



## REPRESENTATION OF 'NATURE' IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S *SONS AND LOVERS*

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### ABSTRACT

*In Sons and Lovers, D.H. Lawrence described nature not as a simple matter of sights and a part of scenery, but as an important connection with human lives. He tried to express the characters' psychological state in the relation between them and nature. So it is important for modern society to understand and study this novel. In this paper, an attempt is made to investigate the function of nature in the relationships between Paul and his three loves: his mother, Miriam and Clara. Lawrence revolted against industrialization and machinery in his treatment of nature. Nature symbolizes the instinctive life, while machinery exercises a disruptive and dehumanizing influence on human beings. However, Lawrence does not fo to find a divine spirit in the objects of nature.*

**Keywords:** Nature, Environment, Love, Symbol, Characters.

### INTRODUCTION

From the start of the novel Lawrence emphasizes the religious nature of Mrs. Morel, but her rational morality is quite different from the deep and emotional faith of Mrs. Laivers and Miriam. Miriam's religion goes beyond the church into nature, with which she has a rich communion that is in some way related to her growing love for Paul. She has St. Catherine on her bedroom wall, and she wears Paul's gift of a rosary. She prays in the church with Paul at Easter. She is wholly the opposite of William's Lily, except that Mrs. Morel sees in her the desire to possess utterly her favourite son.

Miriam's love for nature is strangely associated with the same emotion in Mrs. Morel earlier. In Chapter 1 Mrs. Morel buried her face in lilies, covering her face with golden pollen. Miriam also buries her face in flowers, so passionately that Paul hates her for it. Miriam takes Paul late one evening to the rose bush so that her own sense of it could be heightened, and the

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experience of their being together before it is as if it were a natural symbol that forces the pair to acknowledge deep feelings for each other. This could be associated with the red sun that Mrs. Morel saw when she gave Paul his name.

The calm and peaceful scene on the cricket-field contrasts with the sordid scenes in the house. Nature takes over Mrs. Morel's soul, and she has genuine feelings about herself and her son. The rooks in the evening sky are presented poetically, and the sunset colors the landscape and Mrs. Morel: she thinks the corn may be bowing to him as if he were another Joseph, and she names him Paul after she rises up to see the red setting sun. Her raising the infant is an impulse to send him back from where he came, and she is not sure why she must call him Paul. This scene is fraught with meaning for the later relationship of mother and son, and it comes between scenes of violence in the home life.

The growth of their love is as much stimulated by books as by nature. The algebra lessons, the poetry and Miriam's natural gravitation to romances like those of Sir Walter Scott, bond the pair and are another sharp contrast to the relation of William and Lily. Where the latter relationship was clearly physical and not at all deep, the relationship between Paul and Miriam tends to be problematic because it is an emotional and deep, with no physical outlet. Lily could not read a page. Miriam voraciously reads and demands of Paul an attitude of abstract intensity.

Sexual repression keeps the relation between Paul and Miriam chaste, but that same repression causes deep currents of desire and shame to flow through both. Miriam is the first to feel the conflicting currents within her. She turns to prayer and to abstraction as ways of dealing with them. Paul's reactions are to feel further suggests that repressed sexuality is in part responsible for a heightened appreciation of nature.

Not only vegetation but geography is used to expand the relation between the young lovers, the excursions into open countryside and the seashore suggests the breadth and openness of the relationship. The interior scenes are at Wiley farm, an open ruin, and the Morel's home and beach house, the church and, by sea suggest the wider world at Paul's command now that he is coming of age.

Lawrence's use of symbol here extended the range of earlier symbols. The moon, once a symbol of Mrs. Morel's alienation from her husband and union with nature, becomes a symbol of the pain of young love for Paul and Miriam. The umbrella, symbol of William's love for his mother, is damaged by Geoffrey and pronounced broken by Paul, who knows its significance for his mother.



Flowers in this chapter become almost weapons in love's artillery. Miriam measures the way flowers are picked to determine character and mood. She hides behind flowers, bestowing them on Clara and his mother.

Paul's outlook on the world is that of a poet. He is particularly affected by nature, especially by flowers. We notice how he and his mother enjoy the cornflowers' pattern on the dish she has bought. When he is sick he absorbs the atmosphere of his home through every sense. When he is out playing he can be captivated by a rising red moon and associate it with a Biblical passage, Paul is offended by the crudities of the world he must inhabit. Just as Mrs. Morel shows a kinship with nature early in the book, so Paul too has a special relationship with nature.

We can see that there are five main scenes where Gertrude and Paul get a sense of union. Their bonds prevent him from loving other women. But it also gives him a warm stream of life in a positive aspect. This gives him the motive to feel the life force in nature. Through the sense of union, the nature which surrounds humans becomes a living existence. So it is clear that life itself always intervenes. We can see that the fiercer the struggles between Gertrude and Morel grow, the stronger the bonds between Gertrude and Paul become.

The depiction of nature with regard to the relationship between Paul and Clara is also significant. Clara is anything but "clear" as her name might suggest. She appears to be a man-hater. Clara's name is ironic—she is the opposite of what she pretends to be, yet this is clear enough to Paul. Her nickname is "Nevermore", which carries the overtones of the dead beloved. She is dead to love until Paul reawakens her sexuality later in the book. Flowers sprinkled over her head in this chapter are in mockery of her morbidity. Later petals are used to suggest the first-love experience of Paul and Clara. Clara is a sensual and attractive woman. There is no such feeling with Miriam. So it is not surprising that Paul grows fascinated with her, as he wants passionate love. And we can see that their love is always blessed by nature. Paul and Clara are joined completely in a field, where dewdrops are crying constantly. Here they accept "baptism of fire in passion" by identifying with the great stream of primal life. But the moment, when they have perceived complete identification, does not last. So we can see that their love also does not bear fruit.

Finally in *Sons and Lovers*, nature exists as an organism which is close to the characters and is flowing with vitality. What is most important is that nature responds to their pure human nature. So we can see that it is described not as an existence which is separate from their innermost minds. Accordingly, nature is deeply connected with human beings and highlights what human beings should be. So it can be said that the relationships between the characters (Paul and Gertrude, Miriam, Clara) in *Sons and Lovers* can be estimated by their communion with the great life of nature. Lawrence revolted against industrialization and machinery in his



treatment of nature. Nature symbolizes the instinctive life, while machinery exercises a disruptive and dehumanizing influence on human beings. However, Lawrence does not fo to find a divine spirit in the objects of nature.

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