

Interpreting Lawrence's Sons and Lovers: A Symbolic Analysis

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Abstract :

D.H. Lawrence's novel Sons and Lovers departed from the Edwardian ideals of sexuality and female virginity, which were held in high regard at the time. Through a detailed portrayal of Victorian culture, this research seeks to critically investigate the symbolic analysis in Lawrence's Sons and Lovers. The novel's use of symbols deepens the significance of the words and phrases inside it. They were crucial in allowing the author to convey the inner workings of his characters' minds and thoughts. Like many contemporary novels, Lawrence uses symbols to add depth to his prose and make many concrete concepts that would otherwise stay abstract. This study used qualitative descriptive analysis of the symbolic use to analyze some main symbols. It was found in Sons and Lovers that a series of such symbolic sequences had a catalytic impact on the novel's storyline and action. Throughout the story, it becomes clear that sexual desire does not belong to love. It is both a physiological requirement and, sometimes, a show of affection.

Keywords(interconnected , impulsive. Metaphorical , comprehend , stability).

تفسير أبناء وعشاق لورانس: تحليل رمزي

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الملخص :

عدت رواية أبناء وعشاق ل دي اج لورانس عن المثل الإيدواردية للجنس و عذرية الإناث ، والتي كانت تحظى باحترام كبير في ذلك الوقت. من خلال تصوير مفصل للثقافة الفيكتورية ، يسعى هذا البحث إلى إجراء تحقيق نقدي في التحليل الرمزي لرواية أبناء وعشاق للكاتب لورنس . إن استخدام الرموز في الرواية يعمق أهمية الكلمات والعبارات بداخلها. لقد كانت حاسمة في السماح للمؤلف بنقل الأعمال الداخلية لعقول وأفكار شخصياته. مثل العديد من الروايات المعاصرة ، يستخدم لورانس الرموز لإضفاء العمق على نثره وصنع العديد من المفاهيم الملموسة التي كانت ستبقى مجردة لولا ذلك. استخدمت هذه الدراسة التحليل الوصفي النوعي للاستخدام الرمزي لتحليل بعض الرموز الرئيسية. وجد في ابناء وعشاق أن سلسلة من مثل هذه التسلسلات الرمزية كان لها تأثير محفز على قصة الرواية وعملها. طوال القصة ، يتضح أن الرغبة الجنسية لا تنتمي إلى الحب. إنه مطلب فسيولوجي ، وفي بعض الأحيان ، إظهار للعاطفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية (مترابطة ، اندفاعية. مجازية ، فهم ، استقرار).

1.1 Introduction

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885, in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, and is widely regarded as a significant figure in the development of the contemporary English novel and a master storyteller with a keen eye for the nature of humanity (Neopany, 2012). He attended Nottinghamshire High School on a full scholarship, then worked as a factory clerk until enrolling as a professor at Nottinghamshire University College in 1906. The first important publication of his work was in 1909, when five poems appeared in English Review; the publication of his famous novel *Sons and Lovers* occurred four years later, in 1913. Years go passed while Lawrence lives in self-imposed exile on the European continent. Until 1923, he released almost

800 poems and many collections of short tales. Notable works from that year include *The Fox*, *Critical Studies in Classic American Literature*, *The Captain's Doll*, and *The Ladybird* (Mehl, 1992).

As the primary focus of this analysis, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* provides a window into his life and the tragedy of that time in his history. He felt that time in his life was a disfigurement. In the years 1910–1912, he saw his mother pass away from cancer while ending passionate romances with Jessie Chambers and Louie Burrows. His work on the agony of waste, isolation, and death had been misinterpreted by some as harsh and cruel, but it was actually a reflection of these formative experiences. He promised a friend after the release of *Sons and Lovers* that the harsh, violent style that emerged from the book's significant use of symbolic iconography would never appear in another work of his. The concepts "sensation and presentation," which gave rise to this style, have meanings that are not entirely obvious but are defined in light of the literary culture of their day. The 'sensational' and 'presentational' style was dominant in Lawrence's works. It is indisputable that the original manuscript featured a more sophisticated layout than the one that was published after Garnett's revisions. Some critics favoured eschewing literary style altogether, while others demanded that it be used excessively (Harvey, 1987).

