

YILIN CLASSICS

Sons and Lovers

D. H. Lawrence

YILIN PRESS

YILIN CLASSICS

Sons and Lovers

D.H. Lawrence

YILIN PRESS

译林英语文学经典文库

儿子与情人

[英国]D. H. 劳伦斯 著

出版发行 译林出版社

地 址 南京中央路 165 号(邮政编码 210009)

经 销 江苏省新华书店

印 刷 南京新九州印刷厂(地址:六合县城东郊)

开本 787×1092 毫米 1/36 印张 13.5 插页 2

版次 1996 年 9 月第 1 版 1996 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

印数 1—11000 册

标准书号 ISBN 7-80567-574-0/I·307

定 价 12.80 元

(译林版图书凡印装错误可向承印厂调换)

INTRODUCTION

Sons and Lovers was D. H. Lawrence's first major novel. His only major novel, some would say; but even readers who are out of sympathy with him, or who feel that his gifts were not really those of a novelist, have usually been happy to make a whole-hearted exception in this one case. Within a short while of its being published, in 1913, there was widespread agreement that the book was a masterpiece; by the 1920s, while controversy raged around Lawrence's later work, its place in the standard repertoire was secure. And indeed you only have to read a few lines to become aware that you are in the presence of a sense of authority, of absolute confidence, which is one of the hallmarks of a classic.

Much of that confidence comes from the fact that Lawrence knew the material he was writing about through and through. Scene after scene was drawn straight from his own experience, or that of his family. The main characters with the exception of Clara Dawes, who whose common life had their close equivalents in real life. "Bestwood" is Eastwood, the mining village where he was born. There are minor embroideries and shifts of emphasis—the book is a reworking of reality, not a transcript—but in most essentials the early history of Paul Morel is the early history of D. H. Lawrence.

This, in itself, was far from being a guarantee of success, however. Countless would-be novelists have been tempted to begin with an autobiographical novel—let me tell you who I am; let me tell you about the things that have made me what I am. It

starting work on it, was to be “restrained, somewhat impersonal.”

Even at this stage he planned to write a story containing a fair degree of pure invention. Originally, for instance, Walter Morel was to be shown accidentally killing Paul's younger brother in a quarrel and going to prison for it. And though the death of Lawrence's mother, in December 1910, sharpened his determination to commemorate her, when he showed the incomplete manuscript to Jessie Chambers (the original of Miriam in the novel) the following October, she was disappointed by what she called its “story-bookish” quality: “He was telling the story of his mother's married life, but the telling seemed to be at second hand, and lacked the living touch.” She encouraged him to write the whole story again, sticking closer to the facts, and he followed her advice; but when he began sending her installments of the new version early in 1912, she was shocked to find that he had also produced a more hostile portrait of Miriam than before and upset by what she felt was a travesty of her own relationship with him—inspired, as she says, by the need to placate his mother's shade. Many years later she set down her own side of the story in an invaluable memoir, *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, originally published under the pseudonym “E.T.” in 1935.

In March 1912 Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, née von Richthofen; six weeks later he eloped with her to the Continent, and in June he sent the completed manuscript of his novel to the publisher William Heinemann. When Heinemann turned it down, his reader Edward Garnett intervened and arranged to place it

us, giving them their full value, alternates with the historian, analyzing and summing up with bold narrative strokes.

Between them his two methods leave us in no doubt where the heart of his story is to be located. It is a story that reaches back into the past, one tendril as far back as the seventeenth century, when Gertrude Morel's forebears, good burgher stock, fought on the Parliamentary side in the English Civil War. More immediately, we learn of her affinity with her father (who "drew near in sympathy," we are told, "only to one man, the Apostle Paul"—a man bearing the same name as the son who is intended ultimately to redeem everything that has gone to waste in her own life). And then there is that most tantalizing of formative periods, the period just before someone is born—in this case, the early married life of the Morels.

Gertrude Morel is a woman of high principles, of character and refinement—this last a word that most of us are inclined to blench at today, but a key term in the context, supplied by Lawrence himself in a letter, to Edward Garnett, outlining the novel. Her husband is a miner who can barely read and write. Marrying him for passion, she is bitterly disappointed by his rough manners, his drinking, what she can only see as his weakness and irresponsibility. When the book opens, the marriage has already turned into a battlefield, and the love she has withdrawn from Morel is being redirected toward the first of her children. Such is the world into which Paul Morel is born.

