

Social Framework Analysis Through Oedipus Complex in Lawrence's Sons & Lovers

Sultan Mahmood Niazi¹ and Amara Faheem¹

Abstract

Sons and Lovers has always been posing problems for the teachers, during classroom critical discussions on the novel on account of its undue association with Freud's concept of Oedipus complex and his focus on sexual instincts. Readers are forcibly led to the conclusion that there is convincing evidence of unconscious sexual attraction between Gertrude (the mother) and William and Paul (her sons) throughout the novel. The novel basically focuses on the individual's mental and behavioral struggle to locate his own place in the social setup in pursuit of his dignity. An open-minded close examination of the novel makes one realize that it hardly deserves to be labeled as an illustration of Freud's theory of Oedipus complex. Paul's struggle for recognition and acceptance in the society is the central theme of the novel which puts him in trying conditions and relations and leaves him struggling to adjust his place in quest of self-esteem and recognition. The more he tries to get satisfaction, the more he becomes disillusioned. Consequently, dissatisfaction leads him to interact with different people and he experiences mal-adjustment. The object of this paper is to analyze Paul's relations with other main characters in the novel in order to diagnose the cause of his discontentment in his relations with them. An attempt has been made to view his predicament in the light of psychological and social cross-currents that pervade his behavior through-out the novel Paul finds intellectual harmony with Miriam as her feelings match with those of his. Like Paul, she also wants to achieve something great. A cleavage occurs in their relationship when Miriam shows her reluctance to fulfill his carnal desires, as being unethical and contrary to her spiritual ideals. Paul's sensual desires are fulfilled by Clara, a woman promising physical satisfaction but devoid of aesthetic sensibilities which again compel him to turn to some new destinations. A thorough analysis of the novel Sons and Lovers clearly reveals that there is very little influence of Oedipus complex while there is a strong chemical bond and natural affection between the mother and son which is a natural human instinct. Paul finds solace in the company of Gertrude simply on account of natural reasons and not for any amoral urge like Oedipus complex.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Acceptance, Dignity, Ego, Sons and Lovers.

¹ Department of English, Lahore Leads University - Lahore

Introduction

Readers and critics of *Sons and Lovers* have constantly been frenzied by Freudian focus on sexual instincts, instead of having been moved by the urge to view normal and natural affections and attachments among the family members. Since its first publication in 1913 by D.H. Lawrence, has unduly been subjected to critical probing based on Oedipus complex whereas, in reality, we do not find any convincing evidence of uncontrolled amorous relations between Gertrude (the mother) and William and Paul (her sons) at any stage from the opening of the novel to the end. It is thoughtlessly dubbed as an illustration of Freudian Psycho-analytical interpretation of close filial bonds. The novel basically projects the individual's mental and behavioral struggle to locate his own place in the social setup in pursuit of his dignity (Freud 1899).

❖ Sons and Lovers

Over-riding the biological and social forces was the concept of ego and self-esteem as emphasized by Carl Jung (Edinger 64). It put Paul on to a churning rollercoaster which left him struggling to find a durable and satisfactory moment of relief. In Jung's opinion, 'ego' is the sense of oneself and how one portrays himself in the world. There are people who are constantly goaded by the sense of carrying no importance in the eyes of the people. They feel being deprived of the element of worth, more in their own self-assessment than in the eyes of the people (Ibid).

Elucidating the difference between 'ego' and 'self-esteem', Leslie Fieger states in her article 'Big Ego or Self-Esteem':

"Egotists are essentially insecure people who are attempting to cover up their own suspicion that they are not quite as good as other people by pretending that they are more important. People with very high level of self-esteem do not need to determine their self-worth by comparing themselves, either publicly or in their own minds, with others." (2005)

An open-minded close examination of the novel convinces that it hardly deserves to be labeled as an illustration of Freud's theory of Oedipus Complex or 'mother fixation'. Instead, in order to identify and analyze the major issue of the novel, we need to base our probing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs; in particular on the place, assigned by him, to self-esteem and recognition in human motivation (Lawrence, 2002). Thereby, it would transpire that quest for recognition and acceptance is the

basic theme of the novel. This acceptance is multidimensional and compact in nature. It includes intellectual acceptance as found emerging between Paul and Miriam, physical acceptance as transpired between Paul and Clara, filial acceptance as existed between Paul and Gertrude, artistic and professional acceptance as gradually emerged in the sale of Paul's paintings, social acceptance as demonstrated in attempts of William and Paul to move up the class ladder and ultimate acceptance adjustment on humanistic grounds as demonstrated in the relations between Paul and Baxter.

The main protagonist of this central theme i.e. Paul Yearns to seek a niche for himself where he can claim with confidence that his talents are recognized and he has adequate satisfaction to carry on living. He simply craves for harmonic co-existence with his kiths, acquaintances and colleagues, but his approach is not altruistic. He seeks acceptance and recognition without taking the needs of others in consideration. His quest for individuation which is described by Carl Jung as a person's attempt to get in touch with his full potential as an individual human being, puts him in situations that test his stored-up potentials.

