

A Jungian Psychological Interpretation of Paul's Love Tragedy in D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers: Unraveling the Archetypal and Individual Unconscious Dynamics

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Abstract: *Jungian psychology, with its emphasis on the collective unconscious, archetypes, and the process of individuation, provides a rich theoretical framework for understanding the complex psychological motivations and conflicts that drive Paul's romantic relationships and ultimately lead to his tragic fate. At the core of Jungian theory is the concept of the collective unconscious, which contains archetypal images and patterns that are shared across all human cultures. In Sons and Lovers, the figure of the mother can be seen as an embodiment of the Great Mother archetype. Paul's intense and often unhealthy attachment to his mother, Gertrude, is a manifestation of his unconscious identification with this archetype. This over-identification inhibits his ability to form healthy, independent romantic relationships, as he is constantly drawn back to the security and familiarity of the maternal bond. The paper also explores the role of the anima archetype in Paul's love life. The anima represents the feminine aspect within the male psyche, and its integration is a crucial step in the process of individuation. Paul's relationships with Miriam and Clara can be interpreted as attempts to project and integrate his anima. However, his unresolved Oedipal complex and his mother's overpowering influence prevent him from achieving a balanced integration of the anima, leading to a series of failed and destructive relationships.*

Keywords: Sons and Lovers, Jungian psychology, Anima, Great Mother, Tragedy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel Sons and lovers is a representative masterpiece in the history of British literature. It is a successful model in the early works of D. H. Lawrence, a famous British novelist. The book can be regarded as a semi-autobiographical novel of the author's life. It tells us the tragic story of the major protagonist Paul by depicting a vast picture of his family relationship, especially with his mother, and his romantic relationship with two women. Based on Lawrence's personal life experiences, his creative combination of romanticism with realism and psychoanalysis with social criticism gains the novel a everlasting good reputation. In 1994, one famous critic Harold Bloom listed Sons and Lovers as one of the books that have been important and influential in Western culture in The Western Canon.

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist, is the leading representative of psychoanalysis. His analytical psychology is well-known for its collective unconsciousness and the psychological type theory. He was the first psychologist to observe the psychological phenomenon of androgyny. After years of researching, he pointed out with creativeness that in the robust and masculine body of a man, there is a female archetypal image, called "anima", which is wholly represented in the heart of male with feminine features, such as tenderness, consideration, compassion and mercy. What's more, this image can be considered as the perfect type of an ideal female partner in male's mind, and that is why the study of male's inner "anima" is a relatively reliable reflection in the research of intimate relationship between men and women. Correspondingly, Jang pointed out that there is also a masculine side in women's mind, named "animus", which is the complementary archetype of "anima" in terms of personality. Based on Jung's theory, everyone is born with some nature of the opposite gender. When it comes to the male group, in order to achieve a harmonious dynamic balance, the consciousness and behavior dominated by male personality would eventually embody the nature of women. Furthermore, they are easily attracted by the image of "anima" in their hearts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For decades, the novel has been widely accepted by more and more literary lovers, and thus it has been greatly criticized and concerned by many experts and scholars in China and abroad. Most of them use Freud's

psychoanalytic theory, feminist theory and ecological theory to analyze Lawrence's novel. In the application of psychoanalytic theory, it mainly starts from Oedipus complex, which is used to explain all different kinds of emotions in Paul's heart, especially those that are dramatically influenced by his mother, Mrs. Morel; what's more, in the application of feminist theory, it explains the tragedy of Paul's love from Mrs. Morel's excessive doting love and complete control over Paul, and the main focus is on Mrs. Morel not Paul; in the application of ecologism, the development of the industrial society makes people become the tool of labor and the burden holder of the industrial development in terms of the environmental deterioration and social alienation. Paul also cannot escape from the intrusion of alienation to human beings, and as a result, his life is as miserable as most of people during that period of time.

After the analysis of the previous review of this novel, one thing worth mentioning is that although those theories explain the theme of the novel as well as analyze the characters' image in a sufficient and logical way, they overemphasized the influence of external conditions, such as where Paul lives or whom he lives with, but ignored his own internal psychological activities which is centered on Paul to large extent. Even Freud's Psychoanalysis puts relatively the same emphasis on both Paul and his mother.

As a result, this paper regards Paul as the only center, and agrees that other factors have different effects on his growth and life to some extent. When it comes to Paul's love relationship with Miriam and Clara, it is actually because some parts of these two ladies meet Paul's the expectation of a future lover, so that a feeling of love emerges in Paul's heart. Later, after staying with them for longer time and knowing more about them, Paul gradually gets fed up with both of them, because he finds something that he dislikes or cannot bear on them, i.e. both of Miriam and Clara are different from the imaginary female character that Paul wishes to have a relationship with or even marriage. One distinguished feature of this novel is that Lawrence, as one of the early modernist writers, used the writing methods of psychoanalysis. The school of psychoanalysis founded by Freud has also been developed into a new branch by his student Carl Jung, and Jung's relevant theory can also find a good correspondence in the novel *Sons and Lovers*. The concept of anima in Jung's psychology can give us a look into Paul's heart to find out what makes his love and life almost a tragic one.

