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An Analytical View Of Paul Morel Character Of D.H.Lawrence's In The Novel Sons And Lovers

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Abstract

Paul Morel is the protagonist of this novel D.H.Lawrence's Sons and Lovers that vividly portrays a complex husband-wife, mother son and man-woman relationship. He is sensitive, temperament, a painter and unceasingly devoted to his mother. Through this article it depicts the relational motifs of the major character of Paul with other characters and the dire upshot resulting from his relation. Mrs. Morel is the dominant character in the novel but the study found that Paul should certainly be described as the hero of the novel. He failed because his mother's unusual attachment to him negatively impacted on his building up a normal relation with the other two women that is the chief attraction of the novel. The women with whom Paul had relation underwent part of the suffering somehow. At the end of this novel, it is quite tragic of because of his mother's death made him hopeless and nothing is left in his life.

KEYWORDS: protagonist, sensitive, painter, mother-son, relation.

INTRODUCTION.

Paul Morel is one of the most interesting characters of D. H. Lawrence. Mrs. Morel is the dominant character in the novel *Sons and Lovers*, but Paul should certainly be described as the hero of the novel because so much of his experience is vividly described. It is his relations with his mother, and with the other two women that is the chief attraction of the novel.

Paul is the third child of Gertrude and Walter Morel. The circumstances attending his birth are hardly such as would be conducive to a healthy and natural development of the child. The marriage of his parents has degenerated into an unending series of bitter quarrels, and when the third child, Paul arrives, the mother feels herself guilty in bringing an unwanted child into a world which is barren of love. She feels "wretched with the coming child."

"She could not afford to have this third. She did not want it. The father was serving beer in a

public-house, swilling himself drunk. She despised him, and was tied to him. This coming child was too much for her... she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness.”

And when the child is born, its peculiarly knitted brows and heavy eyes, which give the impression as if it is trying to understand something that is ‘pain’ move the mother’s heart to pity. It pulls at her heart. “She felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot love went over to the infant. With all her force, with all her soul she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved.”

Paul, in his childhood, is rather weak and delicate. Aready he is prone to fits of depression. At times he cries without any specific reasons and when the mother has failed to reason him out of it, or to amuse him, his father will threaten to beat him. It is this brutal atmosphere of the house that engenders a neurotic strain in Paul’s personality. As Graham Hough says, his “neurotic refusal of life... is direct result of his parents’ failure.”

2.DISCUSSION

Paul has been a highly sensitive child. It is rather tragic that such a sensitive child as Paul should be exposed to uncongenial atmosphere and agonising circumstances. Being a sickly child Paul is exceptionally dependent on his mother. The brutal insensitive behaviour of his father engenders a feeling of insecurity and fear in his tender heart. When the ash tree shrieks at night, it reminds him of the cries and howlings of his father. His heart in the grip of a terrible fear, Paul will lie awake in his bed, praying for the safety of his mother, guessing as to what his father will do next. And when the shrieking wind falls silent, Paul is overpowered by the “horror of the sudden silence, silence everywhere, outside and downstairs.” His mind is assailed by unhappy thoughts : “What was it ? What is a silence of blood ? What had he (Morel) done ?”

And so he begins to hate his father. His nature is too refined to stand the uncouth and ugly manners of his father. His (Morel’s) vulgarity is like a spiritual irritant to the soul of Paul. And Paul always avoids any contact with his father. When he wins a prize for the first time, he comes home running to tell his mother about it, but is very much reluctant to break the news to his father. And how much does Paul loathe his father when he, after the death of Mrs. Morel, indulges in false sentimentalizing.

The uncongenial domestic atmosphere brings about three kinds of devastating effects upon the personality of Paul. First, he often falls into fits of depression. His mother tries to console him, but his father’s callous attitude makes him feel all the more insecure. Graham Hough rightly points out that Paul’s “neurotic refusal of life... is the direct result of his parents’ failure.” Secondly, Paul develops an abiding hatred for his father, so much so that he begins to wish his father dead. And thirdly, this atmosphere is largely responsible for an unusual bond of inter- dependence between him and his mother.

As Paul Morel grows up, he becomes highly self-conscious. He is an introvert, a hypersensitive introvert, to whom any touch with external reality is an agonizing experience. He suffers very much from the first contact with anything. When he first goes to the school it is almost a nightmare for him. We also remember how much he suffers when he goes to collect the weekly wages of his father, because the cashier and Mr.Winterbottom speak to him in their characteristic vulgar way. He tells his mother of his resolve not to go there any more because

the people there are "hateful and common....Mr. Braithwaite drops his "h's" and Mr. Winterbottom says "you was". The same intense self-consciousness and a reluctance to face the realities of life are evident when his schooling being over he is required to take up a job. id not', writes Lawrence. "that he felt he had to go out into life, he went through agonies of shrinking self-consciousness.... His heart felt like a tight knot." He is full of apprehension when called for interview, and as he steps into the room of his employer he feels himself martyred. "Charles I mounted his scaffold with a lighter heart than had Paul Morel as he followed his mother up the dirty steps to the dirty door". His extreme nervousness renders him tongue-tied and he can hardly read out the paper given him for the purpose.