Sons and Lovers is overwhelmingly involved with Morel Family's (especially Paul's) relentless struggle for psychic acceptance and social adjustment (Calan, 1997). It would be pertinent to mention that the novel under consideration is an autobiographical exposition of Lawrence's own disgruntled and unrewarding experiences of life (Al-Bayati 6). In his last work, *Apocalypse*, Lawrence stated: "For man, the vast marvel is to be alive.... What we want is.... to re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Stars with the sun and the rest will slowly happen." (Lawrence 149). The re-establishment of the living organic connections demands sacrifices and compromises for its realization. Industrial revolution and emergence of the bourgeois had loosened the traditional bonds and most of the people gifted with thinking capabilities found themselves isolated from the living organic network (ibid). We can compare Paul to an atom in the Free State. He needed to be amalgamated with and bound into some sort of molecular structure for his meaningful, contented and productive living.

Paul was an unwanted child. Gertrude Morel despised his presence even in her womb, in the embryonic and fetal stages after conception:

“But she felt wretched with the coming child. The world seemed a dreary place, where nothing else would happen for her__ at least until William grew up. But for herself, nothing but this dreary endurance__ till the children grew up. And the children! She could not afford to have this third. She didn’t want it.... This coming child was too much for her. If it were not for William and Annie, she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness.” (Lawrence 15)

In his pre-natal state of intellectual development, Paul must have received such signals of despise lacerating his budding endeavors of finding acceptance in the world outside and developed into a constant source of anguish for him with his growth. His id; the desire to turn his mother’s revulsion into affection marks the beginning of his struggle to achieve societal acceptance (Maugham, 1915). His elder brother William over shadowed and injured his ego and pushed him to the state of being neglected at home. The mirror stage as described by Jacques Calan in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis* that, the Paul’s case started before his birth and went on till William’s elimination from the family scene through his death (Madsen, 1997).

Even during his childhood, Paul was treated with continuous disdain on the part of his mother. When Paul, as a child, had a fit of bronchitis, his mother’s response was a wish of riddance. This attitude must have left indelible marks of injury on his conscious self.

“That afternoon Mrs. Morel was ironing. She listened to the small, restless noise the boy made in his throat as she worked. Again, arose in her heart the old, almost weary feeling towards him. She had never expected him to live. And yet he had a great vitality in his young body. Perhaps it would have been a little relief to her if he had died. She always felt a mixture of anguish in her love for him.” (Lawrence, 80)

Paul, on his part, was genuinely attached to his mother. He wanted her to be ever happy and cheerful. He cherished to make up for all the deprivations that had been meted out by fate to his mother. When she (Mrs. Morel) was quiet, so, she looked brave and rich with life, but as if she had been done out of her rights. It hurt the boy keenly, while this feeling about her that she had never had her life’s fulfillment, and his own incapability to make up to her hurt him with a sense of impotence, yet made him patiently dogged inside. It was his childish aim. (Lawrence, 80)

There were two possible options for Paul. He could either let himself wander about in space and be lost in the black hole of humanity without being noticed and recognized by the world or he could struggle to find peace by testing his scope of acceptance and adjustment through attachment with other atoms. Keeping this situation in mind, it would be worthwhile to analyze Paul's relations and attachments with the Best-wood environment and with different other characters in the novel. The various participants, in case of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* provide us insight into the mental and emotional cauldron of Paul's personality.

❖ **Best-wood and Nottingham Environment**

The setting of the novel, 'Sons and Lovers', is reminiscent of Lawrence's own childhood. The actual name of his native village was Eastwood, which, in the novel, was fondly changed by him into Best-wood. A place where the formative years of the childhood of a person are spent naturally carries perpetually unforgettable attraction for him, so it is no wonder that he ambitiously termed his native village as 'Best-wood'. It is a place, which, though blotched by ugly spots, had redeeming features of natural beauty. In the opening chapter of the novel, Lawrence describes Best-wood romantically:

"The brook ran under the alder trees, scarcely soiled by these small mines, whose coal was drawn to the surface by donkeys that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin. And all over the countryside were these same pits, some of which had been worked in the time of Charles II, the few colliers and the donkeys burrowing down like ants into the earth, making queer mounds and little black places among the corn-fields and the meadows. And the cottages of these coalminers, in blocks and pairs here and there, together with odd farms and homes of the stockingers, straying over the parish, formed the village of Best-wood." (Lawrence 5)

Lawrence reflects his personality into the character of Paul, who finds himself born at a place which constantly reminds later of his mal-adjustment with the environment. Paul idealizes the tarnished scenes by focusing on the minuscule manifestations of natural beauty in the newly bursting flowers and gold and dark orange clouds at the time of sunset. But, all the same, he is continuously disgusted by the abominable spread of soot and dust due to the fast-expanding coal excavation network (Glesne, 1991). He doesn't want to be termed as 'a donkey' or 'an ant' by silently acquiescing to the routine of the situation. He aspires to be recognized and accepted as a talented human being. Engels comments in *Dialectics of Nature*: "It is

precisely the alteration of nature by man, not nature as such, which is the most essential and immediate basis of human thought” (Lawrence, 110).

