



MARITAL DISILLUSIONMENT IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S SONS AND LOVERS

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ABSTRACT

D. H. Lawrence novels depict men and women characters in a broad based theory. As a genre of literature, the novel has always been reflecting life in part or in its entirety. It has never been more so than in the 20th and 21st centuries, as a powerful mouth piece of human feelings and emotions. D. H. Lawrence is a novelist, short story writer, poet and essayist. D. H. Lawrence is known for his frequently misunderstood, basically idealistic ideas about sexual relation and for his interest in primitive religion nature and mysticism.

In the novel Sons and Lovers, Paul is very much attracted towards his mother. Mrs. Gertrude Morel is the central character in Sons and Lovers. The novel deals with her disillusionment in marriage, the gradual rejection of her husband Mr. Moral, the taking on of her sons first of William and then Paul as her lovers and the disastrous effect of this unnatural, but unbreakable bond in their emotional life. Unable to find any fulfillment in her relationship casts him off and turns to her sons. Mrs. Moral fights a heroic and persistent battle against poverty and does her best to save her sons from the ugly and wretched life of the mines. She muses them devotedly and does not have any life of her own through the result of all this sacrifice is not healthy. The women characters in the novel of Lawrence are seen in difficult colors, they are full blooded, passionate and strong in characters. They have their complexes and have their vacillations in behavior. All this is human in a real world which Lawrence rightly portrays.

INTRODUCTION

Lawrence is known for his frequently misunderstood but basically idealistic ideas about sexual relationship and for his interest in primitive religion and nature mysticism. His philosophy, life history and prejudices are all inextricably involved in his writings. His writings possess energy of impassioned imagination which stamps it with the characteristic marks of greatness. His novels have a realism stirred by a longing for symbolical suggestion, glowing with poetical ardour. *Sons and Lovers* is the most autobiographical of Lawrence's



work. Lawrence has summarised the theme of the novel which runs parallel to the actualities of his own early life.

In *Sons and Lovers*, in portraying the character of Mrs. Gertrude Morel, Lawrence idealises her in order to prove her superiority to Paul's father and Miriam Leivers. Later Lawrence had himself confessed that while highlighting the positive points of Gertrude Morel, he had been unfair to Walter Morel who had been drawn after his father. Jessie Chambers was also of the opinion that Lawrence "handed his mother with laurels of victory".

Mrs. Morel is the central character in the novel. She is a hard, wilful and unbending women possessing love and ruins in the life of Paul and destroys Morel as a man. It is because of her disillusionment in marriage and inability to accept the life which her miner husband can offer, the whole novel is brought about.

Mrs. Morel comes of the famous Coppard family. She is filted by a young man who deserted her to marry a rich widow. Later she meets Mr. Morel at a Christmas party. She is at once fascinated by his smartness, vigour, gallantry, pleasant manners, ringing cough and sense humour. Within a year, she gets married to him. It is not long before her blissful married life is vitiated, disillusionment sets in. She discovers the truth about Mr. Morel. She finds Mr. Morel's profession ugly and undignified. She is hateful to his lack of interest in intellectual things. The meagre house-keeping allowance often compels her to borrow and at the moments of family crisis, their requirements are met largely because of the charity of neighbours. To add to this, she has four children to bring up.

The married life of Gertrude morel is hyphenated by violent quarrels. Mr. Morel often comes home, drunk and bullies his wife. She in her turn nags at the uncouth manners of her husband till he is beside himself with rage. Though Gertrude married Morel knowing full well that he is miner, soon her initial fascination wears off and she starts looking at all his negative aspects. In fact, she is too large extent, responsible for the tragedy of her life. She regards the profession of her husband as ugly and undignified. She fails to anticipate the hard work of Morel as a miner and does not deal with him sympathetically when he comes back home.

