

MAY 2022

ENGLISH B HL

CATEGORY 3 – LITERATURE

FRUSTRATIONS CAUSED AS A RESULT OF LOVE

“IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE CONCEPT LOVE CAUSE FRUSTRATIONS IN PAUL
AND ALVINA’S LIVES IN THE NOVELS *SONS AND LOVERS* AND *THE LOST GIRL* BY
D.H. LAWRENCE?”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Introduction to D.H. Lawrence.....	1
III.	The unhappy family environment.....	3
	A- Paul's feeling of hatred toward his father	
	B- Alvina's lack of communication with her parents	
IV.	Family relationships.....	7
	A. Paul's feelings for his mother	
	B. The increasing intimacy of Alvina's relationship with her governess	
V.	Frustrations in physical relationships.....	10
	A. Paul's hatred of Miriam's possessive love	
	B. Alvina's dissatisfaction with the men she chooses	
VI.	Increasing need for love.....	13
	A. Paul's sexual fulfillment in Clara	
	B. Alvina's submission to Cicio's sexual dominance	
VII.	Failure in relationships.....	14
	A. Paul's freedom towards a new life as a result of Mrs. Morel's death	
	B. Alvina's self-liberation and self-destruction	
	Bibliography.....	16

I. INTRODUCTION

D.H. Lawrence grew up in the Victorian era and was a true supporter of the individualistic belief, which was prevailing at that time. In all his novels, he mostly concentrates on the individual. The novels Sons and Lovers and The Lost Girl trace the growth and development of a talented hero and of a heroine through their conflicts. Paul and Alvina are frustrated in love and neither can enjoy a relationship completely. Paul's extreme love for his mother and the limiting conditions in the town where Alvina lives are the main causes for their frustrations. Paul is set free by his mother's death so he moves on, towards a healthy life whereas Alvina's escape to a new world, her mindless passion for a foreign man brings her more frustration. In the end, there is hope for a bright future for Paul in the novel Sons and Lovers but Alvina in the novel The Lost Girl is a hopeless and lost girl.

II. INTRODUCTION TO D.H.LAWRENCE

David Herbert Lawrence was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, in 1885. His father was a coal miner barely literate whereas his mother was an educated middle class woman who belonged to an aristocratic German family. She respected middle class values but her husband despised her background. Her marriage was a continual battle with her husband. She was relieved by the solace she found in her children and exerted a great deal of influence on Lawrence. She encouraged his intellectual and artistic pursuits. His mother's deep influence on Lawrence resulted in his directing his love directly towards his mother. However, this love frustrated his development into sexual and artistic maturity at least until her death and his marriage. Until his marriage, the other women were only surrogate

mothers for him. It seemed to Lawrence that women possessed and exploited him to their own satisfaction and he thought of women as self-possessing and egoistic. (Pritchard, 1971:24)

All Lawrence's novels are to an extent autobiographical which deals with his life experiences as well as his emotions. The novel *Sons and Lovers* is the most autobiographical of all his novels. In the book, the chief characters and the central situation are clearly taken from Lawrence's own early life. The central character, 'Paul', represents Lawrence, Miriam represents Lawrence's girlfriend Jessie Chambers and Mr. and Mrs. Morel represent Lawrence's parents. In the novel *The Lost Girl*, the experiences of Alvina and Cicio in Italy are those of Lawrence and his wife Frieda.

Since Lawrence grew up in the late Victorian Age, he was a true supporter of the individualistic belief which prevailed at that time. In his books, he mostly concentrated on the individual by putting the individual at the forefront while society remained in the background. He believed in human life and in all its energy. Lawrence was fed up with Victorian prudery of the time and was against social conventions that put obstacles to people reducing their life to a minimum degree. Lawrence lived at the turn of the century when people believed that science would make them happy but he saw that with the coming of science people were becoming sterile and slaves to machines. Lawrence believed in the 'liberal' individualist and in the right of the individual to assert himself by controlling not only the material world and other men but also the world within himself. (Pritchard, 1971:13)

Lawrence tried to evoke the feeling and tempo of life in the Midlands when the old agricultural England went through uneasy times with the early phase of industrialization. He

portrayed the life and background of a part of English society largely ignored by many imaginative writers, not only socially and geographically but imaginatively too. (Salgado, 1969,15)

III. THE UNHAPPY FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

In both the novels *Sons and Lovers* and *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence used the Bildungsroman pattern. As Bildungsromans, both the novels trace the growth and development of a talented here in *Sons and Lovers* and of a girl in *The Lost Girl*, from their childhood to maturity. The novels trace the growth of the central characters Paul and Alvina through their conflicts.