Writers who critique a work have high standards, believing it should disclose or reflect a distinct plan that is fully formed in the author's head and, ideally, makes a seamless transition from the author's head to the piece of paper. Previous research of Lawrence's works found substantial symbolism, particularly in *Sons and Lovers*. Symbolism is used to dig deeper into the meaning of a word, phrase, scene, item, or even a person who has more than one meaning. The first is immediately apparent to the reader. A lot of introspection on the part of the reader is required to decipher the other level of symbolism contained in the writing style. Lawrence uses symbols well to delve into his characters' psyches in this piece. If simply take the time to learn what each sign

means, the reader will have a far newfound appreciation for the novel. Lawrence's writing is the expression of "a thing not to be classified in any other better way", therefore symbolism is clearly an important part of his work. So, Lawrence employs symbols, which in turn improve the expressiveness of his language, to convey the underlying meaning of his writing. (Wilson, 2019)

1.2 Examination of Symbolism

In literature, Kadhim (2022) explain that symbolism refers to a mode of language in which the reader's mind is led to a realisation of an invisible reality. A symbol is an inherently meaningful picture that might be hard to put into words. Lawrence uses a number of symbols with deep personal meaning to enhance the themes of *Sons and Lovers*. The resonances between Lawrence's symbols are also interconnected, giving the work a vitality all its own. A flower represents several things in Lawrence's work. Lawrence's love of flowers is seen in his frequent use of floral imagery. Symbolic meanings are often ascribed to flowers. In *Axels' Castle* (2019), Edmund Wilsory discusses the difficulty authors have when attempting to convey intangible concepts to their readers. He expands on this, noting that every poet has a distinct voice and that every one of his works features a distinct tone and set of components. This is up to the poets to discover, perhaps develop, the unique language that will be the only vehicle for conveying his character and emotions.

Lawrence uses symbols deftly to delve into his characters' minds. By employing this method, he is able to express himself more fully through his words. His thoughts were so genuine and vivid that he seemed unable to tell the difference between literal truth and figurative language. Lawrence uses a wide variety of symbols throughout *Sons and Lovers*, all of which contribute to the novel's depth (Totter, 1995). The novel's storyline is essential to deciphering its symbolic language. Despite her initial happiness, Gertrude's marriage to Mr. Morel, a gorgeous coal miner, does not last. Mrs. Morel places her affections on her boys as they mature. This is the origin of the irreconcilable divide. The

oldest son, William, takes his own life because he refuses to choose between his mother's claim and the claim of the woman he loves. Miriam and his mother share custody of their second son, Paul. To the extent that Miriam represents the soul, his mother and Clara represent the physical form. Lawrence uses symbols deftly to delve into his internal characters that he generates from his mind. As a result, the following sections will focus on the most common types of symbolic representations.

1.2.1 The Flowers

“She looked at her roses. They were white, some incurved and holy, others expanded in an ecstasy. The tree was dark as a shadow. She lifted her hand impulsively to the flowers; she went forward and touched them in worship.” (Lawrence, 1993: 140)

The novel *Sons and Lovers* is built around a central motif of flowers and their meanings. The flower is one of the book's most significant symbols since Lawrence uses it to convey several meanings, alluding to the characters' divergent perspectives on life. An outstanding scenario emblematic of the characters takes place while the three companions are walking across a field full with flowers. When Paul, Miriam, and Clara are walking in a field and Miriam picks up a flower, it symbolises the end of her relationship with Paul and the beginning of her connection with Clara. And again, Paul makes the selection. Paul's seemingly impulsive and natural flower-gathering behaviour is a metaphor for the ease and spontaneity with which his feelings for others flow from him. (Niazi, 2013)

