

Lawrence's use of time in sons and lovers

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Examine the author's handling of time. The use of time by the author is an important component of prose, as it provides the framework for the entire novel by manipulating the themes and characters by the use of techniques such a setting and narration. Sons and Lovers is set in the early 1900's during the second industrial revolution in a small mining town in England. By choosing this time period and place, Lawrence isolates the themes to be addressed, as well as provides context for the relationships, occurrences and behaviour in the novel.

The activity of coal mining is an important one in the book as it provides income for the Morels as well as many major problems. This reflects the views of Lawrence who grew up in a similar situation and explains his interest in the theme of industrialisation and its impact on individuals. Lawrence, as a writer of the Romantic Movement great opposed industrialisation as he believed it severed the bond with nature and ruined relationships between persons.

These views are evident in his writing as we can see the impact of Morel's job as a coal miner on his family; this represents the situation in many households during the period. This also explains the emphasised relationships that many main characters have with nature such as Paul, Miriam and Mrs. Morel. This relationship represents their spirituality and their escape from industrialisation, especially so by Mrs. Morel's refusal to let her children work in the mines as she believes it will dehumanise them, as it did her husband.

The use of nature imagery, pathetic fallacy and the accentuated description of nature throughout the novel highlight Lawrence's own sentiment toward

nature. This theme is one characteristic of the era and is only able to be addressed because of Lawrence's choice in setting. The narration and structure are other techniques used to influence time. *Sons and Lovers* is a semi-autobiographical, psychological novel that addresses the relationship between a mother and her son and the psychological consequences of this relationship.

Lawrence purposefully arranges his novel in chronological order so as to trace the development of the characters throughout the years. This technique allows a change in protagonist, from Mrs. Morel to her son Paul. This change is necessary to highlight the mother-son relationship and its growth and development throughout the years as well as their relationships with other characters. When we are first introduced to Mrs. Morel, she had been married for eight years. Lawrence uses flashback to briefly explore her relationship with her father as well as illustrate her first meeting and eventual marriage to Morel.

Here he establishes the theme of parent-child relationships and their effect on romantic love in the novel and provides necessary information the reader needs to understand Mrs. Morel's behaviour. The use of a chronological sequence also functions to increase the reader's interest as it keeps them curious about the outcome of events and the resolution of conflicts between the characters. Although the book is chronologically sequenced, the events are not evenly spaced. Lawrence carefully chooses events that are of importance to the development of his characters rather than simply narrate their day-to-day activities.

This allows the reader to observe the changes in relationships in a concise manner, such as the deterioration of the Morels' relationship and the events that led to it. We are able to see how Morel cutting William's hair and locking Mrs. Morel out affected their relationship and caused her to depend on her children's affection rather than her husband's. The transfer of affection from William to Paul after William's death is also made evident. Paul's growth and development into adolescence and the increased possessiveness his mother as a result of his relationship of Miriam is also a key occurrence.

This manipulation of time serves to keep the audience interested rather than overwhelm them with monotonous details as well as highlights only key events in the life of the Morels so as to ensure readers are made aware of the themes that Lawrence wishes to highlight, especially those dealing love and relationships. Lawrence's deliberate manipulation of time serves to effectively depict the themes he wished to address, such as industrialisation, family and romantic relationship through the use of setting, sequencing and structure in a timeless way that still continues to engage audiences.