In the novel *Sons and Lovers*, the class difference between Mr. and Mrs. Morel results in their unhappiness. The clash of their personalities is stronger than their passion. Mrs. Morel comes from a bourgeois family and is a well-educated woman. Mr. Morel, on the other hand, is barely literate and sees no value whatsoever in the reading of books. He does not believe in the use of religion and this fact irritates Mrs. Morel as she is strongly religious. 'Little beyond Bestwood attracts him and little within Bestwood repels him.' (Sanders, 1974: 33) Mr. Morel does not share Mrs. Morel's education, religious belief, social aspirations, aesthetic training, economic motivations, manners, language, moral views or political views so the charm of love that existed between them at the beginning of their marriage soon disappears giving its place to deep unhappiness. Mrs. Morel's disenchantment with the marriage dates from this experience:

“She said very little to her husband, but her manner had changed towards him.” (Lawrence, 1913:22)

Mrs. Morel tries to change her husband but her attempts fail.

“There began a battle between the husband and wife-a fearful bloody battle. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it-it drove him out of his mind.” (Lawrence, 1923: 23)

The more Mrs. Morel tries to shape her husband, the more he draws away from her and the children. Paul is born into an atmosphere of parental violence. By the time Paul is born Mrs. Morel hates her husband and this gradually draws Mr. Morel to his shell.

Towards Paul, Mrs. Morel feels, as to none of the other children that she must recompense for all that she has missed in her shattered love for her husband. (Salgado, 1969:71)

Paul is a quiet child who seems ‘old for his years’ and ‘very conscious of what other people feel, particularly his mother.’ (Salgado, 1969:73) As his mother looks after him, Paul becomes dependent on her. He loves his mother and hates his father because he hurts her and makes her unhappy. One ‘vicious bond of sympathy’ (Salgado, 1969:79) unites all the three Morel children: their common hatred and contempt for their father. The mother’s influence turns the three children, Paul in particular, against their father. The three children even speak Mrs. Morel’s language-a refined speech- as Mr. Morel speaks the language of Bestwood streets. So Mr. Morel is even excluded from the talk shared by the mother and children.

Mrs. Morel forces the children to despise their father and treats the miner's fate within the industrial system as proof of his personal weakness.

"There was a feeling of misery all over the house. The family life withdrew, shrank away as he entered. But he cared no longer about his alienation. Immediately after he had finished tea he rose to go out... When he had gone, they sighed with relief."

(Lawrence, 1913:56)

The father ideal does not exist for Paul. He only fears and despises his father. Also the normal love for the mother which ordinarily serves as a model for a man's love for other women, is perverted into abnormal expression in Paul and he is always conscious of his mother's influence upon him and can never free himself from this feeling.

Mr. Morel's presence is a nuisance for family members. Mr. Morel is a man who acts according to his feelings and emotions and is quite sensitive when something happens to any member in the family.

"He was always very gentle if anyone were ill. But he disturbed the atmosphere of the boy.

'Are ter asleep, my darlin'? Morel asked softly.

'No: is my mother comin'?

'She's just finishing' folding the clothes. Do you want anything?

'I don't want anything. But how long will she be?

'Not long, my duckie.'

He felt his son did not want him. Then he went." (Lawrence, 1913:86)

Every time Mr. Morel makes an attempt to be close to his children he is rejected. Paul discourages his father as his mother tells him to do so. The children and Mrs. Morel do not allow their father to come close to them and he is fully aware that he is not welcomed by them and isolates himself from them with each passing day.

In the novel, *The Lost Girl*, Alvina's family environment is different from that of Paul's.

