

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Female Agency in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*

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This thesis, entitled “Female Agency in D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*”,
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Recommendation Letter

This Thesis entitled “Female Agency in D.H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*” by Mr. Ganesh Subedi has been conducted under my supervision and guidance as a partial fulfillment of requirement of Masters Degree of Arts in English. I forward this thesis for viva voce.

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Abstract

The present thesis explores Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* from feminist perspective, where author's projection of female agency is contradictory. On the one hand Lawrence shows the female characters quite active and decisive in controlling and regulating male members where as on the other hand he is constantly projecting them with negative stereotypes such as being very seductive, cocky, selfish, opportunist. Like Mrs. Morel keeps her sons within her control and make them move around her commands and desires. Clara substitutes her husband and lover time and again when she thinks in need. Moreover, female agency is shown only in the absence of male agency that is either male can't act actively or are irresponsible. Therefore, this projection of female agency in the novel is used not only to continue the patriarchal ideology but also to reinforce more powerfully the negative stereotypes of women.

II. Feminism and Issue of Agency

Feminism is a movement of awareness about woman position in society, culture, literature etc. In the same way, it is also a struggle of women for their individual identity for the reason it seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities, and injustices. They demand for the equal right and opportunities like that of men.

The term 'feminism' has come from the French word '*feminisme*' coined by Charls Fourier to denote the support for women's equal legal and political rights. However, it has been developed as a theoretical concept that questions the validity of patriarchy by asserting: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economical fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature" (Beauvoir 295).

So, it questions the validity of womens's inferiority imposed by the patriarchy through the logic that the gender is a social construction shaped by patriarchal forces in society. In this logic Maggie Humm argues:

Feminism incorporates diverse ideas which shares three major perceptions: that gender is a social construction which oppresses women more than man; that patriarchy shapes this construction; and that women's experiential knowledge is a basis for a future non-sexist society. These assumptions inform feminism double agenda: the task of critique (attacking gender stereotypes) and the task of construction, without this second task of (sometimes called feminist praxis) Feminism has no goal. ("Feminism," 194)

She further argues that through the experimental knowledge, feminists have to attack on gender stereotype, shaped by patriarchal society and secondly must engage on the task of construction. In this sense, feminism is a political, cultural, and economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism includes sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference. It is also a movement that campaigns for women's rights and interests.

One of the major goals of feminist movement is also to create female agency in the society as it aims to erase all the gender stereotypes and restriction imposed on women by patriarchal forces. Previously women were marginalized in society as passive, second sex, evil etc. that can be traced out through different popular saying and religious assumptions. These two ways reveal the negative stereotypes of women in any forms like daughter, sister, mother etc. who have always been ruled by the males and subjected to harsh domination of their male counterparts. For instances, Napoleon Bonaparte took women just as the slave and property of men. He further says:

Nature intended women to be our slave .They are ours property; we are not theirs. They belongs to us, just as a tree bears fruits, belongs to gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for woman! Women are nothing but machines for producing children. (Morgan 92)

Similarly, Aristotle did not count female as an equal to male and believes women as an 'unfinished men'. For him, female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities and man provides the form and the woman contributes to the substances. For Hegel position of manhood is attained by thought and technical exertion whereas women are educated by living not by acquiring knowledge. He further says: "Women are educated

by living rather than by acquiring knowledge. The status of manhood on the other hand, is attained only the stress of thought and much technical exertion,” (Gaarder 367). Though Plato seems positive to women; he is in the view that their freedom are more restricted than man and women have weaker bodies than men. For Socrates, beings born as a woman was divine punishment, since a woman is halfway between a man and an animal. Moreover, John Donne only saw flesh and bone not mind and thought in women. In his famous poem *Love's Alchemy* he forwarded his crucial views about women: “Hope not for mind in women; at their best\sweetness and wit they're but mummy possessed” (52). Moreover, religion has also always favored the patriarchal side. In *Bible* Adam (male) is a first human being where as Eve is created by god from his left rib. God created Eve just as the choice of Adam because he is not satisfied with any other creatures of God created on his world. So Eve (female) was just as the means to satisfy Adam (male) for God. In this regard, Christopher Smart says that women's purpose on earth is to decorate, amuse, obligate, care, arrange, the domestic scene, provide sex, progeny and approval but never to reason, pronounce or be heard. God offered them heaven like world at the same time making them aware about restriction but being the symbol of temptation she across the limitation of God and become the cause of fall of heaven. So, still now female are considered as the fall or disturbance of male in the society. In the same way, western religion is a stark example of male domination which believes that God who created this world is male.

The politics of constructing such gender roles is to center the men and marginalize the women with the no say and power or agency. Therefore, feminism aims at decentering such phalocentrism by attacking the patriarchal notions which just

objectify women. For Luce Irigaray, women in patriarchal culture are defined not as what she is but as what men are not. For feminism in the patriarchal society, all the interpretations are misrepresentations. Readymade myths work there and result is the same as before (15). Therefore, main aim of feminism is to redraw the historical (mis)representation of women because gendered myth prevailing in our society blocks the true representation. In each and every field like culturally, socially, economically, linguistically, politically female are dominated. New Feminism rejects the basic rules for women's behavior laid down by patriarchal society. Susan widely traces the negation on the earlier assumption of female personality in this ideal of womanhood duties which says that in childhood a female must be subjected to her father, in youth to her husband, when lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. She who controlling her thoughts, words and deeds never slights her lords resides after death with her husband in heaven and is called virtuous wife.

