

Clara as the Sensuous Woman in D.H. Lawrence's Novel 'Sons and Lovers'

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Abstract:The fact is that the quality of man's relationship determines the quality of his life. Among the human relationships man and woman relationship is the most important for humanity. The man-woman relationship was the dominant theme of Lawrence's major novels particularly the 'Sons and lovers'. Clara is the first imperfect version of the Lawrencean woman, the "lost girl" in search of true womanhood. She is Lawrence's one of the several characters who consciously identify themselves or are identified by others as feminists. Some important areas of Clara's character, including her feminism, are based on Alice Dax, a well-known pioneer of feminism, who recognized herself in the character. D.H. Lawrence has been completely successful to describe Clara's character as a sensuous woman in his famous novel 'Sons and Lovers'. The present research paper highlights Clara as a sensuous woman.

Keywords: Sensuous, Feelings, Spirit, Love, Physical, Feminism, Relationship.

Introduction:'Sons and Lovers' is a remarkable and well-known novel written by D.H. Lawrence. In this novel Clara's character has been defined as a sensuous woman. When we analyse the story of novel, Clara is beautiful, blonde, and rather heavy in build, a town girl who is, as it were, pulled towards the light, the lux Clara. Her blonde statuesque beauty seems to be inspired by Frieda, who was no sylph. There is no similarity of temperament, but Clara is a married woman, a sensual woman who Paul wins from a void of sexual indifference induced by her husband, and she is thirty while Paul is going of twenty three. He responds at once to her slumbering warmth, and senses that her aloofness is just a defensive pose. For her part, Clara admires his animal quickness: he brings her the promise of renewed vitality, and they draw close together and make love, once he need, the real, real flame of felling through another person and Clara come to full awakening as a women. Clara brings him a potentially fuller love than either Miriam or his mother. Nor is she defeated by Paul's mother, though she fits in better with the older women's plans: she takes care of Paul's sexual needs, that is, and leaves

plenty of him over for Mrs. Morel. So the mother is not hostile to the idea of Clara; in fact, she finds the relationship rather wholesome, after the soul-sucking affair with Miriam. She even likes Clara, but judges her as somehow not large enough to hold her son. Paul reaches a similar verdict about his mistress, independently, when he gives her back to her husband.

Here it is noteworthy to say that Clara had left her husband because of his cruelty and unfaithfulness. She is an advanced woman, a suffragette who talks on platforms, having been in the women's movement before her marriage and remained active in it for ten years. Through her Paul gets into connection with the socialist, suffragette, and Unitarian people in Nottingham. But Clara is an individualist too, and her feminism had led her, not to identify with other women, but to separate herself from them - she considered herself as a woman apart, and particularly, apart, from her class - a stance based to some extent on the education she had been able to obtain through the women's movement. Her feminism begins by intriguing Paul, but later comes to seem an irrelevance, and towards the end of the novel we hear less about it. Eventually the novel implies that Clara's dissatisfaction has nothing to do with women's oppression, but concerns only her own sexuality and the necessity for her to come needs, that is, leaves plenty of him over for Mrs. Morel. So the mother is not hostile to the idea of Clara's: in fact, she finds the relationship rather wholesome, after the soul-sucking affair with Miriam.

Most of the scholars write that Clara is a really two people, the rebellious feminist and political activist whom Paul accuses of penis envy and man-hating, and who tempts him the more for being a harder conquest, and at a later stage, the sensuous rose, who by the end of the novel is changed once again now beyond recognition - into a loose woman whom Paul nonchalantly disposes of when he has exhausted her sexual utility. A careful perusal of contradictory attitudes towards Clara leads to D.H. Lawrence's fundamental concept of a satisfying and abiding man-woman relationship as a conjunction at a level deeper than that of ordinary sex is seen as dealt within the relationship of Paul and Clara Dawes.

D.H. Lawrence writes that when Paul first meets Clara she is out walking with Miriam, and he is struck by her confident assertiveness, which contrasts strongly with Miriam's shrinking manner. Clara is a striking woman the way she holds herself is defiant, she is tall, with

handsome shoulders, and she is not in the least interested in Paul. As Clara remains indifferent to Paul, his perception of her becomes more complex. We get a closer picture of her, moving into her face. Her grey eyes are still only scornful, but Paul becomes conscious of her sensuous appeal - a skin like white honey - and then, in observing her mouth, uses the sensuality to cast doubt upon the integrity of the scornfulness, implying that Clara is out of touch with her body and its need: a full mouth, with a slightly lifted upper lip that did not know whether it was raised in scorn of all men or out of eagerness to be kissed, but which believed the former. Paul obviously believes the latter, and the implication that Clara should be concerned with her own unacknowledged sexuality rather than with a spurious feminism is already present.

