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**Depiction of Obscenity  
in  
D.H.Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers***

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*Dedication*

*To my beloved family, my lovely daughter and my husband.*

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## Abstract

Edwardian society held some ideal and values that they considered as sacred nevertheless, D.H Lawrence deviated from those ideals of morality and woman chastity with the novel *Sons and Lovers*. This dissertation aims to analyze the way the author incorporated the Freudian psychoanalytical theories in depicting the themes of obscenity, adultery and marital betrayal through a thorough depiction of Victorian society. The first chapter explains new historicism as a literary theory and its usage in the analysis of Lawrence's novel. In addition, it provides a historical overview of the Edwardian society within all its aspect of women struggle and social reforms, while defining the notion of marriage, sex and love. On the other hand, the second chapter introduces the novel with all its characters and plot. Furthermore, it examines Lawrence's portrayal of sexuality through Freud's viewpoints of Oedipus complex. It is necessary to consider *Sons and Lovers* as a revolutionary novel that broke off the taboos of the Victorian society and put forth the notion of the human desire and obscenity.

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# General Introduction

## General Introduction

Every text shows signs of the time and the society in which it is produced. D.H.Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* considers a range of options for where life meaning is anchored around a discussion of several relevant themes: family, education, art and culture, love, sex, obscenity, class conflict.... Most are well-known, even to the twentieth century man. Human higher capacities, linked with tenderness, care, intelligence, reason and creativity, as well as commitments and relationships are – among other – vital ingredients to building up a sense for life. Social qualities and cultural values do not just shape the individuals' daily lives, but also every text that is written. These writings then have the ability to influence thoughts and beliefs on what is right and wrong.

D.H.Lawrence expresses the idea that man is living a lie, leading a life of falsity, negativity and deadness. The decline in human relationship, the tendency of human beings to destroy each other through war (World War I) are current tendencies of man's greedy quest of wealth and power. This pattern can at any rate be reversed just if man connects with nature and its delicacy, thus experiencing a life of spontaneity based on sensitivity, affection and tenderness.

However, human relationship encompassing sensitivity, affection and tenderness in *Sons and Lovers* has been depicted in such a frank and direct way that they aroused fierce criticism, polemics and controversy. This modest work tries to shed light on Edwardian society in relation to the individual, and vice versa. Although the two are inseparable entities, depending on each other, Lawrence portrays them as conflicting parties where the fight for ideas and principles is irrevocable. The point, then, is to identify a common ground in order to build comprehension, as a consensus, from different inclinations and tendencies. In clear words,

- Why did society treat Lawrence as an obscene writer?
- Why did Lawrence never give up?

On one side, to the rulers' eyes, the domination of society was beyond all consideration; on the other one, Lawrence's exploration of the individual and his introspections was more than a necessity, it was a reality.



Chapter I deals first with the concept of New Historicism which helps understand better Lawrence's views of not only the past but today's world as well. What follows is a short account on the Edwardian era in which *Sons and Lovers* was born, and it serves as a historical and a social framework to the novel. Whereas Chapter II is a case study. First, it presents the novel and its content. Next, it provides a psychoanalysis of the main protagonist and his relationships, and it puts into question the problematic related to obscenity and social taboos.

# **Chapter One**

## **Literary Theory and Social Background**



## 1.1. Introduction

Since this dissertation aims to study the relevance of the themes of obscenity over the literary writings during the Edwardian era, the first chapter investigates through a new historicist analysis, the morals and the values of the Edwardian society and their people's attitudes towards Marriage and Sex, and the way they were reflected through literature, particularly Lawrence's masterpiece, *Sons and Lovers*.

## 1.2. New Historicism

There has always been a close link between literature and history. To understand any piece of literature, one needs to know about the historical context which has made this literature. Then, the artistic work opens the opportunity to learn about people's history, their feelings, aspirations, and traditions. Thus, when reading a text, one not only discovers the past, but also enjoys the artistic depiction of the text which encompasses the cultural mood, the tendencies and the inclinations of its author.

### 1.2.1. Definition

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines New Historicism as "a method of literary criticism that emphasizes the history of the text by relating it to the configurations of power, society, or ideology in a given time." New Historicism developed as a school of literary theory in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic and Harvard English Professor Stephen Greenblatt who coined the term. New Historicism became a prominent study tool for the modern literature works in the 1980's and 1990's. Time, place and the historical event are seen as essential elements of any literary work. In fact, these main components are decoded from the literary text providing deep analysis of the text.

In other words, when analyzing literature, New Historicism takes deep interest in the social, historical and cultural events that have created it. For, these events have certainly inspired the literary work and impacted on its writer's view to transfer it into a piece of art.

As stated by Louis Adrian Montrose, an American Professor of English Literature at San Diego University,

New historicism deals with textuality of history, that is, the fact that history is built and fictionalized and the history of the literary text is

without a doubt found within the socio-cultural and political conditions surrounding its conception and interpretation. (Montrose, 2006)

The main concern of New Historicism is the exploration of history and the mechanisms which are inherent in the way institutions and people – rulers, monarchs, church, men and women of different classes – interact for the building and the development of this history. The historical components, encompassing social events, cultural factors and political contexts help understand the literary text and the degrees of impact and influence they have on the artist. New Historicism recognizes and bears the idea that, as times goes on and changes, the perception of literary works develops.

### **1.2.2. The Origins of New Historicism**

To understand New Historicism it is of importance to also understand where it came from. New Historicism takes its roots from America “and has remained largely American” (Bertens, 2008, p.139). Its origin can be traced back to Raymond Williams's *Marxism and Literature* (1977) which inspired the rehistoricization of literary studies in England and America, and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which gave a new impetus to the eurocentric cultural discourse and questioned the preeminence of Western culture.

Though the term seems to have been coined by Michael Mc Canles, New Historicism came up when “in 1982 Stephen Greenblatt used it to describe recent work of himself and others on the Renaissance period” (Bertens, 2008, p.141). The central question raised is on how literary texts relate to their historical background. Both Theories are often focused on studying traditional texts such as Shakespeare, but since the 1980s, they have spread to the study of other periods. The main concern-raising themes are related to the notion of self-realization, human psychology, and authority. The central aspect in New Historicism is culture. Culture gives a meaning to society in which individuals live and interact. In return, individuals’ integration in society and their conduct determine the importance of the society’s structure, its morals and values. New Historicism centralizes around how human beings perceive themselves, how they are shaped through society, and how they use power to satisfy their needs.

Thus, the author is a subject to his context and therefore to his historical background, living circumstances, class, family and world view. Another central aspect

is that a text can never be understood out of his historical context. No reader can assert to have the “truth” of a text or an event; or even that an understanding of the “truth” is possible.

### **1.3. Edwardian Society**

The Edwardian Era began with the accession of Edward VII (1841-1910) to the throne in 1901. His reign lasted up to 1910. The period witnessed a lot of changes and improvements which made of Britain a prosperous period and an influential empire. That was due to the progress in science and industry. As opposed to the Victorian Era, Edwardian society became much more comfortable and less conventional. The section below describes some social aspects of that period.