In patriarchal society women just have domestic purpose which always ties them and keep them always as a passive creature. There is always lack of freedom of female in the same way patriarchal society don't care about their satisfactory where as it becomes satisfy if she performs her different duties about decoration, obligation, arrangement, never reasoning and this sorts of her other domestic task determined by the group of male patriarchy in society.

Different feminists in this way have criticized patriarchy on their own way. For Virginia Woolf, if a woman wants to resist against the 'Patriarchy', she would certainly get much success though she has to suffer a lot during her struggle: "There is no gate, no lock, and no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of the mind" (129).

For radical feminists, modern society has a Patriarchal character in the sense its constructs (law, religion, politics, arts etc.) are the products of males and the best solution against women's oppression would be to treat Patriarchy not as a subset of capitalism but as a problem in its own right. Thus, eliminating women's oppression means eliminating male domination in all its forms.

One of the leading American feminists Kate Millett takes patriarchy as having several disrupted factors. She further finds patriarchy as grotesque, increasingly militaristic, increasingly greedy, colonialist, imperialistic, and brutal, with a terrible disregard of civil liberties, of democratic forms.

In this way, feminism shows how in patriarchal society women were either suppressed or oppressed or rejected the freedom of personal expression. That is why by destroying the convention of the patriarchy, feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf, Wollstone Craft, Julia Kristeva etc seek to end women's subordination for the sake of women rights and to create the female agency. For this purpose, Feminist literary criticism has played an important role to create the female agency in the society.

Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theory or by the politics of feminism more broadly. It is also the way to create female agency in the sense it is concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. It has considered gender as a construction that demands the deconstruction power gender relation, and as a concrete political investment. It has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. And the more traditionally literary feminist criticism concern with the representation and politics of women's lives.

For this purpose, literary feminism criticizes literary works through the examination of female point of view, concerns and values. It encompasses not only female literary works but also male literary works. For Lisa Tuttle, it is as asking new questions of old texts. According to her, its goal is to develop and uncover a female tradition of writing, to interpret symbolism of women's writing so that it will be lost or ignored by the male point of view, to rediscover old texts, to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective, to resist sexism in literature and to increase awareness of sexual politics of language and style.

Basically in literary texts, women characters exist in two types – one is rewrite the sentence positive roles which depict women as sacrificing, intelligent, heroic virgins/goddesses, and another is negative that views women as whore literature written from male perspective a surplus of misogynistic roles commonly identified as the bitch/witch, and the vamp. The 'image' of women in literature is invariably defined in opposition to the 'real person', whom literature somehow never manages to convey to the reader. Feminist critics show how often literary representation of women repeat familiar cultural stereotypes. Women are represented even by female authors, either as immoral seductress or as sacrificing angels. In post-modern literature, images of women have been destabilized, deconstructed and reconstructed. The early feminist literary critics (in the 1960s and 70s) argued that men and women had different point of view about literature, and that what had been considered as neutral about literature was really the male point of view. In this regard B K Das views that feminist literary criticism responds the way in which women are presented in literature. If literature is presented from male point of

view it gives rise to Phallocentrism and if it is presented from female point of view it gives rise to Gynocriticism. He further says:

Feminist literary criticism primarily responds to the way woman is presented in literature. It has two basic premises: One, women presented in literature by male writers from their own view point and two, women presented in the writing of female writers from their point of view. The first premises gives rise to a kind of feminist criticism known as phallocentrism and the second premise leads us to another kind of feminist criticism known as Gynocriticism. (88)

The American feminist theorist Elaine Showalter's ideas of generating female agency is considerable. When feminist discourse began to address literary texts in the 1970s, new questions arose about what it meant to write as a woman and what it meant to read as a woman. In its first phase, feminist literary studies focused on 'the woman as reader' and 'the woman as writer'. Elaine Showalter, in her essay, "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (14) pointed out that the first type is concerned with woman as a consumer of male-produced literature, and with the way in which the hypothesis of a female reader changes our apprehensions of a given text. Its subjects include images and stereotypes of women in literature, misconceptions about women in criticism, and the crevices in male-constructed literary history. 'Gynocritics' is the name Elaine Showalter has given to those critics wishing to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature. Its subjects include the female creativity and the problem of female language, and of course, studies of particular writers and works. Forgotten text of talented women writers of the

past are often unearthed and brought to light. Such as, Showalter's "A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronete to Lessing".

In this essay, Showalter employs three terms to describe three stages in the development of women's writing. She identifies these stages as an initial stage characterized by the imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant literary culture; a phase of protest in which those modes are contested by the assertion of identity and finally phase of self-discovery or a search for identity. She terms the three major phases that are common to the all literary subcultures as 'feminism', 'feminist' and 'female':

First, there is a prolonged phases of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition [...]. Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards [...]. Finally, there is a phase of *self-discovery*, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, *Feminine*, *Feminist* and *Female*. (16)

In this connection 'feminist' refers to the radical reading by women of texts written by male authors. In this process, popular patriarchal texts are ripped off, imitated, parodied, rewritten and manipulated in as many as possible. This recasting of as entire range of male-conceived women characters includes their recreation and reframing from a woman's point of view and perspective. The feminist critics examine and analyze the power relations in texts, with a view to break them down, seeing reading as a political act and showing the extent to patriarchy pervading the work. Such critics raise the question of whether men and women are 'essentially' different because of biology, or are socially constructed as different.

