

### Prose Style in D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers

[1]And after such an evening they both were very still, having known the immensity of passion. [2]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. [3]It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. [4]To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. [5]If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them all together 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? [6]They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. [7]There was a verification which they had had together. [8]Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life.

[9]But Clara was not satisfied. [10]Something great was there, she knew; something great enveloped her. [11]But it did not keep her. [12]In the morning it was not the same. [13]They had known, but she could not keep the moment. [14]She wanted it again; she wanted something permanent. [15]She had not realized fully. [16]She thought it was he whom she wanted. [17]He was not safe to her. [18]This that had been between them might never be again; he might leave her. [19]She had not got him; she was not satisfied. [20]She had been there, but she had not gripped the something-she knew not what-which she was mad to have. (336-337)

This passage, from D.H. Lawrence's novel, Sons and Lovers, describes the thoughts of Paul Morel and Clara Dawes after they have spent an evening of passion together. It is now that Paul and Clara realize that they are not able to fulfill each other's needs adequately. Most of the sentences are complex, illustrating the complexity of the situation and the character's thoughts, yet the speech is simple and descriptive. Lawrence's can be seen by examining the diction, grammar, and the rhythm and sound devices.

The speaker of this particular passage is the narrator, or the author. The speech is articulate and specific making the author's point and mental pictures clear. Lawrence uses many examples to illustrate ideas. He compares life to a flood saying that it carries people along through time, and he compares Paul and Clara's life as what makes up the world to what makes up a blade of grass or a tree. The most notable illustrative example is also an allusion from the Bible comparing Paul and Clara to, "Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realized the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise" [2]. Similar to examples for illustration is the use of denotation and connotation. Denotation is an indication or a sign. An example of this is the use of the word, "nothingness" in line four. "Nothingness" in this sentence denotes Paul and Clara's insignificance to the world as a whole. Connotation is an idea or notion associated with a word or phrase. For example, the word, "verification," in line seven, connotes an oath, such as marriage; the word, "belief," in line eight, connotes faith, as in a religion; and the word, "mad," in line twenty, connotes frantic or foolishly enthusiastic.

At times, due to the complexity of some of the sentences, the story is difficult to follow. From this particular passage, there are eight simple sentences, seven compound sentences, and five complex sentences. The sentences in the beginning tend to be quite long and complex. However, towards the end, the sentences become quite short. There are many prepositional phrases which contribute to the description of the passage as well as many adjectives and adverbs. Lawrence's style also includes many examples of parallel structure. Some of these include, "...the great night and the great day of humanity..."[2], "To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood..."[3], "nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away..."[8], "Something great was there,...something great enveloped her..."[10], and "She

wanted it again; she wanted something permanent"[14]. A climax is also found in line five when Lawrence lists a blade of grass, a tree, and everything in order of smallest to largest.

Rhythm and sound are also evident in Lawrence's style. In the second paragraph, Clara's several short thoughts characterize the complexity of the situation and the confusion in Clara's mind. In speech the cadence could be broken down as follows from lines twelve through fourteen:

In the morning                      it was the same.

They had known,                      but she could not keep the moment.

She wanted it again;                      she wanted something permanent.

Many other poetic devices are also used. Alliteration, for example, in lines four, know and nothingness; eight, nothing and nullify; and eighteen, this, that, and them is one type. Assonance is another type. It is found in lines five and eighteen with heave and tree and he and leave, line nineteen with not and got, and line twenty with mad and have. End rhyme, where the end of words rhyme, is also found in lines two and three with innocence and magnificence, and initiation and satisfaction.

In D.H. Lawrence's novel, *Sons and Lovers*, his prose style can be analyzed through examination of his diction, grammar, and rhythm and sound devices. The complexity of the sentences reflects the complexity of the novel, particularly of this specific passage. Descriptiveness contributes greatly to the novel.

## Outline

Thesis: Lawrence's can be seen by examining the diction, grammar, and the rhythm and sound devices.

Introduction: This passage, from D.H. Lawrence's novel, *Sons and Lovers*, describes the thoughts of Paul Morel and Clara Dawes after they have spent an evening of passion together. It is now that Paul and Clara realize that they are not able to fulfill each other's needs adequately. Most of the sentences are complex, illustrating the complexity of the situation and the character's thoughts, yet the speech is simple and descriptive. Lawrence's can be seen by examining the diction, grammar, and the rhythm and sound devices.

### I. Diction

- A. Speaker
- B. Speech
  - 1. Articulate
  - 2. Specific
- C. Examples
- D. Allusions
- E. Denotation / Connotation

### II. Grammar

- A. Difficulty
- B. Sentence Structure
  - 1. Length
  - 2. Descriptive
    - a. Prepositional Phrases
    - b. Adverbs / Adjectives
- C. Sentence Patterns
  - 1. Parallel Structure
  - 2. Climax

III. Rhythm and Sound

A. Cadence Groups

B. Poetic Devices

1. Alliteration
2. Assonance
3. End Rhyme

Conclusion: In D.H. Lawrence's novel, *Sons and Lovers*, his prose style can be analyzed through examination of his diction, grammar, and rhythm and sound devices. The complexity of the sentences reflects the complexity of the novel, particularly of this specific passage. Descriptiveness contributes greatly to the novel.

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