

Justify the Title Sons and Lovers

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ABSTRACT

Sons and Lovers published in 1913 by D.H. Lawrence is third autobiographical novel and it has been considered first masterpiece of Lawrence. The title Sons and Lovers is justified. Deeply dissatisfied in her loveless marriage, Gertrude diverts the passion expected to have for her husband towards her sons. Sons and Lovers depicts incestuous relationship that Gertrude Morel has with her sons. This novel portrays incestuous relationship between Gertrude Morel and her sons Paul and William. Originally Lawrence intended the book to be entitled Paul Morel but he wanted to emphasize the strange, passionate vitality of the mother /son relationship, he changed the title to Sons and Lovers. Trapped in a loveless and sexless marriage, Gertrude needs to an outlet for her passion which she duly finds it in her sons. Lawrence presents Freudian psychology in this novel. Paul is compared with Oedipus Complex. Paul does not simply treat Gertrude like a lover. He also treats his father as a deadly rival. When Walter (Paul's father) passes away, Paul immediately takes his place as head of the house and loves his mother as a wife and lover.

KEY WORDS: *Autobiographical nature of novel, Psychological depiction, Realist environment, Subjectivity, Freudian psychology*

I. INTRODUCTION

The roots of Sons and Lovers are clearly located in Lawrence's life. Walter Morel is modeled on Lawrence's hard-drinking, irresponsible father Arthur. Gertrude Morel is modeled on Lawrence's mother Lydia. Lawrence's mother Lydia is unhappy with her husband and she is obsessed with Lawrence. Through this novel Sons and Lovers Lawrence re-examined his childhood, his relationship with his mother and her psychological effect on his sexuality. There is evidence that Lawrence was aware of Sigmund Freud's early theory on sexuality. Sons and lovers deeply explores and revises one of Freud's major theories, the Oedipus complex.

Gertrude (soon to be Mrs. Morel), an intelligent young woman from a middle-class English family, meets a young miner, Mr. Morel, at a country dance. Although Gertrude has a religious and ascetic temperament, she is attracted to Walter Morel's vigorous nature and thinks he is very handsome when she sees him dancing at the party. The pair are married a few months later and soon Mrs. Morel becomes pregnant. The first few months of their marriage are happy but Mrs. Morel finds that she cannot really talk to her husband and that, despite their initial attraction, the couple has little in common. She discovers that Walter is not as wealthy as she believed and that they do not own the house they live in, but rather rent it from Walter's mother. She dislikes life in the mining community and does not get along with other women, who finds her haughty and superior. Mrs. Morel gives birth to a son, whom she names William, and she adores him immensely. Although she and Mr. Morel are still friendly with each other, she has lost interest in him and the rift between them widens after the birth of the child. One morning, when William is a toddler, Mrs. Morel comes downstairs and finds that Mr. Morel has cut the boy's hair off. Mrs. Morel is horrified, and this action drives a wedge between her and her husband. She focuses all her love on her son and delights in planning for his future and watching him grow up.

Mrs. Morel has a second child, Annie, and then gets pregnant with a third. One day, not long before her due date, a fair comes to town and Mrs. Morel reluctantly goes along to please William who cannot enjoy the fair without her. While she is there, Mrs. Morel sees that Mr. Morel, who has taken to drinking frequently, is in the beer tent and she is not surprised when he returns home drunk that evening. A few weeks later, there is a public holiday and Mr. Morel uses this time to go out drinking with his friend Jerry Purdy, whom Mrs. Morel cannot stand because he is a misogynist. When Mr. Morel comes back that night, he is very drunk and the couple fights. Mr. Morel locks Mrs. Morel out of the house and she calms herself down by looking at the moon and the flowers in the garden. When she returns Mr. Morel lets her back in but goes to bed without talking to her. Mrs. Morel gives birth to another boy. One night, shortly after the birth she has taken the children out of the house to avoid Mr. Morel's temper. She sits and watches the sunset on a nearby hill and decides to name the baby Paul. As she looks down at the little infant, she is overcome with guilt and sadness. She thinks that the baby looks sad because she did not want him while she was pregnant. Paul grows into a serious and thoughtful

child. Mrs. Morel gives birth to a third son, Arthur. At first, William visits home frequently and sends money to his family. Later on he begins to get caught up in city life and spends his money on his fiancés.

Paul grows into an intelligent young man and takes a job as a clerk in Nottingham. He enjoys the work and gets well along with his colleagues. When Paul is struck down with pneumonia Mrs Morel does everything in her power to nurse him back to health. Paul recovers well and since that time Mrs. Morel is committed to him and pins all her hopes for the future on him. During his off time after work Paul begins to visit a nearby farm owned by Mr. Leivers. He develops an unusual friendship with Leivers' daughter Miriam who is very timid, religious and intellectual. Mrs Morel does not like the friendly and emotional relationship between Paul and Miriam. Later on Paul develops friendly and emotional relationship with young woman Clara Dawes. Clara Dawes is married but separated from her husband. Miriam and Paul continue their platonic relationship with Paul and wanted to marry him. Paul resents Miriam because he feels she is too spiritual and that hampers him from behaving physically. While Mrs. Morel is on holiday, she falls ill and is diagnosed with cancer. Paul is horrified that his mother may die. He nurses his mother. It is understood by everyone that she will not live very long. Paul dedicates all his time to care his mother. Mrs Morel dies gradually and painfully. After his mother's death Paul has lost all interest in her girl friend Clara and he is deeply grief-stricken. Lawrence's realistic attitude is expressed through his passion for presenting psychological state of mind, Freudian psychology and for presenting the spirit of the age in his novels. This novel Sons and Lovers presents real and everyday situation in contemporary settings and presents with truth, reality and accuracy. **CONCLUSION**

Thus D. H. Lawrence's novel Sons and Lovers is initially called Paul Morel after the name of the central character was later given the title Sons and Lovers. The novel presents the story of a woman who is disillusioned with her husband and accepts two of her sons as lovers one after the other. This plan is made amply clear in a letter Lawrence wrote to Garnett: "A woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, so the children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up, she selects them as lovers-first the eldest, then the second. The sons are urged into life by the reciprocal love of their mother-urged on and on." Thus it is clear that it is the sons themselves who, when they grow up, become the lovers of their mother. Lawrence is at his best in presenting realistic picture of society in modernistic attitude. Breaking down of social norms, rejection of standard social ideas, ethics and traditional thoughts and expectations Lawrence has made this novel modernistic, realistic and outstanding. His themes, subjectivity and realism reveal his modernist style. His novel Sons and Lovers is considered the best representations of modernism and realism and justify D. H. Lawrence as a modernist & realist novelist. The autobiographical nature of novel, psychological depiction, realist environment and surrounding settings and naturalism make the novel realist. Psychoanalysis, strong female character, sexual wholesomeness, impressionism, breakdown of family unit and movement to city makes it a modernist novel. Thus the novel 'Sons and Lovers' is both a realist and modernist novel. Paul fails in his relationship with Miriam mainly because of his love for his mother. It is true that Miriam is sexually inhibited and much of the responsibility for the failure of her affair with Paul lies with her but it does not absolve him from his share in the responsibility. The mother pulls him so strongly that he can never give himself freely to Miriam. He instinctively dislikes even a touch from Miriam. But there is no such feeling when he (Paul) is with his mother. Once he kisses his mother on the forehead. His hand lingers on her shoulder after the kiss and he forgets Miriam. Thus it is true that Mrs. Morel accepts her sons as her lovers and this justifies the title Sons and Lovers.

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