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D.H. LAWRENCE: THE NOVELIST
Random Topic for Exam

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David Herbert Lawrence was born on 11th September 1885, the son of a coal miner of Embsay in Nottinghamshire. He began his writing career early. When he was teaching at Croydon School his first major work The White Peacock was published and had favourable reception. This made him give up the job as a school teacher and take up writing as his career. Lawrence became a writer of repute in his lifetime.

He is before all else a great novelist, one of the very greatest, and it is as one of the major novelists of the English tradition that he will above all last. His genius is distinctively that of a novelist, and as such he is a remarkable technical innovator as there ever been. Lawrence's teachings are interesting because they are a compendium of what a whole generation wanted to feel, what Hitler asked, just after Lawrence's death and they saw when the dark consciousness was leading them to see in this light. Lawrence represented the last phase of the Romantic Movement: under irresponsible egotism, power for power sake, the blood cult of Rosenberg.

And Lawrence was representative, because tens and thousands of people in England and Europe were uprooted people, like himself. It was perhaps his supposed attitude in the matter of sex that mainly accounted for the ban maintained by the BBC for nearly twenty years. On the other hand, the sophisticated reaction is given by the writer in 'The Times Literary Supplement' who, reviewing a translation of Bel-Ami contrasted Lawrence's 'credulities' with the mature wisdom of Maupassant. women

in Love and The Rainbow can hardly be understood first reading. They present a difficulty that is the measure of their profound originality. Lawrence's art in them is so original in its methods and procedures that at first we are doubtful, we gain and again fail to recognise what it is doing or offering - we miss the point. And this technical originality was evoked by the originality of what Lawrence had to convey. The important truths about human experiences are not necessarily at once obvious. The importance of some is to be measured by the difficulty with which we recognise them. They are not in our habits of conscious thought, what we say we believe with our conscious minds ignores or denies them.

Lawrence's insight was penetrating and clear, and he was marvelously intelligent, and the worst difficulty we have in coming to terms with his art is resistance in us to what it has to communicate - his art demands growing - growing into understanding. According to "After Strange Gods", Lawrence has three aspects. The first is the ridiculous: his lack of sense of humour, a certain snobbery; secondly there is the extraordinarily keen sensibility and capacity for profound intuition and thirdly, there is a distinct sexual morbidity.

to have had The Rainbow and Women in Love banned as a bad enough blow for Lawrence, isolated and without a public and unfriended among the power of the contemporary literary world, and yet conscious of what he had achieved. But it was not in Lawrence's nature to rest in negation. He was haunted with horror and foreboding and a state bordering on despair, but it was not

possible for him to be a defeatist. The affirmation of life was always strong in him, and to us always that profound sense of responsibility which is his strength and genius. Lawrence wrote across his book as a kind of letter to himself. In his final colloquy with Aaron in the last chapter he tells him that "There are two great life ways - the 'love urge' and the 'power urge'. woman - and man too. Yield to the deep power - soul in the individual man, and obey implicitly - I do believe that every man must fulfil his own soul, every woman must be herself, not some man's instrument, or some ambulatory theory. But the mode of our being is such that we can only live and have our being whilst we are implicit in one of the dynamic modes. we must either love or rule. And once the love-mode changes, as change is must, for we are worn out and becoming evil in its persistence, then the other mode will take place in us"

"my great religion is belief in the blood, the flesh as being wiser than intellect. we can go wrong in our minds. but what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. what do I care about knowledge I conceive a man's body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame forever upright and yet flowing: and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the thing around" - wrote Lawrence in a letter to Ernest Collins (17th Jan. 1913) these lines represent Lawrence philosophy in nut shell.

In his essay "Edgar Allan Poe" he writes, "love is the mysterious vital attraction which draws

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things closer together, together close. For this reason
there is the actual crisis of love. For in love, the
two blood systems in the male and female converge
towards and come into contact, the next film
intervening. Yet if the intervening film breaks
down it is death. There is a limit to every
thing and there is a limit to love. The central
law of all organic life is that each organism is
inherently isolated and single is itself, the
moment its isolation breaks down there comes
an actual misery and confusion and death
sets in. But the secondary law of all organic
life is that each organism only lives through
contact with other matter, through assimila-
tion and contact with other lives.

Lawrence is first and foremost out on a crusade
against the split between blood knowledge which
is based on the vast flux of knowing that goes
on in the dark, antecedent to the mind and
mechanical mental knowledge which makes
oneself conscious. When mental consciousness
ceases to be a controller of the dictates of reason
a harmonious balance will be the controller of
the living being and the body is no longer made
to follow the dictates of reason, a harmonious
balance will be achieved between the intellect
and emotion. Blood consciousness and mind conscious-
ness all the time try to extinguish and annul each
other.

Lawrence was as eagerly championed, as warmly
defended as industriously imitated as was
Byron by contemporary admirers. During the
twenties and thirties the prophetic voice which
arouses the greatest enthusiasm among postwar

Generation was Lawrence. He was an explorer of
 the mind and and mind in the world about him
 Redefining the values, beliefs in progressivist with
 individualism, Lawrence maintained that instead
 an excessive mental refinement had imperve-
 rished the blood, the vital & vital flow and
 record of emotion. He believed that Christian
 civilization was in ultimate decay and that
 people were waiting for new gods to appear and
 initiate a fresh cycle, a belief which reminds
 on one of the theory of Yeats.

Lawrence endeavoured to penetrate through the
 dramas of the mental will to elemental patterns
 of behaviour. He has a great insight into the
 obscure human relationships. He is one of the
 originators who bequeathed to us a whole
 world of imagination, doctrine and interpre-
 tation of life, rendered with the depth of a
 great poet.

D.H. Lawrence was a crank, a ~~sex-kitten~~ ridden
 degenerate, a belated Rousseauist, a better Christ
 and a Jaeger poet Miss Edith Sitwell. Or else he is
 was sex, a beautiful soul, a divine fool, a modern
 Prometheus, and a very great artist. Lawrence
 may be placed beneath one or the other of these
 two sets of labels, or he may be distributed by
 the cautious somewhere between them, but the
 fact becomes more and more evident that he
 even at the present after ~~almost~~ so many
 years easily the most living of contemporary
 English writers.