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## D. H. Lawrence's Treatment of Love and Sex in *Sons and Lovers*

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**Abstract :** D.H. Lawrence is considered to be one of the most important novelists of modern age. He was born on September 11, 1886 in the mining town of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, England. He was the child of Arthur Lawrence and Lydia Beardsall. Both of them belonged to a middle class family. He died in 1930. He was a versatile genius with a lot of creative urge. His genius found reflection in various types of literary expressions such as novels, poems, short-stories, critical essays, plays, travel-sketches and letters. He was a prolific writer, but his fame as a renowned writer rests chiefly on novels. He wrote a number of novels during his career but he is better known for his two controversial novels: *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*. The common theme of these two novels is love and sex and both love and sex have their own significance. The present paper is an attempt to study and analyse *Sons and Lovers* with respect to the theme of love and sex.

**Key-words :** Lawrence, Gertrude Coppard, Love and sex, Sons and lovers, Oedipus Complex, Paul Morel, Miriam.

The story of *Sons and Lovers* is based on Oedipus Complex. The term Oedipus Complex has been derived from the name of King Oedipus of Thebes, who, in ignorance, married his own mother and had children by her. Thus, the Oedipus complex is a state in which a person shows excessive affection for the parent opposite in sex. In *Sons and Lovers*, we see the same kind of relationship that has been defined through the term. The story of the novel revolves around five characters but mainly three characters, Paul Morel, Gertrude Morel and Miriam. The novel is also full of autobiographical notes. Almost all the major characters created by Lawrence are closely modeled after their originals. Gertrude, William, Paul and Miriam are nothing but true sketches. The occupations of all the characters are same as the occupations of real ones. Lawrence adds "My father was a collier and only a collier, nothing praiseworthy about him". (123-124)

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It is a well known fact that all the works of Lawrence are related to the theme of love and sex. The theme of love and sex revolves around the story from beginning to end. D.H. Lawrence deals with this theme in such a way that attracts every reader to read the novel more eagerly. The reader never feels bored after reading it. Lawrence seems to be attaching certain sanctity to the sexual demands of a person. His preference or emphasis on love and sex clearly reflects in his works.

Nothing was more modern in Lawrence than his free and frank treatment of sex. Lawrence doesn't imbibe in himself any of the inhibitions of the Victorians. Lawrence's attitude towards life is deeply rooted in sexual mysticism. Lawrence believed that deepest mysteries of life can be known through sex, and so sex is fundamental to an organic and complete life. Lawrence felt that for the attainment of happiness in life, sexual harmony was essential. Sex is not merely a functional act but creative and revelatory of life and of the beauty of being alive. Lawrence also seemed to believe that the nature of sex experience is same as that of a divine experience in that both experiences are revelatory of the hitherto unknown mystery. To Lawrence not only was sex the way woman fulfils her being and man one of his chief creative functions, but the sexual experience was a door to new realms of consciousness, "and initiation into divine mysteries, the mystery of the other world that is close behind us".(25-30)

No one can deny this fact that D. H. Lawrence's novels are based on blood and sex because he has firm faith in supremacy of physical life. He writes "My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect." We can go wrong in our mind but what our blood feels and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and bridle. Anger is blood, poured and perplexed into froth; but the malice is the wisdom of our blood."(233-237)

In the real sense, the story of the novel is based on a kind of conflict. This is the conflict of body and soul and that becomes the real theme of the novel. The first mode of love and sex has been shown with the relationship between Paul and his mother. In the beginning of the novel, we have an episode where Arthur Morel comes back home after his daily work. There is a conflict between both wife and husband on a small issue. In order to save his mother, Paul takes the side of his mother. Now he has no good thinking for his father. Thus their relationship grows. They realize each other. She becomes his confidence. She too waits for his coming home in the evening and unburdens herself of all that she has pondered over. They too share lives. They behave like lovers when they go out for walks. Paul treats his mother almost like a lover. He strokes his mother's hair, fondles and kisses her likes a lover. Thus Paul's relation with his mother is that of a husband substitute.

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Next, we observe the relationship of Paul and Miriam. But their relationship has a unique approach. It is a kind of spiritual relationship from Miriam's side. Through the description of this relationship, Lawrence wishes to present a polarized relationship between man and woman. He holds the view that human beings are the combination of flesh and spirit and they always seek the fulfillment of the demands of both flesh and soul. Paul is attracted towards her for her beauty and has sexual relationship. But she considers sex as an ugly thing. She becomes sexually inhibited. She says to Paul "Mother said to me, there is one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but you have to bear it". But on the other hand, Paul has the different thinking on this matter. He feels a kind of relief in it and wants to have the sex relationship with her. But it has the strong view that there is a kind of boredom after this kind of relation. Now, he wants the spiritual gratification from her. He says, "see, you are a nun. I have given you what I would give a holy nun, as a mystic monk to a mystic nun."(203-204)

It is Miriam's character and simplicity that change Paul's life a little. Their relation is balanced and chaste. Paul finds a kind of satisfaction with her. He never abandons her but the love for his mother compels him to leave her. Thus Paul is torn between his love for Miriam and his love for his mother and at last breaks off relationship with her. Paul's deep rooted Oedipus complex is responsible for the complete break off with Miriam. On the other hand, Miriam wants to observe Paul with the help of her spirituality. Initially, Paul agrees with her but at last leaves her totally. Thus sex overcomes spirituality that Lawrence wants to depict in his novel. He presents that man's sole need is sex and it is above everything in life.

The relation between Paul and Clara is also sex based. He meets Clara at a time when his relationship with Miriam has already started showing signs of falling apart because of her religiosity and sexual frigidity and not meeting the physical demands of the man in Paul. Paul is a young man of twenty-three with an intense passion for physical love. When he meets Clara Dawes, a woman of thirty, he feels attracted towards her because of her physical charms. She has a skin like white honey and foul mouth. Her bare shoulders and arms and curvaceous body excite him passionately so much so that he finds her charms irresistible. Clara Dawes is all physical and she is sexually very aggressive. She is an emancipated lady. Disgusted with the bullying attitude of her husband, Baxter Dawes, she is living with her mother but economically independent as she earns her living by working at the Jordon's. She is not spiritually inhibited like Miriam. She does not consider sex to be a spiritual sin and derives ecstatic delight in it. When she realizes the physical needs of Paul Morel, she does offer him baptism of passion. Both achieve the bliss of physical love and feel relieved. But this blissfulness remains short-lived and it soon starts evaporating as this relationship is based on triviality and superficiality.

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**Conclusion :** In nutshell, it can be said that D. H. Lawrence is a novelist of love and sex. All the directions of his novel reach together on the issue of love and sex. He has firm faith in both of them. He honestly clears his view that soul is alive with the help of body. It gives shelter to soul to live in. If we have no body, we have no soul too. *Sons and Lovers* proves it rightly. There is a complexity of relationship among all the characters and their intimacy revolves around love and sex. Sometimes love is heavy and sometimes sex is heavy. This balance between both of them brings the novel to end. In this way, the novel *Sons and Lovers* describes the relationship from the point of view of love and sex. Here all the characters are in the grip of love and sex. They try to find out the way but fail and again get involved in them. There is no way to escape. The hero of the novel is so frustrated from them that at the end of the novel, he kills his mother by giving extra dose of morphine. Thus, it can be said that D. H. Lawrence's treatment of love and sex is just and appropriate. There is no other novelist who has treated these themes so appropriately.

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