Paul aspires to make Best-wood really best through his paintings. He is lucky to pursue his hobby in his leisure hours, in contrast to Somerset Maugham’s Phillip Carey who was also motivated to become a painter but was compelled to study medicine against his will. Best-wood offers Paul the inspirational spurs through frequent manifestation of natural beauty, especially the stars and ‘the pine trees which caught the red glare from the west. But Paul has no intention of being bound to the place. His restless spirit can hardly acquiesce to permanent bondage or slavery to his native village. He was averse to the idea of being captive to any place or any person because he found his mother’s power over him to be too much to forbear. (Engels, 1987).

“Then he looked wistfully out of the window. Already he was a prisoner of industrialization. Large sunflowers stared over the old red wall of the garden opposite, looking in their jolly way down on the women who were hurrying with something for dinner. The valley was full of corn, brightening in the sun. Two collieries, among the fields, waved their small white plumes of steam. Far off on the hills were the woods of Annesley, dark and fascinating. Already his heart went down. He was being taken into bondage. His freedom in the beloved home valley was going now.” (Lawrence, 105)

Paul happens to go to Nottinghamshire in search of work. He is satisfied with the job offered to him at the Jordan’s Surgical Appliance Factory, which appeared to be a symbol of redemption of debilitated human beings through replacement of artificial limbs. Though he has to walk a fairly long distance to work, the factory gave him the optimism which he so eagerly sought around him. He must have seen the implicit message given by the factory that damaged and disfigured bodies could be repaired and made acceptable. The factory held out the promise of restoration of his mauled ego, so an irrevocable bondage started taking shape between Paul and the factory. (Lawrence, 136)

❖ **Paul’s Quest for Intellectual Harmony**

Born with the id of being an unwelcome child and pushed on by his ego, the constant sense of being neglected, Paul was desperately seeking companionship, and through it, the intellectual harmony that could direct his endeavors for adjustment in the

society. Earlier he found support in his mother's aesthetic sensibilities and art potential in the designs on crockery and the irresistible attraction of the flowers. It was gratifying for his artistic sensibilities but it was not enough to boost up his artistic ego. Miriam appeared as a catalyst to ignite his fancy and sharpen his artistic cognizance. He saw in her the reflection of his own love of natural beauty and he was carried away by the realization of congruence in their mutual chemistry (Horney, 1945).

"Anthropomorphic as she was, she stimulated him into appreciating things thus, and then they lived for her. She seemed to need things kindling in her imagination or in her soul before she felt she had them. And she was cut off from the 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 an ugly cruel thing.... So, it was in this atmosphere of subtle intimacy, this meeting in their common feeling for something in nature that their love started." (Lawrence, 100)

Miriam revealed similar feelings of having been neglected as compared to her brothers. She was burning with the desire of being able to accomplish something great and of showing her real worth. These were also the under-currents that had been at work in Paul's own yearning for recognition and acceptance. Their congruity of aspirations made them an ideal couple for moving together on the path to blissful co-existence and recognition:

"I want to do something. I want a chance like anybody else. Why should I, because I am a girl, be kept at home and not allowed to be anything? What chance have I? 'Chance of what? 'Of knowing anything _ of learning, of doing anything. It's not fair, because I'm a woman." (Lawrence, 175)

Paul, too, had been constantly pinched by the feeling of not being able 'to do something and to be something'. That was the gulf which he craved to bridge up. He looked for recognition through narrowing the distances with the people and by proving his worth. He had intrinsic motivation for art endeavors, no doubt, but he felt something missing, something still to be acquired, for the consummation of his artistic talents. He found the scope of fulfillment in the companionship of Miriam. In her presence, he felt as if his latent faculties were fully aroused and complemented.

“He (Paul) was conscious only when stimulated. A sketch finished, he always wanted to take it to Miriam. Then he was stimulated into knowledge of the work he had produced unconsciously. In contact with Miriam he gained insight; his vision went deeper. From his mother he drew the life warmth, the strength to produce; Miriam urged this warmth into intensity like a white light.” (Lawrence, 180)

Paul found recurrent stimulation to the aesthetic attributes of nature when he was in Miriam’s company. Her keen observation and minute capacity to grasp the lure of nature qualified her to be Paul’s guiding angel and his intellectually driving force. It was a rare and refreshing experience for him to be reminded of the immense art wealth spread around in nature but noticed and pin-pointed by Miriam first.

“When they turned the corner of the path she stood still. In the wide walk between the pines, gazing rather frightened, she could distinguish nothing for some moments; the graying light robbed things of their color. Then she saw her bush. ‘Ah!’ she cried, hastening forward.

