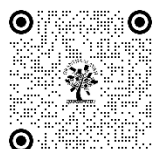


MORAL DILEMMAS AND HUMAN NATURE: ANALYZING THE ETHICAL LANDSCAPE IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

In his written works D.H. Lawrence demonstrates the testing of societal understanding towards moral controversy and human nature through his literary creations. Lawrence created a dual conflict between social rules and personal freedom to show how his stories explore romantic relationships and class distinctions and sexual intimacy and social rankings. The research examines Lawrence's ethical viewpoint through a study of his four main literary works which include *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love*, *The Rainbow*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The characters in his writings encounter multiple complicated choice points where they discover personal truth while breaking traditional moral standards. An evaluation of Lawrence's writings through psychological and philosophical approaches and literary criticism enables researchers to link his works to investigations about human moral conduct. Modern writers borrow extensively from Lawrence's work because he created the fundamental principles that contemporary authors use to analyze ethical elements in literature. According to the findings, Lawrence's narratives continue to resonate with contemporary readers since they generate contemplation regarding individual wishes together with community expectations alongside liberation's definition. Further studies should analyze Lawrence's moral themes in contrast with those of modernist writers or through an examination of his hidden literary works to reveal his full perspectives on morality.

Keywords: D.H. Lawrence, Moral Dilemmas, Ethical Conflicts, Modernist Fiction, Social Values

1. INTRODUCTION

D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930) stands as a foundational figure in early 20th-century literature because of his deep examination of human psychology sexuality and personal relationships (Worthen, 2005). His novels, such as *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, delve deeply into the moral dilemmas and intrinsic aspects of human nature (Moore, 1955). Lawrence's literary works criticize industrial society by focusing on the mind-body separation which he believed caused modern alienation (Wallace, 2005). Throughout his work, Lawrence uses nature as a thematic contrast to industrialization to show how human instincts battle against societal limitations (Ebbatson, 2010). Lawrence's fiction explores moral conflicts that emerge when people face their natural desires against social expectations. Through his characters, Lawrence explores inner moral battles that represent fundamental philosophical

inquiries about personal freedom romantic love, and social expectations (Schorer, 1966). According to Goto (1996), true fulfillment emerges when people accept their physical nature alongside their emotional nature because his concept of nature reaches beyond external environments to include human emotions and instincts. Through his essays, Lawrence demonstrates how people need to understand their position in the natural world because he believes humans are connected to nature (Turner, 1993).

The analysis of ethical conflicts in Lawrence's novels through character interactions with social norms and personal needs serves as the main focus of this review according to Worthen (2005). The research analyzes these moral dilemmas to reveal Lawrence's depiction of human psychological processes and the ethical environments where his characters function (Moore, 1955). His post-World War I writings demonstrate his conviction that Western culture developed excessive rationality which undermined natural emotional satisfaction (Wallace, 2005). The analysis of Lawrence's ethical conflict management requires a study of his work's depiction of social classes gender roles and moral obligations (Young, 1952). Throughout his novels, Lawrence demonstrates his belief that sexuality holds sacred value for human fulfillment while he confronts Victorian prudery which had controlled English literature before his time (Turner, 1993). The controversial nature of his sexual depictions resulted in censorship and legal challenges, especially with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Lawrence, 1928).

The analysis uses multiple ethical and philosophical perspectives including existentialism and psychoanalysis to understand moral conflicts in Lawrence's literary works (Ebbatson, 2010). This research examines Lawrence's ethical dilemmas and philosophical perspectives through the application of moral criticism and ethical literary criticism as outlined by Schorer (1966). The framework enables researchers to study how characters develop while making moral choices and how they critique society in Lawrence's novels (Worthen, 2005). Lawrence presents moral questions in an unclear manner because he believes ethical decisions depend on the specific circumstances of personal experiences (Wallace, 2005). Through his works, Lawrence explores personal freedom alongside moral transgression and societal norm violations which continue to influence modern ethical literary analysis (Young, 1952). This review establishes Lawrence's work based on theoretical structures to prove his exploration of moral challenges and human features maintains its significance. The research explores D.H. Lawrence's literary achievements through an examination of his exploration of moral dilemmas and human nature which is based on philosophical and ethical analysis of his novels (Moore, 1955).

