

The Figure of Women in the Life of D.H Lawrence Manifested in Sons and Lovers

(Sosok Wanita dalam Hidup D.H Lawrence yang Dimanifestasikan dalam Novel Sons and Lovers)

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Abstrak

D.H Lawrence menuangkan pengalaman pribadinya dalam sebuah novel berjudul Sons and Lovers. Wanita-wanita yang pernah ia temui di dalam hidupnya seperti Lady Beardsal, Jessie chambers dan Louis Burrow menginspirasi karakter seperti ibu Paul Morel, Miriam dan Clara. Berangkat dari fakta inilah, saya mencari hubungan antara karya dan wanita wanita di sekeliling Lawrence. Melalui hubungannya dengan wanita, Lawrence memahami masalah di zamannya saat dunia berkecamuk dengan peperangan diawal abad ke-20. Lawrence memahami kemungkinan untuk memperoleh keseimbangan dunia agar kehidupan menjadi lebih baik. Dia mulai bertanya tentang kondisi yang tidak seimbang antara pria dan wanita. Kenyataan ini muncul dari perasaannya juga pengalamannya terhadap wanita. Dia mengetahui perasaannya terhadap wanita lebih dalam dari laki-laki biasa pada eranya yang hanya berpikir tentang status dan materi. Pengalaman inilah yang ia tuangkan dalam Sons and Lovers sehingga pembaca dapat melihat bagaimana wanita-wanita dalam dunia nyata muncul dalam novel tersebut. Inilah yang disebut mimesis. Lawrence membawa realitas dalam sebuah karya sastra dengan kemampuan imajinasi pengarang. Oleh karena itu, jurnal ini menggunakan teori mimesis Aristoteles untuk memahami bagaimana realitas dan imajinasi pengarang bertemu dalam novel Sonsan Lovers.

Kata Kunci: Wanita, Cinta Sejati, Mimesis.

Abstract

D.H Lawrence narrates his personal experiences in *Sons and Lovers*. Some women he met in his life such as Lady Beardsal, Louis Burrow and Jessie Chambers inspired the character of Paul Morel's mother, Miriam and Clara in the novel. Departed from this fact, I search the relation between his work and women surrounding him. Women have unintentionally formed his paradigm toward the world that becomes the space of battlefield in the beginning of 20th century. Lawrence constructs the possibility to achieve a balancing point demanded for a better life. He starts asking the imbalance condition focused between men and women. This fact appears from his felling and experiences to women. He knows his feeling toward women is rather deeper than the ordinary men who are always seeking a highest status and wealth in society. The feeling is brought through his work. Therefore, the readers are able to see the appearance of women in his real life in *Sons and Lovers*. His work is a mimetic. He brings reality into the work that is blended with an imaginative ability. This journal applies Aristotle's theory of mimesis to comprehend how reality and the author's imagination collaborates in *Sons and Lovers*.

Keywords: Women, True Love, Mimesis.

Introduction

Sons and Lovers is the story of the struggle for dominance in the Morel family against the figure of a father and the closeness of a mother to her sons. Lawrence, in this novel, speaks with a great deal of credibility because his work is influenced by the real women in his life. He is obviously affected by the women he meets in his life. They are his mother, Lydia Beardsall, his friend Jessie Chambers and Louie Burrows.

He realizes the deep feeling of the women he portrayed in his novels. It is obvious that his fictional women do not come out of absolute fantasy. They are a composite of his own ideas, the ideas of the times, and the expression of those ideas as lived by the real women that he loves.

Therefore, Aristotle's mimetic theory is applied to see how the figure of women in Lawrence's real life manifested in his novel and how *Sons and Lovers* becomes an alternative form to disclose Lawrence's individual feeling. Aristotle once states that all human actions are mimetic and that men learn through imitation (Aristotle, 1902:18). Thus, Art, unlike science, is not an abstract universal form but imitates the form of individual things and unites the separate parts presenting what is universal and particular. Lawrence makes his novel in accordance with his individual experience then his imagination works to re-create and to re-unite his individual experience for aesthetical purpose. Thus, he does not imitate the reality where he is there but brings reality into existence through mimesis. In particular, mimesis is the distinguishing quality of an artist. He recreates and reorganizes already known facts and presents them in a fresh and attractive way. Therefore, the whole story in Lawrence's novel is not absolute facts but a story reconstructed by imaginative act of the author. Mimesis is copying and changing.

Research Methodology

This research is conducted to show the women in the life of D.H Lawrence and their influences in his novel *Sons and Lovers*. The undergoing research employs Aristotle's theory of mimesis to discover the circumstance, the condition of his era and the people surround him. Thus, the meaning of his work can be revealed.

This study is conducted in several phases. At the first, I compile, classify, and verify the data from *Flame into Being. The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence and D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* to see the real life of D.H Lawrence related to women surround him. The first step results information about the position of women in his real life and his novel. However, it is not absolute manifestation that means there is Lawrence's imagination to construe his reality. Therefore, there is always some moments that look different from his social life. Meanwhile, the thesis does not research the sameness and the difference between D.H Lawrence's social life and his novel. It goes further by analyzing Lawrence's imagination and motive to write his masterpiece as an alternative way to release his feeling resulted in catharsis. Therefore, the second step is gathering information and data from Aristotle's *Poetic* to show D.H Lawrence is creative process in re-creating the reality into

the world of imagination in the novel. This step results a portrait of his ability to conceive his reality. The novel is the alternative way and the escapism from social burden to treat women he knows in his life.