In time, after the death of his older brother, he becomes the chief focus of his mother's hopes. She lavishes love on him, which he reciprocates (like all the Morel children, he has been completely turned against his father). Determined to save him from the shadow of the mine, she helps find him a job as a clerk, and she encourages his interest in painting. But if she urges him on at one level, at another she holds him back. When he becomes involved with Miriam, she is afraid that she will lose him and does her best to come between them (although it is scarcely necessary—he is still emotionally in thrall to her and unable to return Miriam's love). A second attachment, to Clara—who is a married woman, though separated from her husband—brings him temporary fulfillment, but then that, too, gradually fizzles out. Miriam and Clara stand in contrast to each other—one spiritual and sensitive, the other sensual and robust—but with neither of them can he find true release. It is only after his mother has died that he is ready to strike out toward an unknown future.

Until October 1912, until very nearly the eleventh hour, Lawrence was planning to call the novel *Paul Morel*. His final choice seems an obvious improvement, and the change could be justified by pointing to the presence in the story, alongside Paul, of a second son and lover—his brother William. But the new title also had wider implications: it turned the spotlight away from Paul's uniqueness and suggested that in some ways his case was a representative one. By this time Lawrence himself had certainly come to feel that it was. He had occasionally stood back long enough to look for parallels with his own predicament. Two years earlier, for instance, he had recommended to Jessie Chambers a couple of stories by the notoriously mother-fixated J. M. Barrie—"They'll help you to understand how it is with me." Now, on completing *Sons and Lovers*, he had a firm conviction—so he told Garnett—that what he had written was "the tragedy of thousands of young men in England . . . I think it was Ruskin's, and men like him."

But why only some young men? Why just England? Might not Paul be an example—an extreme one, admittedly—of something altogether more pervasive? It is a striking historical conjunction, the kind of thing that makes one believe in a zeitgeist, that *Sons and Lovers* should have appeared just as Freud's theories were beginning to become widely known in the English-speaking world. No other important English novel seems to offer quite such a stark illustration of an Oedipus complex, as critics and commentators have not been slow to point out. As early as 1916 an article on the novel was published in *The Psychoanalytic Review*—an intelligent piece of work, by Alfred Booth Kuttner, which has been reprinted in several modern collections of essays on Lawrence, and which was the forerunner of much Freudian interpretation to come.

Although Lawrence was fairly quick to reject Freudian ideas, it seems reasonable to ask whether he came under their influence during the months when he was writing the final draft of *Sons and Lovers*. It was at this time that he first learned of them; Frieda was an admirer, and often discussed them with him, and some of his comments suggest that he was, at any rate, persuaded by her that his relationship with his mother had been more damaging than he had previously been prepared to admit. But how much of this worked its way into the book as it now stands? It is impossible to say for certain, since the essential evidence, the intermediate draft, which was put aside in favor of the final version, no

longer exists; but the verdict of the experts seems to be, very little. In the words of one of them, Keith Sager, "Lawrence's insights came too late to allow him to reshape *Sons and Lovers*. He would have had to start all over again."

So far from exemplifying the first impact of Freud, it might be truer to say that the novel marks the last phase of pre-Freudian innocence, in the sense that at any later date it would have been impossible for someone like Lawrence to have been quite so unguarded about what he was doing. Passionately espousing Mrs. Morel's cause, surrounding her with an aura of purity, majesty, martyrdom, he fails to recognize the effect she has had on Paul for what it is, fails to make the full connection between the captive son and the thwarted lover.

Yet the book would be a mere piece of sentimentality, J. M. Barrie rather than D. H. Lawrence, if he didn't *show* us what her effect has been, powerfully enough for us to be able to draw our own conclusions. "Never trust the artist, trust the tale"—here, as so often, his own maxim seems sound advice. Demonstrating rather than diagnosing, he gives us all the evidence we need in order to see past the idealized version of events to what is actually happening. And the emotional pattern of the book is far from simple or static. It is full of suppressed conflicts, crosscurrents, sudden leaps of sympathy, moods that could go one way or the other.