2. MORAL DILEMMAS IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S NOVELS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

D.H. Lawrence established his literary reputation through his deep examination of morals which studied how people resist social expectations against personal wants. Throughout his literary work Lawrence portrays characters who experience moral conflicts that represent both human emotional complexity and social moral frameworks which form awareness about right and wrong.

1) Conflict Between Social Norms and Individual Desires

Through his characters Lawrence demonstrates individuals who attempt to reconcile their individual requirements with societal standards. Ursula Brangwen fights against societal rules that stop her from gaining independence and fulfillment because her society denies women freedom of choice. Through their love relationships in *Women in Love* Gudrun and Ursula confront social conventions about social standing and gender expectations. Through his characters Lawrence shows readers how they face their individual freedom needs against the social conventions of early 20th-century modernist literature times. This story studies the struggle between personal choices and establishment rules that lead to oppositions between personal desires and societal requirements.

The main character Paul Morel faces ongoing tension between following his personal dreams and meeting his family responsibilities throughout the story *Sons and Lovers*. The strong emotional connection Paul has with his mother Gertrude creates an emotional barrier which stops him from forming deep romantic bonds with Miriam and Clara. The Oedipal conflict represents an ethical problem between meeting family commitments and following one's own self-fulfillment needs. Paul's internal development reveals Lawrence's depiction of how the character experiences alternating feelings of guilt and desire as he attempts to break free from family traditions. The tale demonstrates how human beings resist social norms when pursuing their individual desires. (Lawrence, 1913).

2) Sexual Liberation vs. Moral Restraints

Lawrence demonstrates his characters break traditional sexual moral codes by seeking authentic relationships which transcend cultural boundaries. Lawrence uses his stories to challenge traditional love beliefs in order to establish a more liberated approach to human relationships.

Lady Chatterley's Lover narrates the story of Constance Reid who starts an illicit sexual relationship with her gamekeeper Oliver Mellors. The unique bond moves beyond conventional social practices to understand profound emotional connections which people form. Lawrence uses his analysis of love and fidelity to push readers toward reconsidering their sexual ethics. The novel tells a story which opposes conventional social norms while introducing a new ethical system that approves intricate emotional dynamics among people (Lawrence, 1928)

3) Class and Power Dynamics in Ethical Choices

Social class dynamics together with power relations exist throughout Lawrence's literary works. Lawrence developed his writing about social class conflicts through his experiences growing up in a mining community. Lawrence resided in Eastwood Nottinghamshire where he observed the social tensions between working-class and middle-class communities that he depicted with great detail in his literary creations. His father extracted coal in mines yet his mother attempted to achieve middle-class status despite facing resistance from traditional class boundaries. His personal life shaped his literary approach to writing characters who navigate the rigid class structure in Sons and Lovers, Women in Love and Lady Chatterley's Lover. The author describes how social classification shapes relationships and moral choices and displays societal conflicts through his written works.

Through its main characters Women in Love demonstrates how social status differences together with power relationships shape the nature of their relationships. Through his narrative Lawrence demonstrates how people navigate between their personal desires against social commitments and thus generate moral dilemmas regarding both love and personal autonomy. The narrative illustrates how power differences between partners lead to ethical challenges which destroy genuine human connections and fulfillment of self (Lawrence, 1920).

4) Nature vs. Civilization: Ethical Implications

Throughout his work Lawrence establishes instinctive human behavior as an opposing force against the social structures that define civilized existence. The analysis adopted modernist perspectives on industrialization as Hardy and Woolf explored these themes in their literary works from the same time period. Through his writing Hardy mourns the rural decline yet he emphasizes destiny's control over human lives while Woolf studies nature's influence on human mental states and existence. Lawrence uses natural power as a fundamental source for character self-discovery which serves simultaneously as a healing force against the social isolation from industrial modernity. The author demonstrates how industrialization harms human nature and advocates for basic primal relationships as a solution that brings ethical fulfillment and personal satisfaction.