It was very still. The tree was tall and struggling. It had thrown its briers over a hawthorn bush, and its long streamers trailed thick, right down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great split stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed on the darkness of the foliage and stems and grass. Paul and Miriam stood close together, silent, and watched. Point after point the steady roses shown out to them, seeming to kindle something in their souls. The dusk came like smoke around, and still did not put out the roses.” (Lawrence 18)

Paul fully realized that Miriam could serve as a flint stone for igniting his artistic faculties and functionalizing them into full accomplishment. He was conscious of the sublimation of his sensibilities which her presence brought about. But Paul was not content with the partial satisfaction of his ego. He aimed at her complete and unquestioned subjugation and exploitation, something which could simultaneously fulfill his intellectual, aesthetic, artistic and sensual cravings. Miriam’s company and conversation provided him the intellectual, aesthetic and artistic satisfaction, but she could not and would not extinguish the fire burning in his physique.

“She fretted him to the bottom of his soul. There she remained _ sad, pensive, a worshipper. And he caused her sorrow. Half the time, he grieved for her, half the

time he hated her. She was his conscience; and he felt, somehow, he had got a conscience that was too much for him. He could not leave her, because in one way she did hold the best of him. He could not stay with her because she did not take the rest of him, which was three quarters. So, he chafed himself into rawness over her.” (Lawrence, 280)

Paul expected Miriam to melt in his arms and to quench the flame of desire simmering his other faculties. The following excerpt from the novel appears to be an innocent narration, but when viewed symbolically, Miriam’s reluctance to jump from even a small height is significant. The downward jump signifies ignominy and debasement as it transpired in case of Jim’s jump from the pilgrims’ ship ‘Patna’ in Joseph Conrad’s novel, *Lord Jim* (Fieger 2005). Ever after the jump, Jim was caught in the struggle to cleanse his conscience and erase the memory of his condemnable deed. Miriam, anticipating the consequences of the wrong step, declines to take the jump.

“She rarely varied from her swinging, forward, intense walk. Occasionally she ran with Paul down the fields. Then her eyes blazed naked in a kind of ecstasy that frightened him. But she was physically afraid. If she were getting over a stile, she gripped his hands in a little hard anguish, and began to lose her presence of mind. And he could not persuade her to jump from even a small height. Her eyes dilated, became exposed and palpitating. ‘No!’ she cried, half laughing in terror_ ‘no!’ ‘You shall!’ he cried once, and jerking her forward, he brought her falling from the fence. But her wild ‘Ah!’ of pain, as if she were losing consciousness, cut him.” (Lawrence, 175)

Having been cut by Miriam’s reluctance to take the emotional jump and placate his carnal desires, Paul was repulsed to the point of dejection. He wrote a letter describing the reasons of his non-adjustment with her. The letter is a testimony of his agonized state of mind at not being able to accept the idea of Platonic love alone. “May I speak of our old, worn love, this last time? It, too, is changing, is it not? Say, has not the body of that love died, and left you its invulnerable soul? You see, I can give you a spirit love. I have given it you this long, long time, but not embodied passion. See, you a nun! I have given you what I would give a holy nun _ as a mystic monk to a mystic nun. Surely you esteem it best. Yet you regret _ no, have regretted _ the other. In all our relations, no body enters. I do not talk to you through the senses _ rather through the spirit. That is why we cannot love in the common sense.

Ours is not an everyday affection. As yet we are mortal, and to live side by side with one another would be dreadful, for somehow with you I cannot long be trivial, and you know, to be always beyond this mortal state would be to lose it. 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. 'Ought I to send this letter _ I doubt it. But there _ it is best to understand. Au revoir.' (Lawrence, 282)

Paul could not digest the idea of dissociation of sensibilities. His solace lay in the simultaneous satisfaction of the aesthetic and sensual physical sensibilities. Miriam could offer him both after their nuptial vows, but Paul dreaded the specter of social bondage looming about him the rest of his life. He wanted to retain his independence and yet at the same time avail of the bliss of the company of a compatible partner. This was a serious flaw in his character and this immaturity of approach went on widening the gulf between Paul and Miriam. Miriam also was a slave of the traditional spirituality that didn't fit in with the requirements of the new age. She was expected to encourage his amoral advances and woo him into legal spousal relations.

"They both were late in coming to maturity, and psychical ripeness was much behind even the physical. Miriam was exceedingly sensitive, as her mother had always been. The slightest grossness made her recoil almost in anguish.....Paul took his pitch from her and their intimacy went on in an utterly blanced and chaste fashion." (Lawrence, 184)

Blanced and chaste intimacy did not measure up to Paul's notion of companionship. He expected his partner to stoop down to the state of total submission without expecting faithfulness and loyalty from him in return. This disillusionment chagrined him to the extent of finally breaking away from Miriam.

"Frequently he hated Miriam. He hated her as she bent forward and pored over his things. He hated her way of patiently casting him up, as if he were an endless psychological account. When he was with her, he hated her for having got him, and yet not got him, and he tortured her. She took all and gave nothing, he said. At least she gave no living warmth. She was never alive, and giving off life. Looking for her was like looking for something which did not exist. She was only his conscience, not his mate." (Lawrence, 328)

❖ Paul's Search for Sensuous Compatibility

The prospect of sensual fulfillment was perceived by Paul as he observed for the first time the ripened figure of Clara at Willey's Farm. His raw sensibilities felt concord in the heat signals emanating from the mature physique of Clara.

