Chapter 2

Sons and Lovers

and

The Concept of Ardhanarishvar

Lawrence’s early attitude towards India and her thought and culture was rather ambivalent. His mind was suspended between two extremes of repulsion and fascination. As early as in 1916, he found Hindu “horribly decadent”\(^1\) and asked people not to be look towards East for inspiration. Again in 1922, he ventilated his disgust with “the nasty faces and the yellow robes of the Buddhist mocks, the little vulgar dens of the temples.”\(^2\) However, much at the same time, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell in 1915, he admired (as quoted earlier) the Ajanta frescoes as “the most perfect things,” “the zenith of a very lovely civilisation,” and the expression of “perfect intimate relation between the men and the women; so simple and complete, such a very perfection of passion, a fulness, a whole blossom.”\(^3\) Lawrence might have thought of the decadence of the Hindu culture and vulgarity of the Ceylonian monasteries but at the same time he was well aware of the achievements of Indian art and the inclusiveness of Indian life which accepted sex as something central to human life. In view of his appreciation of Indian way of life, it is not to difficult to trace the development of his inclusive view of the phallic consciousness from Indian sources.
It is interesting to see how gradually Lawrence comes to realize the centrality of sex in human life. He launches his career with the intention of imparting the education of real sexuality to his generation which was rather confused by the conflicting theories of sexuality prevalent in the early twentieth century. He declares in Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover: "I want men and women to be able to think sex, fully, completely, honestly, and cleanly." He was conscious of the fact that sexual urge is one of the most important urges of the body. It was as powerful as other things. In his poem, he refers to this urge as a hunger:

The hunger for the woman. Alas,
it is so deep a Moloch, ruthless and strong,
'tis like the unutterable name of the dead Lord,
not to be spoken aloud.

Although conscious of the deep rootedness, ruthlessness, and the strength of the sexual urge, Lawrence does not promote the sexual urge at the expense of life. Furthermore, he does not associate the sexual urge with the physical body; rather he goes on to associate it with soul. Evidently, his sexuality or for that matter phallicism, as discussed in the first Chapter, is not limited. It is no way to associate with the male organ and virility. It neither denotes the superiority of male over female nor does it suggest the submission of the female to his male. To Lawrence, the phallic consciousness is more than cerebral sex-consciousness. It is, in fact, an acceptance of the body, its power, its glory with virility and otherness as its chief aspects.
In fact, Lawrence floats a new idea of sexuality quite unknown to the Western world. He dismisses the idea of the cerebral sexuality and puts forward the idea of all inclusive sex i.e. an integrated idea of sex. In *Apropos* Lawrence writes:

So that at last I begin to see the point of my critics’ abuse of my exalting of sex. They only know one form of sex: in fact, to them there is only one form of sex: the nervous, personal, disintegrative sort, the “white” sex. And this, of course, is something to be flowery and false about, but nothing to be very hopeful about. I quite agree. And I quite agree, we can have no hope of the regeneration of England from such sort of sex.\(^6\)

For Lawrence sex is not a physical act but an instrument which relates man and woman. It is a flow between the two which defines chastity as well as the mysterious and subtle communication between the two. It is a lasting flow which cannot be equated with sex desire which is only periodical. While sex desire appears and disappears but the flow of sex continues in its manifold forms. As Lawrence thinks this dynamic desire goes on changing during the course of “life-long travelling.” He writes in “We Need One Another”:

The relationship is a life-long change and a life-long travelling. And that is sex. At periods, sex-desire itself departs completely. Yet the great flow of the relationship goes on all the same, undying, and this is the flow of living sex, the relation between man and woman, that lasts a life-time, and of which sex-desire is only one vivid, most vivid, manifestation.\(^7\)

Lawrence defines this idea of sex as the living sex which denotes the flow of “genuine feelings, between the individuals of opposite sexes.”\(^8\) In the opinion of Lawrence, this sort of sexuality can be realized through “centralized sexuality (and what Lawrence describes as “conjunction”).”\(^9\) As Nahal
explains, "the purest form of centralized sexuality conceives of a relationship between one man and one woman – the same man and the same woman, holding on to the magic for each other all their life." This centralized sexuality overcomes the fluctuation of love and puts togetherness as well as the otherness of man and woman to each other on a solid foothold.

While defining this new idea of centralized sexuality or conjunction, Lawrence puts forth a revolutionary idea of marriage. Since this conjunction can be materialized only though marriage, he goes on to interpret this institution in religious terms. However, these religious terms are not Christian but typically Lawrentian. In Christianity the sacrament of marriage is based on moral ground which invariably involves the fear of God. But in Lawrence it is based on the law of Consummate Marriage, "that every living thing seeks individually and collectively." For him the basis of marriage is a genuine desire which comes from the inmost regions of the inmost being, from the soul itself. It demands sexual faithfulness which is rather instinctive. He writes in Apropos: "The instinct of fidelity is perhaps the deepest instinct in the great complex we call sex. Where there is real sex there is the underlying passion for fidelity."

It is only through such a marriage that man can unlock the mysteries of sex and realize the divinity of sexual power. In his essay "The Novel" he speaks of the flame of sex in terms of power, equating it with such symbols as of stripped tiger and the king cobra. However, this sort of marriage which is endless in its character, can take place only between what Middleton Murry
calls “a regenerated man and a regenerated woman.” The real source of this marriage is not love but intuition. Lawrence attacks modern love stating that it is the counterfeit, it is not the voice of soul but only the promptings of the ego. The genuine love and marriage have their sources in the soul. Attacking counterfeit love he writes in *Apropos*: “All love today is counterfeit. It is a stereotyped thing. All the young know just how they ought to feel and how they ought to behave, in love. And they feel and they behave like that. And it is counterfeit love.”

