

**D. H. Lawrence's Ideology of the Five Senses as Mentioned in  
*Fantasia Of The Unconscious***

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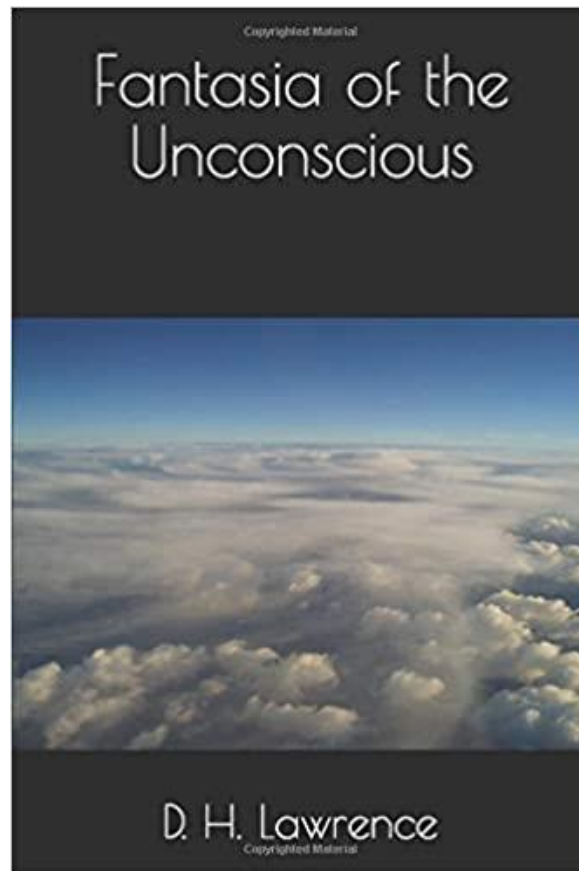
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**Abstract**

The present paper is an attempt to analyze and explore the ideology of D. H. Lawrence on “The Five Senses” of human body. In the beginning, Lawrence is opposed the theory of science related to

human body. Through practical approach he has disproved this theory. “The Five Senses” is an essay written by D. H. Lawrence in his book *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. He has proved that the five senses of the human body are sensual to unconscious. In this paper I have tried to highlight the psychological, biological and metaphysical concept of Lawrence’s idea of unconscious. This paper also analyses different faculties to combine to adjudge the state of consciousness and unconsciousness. It is important to mention here that I haven’t quoted any critics’ view or opinion about “The Five Senses” theory of D H Lawrence. I have analyzed the topic and inferred what I understood in the “The Five Senses” from the book *Fantasia of the Unconscious*.

**Keywords:** *Fantasia Of The Unconscious*, D. H. Lawrence, consciousness, unconsciousness, psychological, sensual,

It is the human psychology that negative or controversial aspects of a person is remembered for long. S/he is not revered for the good deeds and legacy s/he leaves behind him. So is the case with David Herbert Lawrence. Lawrence, the follower of Charles Dickens in many ways has been misunderstood and tagged as sexist. This is a dogma which can be driven away only by knowing the ideology of Lawrencian era. D. H. Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885 in coalmine town of Eastwood. He was the fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence and Lydia, née Beardsall, a former schoolmistress. His father was an illiterate miner. Lawrence spent his childhood in Eastwood and attended to the local school. Since his childhood, Lawrence had been a genius mind which helped him earn scholarship to study at the Edinburg University.

Here it is important to note that Lawrence began his life in an environment of freedom from any restricted tradition or institution. He was not guided upon by anyone but the “Inner Light”. His free ideology provided him an opportunity to plunge into the Fantasy and explore the psychology of life. This is why Lawrence always used ‘L’ for life. His quest for life encouraged him to come up with books such as *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, *Studies in Classic American Literature* etc. He wrote his first novel *The White Peacock* at the age of twenty-four. Lawrence shared his philosophy of relationship and the intricate problems he encountered during his life in his poetry. He got in - depth excellence in composing poetry. This excellence reached to such an extent that he started believing that ‘Civilization had corrupted the natural behaviour of human being’. According to Lawrence ‘Physical fulfilment was the clue to recovery of human dignity and happiness’.

*Fantasia of the Unconscious* was published in 1923. This book helps us know about the psychology of Lawrencian ideology of life, world, thought, idea and metaphysical world. The two books *Fantasia of the Unconscious* and *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* are exemplary works on such an intricate issue as the one we discussed. These books are all about biological and physical state of human beings. Through these two books Lawrence, has attempted to understand how the social institutions and individuals could not understand the principle of ‘unconscious state’. They both have proved futile in establishing family relation in creative life.

Lawrence is of the opinion that there should be a thorough change in educational system to incorporate unconscious state of life which leads to study different fora of psychology. He extensively explored the subject of unconscious with simulated examples and arguments along with flexible prose-style. All these prompt us as excitedly as the created sensation during the age of Lawrence nearly hundred years ago.