Language also plays a vital role in making what is social and constructed seem 'natural'. In 1960s, French feminists approached this theoretical framework with a new concept. The term 'écriture féminine', originating in the writing of Helene Cixous, designated an 'other' mode of discourse prevalent in the writing of female authors. It, refers the writing which was typically feminine in theme, style and approach. Cixous argued that writing and philosophy are phallogentric, and emphasized, along with Luce Irigaray, 'writing from the body' as a subversive exercise. Thus, women writers claim to know the feminine world more intimately than their male counterparts. Ecriture feminine establishes a bridge of communication and community between women, irrespective of their race and color. The critics of the newer generation explored the question of whether there is, at all, a female language, an ecriture feminine, and whether this is also available to men. They reread psychoanalysis to further explore the issues of male and female identity and challenge representations of women as 'Other' / 'lack', or as part of 'nature'.

All These issues of feminist literary criticism are no more than to engaging for how to create female agency. On one hand it creates female agency where as on other hand it also breaks the hierarchy of patriarchy

Except feminist criticism, female agency is also generated through various ways that can be traced out in different ways through the views of different feminist theorist. To create female agency Charlotte Perkins Gilman directs women towards useful works created by modern industry and profession. Highlighting women's capability to work in the public worlds. She focuses on economically beneficial occupation for women. She refutes the childcare and housework, which deprive them from opportunities and the development of their genuine potentiality. Nancy Cott speaks of Gilman as:

She proposed [...] the socialization of remaining home employments such as cooking and laundry and argued that house cleaning and child care would be better performed by specialized paid employees than by housewives and mothers not necessarily suited and not paid for the tasks.

(41)

Unlike Cott, Mary Wollstonecraft possesses the separate view of achieving female agency. In order to achieve female agency she gives the importance to good education which liberates women from male dominating motives hidden in the emphasis of feminine features like meekness, humility and childishness. She detests false education system that inspire women to love at the expense of reason, and encourage women to study medicine, business, and mathematics. Rosemarie Tong examines Wollstonecraft's views about women's education and further claims that: "[...] they should be provided with real education, one that sharpens and focuses her mind and gives her a chance to develop her national and moral capacities, her full human potential" (15).

On the other hand, Simon de Beauvoir attempts to disclose female agency by bringing widespread consciousness on the part of women, pointing to the socio-historical construction of women. She condemns the socialization that persuades women to be sexy and to be flesh for more entertainment of male ego. Rather, she professes for a mentality for women to be self-assertive and determined; able to tackle with impediments, and to liberate them from the social construction of femininity. Jane Freeman says: "[...] the distinction between biological sex and the social creation of the 'eternal feminine' is a precursor of the distinction between sex and gender that is common in much feminist theory" (14).

Despite, the way of achieving female agencies in these three feminists are different the common point of creating female agency is similar. To acquire it, Gilman shows women to follow the path of engaging on economically beneficial work without being limited on household works, whereas for Wollstonecraft good education for women should be inspired and for Beauvoir female themselves should be mentally determined to liberate them from gendered biases of the society.

To sum up, feminists not only criticize patriarchy but also seek the way to establish feminism as a movement of women's right and interest in the field of social, political, economic etc through the means of female agency.

III. Female Agency in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*

The issue of female agency in D. H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers* is contradictory. Lawrence has projected women's agency over men while doing so, the writer time and again stereotypes women subjectivity as something. In this regard, Gertrude Morel's agency over her husband and sons and Clara's agency over her husband and lovers are most remarkable female agency of this novel. Besides them, the other agency of other female characters such as Betrice, Jerry's eldest daughter and Miriam can also be traced out in the novel. So, the novel's representation of women's subjectivity becomes contradictory through which the novelist is conveying his patriarchal ideology that cocksure woman and hen sure men do not bring harmony and happiness.

Gertrude Morel, one of the major female character, has agency over her husband and sons. If she is analyzed through the female perspective of Manu to some extent, she poses the virtuous quality of women and to some extent different. Manu took virtuous female to those who in childhood objected to her father in youth to her husband and after him to her son. In his work "*Laws of Manu*" he further says:

In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. She who controlling her thoughts, words and deeds never slights her lords resides after death with her husband (in heaven) and is called virtuous (wife). (30)

Here, major highlighting point of Manu is ideal women must be submissive to the male through out their life. In this process the necessity of woman's substitution of man also can be realized in this popular saying. This very patriarchal notion of women goes similar to Mrs. Morel because before her dependency over sons, on that place there was her husband. But the different is that

whenever Mrs. Morel depends on either husband or sons, she keeps her role of agency always at the top hierarchy or her first priority is always to create her authority over them rather than being an ideal woman of society. She changes her love and affection from one male to another in search of her subjectivity over them through which she can fulfill her desires.

At first, she was close to her husband but when she finds him as drunkard and irresponsible husband who doesn't move as her desire she leaves him and turn toward her eldest son, William but she is greatly saddened by William's engagement to Gipsy. She feels threatened and scared that William's future wife will take her place as the woman he loves most in his heart. So, she turns to Paul, her second son, for comfort and support. Mrs. Morel instinctively knows that Paul will become famous and known. More importantly, she feels that her destiny and her dream will be carried out through Paul. She knows that Paul is capable of accomplishing all of her goals and her dreams. On every side either leaving her husband or being close with her sons her individual interest over male has become her first priority of life through which her cocky natures get reflected in the novel.

Maggie Humm has offered the task of attacking on gender stereotypes to feminist because gender is the social construction where male agency always takes place either in society or in family. As Humm claims Mrs. Morel has attacked on the traditional male dominated patriarchal tendency by keeping agency over all her family members and marginalized father domination on her family. Due to Mrs. Morel active role in her family all her children are loyal toward her not toward her husband and all the responsibility of the house is taken by her. Because of Morel's irresponsible guardianship in family, Mrs. Morel has provided the cool and safe shadow to her children and doesn't let them to feel the lake of good guardianship in the family. That is why Paul openly praises his mother. Once he shares his experience about his

mother to Miriam: “[...] see my mother looks as if she’d had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There is not a tiny bit of a feeling of sterility about her” (276). It also shows woman cocksure nature lies on male hensure nature.