To take only the most extreme instance, lurking somewhere in the depths of *Sons and Lovers* there is a much more sinister book, the story of a mother's boy who has been unmanned, who builds up a massive resentment under a show of devotion, and who finally kills his mother—which is what Paul does when he gives Mrs. Morel an overdose of morphia. His professed motive is to put her out of her pain—she is already close to death, ravaged by cancer—and there need be nothing murderous about mercy killing; nor could anyone doubt the depth of his anguish as he watches her suffer. But a number of critics have argued that there is also an element of symbolic murder in his action, and I believe that they are right. The clinching detail is the way he and his sister Annie laugh together "like two conspiring children" when he tells her what he is planning to do. And this in turn goes back to the childhood "conspiracy" in chapter 4—the first real initiative we see him take—in which Paul accidentally breaks Annie's doll Arabella and then persuades her to let him burn it on a little altar that he builds. "That's the

sacrifice of Missis Arabella. An' I'm glad there's nothing left of her.' "

At the same time, this is only one strand in the book, and it would be wrong to make too much of it or to assume that nothing in *Sons and Lovers* is what it initially seems. Even when we have taken stock of the destructive capacity of Paul's involvement with his mother, that destructiveness does not cancel out the healthy and life-affirming aspects. Even when we have learned to shudder at her possessiveness, she can still command our respect and, up to a point, our admiration.

It makes an immense difference that in the early part of the book we see so much of her through the eyes of childhood, when she is an unarguable source of warmth, strength, and protection, or through the eyes of youth, when her aspirations—her refinement—still provide a valuable touchstone in an unrefined world. And in the novel itself her virtues are not, of course, the mere abstractions that they may sound in a summing-up. They are displayed in detail, against a solid setting—while she is ironing, blanching almonds, visiting Nottingham for the day. Such scenes (and their obverse, the terrible domestic quarrels) help to make the opening chapters an account of growing up that can challenge comparison with the great Victorian novelists.

The Miriam episodes, though there are wonderful things in them, seem to me less satisfactory. Miriam, we are told, and to some extent shown, suffers from a false spirituality, a false reverence for life, a lack of true passion. She is also determined to have things her way. When Mrs. Morel condemns her as " 'one of those who will want to suck a man's soul out till he has none of his own left,' " our first reaction may well be that it takes one to know one: in being drawn to her, isn't Paul subconsciously trying to duplicate his experience with his mother? But the more we think about her, the harder it becomes to decide to what extent her faults are really faults, and to what extent Paul is blaming her for his own inadequacy, deflecting attention from his problems with high-flown harangues. There is a nagging tone and a vein of cruelty in his treatment of her that foreshadows some of the rancor in Lawrence's later books—although the novelist in Lawrence still allows him to take her side from time to time and even permits her one lethal moment when she tells Paul that he is a child of four.

Lawrence was equipped to write about the industrial working

class as no other English novelist before him, and there are scenes in *Sons and Lovers* that clearly confirm the advantages of being able to describe life in a working-class community at firsthand—the episode where he shows Paul going to collect his father's wages is an obvious example. In principle he could have picked up where the factory novelists of the 1840s left off, tackling the same kind of broad social theme as Mrs. Gaskell in *North and South* or Disraeli in *Sybil*, though with much greater authenticity. But anyone who goes to him looking for panoramic social realism will be sorely disappointed. He followed his inspiration where it led him, and he found himself writing about the family and the individual rather than society at large.

Questions of class, on the other hand, were a major preoccupation. In a sense it is the class struggle, as much as any personal conflict, that rages in the Morel's kitchen. Almost all Mrs. Morel's complaints are against her husband—complaints that her children are taught to echo, and which Lawrence endorses—are directed against failings that spring from his circumstances, from lack of education and harsh physical toil. He is no paragon, but neither is he ill-natured. The outbursts of violence, which are his worst fault, are usually the result of intense provocation, of returning to a home that is no home and a family that has closed ranks against him. His drinking is easily explicable in terms of his life in the pit. As against this, the standards by which he is condemned in the novel, though they often masquerade as eternal values ("he had denied the God in him," "his manhood broke"), are essentially those of the middle class, the class from which Mrs. Morel comes and to which she hopes her children will return.

It would be too easy to condemn her in turn, or to condemn Lawrence, for simple snobbery. The problem is much more complicated than that; narrow though they are, her standards really do represent a key, the only one available in Bestwood, to a larger world. But there is still something ugly about the way in which the moralizing comments in the book makes no allowance for Morel's difficulties.