According to Lawrence it is through sex man and woman discover themselves, their true identity as male and female, and the otherness of each other. In his opinion a single man and a single woman are only torn personalities incomplete in themselves. Through union they fulfil themselves. This union does not imply the inferiority and the superiority of the male or the female. It does not entail annihilation of either partners nor does it require submission or surrender. But since woman belongs biologically, psychologically, and physically to man, she should make a joyful surrender admitting the importance of phallus, a superior symbol of energy. Lawrence frequently describes male as a Phoenix and female as a nest. He asks them to accept their mutual otherness that makes this very life. In this regard Lawrence says:

[His] nest, make the conjunction that is a temple of beauty and joy; beauty and joy not in some remote, future state but within the grasp of their hands and their feet and their loins now – their physical bodies replenished and fed by the sun, and the stars, and
the planets; drawing life from the universe, passing on life to each other; creating new life.\textsuperscript{15}

In \textit{Apropos}, the novelist writes:

Marriage is the clue to human life, but there is no marriage apart from the wheeling sun and the nodding earth, from the straying of the planets and the magnificence of the fixed stars. Is not a man different, utterly different, at dawn from what he is at sunset? and a women too? And does not the changing harmony and discord of their variation make the secret music of life?

This is marriage, the mystery of marriage, marriage which fulfils itself here, in this life. We may well believe that in heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage. All this has to be fulfilled here, and if it is not fulfilled here, it will never be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{16}

Indeed, marriage is conspicuously an earthly institution but it opens the doors of heaven. During the union man achieves a state of impersonality and indifference akin to the highest state of human consciousness, a state which enables one to achieve salvation.

In this way Lawrence’s phallic consciousness revolves round the notions of sex as a cosmic power and the central urge of body which could be realized through consummation or centralized sexuality of marriage, that eventually leads to the higher state of consciousness and ultimately to salvation. These notions of Lawrence betray a close kinship with the of Indian notions of phallic consciousness. Lawrence’s conception of sex as a cosmic power has its parallels in the Indian notions of this world as a Mathuni (sexual) creation. His views of the cosmic influences on marriage and human relations are a pervasive element in Indian philosophy. Likewise, his idea of sex as the greatest of the
human urges seems to have an echo of *Rig Veda* which reads: "Man longs for woman, natural as the parched frogs longing for the rains."  

However, the best example of the kinship between Indian and Lawrentian phallic consciousness is an integrated view of sex and its centrality in human life. In India sex is the most dominant element in human life. It is the chief of the four supreme values of life (Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha). It is supreme in the sense that it influences the other three values. Celibacy (Brahmacharya) is not possible without understanding the nature of true sexuality. The idea of the reverence of sex is also crucial for a man occupied with economic activities. He requires to maintain a balance between his domestic life which involves sex among other things and his quest for the money. Likewise, sex has also played an important role in salvation. The fulfilment of sex and its eventual sublimation are necessary preconditions to liberation.

Furthermore, Lawrence’s conception of marriage as a centralized sexuality bringing fulfilment and liberation, has unmistakable resonances of Indian view of marriage as the eternal union of two souls united in the quest of salvation. This union is based on biological, physical, psychical, and spiritual needs. It is rooted in the genuine desire that comes from the soul. This union, though requiring a joyful surrender, is based on the principle of equality. It requires a type of submission that we find in the lives of Sita, Dropadi, and Radha which are not only joyful and loving but also selfless. The elements of equality and independence of womankind are also discernible in the ancient
custom of Swayamvara through which a girl had the freedom of choosing her husband among many suitors.

Coming to *Sons and Lovers*, we find that the novel embodies the earliest stirrings of Lawrence’s phallic consciousness fortified by Indian phallic elements. Nevertheless, these concepts are yet to assume a definite shape. For the most part, they mark a tension between the negative and the positive aspects of sexuality and marriage. The central core of the novel is certainly sex. It forms more or less both the thematic and the structural principles of the book. The story of the novel presents human relations in terms of sexual relations. It presents man and woman’s suffering because of their failed sex relationship. The marriage of Walter Morel and Gertrude Morel fails chiefly because they have false notions of sexuality and marriage. The life of William is doomed, because he fails to establish a balance between his mother who adopts him as a husband substitute and his girl friends who want him to consume. The same lot waits for Paul Morel who is not able to establish and maintain satisfactory sex relation either with Miriam or with Clara. In this way we find that the question of relationship among all the chief characters is resolved only by their sexual needs. Structurally, while the first part of the novel exemplifies sons adopted as lovers or husband substitutes, the second part demonstrates the failure of the hero in his affairs with two women, rather in his failure to develop satisfactory sexual relations with either of them.

*Sons and Lovers* is in fact an acute critical analysis of sexuality and marriage. As for sexuality the novel examines its various aspects ranging from
the passional to the ideal including the religious. It also evaluates love both from the physical and the spiritual angles. Sex, as demonstrated through the character of its protagonist Paul Morel, is a paradoxical element. It is more like a problem and even like a disease. Paul seems to voice, the feeling of his generation which was confused regarding sex and love and which was incapable of solving the subsequent problems of life. Most young men of Paul’s time failed to reconcile the emotional demands of their mothers and their lovers and to endure the tension which came to clot their emotional and intellectual life. In chapter X of his novel titled “Clara,” Lawrence describes this tension, felt not only by Paul but by all his contemporaries:

He was like so many young men of his own age. Sex had become so complicated in him that he would have denied that he ever could want Clara or Miriam or any other woman whom he knew. Sex desire was a sort of detached thing, that did not belong to a woman. He loved Miriam with his soul. He grew warm at the thought of Clara, he battled with her, he knew the curves of her breast and shoulders as if they had been moulded inside him; and yet he did not positively desire her. He would have denied it for ever. He believed himself really bound to Miriam.18

Paul’s dilemma is not in reality the dilemma between two different types of women, but between two different types of sexuality and love, the one being physical, the other being spiritual or what is known as the brain love or cerebral sexuality. Clara represents physical sexuality in its full glory—the primal sex which goes on to rise to the state of mysterious force engulfing the entire cosmos. In his chapter entitled “Passion,” Lawrence describes the beauty of Clara’s body which virtually sweeps Paul off his feet:
She turned to him with a splendid movement. Her mouth was offered him, and her throat; her eyes were half shut; her breast was tilted as if it asked for him. He flashed with a small laugh, shut his eyes, and met her in a long, whole kiss. Her mouth fused with his; their bodies were sealed and annealed. It was some minutes before they withdrew. They were standing beside the public path.

(Sons and Lovers 376)

The passion which engulfs, Paul and Clara, is bigger than them. It is a life that is not only strange and strong but wild like the life of nature that inundates not only the natural objects but the whole cosmos as such. In chapter XIII, entitled “Baxter Dawes,” Lawrence writes:

All the while the peewits were screaming in the field. When he came to, he wondered what was near his eyes, curving and strong with life in the dark, and what voice it was speaking. Then he realized it was the grass, and the peewit was calling. The warmth was Clara’s breathing heaving. He lifted his head, and looked into her eyes. They were dark and shining and strange, life wild at the source staring into his life, stranger to him, yet meeting him; and he put his face down on her throat, afraid. What was she? A strong, strange, wild life, that breathed with his in the darkness through this hour. It was all so much bigger than themselves that he was hushed. They had met, and included in their meeting the thrust of the manifold grass-stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars.

(Sons and Lovers 430)

This overwhelming and blinding passion is like that of Adam and Eve after the loss of their innocence, a passion which involves initiation and satisfaction and which appears as a great and magnificent power of life. Lawrence goes on to add:

And after such an evening they both were very still, having known the immensity of passion. They felt small, half afraid, childish, and wondering, like Adam and Eve when they
lost their innocence and realized the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise and across the great night and the great day of humanity. It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass-blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life.

(Sons and Lovers 430-431)

If Clara represents physical sexuality, Miriam represents spiritual sexuality which involves cerebral love or love in brain. It is not that this type of sexuality does not involve sexual act. It certainly involves physical interaction but that interaction is executed in a spirit of self-sacrifice. As such it does not demand so much physical satisfaction as the spiritual contentment. Hence this sort of interaction goes against the very spirit of sex as something mutually satisfying. It should not be presumed in any case that Miriam has no sex instinct. She has a hot desire which burns as a flame. Her rival Clara is well aware of Miriam’s sexual demands, as she tells Paul in unambiguous terms in the following dialogue:

‘I do! I know she wants a sort of soul union.’
‘But how do you know what she wants?’
‘I’ve been with her for seven years.’
‘And you haven’t found out the very first thing about her.’
‘What’s that?’
‘That she doesn’t want any of your soul communion. That’s your own imagination. She wants you.’

(Sons and Lovers 339)
But the sexuality that comes in the wake of spiritual love is self defeating. It is more an act of sacrifice than an interaction of the two loving bodies, delightful, relieving, and enlivening, the fullflow of sexual energy or the vital life force. As an evidence we can refer to chapter “The Test on Miriam” in which Lawrence sketches Miriam like a creature awaiting sacrifice. To quote him:

He never forgot seeing her as she lay on the bed, when he was unfastening his collar. First he saw only her beauty, and was blind with it. She had the most beautiful body he had ever imagined. He stood unable to move or speak, looking at her, his face half smiling with wonder. And then he wanted her, but as he went forward to her, her hands lifted in a little pleading movement, and he looked at her face, and stopped. Her big brown eyes were watching him, still and resigned and loving; she lay as if she had given herself up to sacrifice: there was her body for him; but the look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting immolation, arrested him, and all his blood fell back. (Sons and Lovers 353-354)

Miriam’s spirit of self sacrifice disgusts Paul so much so that he decides not to continue with her. But she continues to follow her spirit of self-sacrifice. She learns no lesson from her defeat inflicted by the passional love of Clara. In the end of the novel when Paul returns to her, she becomes prepared to marry him but not for herself but for the sake of Paul. To quote from the last chapter “Derelict”:

She turned her face aside; then, raising herself with dignity, she took his head to her bosom, and rocked him softly. She was not to have him, then! So she could comfort him. She put her fingers through his hair. For her, the anguished sweetness of self-sacrifice. For him, the hate and misery of another failure. He could not bear it – that breast which was warm and which
cradled him without taking the burden of him. So much he wanted to rest on her that the faint of rest only tortured him. He drew away.

(Sons and Lovers 508)

Besides, Clara’s physical sexuality and Miriam’s spiritual sexuality, there is another type of sexuality which represents sex as a regenerative power through which man is daily reborn. In his unpublished foreword of Sons and Lovers, Lawrence speaks of this sexuality. In his opinion, sex is an instrument of release and rebirth. The tired man who has exhausted his vitality and damaged his cells by hardwork during the day, gets a new lease of life in union with his wife every night. To quote Lawrence:

Now every woman, according to her kind, demands that a man shall come home to her with joy and weariness of the work he has done during the day: that he shall then while he is with her, be re-born of her; that in the morning he shall go forth with his new strength.19

Sexuality as a regenerative power appears in Sons and Lovers as an unrealized experience. It is visible only as the flickering of a great idea, as we see the marriage between Walter and Gertrude, that produced this experience only for three months. Likewise, the marriage of Clara and Baxter also demonstrated this experience more in its failure than in its fulfilment. Of the other marriages solemnized, especially those of Annie, his sister and Arthur, his brother we have no information. It is remarkable that William and Paul despite their hectic love activities could not come to the marriage point.