Mrs. Morel desires for such male who moves according to her own will if not she differentiates him and seeks for substitution. When she does not find her husband in the way of fulfilling her desires, she begins to dislike him as if he is no one of her and turn toward sons whom she hopes can fulfill her desires. Here, she seems caring only to such male who seems to move on her way if not she neglects him proves her opportunistic and selfish nature which further becomes clear in her conversation with Paul about her husband:

‘Where’s my dad?’ said William, coming in from school.

‘He says he’s run away,’ replied the mother.

‘Where to?’

‘Eh, I don’t know. He’s taken a bundle of blue handkerchief, and says he’s not coming back.’

‘What shall we do?’ Cried the boy.

‘Eh, never troubled, he won’t go far.’

‘But if he doesn’t come back,’ wailed Annie.

And she and William retired to the sofa and wept. Mrs. Morel sat and laughed.

(40)

This conversation depicts Mrs. Morel’s negligence toward her husband after she finds him not moving on her path. Now, she has become too much selfish and neglects her husband that leads him to leave. But neither she worries about her husband nor cares her son’s love toward his father. William weeps on sofa where as Mrs. Morel sits and laughs mercilessly because she only

cares for such man who is always ready for fulfilling her wishes. This suggests Lawrence belief that when women become cocksure, they lose common human sentiments and feelings.

The irresponsible hensure father Morel has given chance for Mrs. Morel to be made responsible and active in family because if morel was active in his family and manage everything and everyone carefully and responsibly Mrs. Morel wouldn't had got any chances of doing so, and also not be able to show her agency role in family (or other male members). So, lack of Morel's agency in the family is also the cause of Mrs. Morel's agency and Morel seems irresponsible in various ways.

Morel is very irresponsible guardian of his family. For him beer and drunkard fellows are his first priority of his life not his wife and children. He just desires to have his free and enjoyable life in drinking with other miners and dislikes his responsibility towards his family:

The weekend was his chief carouse. He sat in the miners' arms until turning-time every Friday, every Saturday, and every Sunday evening. On Monday and Tuesday he had to get up and reluctantly leave towards ten o'clock. Sometimes he stayed at home on Wednesday and Thursday evening, or was only out for an hour.

(16)

These lines illustrates Morel as irresponsible person. Morel's being irresponsible for his family stages Mrs. Morel agency to wield responsibility for her family.

Morel is quite rough in his manner and words that is why his children hate him for his unfamiliar behavior toward them. He becomes offensive towards members of his family for as instance, he says: 'I'll lay my fist about thy y'ead, I' m tellin' thee, if tha doesna stop that clatter! Dost hear?' (56). That is why:

He was shut out from all family affairs. No one told him anything. The children, alone with their mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything.

Nothing had really taken place in them until it was told to their mother. But as soon as the father came in, everything stopped. He was like the scotch in the smooth, happy machinery of the home. (56)

Morel is out cast from his family for his rascal manner. That is why in his family no children dare to share day's happening. He seems like a child who likes just silence not any noise.

Because of his manners children become close to mother and as a consequence, father constitutes a marginalized figure. Thus Mrs. Morel becomes the center of her children.

Due to the assertive agency of Mrs. Morel upon her children there was good conversation among them: "The children, alone with their mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything" (56). Through the means of conversation she is able to keep the power of unavoidable influence upon them unlike her husband because Morel's conversation with his children seems just as fulfilling a sort of formality. Usually he does not talk to them though seldom in some special circumstances he makes his conversation with them. This is proved by his conversation with Paul after he won prize:

'I've won a prize in a competition, dad' he said.

Morel turned round to him.

'Have you, my boy? What sort of a competition?'

'Oh, nothing – about famous women.'

'And how much is the prize, then, as you've got?'

'It's a book.' [...]

And that was all. Conversation was impossible between the father and any other member of the family. He was outsider. He had denied the God in him. (57)

Here, Paul is eager to share his happiness of winning prize in competition with her father and is asking the cost of prize and when he knows it just as a minor thing his conversation stop. He seems only interested about the cost of prize not with his son's feeling. So, 'he was outsider' refers he is marginalized in the family which mean Mrs. Morel as the center of his family.

For Beauvoir female is not determined by economical fate because in patriarchal tendency women are always backward in economic sense. Here, Mrs. Morel's agency over her husband also lies of economic sense:

He never saved a penny, and he gave his wife no opportunity of saving; instead, she had occasionally to pay his debts; not public- house debts, for those never were passed on to the women, but debts when he had bought a canary, or a fancy walking-stick. (17)

Morel is very careless in managing his family economically. He does not worry about fulfilling the necessity of his family members but does not break his habitual manner of spending income for drinking with his Jerry like drunkard friends. In such case Mrs. Morel plays dominant role to manage her family economically though Morel is supposed to give his wife thirty shillings a week, to provide everything – rent, food, clothes, club, insurance, doctors etc.

These all refers Morel in like a flying kite without thread that flies uncertainly. And Mrs. Morel who has high morel sense is his thread to bring him on track. She is like his lord who loves him and punishes him too for his worse activities. By love or hate or by hook or crook she tries to keep him control and to display her agency over him. In this regard Lawrence further says: "She still had her high morel sense inherited from generations of Puritans. It was now a

religious instinct, and she was almost a fanatic with him, because she loved him, or had loved him. If he sinned, she tortured him” (16).

Mrs. Morel also dares to fight with her husband in order to bring him in proper track. She tries to make him responsible guardian from his irresponsible behavior: “She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfill his obligations” (14). So, her battle against her own husband for good care contradicts the traditional passive notion of women.

