

Similes in D.H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers"



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The ability of understanding a piece of literature is not an easy task at all, for literature is a specific world giving a wide opportunity to study the diversity of imaginative elements, those inherent and adherent connotations which give birth to many new meanings.

In fiction the constant interplay of language units offers a whole range of interpretations. In this respect the creative use of stylistic devices in verbal art is of paramount importance.

Verbal art as opposed to intellectual prose is the mediated reverberation of the objective reality. It does not reflect real facts directly as they are. The latter go through the imaginative mind of the writer, get transformed and, in this sense, turn into something fictive.

The present paper goes along the lines of interpretation of simile or literary comparison which is a figure of speech consisting in an explicit likening of one thing to another on the basis of a common feature. In verbal art simile is one of the most powerful means, which reveals the author's understanding of the surrounding world, his thoughts and ideas.

In our study we have singled out two types of similes—metonymic and metaphoric. The terms and definitions have been introduced by Prof. S. Gasparyan according to whom the interpretation and understanding of metonymic simile

does not cause any special difficulty and efforts, for linguistic units are rationally regulated and presuppose the ability of the reader to perceive the meaning easily. The picture is completely different in the case of metaphoric similes where the linguistic elements are never used at random, their choice and arrangement is always pragmatically conditioned. (Gasparian S., 1991, 2000, 2008)

In our study, however, our main concern is the metaphoric simile, its effect and realization in D.H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers". As a skillful master of verbal art Lawrence goes deep into the human mind and soul and is never satisfied with mere fiction. Emotional manipulation is at the core of his most intriguing novel, "Sons and Lovers" which greets the reader with the author's elegant prose while systematically immersing the story in a swirling cloud of tangled dysfunction.

The novel can be considered Lawrence's autobiography, as it resembles much of the writer's own life. It gives, therefore, an interpretation of how close Lawrence and his mother really were. In this relation he is very vulnerable, because he not only expresses himself as the son, but also as the inevitable lover. Paul, the main character, living with two women (Clara and Miriam) understands that neither Clara nor Miriam can replace his mother and this mutual psychological bondage makes him suffer.

The use of the simile in this context helps the reader to penetrate into the character's inner world, discovering new and intricate facts of his life.

*Paul suddenly looked at her.
 "Why are you so sad?" he asked her.
 "Sad?" she exclaimed, looking up at him, with startled, wonderful
 brown eyes.
 "Yes, he replied. "You are always, always sad!"
 "Oh, I am not, not a bit!" she cried.
 "But **even your joy is like a flame coming off of sadness,**" he
 persisted.
 "I wonder, why?"
 Because you are not: **because you are different inside like a pine-
 tree, and then you flare up: you are not an ordinary tree, with fidgety
 leaves and jolly.**"*

(D.H.Lawrence, "Sons and Lovers", p.202)

In the analysis of the passage special attention should be given to the metaphoric simile "your joy is like a flame coming off of sadness". Here the rules of conceptual compatibility are obviously violated: *joy* does not denote a tangible object, whereas *flame* expresses a tangible and visible quality. The word *flame* (a bright light; an intense feeling) has gained negative polyphonic meaning: *sad, sorrowful, mournful, showing or causing sorrow*.

The metamorphosis here is conditioned not only by intermetaphoric interactions, but also by the general mood of the work itself and the inner world of the main character. The meaning of the above mentioned simile is intensified when another simile follows: *You are different inside like a pine-tree*.

It is worth mentioning that the interpretation of metaphorical similes may differ among the readers. It generally depends on the profundity of their knowledge, on their mental outlook. The picture is quite different in the case of metonymic similes, where the reader does not need to analyze the given simile thoroughly. The author's intention is quite conceivable.

As has been mentioned above the word *flame* has acquired a new meaning. It has got the meaning of *grief, bewailing, lamentation*.

The similes used by the author are not aimless as they help the reader to penetrate into the hidden essence of the character.

Paul is in delusion. Finding in his mother all the important prerequisites for life, he

loses his sympathy with Miriam. She, now, is depreciated. She becomes *invisible* - one who does not exist. After all he breaks off with Miriam. However Miriam believes that his chief need in life is she herself. If she could prove it, both to herself and to him, she would simply trust the future.

New relations began between Clara and Paul. For Paul's mother Clara was better than Miriam yet she was not the right one she wanted. But the mother's influence is so great that neither Miriam nor Clara can help him. And one day he feels the nonsense of Clara.

Clara and Paul loved the Lincolnshire coast and she loved the sea. In the morning they often went out together to bathe. As usual she went to the sea but Paul decided not to bathe but just have a look at her. She was in water moving deeper and deeper...

She seemed to move very slowly across the vast sounding shore. As he watched, he lost her. She was dazzled out of sight by the sunshine. Again he saw her, the merest white speck moving against the white, muttering sea-edge.