Evidently, sexuality in Sons and Lovers never reaches Lawrence’s ideal of centralized sexuality nor does the ideal of love which is so closely associated
with the ideal sexuality. Lawrence aspires for a state beyond love or hate as he finds that our desires are rooted in the unknown i.e. in the creation itself. In his essay on "Love" he tells us:

There is that which we cannot love, because it surpasses either love or hate. There is the unknown and the unknowable which propounds all creation. This we cannot love, we can only accept it as a term of our own limitation and ratification. We can only know that from the unknown, profound desires enter in upon us, and that the fulfilling of these desires is the fulfilling of creation. We know that the rose comes to blossom. We know that we are incipient with blossom. It is our business to go as we are impelled, with faith and pure spontaneous morality, knowing that the rose blossoms, and taking that knowledge for sufficient.20

We do not find such an exalted ideal of love in Sons and Lovers. The elements which bring Walter and Gertrude together simply generated from the attraction of the positive and the negative. The two persons feel a magnetic pull by the elements which they actually lack. William's relations with his girl friends never rise above flirtation. Paul because of his mother-fixation, cannot make a serious attempt to win Miriam and Clara. On their part Gertrude, Miriam, and Clara do not try to develop a true sense of love. Love for them always remains a complicated emotion and even an obsession which each one of them fail to overcome. Miriam's dilemma is actually the dilemma of women who have a false notion of love as an instrument of possession. Although Miriam is aware of the divine roots of love, she is not able to come to terms with herself. Even her earnest prayer does not solve her problem. To quote from the novel:

'O Lord, let me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him.'
Something anomalous in the prayer arrested her. She lifted her head and pondered. How could it be wrong to love him? Love was God's gift. And yet it caused her shame. That was because of him, Paul Morel. But, then, it was not his affair, it was her own, between herself and God. She was to be a sacrifice. But it was God's sacrifice, not Paul Morel's or her own. After a few minutes she hid her face in the pillow again, and said:

'But, Lord, if it is Thy will that I should love him, make me love him – as Christ would, who died for the souls of men. Make me love him splendidly, because he is Thy son.'

(Sons and Lovers 212)

Meanwhile Paul's attitude towards Miriam is not inspired by genuine love but only by a sexual flame produced by the rush of blood. It is just the opposite of what Miriam feels, while he is mad to crush her on his breast. She eventually feels suppressed into a shame:

He did not know himself what was the matter. He was naturally so young, and their intimacy was so abstract, he did not know he wanted to crush her to on his breast to ease the ache there. He was afraid of her. The fact that he might want her as a man wants a woman had in him been suppressed into a shame. When she shrank in her convulsed, coiled torture from the thought of such a thing, he had winced to the depths of his soul. And now this 'purity' prevented even their first love-kiss. It was as if she could scarcely stand the shock of physical love, even a passionate kiss, and then he was too shrinking and sensitive to give it.

(Sons and Lovers 220-221)

Such attitude cannot serve the basis of an exalted and lasting experience of love or centralized sexuality. Both Miriam and Paul are conscious of the demeaning nature of their love. Miriam, in the end of the novel, remarks that she should die smothered in the type of love that Paul is to offer. To quote her:
'I know you do. But - you love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I should die there smothered.' She bent her head, put her finger between her lips, while the bitterness surged up in her heart.

(Sons and Lovers 506-507)

What is the outcome of such a love? Only disgust and nothing else. Such a love can inspire only a decision to leave the world and to retire to the wilderness. We can mark this sense from Paul’s answer to Miriam’s question:

‘And what will you do otherwise?’ she asked.
‘I don’t know - go on, I suppose. Perhaps I shall soon go abroad.’

(Sons and Lovers 507)

The soul love, which Miriam has to offer, cannot solve a young man’s problem whose life can be redeemed only by a true centralized sexuality. Miriam is not a girl who can restore Paul’s confidence in life and save him from the clutches of that terrible will to destroy himself or to die. She cannot become his strength because she is perhaps enclosed in her little self, demanding spirit love. Lawrence writes:

It was the end then between them. She could not take him and relieve him of the responsibility of himself. She could only sacrifice herself to him - sacrifice herself every day, gladly. And that he did not want. He wanted her to hold him and say, with joy and authority: ‘Stop all this restlessness and beating against death. You are mine for a mate.’ She had not the strength. Or was it a mate she wanted? or did she want a Christ in him?

(Sons and Lovers 508)

In the end Miriam is embittered because of the rejection of her sacrificing love. For her life becomes dark:
She stood before the mirror pinning on her hat. How bitter, how unutterably bitter, it made her that he rejected her sacrifice! Life ahead looked dead, as if the glow were gone out. She bowed her face over the flowers – the freesias so sweet and spring-like, the scarlet anemones flaunting over the table. It was like him to have those flowers.

(Sons and Lovers 509)

Her lover’s condition is no better. He is overtaken by a self-destructive will, finding himself engulfed in an all-devouring night of nothingness:

On every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him, so tiny a spark, into extinction, and yet, almost nothing, he could not be extinct. Night, in which everything was lost, went reaching out, beyond stars and sun. Stars and sun, a few bright grains, went spinning round for terror, and holding each other in embrace, there in a darkness that outpassed them all, and left them tiny and daunted. So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing.