Her agency over Morel not only lies of economic sense and household activities but physically too her subjectivity over him is justified that can be known once when Morel bits William, one years old child:

Mrs. Morel stood still. It was her first baby. She went very white, and was unable to speak.

‘What dost think o’ im?’ Morel laughed uneasily.

She gripped her two fists, lifted them, and came forward. Morel shrank back.

‘I could kill you, I could! She said. She choked with rage, her two fists uplifted [...]. His attempt at laughter had vanished. (15)

In this way she is active not only in managing the house and wining the favor of her children but also in battling with her husband. Due to her agency in her life even after her death Morel does not dare to see her figure.

Beside Mrs. Morel’s agency over husband her agency over sons William and Paul is also remarkable. Due to the unavoidable loving influence of Mrs. Morel over William after he leaves home for London, he keeps just contact to his mother as if he does not miss his father or other members of his family. So, Lawrence by presenting William’s link with just Mrs. Morel from London, attempts to prove her skillful agency over him which Morel unable to attain:

His letter came regularly once a week. He wrote a good deal to his mother, telling her all his life, how he made friends [...]. His mother felt again he was remaining to her just as when he was at home. She wrote to him every week her direct, rather witty letters [...]. Almost, he was like her knight who wore her favour in the battle. (70-71)

These lines indicate Mrs. Morel's skill that keeps William close even he stays on London away from his house. Because of her loving influence upon him though in London he was as if with his mother on house. Her reply to him is a way to impose her subjectivity upon him. The line: 'he was like her knight' refers him as a submissive child of Mrs. Morel that paves her to keep her agency on him.

On the one hand her influence over William can be seen when he departs from home and her same subjectivity can be realized on the first meeting of William after he returns from London:

He dropped his Gladstone bag and took his mother in his arms.

'Mater!' he said.

'My boy!' she cried.

And for two seconds, no longer, she clasped him and kissed him. Then she withdrew and said, trying to be quite normal:

'But late you are!'

'Aren't I!' he cried, turning to his father. 'Well, dad!'

The two men shook hands.

'Well, my lad!' [...]

Then the son turned round to his mother.

‘But you look well,’ she said proudly, laughing.

‘Well’! he exclaimed. ‘I should think so – coming home!’ (73)

The quote above shows William’s formal relation with his father. Where as he takes his mother in his arms and his saying word ‘mater’ and reply ‘my boy’ refers on one side their true intimacy where as on another her agency over him. Here, through the means of kissing she is attempting to keep her agency stronger on him and her proudly laughing is associate with her ego on keeping subjectivity on him.

Beside, William Mrs. Morel also has control over Paul. She desires to absorb his last drop of manhood and to make him puppet that move as her will. She wants to be the remote control of the television whose name is no more than Paul. In this regard narrator says:

She is not like an ordinary woman; [...]. She wants to absorb him. She wants to draw him out and absorb him till there is nothing left of him, even for himself. He will never be a man on his own feet – ‘she will suck him up.’ So the mother sat, and battled and brooded bitterly. (169)

These lines refer to her agency upon male goes to the extent that discloses her negative reflection. She desires to be a assertive woman. She likes to absorb Paul mercilessly till there is nothing left of him for himself. She is imposing her subjectivity upon Paul as if making him as her puppet. She offends him deliberately in order to persist her influence over him. So, though author is depicting Mrs. Morel’s agency together with presenting the negative stereotype of female.

Mrs. Morel agency over Paul seeks to control all his desires. Mrs. Morel does not like her son who chose his own way of happiness himself even in choice of happiness he is not free to choose himself. So, that to be happy he seems to have the permission of his mother:

‘My boy,’ said his mother to him, ‘all your cleverness, your breaking away from old things, and taking life in your own hands, doesn’t seem to bring you much happiness.’

‘What is happiness!’ he cried. ‘It’s nothing to me! How am I to be happy?’ (224)

This controlling Paul’s happiness refers how his every step is controlled by his mother.

Blackmailing and loving are two mighty weapons of Mrs. Morel to keep Paul on her own control and to create boundary upon his free- floating desires. Her blackmail is very effective, it controls his own way of happiness. In this regard once she says: “But I want you to be happy,” she said pathetically ‘Eh, my dear – say rather you want me to live’ (224). The negative mirror of female is also reflected through these two weapons because by hook or crook she is on the way of controlling the happiness of Paul and forcing him to move on the path created by herself. Moreover, Mrs. Morel loves him emotionally and passionately in front of her, he seems very passive and inactive and also she is not ready to bear anyone between her and Paul:

Mrs. Morel felt as if she would break for him. At this rate she knew he would not live. He had that poignant, carelessness about himself, his own suffering, his own life, which is a form of slow suicide. It almost broke her heart. With all the passion of her strong nature she hated Miriam for having in this subtle way undermined his joy. (225)

In order to keep up her agency over Paul, Mrs. Morel penchants for avoiding the influence of Miriam upon him so his happiness generated from the closeness with Miriam breaks her heart. Though Miriam the religious lady and the beloved of Paul might be his right choice of life but Mrs. Morel interferes this relation and hates Miriam with all the passion of her strong nature.

Here, author seems to expose the negative or jealousy figure of female to another female in regard with male.

In Utopia, Book II, Sir Thomas More says, that women can marry at eighteen, men at twenty two. This fact is properly known by Paul who is now twenty four but still unable to marry. It is just because of his mother's immense influence over him. He can do nothing besides thinking and talking about his marriage. Once, on this matter, Paul discusses with Miriam:

‘Sir Thomas More says one can marry at twenty-four.’