#### **1.3.1. Industrial Background**

The decline in agriculture in the 1870s tired a great number of farmers, and, as a result, the country knew a rural exodus of the high majority of the population. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution witnessed a huge progress in inside and outside England. However, this development has been achieved at the expense of human’s energy and liveliness. In that period, the harsh living and working circumstances led the British miners to rise against their bosses. They asked for pay rise and for better working conditions. As the pace of industrialization was reaching an important extension, the gap between the wealthy and the needy deepened.

The Education Act of 1870 offered the opportunity to the miners’ children to attend school. The miners felt it as a relief and they hoped their situation would improve. The act stipulated that local school boards were subject to charge and taxes. Elementary schooling, however, did not become completely free till the 1890s, when board schools did not impose fees anymore. During the last quarter of the century, The Education Act, industrialization, and urbanization, resulted in the availability of more jobs in different professional sectors, such as the Post Office, office work, accounting, and photography. This opened a range of choices for those who wished for a way of improving their living, notably through reforms.

#### **1.3.2. Social Reforms**

Historians argued that it was not so easy to give a definition to Edwardian society. The given point was that it was ruled by the upper middle class and the aristocracy,

despite the fact that the working class constituted the largest faction of the population. The rich were concerned by building country houses, organizing banquets and hosting guests. The people who participated in these celebrations and festivities appeared in sumptuous look and showed typical society behaviours. The fortunate felt superior to the poorer. Whereas the working class was neglected.

There was a time when food abounded, and people living in the countryside could enjoy the land crops and the grazing of their animals on pastures. Nevertheless, decline in agriculture pushed people down to cities in which life did not prove to be easy to handle. Factors such as pollution, slums, unhealthy conditions, poverty, and diseases heightened the precarious living of the poor and the working class. The main source of economy was based on mining. However, the miners' wages did not rise and the working class could hardly cope with the rise of the cost of living. This led many people to rent their houses for better financial revenue. As for social security, they had to wait until Workmen's Compensation Act of 1906 appeared. It allowed workmen to benefit from compensation in case of injury or accident.

The gap in wealth distribution deepened; while the fortunate were able to spend their money the way they liked, the poor were going from bad to worse.

The reign of Queen Victoria was the longest to last – 64 years. Although there had been significant progress, social change was to be considered. The wealth that industrialization had produced was controlled by fewer people. The middle class consisted of the high majority of the population and it grew rapidly. It made the minority rich and provided the wealthy with all comforts of life. Unfortunately, those who were behind others' wealth lived in awful conditions.

The time for social reforms was irrevocable due to the increasing poverty. Social movements emerged to denounce the living situation and to find way outs to their boredoms and problems. Women played large roles among the emerging movements. The reforms they advocated and struggled for brought considerable social changes.

Even if the Edwardian era appeared to be a peaceful period, it was in fact full of social turmoil. People were at the same time optimistic about the industrial progress that their country was making, and, at the same, they feared the worsening of the situation as the First World War was just near. The war would affect all people of

society, and, especially, it would make the poor poorer. Thus, most reforms sought to free themselves from the Victorian past.

Reforms centered their attention on Human rights, mainly. However, political groups – Anarchists, Nihilists, and Socialists – proliferated and incited the working classes to up rise. The distinction between people of fortune and those who owned too little became very sharp. Victorians understood that people were behind their own wealth and that the individual was the only one to blame for poverty, not society. Liberal government officials were struggling for the benefit of the working class. They strived to pass laws about reducing working hours, establishing income tax, and death duties. They also claimed for financial support in case of sickness, disability or retirement. As for the woman, in particular, she started to get concerned and involved in the socio-economic situation of the United Kingdom, who had never witnessed a large female movement before.

#### **1.4. Edwardian Woman**

The woman had a complex position in society. She was seen, as modest, gentle, submissive, and domestic. She was regarded as the heart of the home and the household. However, her access to outer and public life was fiercely criticized and many were not really ready to support their movement. The woman was not deemed fit for any political engagement or activity. Neither was the political scene a suitable place for her.

Nevertheless, the women's reaction was gaining the ground due to their determination to fight. Women's rights and progressive change tended to raise concern at the political level. Their energy and capacities began to be seen and acknowledged. They challenged the traditional views and labels they had endorsed before. They acquired the rights for their own property when they get married, and the children custody rights when they get married. However, this was only the beginning of the new century changes.

“In 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Manchester, a group who, by 1905, had adopted a militant approach to suffragist demands.” (Miller, 2013) This saw the beginning of the suffragette movement in deep. This movement helped to tear down the persisting ideals of womanhood. In spite of the considerable participation and the commitment of women between the



1880s and 1890s, it wasn't until the 1910s that young women from wealthy and comfortable backgrounds set out to express their thoughts and claims openly.

Turmoil within England became more powerful and acute. While Victorian woman was passive and submissive, the Edwardian one showed rebellion and active fight in order to be heard and considered. In 1872, voting rights became the center of all women's discussion. They claimed for gender equality and for better life conditions. Nonetheless, they did not gain the right to vote until 1918, for women over thirty years of age. As for women over twenty-one had to wait until 1928 to start voting. As a reaction, women's quest of gender equality in terms of labour and voting rights developed into acute hostility in Edwardian times, thus triggering an unprecedented women revolution. "Along with this movement the concept of the New Woman and the questioning of the role of a woman was born" (Banks, 1981, p.180).

Women's suffrage movement touched various aspects of women's life, including their sexual freedom. In fact, they fought any double standard and male preferences, They denounced their immoral inclination towards sex, and its damaging effects on them (women). They started to have their own word regarding any aspect linked to their private life and to their sexuality. The point was to enjoy certain freedom, as man did, and to express their views on when to have children, how many they would have, or not to have at all. They focused, indeed, on the issue of birth control through specifically the two major feminine activists' action, Margaret Sanger and Emma Goldman, who defended the less privileged class of women who did not wish to have more children than they could bear. Now, the idea of the New Woman was born with a new perception about her role in society, and inside her family.

### **1.5. Marriage, Sex, and Love**

Upper class women engaged in married life not only for material profit and supremacy, but out of love as well. Now, she performed independently of her father or even of her future husband, and she enjoyed some autonomy in society. In particular, "she gathered much more opportunities for jobs and careers which reduced the need of a marriage out of economic reasons and made room for companionship within marriage." (Lewis, 1984).

In post-Edwardian England, upper-class women continued to view marriage and

family as central factors inherent in their social life. Despite the changes which occurred, the aristocrats were keen to protect their wealth and to preserve their family dynasty. Society norms wanted that girls had to choose their own husbands. Despite, meetings on special events were generally planned by parents so that a man or a woman could find the suitable partner for life. The rules and behaviours regarding marriage all favored marital union, but not divorce. Men's adultery did not have enough weight to lead to divorce. However, on the opposite case divorce could be pronounced right away against the woman. The woman's duty was confined mainly to pregnancy and child raising. Thus, the woman was seen as the family pillar, running the household life and submitting to her husband, the head of the family.