The Brangwen family in The Rainbow experiences a journey between their instinctual drives and their social responsibilities. Through ethical analysis the text demonstrates how industrialization separates people from nature to advocate for a balanced relationship between elemental human desires and social regulations. Through his writing Lawrence presents ethical dilemmas about uniting instinctual impulses with social conventions that overlap with the works of his contemporaries James Joyce and E.M. Forster. Through stream-of-consciousness writing in his novel Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Joyce examines how natural desires compete against social limitations. Through his moral philosophy Lawrence advocates instinctual freedom as an answer to the limitations that modern civilization imposes on individuals (Lawrence, 1915).

Through his narrative methods D.H. Lawrence constructs deep moral observations about human life. The authorship of D.H. Lawrence continues to impact contemporary literature studies and ethical research because he analyzes crucial conflicts between individual freedom and societal rules and natural instincts and rationality. The analysis of Lawrence's moral approach in cowritten literature examines how contemporary social gender perspectives influence his work through social class dynamics and existential freedom. Through his stories Lawrence develops core principles which demonstrate how industrialization shapes morality and technology shapes ethics while retaining contemporary value. Studies of Lawrence's work both in current times and academic settings unveil contemporary meanings of his moral conflicts assessment with present-day analytical methods. Lawrence weaves complex studies about social rules versus individual desires within his prose to produce meaningful ethical content that still speaks to humanity today.

3. HUMAN NATURE AND ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY IN LAWRENCE'S WORKS

D.H. Lawrence examines human nature and ethical principles in his novels as his fictional characters experience questionable moral regions. Lawrence examined human decision-making processes in his writings as people faced ethical dilemmas and gender role restrictions and self-determining choices. Lawrence uses psychological and ethical theories to analyze his characters in order to challenge conventional morality and study Victorian society's social and religious boundaries.

1) Psychological and Ethical Motivations of Characters

Lawrence uses psychological and ethical theories to analyze his characters in order to challenge conventional morality and study Victorian society's social and religious boundaries. The Jungian archetypes in *Women in Love* materialize through Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich who mirror opposite parts of the self-leading to identity conflicts that plague the conscious and instinctual aspects within the narrative. These psychological models clarify character moral decision making through displaying the mechanisms they apply to weigh their desires against their responsibilities to the social group. Lawrence illustrates in his psychological depictions that suppressed emotions create ethical consequences that break down relationships both within and outside the self. Paul Morel's tight bond with his mother expresses Freud's Oedipus concept from the theory of unconsciousness and this influences his problems maintaining romantic partnerships. (Lawrence, 1913). The characters in *Women in Love* pursue their existential journey toward self-actualization through Jungian archetypal desires that seek emotional fulfillment.

Lawrence's literary works present three major themes including moral relativism and existential dilemmas and psychoanalytic theory. Lawrence uses his characters to express existentialist concepts from Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre about personal freedom and value creation during times of truth relativism. Rupert Birkin from *Women in Love* faces an existential dilemma because he seeks relationship meaning by rejecting traditional ethical systems (Lawrence, 1920). Paul Morel faces moral dilemmas in *Sons and Lovers* that mirror Kierkegaard's description of "leap of faith" which explains how people navigate between aesthetic, ethical, and religious ways of living (Kierkegaard, 1843). Lawrence's characters share with Sartre's protagonists the weight of absolute freedom because they must choose ethics without any clear social direction which demonstrates the core existential elements of his literary approach. Rupert Birkin from *Women in Love* resists traditional ethical systems because he seeks to uncover deep existential values within human relationships (Lawrence, 1920). The characters demonstrate existentialist philosophy through methods comparable to Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre's work about human-made moral values after truth's disappearance.

2) Lawrence's Ethical Perspective: Ambiguity and Critique

Lawrence uses his literary works to reject Victorian moral standards and religious beliefs while creating an ethical foundation based on instinctual responses. During the Victorian era society established strict moral codes which demanded people to control their behavior and follow social rules specifically about sexual matters and personal relationships. Both religious organizations and social norms made individuals follow rules of behavior through which they often had to sacrifice their own pursuit of fulfillment. The author rejected Victorian morality through his support of an ethical framework which depends on real emotional responses as well as physical interactions. Lawrence creates characters in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love* who reject conventional social morals to discover themselves and follow their natural instincts beyond Victorian moral codes. Through his writing he attacks strict moral systems because they eliminate natural human instincts and block people from finding meaningful self-awareness. Through *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence shows how Constance Reid and Oliver Mellors develop authentic emotional and physical intimacy rather than immoral behavior (Lawrence, 1928).