“The Five Senses” is the fifth chapter of the book *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. In this chapter Lawrence begins with the scientific point of view about ‘human body’. According to this view, the human body is a sort of complex mechanism consisting of innumerable intricate machines which works day and night. This mechanism is controlled by the human will i.e. intelligence. But Lawrence is highly opposed to the notion. He puts forward his argument that once the soul or spirit is formed, it remains inactive within human body which science could not explain. He argues:

If anything goes wrong with the machine, why, the soul if forgotten instantly. We summon the arch-mechanic of our day, the medicine-man. And a marvelous earnest fraud he is, doing his best. He is really wonderful as a mechanic of the human system. But the life within us fails more and more, while we marvelously tinker at the engines (Lawrence 55).

Lawrence further argues that even if the human body is conceived as a machine, one cannot let such a machine function for a single day on its own but by unified control. He says that every machine has originated by its God or the indenture. Likewise, human body is controlled by some central God. He gives an example that the beetle toddles because its little soul commands it to. Similarly, a human child stands on its feet because of the command its soul gives it. Lawrence has compared a human being to a machine in order to convince us how a human body functions and how it is controlled by a mighty soul. For this, he compares the human body to a bicycle is made to move ahead by its God (human being) who sits on the saddle and apply force to move it to the desired direction. A bicycle has different parts which together help a man move it. Same is the mechanism of a human body. He says “In a child, the solar plexus and the cardiac plexus with corresponding voluntary ganglia, are awake and active. From these centers developed the great functions of body” (58).

Lawrence scientifically writes that the functions of vital organs of human body “Liver and Kidneys” are controlled by the solar plexus. He tells us the cause of fever and constipation. These disorders are caused due to sympathetic dynamism of the solar plexus. Likewise, the cause of anaemia, diarrhea, etc. are also caused due to stimulation of the voluntary midpoint. He plunges for the deep to tell us about important organs situated at the lower part of the human body. These lower parts are the controlled by the two centers. He writes “these organs work well or ill according to as there is a true dynamic psychic activity at the two primary centers of consciousness” (Lawrence 59). He moves ahead to explain how a dynamic psychic activity has a correlation between an individual and other individual concerned or the surroundings which affect his living condition. These conditions may be physical, geographical and regional surroundings.

According to Lawrence the upper part of the human body has two sophisticated subparts- the lungs and the heart. They both are controlled by “Cardiac plane and thoracic ganglion” (59). He goes on to elaborate that excessive emotional and sympathetic attitude cause the burning of lungs with oxygen. The result of this weakens the lungs. He says, “So it is just criminal to make a child too loving” (59). He warns us not to induce any child to love excessively as it may result in derangement and inevitable death. Lawrence is of the opinion that the doctors should try to know as to how there a relation between the working of primary organs and the dynamic psychic activity. He presents his arguments that “the dynamic psychic activity and the four-primary consciousness-centres – beyond these physical functions, there are the activities which are half-psychic, half-functional. Such as the five senses” (59).

Lawrence says that four out of the five senses, function through facial activities. According to him, the fifth- the sense of touch is perceived throughout the body. The nerves move to and fro and stops on the surface of the body. He says “Inwardly this is an inextricable ramification and communication” (60). He says how human physiology is designed and how a definite are-control functions from the four centers. He further says that on the back portion of the body the sense of touch is not sensitive. As for front portion, the breast is highly sensitive to sympathetic touch followed by the belly. But both- the breast and the belly have different stimulus of touch and they have distinctive psychic quality and result. It is perceived that the breast touch is observant of trembling inquisitiveness whereas the belly, when touched, gives a thrill of delight and covetousness.

Lawrence describes about the functions of hands and says that they are instrumental in delicate curiosity. And the function of elbows and wrists is to flow the dynamic psychic current. Similarly, the legs are instrumental in illimitable satisfactions and repudiations. He says that all the parts of the lower limbs- thighs, knees, feet etc. are highly active with ‘love-desire’. Knees also make a man feel weak when he feels flush of sympathetic desire. And it is hatred which produces the tension of the knees as hard as steel thus gripping the feet like hooks. Thus, Lawrence explains the four fields of touch – two sympathetic, present in front of the body from throat to feet and other two are resistant field, present in the back of the body from neck to heels.