Alvina's father Mr. James Houghton in contrast to Mr. Morel, is a highly educated man. He is a tradesman. He is extremely materialistic to such a point that he is disappointed when his wife's dowry amounts only to eight hundred pounds but not to ten thousand pounds as he expects and he never forgives his wife for this. He lives in a world of fantasy that he has built for himself, a fantasy of commerce. In this world, there is a lot of profit and no loss. In reality he is never successful in his family and business life due to his unrealistic imaginative nature that he never gives up.

Mrs. Houghton is a sick woman and not dominating like Mrs. Morel. She is a weak woman both physically and spiritually and develops heart disease. She is not strong enough to deal with her husband. Day by day, she becomes an invalid and cannot even look after her small child, Alvina. Thus, the care of her child is given to the charge of a governess. During the first twenty-five years of her life, Alvina is under the care of her governess Miss Frost who is the only person who cares for her.

Alvina grows up with the same feeling of hatred with which Paul in the novel *Sons and Lovers* grows up. While Paul is made to hate his father because of his mother, Alvina hates her father but without anyone's pressure. She finds him a hypocrite. Alvina is a realistic girl and does not live in a fantasy world that Mr. Houghton has built for himself. She does not share her father's dream world that becomes intolerable to her.

“She disliked and despised James Houghton, detested his airy and gracious selfishness his lack of human feeling and most of all , his fairy fantasy.” (Lawrence, 1920:18)

Mr. Houghton enjoys telling about his fantasies to ladies who come to his shop. The dream adventures recounted by him are usually those of Edgar Alan Poe, half Anderson with touches of *Vathek*, Lord Byron and George Macdonald. Ladies who come to his shop are always struck by these accounts, as they are all middle class woman, all without a job and who have with plenty of free time. However, Alvina and Miss Frost hate Mr. Houghton's immense fantasy and Mrs. Houghton is scared of him and does not want to see him at all. Miss Frost loves Alvina and defends both Alvina and petulant and heart-stricken Mrs. Houghton from the vagaries of James.

IV. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

In the novel *Sons and Lovers* as the quarrels between Mr. and Mrs. Morel increase in intensity and frequency, Mrs. Morel turns more and more to her sons for the warmth and understanding that she no longer has for her husband. Mrs. Morel's relationship with Paul is strongest after her eldest son William's death.

Paul in a way saves his mother and helps her to turn to life after William's death. Mrs. Morel makes Paul love her and hate his father. Paul is faced on one hand with extreme love for his mother and on the other hand with extreme hatred toward his father. (Salgado, 1969:88)

Mother and son's relationship is very intense.

"His soul was always attentive to her." (Lawrence, 1913:75)

Paul's emotions come by reflection from his mother, from her suffering and anxiety. Everything Paul does is for her, the flowers he picks as well as prizes he wins at school. The two 'almost share their lives.'(Lawrence, 1913:115) Paul admires his mother to such an extent that:

"... his heart contracted with the pain of love of her."
(Lawrence, 1913:11)

Their relationship is like the one between a man and his wife except the sexual side. They behave as two lovers:

"... Suddenly their eyes met, and she smiled to him a rare, intimate smile, beautiful with brightness and love."
(Lawrence, 1913:117)

Mrs. Morel's love is so obsessive that Paul gets deeply affected by it. The strength and peculiar nature of her love is extremely possessive.

She captures Paul's soul and holds it to herself to such an extent that she does not even allow him to share it with other women. She sees her son like a lover.

In the novel *The Lost Girl*, Alvina's governess Miss Frost matters more than anything to Alvina during the first twenty-five years of her life as she is the only person who cares for her in the house. She is a strong, generous woman and a musician by nature. Miss Frost too likes Alvina but dislikes Mr. Houghton for his lack of human feeling and his immense fantasy. Miss Frost has the reins of the domestic government in her hands.

“She was steering the poor domestic ship of
Manchester House, illuminating its dark rooms with her
own sure, radiant presence....”(Lawrence, 1920:19)

Miss Frost is like a member of the family. She even contributes to the upkeep of the domestic heart by giving music lessons to daughters of tradesmen and even colliers. She is liked and respected by people in town. Apart from these, whom she cares for and loves more than anything else is Alvina. She drills Alvina thoroughly in theory and piano practice and tries to place in her all the elements needed for a young girl's education including drawing and literature. Miss Frost never teaches Alvina irony or mockery. Miss Frost is straight forward, good-humored and a little earnest. Consequently, Alvina understands only to be good-humored and straightforward. Alvina in a way worships Miss Frost who is like a second mother for Alvina and a teacher too. Alvina never goes to school and has all her lessons from Miss Frost. Alvina is happy and does not feel the lack of her parents' care.