However, the sun's reddened pin-trunks represent Paul's intense yearning for physical relation with Miriam and serve as a divine sign encouraging them to act on that impulse. Paul's goal in telling Miriam about his sexual desire is to encourage her to follow in Moses' footsteps and respond to God's call. The blossoming of Paul and Miriam's love takes place in the midst of natural beauty, and the flower is used to symbolise Miriam's naivete, freshness, and

attractiveness. Mrs. Morel, who has a lively and healthy appreciation for flowers, heaved a sigh of mild alarm as she gasped at the sight of the towering white lilies tumbling in the moonlight, their aroma filling the air. The lilies' form, the airborne fragrance of their petals, and the glow of the moon constitute a potent force. Since Mrs. Morel is a representation of feminine sensuality, it follows those lilies that frequently used as literary symbols. (Sinha, 2016)

On the other hand, there are many critics who think the lily blossom represents the end of the husband and wife's love or the end of a character's love for another. The husband and wife's love appears to have perished a long time before the violent scene, and the lilies here are a metaphor for protecting the wife's heart from further damage. In addition, the lily blossom may not be seen as a literal representation of the lily bloom but rather as a metaphor for William's sad engagement with his fiancée and his subsequent death. Similar to how Paul and his mother bonded over tulips while he was sick, Lawrence utilised tulips to imply a closeness between himself and Paul. Paul and his mother are cuddled up in the window, smiling broadly as passers-by as they admire the flaming tulips that Mr. Morel ordered.

In the same vein, Lawrence employed the hue of roses as a symbol, specifically roses of three different colours: red, white, and black—the former representing passion, the latter purity, and the last mourning and death in the Morel family. At the novel's conclusion, the city's gold phosphorescence symbolises hope and optimism, among other themes. The novel's use of symbolism is not too complicated, but rather serves to enhance readers' comprehension of *Sons and Lovers*.

1.2.2 The Orange Moon

"One night, as Miriam and Paul walk back from the shore in the dark, they are startled by the appearance of a huge, orange moon above the sandbanks. Miriam is amazed by the sight and thinks it must have some mystical, religious meaning. Paul feels an urge to clasp Miriam

in his arms, but he cannot and there is an ache in his chest. He is immature and feels ashamed of himself because he is physically attracted to her, and this almost makes him hate her." (Lawrence, 1993: 152)

Paul and Miriam are taking a stroll by the river one evening when they spot a huge orange moon gazing down on them. The moonlight ignites a fire of sexual desire in Paul. Miriam feels the same way, but Paul can't seem to convey his emotions to her. The orange moon alludes to the raging libidinal fervour that this image of Paul arouses. Lawrence establishes a link between the people' emotional lives and the role nature plays in shaping their lives. It's only natural that people would want to satisfy the sexual urges that arise inside them, and this desire might cause them to create a racket as loud as a raging river torrent hidden in the bushes, before retreating to the void in search of anonymity. But if they let their feelings be known and embrace one another, they will see that their relationship has a great chance of succeeding. (Deacon, 2022)

When Paul and Miriam first met in the bushes by the river after a storm, it was clear that they had a craving for sexual pleasure, something none of them denied. Their relationship has since blossomed into something more serious and committed. This is mirrored in the damp setting, ideal for the development of all living things, including romantic feelings. From the riverbank, their first love seems like an exhilarating adventure, fulfilling their deepest desires, but it is just satisfying their bodily needs if they are unable to communicate with one another on a spiritual level. This kind of connection is contrary to human nature and the culture of partnerships since it resembles a desire found in animals.

1.2.3 The Ash Tree

"And then the whole was drowned in a piercing medley of shrieks and cries from the great, wind-swept ash-tree." (Lawrence, 1993: 50)

Lawrence uses the ash-tree to illustrate the darker side of existence, the mysterious power of nature that penetrates the Morels' shattered personal life. It

represents the tension between Mr. and Mrs. Morel and the fear felt by the children in the family. Symbolic of all the strange, dark elements of nature that surround man and are the instrument of tragedy in his life, an ash-tree stands guard outside the Morels' home. When the west wind blows, the tree in *Sons and Lovers* makes a horrible screeching noise. Mr. Morel says that he feels like he's listening to music and that the noises put him to sleep. However, his kids, especially Paul, have grown to despise the tree.