She laughed quaintly, saying:

‘Does it need Sir Thomas More’ sanction?’

‘No; but one ought to marry about then.’

‘Ay,’ she answered broodingly; and she waited.

‘I can’t marry you,’ he continued slowly. (244)

Here, Paul is expressing his inability to marry with Miriam still in his proper age as referred by Sir Thomas More. He is not able to marry due to the jealousy nature of Mrs. Morel who can't endure any lady between her and her son that is why in this case female's negative figure of jealousy has been highlighted by author.

For Nancy Cott feminist invalidates the gender hierarchy. Here, Mrs. Morel has not only broken the traditional patriarchal hierarchy but also has constructed the hierarchy of her own in her family by keeping her unavoidable influence over her sons and husband. Such her influence over Paul can be analyzed in three ways in this text. First, when he is with his mother second, when his is with his mother and third, after the death of his mother. Here, in each case Paul's passivity with his mother has been displayed.

Firstly, when Paul is with his mother time and again drowned into the deep intimacy with his mother which is no more than her unavoidable influence upon him:

‘What do you want to be?’ his mother asked.

‘Anything.’

‘That is no answer,’ said Mrs. Morel.

[...] His ambition as far as this world’s gear went, was quietly to earn his thirty or thirty five shillings a week somewhere near home, and then, when his father died, have a cottage with his mother, paint and go out as he liked, and live happy ever after. (79)

Here, he keeps Mrs. Morel at the center where as neglects his father. Here, male himself is putting female at the top of hierarchy so Gertrude Morel is successful in invalidating the patriarchal male dominated tendency.

In front of his mother, he is again blind to his mother’s loving influence and expresses his deep feeling toward her:

‘I never will see. I’ll never marry while I’ve got you – I won’t.’

‘But I shouldn’t like to leave you with nobody, my boy,’ she cried.

‘You’re not going to leave me. What are you? Fifty-three! I’ll marry a staid body.

See!’ (214)

For Paul to be married with anyone is to leave his mother, which he does not want. So for him to be closed to his mother is his first priority of his life and wedding and live within the boundary of wife is his next priority indicates his inferiority to Mrs. Morel. That is why he views with his mother that he is not in the way of leaving his mother any more till she lives her life.

Secondly he is not able to forget her even in the absence of his mother or in the time when he is with his lover, Miriam:

‘Yes; but my mother, I believe, got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first. I believe she had a passion for him; that’s why she stayed with him. After all, they were bound to each other.’

‘Yes,’ said Miriam [...].

See, my mother looks as if she’d had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There’s not a tiny bit of a feeling of sterility about her.’ (276)

Without making his affair with his beloveds more romantic, he spends much time talking about his mother being unable to forget her influence upon him. Her influence over him makes him realize that he needs just his mother in his life not wife.

Thirdly her influence over him goes on drastically after her death. Sometimes he murmurs: “I have been dreaming of thy mother” (349). His condition becomes so poor as if he loses everything in his life and there is no one for him in his world. He becomes helpless. His dreadful feelings come to the fore:

Paul felt crumpled up and lonely. His mother had really supported his life. He had loved her; they two had, in fact, faced the world together. Now she was gone, and for ever behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn towards death. He wanted someone of their own free initiative to help him. (354)

After Mrs. Morel’s death Paul finds no worth of his romantic affair with his two lovers- Clara and Miriam. For him they are like stars of which Mrs. Morel is moon. So, in absence of moon he finds no value of stars that is why he leaves them. He does not precede his relation with

Miriam and he aborts his relation with Clara. He helps clear misunderstanding between Clara and Baxter. And in such he farewells to them:

‘Ay – well –’ said Dawes.

‘Goodbye,’ he said to Clara.

‘Goodbye,’ she said, giving him her hand. Then she glanced at him for the last time, dumb and humble. (355)

Lawrence ended his novel in Paul’s whispering for death of his mother who held him up and desire to be close with his mother. Moreover he takes no direction of his life after her death because he becomes trackless:

‘Mother!’ he whispered – mother!’

She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this [...]. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her.

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city’s gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly. (366)

The novel ending with Paul’s uncertainty after Mrs. Morel’s death shows women’s assertive agency over male and it also indicates behind the trackless life of male, female have major role as Chadakya (one of the eastern philosopher) says in his work *Chadakya Niti*. When Mrs. Morel was alive she always used to impose her agency so that Paul become blind and passive through out his life only depending with his mother and when mother dies he became careless, trackless in his life. In this way, the negative stereotype of female goes together with female agency.

Beside Mrs. Morel we also can trace out the agency of other females characters over male. One of them is Miriam. She is a beautiful, deeply, intense and devoted girl whose feelings for Paul is as passionate as her love for god and church which keeps him too much passive and inactive, kills his joy in which her agency lies on him: “Miriam killed the joy and the warmth in him. He had been such a jolly lad, and full of the warmest affection; now he grew colder, more and more irritable and gloomy” (244). Paul himself believes her love is sickening him and making him as a donkey though he is aware of his freedom in love. His conversation with Clara proves it:

‘I hope so; but love should give a sense of freedom, not of prison. Miriam made me feel tied up like a donkey to a stake. I must feed on her patch, and nowhere else. It’s sickening!’

‘And would you let a woman do as she likes?’

‘Yes; I’ll see that she likes to love me.’ (313)

Miriam, by imposing immense loving influence upon Paul desires to keep him as submissive donkey and Paul is too much passive in front of her. Here, also Miriam’s agency goes together with negative intention of female in making love with male where woman keep male as submissive cattle.

