

Autobiographical Outburst in D.H Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*

¹Richa Langyan

¹Assistant Professor

¹Department of English,

¹R.K.S.D (P.G) College, Kaithal, Haryana, India.

Abstract : *Sons and Lover*, a psychological compilation, a novel of ideas, devoid of traditional plot, an anti feminist piece of literature, one bright book of life, is well known for its autobiographical outburst which was published in 1913. It is the love novel for which D.H Lawrence commands our respect and sympathy in the shape of novel writing. Though the influence of Sigmund Freud is quite discernible in the works of D.H Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* exposes us to Lawrence's deep interest and adequate knowledge and analysis of man-woman relationships and its intricacies.

IndexTerms –Autobiography, Psychology, Feminism, Confession, Criticism.

I. INTRODUCTION

D.H Lawrence began his career as a novelist with the assurance that the novel, 'the one bright book of life', offered opportunities for self-expression which no other literary genre ever offered before. D.H Lawrence is purely an autobiographical novelist and a good deal of his life is vividly reflected in his creative works. A critical examination of *Sons and Lovers* in particular would reveal how Lawrence could make use of the autobiographical material into an almost confessional mode. Middleton Murry is right when he says, "Lawrence was a frustrated soul for forty-five years of his life and his writings are an expression of his inner sufferings, frustrations and emotional complexes."

Moreover, it has been regarded as a novel which undertakes to portray the life of the author by making use of autobiographical material scrupulously selected. The writer often indulges in fine retrospect in his own past and recreates fiction out of it. John Middleton Murry further observes with reference to *Sons and Lovers*, "This novel appears as the gesture of a man who makes the heroic effort to liberate himself from the matrix of his own past...."

Sons and Lovers is, indeed, an autobiographical masterpiece to the exclusion of anything else and it is, as such looked on as a classic model of the autobiographical fiction. It has its roots deeper in Lawrence's childhood and youth. It is replete with his haunting reminiscences, recollections and past relationships. The pen with which Lawrence wrote this masterpiece was certainly dipped in his own blood. Lawrence was sharply aware of the fact that the work of art is not the product of the personal whims of an artist. To create an art, to create an appeal an artist has to objectify his personal emotions. That is why, he was able to create a masterpiece out of the autobiographical material. As D.L.B Hartley says, ".....to a certain extent *Sons and Lovers* is an autobiographical novel."

II AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL OUTBURST

Initially, there is a parallel between his own background and that of *Sons and Lovers*. The first part of the novel is a description of the early married life of Walter Morel, a coal miner, his wife Gertrude Morel and their growing children. There is a close remembrance between Lawrence's father and Paul's father, Walter Morel. Like Lawrence's father, Walter Morel is also a collier who frequently gets drunk. The physical description of Walter Morel presents a true portrait of Arthur Lawrence. Lawrence's mother, Lydia, like Gertrude Morel belonged to a middle class family. She had no ideas of how difficult life a coalminer's wife had to lead. H.T Moore rightly observes "The disappointment of Gertrude Morel in *Sons and Lovers* is an accurate record of the disappointment of Lydia Lawrence, as she described it to her son."

The married life of Lawrence's parents was as disturbed as that of Paul's parents. So, the domestic background of Morels is drawn from Lawrence's own life.

The first part of the novel is replete with the conflict between husband and wife. The description and background of the major characters in the novel is similar to Lawrence's own background. Similarly, Paul is the transformation though not totally of Lawrence himself. Though Paul's character is contemplated, the personal agony of the writer. Paul, like Lawrence, was on the side of his mother. Like him, he was very sick, delicate and weak. Such similarities are there to support the criticism that *Sons and Lovers* is an autobiographical novel.

Further, Lawrence met Jessie Chambers in the summer of 1901. Lawrence writes of her as Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*. Jessie, like Miriam, was a dreamy girl and thought of herself as William Scott's heroine. In fact, most part of the novel dealing with Paul-Miriam relationship is biographical in nature. Graham Hough rightly observes "The element of autobiography constantly intrudes itself in Lawrence's fiction."

However, Jessie became angry when she observed in dealing with Paul- Miriam relationship Lawrence made so many mistakes. This clearly shows that Lawrence was very careful in reflecting or modifying material like a true artist. That is why, he got it modified from her perspective. Elisa has said very rightly, "Lawrence did not attempt to put into the books everything that he remembered as happening to him or his family and his friend."

Similarly, the failure in love on the part of Lawrence and Paul both is a personal experience rendered in artistic terms as expressive of 'mother-fixation'. Thus, it is clear in Lawrence's confession to Jessie Chambers:

I loved my mother like a lover
And that is why I could never love you

Such parallel details of background, character and their incidents seem to justify the critics' claim that *Sons and Lovers* is an autobiographical book. It is a professional projection of D.H Lawrence which depicts whatever was told to him by his mother:

He vomits out himself and feels easy...

Lawrence's own understanding of the matter in this regard also needs to be considered. Later in life, Lawrence himself observed that the first part of the novel was autobiographical, but the artistic mind of the writer saved it from being a mere autobiography. In fact, his aim has been to study the nature of balance between man and woman, between the mother and the son, and between and the son.

IV CONCLUSION

The novel stands out as a fine example of the transmutation of personal experiences into a work of art. The readers can sense how the writer succeeds in pushing his own life away so as to view it mere objectively and dispassionately. He surely attained mastery in creating a valuable and aesthetically satisfying work of art.

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