"Often, as he talked to Clara Dawes, came that thickening and quickening of his blood, that peculiar concentration in the breast, as if something were alive there, a new self or a new center of consciousness, warning him that sooner or later he would have to ask one woman or the other." (Lawrence, 283)

Clara was not symbolically afraid of jumping down. Her separation from Baxter Dawes, her estranged husband, left her body crying for physical comfort. She was willing to jump down to the pit of depravity for the sake of quenching her sensual desires. Working as colleagues at Jordan's Surgical Appliances, Paul and Clara found frequent chances of afternoon excursions. On one such occasion, he revealed his intentions of coming into closer physical contact with her (Sulloway, Frank 2021). Clara's willing submission to his desires is reflected in symbolic phrases like 'go down', 'climb down' and 'slippery declivity',

"Will you go down to the river?" he asked.

She looked at him, leaving herself in his hands. He went over the brim of the declivity and began to climb down.

'It is slippery,' he said.

'Never mind,' she replied." (Lawrence, 345)

Such symbolic willingness of casting aside the consequences revealed her longing for sensual placation of the fiery fiends catapulting in her veins. Miriam had always been averse to any such considerations, but not so Clara. Clara was as inclined to romp in erotic indulgences as Paul:

"She toiled to his side. Arriving there, she looked at him heavily, dumbly, and laid her head on his shoulder. He held her fast as he looked around. They were safe enough from all but the small, lonely cows over the river. He sunk his mouth on her throat, where he felt her heavy pulse beat under his lips. Everything was perfectly still. There was nothing in the afternoon but themselves." (Lawrence, 347)

Clara could afford to appease Paul's cruder sensibilities, but she was not aesthetically sublime enough to hone his artistic sensibilities. Even in her company, Paul was appalled by the problem of dissociation of sensibilities. Clara had no intention of stimulating the aesthetic cravings of Paul. To her, even the flowers offered by Paul seemed to be corpses.

"I don't want the corpses of flowers about me", she said.

"That's a stiff, artificial notion," he said. "They don't die any quicker in water than on their roots. And besides, they look nice in a bowl — they look jolly. And you only call a thing a corpse because it looks corpse-like." (Lawrence, 266)

Such discord of temperaments offered little scope of stable relations between the two, but Paul was rashly blinded for a time to succumb to physical temptations.

"Clara's hat lay on the grass not far off. She was kneeling, bending forward still to smell the flowers. Her neck gave him (Paul) a sharp pang, such a beautiful thing, yet not proud of itself just now. Her breasts swung slightly in her blouse. The arching curve of her back was beautiful and strong, she wore no stays. Suddenly, without knowing, he was scattering a handful of cowslips over her hair and neck, saying:

'Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,
If the Lord won't have you the devil must.'" (Lawrence, 267)

As Paul wallowed in sensual indulgence with Clara, he could not be oblivious to the spiritual and subliming beauty of artistic activities. The sex experience kept him allured for some time and he relapsed into oblivion of his sublime urges.

"His eyes were dark, very deep and very quiet. It was as if her beauty and his taking it hurt him, made him sorrowful. He looked at her with a little pain, and was afraid. He was so humble before her. She kissed him fervently on the eyes, first one, then the other, and she folded herself to him. She gave herself. He held her fast. It was a moment intense almost to agony.... She stood letting him adore her and tremble with joy of her. It healed her hurt pride. It healed her, it made her glad. It made her feel erect and proud again. Her pride had been wounded inside her. She had been cheapened. Now she radiated with joy and pride again. It was her restoration and her recognition." (Lawrence, 378)

Physical indulgence was a gratifying experience for Clara and, through that experience; she succeeded in attaining her recognition. Paul's temporary infatuation with Clara dissipated gradually as he was continuously hounded by the thought of splitting away from his intellectual and artistic self. Indulgence in amoral activities appeared to be tearing him away from his total existence.

"He was like so many young men of his own age. Sex had become so complicated in him that he would have denied that he ever could want Clara or Miriam or any woman whom he knew. Sex desire was a sort of detached thing that did not belong to a woman. He loved Miriam with his soul. He grew warm at the thought of Clara, he battled with her, he knew the curves of her breast and shoulders as if they had been moulded inside him; and yet he did not positively desire her." (Lawrence, 309)
"He only wanted to be left alone now. He had his own trouble, which was almost too much to bear. Clara only tormented him and made him tired. He was not sorry when he left her." (Lawrence, 429)

❖ **Filial Affiliations**

▪ **Paul and his mother**

In the narrow family sphere of relatives, acquaintances and colleagues, the most amicable and supportive person for Paul is his mother, Gertrude Morel. Though she highly resented the conception of the third child on account of the pecuniary condition of family income, she was stirred by genuine motherly instincts, when the child came in her hands. She considered her earlier abhorrence for the unborn child as gravely misplaced.

"And at that moment she felt, in some far inner place of her soul, that she and her husband were guilty.....The baby was looking up at her. It had blue eyes, like her own, but its look was heavy, steady, as if it had realized something that had stunned some point of its soul.....