3. THREE DYNAMIC STAGES OF PAUL'S LOVE

According to Jung's theory of anima, the image of anima in a male's heart can be both beneficial and harmful to his love relationship or even marriage. There are mainly three stages of Paul's love toward Miriam and then Clara. On the first stage, anima has a positive effect on the relationship, because during that time, love just starts to bud and everything seems to be extremely pure and beautiful. And then, love begins to develop and reaches the second level, which is what people usually call infatuation period. During the developing process of love, the effect of anima is usually positive so that the male and female are attracted by each other to have a closer intimacy. However, after that, if the female gradually turns out not being the person that matches largely with the male's image of anima, the love would definitely end up in tragedy. From this perspective of view, we can say that both two tragic loving experiences of Paul are caused by the image of anima in his internal mind.

3.1 The Birth of Love: Anima and Projection

The birth of Paul and Miriam's love takes a long time to bud, because they meet each other at a very young age, when both of them seldom knows what is love or what is not. It is in the farm of the Leivers family on a beautiful day with flowers spreading on the green grass that their first conversation goes as Paul says, "I suppose these are cabbage-roses" (Lawrence, 145)? And then, "Miriam flushed. She had a beautiful warm coloring". Gradually, they spend much time together, because they both like to read poems, books, and discuss with each other about a certain masterpiece. She can perfectly understand Paul's paintings, which gives Paul a sense of belonging. Her caring and understanding is the same as one part of Paul's anima, which satisfies Paul's mental need. Thus, the purest and simplest love starts to grow in Paul and Miriam's heart. Miriam becomes the person with the projection of Paul's anima.

As for Clara, unlike the long period of love between Paul and Miriam, this time, the love between Clara and Paul is born in a passionate way with a strong sexual attraction. There is a time Miriam invites Clara to pay a visit to Willy Farm. On that day, Paul is over excited, and in his mind Clara's "heavy, dun-colored hair was coiled on top of her head. She wore a white blouse and navy skirt, and somehow, wherever she was, seemed to make things look paltry and insignificant. When she was in the room, the kitchen seemed too small and mean altogether. Miriam's beautiful twilight parlour looked stiff and stupid. All the Leivers were eclipsed like candles" (Lawrence, 260).

From Paul's psychological activities, we can infer that Clara's appearance and body is a big attraction to him, because deep in Paul's heart, the anima is a beautiful young lady who drives Paul's sexual impulse. It is understandable that as an adult male, instead of spiritual comfort, Paul also needs sexual love.

In short, the anima in Paul's mind is a complete figure in both body and soul. However, Miriam and Clara are not round characters, because they are simple: Miriam as the representative of spiritual love, and Clara the symbol of physical love. The point is that, to some extent, they are partly the anima of Paul, and that is why there would be the birth of love.

3.2 The Development of Love: Positive Effect of Anima

The positive effect of anima means that when a male and a female start a relationship, the anima in the male's heart will over beautify the female character, so that he will have the rejoice and satisfactory simply by staying with that female, although most of the time, she may not be the perfect person as what he thinks. However, it does have some positive influence on the development of their love.

Some people may argue that there is no such happiness and pleasure between Miriam and Paul, since Miriam over-emphasizes the importance of spiritual love, which makes Paul in a struggled situation. However, on the contrary, it is because of the satisfactory of Paul's mental need that then Paul starts to seek for physical love. As a result, in the development of Miriam and Paul's love, anima's reflection on Miriam actually gives Paul spiritual support as a close friend and a lover. For one thing, they study algebra and French together and enjoy the tenderness and peace at that time. For example, when Miriam is attentively reading the books, Paul will look at her: "she was ruddy and beautiful" (Lawrence, 180). Paul will be very gentle, if he finds "her hurt because she did not understand." For the other thing, Miriam is the motivation and inspiration of Paul's painting creative activities. "A sketch finished, he always wanted to take it to Miriam. Then he was stimulated into knowledge of the work he had produced unconsciously" (Lawrence, 182). what's more, "In contact with Miriam he gained insight; his vision went deeper". He has warmth to feel the world and "Miriam urged this warmth into intensity like a white light".

When it comes to Clara, things are totally the opposite, because it is the physical sexual pleasure that reflects the positive effect of Paul's anima. As we all know, at first, the book was banned in Britain, the United States and other countries because it was denounced as "immoral" pornography. Only in the 1960s, the ban was lifted after a sensational court trial. The reason why the novel was first banned is that most of the parts in the story when Paul and Clara appear at the same time involve erotic scene. And there is a time when Paul plays a trick on Clara, Miriam thinks to herself that "there was a danger of his becoming frivolous, of his running after his satisfaction like any Arthur, or like his father" (Lawrence, 284). It seems that Paul throws away his soul for the flippant traffic of triviality with Clara. What's more, later he breaks up with Miriam and lives a life indulging in excessive body pleasure. However, during this period of time, Paul possesses the simplest bodily happiness and pleasure which he has never had before, which is a supplement for the empty that he cannot get from Miriam.