Many were in loveless unions and were looking for excitement elsewhere. However, more important about sexual affairs was that married women did not want to jeopardize their own marriages. These intimate practices needed to happen secretly so that nobody would know what could happen in the confines of doors. Otherwise, especially women would end as social miseries. Now, if a child should be born as a result of an illegal relationship, then, he could be seen legitimate and could easily be accepted and raised by the family.

Sexual matters were also at the center of debate in Edwardian England. Sexual behaviour and perception in Edwardian era overlapped with the Victorians' views. Edwardian girls were also expected to have no passionate interest in sex. The ideal was "that she have little sexual feelings at all, although family affection and the desire for motherhood were considered innate" (Vicinus, 1972, p.ix). Once they were married this attitude was not expected to change. The woman as a wife was "to endure rather to enjoy sex." (Bruley, 1999, p.14). Society saw sexual desires of women and masturbation as immoral, whereas sexual practices of men "were understandable and even necessary for their health" (Bland cited in Bruley, 1999, p.13). As a matter of fact, Marriage, sex, and love are important themes that Lawrence tackled in the industrial setting of *Sons and Lovers*.

### **1.6. Introducing *Sons and Lovers***

Industrialization and urbanization were the main factors which led Lawrence to strong criticism of the Edwardian society. Like many other writers of the time, he was

much affected by the circumstances and by the harsh living conditions that the lower classes were suffering from. So, they switched their writing style to mirror the values of the new artistic movement, Modernism. The main values of this movement include psychology and science, the effects of war, social and personal fears, and flow of awareness. This phase gave them the opportunity to express themselves, psychologically and artistically, from different perspectives.

*Sons and Lovers* shows Lawrence's awareness and understanding of the society and its nature. Lawrence portrays the sickness of modern civilization and explores its negative effects on the human being and his psyche. To Lawrence's eyes, society is not what matters a lot. Through the novel, he rather puts emphasis on the individual. He sees that the individual is the most important actor in the community. He considers that the individual's growth, endeavor and initiative are the basis of change and enthusiasm.

### **1.6.1. The Novel**

When *Sons and Lovers* was published in 1913, the novel was straightaway considered as a portrayal of obscenity, due to its treatment of sexuality. Lawrence's descriptions of sex were sensational in Edwardian England. By the turn of the twentieth century, sexuality was a common practice for men. But, the fact that a woman expressed her sexual needs or desires was a shocking attitude and an offensive behaviour. Women could not wish for sexual desires unless they belonged to lower or uneducated classes. Whereas pure and chaste women's role consisted mainly of satisfying the sexual fulfillment of their husbands. It was a conjugal duty, a view that Lawrence expresses through the character of Mrs. Morel. She criticizes her son's women – Clara's distance from her husband and Miriam's puritanism.

*Sons and Lovers* was published in a time when the perception of sexuality tended to shift from the idea of repression towards that of liberation. The author presents this dichotomy of repression and liberation through the main protagonists of his story, Paul, Miriam, and Clara. They all seek passion. However, each of them is hindered and retained by either moral or social restrictions.

*Sons and Lovers* was published in 1913, one year before the start of the First World War. It was his third novel and is one of the innovative novels of the twentieth century English Literature. Many critics see it as the best of D.H.Lawrence's achievements.

The novel narrates relationships inside and outside the Morel family. Lawrence's basic idea in *Sons and Lovers* is that of the relationship of his mother, Gertrude Morel, and her sons, especially Paul Morel. Their relationship is so strong that it does not let Paul form a concrete and meaningful connection with other women, mainly Miriam Leivers and Clara Dawes.

The story is based on Lawrence's own life. It is an auto-biographical novel which includes two parts. The first part draws mostly on Mrs. Morel's marital life and her problems within her household. The second part of the story is based on the inner emotions and beliefs of Paul Morel, as well as his unstable relationship with his mother and his girlfriends.

### **1.6.2. The Author**

David Herbert Richard Lawrence, known as D.H.Lawrence (September 11, 1885 – March 2, 1930) was born in the small mining town of Eastwood near Nottingham in the English Midlands. He began his career as an Edwardian novelist. His literary achievements, mainly short stories, poems and novels made of him a famous writer. He wrote about all aspects of life; he went further in his writings dealing with abstract topics, such as the Freudian theory on psychoanalysis, which was quite resented by public views of the time.

His family was poor; it counted five children, among whom he was the fourth. His father's name was Arthur John Lawrence, an illiterate coal miner. His mother, Lydia Lawrence, a former teacher, was from a middle-class family. She was educated, refined and pious. In 1901, Lawrence started work for a surgical appliances factory. But, when his older brother William passed away, Lawrence got deeply affected. He caught a terrible pneumonia. As he felt in good safety, he got a teacher job at the British School in Eastwood. There, he got acquainted with Jessie Chambers. They became close friends, but he was not much attracted by her. Jessie Chambers represents the character of "Miriam" in *Sons and Lovers*. Then, he broke up with Jessie and began another relation with Louie Burrows to whom his sister, Ada, introduced Lawrence: all three of them were trained to be teachers at the same school.

He then moved to London to accept a teaching occupation in Croydon. He began writing poems, short stories and finished *The White Peacock*, his first novel, in 1910,

and published it in 1911. After one year, Lawrence printed his second novel, *The Trespasser*. However, in 1912, Lawrence's life took another turn. He met Frieda Von Richthofen for whom he was infatuated. She left her husband and her three children to flee with him to Germany and then to Italy. Lawrence did not stop writing. So, *The Daughter-in-Law*, his first play, was completed in 1912. The next year, he published a set of poems: *Love Poems and Others*. The publication of *Sons and Lovers*, his autobiographical novel, appeared in 1913. After the marriage of Lawrence with Frieda on July 13, 1914, he published a collection of short stories, *The Prussian Officer*, and *The Rainbow* in 1915.

Lawrence could not leave the country because World War I was raging. So, he settled in Cornwall in the southwestern coast of Great Britain. However, government officials saw his presence as suspicious and as a threat because his wife was of German origin. So, he was banned from in 1917. Lawrence did not have his own home; he moved among his friends' apartments for two years. However, despite the disorder of the time, Lawrence could complete the publication of four poetry works between 1916 and 1919: *Amores* (1916), *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1919), *New Poems* (1918) and *Bay: A Book of Poems* (1919).

After the end of the First World War, Lawrence once again left England for Italy where he devoted two years in writing. He finished his two most famous books, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, in 1915 and 1920 respectively. He published *My England and Other Stories* in 1922, a collection of short stories that he had revised during the war. Lawrence caught tuberculosis, and travelled back to Italy in 1927. There, he wrote *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, that he published in 1928. As his health worsened, he refrained from writing.

The scenes, in *Sons and Lovers*, which were deemed highly sexual, were all censored and deleted by editors. Moreover, in 1929, even some of his paintings in the Warren Gallery in London were impounded because of their portrayal of high-level obscenity. Although many of Lawrence's works were considered too daring, even pornographic, he remained a very talented poet and novelist. His accurate writing style, his treatment of different themes, and his masterful exploration of the individual – human psyche and his inner complexity – ranked him as one of the most distinguished

and innovative English writers of the early twentieth century.