In her arms lay the delicate baby. Its deep blue eyes, always looking up at her unblinking, seemed to draw her innermost thoughts out of her. She no longer loved her husband; she had not wanted this child to come, and there it lay in her arms and pulled at her heart. She felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot love went over her to the infant. She held it close to her face and breast. With all her force, with all her soul, she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved. She would love it

all the more now it was here; carry it in her love. It's clear, knowing eyes gave her pain and fear. Did it know all about her? When it lay under her heart, had it been listening then? Was there a reproach in the look? She felt the marrow melt in her bones with fear and pain." (Lawrence, 48)

Paul found his position in his mother's eyes established after the sad demise of his elder brother, William. Once he gained his mother's attention, he was determined to consolidate his place as the favorite son in the family. His sole ambition in life, as far as his family was concerned, was to please and humor his mother, because she stood as a symbol of gentility and sophistication. She had unfortunately been pushed by circumstances to lead a miserable squalid life, instead of having been given the option to follow her own dreams and ideals of honorable living.

"His ambition, as far as this world's gear went, was quietly to earn his thirty or thirty-five shillings a week somewhere near home, and then, when his father died, have a cottage with his mother, paint and go out as he liked, and live happy ever after. That was his program as far as doing things went. But he was proud within himself, measuring people against himself, and placing them, inexorably. And he thought that perhaps he might also make a painter, the real thing." (Lawrence, 104)

The quest for sublimity in life and satisfaction of aesthetic values formed the common chemical bond between the son and the mother. Gertrude Morel had the artistic eye to readily discover beauty, be it in the corn flowers on a piece of crockery, in the moonlight standing up from the hills in front, in the tall white lilies reeling in the moonlight, and the air charged with their perfume, in the sun sinking from the glistening sky, leaving a soft flower-blue overhead, while the western space went red, as if all the fire had swum down there, leaving the bell cast flawlessly blue, in the cathedral brooding over the city of Nottinghamshire, in short in everything that could possibly catch the eye of the painter. Her quest for sophistication found reward in Paul's inherent potential.

"But Paul was going to distinguish himself. She had a great belief in him, the more because he was unaware of his own powers. There was so much to come out of him. Life for her was rich with promise. She was to see herself fulfilled. Not for nothing had been her struggle." (Lawrence, 207)

Gertrude's ambition of elevating her position in the society was not altogether unfounded. She had the seeds of sublimity strewn here and there in her intellectual existence. She could industriously work like a scholar, preparing for presentation at the meeting of the Women's Guild. 'It seemed queer to the children to see their mother, who was always busy about the house, sitting, writing in her rapid fashion, thinking, referring to books and writing again. They felt for her on such occasions the deepest respect.' Mrs. Morel was always very sensitive to her own feelings and to the feelings of others. She could delve deep into the psyche of her favorite son. When Paul announced his breaking away from Miriam, apparently, he seemed to have gotten over the emotional crisis of separation, but his mother immediately saw that his calmness was nothing more than a mask.

"He told her (his mother) about the girls in the Willow Tree. Mrs. Morel looked at him. It seemed unreal, his gaiety. At the back of it was too much horror and misery." (Lawrence, 339)

Such deep mutual understanding between the son and the mother was bound to alienate others as far as Paul's emotional and intellectual satisfaction was concerned. He found solace in the company of Gertrude simply for natural reasons and not for any other amoral cause like Oedipus complex. We cannot ignore the influence of Gertrude's possessive nature on Paul. She could not endure the sharing of her son's love with others. It was sheer motherly instinct which made her jealous of Miriam. She had had to sacrifice her first love with John Field at the hands of 'his landlady, a woman of forty, a widow with property'. But Paul was there to sacrifice his own love in order to placate the anguish of his mother.

❖ **Humanistic Sympathy Bond between Paul and his father**

Walter Morel; Paul's father appears in the novel as a symbol of the rustic laborers and declines during the course of the story to the symbol of the rusted poor. He is introduced as a young, vigorous, cheerful and ever-active person, willing to serve as an honest miner and contribute his little bit to the national development and economy. He is content with his lot as a miner and has no ambitions of flying higher than his status. His physical appearance and his naïve glamour instantly carry the earth away from under Gertrude's feet and make her instantly oblivious to everything about her dainty ideals and sophisticated social life.

“(Walter) Morel was then twenty-seven years old. He was well set-up, erect and very smart. He had wavy black hair that shone again, and a vigorous black beard that had never been shaved. His cheeks were ruddy, and his red moist mouth was noticeable because he laughed so often and so heartily. He had that rare thing, a rich, ringing laugh. Gertrude Coppard had watched him, fascinated. He was so full of color and animation, his voice ran so easily into comic grotesque, he was so ready and so pleasant with everybody.” (Lawrence, 18)

Gertrude’s fascination with his sensuous ardor started diminishing when her initial emotional fever subsided and she found him not at par with her sophisticated ideals and ambitions. She realized that matrimonial chains were pulling her down instead of intellectually and socially buoying her up in status.