All in all, two opposite aspects of the image of anima in Paul's heart drive him crazy in the pursuit of mental love and bodily love from time to time. The positive effect here, is only temporary, because he never manages to keep a balance of it to have a peaceful living condition of life. Given this, it is predictable that he may face more and more dilemmas when the relationship grows into a new level, and that is an illustration of the negative effect of anima.

3.3 The Disillusionment of Love: Negative Effect of Anima

At the end of each relationship, Paul's love turns out to be a disillusionment, causing by the negative effect of anima, i.e. when the female character fails to meet the male's expectation of a perfect lover, the big gap between them will cause strong psychological discrepancy in the male's heart, and thus, negative emotions will eventually come into being and do harm to the relationship.

It is obvious that the biggest problem between Paul and Miriam is that Miriam is too devout a Christian, due to the society's abnormal view of chastity which requires Miriam to use reason to restrain impulse. The patriarchal family environment binds Miriam's spiritual world, which causes her tragedy. In turns, it also results in Paul's tragedy. For instance, there is a time when "she lay as if she had given herself up to sacrifice: there was her body for him; but the look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting immolation, arrested him, and all his blood fell back" (Lawrence, 328). It is abnormal in a healthy relationship because a healthy one requires both spiritual love and physical love. Apart from that, Paul is over controlled by Miriam, which is also a fatal problem in their

relationship. It is paradox that Paul has a crush on Miriam because of the noble and solitary temperament within her soul, but the characteristic of this kind of person has, to large degree, a strong control desire and always like to take control everywhere. This feature of Miriam attracts him, but also repels him.

As for Clara, Paul thinks that she has little spiritual interaction with him. She is ignorant, vulgar, and regarded her only as a sexual partner, for he says to himself at an early time that, she is “not much more than a big white pebble on the beach, not much more than a clot of foam being blown and rolled over the sand” (Lawrence, 404). However, it is because of Paul’s male chauvinism that brings the miserable life to Clara and himself. In the story, Clara is not only a person who is ignorant without any thinking ability. She teaches herself French, and has a sense of appreciation of paintings and has her own ideas and feeling to make a judgement. There is no doubt that in the 19th century, people’s minds are limited by various kinds of power, such as the power of patrilineal society, the power of industrialization, and the power of alienation. As a result, the negative effect of anima has a serious impact on Paul’s love relationship with Clara is based on the premise that Paul firmly holds the view that Clara can never be his soul mate. Therefore, it can be said that sometimes due to other interfering factors, a male person may fail to know whether the female figure really matches his image of anima.

In sum, the inevitable conflicts between the couple will lead to the disillusionment of love due to the negative effect of anima. Two more specific reasons behind it are: the male and female are not suitable with each other; the male is a perfectionist with no idea about the image of anima.

4. THE MAJOR REASON FOR PAUL’S LOVE TRAGEDY: GREAT MOTHER

After having the analysis of Miriam and Clara, another important woman in Paul’s life is his mother, Mrs. Morel. According to Jung’s archetype of Great Mother, gentleness, love and tolerance are the foundation of maternal image. In children’s hearts, they will be influenced by Great Mother, and the formation of mother’s image in children’s hearts will accompany them lasting a life long time. Every child is eager to get the mother’s attention and caress. However, there are also dark sides of Great Mother, such as monopolizing, binding and controlling children. When these dark sides act on children’s consciousness, they are prone to produce destructive images and ideas.

Largely, the image of anima is influenced and controlled by the archetype of Great Mother. That is why some scholars strongly hold the view that Paul has Oedipus Complex. However, using the archetype theory to have an inward look into Paul’s heart would be a more appropriate way, since it is Mrs. Morel who has an abnormal attitude in treating her sons, not only Paul, but also William and the rest of her children. At the beginning of *Sons and Lovers*, the unhappy marriage of Mrs. Morel and her husband has laid the foundation for the subsequent conflicts. And here it is necessary to attach the importance of family happiness that will dramatically put an influence on children’s life.

One major theme of this novel is to give full play to people’s subjective initiative and deal with the relationship of family members and lovers. We cannot deny, during that period of time, it was hard for people in Britain to cultivate a sense of self and be independent. However, the truth is that more and more people at that time found the unnatural relationship between man and nature, man and man, man and self. Lawrence set a good example for the whole world that human need to be independent to gain freedom so that they can live a happy life in the world. The most important thing is to find the balance between man and nature, man and man, man and self.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on D. H. Lawrence’s famous novel *Sons and Lovers*, which is a good illustration of the conflicts in people’s heart and in the modern civilized society. From the perspective of Jungian psychology, the paper analyzes Paul’s internal psychological causes in his three dynamic stages of love: birth, development and disillusionment, and explains the potential reason for his love tragedy, so as to further prove the importance of keeping the balance between family relationship and romantic relationship.

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