After his health had worsened, Lawrence died in the south of France, on March 2, 1930, at the age of 45.

### **1.7. Defining Some Concepts**

The concepts below are worth of concern because they are recurrent in *Sons and Lovers*' criticism, as some of the novel parts were censored because they were considered obscene.

#### **1.7.1. Obscenity**

The term is of Latin origin. The phrase 'ob caenum' means 'about filth..' It refers to a behaviour or a word considered as offensive to modesty or decency. Although the term originally referred to things considered disgusting, it became particularly connected to sexual denotation. 'Obscenity' is defined by Duhaime's Law Dictionary as "An elusive concept used in the context of criminal law to describe material or a publication which is illegal because it is morally corruptive, and therefore closely related to the term corrupting morals and the evolving standards of society as to what is morally wrong and what is not."

For history, Obscenity involved any immoral material which was unpleasant to current community values and levels of decency. It also included any conduct which meant to indulge in impure sexual thoughts or action. Whereas, a modern definition is given by Canadian Criminal Code: "For the purposes of this Act, any publication a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence, shall be deemed to be obscene." (Section 163.8)

#### **1.7.2. Censorship**

The term comes from Latin 'censere' meaning 'to give as one's opinion, to assess'. The Roman censors were magistrates who took the census count and served as assessors and inspectors of morals and behaviours. "Censorship operates on the assumption that the thoughts, feelings, opinions, beliefs and fantasies of human beings ought to be a subject of moral judgment and ultimately social and government action." (White, 1997, p. xvii). In other words, it presents different types of restrictions that were imposed in the name of public morality and anti-governmental beliefs. As examples, the Roman

Catholic Church's Index (Index Librorum Prohibitorum) contained a list of publications which Catholics were forbidden to read. In 1857, the British Obscenity Publication Act established the rules for censorship in both Britain and America, and it banned many writers of the time for violating anti-obscenity laws.

### **1.8. Conclusion**

The Edwardian era and its society were known by holding confined and restrained attitudes regarding marriage and sex, especially towards women. Nevertheless, their position started to change particularly due to the social reforms and the Industrial Revolution. These attitudes were mirrored in various literary works, most notably *Sons and Lovers*, by D.H. Lawrence, which has been largely approached through a psycho-analytical perspective.

## **Chapter two**

### **Depiction of Obscenity**

**in**

***Sons and Lovers***





## 2.1. Introduction

Before studying any piece of literature, it is important to look at the period and the conditions of the society, and how its people lived, including the author. While relying upon his time's circumstances soaked in an industrial world, the author highly contributes to a better vision of this world in his literary achievement. The literary background includes a short account regarding the literary movement of the time, Modernism, and its new view over literature and the image of the society.

## 2.2. *Sons and Lovers* in Modernism Time

Modernism emerged in early 1900's. In Britain, it started in the late of the nineteenth century and early decade of the twentieth century. It is characterized by significant developments to get out of the grip of Victorian ideals and values. Rebellious ideas from many thinkers like Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche challenged many traditional beliefs about the world and human nature, bringing radical changes in art, literature, philosophy, sociology and psychology.

In literature, Modernist writers, such as D.H.Lawrence, focused upon the idea of individuality, the role of the inner-self and awareness in human nature. The growth of a character refers to how it progresses in complexity. The characters in *Sons and Lovers* break away from traditions and conventions through resistance to materialism and industrialization of the time. Lawrence describes the Morels' world as it is actually felt and experienced by its actors. This is clearly illustrated through the protagonists of the novel. For instance, Paul Morel becomes more and more unconventional when indulging in relationships; Walter, his alcoholic father, shows aggressiveness in his conduct; Gertrude, his mother, is too possessive and, thus, hampers Paul's psychological growth. The point worthy of consideration is that the characters' attitudes and behaviours have less to do with morality and appealing standards. Rather, their development is about their own vision, creativity and satisfaction.

The analysis of *Sons and Lovers* through the use of Freud's theory of Oedipus Complex, relates the unusual characters' relationships and the protagonist's psycho-sexual tribulations. When introducing the theory which was very influential at that time, Lawrence, through the character of Paul, retraces his childhood, reexamines the psychological effect of his relationship with his mother on his sexual growth. The

controversial issue is how a dominating and possessive mother could cause a psychic tension to her son and leads him to turn out into hopeless and unsuccessful relations with other women in his life.

The subject of industrialization is present in *Sons and Lovers*. This novel portrays directly the miners' life. It describes their lifestyle, their daily ups and downs, as well as their enjoyments and sufferings. Under the impact of mine and factory works, these people have lost the sensual aspect of life, the essence of human nature and the relevance of relationship.

### **2.3. Impact of Industrialization on the Family Values**

Mr. Walter Morel, a coal miner, is the representative of the working class people in this novel. He lives with his family in precarious dwellings built for the thriving coal mining business. For Gertrude Morel, his wife, living in such deplorable conditions is a kind of nightmare from which she cannot escape. She is from a middle class family who has provided her with necessary education; adapting to the poor miners' living situation becomes almost impossible. Mrs. Morel suffers. She realizes that the life she leads as a poor miner's wife is not hers. The new living conditions are not compatible with her principles and her education standards, neither do they respond to her hopes and expectations. Her married life worsens seriously when she sees that her husband has resumed to alcohol and brutality, and when she discovers that her husband has lied to her about the house. He has told her that it was his, but the truth is otherwise. Mrs. Morel has been taught to religiously keep up with basic standards, such as morality and decency. And as he gets more and more distant from her, she understands that their relationship is doomed to failure. Through the character of Walter Morel, Lawrence stresses the fact that miners have joined the coal pits at a very early age in order to contribute to their families' incomes. They did earn some money, but the downside is that they were deprived of their childhood innocence and turned into tough individuals. Mrs. Morel is a caring mother. She does not want her children to follow their father's footsteps. In fact, they appreciate their mother's dream; they want to lead a peaceful life and earn money through a suitable vocation. That is why William finds a job with decent salary in London. As for Paul, he seeks a meaning to his life inside the mining community, industrial England. Paul wants a simple and peaceful life.

He aims to “earn thirty to thirty–five shillings a week, and when father died, live in a cottage with mother...Happily ever after” (Lawrence, 2005. p.116). He finds a good job at Jordan’s corporation.

Industrialism opened doors for women to get out of their homes and to seek employment or to engage in professional vocation. That was a means to not only earn a livelihood, but to feel independent as well. Mrs. Morel has membership at the ‘*Women’s Guild*’, Clara participates in the ‘*Suffragettes Movement*’ and some ladies work at Jordan’s factory. All these facts show that the idea of the model woman, as previously perceived by the Victorians, belongs, now, to the past. However, this newly found independence has aroused some negative feelings expressed by Lawrence. He depicts marital betrayal and adultery through the characters of Clara and the ladies working at Jordan’s, who are harassed by their boss.

In the end, the nature-based image which Lawrence uses expresses an alternative escape from the heavily industrialized world. Lawrence mentions in Chapter IV ‘*Roses, Lilac tree, Oak*’. He highlights the fact that the return to primitive roots, is a vital need for humans to escape the drawbacks of the material world, to breathe fresh air, and to enjoy the harmony of nature.