According to Lawrence’s view of unconscious, there are basically two feels of touch which are, in terms of distribution, complicate “the face and the buttocks” (60). Both these fields have no any mode of sense communication. He juxtaposed these two fields. His further arguments are “The face is of course the great window of the self, the great opening of the self upon the world, the great gateway” (61). He practically convinces us that most of our communication is established with the outer universe through the means of face. And the face has four basic centers of initial area of consciousness. Mouth, a primary gate of two important sensual centers, is the important source to the belly and the loins. Mouth is basically used for intake of food and water and it also gives us the sense of taste. Then we have lips. Lips are used for sensual connection by kissing. Another important part of the mouth are the teeth. Teeth are used not only for chewing or crushing the food staples but also for our sensual will. Two important sensual centres situated below the diaphragm are responsible for the growth of the teeth. Lawrence scientifically proved that “The growth and life of the teeth depends

almost entirely on the lumbar ganglion” (61). The sympathetic mode is stopped in the process of the growth of the teeth. As a result, we notice pain, diarrhea and misery in a baby undergoing the process of development of new teeth. Lawrence says:

“And we, in our age have no rest with our teeth. Our mouths are too small. For many ages we have been suppressing the avid, negroid, sensual will. We have been converting ourselves into ideal creatures, all spiritually conscious, and active dynamically only on one plane, the upper, spiritual plane. Our mouth has contracted, our teeth have become soft and unquickened. Where in us are the sharp and vivid teeth of the wolf, keen to defend and devour? If we had them more, we should be happier. Where are the white negroid teeth? Where? In our little pinched mouths they have no room. We are sympathy-rotten, and spirit – rotten, and idea – rotten. We have forfeited our flashing sensual power. And we have false teeth in our mouths” (61).

The above lines give us a clear concept of the philosophy Lawrence advocates of about the society and its various stake holders. He is highly opposed to the way human beings are behaving in the society. Sarcastically, he compares human teeth to that of the wolf. This way he establishes his belief that the wolf is more prone to defend and devour. Had we had teeth like the wolf, we would be happier. He criticizes the entire human psychology and says that we have killed sympathy, spirit and ideas which lead to human welfare. Same is the case with our lips. Lawrence vividly says that lips, meant for sensual desire, has become thinner and meaningless and he juxtaposed it “to our upper will and idea- driven impulse” (62). He urges the society “Let us break the conscious, self-conscious love-ideal” (62). Only then the society will be able to grow stronger and resistant teeth. This way, we can make the teething of our young in the desired direction and not according to the prevailing trend.

Lawrence, in his artistic, scientific and psychological way established that our sensual gate to lower part of the body is mouth. Then he talks of smell. He establishes a relation between “the wide atmosphere of the heaven to the lungs” (62) through the nostrils. Our subtle nose communicates with the inestimable air. He clearly explains that we experience refined sensual intake if a scent is sweet and the sensual rejection when it is unpleasant. He then defines the shapes of the nose:

“A perfect nose is perhaps the result of a balance in the four modes. But what is a perfect nose! – We only know that a short snub nose goes with an over-sympathetic nature, not proud enough; while a long nose derives from the center of the upper will, the thoracic ganglion, our great center of curiosity, and benevolent or objective control. A thick, squat nose is the sensual-sympathetic nose, and the high, arched nose the sensual voluntary nose, having the curve of repudiation, as when we turn of our nose from a bad smell, but also the proud curve of haughtiness and subjective authority” (63).

These are the very elaborate descriptions of different kinds of noses and their characteristics. Lawrence remarks that the nose indicates our characters. In other words, the shape of our nose



signifies the mode of predominant primary centers. This reveals his mastery on such intricate scientific, biological and psychological issues. He has proved himself a cognoscenti of psychology.

The third important gateway to the psyche is the vision- the eyes. Lawrence says that a conscious vision has its root in the breast. It is the breast which reflects inward self of an individual:

“When I go forth my own eyes, in delight to dwell upon the world which is beyond me, outside me, then I go forth from wide open windows, through which shows the full and living lambent darkness of my present inward self. I go forth, and I live the lovely open darkness of my sensient self recvealed; when I go forth in the wonder of vision to dwell upon the beloved, or upon the wonder of the world, I go from the center of the glad breast, through the eyes, and who will may look into the full soft darkness of me, rich with my undiscovered presence” (63).

Here it is important to note that Lawrence, based on his personal experience, says that our eyes only gaze outward and not inward. Eyes are also categorized into different types based on their shapes.

Lawrence comes to the last sense- the sense of ‘hearing’. It is supposed to be the deepest of the senses. Unlike other senses we don’t have any choice of rejection when comes to the matter of hearing. Hearing is spontaneous and it is unavoidable. We are bound to hear. We cannot stop ourselves from hearing. It is not our discretion. In other words, our will is eliminated. “Sound acts direct, almost automatically, upon the affective centers. And we have no power of going forth from the ear. We are always and only recipient” (66). As per the basic poles of consciousness, sound acts in various ways. We hear different types of sounds- from music to the roaring of a lion. We also hear “deeper resonance of the sensual mode of consciousness” (67).

The conclusion is that Lawrence has adopted practical approach to enlighten us about the five senses, their functions, impacts and the outcome on the psychology of human behaviour. Neither a psychologist nor a biologist could have dealt with such a complex topic in a practical way as Lawrence has succeeded in doing so.

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#### Reference

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