Gertrude has foisted herself upon her young sons and is using them to escape her loneliness caused by her failure to establish a rapport with her husband. In fact, the refusal of the mother to recognise the "otherness" of her husband and her sons destroys their life and personality. Mrs. Morel, after bitter frustration and acute dissatisfaction with her married life, transfers her affection to her sons. The husband is gradually cast off and she turns to her sons – first William and then Paul – for emotional satisfaction. The sons too are deeply attached to her and there are tender scenes of homely affections between the mother and the sons.



Gertrude started casting her husband off soon after the birth of Paul. Mrs. Morel was more or less a husk. Her treatment of Paul was different from that of the other children. A.B. Kuttner says,

Towards Paul she feels, as to none of the other children, that she must make up to him for an injury or a sin committed by her and that he must recompense her for all that she has missed in her shattered love for her husband.

Paving a way for a close contact between Paul and his mother, the other children are gradually removed from the scene.

The early relation between mother and children are full of a delicate and poetic charm. Paul's admiration for his mother knew no bounds; her presence is always absorbing, often at the sight of her, his heart contracts with love. Everything he does is for her, the flowers he picks as well as the prizes he wins at school. His mother is his intimate and his confidante; he has no other chums (p.72).

Paul has bronchitis. His mother was attached to him particularly because of his illness. She always felt a mixture of anguish in her love for him. He responded her love. Both of them, the mother and the son worry more about each other. The son is worried over the access of agony and the pain his mother undergoes. The mother tries to derive her comfort and consolation only from this son. One side, Paul and his mother were coming closer and on the other, father was being gradually effaced. The entire family was united in its hatred for Mr. Morel.

Mrs. Morel also lost all hope in her husband. She knew that the man who stops on the way back home from work is on a quick way ruining himself and his home. Mr. Morel was gradually growing stranger in the family. Mr. Morel was shut out from all family affairs. No one told him anything. The children alone with their mother told her all about the days happening, everything. Nothing had really taken place in them and until it was told to their mother. But as soon as the father came in everything stopped. He was like the scotch in the smooth, happy machinery of the home. And he was always aware of this fall of silence on his entry, the shutting off of the life of being unwelcomed. But now it was gone too fair to alter (p81).

When Morel met with an accident the reaction of Mrs. Morel was peculiar. But still in her heart of hearts where the love should burn, there was blank. Her feeling for her son Paul is exactly the opposite. She talked to Paul after her visit to the hospital to see the ailing Morel. She explained to him how his father behaved in the hospital. "So she talked to her son, almost as if she were thinking a loved to him and she took it as best as he could, by sharing her



trouble to lighten it. And in the end she shared almost everything with him without knowing “(p111).

Thus we see how Mrs. Morel weans herself away from her husband and binds herself to Paul, the last and the only way of seeking her identifying and realizing her’self’. When Mrs, Morel drifts away from her husband, Paul comes closer to her. They have much of a love for each other and are knit together in perfect intimacy. When Paul fell ill once, his mother was attending on him. She lifted him when he suffer.

Getting freed to be rooted in another relationship to get freed to be rooted again. This seems to be the never ending process of the human soul. Mrs. Morel fails to realize the principles of polarity in her relationship of husband or her sons. She is too domineering and over possessive. She fails to realize that in order to establish a successful relationship, the divine ‘otherness’ of the other has to be respected. Mrs. Morel has lost all feelings of love for her husband and transferred them to her sons. She also does not understand that her husband and sons possess distinct personalities with individual emotional requirements. All these factors lead to disharmony and disintegration.

The novel *Sons and Lovers* studies Paul Morel’s attraction toward his mother. The gradual rejection of her husband consequent on her disillusionment in marriage, the taking of her sons as lovers, and the disastrous effect are unnatural but remarkable bond in their emotional life. Mrs. Morel fights a heroic persistent battle against poverty and tries her best to save her sons from the ugly and withered life of the mining community. She goes through a period of escapism and defense mechanisms in the form of her sons. To her, the consequences are immaterial.

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