Vampiric Attitude of Women in Sons and Lovers by D. H. Lawrence

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Abstract: Venomous and vampiric attitude of women in D. H. Lawrence’s novel Sons and Lovers is discussed with description of the circumstances that leads towards such wrong behavior. Moreover, matter of choice and the nature of a person is that force to act in a way that is hard to accept by social, ethical and moral surrounding that exist at specific time as well as time immemorial. Liberalization of women, effects of education, egocentric behavior, and extreme selfishness leaving no space for others is discussed. Internal as well external effects of men-women relations and destructive impacts of individuals in guise of love and pure relations is brought to light.

Key Words: vampire, liberalization, destruction, refined, superior, erotic, terse, jealousy, feminine, sermonizing.

1. Introduction

Gertrude having echo of Hamlet’s character, is not in good terms with his father, George Coppard, an engineer, who is considered by his daughter as ruthless and sluggish. In her young age she meets a boy, John Field, very impressing and appealing but she leaves her on the grounds that ‘a man can do everything’, scared by his manliness. So strange about this relation is that Gertrude keeps with her the gifted Bible throughout her life.

She watched him. He danced well, as if it were natural and joyous in him to dance[…]. Her father was to her the type of all men. And George Coppard, proud in his bearings[...] was different from the miner. (1.82)

At age of twenty three at the Eve of Christmas, Gertrude meets a person, Walter Morel, full of life, pleasant, warm, attractive, full of gaiety, joy of living but ignorant to life of mind. All his characteristics are contrast to her own personality, while she is serious, sober, serene, thoughtful, love discussion about authentic and valid issues.

2. Her interests

What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man. So she always had people to tell her about themselves, finding her pleasure so. (1.80)

After marriage all fascination about Morel proves a delusion especially when Mrs. Morel comes to know whatever he showed his property was a deception. This incident turns Morel from a noble to shallow, lover to liar, and from authority to withdrawal that final in neglecting her.

3. Deception

All coming worse happenings based upon the deception that destroys the marital life of couple as well ruining for children. Psychological, social, husband wife bond, child psychology, miner family life all issues and aspects take birth from unhappy marriage. Conflict of parents is symbolic to English Communal Life that is conflicting in its vitality and Puritanism. So the internal conflict shows external conflict as well in a society where collapse of traditional attitude, Lawrence’s view of society as subordinate of man, who has many manifestations of life, that thwarts the sheer instinct of life of the individual. Life is powerful urge pervading the universe and society is no more than man-woman relationship and the attitude towards one another including futility of existence. Hayman says notion as “the fullest sense of sentimental education”.

So impacts on a miner’s wife who is so fool in this particular situation is that she compromise on her identity and except Gertrude becomes Mrs. Morel so happily but is not ready to live in limited economy of her husband. Perhaps money is major weakness of her personality and can never cope with a life that is without this top priority of her life.

4. Shameful Choice

Perhaps she is ashamed at her wrong choice of husband while she was trying to kill
the shadowy image of her father. But in response of her humiliating and disturbing argument with Morel enhance this reflection to an unbearable position. It brings deadly outcomes for her, for her family, as well for whole community, contrasting Lawrence’s views in which he claims male and female just like tree and flowers contributing in life. They are different, other and separate but are same in origin. Pull of family and culture, cultivation of individuality and effect of education is questioned here.

But in Sons and Lovers Mrs. Morel proves as burning flame of fire and her attitude towards her husband is just like a man reduced to mere animal. Mrs. Morel appears as stone hearted, unbending and hard women who ruins her husband and leaves him with no chance.

5. More Reactions

Jerry Purdy bosom friend of her husband visits and she misbehaves him. Her hatred for male in society or her wish of competition with them grows in her grudge for her father, for her lover as well as for her husband are seed sow in her nature that compel her to act so.

Unhappy marriage and child bearing are closely linked as Mrs. Morel cannot bear pain of pregnancy. The reason is perhaps fetishism. She does not want show any flexibility while her successive pregnancies become burdensome because of her manlike approach towards life. She is refined highly principled who loves ideas and considered intellectual. She forgets that power to regenerate life is a physical union generates a blood knowledge, which in human is superior and preferable to mind knowledge.

But she is exceptional as miner wife and a woman as well. She never has tender, polite and kind heart and impulse towards her husband. She is always offended, irritated and hardened against him and can never ignore his vulgar manners. Perhaps she marry Morel just to label as his wife because she is in a fix, in ‘liking a male or disliking him’. Actually, she is aware about power of men and is conscious about authority of men in society but is not ready to behave according demand and is resistant to compromise. She has repressed desire to be a male that is why opposition can attract as they repulse.