(Sons and Lovers 510)

Likewise, in Sons and Lovers Lawrence fails to realize his ideal of marriage as an instrument of realizing his other ideal i.e. the ideal of centralized sexuality. Nonetheless, in its failure lies the germs of his ultimate ideal of a marriage. In the novel there is no joy, no communion, and no spontaneity which come in the wake of the ideal Lawrentian marriage. Nor is there a sense of belonging or a genuine sex desire or mutual discovery. There is simply emptiness and wandering passion. The protagonist and the characters of the novel are yet to feel togetherness, communion, and the redeeming power of tolerance and respect which forgives lapses of faith and fidelity. Yet there are sufficient hints, at least in the end of the novel, suggesting reverence for the institution of marriage.
The main story of the novel is based on the repercussion of a failed marriage. It is the marriage of Walter and Gertrude. The germs of their failure lie in their decision to marry. The two persons are so radically different in their nature, character, and attitude towards life. They come from so different social milieu and they have so different upbringing that the chances of the success of their union are remote. Their desire for marriage is neither genuine nor natural. It springs rather from the mysterious pull of the negatives. When Walter Morel aged twenty-seven meets twenty-three year old Gertrude Coppard, he seems “melted away before her.” To him, Gertrude appears a “thing of mystery and fascination.” Equally overwhelmed is the lady, as she finds her male counterpart rather wonderful. She is swept off her feet, because she has never “met anyone like him.” Although she was brought up in a strictly puritan way of life and was rather contemptuous of dancing, she is taken away by the very same thing which she lacks in her life. Lawrence writes how the wavy hair and the melodious voice of the miner cast a spell over her mind and how her puritan self feels the impact of the sensuous flame of his life:

Therefore the dusky, golden softness of this man’s sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her.

(Sons and Lovers 18)

The elements of mystery, wonder, and sensuous fascination can certainly produce an overwhelming sense of attraction, but they cannot form the basis of a lasting passion, and involving love and ensuring a successful
marriage. Naturally, as Lawrence writes, they feel perfectly happy only for three months. Thereafter they begin to visualize the cracks, which ultimately make their life a virtual hell. Their life becomes a battle ground. To quote Lawrence:

There began a battle between the husband and wife — a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it — it drove him out of his mind.

(Sons and Lovers 23)

Mrs. Morel fails to deal her husband, the way she likes. Subsequently she begins to despise, loath, and hate the person whom she once liked. At one time, when Walter crops the curly hair of William, she thinks of even murdering her husband. [“I could kill you, I could!” she said. She choked with rage, her two fists uplifted” (Sons and Lovers 24)]. Henceforth she throws Walter out of her life and circumstances systemically in a ruthless manner. She goes on to the extent of refusing to acknowledge her husband’s existence, believing herself to be a woman without husband even after marriage [“I’ve never had a husband — not really . . . .” (Sons and Lovers 262)].

Over and above it she begins to minimize the importance of marriage as a social institution. We can recall her statement made to her son in the chapter entitled “Death in the Family”:

‘My boy, remember you’re taking your life in your hands,’ said Mrs. Morel. ‘Nothing is as bad as a marriage that’s a hopeless failure. Mine was bad enough, God knows, and ought
to teach you something; but it might have been worse by a long chalk.'

(Sons and Lovers 164)

Mrs. Morel's negative attitude towards marriage influences Paul as well. For he also feels the dreadful nature of marriage which one has to endure. He tells Miriam in chapter "The Test on Miriam":

'But all my life. Mother said to me, "There is one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but you have to bear it." And I believed it.'

'And still believe,' he said.

(Sons and Lovers 355)

This experience of marriage is not attuned to Lawrence's ideal which regards marriage as the meeting ground of man and woman and as the instrument of wholeness. He states this ideal in The Plumed Serpent. To quote him:

Remember the marriage is a meeting-ground, and the meeting-ground is the star. If there be no star, no meeting-ground, no true coming together of man with the woman, into a wholeness, there is no marriage. And if there is no marriage, there is nothing but an agitation. If there is no honourable meeting of man with woman and woman with man, there is no good thing come to pass. But if the meeting come to pass, then whosoever betrays the abiding place, which is the meeting-ground, which is that which lives like a star between day and night, between the dark of woman and the dawn of man, between man's night and woman's morning, shall never be forgiven, neither here nor in the hereafter. For man is frail and woman is frail, and none can draw the line which another shall walk. But the star that is between two people and is their meeting-ground shall not be betrayed.21

The wholeness implies the honourable meeting of man and woman in a spirit of equality. In this meeting there should be a sense of mutual
satisfaction. There is no question of sacrifice. It is a joyous desire which belittles other things like shyness or religiosity. In his heart of hearts Paul is well aware that the type of marriage which involves joy but sacrifice, is degrading and negative. While contemplating his marriage with Miriam, Paul expresses his contempt for the element of sacrifice in marriage:

Then, if they could get things right, they would marry; but he would not marry unless he could feel strong in the joy of it — never. He could not have faced his mother. It seemed to him that to sacrifice himself in a marriage he did not want would be degrading, and would undo all his life, make it a nullity. He would try what he could do.

(Sons and Lovers 340)

The element of sacrifice cannot produce the type of sexual pleasure that one wants. It renders the partners either sexless or dead. Moved by the spirit of sacrifice Miriam, though possessing a “beautiful body,” cannot provide Paul the type of physical satisfaction which he longs for. No wonder the sight of Miriam lying on bed as a creature awaiting sacrifice becomes rather disgusting to him:

She was very quite, very calm. She only realized that she was doing something for him. He could hardly bear it. She lay to be sacrificed for him because she loved him so much. And he had to sacrifice her. For a second, he wished he were sexless or dead. Then he shut his eyes again to her, and his blood beat back again.