Paul is an artist at heart. He loves to paint and some of his paintings bring him prizes in exhibitions. How happy is he when his "landscape" gets the first prize at Nottingham Castle Exhibition and is bought for twenty guineas. His paintings are also a manifestation of his life-long quests of "inner reality." His ideas on art are expressed feeling in his conversations with Miriam. He is explaining to her as to why one of his pictures is so true :

"Its because – It's because there is scarcely any shadow in it. It's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmery protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is an inside reality."

Painting gives him an inner satisfaction. When he is working at a sketch he is isolated from outside world and lose himself in his pictures. It is intensity of his feeling for the shimmeriness of things that makes sketches so intense and true. In his youth, Miriam inspires the artist in him and with her he talks endlessly about his sketches, about his "love of horizontals." The great levels of sky and of land in Lincolnshire suggest to him "the eternality of the will" while the Gothic arch symbolizes the ecstasy of the human soul in touch with the divine. One of the most touching scenes in the novel is the presentation of paint-tubes to him by the girls working in the factory: They know how much Paul will appreciate their gift, and Paul really feels grateful to them.

Mrs. Morel loves to be intellectual. Consequently Paul Morel has acquired from his mother a characteristic intellectualism. He has a love of things intellectual. He knows French and algebra, and is glad to share his knowledge of these subjects with Miriam. Together they read and enjoy their favorite poems and authors. D.H. Lawrence's description of such scenes is not merely academic; it is a manifestation of his intense desire to live on a higher plane of being. His restive soul seeks out in books that purity of experience which real life so often denies.

Mrs. Morel is the single and most powerful influence upon Paul's early life as also his development in youth are conditioned by his mother's love for him, and his own compelling need of her. From the beginning both look to each other for love and life – Paul looks to her for comfort, for protection and for sustaining love; Mrs. Morel, unable to find fulfillment with her husband turns to him for love and life.

Paul's relationship with his mother is, first tranquil. They appear as companions, almost as lovers, as they go out together to Nottingham for Paul's interview at Jordan's Appliance Factory. The two are seen in relief against the unfamiliar setting of Nottingham as they enjoy

each other's company – "She was gay, like a sweetheart." and he "suffered because she would talk aloud in presence of the other travellers." They visit the Leivers at Willey Farm during Paul's convalescence. The two occasions vividly show the love between Paul and his mother. They intensity and importance of their relationship to each of them is clearly shown in Paul's love of painting at night, as he sits along with his mother:

"She sewed or read. Then looking up from his task, he would rest his eyes for a moment on her face, that was bright with living warmth, and he returned gladly to his work.

'I can do my best things when you sit there in your rocking chair,.

When Miriam comes into Paul's life, this new relationship interferes with the intimacy between Paul and his mother.

I'm sure ! she exclaimed, sniffing with mock scepticism. But she felt it was so, and her heart quivered with brightness. For many hours she sat still, slightly conscious of him laboring away... And he, with all his soul's intensity directing his pencil, could feel her warmth inside him like strength. They were both very happy so, and both unconscious of it."

Inevitably there is strife as Mrs. Morel sees Paul being drawn away from her and we are told of her fears after Paul has spent an evening with Miriam— "and it grew rather late, he knew his mother was fretting and getting angry about him". Mrs. Morel does not care for Miriam.

During the whole course of his relations with Miriam, Paul's emotions remain confused, as he is torn between his deep love for his mother on the one hand and his growing involvement with Miriam on the other. And all the time Paul is drawn back to his mother. In fact, in all situations, Paul realises that he loves only his mother — "Instinctively he realized that she was life to her. And, after all she was the Chief thing to him, the only supreme thing."

Mrs. Morel's attachment to Paul is passive in nature. She does not realize the "otherness" of Paul and her failure to achieve polarity in her relations with her son destroys him as a unified person. Paul is too strongly attached to his mother to achieve a satisfactory relationship with other women. He fails with Miriam, and he fails with Clara. By the end of the novel it is clear that his mother has damaged his capacity for normal sexual relations. That he himself is aware of this is clear from what he says to his mother towards the end of the novel : "And I never shall meet the right woman while you live." Once Mrs. Morel disowns her husband and instead takes on first William, and then Paul, as husband-substitutes, the split in the family and in the personalities of the sons is inevitable. Paul is a victim of this Oedipal situation. The life of his mother is so deeply rooted in him that she cannot suffer him to go to other woman lest he should grow cold to her and get out of her range. She is always afraid of **losing** Paul to potential **daughter-in-law**, and **this explains** her hostility **to Miriam**, Paul's sweetheart. She resents Paul's **going** to her frequently **and staying** up with her till **late in the evening**. She accuses Miriam, of possessiveness without ever caring to see that she may not ruin her **son's** life **in doing** so !