#### **2.4. *Sons and Lovers*: Plot, Setting, and Characters**

What follows is a description of the environmental location of the novel, and a presentation of its characters and the plot they are involved in.

##### **2.4.1. Plot and Setting**

*Sons and Lovers* is an autobiographical story which is set in an industrial environment, at the beginning of the twentieth century. It relates the story of a mining family. On one side, it portrays the hardships and conflicts of this family, the Morels. On the other side, it depicts an emotional relationship between Mrs. Morel, the mother, and, Paul, her son. The latter is so passionately attached to his mother that his connections to other women do not last for long.

Mrs. Morel has always encouraged her sons to be intellectual. They are sent to school and are motivated to become middle class people. In fact, they are good students at school because their mother has always pushed them forward. When the couple drifts apart, Mrs. Morel progressively directs her affections to them, beginning with William,

the oldest. William is ambitious, and his mother is very proud of him because he is “the best shorthand clerk and bookkeeper in the area” (Lawrence, 2005. p.70). When he has earned his own salary, he gives all of his money to his mother and keeps very little for himself. Then, he finds a promising occupation in London. He could help the family financially. William writes from London, telling his mother news about his new situation and his new acquaintance, Lily. Mrs. Morel is only concerned about her son’s well-being. However, William gets married in spite of his mother’s disagreement. Later, William gets very sick. The mother goes to London to see him. But, some days after, William dies of Erysipelas (Inflammation of the skin and subcutaneous tissues). His body, then, is brought home to be buried. Mrs. Morel is deeply affected. Mr. Morel also feels very sad by the event of his son’s death. He is so disappointed that he has rarely cared about him.

Mrs. Morel really comes back to life when Paul has caught bronchitis. Paul has grown as tender and sensitive since a very young age. Meanwhile, Mrs. Morel has lost her love for her husband who has grown more and more uncontrolled. The children have distanced him more than before. Mr. Morel does not care much about family life

Paul is a very talented and artistic boy. That makes his mother treat him differently from the other children. He takes William’s place as the center of his mother’s world. As the other children, he finds harmony in his mother's side and protection. He goes out with his mother wherever she heads to. He has gained an important place in her heart. She has become his life inspiration; her views are his. Paul consents to everything his mother decides for him. He hates his father to the point of wishing him death; he prays, “Lord, let my father die,” (Lawrence, 2005. p.81). As his mother wants, he wishes for a decent and happy life through painting. His full dependence on her is reflected, for instance, when he looks for a job. Working in the factory was his mother’s wish. His mother feels that she exists through him, as if his life were her own.

As Paul becomes a man, he knows a conservative girl named Miriam Leivers, with whom he bonds. He is fascinated and attracted by her sensuality. They sometimes meet at the library. He even gives her extra lessons in her home. Miriam engages with him spiritually, without any carnal contact. Thus, Paul feels uneasy because he cannot fulfill his sexual desires. Their relationship cannot go further. Moreover, Mrs. Morel does not

consent this relationship. She does not like Miriam because she fears Paul would leave her. Thus, this attitude of jealousy hampers his relationships with other women.

Clara Dawes is another woman who shares life moments with Paul. She is married and she is older than him. They are sexually united. She satisfies his needs. Later, in the local bar, Paul has a violent talk with Clara's former husband, Baxter Dawes. This shocks Clara; she loves Paul who declares that he would settle with his mother in London if he had a lot of money. However, his attitude of excessive dependence on his mother puts an end to his relationship with Clara.

Actually, Paul knows pertinently that he could never have the woman he wishes for, as long as his mother is alive. For him, there is no other woman who looks like his mum; and though he resents her, he cannot distance her at all. Her extreme possessiveness of Paul has stood in the way of any emotional and sexual desire for any other woman. At that time, Mrs. Morel is affected by cancer; she is close to death. To her, the time of leaving Paul has rung. One night, when Paul sees that she is agonizing Paul puts an overdose of morphine in her drink to put an end to her terrible pain. Paul is so extremely affected that he wishes death for himself. He must then learn how to live his own life independently.

## **2.4.2. Characters**

### **2.4.2.1. Gertrude Morel**

Mrs. Morel is highly interested in sharing her ideas with people. For, she is a religious, intellectual and educated woman. However, she gets too disappointed after marrying Walter Morel. At first, when she meets him, she thinks he is the man suitable for her. She hopes he will be up to her expectations. Unfortunately, Walter Morel does not reflect the image of her hopes. The man soon reveals his true nature: addiction to alcohol, brutality, lies – among others – affect Gertrude's married life that has become a nightmare to her. It is obvious that she can no longer bear that situation. She finally hates that life, as well as her poor collier. Her married life has put an end to her dreams as an educated woman. It has become evident that her marital life has turned to failure. Therefore, all her love is shed on her sons, Paul and William. She needs them to travel out for professional activities, and to discover the world where they can blossom the way they wish.

#### **2.4.2.2. Walter Morel**

Walter Morel is the image of the poor working-class. Art works, mental power and creativity are not parts of his world. He started working in mines at a young age. So, he is conditioned by his industrial milieu. At first, he looks a man full of warmth, energy and enthusiasm. He enjoys happy moments in dancing and singing. In fact, this is why Gertrude loves and marries him. However, Walter's true nature appears. He manifests a completely different behaviour; he enters home too late at night, smelling alcohol. Home has become a setting for verbal disputes and physical fights. His wife's principles and cultural views mean too little to him. As a result his wife and his children distanced him.

#### **2.4.2.3. William Morel**

William is the eldest son. He is well built and passionate. In an early passage, Lawrence describes his enthusiastic character: "Already he was getting a big boy. Already he was top of the class, and the master said he was the smartest lad in school. She saw him a man, young, full of vigour" (Lawrence, 2005, p.63). He finally travels away, gets a job and makes money. His mother jumps of pride. However, when he engages in a relationship with a girl, Lily, his mother does not consent. William likes her because she is pretty and well-fixed. When he dies in London, he is brought home to be buried. At the start of the story, William appears to be the leading feature, but Lawrence later shows that his main concern is directed to Paul.

#### **2.4.2.4. Paul Morel**

When Paul actually falls sick, his mother devotes full attention to him. She cares about him until he feels better. Mrs. Morel gradually recovers from the loss of her first son, and Paul becomes the new picture for all her hopes and joys. Through the rest of the story, Paul is excessively possessed by his mother. Thus, he has to struggle against his mother's attempts to control his life — especially his sentimental life. He feels awfully uncomfortable whenever he mentions any of his girlfriends' names.

Paul believes that any bond with a girl is an offense to his mother who wants him to concentrate on something more interesting in his life. Things are complicated in Paul's emotional life. Miriam is not what he really wants because he thinks that she is too philosophical for him. He is a young man whose main interest is sex, so he falls

into the arms of the more "experienced", Clara Dawes, to fulfill his physical desires.

In the end, Paul decides to be with neither Clara nor Miriam. He is uneasy, even torn. Deep down, he wants to fly with his own wings to become an important artist.