“There began a battle between husband and wife _ a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfill his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it _ it drove him out of his mind.” (Lawrence, 24)

Contrary to Gertrude’s reaction of disdain at the time of Paul’s conception, Walter was never averse to the idea of his son’s birth. Paul never looked at his father with respect or gratitude although Walter was the sole bread earner and provider for the family up till William got a job. Paul’s acrimonious attitude towards his father was solely based on his despicable treatment of Gertrude. He himself was never subjected to callousness or inhuman treatment by his father, though we find that Walter’s treatment of William was really abhorrent. The brutish clipping of William’s locks of hair was an action that could fill the heart of any child with indelible chagrin. On the other hand, Paul was mostly the object of his father’s affection. The gulf between the father and the son was only on account of Walter’s acquiescence to his lot and his being unwilling to try to improve it. He had sought escape in drinking for the sake of forgetting his woes. Such resignation to fate was something which Paul could not stoop to. He hated his father for his clumsiness and his ill-treatment of his mother.

“Paul hated his father. As a boy he had a fervent private religion.

'Make him stop drinking.' He prayed every night. 'Lord, let my father die,' he prayed often. 'Let him be killed at pit,' he prayed when, after tea, the father did not come home from work.'.... 'Paul hated his father so. The collier's small mean head, with its black hair slightly soiled with grey, lay on the bare arms, and the face, dirty and inflamed, with a fleshy nose and thin, paltry brows, was turned sideways, asleep with beer and weariness and nasty temper.'" (Lawrence, 74)

Paul is not overtly anguished when his father is injured in an accident in the mine. He silently keeps on doing his routine work and expects his father to recover fully in the course of time. He is moved by his father's grief after the death of his mother and realizes the existence of humanistic ties between himself and his father and the need to sympathize with his father.

"His father looked so forlorn. Morel had been a man without fear _ simply nothing frightened him. Paul realized with a start that he had been afraid to go bed, alone in the house with his wife dead. He was sorry.

'I forgot you would be alone, father,' he said.

His father too, was sure that Paul wouldn't have eaten anything. Anticipating his son's need for supply of adequate energy, he had prepared hot milk for him.

'Dost want owt (anything) to eat?' asked Morel.

'No.'

'Sithee _ I made thee a drop o' hot milk. Get it down thee; it's cold enough for owt.'" (Lawrence, 448)

Here we find a surprising parallelism between Paul's ultimate behavior with Baxter and his spontaneous affection for Walter. He aims at restoring both to their original positions where there were obvious chances of restoration of their self-esteem.

❖ Paul and his siblings

Paul's relations with his elder brother William were never very intimate on account of the difference in their ages. William was his mother's favorite, exuding hopes of her escape and salvation from squalor and low-class drudgery. Even as a boy of seven, he appeared to be too much fascinated by his own ambitions. He unscrupulously 'fled off immediately after breakfast, to prowl around the wakes ground, leaving Annie who was only five, to whine all morning to go also.' Being the eldest of the Morel children, William exhibited a taint of haughtiness and egotism in respect of the younger children. He wielded authority in the house and tended to

ignore his younger brothers. In Frank Sulloway's opinion in *Born to Rebel*, "First-borns are more conscientious, more socially dominant, less agreeable and less open to new ideas compared to late-borns." (200)

Annie, Paul and Arthur were left behind to loll around the house together and to console each other. Arthur was a care-free, frolicking and rash member of the group. Annie and Paul were in unison in their feelings and deeds. Both of them decided to commit euthanasia (mercy killing) in order to rid their mother of irreversible suffering and pain. Annie could not provide lasting companionship to Paul on account of her own domestic obligations.

All the Morel children promised brilliant futures ahead. But they had to split apart due to one reason or the other.

"When he (William) was nineteen, he suddenly left the Co-op. Office and got a situation in Nottingham. In his new place he had thirty shillings a week instead of eighteen. This was indeed a rise. His mother and his father were brimmed up with pride. Everybody praised William. It seemed he was going to get on rapidly. Mrs. Morel hoped, with his aid, to help her younger sons. Annie was now studying to be a teacher. Paul, also very clever, was getting on well, having lessons in French and German from his God-father, the clergyman who was still a friend to Mrs. Morel. Arthur, a spoilt and very good-looking boy, was at the Board-school, but there was talk of his trying to get a scholarship for the High School in Nottingham." (Lawrence 67)

Paul and Annie were close together as siblings. They shared their innocent games and looked upon each other as sure sources of emotional support. Paul is tormented by the thought of Annie going way from the house after her marriage with Leonard, but he ascribes his worry to his mother being left forlorn. In fact, he feels the shock of separation from Annie too much for himself. Finally, he condescends to let the marriage go ahead as scheduled. After the death of their mother, Paul and Annie drifted apart.

"As he (Paul) grew older he became stronger. William was too far removed from him to accept him as a companion. So, the smaller boy belonged at first almost entirely to Annie. She was a tom-boy and a 'flybie-skybie' as her mother called her. But she was intensely fond of her younger brother. So, Paul was towed round at the heels of

Annie, sharing her game. She raced wildly at lerky with the other young wild-cats of the Bottoms. And always Paul flew beside her, living her share of the game, having as yet no part of his own. But his sister adored him. He always seemed to care for things if she wanted him to." (Lawrence 71)

Arthur Morel, the youngest is quick, careless, impulsive, and does not like the world around him. He thoughtlessly decides to join the army and keeps running after the girls. Such mercurial approach to life is contrary to Paul's concept of the family group.