Results

Lawrence in this novel does show the influence of women toward his creative process. Moreover, he sees the position of women in higher status than people in his era place the position below the men's dominance. In *Sons and Lovers*, he writes a man who is dependent on the hand of women. The balance position is the ideal he evokes. Therefore, *Sons and lovers* discloses his all ideas about the ideal position for men and women that many people in the beginning of 20th contrastingly always maintain the orthodox values in England. The tragedy happens when the main character, Paul morel, cannot cope with the three women. His feeling becomes hollow. What happens then is a kind of tragedy from immature man who does not find his true love. Lawrence indeed transforms this fear and pity into an aesthetical work.

Discussion

Sons and Lovers tells about the story of a post Victorian family that represents a microcosm of the society of that time. It shows the unsatisfied woman because the three women in the novel, Mrs. Morel, Miriam and Clara, never get any satisfaction in their lives. All of them seek to escape the bounds of their existence through education, religion, political activity or through men.

For Lawrence, women lived surround him has strongly affected the development of his literary career. Any of the women represented in his novel, Lawrence knew when he was young, like Jessie Chambers or Louie Burrows. It was not an accident that he knew such women, they were from his milieu (Meyers, 1990:45). These women, unlike their mothers, were the generation which understood about freedom and independence from their career as well as personal and professional status.

The character of Miriam represents Jessie Chambers whom in real life was a teacher. However, Miriam in the novel has no career. Miriam, in fact, has no job at all until the last chapter of the novel that she is earning her own living, "she is going to the farming college and will probably be kept on as a teacher there" (Lawrence, 1974:504). Her career as a teacher is represented as a minor portion. She is described as a girl who prefers the life in the shadow the mundane aspects of everyday reality.

Miriam seems to be the only one who knows who she is and what she wants. The problem with her is that although she knows Paul and his influence over her, she still wants to dominate Paul. Neither she nor Paul wants really a balanced relation. Both want to have power in the relation. Both man and woman are stubborn in their misconception. Then, the next in his life, Paul meets Clara, "After leaving Miriam, he went straight to Clara" (Lawrence, 1974:368). Clara symbolizes feminist woman. Her interest is to find independence. Feminism in Lawrence time emphasized equal rights for the recognition woman rather than just as

sexual objects to be used at every whim of man. This relation does no longer exist in Paul's life. He returns to Miriam as he regards as his true love.

However, Miriam is the woman who threatens Mrs. Morel's domination on Paul. Meanwhile, Mrs. Morel's fear sees that Paul's friendship with Miriam will affect his transformation into a man. She senses their emotional affinities and feels jealous of Miriam. Mrs. Morel fears the displacement in Paul's affections by this young girl. Paul has an enormous capacity to love and be loved. Mrs. Morel wants to reserve his love for herself. She does not wish to share it with Miriam. When Paul knows his mother has cancer. He attends to his ill mother. He understands that she is going to die. After her death, he falls into chaotic feeling.

Writing his *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence does not imitate reality into novel but brings reality into existence through mimesis. He recreates and reorganizes already known facts. Then, he presents them in a fresh and attractive way. He modifies the character of his mother or his friend, Jessie chamber. Miriam is Jessie Chamber in the life of Lawrence.

Through his novel, Lawrence shows women find themselves in dissatisfying circumstances because they are moving away from their proper roles as women. He sees that the human need for some type of balance. He is establishing a way to perceive the female and the male role. He sees that there must be a balance of the male and female principles. This understanding comes from his experiences with women that are mirrored in the novel, but the readers must see that novel is not the factual data, it is the interpretation reality. Thus, what Lawrence does in his work is the sign to recreate reality (Aristotle, 1902:43).

The novel ends with a tragedy with Paul's failure to find his true love. Aristotle stated that:

"Tragedy, then, is mimesis of an action which is elevated, complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished by distinct forms in its sections, employing the mode of enactment, not narrative; and through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis of such emotions". (Aristotle, 1902:6)

Tragedy can represent the form of human life. Aristotle's theory shows this representation as an expression of serious and philosophical interest. In the case of Paul, tragedy happens when he cannot achieve a new fulfilling relationship with Miriam, with Clara or with his mother. Paul's inability to establish a satisfactory relationship with a woman is related to the excessive attachment between him and his mother. It is why Paul cannot cope with women except in their maternal aspect or as objects of passion. However, Lawrence also admits in the Foreword to *Sons and Lovers* that the novel is inspired by, "the tragedy of thousands of young men whose lives, he found, were being ruined by the possessive love of their mothers" (Lawrence, 1974:1). From the story of Paul Morel, the readers undergo an experience of fear and pity that is continuously renewed and transformed into aesthetic awareness and pleasure.

Conclusion

Lawrence makes his novel in accordance with his individual experience with some women in his real life. Even, he uses his women friend's writing as source material especially related to their personal writings such as journals. This is a particular technique to reveal his collaboration with women. I see that Lawrence thinks female experience should find expression in the novel. Women as source of inspiration have a particular importance in his work.

Moreover, he also suggests his readers that human needs for some types of balance. There must be a balance of the male and female principles. Lawrence's concentration on the woman does not seem to derive from a sympathetic motive but he sees that women have their own portions and roles in society. This understanding comes from his relation to some women in his life. His all experiences are mirrored in the novel, but the readers must see that novel is not the factual data, but the interpretation of reality.

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