“Her heart was bitter, because she had loved him”. Now Mrs. Morel thinks herself as buried alive her husband who was live and hearty now looks detached and heartless to her. She is buried in hatred and ignores all good qualities of her husband. The scene where he brings tea for her in a romantic mood. She totally ignores his love, feelings and emotion that can give life to their dying relation in form of compromise. But she is no more his lover, his wife, just a person for whom Morel is nothing, but an embodiment of hatred and irritation.

6. Support from Clergy Man

Morel is ignorant of her miserable condition during birth of child. At that crucial time, clergy man Mr. Heaton visits her daily and becomes source of comfort for her. Although this support and favor of religious person becomes cause of argument and tussle in couple afterwards. Why Mrs. Morel always tends to take sympathies of male members of society? Is there no woman available for her in surrounding for help and soothe her. Adler(1927) gives concept of ruling type personality having little interest in social affairs being aggressive and dominating. Perhaps, she never has good terms with any women as she hates men and loves in same intensity and potential. Delusions of grandeur in Mrs. Morel who thinks herself rich, well educated, proud, grand, well to do lady trapped in a crummy life and sees her life sinking in poverty. “She was so sick of it the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness” (1.44)

6. Residential dilemma

Congested, suffocated and very small house of Morel also increase the conflict as the house in Hell Row is tough to leave for Mrs. Morel. She is taking the pressure of leaving her house out of two possible reasons. One is that, perhaps she get married just for shelter and protection as a wife. When the house is gone she unconsciously thinks everything has gone with this commodity. Hell Row is symbolic in itself she is not ready to leave Hell. Afterwards she herself creates a hell for family and for whole community by her attitude and behavior.

Ruining of house is symbolic to decay of England, its criticism on industrialization the mine and miners are in process of decay and ruin. In this context, Mrs. Morel is the representative of transitional England, with pride of being superior and cutting the roots of miners by her genocide effects.

7. Morel is taken as.....
Morel is humiliated, ashamed and afraid of his wife and is taken as coward who is drunken ill-mannered person. Her sense of superiority mars the whole family unit and she takes her husband as a tool who never match her or is of her caliber. She is totally indifferent to his feeling that’s why he is compelled to show faulty, rude, strict and abusive attitude towards her. She always proves herself stronger of the two that’s why he brutally asserts his authority and masks his weakness knowingly that substitutes his powerlessness.

In a so response Morel beats her wife cruelly and keeps her out from home where she maintains relation with another male that’s disgusting as universal acknowledged love relation of mother is throttled by Mrs. Morel. William the seven years old is first target then Paul the younger one till physical and soul death respectively. While love scene of Paul and mother flowers are present as important witness. The prevailing darkness, presence of flowers and child (male baby) provides alternate to husband. According psychologists all these elements are significant to create and establish a love bond. Winnicott(1988) described how mothers naturally fall into a state of primary maternal preoccupation after the birth of a child. But this love bond proves both admirable and life destroying, breaking spirit of father and inflicting psychological wound on sons.

8. Her Sons her Tools

Now she has two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centers of industry, and feel that she had put a man in each of them, that these men would work out what she wanted. They were derived for her, they were of her, and their works would also be hers. (p.127)

Psychoanalysis and unconscious of parent’s unsuccessful marriage and turning of mother towards son with love, incestuous relation that seems as quick of the trouble and is source of annihilation in parallel. Perhaps the influence of past experience as working as deciding force of future aims but the path chosen is absolutely wrong.

William and Paul Morel sons of coal miners who are present in turn of century when England offered opportunities and consequent hope in education, social and economic mobility for sons of working class. But the unhappy marriage of couple results in overly possessive love for sons, a mother is using sons as substitute for marital love she lacks. “His wife was casting him off, half-regrettfully, but relentlessly; casting him off and turning now for love and life to children”.

(3.16) Adler in inferiority complex and domestic violence supports understanding domestic violence and coping with stress and argues that inferiority complex could lead to hostile, dominating or personality disorders.

Here sons offered a meaningful connection between unhappy marriage to broken families, so the sons are the worst target of so called educated but venomous women of society where the footage of woman is nothing but chapel. New York Times Book Review in Essay ‘Mother Love’ , “It is terse so terse that at times it produces an effect as of short, sharp hammer strokes”.

9. Spilka views

Mark Spilka says, “ A detailed forerunner of those feminine creatures of intellect and will whom Lawrence would later deplore as spiritual vampires”. Every woman in life of the William and Paul plays negative role for them. Although the mother uplift the status but make them shallow and empty forever. Cultivation of individual thoughts, pull of family and culture is relatively little sermonizing and the characters are determined and firm over their analogized bones and transition in conventional role play.