Furthermore, we see that after a quarrel, Miriam invites Paul to meet Clara at Willy Farm. Miriam has already concluded that Paul's interest in Clara is physical, and she has actually arranged the whole meeting as a test; for she believes that her hold on Paul's higher nature, his soul, will prevail over his desires for lower things - Clara's body. And her belief seems to be borne out when the three of them walk to an open field, with many clusters of strong flowers. Ah! Cries Miriam and her eyes meet Paul's. They commune. Clara sulks. Then Paul and Miriam begin to pick flowers. And there is the crux of the matter: the flowers hold life as Paul holds life - he is alive and organic and the flowers are his take. But negative, spiritual, sacrificial Miriam wheedles the soul out of things. She kills life and has no right to it. But Clara a disconsolate suffragette, militantly states, that flower shouldn't be picked because it kills them. What she means, in effect, is that she doesn't want to be picked or taken by any man; she has separated from her husband, and for her flowers become as proud and frigid, in their isolation, as she would like to be in hers.

A large number of critics have pointed out that Paul and Clara hold their own points of views on feminism, on individuality, on human phenomenon. Both points of view are equally limited, and while it has been argued that Clara is a rigid, egocentric isolation which has cut her off from all warm contact with others, leaving her with minimal verbal, intellectual, political, and commercial relationships only. Paul's individualism and emphasis on 'character' tend to blind him to any larger relationship than the personal. One of the principal ways in which Paul

avoids the issued raised by feminism is by appealing to the principle of chivalry. He explicitly sets up this chivalric attitude in opposition to Clara's feminism. On the day of Clara's visit to Willy Farm, when he and Clara and Miriam are out walking he suggests that in setting themselves up against men, women gain nothing, since the lots of the two sexes are bound up with each other - man is woman's own shadow. Clara takes his reference to the mirror differently, suggesting that what he really means is that man is the mirror in which woman must seek her true self.

Furthermore, when Clara's mother reveals that Clara would in fact like to return to the factory but is too proud to ask, Paul experiences a thrill of joy, thinking that she might need his help, and when she is back at work he asserts his rights as her supervisor in order to break down her aloofness and reserve. Not only does Paul want to see Clara betray her vulnerability, he also wants her to acknowledge that her feminism is misguided and that what she really needs is sexual fulfillment. When Paul, Miriam and Clara still on their walk, encounter Miss Limb and her horse, Paul gets the hint for which he has been waiting. The three discuss Miss Limb's eccentricity and her obsessive attachment to her stallion. Clara suddenly says: "I suppose, she wants a man". This comment amounts to an admission from Clara that she is aware of the consequences of sexual deprivation, and it arouses Paul's excitement. Later, speaking about Clara to Miriam, he uses the same phrase that the three of them had previously used about Miss Limb.

Now it becomes an important event for Paul and Clara and they come close to each other not out of any intuitive, genuine love for each other but the urge for their flesh, their bodies bring them together. When they go to Clifton village for tea, an old lady presents Clara with three tiny dahlias in full blow, neat as bees, and speckled scarlet and white. The offering is made because we were jolly, Paul tells Miriam. He also says that if Miriam were to put red berries in her hair she would look like a witch or priestess but could not look like reveler as Clara could. What Paul likes about Clara is that there is a sort of fierceness somewhere in her. Earlier his soul was possessed by women who, as mother and virgin, cannot foster the life of the body and development of a strong, self-sufficient masculinity. His consummation with

Clara, the sensuous woman, blesses the new self which is coming into being within Paul: "Often, as he talked to Clara Dawes, came that thickening and quickening of his blood, that particular concentration in the breast, as if something were alive there a new self or a new centre of consciousness."

Moreover the new self-responds to Clara impersonally, as a woman rather than a person, almost physiologically. And Mrs. Morel remarks: "At any rate that feeling was wholesome. She even invites Clara to Sunday tea. Clara felt she completed the circle, and it was a pleasure to her. But she was rather afraid of the self-possession of the Morels, father and all. She took their tone; there was a feeling of balance Miriam realized Clara was accepted as she had never been." Now it is to say that the abstraction of his relationship with Miriam his natural fire of love transmitted into the fine stream of thought had cut him off from life. Now the sensuous Clara puts him in touch again. By Life, Lawrence means "something that gleams, that has the fourth-dimensional quality". This dimensional quality informs the relations between Paul and Clara. They felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had together.

However, most of the critics admit the fact that the conflict between Clara and Paul is never well defined. Clara is soon dissatisfied with impersonal love; like Miriam, she wants to grasp hold of Paul and to possess him personally. So she begins to crowd her love into the day time hours at Jordan's factory. She presses Paul for little personal intimacies, but he shrinks away from this: "The night is free to you", he says. This disintegration in love is soon followed by an unexpected but climatic incident. Paul meets Clara's husband one night in a lonely field: Dawes has been waiting for him there and a wild battle follows, in which both opponents are badly damaged.

Conclusion: Clara, thus is a sensuous woman, imperfect by Lawrence and model because of her inability to go deeper beyond the requirements of flesh. But at the same time she emphasizes the need of a vibrant physicality that contributes towards developing and maintaining healthy and meaningful man - woman relationship. On the contrary both Clara and Paul experience a baptism of fire in passion in their passionate love making. Both are overwhelmed by sexual

thrills. When Paul embraces Clara for the first time, she feels glad, erect and proud again, it was restoration and her recognition. But his passion has its own limitations. It is something beyond control, accumulated and unresolved, unless it takes its place in a whole human relationship which Paul finds impossible with Clara. In spite of this D.H. Lawrence has been very successful to represent Clara as a sensuous woman in his novel 'Sons and Lovers'.

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