#### **2.4.2.5. Miriam Leivers**

Miriam is Paul's first lover. She looks a very innocent and spiritual person. She does not consider herself as a common girl. She sees herself better than other people. She is timid and she never gets involved in any physical contact. To her eyes, talking about deep beliefs and views should be the center of discussion all of the time.

Miriam discovers her self-actualization from puritanical thoughts; she imagines her world as a paradise. She loves nature and deeply appreciates it. At first, she thinks that Paul loves her but later she discovers that their two worlds do not match. He is engulfed in his mother's possessiveness. Although she knows that Paul's mother does not like her, she wants him completely for her. She sees herself the only woman suitable to Paul's emotional stance, not his mother. By the end, despite the sexual intercourse that Miriam finally has with Paul, the latter does not feel much attracted. He leaves her and build a physical relationship with Clara.

#### **2.4.2.6. Clara Dawes**

Clara is married but separated from her husband, Baxter. She does not seem to like society and its conventionality much. As for her relationship with Paul, Lawrence does present what happens between them. At first, she is not attracted by Paul. But, she gradually yields to his courtesy. Lawrence portrays Clara as a sexual woman. She wants Paul to be completely devoted to her as a man. She wants to possess him physically. She gives herself completely to him, and their sexual passion grows higher. And this is what Paul actually wants. He finds sexual relief in their relationship.

In the end, Clara has not divorced her husband. This means the bond between the couple still exists. Paul, then, realizes how much Baxter loves and needs Clara. Paul himself meets Baxter and reconciles them. She goes back to her husband and all together leave to Sheffield.



## 2.5. Paul's Relationship with female Characters

Lawrence stresses the idea that sexual desire does not necessarily belong to love. Self-fulfillment is dominant aspect in Paul's character. He is confused of the meaning of life because of the strong relationship with his mother who has overwhelmed him with her intense love. The mother is a religiously educated woman who simply thinks she is doing the right thing for her sons. However, her caring has brought seeds of frustration and even harm.

Psychologically speaking, to the writer's eyes, women characters are strong individuals who capture Paul's attention for a long time. But, none of them reveals to be powerful. None of them has shown thorough control over him because of the obstacles built up by his possessive mother. No opportunity has been offered to them for that. In the end, he plans to travel away after leaving them all. As for his mother, he even disdains her because she has become a terrible load to him.

The sense of liberation that follows the end of each of the three relationships is indeed visible, especially in the case of his dear mother. He accelerated her death by giving her an overdose of morphine. This way, her pains as well as his sufferings have come to an end.

The final scene, *The Release*, shows that the broken relationships do not leave a destructive effect on him; they rather remain unforgettable memories. Despite, Paul will begin a new life, probably his own life. The memories with which he will live, are mainly those related to his sexual adventures. For, Lawrence was always concerned with the theme of sexuality.

## 2.6. Lawrence's Portrayal of Sexuality

Sexuality is a theme that Lawrence explored in many of his literary works. The sexuality theme in *Sons and Lovers* is portrayed from the exploratory perspective rather than the descriptive side. Making use of Freud's theory, the novelist explains through his characters and their intertwining relationships how important sexuality is in the human growth, and how harmful it can be when it is not managed properly.

### 2.6.1. Lawrence's Perception of Sex

Generally, Freud notes that most man's actions are driven by only one side, and it is a sexual motive highlighting the unilateral aspect of the human drive; Lawrence on the

other hand argues that it is an aspect of duality. While Freud believes that the human drive is purely biological as a consequence to the human instinctiveness for example he implies that sexual drive comes naturally in childhood and the primary target is the opposite sex parent.

Sigmund Freud introduced the term 'Oedipus complex' in his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). According to him, the concept is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex, which produces a sense of competition with the parent of the same sex and a crucial stage in the normal developmental process. (Ahmed, 2012, p.64).

Since sub consciousness is the focal aspect that everything can be interpreted according to by view of Freud. However, Lawrence focuses on the concept that man is the complementarity of both a body and a soul, and believes that Freudian ideology is nothing more than a minimization of the spiritual side of man.

Lawrence thinks that the sexual clash between female and male is essentially due to the modern industrial life, and sex, is a way of expressing man's relation to god and nature. However, by the coming of the Victorian values and morality, this expression has been perverted since Victorian society viewed as evil and a taboo that does not enter conversations of opposite sexes and the obvious depiction of repressed sexuality of Victorian woman is the character of Miriam.

Industrial revolution, according to Lawrence is the reason why men had become robotic creatures losing their affection, tenderness and dynamics, which were before the primary nature of the human race. Their brutal temper is illustrated through the character of Walter Morel: "He came up to her, his red face, with its bloodshot eyes, thrust forward, and gripped her arms. She cried in fear of him, struggled to be free... he pushed her roughly to the outer door, and thrust her forth..." (Lawrence, 2005, p.35). Later, in Chapter XIII, Lawrence voices out his view through the character of Clara when she talks to Paul about her husband, Baxter. She says, "...I wish you knew the cruelty of men in their brute force. They simply don't know that the woman exists." (Lawrence, 2005, p.460).

In his distinction between the bodily side of the human and the spiritual, he focuses on the spiritual importance of sex recognizing that neither the body nor the soul must

be neglected but rather must be in harmony for natural balance and vital fulfillment.

As focusing only on the fleshly aspect of sex, man will lose his vitality and engage in meaningless sexual intercourses with a woman for purely bodily pleasure. Thus, it is essential for man and woman to realize that sexual unions are for the greater purpose of procreation. Lawrence's views regarding sex practice were largely rational believing that it is not only a mere physical action. The writer expresses his view through Paul's letter to Miriam: "...If people marry, they must live together as affectionate humans, who may be commonplace with each other without feeling awkward — not as two souls. So I feel it." (Lawrence, 2005, p.319)

### **2.6.2. Lawrence's Depiction of Sexuality**

Inside the irrevocable chaos and the entwined turmoil that the Morel family undergoes and endures, Lawrence also addresses the issues of passion, instinctive desires and sexual purity through his novel. The nineteenth century realist novels held back on the notion of sexuality. At that time, it was seen as immoral. So, it was repressed by religious authorities.

Paul's unfulfilled quest for a bond is a central theme of *Sons and Lovers*. Sex is a bone conflict between Paul and his two women, Miriam and Clara. Each of them wants a personal relationship, whereas Paul views sex as rather impersonal. He is not able to have a successful relationship with Miriam because she has inclination towards religion and she considers the fleshly act as a sin. Paul sees Miriam as a girl "...cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else ugly, cruel thing." (Lawrence, 2005, p.192). Despite, she has had sexual intercourse once, but still reluctantly. Paul is not able to get sexual satisfaction from Miriam. He cannot stand her purity, a purity that he finds forbidding: "...And now this "purity" prevented even their first love-kiss. It was as if she could scarcely stand the shock of physical love, even a passionate kiss, and then he was too shrinking and sensitive to give it." (Lawrence, 2005, p.228). This affects their relationship and urges him to turn to Clara Dawes. They develop a very fervent relationship which is mostly physical and sexual in nature.