(Sons and Lovers 354)

However, Miriam’s attitude towards marriage though based on cerebral sexuality or soul love, does not minimize the institution of marriage. It rather promotes it, making it a precondition before sexual relation. She seems to
believe that it is marriage which can save frustrated man from the noose of self-destruction. Hence it is natural for a women adhering to the spiritual love to sacrifice herself in marriage in order to rescue Paul from the deadly ditch of disappointment in life. Let us see how she comforts Paul:

She bowed her head in silence. He lay feeling his despair come up again.
‘I’m not sure,’ he said slowly, ‘that marriage would be much good.’
‘I only think of you,’ she replied.

(Sons and Lovers 506)

But Paul does not accept her offer, as he wants rather to have her without marriage. But Miriam tells him in unequivocal terms:

‘And without marriage we can do nothing?’ he asked.
His mouth was lifted from his teeth with pain. She put her little finger between her lips.
‘No,’ she said, low and like the toll of a bell. ‘No, I think not.’

(Sons and Lovers 508)

Albeit, neither Miriam nor Paul anticipates Lawrence’s view of marriage as an instrument of centralized sexuality. Nevertheless, Miriam’s view-point at least suggests that marriage is the precondition of the realization of true sexuality. Her idea of married sex sans spirit love that seems to be a forerunner of Lawrentian idea, is unfolded in the subsequent novels.

On the whole, in the self-sacrificing spirit of Miriam, we find the glimpses of a typical Indian woman who is ready to sacrifice everything for her lover rather husband but who at the same time bluntly refuses sex before marriage. In her zeal to preserve her virginity Miriam seems an embodiment of
Indian woman. When Paul tries to initiate her into sexual life, she tries to put him off with the arguments which are typically Indian in their purpose. And even when she decides to give herself to Paul, her reaction is characteristically of an Indian woman who can give up her ideals to please her lover. Miriam surrenders not because she is sexually excited but because she becomes prepared for the sake of Paul. The dialogue between Paul and Miriam is a classical exposition of the psychical condition of a woman torn by the conflicting demands of her lover and her female ego. We can do no better than to cite the dialogue in detail:

As she stood under the drooping thorn-tree, in the darkness by the roadside, he kissed her, and his fingers wandered over her face. In the darkness, where he could not see her but only feel her, his passion flooded him. He clasped her very close. 'Sometime you will have me?' he murmured, hiding his face on her shoulder. It was so difficult.

'Not now,' she said.

His hopes and his heart sank. A dreariness came over him.

'No,' he said.

His clasp of her slackened.

'I love to feel your arm there!' she said, pressing his arm against her back, where it went round her waist. 'It rests me so.'

He tightened the pressure of his arm upon the small of her back to rest her.

'We belong to each other,' he said.

'Yes.'

'Then why shouldn’t we belong to each other altogether?'

'But — ' she faltered.

'I know it’s a lot of ask,' he said; 'but there’s not much risk for you really — not in the Gretchen way. You can trust me there?'

'Oh, I can trust you,' The answer came quick and strong.

'It’s not that — it’s not that at all — but —'

'What?'

She hid her face in his neck with a little cry of misery.

'I don’t know!' she cried.

She seemed slightly hysterical, but with a sort of horror.
His heart died in him.

‘You don’t think it ugly?’ he asked.
‘No, not now. You have taught me it isn’t.’
‘You are afraid?’
She calmed herself hastily.
‘Yes, I am only afraid,’ she said.
He kissed her tenderly.
‘Never mind,’ he said, ‘You shall please yourself.’
Suddenly she gripped his arms round her, and clenched her body stiff.
‘You shall have me,’ she said, through her shut teeth.
His heart beat up again like fire. He folded her close, and his mouth was on her throat. She could not bear it. She drew away. He disengaged her.
‘Won’t you be late?’ she asked gently.
He sighed, scarcely hearing what she said. She waited, wishing he would go. At last he kissed her quickly and climbed the fence. Looking round he saw the pale blotch of her face down in the darkness under the hanging tree. There was no more of her but this pale blotch.
‘Good-bye!’ he called softly. She had no body, only a voice and a dim face. He turned away and ran down the road, his fists clenched; and when he came to the wall over the lake he leaned there, almost stunned, looking up the black water.

(Sons and Lovers 345-346)

Besides the presence of Indian flavour in Lawrence’s conceptions of centralized sexuality, marriage, and love as well as the character of Miriam, we can find in the novel the elements of Ardhanarishvar which are so central to Indian phallic consciousness. The core of this conception, as mentioned earlier, is the androgynous character of reality which entails the presence of the male and the female elements in human body. In Shaivism Shiva is Ardhanarishvar in the sense that he embodies in himself both Shiva and Shakti in their elemental forms. Following this idea every human being whether man or woman contains in his or her body, the elements of his or her counterpart.
Lawrence's conception of reality has an stamp of the Shaivita Ardhanarishvar. It is interesting to note that he describes reality as the pair of universal opposites like infinite darkness and infinite light. He conceives of human life as well in terms of this duality, which he subsequently defines as the masculine and the feminine principles reminiscent of the Chinese principles of the Yin and the Yang or the modern principles of the sun and the moon energies. But let us remember that he uses these words, the male and the female, not in terms of sex but only in terms of the elements or principles which are opposite in nature. Furthermore, he interprets this duality of principles not merely as a dichotomy but also as a conflict which ultimately assumes the form of polarity. Lawrence believes that this polarity works at every level social as well as individual. On the social level it is visible in the form of the male and the female, while on the individual level it surfaces in the male and the female elements inside the psyche. He also tells us that these elements also tend to reconcile reaching at a stage, where the conflict is transcended. There is still a tension but this tension is sublimated into a still tension, "life – sustaining and life-creating, forbidding for ever the merging of the opposites, and maintaining both in a state of mutual complementary balance."22

Lawrence's conception of polarity is more in the nature of Shaivite nondualism than in the nature of Shanhya dualism of Prakriti and Purush. In Lawrence we find a constant struggle of duality constantly and consistently trying to reconcile into unity. He visualizes this struggle both individual and
social levels. In his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, he explains this struggle as a struggle for predominance. To quote him:

> For every man comprises male and female in his being, the male always struggling for predominance. A women likewise consists in male and female, with female predominant.