In addition, it foretells the impending disaster that will strike the Morel family; the evil omen will disappear when the same ash tree comes to stand for safety and stability. At this point in his life, Paul is overjoyed because he has finally found a job he enjoys and because he has brought home eight shillings in his first week's pay. So, it may be said that Lawrence has successfully used it as a symbol to depict the image of nature's unfathomable energies. Eventually, the children's fear of their parents' constant fighting escalates to the point that they lie awake in bed, unable to make any sense of what they hear below. For youngsters who hit and groan internally out of fear, the tree takes on symbolic significance. It also foretells the impending disaster that would strike the Morel family.

1.2.4 The Coal-Pits

"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." (Lawrence, 1993: 1)

For the first third or so of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence writes in a very detailed fashion. However, the portrayal of coal mines is both literal and metaphorical. It's grounded in reality by citing actual events experienced by the best wood miners, and it's metaphorical by using the miners' physical movement down and up the coal-pits to represent a metaphor for sexual rhythm. Mr. Morel's illogical outlook on life is represented by the pits in this metaphor (Xu,

2005). The story depicts a mining hamlet whose very existence is predicated on the coal-pits that dot the landscape. Not essential to comprehend the story, but emblematic of a specific outlook on life, are the coal-pits. They are quite close to Walter Morel, who follows an illogical life principle. The coal mines' daily rise and fall represents a cycle of sleep and wakefulness, or the sexual rhythm. The coal mines provide a stark contrast to the artificial lifestyles of the urban elite. (Zheng, 2012)

1.2.5 The Swing

“Miriam was amused that he took a swing so seriously...She felt the accuracy with which he caught her, exactly at the right moment, and the exactly proportionate strength of his thrust, and she was afraid. Down to her bowels when the hot wave of fear. She was in his hands. Again, firm and inevitable came the thrust at the right moment. She gripped the rope, almost swooning.” (Lawrence, 1993: 100)

Paul and Miriam's stormy relationship is represented by the swing at Willey Farm. Just like their love, the swing swings up and down. It's also symbolic of the enormous divide between their sex appetites that Miriam can't reach the same altitudes on the swing as Paul. Also, the swing symbolises how they can't seem to stay together for too long. Because of her sexual reticence, Miriam is unable to reach the same height on the swing as Paul. Paul likes Miriam for one reason but instantly hates her for another, just like the backdrop and forward movements of the swing. And just like his love for her, his contempt for her is fleeting. Therefore, the swing's motion represents the extremes of their feelings for one other, which can range from love to hatred in an instant. It's symbolic of how they can't seem to stay together for very long time.

1.2.6 The Blood

"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 fulfill 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"(Lawrence, 1993: 18)

At the novel's outset, when Mr. Morel returns to his house while inebriated and irritated, he gets into a fight with his wife and hits her with a hurled drawer. Two drops of blood fall from the wound and land on Paul's hair, which is currently in Mrs. Morel's hands; instead of being wiped away, the blood becomes soaked into Paul's scalp. The mother and son's blood bond represents a binding spiritual agreement. In other scenario, Mr. Walter and Mrs. Gertrude's bloody relationship is a metaphor for the constant animosity and contention between them. In contrast, the symbolism of blood in the scene where Clara's husband, Baxter, slaps Paul in the workplace because he knows about their relationship, symbolizes hatred, aggression, and misery between both the men.(Wu, 2014)

1.3 Conclusion

A symbol is a potent representation that is loaded with meaning that is difficult to put into words. Lawrence has developed a really unique collection of symbols for Sons and Lowers that enhance the subjects looked at. Additionally, Lawrence's symbols are connected to one another, and as a result, their resonances take on a life of their own. The flower is one of Lawrence's most recognizable icons. Flowers were a subject that really interested Lawrence, and he frequently describes them in his books. A flower frequently gains the significance of a symbol.

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