Beside Mrs. Morel, Miriam, Annie, the first daughter of Morel family also has an agency role in order to maintain her family financially as her mother did. She is also responsible female member in her family. The little amount of money which father offers for maintaining family is quite insufficient and she joins of the Board – school as a junior teacher and provides side help on her family. “Annie was still a junior teacher in the Board-school, earning about four shillings

a week. But soon she would have fifteen shillings, since she had passed her examination, and there would be financial peace in the house” (101).

We also can trace out the female agency of Jerry’s daughter. Jerry is another male character who is the drunkard friend of Morel and he is widower. As Morel he lacks the responsibility towards his house and in such case his fifteen years old daughter plays an effective role in order to maintain his family. She, as a mature guardian of Jerry takes the responsibility of his house and manages it in lack of agency of her drunkard and irresponsible father. He not only maintains the house for her family but also takes the responsibility of two Jerry’s younger daughter: “His wife, who had died of consumption [...]. And now his eldest daughter, a girl of fifteen, kept a poor house for him, and looked after the two younger children” (19).

The similarity on Jerry’s daughter’s and Mrs. Morel’s agency over male lies on the lack of male agency. In both case female agency over male is created in the irresponsible manner of male like Jerry and Morel both have no sense of handling house and family members properly. Here, author’s projection of female agency is cleared that female has gained their subjectivity over male not through their capacity but through the ground of opportunity laid by male in family and society.

Beside Mrs. Morel and other female agency another remarkable female agency we see in the novel is Clara Dawes’ agency. She is the daughter of old friend of Mrs. Leivers. Once she had been spiral overseer at Jordan’s and her husband, Baxter Dawes, was smith for the factory, making the iron for cripple instruments and so on. Though having husband she is not faithful to him.

She seems feminist women in the novel: “Mrs. Dawes was separated from her husband, and had taken up women’s right. She was supposed to be claver” (162). Her first priority of the

life is to handle it on her own way and in such time she doesn't like to endure any interruption from the male side. That is why she leaves her husband in a minor reason and wear off all the responsibility toward him and his house and begins to live with her mother: "Clara Dawes had no children. When she had left husband and home had been broken up, and she had gone to live with her mother" (163). The choice of her own way of life shows her attempt to gain her agency over males. Such attempts of gaining female agency are lies especially in three different ways. First, by leaving her husband and wearing off all her responsibility towards him and his house as her own choice of life. Second, by making a romantic affair with Paul as if she is giving emphasis over her own enjoyment without considering the wall of morality. Here, male has just become her playing instrument. And third, again by rejoining to her own husband when she finds Paul, her playing instrument not working well after his mother's death.

Firstly, Clara agency over male lies on wearing off all responsibility towards her husband, Baxter Dawes and house when she finds many women's intimacy on her husband. She misinterprets this close relation between her husband and other women and in the name of he does not understand her, she takes the way of tit for tat and leaves him: "[...] she never knew the fearful importance of marriage[...]. And she left him because he didn't understand her' (275). Though Clara is able to perform her agency by leaving her house and husband. Here, she doesn't go ahead to know the actual relation between Dax and women. It seems she just used to seek cause to leave the burden of her husband and house and enjoy her life relaxing by preferring any man on her path. So, when she finds little bit cause instantly she wears off her burden of responsibility. So Lawrence by presenting Clara like character desires to show selfish, narrow minded figure of female.

Secondly, after leaving responsibility of house and husband her agency also lies on imposing loving influence on Paul and making him passive in her love even after leaving her husband. The following lines prove her skill of imposing loving influence on Paul:

He looked at the big drop below them.

‘It’s risky,’ he said; ‘or messy, at any rate. Shall we go back?’

‘Not for my sake,’ she said quickly. [...]

They stood perched on the face of the declivity, under the trees. (269)

Clara is very clever to keep man on her own web as spider does to insects. The following lines prove how she is skillful to attract Paul and how she is involving Paul on risk full life. This risk of Paul also indicates his fallen love on five years more senior woman having husband and also in the case when his mother rejects this relationship.

The romantic scenery in which they involve itself represents Clara’s agency: “Half-way up the big colonnade of elms, where the Grove rose highest above the river, their, their forward movement faltered to an end. He led her across to the grass, under the trees at the edge of the path” (268). In such romantic scenery she is able to keep five years eldest male on her palm, still having her husband. But forgetting these all thing they are enjoying on their physical closeness in romantic natural environment.

Clara sprays such impression over Paul which keeps him deep and passive any time. His words: “I love you! You look beautiful in that dress” (288). It not only indicates his love for her but also his blind inactivity. In the same way due to her in avoidable impression over him, he takes her as ‘awfully nice’ and as ‘not a bit common’. And to accept her he attempts to convince his mother because his all desires are bounded on her own desires:

‘And she’s-she *awfully* nice, mother; she is really! You don’t know!’

‘There’s not the same as marrying her.’

‘It’s perhaps better.’[...]

‘I should like to know what she’s like.’

‘But she’s nice, mother, she is! And not a bit common!’ (273-274)

Here, both Clara’s and Mrs. Morel’s agency over Paul is seen. Mrs. Morel’s agency becomes visible through Paul’s liking to Clara but to accept her as his beloved he tries to keep his mother happy. Moreover, Clara’s agency is seen when she leaves impressions like ‘awfully nice’ and as ‘not a bit common’ which he can’t avoid and approaches her in absolutely positive way. As a result, Clara keeps him too much passive. Her beauty is one of her reliable weapon which hurts him and makes him sorrowful. He is polite and gentle in front of her due to her active presentation over him:

His eyes were dark, very deep and very quiet. It was as if her beauty and his taking it hurt him, made him sorrowful. He looked at her with a little pain, and was afraid. He was so humble before her. She kissed him fervently on the eyes, first one, then the other, and she folded herself to him [...]. It was a moment intense almost to agony. (294)

Here, Paul in front of Clara is as passive as enemy capturing soldier who can do nothing against her. Here, she leaves no stone unturned to keep this man as a submissive child. Through the means of kissing and keeping him on her arms she is able to make him enough humble to move him as her desire. Her subjectivity upon him is so immense that though in her love he is realizing some sort of hurt and sorrow.

