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Literary Analysis

In the short story "The Rocking Horse-Winner" by D.H. Lawrence it is illustrated that money cannot buy happiness. The story displays the way people allow money to control their lives. It includes many literary devices such as: symbols, character development, contrast, suspense, and irony. D.H. Lawrence is able to use these devices to show readers what is really important in life. He has brought readers some of the most thought provoking and inspirational literature that they can get their hands on.

Instead of D.H Lawrence directly telling the reader what the theme of the story is he instead uses symbols. This makes the reader solve for themselves what the story means. One of the symbols he uses is the rocking horse, symbolizing the desire for money. Another symbol is the whispering. It is not actually whispering but is instead the thoughts of the young boy, Paul. The house represents the family relationship within the home, what Paul is striving to fix. The eyes of Paul represent the change he goes through in trying to find luck.

Character development takes place when Paul has clearly changed from acting in a childish manner to frantically riding his rocking-horse. We can see this in the passage, "He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way seeking for the clue to "luck". He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. . . . he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space"(3). This passage shows that the character has a clearly defined goal, which is to obtain

luck. He eventually achieves his goal to have luck with money; however, he ends up having an unlucky life.

“When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery he would sit. . .charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily”(3). This quote shows how D.H. Laurence has used contrast. You first see the two girls who symbolize innocence and goodness playing with their dolls. You then see the boy who rides a horse intensely focused on his quest for luck. The girls are opposite of the boy showing how much the boy is changing.

Suspense is created throughout many passages that pull you deeper into the text. These examples from the text are written demonstrating a cliff-hanger effect. The element fear is shown in the little girls towards the boy in fear. The eyes of Paul are mentioned many times throughout the passage. It is suspenseful to see his eyes change from unsure to blazing fire, to wild/mad to uncanny. This helps create a curious experience for the reader.

Irony is shown in the passage that displays the hunger the boy had for obtaining luck. He would stop at nothing to be lucky and in his case this meant he would not stop riding his horse until he had the name of a horse that would bring him luck. The horse's name would bring him money that he would use to help his mother and to stop the whispering in the house. It is ironic that the one thing the boy strived so persistently to obtain is also the one thing that killed him. The boy madly rode his rocking-horse until his mother discovered him in one of his frenzies,

which is when he collapsed. The last word of his life is what brought him death, "I am lucky"!

This is an example of irony because the character believes the luck (money) that is won at the races will bring happiness to his mother and his home. However, it created the opposite effect. The more money he made the more his mother was worried and the more his house (his thoughts) craved more.

Character development, symbolism, contrast, suspense, and irony all play pivotal roles in making the short story "The Rocking-Horse Winner" the classic that it is today. Had the boy not cared so deeply to please his mother, he may have lived. D.H. Laurence was able to clearly define his theme without specifically telling the reader. Through all of his literary devices the reader is able to find out for themselves the meaning of the passage, that money cannot buy happiness.