He was suddenly intensely moved. He was filled with the warmth of her. In the glow he could almost feel her as if she were present — her arms, her shoulders, her bosom, see them, feel them, almost contain them. This move on the part of Clara brought them into closer intimacy. (Lawrence, 2005, p.347)

There is no deep affection between the two. Love simply rhymes with sex. Ultimately, Clara leaves Paul and returns to her husband, leaving Paul shattered.

Sex is portrayed as something serious and normal; it is the driving concern in human life. The relationship between Paul and Miriam is a true example of the fact that marital union cannot be achieved successfully unless sex is present. When it comes to Clara, Paul has deep sexual passion for her. It is serious and central to his growth. His carnal desire for her is powerful. Thus, Lawrence shows that none of the cases, be it spiritual or sexual, proves to be successful. For, there is no central balance between the two.

Lawrence advocates the idea that the individual has to care about the sexual attractiveness of the body, because it offers the opportunity to enjoy the true nature of life and to get energetically involved in the environment around him.

And after such an evening they both were very still, having known the immensity of passion. They felt small, half-afraid, childish and wondering, like Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realised the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise and across the great night and the great day of humanity. It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves...They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life. (Lawrence, 2005, p.450/451)

In Lawrence's mind, sexuality cannot be separated from the 'self', while the latter is a complete entity in the world in which the individual evolves. His outer world was that of industry and mechanization whose main objective is the production of wealth.

As for the individual, he is the servant of this world, with no purpose in mind. Lawrence was the son of a miner and he was raised in a lower class family, a class family who was eventually doomed to suffering, and even to die slowly. Lawrence sees sexuality as a fleshly language which connects and gathers persons living in a tumultuous environment. He depicted that carnal language in such a direct and honest way that he was resented by the public opinion and considered as obscene.

## **2.7. Reasons behind Obscenity**

Lawrence's frankness and sincerity in discussing sexual relations in *Sons and Lovers* was a very new and a daring change for the time. It treats sexual desire, especially in women as a spiritual force which is of vital importance within human relationships. Many people branded it as obscene due its depiction of openly sexual attractions.

The hostilities to the novel were centered around the portrayal of daring sexual scenes, and around the author's criticism of religion, life and its morals. Lawrence often conveyed views opposed to the public opinions, taking aim at politicians and repression. He was often seen as a revolutionary writer who broke from Victorian taboos on sex. It was used as a powerful tool to oppress and control society. When the control was at its peak, the conservative society, politicians and the church saw the book as a shocking story, and they considered it as a revolutionary work violating society morals and offending their principles.

Miriam, the spiritual character, incarnates chastity and purity in the novel. The religiously educated person she is would never have allowed her to indulge in a sinful relationship. Her sexual orientation is very often seen asexual; she is an individual who lacks in desirable sexuality or any kind of sexual attraction. However, she could not resist to the temptation and she finally submitted herself.

As for Clara, although she is seen as a liberated woman, she gets involved in an unconventional sexual relationship. Her sexuality is greatly portrayed by the author. She is treated as an immoral and impure woman who, separated from her husband, sleeps with a man younger than her. The Victorians saw the woman as pious, and submissive. Here again, society looks at marital betrayal or infidelity as social evil which impacts negatively on the stability of the society, in general, and on the family,

in particular. The opposite case would not raise such polemics, as man was allowed to have sex secretly.

The most thought-raising point, which elicited much speculation and controversy, was the Oedipal theme. The sexual bond between a mother and her son shed oil on fire. While the wife's role was confined to procreation and to child raising, Lawrence came out with something unusual and unacceptable to the society's eyes. Society expected the woman to obey and to love her husband. When showing that Mrs. Morel turned to her sons, Lawrence aggravated the unconventional aspect of the society. In fact, the Oedipal theme had never been treated before, and the novel represented a significant turning point in literary expression, as it elicited a new wave of perception and thinking which was hard to admit.

In the perspective of Lawrence's artistic endeavor, *Sons and Lovers* serves as a literary ground on which Lawrence introduced the scientific approach on sexuality. It challenged repression and sex taboos of the Victorian time so that sexuality would not be labelled as obscene and pornographic. Lawrence contends that people think of sex naturally, but they just dare not voice it out publically. Confession, which used to be confined to religious practice, became, due to psychology and pedagogy, a tool of human analysis and treatment. It turned into a procedure meant to reveal the inside of the human and to uncover the truth about his sexuality. Perversion and degeneration started to be analyzed in terms of scientific discourse, no longer in terms of social principles or moral judgments. The novelist engaged in a discourse about sexuality that readers of the time were not ready to acknowledge.

Lawrence, as an artist, provided a vision which outpaced the society's views. And that made man to accept the changes at a very slow pace. He expressed his personal feelings on sex as clearly as possible. He was not unaware of the fact that some passages would be cut out. However, his determined belief and message was to educate future readers and to familiarize the next coming generations with the theme and the words and phrases it includes.

No matter what effort is made, taboos are persisting phenomena. In the context of breaking them, it is important to mention that no norms are eternal. The notion of taboo varies accordingly, but still remains an unavoidable issue. Lawrence's use of a more

exploratory approach rather than a mere descriptive approach was the reason behind the misunderstanding of his novel. Lawrence knew pertinently a change was coming – and he knew individuals had to live in a happy environment, and in a system based more on life values than on materialistic ones.

## **2.8. *Sons and Lovers* and Psychology**

The century drew in a time of moral perplexity and uncertainty, thus witnessing a gradual weakening of religious understanding and questioning social beliefs and conventions. The development of the scientific mind and rational thinking placed emphasis on the individual as such, rather than on society. It led English fiction to fully explore the complexity of psychic relationships that needed to be looked over radically through the characters' inner growth – depiction of feeling, introspection, mental state and intuition – plot, and moral significance.

Modern writers, especially Lawrence, were consciously aware and vehicle the theme through their works. Sexuality and power play a key part in every aspect of human experiences, including literature. The psychoanalytical theory has actually aroused awareness and has been the central concern of the twentieth century writers. Lawrence has so impressively reflected it in *Sons and Lovers* that his novel is called Freudian or Oedipal novel.

### **2.8.1. Freud's Theory**

*Sons and Lovers* is a distinguished novel because it is firmly based upon the individual's emotional life; it deals with a son who loves his mother too dearly, and with a mother who pours all her affection upon her son. Through this relationship, Lawrence depicts the psychological evolution of love which the human being expresses towards a member of the other sex. And the problem highlighted by the writer is the way how a man releases himself from his mother's grip.

Oedipus Rex who, according to the legend, killed his father and unconsciously married his mother, has impacted on people of art and thought through the whole world. Sigmund Freud grounded his psychoanalytical analysis on the theory which he named the "Oedipus complex". He writes in his influential work *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours — because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him. It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that this is so. (Freud, 2010, p.280)

Freud stipulates that as the child grows up, he goes through psychosexual steps. He also adds that tension and pleasure constitute major factors in the child's development. However, increase in tension can be the root to psychological disorder, mainly obsession. This obsession is generated by the libido. The latter is an instinctive drive which results in the repression of the human mind. When it is stocked, it can badly intrude into the emotional growth of a person, causing inner misbalance as the child becomes adult.