Miss Frost taught Alvina thoroughly the qualities of her own true nature and Alvina believed what she was taught. She remained for twenty five years the demure, refined creature of her governess' desire."(Lawrence,1920:34)

V. FRUSTRATIONS IN PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the novel *Sons and Lovers*, Paul realizes that he has to break away from his mother's influence. He centers his affection upon women and this leads him into more unhappiness and frustration. In the same way in the novel *The Lost Girl* Alvina is bored as a result of her dull village life. She has certain breeding and inherent culture that distinguishes her from people in Woodhouse. So, Alvina centers her interest upon young men and this leads her like Paul into more frustrations.

The first woman to attract Paul in the novel *Sons and Lovers* is Miriam. She is a shy and romantic girl who leads a lonely life with her family on a neighboring farm. Miriam seeing this well-mannered and gentle boy, falls in love with him. Paul is fascinated by her but there are barriers that he erects to prevent anything too personal from arising between them. Sometimes he feels hatred toward her and during such times he immediately thinks of his mother:

"He was thankful in his heart and soul that he had his mother..." (Lawrence, 1913:190)

This clearly shows how Paul is deeply tied to his mother in his heart. He refuses his mother who says he is courting her:

“We aren’t lovers, we are friends.” (Lawrence 1913:213)

Miriam loves Paul and prays to God to make him love her. She adores him for his intellect and sensitivity. She is deeply religious and because of this their relationship is at the intellectual and spiritual level. Mrs. Morel does not like Miriam as she fears that Miriam will take him away from her.

“She is one of those who will want to suck a man’s soul till he has none of his own left.” (Lawrence, 1913:199)

She is jealous of her son spending time with Miriam and scolds him whenever he is with Miriam. Paul is torn between the two women. He does not understand why he hates Miriam when he thinks of his mother and blames her for his confused mind. Finally, Paul tells Miriam that he cannot love her. For Paul his mother is ‘his strongest tie in life.’ (Lawrence, 1913:272) He is happy in his soul as he is faithful to her. ‘She loved him first; he loved her first.’ (Lawrence, 1913:272)

Mrs. Morel wins the battle and Paul becomes her child again. His relationship with Miriam brings him only bitterness and disillusion. Miriam’s possessiveness and religiosity, Paul’s love for his mother and the sexual immaturity of both the boy and the girl cause the end of their relationship. (Sanders, 1973:46)

Alvina's first suitor in the novel *The Lost Girl* is Graham—an Australian taking his medical degree in Edinburgh. He is in Woodhouse for some months practicing with old Dr. Fordham. Alvina meets him when he comes to see her mother. Graham is not liked by Miss Frost and Alvina's invalid mother. Miss Frost's impression of Graham is negative as he is a foreigner and foreigners are not liked much in Woodhouse. The man excites in Alvina a perverse sexuality. This is her first sexual experience but she finds him repulsive.

“To tell the truth, Alvina herself was a little repelled by the man's love making.” (Lawrence, 1929:36)

After Graham's departure for Australia, Alvina is confused. At times, she misses him but at times she finds him repugnant with Miss Frost's remarks who convinces Alvina that she does not love him really. Alvina realizes how true her governess' words are and understands the fact that the man has no feelings or thoughts for her.

“I don't care for him. He is nothing to me.” (Lawrence 1920:40)

Miss Frost is once again happy, as the risk of losing Alvina is gone. Alvina can set free only if Miss Frost is not on her way. After Miss Frost's death Alvina's desire for pleasures increases. She feels sexual attraction toward Arthur Witham a common and uneducated man. This time she develops a fear of being an old maid and a virgin till the end of her life. No man in the town dares to have a relationship with her as she is too pretty, intelligent and educated for common men in town.

Her next suitor is Albert Witham, a student from Oxford. He is a selfish man who does not care for Alvina. According to Alvina, it is as if a 'glass wall of an aquarium divides them.'

(Lawrence, 1920:88)

The lack of communication between them ends Alvina's relationship with him.