Through character development Lawrence presents his rejection of traditional black-and-white moral distinctions. Every important character in his works exists between absolute goodness and complete wickedness. Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow* demonstrates how she balances traditional social expectations with personal freedom through her ethical decision-making choices (Lawrence, 1915). The writer presents his characters without strong characteristics which prompts readers to doubt universal ethical values while revealing how actions contain multiple layers.

3) Feminism, Gender Ethics, and Moral Dilemmas

Lawrence uses his writings to show his opposition to Victorian moral standards and religious teachings by promoting ethical choices based on natural human instincts. The Victorian era society maintained rigid moral codes that

required people to control themselves and follow social rules particularly regarding sexual issues and personal relationships. Society through its religious institutions created behavioral rules that often demanded personal fulfillment sacrifices from people. Lawrence developed an ethical framework that depended on authentic interactions between body and soul. Lawrence depicts characters in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love* who reject conventional moral codes to discover their true selves and natural instincts while rejecting Victorian ethical norms. Some Moral systems come under fire in his writing since these systems restrict natural human desires and hinder true self-realization. Lawrence uses his writings to show his opposition to Victorian moral standards and religious teachings by promoting ethical choices based on natural human instincts (Lawrence, 1928).

Lawrence depicts his opposition to traditional moral duality through detailed character construction. Each principal character in his works exists between pure goodness and total wickedness. The *Rainbow* demonstrates through Ursula Brangwen the struggle between social conformity and personal independence because she repeatedly moves between these conflicting paths (Lawrence, 1915). Lawrence uses ambiguous characterization to guide readers through an assessment of moral absolutism while teaching them advanced insights about human actions.

4. RECEPTION AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LAWRENCE'S ETHICAL DISCOURSE

The ethical motifs discovered by D.H. Lawrence have received diverse literary reviews that showed significant alterations across the first two decades of the twentieth century onwards. Critical discussions have performed moral analysis and literary reinterpretation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Rainbow* across various time periods. During moral debates from early times *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Rainbow* were considered immoral but contemporary scholars study his ethical messages by examining them within literary intellectual and cultural contexts.

1) Early 20th-Century Moral Criticism

The immediate censorship of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1928 occurred because the book exposed explicit content and openly depicted sexual matters. The book faced censorship in three countries including the United States Australia and the United Kingdom because authorities considered it obscene. The famous 1960 obscenity trial against Penguin Books in the UK occurred after they decided to publish the complete unexpurgated version. The trial established itself as a historic case that tested both societal moral values and censorship regulations while demonstrating a growing acceptance of artistic freedom. The acquittal of Penguin Books in this trial shaped both publishing freedom and public perceptions of literature (Rolph, 1961).

The *Rainbow* by Lawrence faced an obscenity trial which led to authorities seizing and burning all unsold copies of the book. The novel's exploration of female sexuality alongside personal liberation and nonconformist morality caused widespread controversy during its time of publication. Lawrence's honest portrayal of human connections alongside his rejection of established gender roles caused discomfort among critics and moral guardians of the time. The initial reactions demonstrate the conflict between Lawrence's literary experiments and the moral standards that dominated his period. Early 20th-century moralists and literary scholars directed their critical condemnation toward Lawrence's literary works. T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis criticized Lawrence's writing because they believed his focus on sexuality and emotional intensity lacked intellectual discipline according to Leavis (1955). Leavis modified his original position to acknowledge Lawrence's essential role in modern literature because of his innovative approach to human consciousness and social analysis

2) Postmodern and Contemporary Ethical Readings

Scholars have returned to Lawrence's works in recent decades to study them through ethical criticism. Ethical criticism reviews the moral aspects found in literature and evaluates their effects on readers' ethical awareness. New literary examinations of Lawrence focus on his presentation of ethical problems that result from individual-social clashes and relationship complexity alongside authenticity-seeking behaviors. Research frequently shows that Lawrence's ethical statements have fascinating yet inconsistent elements that demonstrate both his social critique and problematic method of portrayal (Buell, 1999). Simonetta de Filippis's edited volume *D.H. Lawrence: New Critical Perspectives and Cultural Translation* examines various cultural recontextualizations and modern ethical perspectives in Lawrence's works (de Filippis, 2016). The research production showcases how Lawrence's studies stay active and his ethical thoughts persist as meaningful.