To Freud, the shape of the adult personality takes place between the first year of age up to the fifth. These five years are central to the formation of the adult's character. The idea of the Libido – sexual instincts and obsession – are centered within the body at different stages of growth.

Freud explains that it is frequent that boys express erotic feelings towards their mother, a revolting reaction against their father. In this case, the male child internalizes his sexual feelings towards the mother and waits until maturity to experience his own sexual adventure. Besides, if the boy is trapped by his sexual desires towards his mother, he will not get rid of the oedipal complex even in his adulthood. If he fails to overcome this behavior pattern, he will find it too hard to establish adult relationships during his whole life. In other words, he will live a disrupted adulthood. And this is what is depicted through the character of Paul Morel. This behaviour is well explained in the following part, the Oedipus Complex.

### **2.8.2. Oedipus Complex**

The psychological research into the sub-conscious reveals that there is no individual like the other. Each one is his own individual with his own personality. As a twentieth century novelist, Lawrence brought the subject of sex, psychology, and religion to the forefront of literature. He sees the great society as depraving the human; it is the individual of the enemy. So he wants it to be reformed. He stresses the idea



that individuals must realize that they are themselves full-fledged individuals before they can come into any true contact with others. Thus, love prevailing among individuals should be viewed as sign of respect and sympathy, rather than a means of possessiveness and domination.

When writing *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence traces his own life through his main character, Paul Morel. Lawrence's use of Freud's Oedipus complex with his mother is of critical importance. When it was published in 1913, critics and psychologists argued that the novel is a strong depiction of mother and son relationship in which love can shatter man's emotions and personality.

Mother-fixation remains the central concept of the novel. Oedipus complex appears in both the sons of Mrs. Morel, William and Paul, with a variable passion. The upset and rude married life of Mrs. Morel characterizes the beginning of the Oedipus complex in her sons. The drunkard father is distanced by his wife and his children as well. The children develop hatred towards their father, leading their mother to be more defensive towards them than ever. She directs all her care and attention to her sons. She manages to find her happiness through them, a stimulus that favours the oedipal connection among the mother and her sons.

William, as well, undergoes the Oedipus complex due to his sexist attitude towards his fiancé. William feels unfulfilled when he discovers that Lily's qualities are far from reaching his mother's. He has come to the point that he frequently disagrees with Lily about certain matters. When he talks to his mother about her, she even asks him to clearly make up his mind about marrying her. He says, "Oh, well, I've gone too far to break off now," he said, "and so I shall get married as soon as I can." (Lawrence, 2005, p.169). Mrs. Morel further shows her disagreement by saying, "Very well, my boy. If you will, you will, and there's no stopping you; but I tell you, I can't sleep when I think about it." (Lawrence, 2005, p.169). These words show a stream of conflict inside William. The oedipal complex still hovers over William who tries to combat it. Fate decides that he passes away following serious sickness.

Now, the mother and her child have built a relationship full of delicacy. Paul's admiration for his mother has no limits, he even "wants to sleep with his mother" (Lawrence, 2005, p.89); he is always haunted by her existence. When he even sees her,

“his heart was full of happiness...” (Lawrence, 2005, p.166). The flowers and the prizes are all for her. His mother is his close companion, “...The two knitted together in perfect intimacy. Mrs. Morel’s life now rooted itself in Paul.” ((Lawrence, 2005, p.182). Their connection grows higher and higher. As example, the way she accepts a bottle of perfume spray from Paul. “Pretty!” she said, in a curious tone, “of a woman accepting a love- token” (Lawrence, 2005, p. 91). She has become his second half, and vice versa. Lawrence writes:

...she shared everything with him without knowing.... She waited for his coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had pondered, or of all that had occurred to her during the day. He sat and listened with his earnestness. The two shared lives...(Lawrence, 2005, p.114)

The protagonist, Paul, has always wanted a bond with a woman. Doing so, he attempts to get rid of his oedipal fixation. But, Mrs. Morel manages successfully to make him admit a sense of guilt for Miriam. Even Paul does not allow his physical relations with Miriam to last for long. For, he does not think of marrying her. His oedipal relationship with his mother prevents him from intimate engagement with Miriam. When it comes to Clara Dawes, Paul knows pertinently that the relationship does not have any future. With her, at least he finds sexual solace. His mother does not interfere so much in their connection. Clara is not an obstacle to his oedipal fixation; she will never replace his mother.

The story now revolves around the death of Paul's mother. Mrs. Morel’s health gradually weakens due to an incurable tumor. Paul stays at her bedside. Now he is troubled and he gets too confused at seeing her like that. He wishes her death. He has the feeling that he is lost if she is not there, and that he cannot manage his own life as she is alive. Therefore, he accelerates her death. This can be seen as an unconscious effort to rid himself from the Oedipus complex.

## 2.9. Conclusion

In a way, Freud's theory resulted in breaking the sex taboos. *Sons and Lovers* successfully changed the general conception regarding sexuality. It gave the concept a new interpretation by means of Freud's theory which helped the reader understand the psychological behaviour of both William and Paul. The Oedipus complex not only touches the mother-sons relationship, but it also influences the psychology and behaviours of others, notably Miriam and Clara.

## **General Conclusion**

### General Conclusion

The human being is certainly endowed with a power that makes him handle his life in relation to himself and to others. This power is central to people's life, to which the humans are always trying to give sense. Yet, the only one who knows himself better is man himself. Whether life is meaningful or not depends solely on him. No one can decide or determine what is meaningful for the other. The meaning of life is characterized by the comprehension of mechanisms which rule the human behaviour either internally or externally. Thus, the way to cope with both the emotional side and the material one jointly defines and justifies the human personality.

British people were, in fact, not different from others. They were not spared by turmoil, problems and different issues. However, in spite of differences, all factions of the British society – rulers, artists, writers and different social classes – could gather efforts, through power, dialogue, agreement and compromise, in order to build a common ground for their living, thus assuring a meaningful existence for them and for their future as well.

D.H. Lawrence, as a British citizen, was closely concerned with the circumstances of the time, from which he suffered a lot. As a novelist, he simply expressed his views on a particular theme against which the society reacted violently, to the point of censoring his works because they deemed them obscene. The laws of the conservative Britain at that time were unquestionable. However, the clash persisted and Lawrence never gave in. He had an idea in mind. He developed it and he was confident that it would see light one day. As a matter of fact, the novelist who had been once treated as obscene began to gain the ground of esteem and understanding. For, when challenging the values of the time, Lawrence, through *Sons and Lovers*, approached the society, in general, and the individual, in particular, in a scientific way. Lawrence propounds the thesis that a youth's development is bound to love people around him and to be given deep affection by them, especially the closest. Lawrence tried to establish a certain duality between mind and body. The relationship between individuals, and between the sexes, as well, must be one of reconciliation through dialogue, and not of domination.

Domination and power engender stubbornness in thinking and turmoil inside relationships. Whereas the strength and the development of society should be built on understanding, mutual agreement and concord.

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