*"Look how little she is!" he said to himself. "She's lost **like a grain of sand** in the beach - just a concentrated speck blown along, a tiny white foam-bubble, almost nothing among the morning. Why does she absorb me?"*

The morning was altogether uninterrupted: she was gone in the water. Far and wide the beach, the sandhills with their blue murrain, the shining water, glowed together in immense, unbroken solitude.

*"What is she, after all?" he said to himself. "Here's the sea-coast morning, big and permanent and beautiful; there is she, fretting, always unsatisfied, and temporary as a bubble of foam. What does she mean to me, after all? She represents something **like a bubble of foam** represents the sea. But what is she? It's not her I care for."*

(D.H.Lawrence, "Sons and Lovers", p.425)

The passage is very typical and it requires a specific and thorough examination.

It is clear from the passage that Paul compares *Clara* with a *grain of sand* showing her smallness and meanness. Now she has no value for him. To emphasize the meaning of the conception deeper, the author continues the range of similes comparing *Clara* to a *bubble of foam*. In the expression *she is temporary like a bubble of foam* the word *temporary* is worthy of notice. The author shows that Clara is also temporary for Paul. She is unstable like a bubble of foam and can appear and disappear any time. He finds now no stable values in her. For him she seems a temporary pleasure.

The author uses alliteration, which gives words additional emotional coloring and unique sonority as [l], [k], [g] (*she is lost like a grain of sand*).

The context is not confined to alliteration only. In the given simile we come across the use of accumulation of attributes, as synonymic condensation, which help the reader

to reveal the hidden, undiscovered nature of the character. The attributes (*a tiny, white, foam (bubble); fretting, unsatisfied, temporary (like a bubble of foam)*) are the key words which expose the spiritual world of the character.

In the example adduced below one can face a brutally frank portrayal of the relationship between a domineering mother and the son, a relationship that colors every aspect of the protagonist's life. The author paints this portrait with very fine brush strokes, pays a lot of attention to descriptive detail and succeeds in one of the best characterizations in modern English literature.

It was very dark, with an attempt at snow, although the spring was so far advanced. Morel had not much time; he plunged forward. The town ceases almost abruptly on the edge of a steep hollow; there the houses with their yellow lights stand up against the darkness. He went over the stile, and dropped quickly into the hollow of the fields. Under the orchard one warm window shone in Swine head Farm. Paul Glanced round. Behind, the houses stood on the brim of the dip, black against the sky like wild beasts glaring curiously with yellow eyes down into the darkness. It was the town that seemed savage and uncouth, glaring on the clouds at the back of him. Some creature stirred under the willows of the farm pond. It was too dark to distinguish anything.

(D.H.Lawrence, "Sons and Lovers", p.433)

The passage is very expressive and full of colorful images. It immediately disposes the reader to grasp the tense atmosphere of the inner tragedy and riot of the hero. The whole segment is fully metaphoric. As we see the author compares *houses* to *wild beasts*. In this metaphoric passage the author does not say openly that the hero is in desperate situation. That spiritual indignant state is vivid in the above adduced paragraph. At first sight it seems strange for he always admired the beauty of his town. The town, the houses, the own yard that were so dear to him now have no value and have turned to be *wild beasts* as if they want to attack him.

The expression *wild beast* which is a very ordinary expression acquires polyphonic coloring only in the metaphoric combination with such a word as *house* (*houses like wild beasts*). The hero's mental riot is the result of his mother's inconsolable state. The thought that soon his mother would leave him, leave the world, the house where she lives, makes him suffer so bitterly.

The peculiarities of the segmental aspect of the passage also deserve a lot of attention. We find an interplay of alliteration: [b], [g], [d]. (*Behind, the houses stood on the brim of the dip, black against the sky like wild beasts glaring curiously with yellow eyes down into the darkness.*) The condensation of these consonants conveys gloomy overtones to the passage.

In conclusion we can state that in portraying his characters D.H.Lawrence is a brilliant master. He uses stylistic devices and expressive means abundantly to describe his character's nature. The wide application of simile as well as other stylistic devices

(metaphor, repetition, allusion, alliteration), enriches the work making it more expressive and sonorous. The use of similes helps the reader to penetrate into the hidden essence of Lawrence's characters and to discover such secret aspects that are hidden between the lines.

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Պատկերավոր համեմատությունները Դ.Յ. Լոուրենսի «Որդիներ և սիրեկաններ» վեպում

Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է պատկերավոր համեմատության ուսումնասիրությանը Դ. Յ. Լոուրենսի «Որդիներ և սիրեկաններ» վեպում:

Համեմատությունը գեղարվեստական խոսքի պատկերավորման միջոցներից է, որն ընթերցողին ամբողջական պատկերացում է տալիս կերպարների և նրանց ներաշխարհի մասին:

Լոուրենսը հոգեբանական վեպի այն հեղինակներից է, որոնք, վարպետորեն օգտագործելով համեմատությունը, տեքստին հաղորդում են հուզականություն և հնչեղություն: