

Cold comfort farm and sons and lovers representation of family life

Family



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The representation of family life in Cold Comfort Farm and Sons and Lovers. Family life in Cold Comfort Farm is portrayed negatively mostly throughout the novel. It's one of the main themes in the novel and can be seen through Flora and the presentation of the 'Starkadders' (Flora's distant relatives). Flora is not close to her family and says 'If I find out I have any third cousins living at Cold Comfort called Seth, or Reuben, I shall not go'. This shows that she's already stereotyping her own family, showing that she knows nothing about them.

Stella Gibbons seems to challenge the conventional family life by overthrowing normal restrictions like roles and social status that would be placed upon women in society, like Flora. Flora is a very independent woman in the novel and doesn't rely on men so she can live her life. Whereas Mrs Morel is totally dependant on her sons, Paul and William. Sons and Lovers was the third novel published by D. H. Lawrence. The novel recounts the coming of age of Paul Morel, the second son of Gertrude Morel and her hard-drinking, working-class husband, Walter Morel, who made his living as a miner.

As Mrs Morel tries to find meaning in her life and emotional fulfilment through her bond with Paul, Paul seeks to break free of his mother through developing relationships with other women. In my chosen chapter for Cold Comfort Farm (chapter 2) Flora proceeds with her plan, despite Mary's disapproval. Mary goes out to look at a brassiere to possibly add to her massive collection. Meanwhile, Flora writes to a bachelor uncle in Scotland, an aunt in Worthing, a cousin in South Kensington, and distant relatives who live on a farm in Howling, Sussex, known as Cold Comfort Farm.

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She takes time in stylize each letter to the relatives' personalities, but as she knows nothing of the ones in Sussex, she keeps that one very straightforward. Three days later, Flora receives replies from all the relatives and looks at them with Mary. They all welcome her except there are issues that Flora can't abide, such as having to share a room with a cousin or parrot. The letter from the relatives in Sussex is, however, intriguing. Flora's Aunt Judith Starkadder seems different to all the others and would have more 'messes to clean'.

She decides to leave for Sussex the next morning. In my chosen extract for Sons and lovers (chapter 1, pages 26-27, from 'Good gracious' to 'It's a lie, It's a lie') Mr Morel has come home drunk once again and Mrs Morel has had enough of his 'childish' and selfish behaviour. She confronts him in the kitchen where she is making him and the children food, he starts to raise his voice and become verbally aggressive. This is the first time in the novel where we see the true side of Mr Morel.

Throughout chapter two in Cold Comfort Farm the text is written in third-person, however, the focus is on Flora as she is narrating and also seems to give her own viewpoints despite the third-person structure. Gibbons portrays Flora as a strong, independent woman and we can see this by her narrative structure "well my mind is made up, so there is no purpose in arguing", said Flora'. This contrasts Sons and Lovers because Mrs Morel is far from independent, unlike Flora, who likes to 'exploit' her rights.

Sons and Lovers is told mostly from a third-person point of view, as the narrator has access to the thoughts of the characters and moves back and

forth in time while telling the story. In the extract Mr and Mrs Morel are arguing, bouncing back and forth off each other, but Mr Morel is clearly the dominant person due to D. H. Lawrence's use of language and imagery. 'He dropped his two hands heavily on the table' and 'nasty little bitch!' makes Mrs Morel feel insignificant.

At the start of chapter two in Cold Comfort Farm Flora presents family life as false and cold as she plans to write to her relatives, changing her style of writing to suit each individual personality. Before proceeding to write to her relatives she reveals her 'dislike' for her 'fellow beings'. The tone achieved by using this self-centered attitude and blunt declaratives shows that she is determined to get what she wants. In the Sons and Lovers extract there are a lot of exclamatory sentences like 'Good gracious, she cried, coming home in this drunken mess!' and 'Say you're NOT drunk!'. These quotes show true emotion and they also show that Mrs Morel has had enough of Mr Morel's actions. In time, Mr Morel's actions hurt his wife and his children until they 'despise' him. These are not normal feelings a son should have towards their father. Different lexical sets have been used to show Flora's true distance from her relatives. 'messy', 'revolting', 'grief' all give a sense of a disease, stagnant life that no one would want to join, but Flora wants to for the 'experience' of it all.

Gives a feeling that family is bad, and must be stopped. She is using her relatives' hospitality to get good writing material for when she's 'fifty-three'. Flora is disgusted at the thought of communicating with her 'fellow-beings' although this compound noun is not directly referring to her family members,

it seems that Flora regards them in such an impersonal way. This impersonal tone is reinforced by saying 'these people' and 'revolting' making it clear that she doesn't want to communicate with her relatives, again showing how independent she is.

The Sons and Lovers extract has a lexical set of distressed and hurtful words. 'cried', 'nasty little bitch', 'thrust', 'shut your face'. These set of words create a feeling of hatred. Mrs Morel says 'you don't get as drunk as a lord on nothing'. Even in an argument where Mr Morel is clearly in the wrong, she still compares him to something great. 'His hat over his eyes', it's almost as if he's hiding the real him, he doesn't want to be like this but the alcohol in his body is overpowering him, almost like the dominance of Flora in Cold Comfort Farm.