And yet there are times when we are allowed to see that, given a chance, he can be rather impressive; that he has his own skills; that potentially he has a great deal of tenderness, and more of the joy of life in him than most of the other characters. There are moments, too, of unforced pathos. Coming home from work, he picks up his youngest child, who is still a baby, covers him with

kisses, and laughs as he looks at his smutted face: “ ‘He’s a little collier, bless his bit o’ mutton!’ ” It seems the most natural way in the world for him to express his love; but we are reminded of the scene, a few pages further on, when he quarrels with his wife over her determination that her thirteen-year-old should not go down the pit—and at that point, how many readers could honestly disagree with her?

In later years Lawrence came to recognize that he had been unfair to his father, and toward the end of his life he wrote much more sympathetically about the miners among whom he had grown up. There is a fine essay called “Nottingham and the Mining Countryside,” for instance (it can be found in the collection *Phoenix*), in which he pays tribute to their comradeship, their sturdiness, their “instinct of beauty,” and in which he conveys a sense of the positive role played by work in their lives that is largely lacking in *Sons and Lovers*. (There are one or two such moments in the novel—the scene where Paul looks admiringly at a row of coal trucks, for instance, responding to them as though they were emblems of virility—but only one or two.) It is worth bearing in mind, however, that it was easier for him to write like this at a safe distance, when he had twenty years of achievement and fame to put between himself and the coalfields. At the time he wrote *Sons and Lovers*, he was a young man who had only just made his escape.

When Paul Morel makes *his* escape, at the very end of the novel, he walks quickly—rapidly, but the word also implies that he has chosen life rather than death—toward the lights of the neighboring town. It is an archetypal denouement. The young hero embraces his destiny; and in Paul’s case, although the ending itself is vague, we already know that his destiny is to be a painter. On the face of it, what we have is one more portrait of the artist as a young man. But his vocation never really assumes a central importance in the novel. He is struggling to emancipate himself as a man rather than as an artist—and indeed, the direct references to his painting make him sound rather dilettantish.

There is no reason to suppose that *Sons and Lovers* would have been a better book if Lawrence had made Paul an aspiring author, but it would no doubt have been a more literary one. We might well have seen more evidence; for example, of the remarkable course of reading that Lawrence undertook together

with Jessie Chambers (her account of it is one of the things that makes her memoir so much more heartening than the Miriam episodes). We might even have learned something of how he developed his style.

His mastery of language, which is all in all to a writer of his kind, has generally been acknowledged, but seldom analyzed, and certainly there are aspects of it that are hard to put down. He has a no-nonsense quality, for instance, which seems to me far more likely to derive from his childhood than from any literary influence; the same is true of his heightened sense of simple physical objects. It may well be that he owes more to his working-class origins in terms of style than in terms of subject matter. But whatever his debt, it has been refracted and developed beyond easy recognition. We are dealing with elusive matters, which we can only point toward.

There are features of his writing, however, that will repay close attention. How does he manage to avoid lushness, for example, or purple patches? In his determination not to flinch from passages of high emotion, he often comes perilously close to them; what saves him, usually, is the way in which he gives stale language a small revivifying twist. "Every open evening, the hills of Derbyshire were blazed over with red sunset." Think how much weaker that sentence would be if the hills had been "ablaze," which would have been the routine formulation. And "blazed over" is not simply unexpected (if that were all, it would be a mere mannerism) but more accurate: the sunset is applied to the hills from outside. This is a random instance of how Lawrence manages to keep one step ahead of a cliché; readers might find it rewarding to repeat the experiment for themselves.

Yet, in the end, you can see why close analysis does not seem particularly appropriate. Lawrence is a writer who sweeps you along. You are caught up in his rhythms, until they seem part of you; his vision, if it works at all, tends to take over completely. And *Sons and Lovers*, the book in which he found himself, is also the best of his books to start with. It has its faults, but there isn't a page that doesn't pulsate with life.