10. Complex in Paul Morel

Oedipus complex in Paul forces him to win egg cup for mother just like winning girlfriend. When his mother leaves him Paul is tense upset and in anger as his girlfriend has left him and she gives time to Annie his sister, well fitted to Kiracofe (1992) ’s investigation in perceived parental favoritism and lifestyle.

In same way attachment of Mrs. Morel is evident when Morel cuts a lock golden curly hair of Paul. He does so out of jealousy and it increase rift and tussle just like in “The Rape of Lock” by Alexander Pope. The following expression shows the intensity of hatred and anger, “The spear through the side of her love for Morel”. Mrs. Morel forgets that Paul is son of Morel as he does belongs to her why she is so cruel and creates an atmosphere where the son wish for father, “ Lord, let my father die”.

Kuttner (1916), rightly says “ Lawrence particularizes the phenomenon while Freud generalizes it”. In Sons and Lovers mother love fixation is just like Gother and his mother and France Van Stein and Christian
and sexual dissatisfaction of women. In this situation mother uses her own sons as a sort of reset buttons for her own life as Adler described it spoiling of children by the opposite sex parent.

Confusing dependence with love inflicts her children with moments of fulfillment and self-realization alternatively. Although life is powerful urge prevailing the universe, a force that’s imminent, irresistible, spontaneous, the vital stream which can never be thwarted without tragic effects. But for William and Paul the tragic effect is dominant and the main force is of nothingness internally and externally. One son is dead the other is dying and for mother dying son becomes Will and source to live.

11. A Strange Girl

Miriam is of passionate nature, romantic, source of fulfillment, trail to soul and with earnestness comes in life of Paul who make him glow to work with refined zeal and zest. Miriam is another strange girl who has no normal relations in life. She is Congregational chapel with Orthodox question as she is under religious impact of her own mother. In the same way Paul is under incestuous effect of his mother but the blame on Mrs. Morel is undeserved. It is thinking of Miriam and fault of her personality that it is a sin to physically involve with a male. So religious values, intellectual training and image of sacrifice is barrier for her “I am so damned spiritual with you always”. (p.232) Perhaps, Miriam and Mrs. Morel are same one in acting social and religious taboos and the other for lust of money and physical comforts respectively. Mrs. Morel says’

“Miriam is not an ordinary women who can leave my share in [Paul]. She wants to absorb him. She wants to draw him out and absorb him till there is nothing left of him, even for himself”. (p.236)

Paul is thankful to Miriam and tries to counterbalance between religious impact of Miriam and his mother. Mother has no interest in paintings rather in Paul, while Miriam appreciates his talent. Mrs. Morel is quietly determined, patient, dogged and unwearied but is scared from Miriam and thinks about her, “Miriam is one of those who will want to suck a man’s soul till he has none of his own left”. (p.237)

12. Clara’s relation

Affair with Clara is successful in sense of spiritual and physical terms while Clara is already married, self-protective, wounded woman, having grudge against men and a strong desire to be independent. She is very much like mother of Paul who uses male purely for sensual purpose a status where human leaves no difference to animal as lust for sex is defined as animal desire. When her love with Paul disintegrates she goes back to her husband proving herself disloyal and unfaithful to her husband and to Paul equally. She is in process of self-deception as a female she sexual shortcomings but is not ready to accept. Return to his mother with increased love is very much significant in this scenario. “My love—my love—oh my love!” Paul whispered again and again to mother.

13. Results of bitter attitude on Paul

So, in life of Paul, Miriam comes without physicality. Clara comes only with hyper sexuality and his mother is granted as superior, no women can match her because her intense love and sensualility. Without Paul emptiness of existence dominate in life of his mother who is too attentive and attractive for him as lover. Inextricable relationship between mother love and sex life of sons is present where new unconventiona love triangle is established based on men women relation acquiring new reverberations. Paul confesses this to Miriam, “I can only give friendship it is all I am capable of, it is a flaw in my makeup. The thing overbalances to one side. I had hoppling balance. Let us have done”. (12) All this shows insurmountable burden of mother fixation and pulsation of love for Miriam. Erikson says sexual love is of primary importance as the basic virtue resulting from the achievement of intimacy that is absent in Paul as woman in his life proved life sucking bug. But after leaving Clara some sort of reaction for mother love is present though in unconscious when Paul gives over dose of opium to his near death mother. Klein(1959) termed it as phantasy as deep unconscious levels of individual. Mother says, “You haven’t met the right woman”; Paul answers, “And I shall never meet the right woman while you live”. Perhaps this is poetic justice or it may be reaction of male of society to vampiric attitude of women. It may also revenge try of liberalization from effects of such woman forever. But the struggle and effort was futile.
as physical death of mother cause spiritual death of son.

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