After leaving her husband and joining with Paul, they marginalize Baxter Dawes. For them Dawes has become their just talking matter through which they fall more emotionally and

passionately in their love affair; which can be proved by the quote: “[...]he asked at length, ‘did you hate Baxter Dawes?’ She turned to him with a splendid movement. Her mouth was offered him[...]and met her in long, whole kiss” (268).

Clara is not only active to bind Paul internally but also she is equally active to grip him physically. In both cases he is passive on her activeness. When she gets an opportunity she openly clasps him to fulfill her internal lust over him. That can be realized through the following paragraph of the text: “She slung close to him, trying to hide herself against him. He clasped her very fast. Then at last she looked at him, mute, imploring, looking to see if she must be ashamed” (294). And after, fulfilling her lust over Paul:

She stood letting him adore her and tremble with joy of her. It healed her hurt pride. It healed her; it made her glad. It made her feel erect and proud again. Her pride had been wounded inside her. She had been cheapened. Now she radiated with joy and pride again. It was her restoration and her recognition. (295)

After fulfilling her inner desire with Paul, she feels joy and pride. Joy in the sense her internal sexual desire over Paul is fulfilled and pride in the sense that she is able to seduce handsome and virgin Paul as her own choice of life. While depicting Clara’s such active roles over Paul, Lawrence projection stereotype has as seductive and beyond the control of her emotional outpouring:

The third way of Clara agency lies on re gaining husband after leaving Paul. After she fulfills her inner physical desire with Paul and thinks him passive after the death of his mother. Now, such passive one is unable to keep her happy and fulfill her desires. That is why Paul’s relation to Clara is finished for her. And to fulfill her rest of the desires, she again attempts to be close with her husband by using her unique technique of being humble, offering rose, fruits and

money for Dax. In doing so first she hesitates but later she feels pride on herself. Her self gratificatory nature becomes further clear in the following quote:

She went on the first opportunity to Sheffield to see her husband. The meeting was not success. But she left him roses and fruits and money [...]. Only she wanted to humble herself to him, to kneel before him. She wanted now to be self-sacrificial. After all, she had failed to make Morel really love her. She was morally frightened. She wanted to do penance. So she kneeled to Dawes, and it gave him subtle pleasure. But the distance between them is very great – too great. It frightened the man. It almost pleased the woman. She liked to feel she was serving him across an insuperable distance. She was proud now. (334)

For Virginia Woolf, if women want to resist patriarchy she would get much success though have to suffer a lot during she struggles. Here, also Clara undergoes such struggles to re-gain her husband though for that such a courageous woman has to be humble and kneeled before husband and afraid on her immoral manner.

In this way, she is still able to convince and rejoin with her husband. Here, she keeps her agency over two males as her own choice of her heart by sometimes being close with one and being away with another time and again. Here, males are like puppets that move as her own desire. In this way, Clara's agency over Paul and Baxter Dawes is justified. But on her agency, her opportunist, selfish, fraud, merciless manners are also reflected because she is misusing men taking them as source of fulfilling her desires only without understanding their co-existence. So, here, the author is negatively stereotyping the women through the projection of their agency at the same time.

Hence, through Mrs. Morel, Clara, Miriam, Annie and Jerry's daughter's agencies shown in the novel it becomes justifiable to claim that though Lawrence repeatedly shows women characters active and having their own subjectivity where as males are seen passive. His projection of female agency is self contradictory since they are at the same time shown as opportunists, selfish, fraud, self-gratificatory, and jealousy and seductive.

IV. Conclusion

This research after the through analysis of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* from feminist perspective, concludes that Lawrence's projection of female agency in the novel is contradictory. He shows the female characters quite active and decisive who even control and regulate male members. But while doing so, the writer is constantly projecting them with negative stereotypes such as being very cocky, seductive, opportunists and passionate.

This sort of contradictory female agency can be seen in major female characters like Gertrude Morel and Clara and their relation with other male characters like Morel, William, Paul and Baxter Daws. Through their relations the novelist shows women being able to subvert traditional patriarchal gender roles with their merciless selfish, seductive and opportunist natures. For example, Mrs. Morel's agency can be seen when she manages her house skillfully by fulfilling every necessity of her house with little amount of money and becomes more successful in such activities in comparison in her husband. In the same way, Mrs. Morel is more forward than her drunkard and irresponsible husband in providing good guardianship to her children. Moreover, in the case of necessity she is able to fight, defeat and keep her husband on proper track. She can keep her sons William and Paul within her control and make them move around her commands and desires. Similarly, another female character, Clara's agency can be seen in three different ways: firstly in her decisive role to leave husband, secondly, in her ability to keep Paul a five years junior man, as her submissive cattle and fulfill her desires and thirdly, in her ability to re-gain her husband by marginalizing Paul when she thinks in need.

Thus, though women in this novel are shown with their ability to create their agency, they are shown simply as the women treating men just as the means of fulfilling their desire.

Moreover, their agency is shown only in the absence of male agency that is either male are irresponsible or can not act actively. This projection of female agency in the novel, therefore, is used not only to continue the patriarchal ideology but also to reinforce more negatively stereotypes to women more powerfully.

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