> And a man who is strongly male tends to deny, to refute the female in him. A real “man” takes no heed for his body, which is the more female part of him. He considers himself only as an instrument, to be used in the service of some idea.

> The true female, on the other hand, will eternally hold herself superior to any idea, will hold full life in the body to be the real happiness. The male exists in doing, the female in being. The male lives in the satisfaction of some purpose achieved, the female in the satisfaction of some purpose contained.\(^{23}\)

We are, in this study, not so much concerned with this on going struggle for hegemony but with the presence of male and female element in one and the same body which is the key-note of Ardhanarishvar. In *Sons and Lovers*, these elements are present in the character of Paul, who is, according to Faith Pullin, “a male version of Mrs. Morel.”\(^{24}\)

Paul was now fourteen, and was looking for work. He was a rather small and rather finely-made boy, with dark brown hair and light blue eyes.\(^{25}\)

Paul’s personality is a mixture of male and female elements. He is very much conscious of these elements. It is no wonder that he “considers himself a better woman than any of the actual women that he encounters.”\(^{26}\) We can obtain an idea of Paul’s feminine attributes from his dialogue with Clara:

> “I have no doubt,” said Clara, “that you would much rather fight for a women than let her fight for herself.”

> “I would. When she fights for herself she seems like a dog before a looking-glass, gone into a mad fury with its own shadow.”
"And you are the looking-glass?" she asked, with a curl of the lip.
"Or the shadow," he replied.
"I am afraid," she said, "that you are too clever."
"Well, I leave it to you to be good," he retorted, laughing "Be good sweet maid, and just let me be clever." 27

In fact Paul is in many ways the replica of his creator's character, sharing many of his qualities and obsessions. Pullin states that Lawrence's personality was androgynous embodying the elements of both the sexes. This part of Lawrence's character surfaces mostly in his portraits of female characters of his novels. To quote him:

In his portrait of women, he is usually defining some aspect of himself, rather than attempting the creation of the other sex. Many critics have argued that Lawrence (whether homosexual or bisexual in fact himself) was the true androgynous artist and therefore attuned to the inner experience of both sexes. 28

Sons and Lovers embodies yet another aspect of Ardhanarishvar i.e. Brahmi consciousness although in a different-way. The term "Brahmi consciousness," as discussed earlier, refers to the phallic consciousness of Brahma, the first member of Indian Trinity. As stated earlier, Brahma created Sarasvati who was enchantingly beautiful. Enamoured of her beauty, Brahma tried to establish sexual relationship with his own daughter. Sarasvati resisted the idea and tried to escape from his chase. After relentless chase Brahma was ultimately successful to subdue her. Brahmi consciousness is neither Oedipus complex nor Electra complex of Western psychology. In Oedipus complex, the son is enamoured of his mother, whereas in Electra complex, the daughter
enamoured to her father. However, in Brahmi consciousness it is not the daughter but the father who pursues his daughter.

In *Sons and Lovers*, we find a similar tendency. But in the novel the roles are rather reversed. Here it is the mother who seems to pursue her sons as husband substitutes. Mrs. Morel makes every possible effort to attune her sons to the rhythm of her own desires so much so that we find something like sexual jealousy between sons and father as well as between brother and brother. The sons are consumed by mother-fixation to such an extent that they are unable to establish successful relationship, social or sexual, with any other woman. The mother feels that there is an inviolable relation between her sons and herself. She induces her sons to cultivate the same feeling. In relation to Paul she feels as if the navel string, that had connected his frail body with hers had not been broken. On his part Paul wishes his father to die. The Oedipus complex in Paul becomes so dominant that Paul begins to be attentive to the physical details of his mother and the beauty of her body and gesture. He goes on to have an idyllic dream of living with his mother in a rural cottage:

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.

(*Sons and Lovers* 113)

Later on his feelings towards her became, though unconsciously, so obsessive that he asks his mother not to sleep with his father. It is not wonder
that after the marriage of Annie, he assures his mother that he will never marry and always live with her. To quote from the novel:

‘At any rate, mother, I s’l1 never marry,’ he said. ‘Ay, they all say that, my lad. You’ve not met the one yet. Only wait a year or two.’
‘But I shan’t marry, mother. I shall live with you, and we’ll have a servant.’
‘Ah, my lad, it’s easy to talk. We’ll see when the time comes.’
‘What time? I’m nearly twenty-three.’
‘Yes, you’re not one that would marry young. But in three years’ time --’
‘I shall be with you just the same.’
‘We’ll see, my boy, we’ll see.’

(Sons and Lovers 300)

He determines to stick to his mother as if he were his man.

Obviously, the mother and the son become so intimate to each other that they no longer behave like mother and son but like two partners rather two lovers. “Mrs. Morel and Paul” writes John Worthen, “often behave together as if they were partners.”29 “In one way,” writers Worthen further, “Paul and his mother are genuinely (if depressingly) themselves, out for the day in Lincoln and behaving like lovers: or when Paul kisses her mother on the throat when his father comes home and discovers them together.”30 Let us quote from the novel:

At this time Paul took his mother to Lincoln. She was bright and enthusiastic as ever, but as he sat opposite her in the railway carriage, she seemed to look frail. He had a momentary sensation as if she were slipping away from him. Then he wanted to get hold of her, to fasten her, almost to chain her. He felt he must keep hold of her with his hand. They drew near to the city. Both were at the window looking at the cathedral.
'There she is, mother!' he cried.
They saw the great cathedral lying couchant above the plain.
'Ah!' she exclaimed. 'So she is!' (Sons and Lovers 294)

The attention which he pays to his mother particularly to her body is certainly not the son’s attention but of lover’s:

He looked at his mother. Her blue eyes were watching the cathedral quietly. She seemed again to be beyond him. Something in the eternal repose of the uplifted cathedral, blue and noble against the sky, was reflected in her, something of the fatality. What was, was. With all his young will he could not alter it. He saw her face, the skin still fresh and pink and downy, but crow’s-feet near her eyes, her eyelids steady, sinking a little, her mouth always closed with disillusion; and there was on her the same eternal look, as if she knew fate at last. He beat against it with all the strength of his soul.