JOHN GROSS

CONTENTS

Introduction by John Gross	vii
----------------------------	-----

PART ONE

1. THE EARLY MARRIED LIFE OF THE MORELS	3
2. THE BIRTH OF PAUL, AND ANOTHER BATTLE	28
3. THE CASTING OFF OF MOREL— THE TAKING ON OF WILLIAM	46
4. THE YOUNG LIFE OF PAUL	58
5. PAUL LAUNCHES INTO LIFE	83
6. DEATH IN THE FAMILY	113

PART TWO

7. LAD-AND-GIRL LOVE	143
8. STRIFE IN LOVE	180
9. DEFEAT OF MIRIAM	215
10. CLARA	251
11. THE TEST ON MIRIAM	276
12. PASSION	299
13. BAXTER DAWES	338
14. THE RELEASE	375
15. DERELICT	406

PART ONE

THE EARLY MARRIED LIFE OF THE MORELS

"The Bottoms" succeeded to "Hell Row." Hell Row was a block of thatched, bulging cottages that stood by the brookside on Greenhill Lane. There lived the colliers who worked in the little gin-pits two fields away. The brook ran under the alder trees, scarcely soiled by these small mines, whose coal was drawn to the surface by donkeys that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin. And all over the countryside were these same pits, some of which had been worked in the time of Charles II, the few colliers and the donkeys burrowing down like ants into the earth, making queer mounds and little black places among the corn-fields and the meadows. And the cottages of these coal-miners, in blocks and pairs here and there, together with odd farms and homes of the stockingers, straying over the parish, formed the village of Bestwood.

Then, some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers. The coal and iron field of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was discovered. Carston, Waite and Co. appeared. Amid tremendous excitement, Lord Palmerston formally opened the company's first mine at Spinney Park, on the edge of Sherwood Forest.

About this time the notorious Hell Row, which through growing old had acquired an evil reputation, was burned down, and much dirt was cleansed away.

Carston, Waite & Co. found they had struck on a good thing, so, down the valleys of the brooks from Selby and Nuttall, new mines were sunk, until soon there were six pits working. From Nuttall, high up on the sandstone among the woods, the railway ran, past the ruined priory of the Carthusians and past Robin Hood's Well, down to Spinney Park, then on to Minton, a large mine among corn-fields; from Minton across the farmlands of the valleyside to Bunker's Hill, branching off there, and running north to Beggarlee and Selby, that looks over at Crich and the hills of Derbyshire: six mines like black studs on the countryside, linked by a loop of fine chain, the railway.

To accommodate the regiments of miners, Carston, Waite and

Co. built the Squares, great quadrangles of dwellings on the hillside of Bestwood, and then, in the brook valley, on the site of Hell Row, they erected the Bottoms.

The Bottoms consisted of six blocks of miners' dwellings, two rows of three, like the dots on a blank-six domino, and twelve houses in a block. This double row of dwellings sat at the foot of the rather sharp slope from Bestwood, and looked out, from the attic windows at least, on the slow climb of the valley towards Selby.

The houses themselves were substantial and very decent. One could walk all round, seeing little front gardens with auriculas and saxifrage in the shadow of the bottom block, sweet-williams and pinks in the sunny top block; seeing neat front windows, little porches, little privet hedges, and dormer windows for the attics. But that was outside; that was the view on to the uninhabited parlours of all the colliers' wives. The dwelling-room, the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scrubby back garden, and then at the ash-pits. And between the rows, between the long lines of ash-pits, went the alley, where the children played and the women gossiped and the men smoked. So, the actual conditions of living in the Bottoms, that was so well built and that looked so nice, were quite unsavoury because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchens opened on to that nasty alley of ash-pits.

Mrs. Morel was not anxious to move into the Bottoms, which was already twelve years old and on the downward path, when she descended to it from Bestwood. But it was the best she could do. Moreover, she had an end house in one of the top blocks, and thus had only one neighbour; on the other side an extra strip of garden. And, having an end house, she enjoyed a kind of aristocracy among the other women of the "between" houses, because her rent was five shillings and sixpence instead of five shillings a week. But this superiority in station was not much consolation to Mrs. Morel.

She was thirty-one years old, and had been married eight years. A rather small woman, of delicate mould but resolute bearing, she shrank a little from the first contact with the Bottoms women. She came down in the July, and in the September expected her third baby.

Her husband was a miner. They had only been in their new home three weeks when the wakes, or fair, began. Morel, she knew, was sure to make a holiday of it. He went off early on the