Modern feminist scholars have conducted new analyses of the gender relationships Lawrence depicted in his work. Scholars now approach Lawrence's works with more complex reinterpretations following Millett's (1970) initial

criticism of patriarchal oppression. Even as his perspectives stem from prevailing social prejudices of his era Lawrence presents society with complex female characters to investigate sexual politics in ways that undermine conventional societal standards. Lawrence constructs in *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow* women who face distinctive conflicts between surrender and personal force allowing readers to observe gender-related ethical challenges from the early twentieth century. Studies focused on ecocriticism examine how Lawrence presents human connections to nature through his work. Through his writing, Lawrence presents a dual relationship between people and their surroundings which leads readers to consider human obligations toward nature (Moran, 2018). Through his novels *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence demonstrates a moral and spiritual perspective that connects human experience to natural elements. The viewpoint matches modern ecological ethics because it promotes industrial harmony with environmental sustainability.

Multiple scholars have studied Lawrence's interaction with philosophical modern developments throughout the years. The collapse of rational systems serves as the main focus of his literary creations which characterize modernist intellectual movements. His analysis of industrialization and his search for different ways of existing and perceiving the world demonstrate his active involvement (Moran, 2018). Lawrence pursues authentic existence by rejecting modern industrial society through emotional connections which aligns with existentialist and postmodern thought similar to Nietzsche and Sartre. Lawrence investigates ethical problems through his depiction of power structures and social class divisions. The working-class environment of his hometown influenced Lawrence's depiction of social class conflicts that appear in his novels *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrence examines social hierarchy effects on romantic bonds and moral decisions in his writings while showing how people face challenges in these systems. Lawrence used his writing to challenge traditional moral values about wealth and social status by showing economic and class oppression thus becoming an early writer who criticized capitalist and economic ethics. The ethical discourse of D.H. Lawrence began in the 1920s and has since transformed from initial censorship to contemporary scholarly interpretations of his work. The modern scholarly focus examines various aspects of his ethical evaluation by combining cultural elements with philosophical and environmental perspectives. The essential scholarly value of Lawrence's ethical thoughts exists because he initiates academic disputes that foster established and emerging academic viewpoints.

5. CONCLUSION

In his novels D. H. Lawrence examines private needs against social and cultural norms to develop his analysis of moral conflicts. Through his literary work Lawrence investigates moral consequences in human relationships and gender dynamics and existential dilemmas thus establishing his research focus in moral ambiguity. Lawrence uses Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers* and Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow* and Constance Reid in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to show his examination of traditional moral values. Lawrence establishes important ethical effects through his writing by analyzing natural human instincts and social limitations against Victorian moral standards. Lawrence developed ethical principles about class conflicts and gender independence and natural world relationships that continue to guide modern literary analysis. Through his ethical analysis Lawrence established his position as a modernist writer by combining psychological insights with authentic freedom.

Research on Lawrence's ethical discourse can be accomplished by analyzing his work with modernist authors Virginia Woolf and Thomas Hardy and James Joyce who studied moral dilemmas. The unique ethical conflict resolution methods which distinguish Lawrence from other authors reveals his writing style and its impact on literary moral values. The ethical philosophy of D.H. Lawrence receives limited scholarly attention because of his less famous works *The Plumed Serpent* and *Aaron's Rod*. The evaluation of these works regarding power relations alongside spiritual aspects and individualistic messages in different cultural environments would increase our understanding of Lawrence's moral outlook. Lawrence's literary studies enhance depth when incorporating philosophical and ethical theories for analyzing morality identity and human agency within his work.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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