

Women's Status in Victorian Era with reference to *Sons And Lovers*

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Abstract

David Herbert Lawrence is an outstanding author, fiction writer, poet, and philosopher. His initial literary works (1909) were his poetries, especially his invoking of the beauty of nature, was influential. Later, he decided to pursue a more independent path. He then started to work on poetry which was true and stark in nature, and by it he got motivated. Many of his best-known poems are about the external and inner lives of flora and fauna; some are sharply humorous, expressing his indignation at the absurdity of traditional Anglo-Saxon culture. He was a disobedient writer who saw sexuality, the primal psyche, and freely discussed nature in his works as remedies for the horrors of civilized western community.

Here, the title **Women's Status in Victorian Era with reference to D.H. LAWRENCE'S *Sons And Lovers*** focuses on the attitudes towards women subjugation, subordination, the mental illness, dilemma and moreover the suffrage and oppressions of women at that particular era. Where he has defined it with a thorough study of the different positions of women (3). It also examines his skills in showing the powerful character of women, both in the individual sphere and in relation with people around them. It tells the various aspects of women in his canon. This article basically focuses on the characterization of women role of women, motherhood and critical representation and evaluation females in day to day life.

Keywords Women, Motherhood, Society, Victorian Era

Introduction

The Edwardian era encompasses the rule of King Edward VII (1901–1910) as well as those years preceding and following his term up until the beginning of World War. It was also recognised for its wealth and beauty within Britain's rich and privileged, but also for its spiritual laxity and a general inability to plan for any of the twentieth century's struggles. It also marks the emergence of modern woman. Lawrence also writes to expand the scope of feminism and sexuality to give them the space to create a strong female character, which not only contradicted gender conventions, but they also maintain an unorthodox approach toward sexual affairs (1).

Here, the word "modern woman" denotes the most significant departure from the Victorian period, when it allows for the portrayal of man-woman marital interactions in the narrative itself.

Furthermore, the Edwardian age is a total transformation that becomes a radical thing in the lives of the people, particularly women who are becoming empowered and gaining more recognition in the field of education, new opportunities and in employment and moreover in taking their own independent decisions but according to this novel, Lawrence has shown women in a more submissive way, in fact, the statistics also tells us that one in ten married women were in paid employment(2). As, most of the women were from the poorer backgrounds. They were also seen as family's possession, and they were also groomed for marriage and so on and all these assumptions would or could lead a woman to finally get married.

Here, in the novel, Lawrence introduced us with the female character of Mrs. Morel, who has been married for eight years, and has three children but she doesn't particularly pleased with the idea to move down to the Bottoms. It was also mentioned that, after her marriage progresses, she becomes more and more happy, she was happy with her husband and it was tied in a good wedlock, but later, the marriage which, appeared good to her in the beginning was now actually a burden to her. She started feeling dull with the oncoming of her third child (Paul) and the present circumstances made her more mundane.

Mrs. Gertrude Morel, mother of William, Paul, Annie and Arthur, has been shown as a determined woman character. She is a character who falls in between the Edwardian and

contemporary woman. What makes her progressive is her fearless personality, her definite collection of values, and her unwillingness to give up on her kids and on her survival until the very last, which demonstrates her resolute spirit. Her involvement in a women's club and debating the virtues of teamwork and other social issues further indicates at her being partially contemporary. When it comes to her spouse, she is unsure and sometimes disputes herself. She dislikes her husband and all he serves, but she doesn't abandon him either. Mrs. Morel is quiet and spiritual, but she does take stand for herself (3). Mrs. Morel tries to make the most of her circumstances and is confident and ready to protect herself if her husband is disrespectful to her. She is never torn down by his rage, even though he renders her furious, and she handles it very well. Sadly, her passion for her sons causes her to become protective and clingy, and she seeks to limit them when they attempt to grow their own lifestyles; they have such a close bond with her and that they feel bad if they express their intimacy with some other lady.

Lawrence has portrayed three very different female characters; Gertrude Morel, Miriam Leivers, and Clara Dawes, out of which Mrs. Morel is the strongest character and the biggest influence on the protagonist, Paul.

In reality, her rejection of Lily, Miriam, and Clara arises out of the same possessive affection, as she fears that her boys will separate themselves from her when they marry, and she reflects the typical insecurity of a Victorian woman, who is more scared of getting her son attached than she seems of getting her spouse connected(4).

As the narrative of the novel, Lawrence has portrayed Miriam as the long term girlfriend of Paul Morel, and when he meets her she was just fourteen. She is a deeply spiritual and a religious girl. She is a pure girl and is afraid of physical sensation and experience. Although, she and Paul have a very deep intellectual connection and they can easily spend time discussing about books, art, and religion. She too is in love with Paul, and she sees 'sex' as a sacrifice and is willing to sacrifice herself for Paul, in order to give him pleasure. However, at times, she tries to manipulate Paul, into staying with her but she's really confused by his weird behaviour and is hurt by his rejections. Despite, she is stronger than Paul in the relationship and often dislikes him because he is so easily swayed by his mother's opinion.

While, on the other hand, Miriam is considered as a progressive individual which might not be obvious to all, as she wants to be educated, and become free of the patriarchal bondage. This is so clear that she desperately want to have the agency as when she says that, 'I want to do something and it is totally unfair that I cannot achieve anything this is only because I am a girl'. She is portrayed as a bold character and towards the ending, she becomes an empowered woman, who is content in her life, but she tethers herself, that one day Paul will definitely return to her.

Coming to Clara Dawes, she was the spouse of Baxter Dawes, child of Mrs. Radford, and Paul Morel's girlfriend. She is hostile to her spouse, whom she wed when she was younger and found difficult to get along with. Paul thinks she is a 'Guy pessimist,' but after actually meeting her, he realises she is very sensual and wants a guy to feel valued. Paul and Clara have an intense and intimate bond. Despite this, they don't talk much intellectually. She is portrayed as a confident woman but is often guarded. She gets along well with Mrs. Morel and loses faith as a result of her relationship with Paul, but she is not able to leave Baxter, for whom she genuinely cares. By the point, she is tired of Paul's indecision between her and Miriam, and she thinks he is ungentlemanly for manipulating and failing to devote to their alliance. She regains her composure and returns to Baxter, who then promises to regard her with dignity.

Conclusion

As a result, Sons and Lovers can be treated as a semi-autobiographical work in which Lawrence depicts various women in diverse but effective aspects(4). He has perfectly described the situation and conditions of the period in the light of females. He has actually focused on women's equality and appears to be an advocate for gender emancipation, while still falling victim to the patriarchal norms.

Method of Research

This research which I have done is a 'Qualitative Research'.

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