“She (Miriam) is one of those who will want to have such a man’s soul out till he had none of his own left.... and he is just such a gaby as to let himself be absorbed. She never will let him become a man : She never will.”

And when she finds that Paul continues to befriend Miriam she breaks down before him, “I can’t bear it. I could let another woman — but not her. She’d leave me no room, not a bit of room.” The tragedy of Paul’s life is that neither the love of his mother nor the love of his sweetheart gives him that sense of freedom which is the essence of true relationship. And Paul knows all too well that he belongs to his mother, and that in hurting her he will merely be hurting a vital part of his own self. His world goes dark without her. In the end he has no choice but to desert Miriam and to return to his mother. Lawrence describes his mother’s triumph thus

“He had come back to his mother. Here was the strongest tie in his life. When he thought round, Miriam shrank away. There was vague, unreal feel about her. And nobody else mattered. There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality : the place where his mother was.”

Paul meets Miriam for the first time on the Wdley Farm when Mrs. Morel pays a visit to the Leiver family. His relationship with Miriam is the most complex. Both are moving through the difficult period of adolescence, and Paul especially, although he is strongly attracted to Miriam, is open irritated by her to the point of hatred. But Miriam is highly impressed by Paul. From the beginning to the end Paul-Miriam relationship is spiritual in nature—it’s not physical attraction that brings them together, but their love of books and their desire to reach out for finer things of life. Both hate the common and the vulgar, and in both the inner life has been intensified to such a degree that commonplace things fall into insignificance and appear meaningless to them. Paul’s company rouses a warmth in Miriam. “She”, says Lawrence, “seemed absorbed in him, and by him, when he was present. And is never more happy than when he is in company, discussing his paintings or talking of things of the spirit, of the mind.” Each sees in the other a restless urge to realise an intrinsically richer life : “each uses the other as a means of exploring the possibilities of a beckoning future in terms not so much of education and intellectual ambition (though that does largely too) as of emotional fulfillment.” Each owes to the other their moments of supreme happiness. As one reads through “Lad-and-Girl-Love” chapter, one feels that Miriam lives for Paul, and that Paul finds his meaning in Miriam. Miriam’s religious intensity and purity of being cut her off from ordinary world and from contact with human beings, and, therefore, she turns to Paul for company and for love. She needs things to be kindred in her imagination before she can know them, and Paul’s company does that.

But Paul’s friendship with Miriam is purely ‘a matter of the soul.’ There is a spiritual love — some call it Platonic that exists on the plane of abstraction. Body does not enter in all their relations. Their intimacy, Lawrence tells us, goes on in a “blanched and chaste fashion.” Therefore, for all its intensity Paul-Miriam relationship is inadequate. Sex is a reality that cannot be denied, and both, in the later stages of the novel, become aware of the inadequacy of their relationship. Miriam overrefrains sex and does not think physical relations essential

to true love. She does not accept the whole being of Paul. The dilemma of Paul is that he cannot leave her because she holds the best part of him, and cannot stay with her because she does not take the rest of him.

When we see Miriam for the last time with Paul at the end of the novel, she accepts defeat with heroic resignation and dignity. Each longs for the other, but neither can submit totally to the other.

Paul meets Clara through Miriam, but is not, immediately, very impressed by her. While Miriam is spiritual in her outlook, Clara is all physical and sensual. She does not have the same depth of feelings as Miriam has. However, unable to find sexual satisfaction with Miriam, Paul is driven to Clara. Clara gives him a baptism in Passion ; but her love is inadequate too, for she cannot satisfy his soul. Their affair is too much on the surface to last long. She gives him all that Miriam cannot offer, but can a person so intrinsically pure and moral as Paul is, ever to be happy with a flippant girl like Clara. Her values are superficial. Though the sexual experience that Paul had with her constitutes a deep and complete consummation, yet it fails to touch the inner man in him. How else can we account for Paul's abandonment of her, his reluctance to fight for her. He, in the end, gives her back to her husband and realizes that she cannot satisfy his total being.

3.CONCLUSION.

The Paul whom we see in the closing pages of the novel is a broken and disintegrated man. He has failed to achieve adequate relationship with all the three women who come in his life — his mother, Miriam and Clara. And when Clara's husband Baxter Dawes, waylays him, his defeat is completed. At the end of the novel he is left a derelict with no one to guide his faltering steps, no one to stabilize him. He turns his back upon his village, uproots himself from his past life, and walks towards the gold phosphorescence of the city. As he recedes into distance, the words of his mother ring in our minds: "Battle-battle-suffer."

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