❖ **Humanistic sympathy Bond of Paul's Relations with Baxter Dawes**

Baxter Dawes, the smith at Jordan's Surgical Appliances, was a portly figure, with dissolute eyes and infuriated bearing. Contrary to Paul's 'impersonal, deliberate gaze of an artist on his face' and curious critical observation, Baxter was disillusioned about his worth as a human-being. His estrangement with Clara, who had turned to women's rights, had filled his heart with revulsion for those who reflected success and accomplishment (Singhania & Partners 2018).

"The smith was a man of thirty-one or thirty-two. He came occasionally through Paul's corner — a big, well-set man, also striking to look at, and handsome. There was a peculiar similarity between himself and his wife. He had the same white skin, with a clear golden tinge. His hair was of soft brown, his moustache was golden. And he had a similar defiance in his bearing and manner. But then came the difference. His eyes, dark brown and quick-shifting, were dissolute (Brown, 1990). They protruded very slightly, and his eyelids hung over them in a way that was half hate. His mouth, too, was sensual. His whole manner was of cowed defiance; as if he were ready to knock anybody down who disapproved of him — perhaps because he really disapproved of himself." (Lawrence, 209)

Disillusion with one's capabilities is the greatest setback in the way of recognition and social acceptance. The victim of disillusion, not only loses worth in the eyes his intimates, but also fatally wounds his image in his own eyes. In case of imperiled dignity, the minds and moral capacities of the victims are stunted. They become devoid of reason and tend to behave like maniacs (STA, 2019). As an apt comparative study, let us take a look at Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim (Conrad, 1900). After the announcement of the verdict of the Board of Enquiry, Jim is so demoralized in his own eyes that he considers the innocent remark about a puppy as having been

attributed to himself. The sympathetic utterance, 'look at the wretched cur' provokes him to rush violently at the person making the remark. Such degradation in one's own eyes is so pricking for the conscience that it deprives a person of his rationality and wisdom. Some infirmity, some weakness in the character can have devastating consequences. Paul had been able to diagnose Baxter's malady. In a mood of sensual intimacy, he asked Clara:

"Were you horrid with Baxter? He asked her. It was a thing that seemed to trouble him.

'In what way?'

'Oh, I don't know. But weren't you horrid with him? Didn't you do something that knocked him to pieces?'

'What, pray?'

'Making him feel as if he were nothing _ I know,' Paul declared.

'You are so clever, my friend,' she said coolly.'" (Lawrence, 310)

Clara's remark is obviously a confession of infliction of degradation on Baxter by her. Subjection to horrid treatment at her hands devastated Baxter's self-esteem. He became a paranoid on account of his stunted image at home. As a reaction, he was inclined to inflict cruelty and atrocity on anyone deemed to be capable of performing heroic deeds in life.

Paul noticed the tragic flaw in Baxter's character. As he himself sought esteem and social acceptance, he felt a sort of natural camaraderie for the fallen soul. He wanted to do something to restore Baxter's image in his own eyes which appeared to be pleading for rescue and salvation, "Those brown eyes, full of the consciousness of failure, almost pleading for reassurance, for someone to re-establish the man in himself, to warm him, to set him up firm again, troubled Paul." (Lawrence, 451)

Paul's decision to restore Baxter's self-image, by letting 'the man with water in his legs', stand firm on his feet once again, is considered to be simultaneously beneficial for Paul as well. He arranged for Baxter's reinstatement on his job and restoration of his domestic life at home by persuading Clara to go back to Baxter. Through such act of human magnanimity, Paul intended to see the realization of his dream of unification into the larger human bond.

"Dawes had been driven to the extremity of life, until he was afraid. He could go to the brink of death; he could lie on the edge and look in. Then, cowed, afraid, he had to crawl back, and like a beggar take what offered. There was certain nobility in it. As Clara saw, he owned himself beaten, and he wanted to be taken back whether or not. That, she could do for him." (Lawrence, 456)

Conclusion

In the light of the above analysis, it is evident that Paul was basically engaged in the struggle to adjust himself in congenial environments where he could assert his will; where his capabilities could prosper; where he could establish his self-esteem and where his merits could be recognized. Ascribing the implication of Oedipus complex and viewing the basic theme of the novel, Sons and Lovers in the light thereof, tantamount to a far stretched conceit. Class room teaching of the novel, on the analytical lines stated above, would eliminate the prospect of embarrassment faced by the teachers in dealing with the topic.

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Article Information:

<i>Received</i>	2-Apr-2023
<i>Revised</i>	3-Jun-2023
<i>Accepted</i>	10-Jun-2023
<i>Published</i>	30-Jun-2023

Declarations:

Authors' Contribution:

- All authors **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions. Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The authors agree to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

▪ **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

▪ **Funding Sources:** NIL

Correspondence:

Amara Faheem

amarakwl@gmail.com