(Sons and Lovers 294)

Paul continues to behave with his mother just in the manner of a lover who is taking his girl for an outing. To quote him:

'You never mind my money,' he said. 'You forget I’m a fellow taking his girl for an outing.'  

(Sons and Lovers 294)

At home as well Paul’s behaviour can be termed as only a lover’s behaviour inviting the extreme jealously of the father. We read that once Walter got infuriated when he found Paul kissing his mother on her throat:

He stroked his mother’s hair, and his mouth was on her throat.

'And she exults so in taking you from me – she’s not like ordinary girls.'

'Well, I don’t love her, Mother,' he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss.

75
‘My boy!’ she said, in a voice trembling with passionate love.

Without knowing, he gently stroked her face.

‘There,’ said his mother, ‘now go to bed. You’ll be so tired in the morning.’ As she was speaking she heard her husband coming. ‘There’s your father – now go.’ Suddenly she looked at him almost as if in fear. ‘Perhaps I’m selfish. If you want her, take her, my boy.’

His mother looked so strange. Paul kissed her, trembling, ‘Ha – Mother!’ he said softly.

Morel came in, walking unevenly. His hat was over one corner of his eye. He balanced in the doorway.

‘At your mischief again?’ he said venomously.

(Sons and Lovers 262)

However, Mrs. Morel’s relationship with Paul and vice versa cannot be interpreted strictly in terms of Brahmi consciousness. In fact it is an interesting blending of Lawrence’s personal experience, Oedipus complex, and the Brahmi consciousness. Lawrence is a great genius who cannot adopt any idea or concept, however formidable it may be, without transforming it and making it relevant to his own vision.

To reiterate, Lawrence absorbed Indian thought very early and used it to develop his phallic consciousness especially his ideal of centralized sexuality, love, marriage, and the androgynous character of reality as well as human beings. First of all, he emphasized the centrality of sex in human life. Although he was conscious of sex as a deep rooted and ruthless instinct, he did not highlight it at the expense of human life and its values. In fact he floated a new idea of sex as something inclusive and integrated. For him sex was an instrument of union between man and woman. He defined this idea as the living sex or the centralized sexuality or conjunction which could be
materialized only through marriage which he regarded as an exclusively earthly institution.

Lawrence conceived of marriage as a sacrament though not a religious sacrament. Whereas the religious sacrament involved an element of fear, a fear of God, the Lawrentian sacrament involved only genuine sexual desire rooted in the spirit. Lawrence conceived of union not as the ordinary union of man and woman in a sex act but as a union in which man and woman discovered themselves or discovered otherness and achieve a state of impersonality. This conception of centralized sexuality though unknown to the Western world was the core of Indian phallic consciousness which stood for an integrated life based on four principal values, Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Of these four values, the principal one was Kama (desire or to be precise sex-desire) which plays a key role in shaping the other three.

In Sons and Lovers Lawrence begins with the negative aspect of sex, love, and marriage. Sex, though central, does not appear in its wholesome or liberating role. It is for the most part obsessive and neurotic. Likewise, his conception of love is questionable in as much as it does not lead to the centralized sexuality through marriage. Much in the same way, most of the characters of the novel seem to question the institution of marriage. Nevertheless, there is at least one character, Miriam, who is fully conscious of the value of marriage as she feels that marriage should be the precondition of sexuality. But her insistence on spirit love and the spirit of self sacrifice does
not allow her to realize the experience of the centralized sexuality in its fullness.

*Sons and Lovers* is an embodiment of elements central to the Shaivite concept of Ardhanarishvar. The key-note of this concept is the androgynous character of man. Paul, the protagonist of the novel, is a living example of Ardhanarishvar in as much as he embodies within his psyche the male and the female elements. Interestingly, some of the critics consider him as a male version of his mother, Mrs. Morel. Another characteristic element of the Ardhanarishvar is Brahmi consciousness. A new version of this consciousness appears in Mrs. Morel who is consciously or unconsciously, enamoured of her son, much in the same way as Brahma was sexually obsessed with his daughter Sarasvati. Thus we find that, *Sons and Lovers*, can be properly interpreted only in terms of Indian phallic consciousness.
Chapter 2 - Notes


3Letters 404.


6Lawrence qtd. Nahal 92.


8Nahal 93.

9Nahal 94.

10Nahal 94.

11Phoenix 515.

12Lawrence qtd. Nahal 96.

13Murry qtd. Nahal 108.
14 Lawrence qtd. Nahal 102.

15 Nahal 126.

16 Lawrence qtd. Nahal 126-127.

17 Rig Veda qtd. Nahal 182.

18 D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1999) 337: hereafter cited as Sons and Lovers. All the subsequent excerpts are from this book and are mentioned with paginations.


20 Phoenix 156.


23 Phoenix 481

24 Pullin 130.

25 Qtd. Pullin 130.

26 Pullin 142.

27 Qtd. Pullin 142.
28 Pullin 129.

hereafter cited as Worthen.

30 Worthen 29.