Then Alvina goes to work in her father's little theatre where he meets a middle-aged alcoholic flute player. This relationship ends too as she can never find him sober. Alvina's next flirt is a Japanese man. At first, she is attracted to the man's well-built body and likes him performing with his naked body. When she sees him dressed, she notices how cheap he looks and sees no more of him. Then she meets her lover Cicio who is to play a very important part in Alvina's future life.

VI. INCREASING NEED FOR LOVE

In the novel *Sons and Lovers* Paul's next relationship is with Clara Dawes—a married woman who is unhappily married and living separately from her husband. Clara is a mother figure who gives her body to satisfy Paul's physical needs. Clara has the effect of gradually seducing Paul away from Miriam. Paul forgets Miriam easily with Clara. (Sanders, 1973:46) Whenever Paul is with Clara 'his blood beats up' (Lawrence, 1913:287) Also in Clara he finds the freedom he desires. Mrs. Morel welcomes Clara as she knows that Clara is less 'exacting in her demands'. (Draper, 1979:60) Clara helps Paul to grow into manhood and Mrs. Morel is aware of this fact. Clara will not oblige Paul to leave his mother and he knows this. After some time Paul loses his interest for Clara who returns to her husband after initiating Paul into a fuller manhood.

Paul cannot give his soul to anyone except his mother and can only love physically because 'he can never accomplish 'the physical and emotional transfer .' (Salgado, 1968:70)

Alvina's last relationship in the novel *The Lost Girl* is with Cicio-an Italian actor. Lawrence brings some color to the atmosphere of the novel with Cicio who has many characteristics of Mr. Morel in the novel *Sons and Lovers*. He is a working class man, unintellectual, impulsive and full of energy. Cicio stands for a 'force of life' in the novel. (Salgado, 1969:217) Cicio comes at a time when Alvina's hopelessness is at its highest level. At first Alvina is sexually attracted to Cicio. Alvina is in need of love as all her relationships have been short-lived and she needs someone. He is a complete stranger who cannot even speak English but she is 'drawn to him in a strange way' at first sight. (Lawrence, 1920:171) Now Alvina has no one, as they are all dead so Cicio easily gets her. Alvina is under Cicio's spell. She lives in a dream world with Cicio where he is the only power. Her last attempt to break away from his spells is of no use. She returns to him and Cicio marries her. Alvina is only aware of 'his physical presence which casts a spell over her.'(Lawrence, 1920:343)

VII. FAILURE IN RELATIONSHIPS

In the novel *Sons and Lovers* Mrs. Morel gets ill and Paul is there to look after her until her death. Paul suffers immensely because of his mother's illness.

"He felt as if his life were being destroyed, piece by piece, within him."(Lawrence, 1913:469)

He cannot bear his mother suffering so he mixes a fatal dose of morphia in her milk. He releases her into the 'true being of death.' (Pritchard, 1971:42)

The ending of the novel suggests life. Paul is reborn. He does not submit to the impulse of suicide and chooses life to death. He walks towards a bright life and is going to be reborn into a new life. He is set free with his mother's death and his self-liberation is a promising one.

In the novel *The Lost Girl* Alvina feels hopeless in Cicio's hometown in Italy where people are common, vulgar and where civilization has not reached much. Alvina escapes from her lower middle class origins and the limiting conditions of her town, Woodhouse, seeking a new world but this results in loss rather than discovery. Alvina yields to her mindless passion of a foreign man and the result is self-annihilation. The ending of the novel is tragical. Alvina is faced with self-destruction and is also going to be cut off from her husband who is going for war. She is left alone in this remote and desolate place. There is not much hope for Alvina in the end.

(Number of words: 3876)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lawrence, D.H. Sons and Lovers. England: Penguin Books, 1913.

Lawrence, D.H. The Lost Girl. England : Penguin Books, 1920.

Pritchard, R.E. D.H.Lawrence: Body of Darkness. London: Hutchinson Company, 1971.

Salgado, Gamini. D.H. Lawrence: Sons and Lovers. London: Macmillan and Company, 1969.

Sanders, Scott. D.H. Lawrence: The World of the Five Major Novels. New York: Viking Press, 1974.

<https://moam.info/>