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## **The Nature of Human Relationships in Sons and Lovers**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The present paper deals with the novel *Sons and Lovers* which is written by D.H. Lawrence. The relationships presented in this story are full of conflicts and depict emotions of all characters. The emotional dissatisfaction that Mrs. Morel sensed, filled her emotional steadiness by demanding love from her sons. The sons put in their head and heart for their mother thus unhealthy atmosphere of the family led to the emotional dependence between mother and their sons. First William and then Paul gradually became the victims of such kind of relationship which resulted in disturbed disastrous personal relationship with other women. Through this study, it has been tried to show relationships which prevailed in the family of Morels and how one devastated relation led to failure of other relations.

**Key Words:** Relationship, Oedipus Complex, Psychoanalysis, Emotions, Ambiguous relations

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### **Introduction:**

*Sons and Lovers* is a novel written by D.H. Lawrence in which he deals with the impartial awareness of human relationships. It depicts the relationship existing between William, Paul, Mrs. Morel and Mr. Morel as well as relationship of Paul with his two close lovers Miriam and Clara Dawes. The novel is affected by Freudian psychoanalysis of Oedipus complex in which a child is attracted towards his mother and despises his father. D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* is actually a study of human relationships. The story revolves around Paul Morel, who is a very sensitive young man and whose love for his mother, shroud his love for other two women: Miriam his self-restrained, pious lover, and Clara Dawes, an expert, liberated married woman. In the end, in spite of losing her mother and setting aside both Miriam and Clara, Paul is still positive about the future.

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### **Objectives:**

To study complexities of human relationship in the novel.

To study Oedipal Complex depicted in the novel.

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### **Related Literature:**

George [Sampson \(1946\)](#) says: "To men and women of very different kinds Lawrence conveyed an unquestionable sense of personal genius, and in most of them that faith was not destroyed by egocentric behavior of the utmost ruthlessness".

[Edward \(1979\)](#) Lawrence used the novel to present to his reader his own interpretation of life; both writers were concerned with the basic problems of human existence, man's relationships with his fellows and with the universe beyond himself.

Martin [Stephen \(1986\)](#) "It has been said that there was sexual tension in Lawrence's family, as a result of the blend it contained of working-class and middle-class attitudes to sexuality. Tension in sexuality is certainly a feature of Lawrence's work, and the whole movement in his work is towards a wholeness of personality that has at its heart the free expression of sexual desires"

Fiona Becket, (2002) D.H. Lawrence's novel mainly talk about relationships... especially the relationship between man and woman...I

Terry [Eagleton \(2008\)](#) in his psychoanalysis of the novel caricatures the Morel family as:

The family set up of the Morel is part of what is known as the "sexual division of labour" which in capitalist society takes the form of the male parent being used as labour-power in the productive process while the female parent is left to provide the material and emotional "maintenance" of him and the labour-force of the future (the children).

## Nature of Human Relationship in Sons and Lovers

Mrs. Morel grows immense emotional attachment with her two sons as a result of her messy and bizarre relationship with her husband. Mrs. Morel as a mother inclines to replace her emotional search to other characters. After her elder son, William's death, Paul, the second son is particularly the subject of the most of this extreme emotion. Paul feels troubled with being satisfied in his own relationships as a consequence of these emotions. Their extensive-than-normal emotional link as his mother developed a bond with him who despised his father and develops a great attachment with his mother that reflects the oedipal nature of Paul. Paul was undergoing a conflict with identity crisis as he whatever love he has; he has given it to mother but his heart remained void and whereas his beloved Miriam yearned for a "soul union".

Miriam thinks herself not as lovely as she is so as a result, she is continuously looking for reasons to love herself. In the instance of Paul, she thinks that if he required her, if she could take care of him;

"if he could depend on her, if she could, as it were, have him in her arms, how she would love him."

But in reality, this is never possible as his mother has already filled this place in his life so consequently, the relationship between Miriam and Paul is in search of identity. The relationship between son and mother, as well as between Paul and Miriam, is strained. The main subjects of concern between Paul and Miriam are the physical and spiritual differences between them as well as his mother. Miriam pays much importance to spirituality. Miriam's issue is all the time on a spiritual level. Lawrence has expressed this at times through floral depictions. Paul has more demands that Miriam will never be able to fulfill;

"You make me feel spiritual, which I don't want to be."

Paul utilizes Miriam for his physical closeness and contentment but fails to give her back which is demanded by Miriam. Paul's relationship with Miriam is obstructed with his mother's contempt and envy as well as Miriam's own spirituality and it is actually a kind of relationship in which love seems to be suffocated. Despite the fact that the two are in love with each other, the situations around them result in tension that holds it.

The unsuccessful relationship between Paul and Miriam turns Paul towards sensual love of Clara Dawes who is married, and lives separated from her husband. She expresses a straight sensual attraction for Paul. Like his mother, she is also unhappy with her husband, which makes Paul feel less unfaithful towards his mother. She fulfills only sexual needs of Paul, and leaves maximum of him for Mrs. Morel. Therefore, mother is not averse to the relation of Clara with Paul despite her being elder to him. Clara in fact admires Paul's quality of doing everything in short time, he fills her with the new vitality, and as a result both of them are drawn together and make love resulting in Paul receiving the impersonal love he desires, and Clara full understanding of herself as a woman. But with the passage of time, Clara feels dissatisfied with this impersonal love. She realized that he was not able to give her the love and affection that her own husband could give and theirs was only a sexual relationship. She was worn out with the physical closeness and relationship with him. She becomes upset when she comes to know that her husband, Baxter Dawes is in the hospital in Sheffield, and realizes that she has treated her husband badly. She goes to see him to try to make amends, but at first they do not get on well but she decided to live with her husband.

Paul also visits Dawes a few times, and the two men begin to develop a sort of friendship. Paul is more disturbed due to failure of another relationship. At this point, the novel moves towards the illness of Mrs. Morel. As her condition gets gradually worse, Paul gets involved in taking care of his dying mother and never leaves her till the end. Paul and his sister Annie share the nursing of their mother. They begin to feel as if they can no longer go on, and Paul decides to give her an overdose of morphia to put an end to all their suffering. He crushes all the pills into his mother's milk. She lasts through the night and finally dies the next morning

After his mother's death, Paul loses interest in Clara and boosts her up and Baxter to reunite. This succession of events reveal that Paul in a way wishes reunion of his parents which actually never occurred. Towards the end, when Paul leaves Clara and Baxter together and goes himself alone into the night, symbolizes Paul being forced to move beyond the Oedipal phase of his childhood in which he was caught while his mother was alive. Just as Mrs. Morel shifted her love from her husband onto her sons similarly Paul transfers his desire to physically satisfy his mother onto Clara and Baxter. But just like his mother it only guides him to confusion and desolation at the novel's end.

The most important feature of the novel is the exploration of Freudian psychoanalysis of Oedipus complex. William despised his father and is devoted to his mother which implies the Oedipal relationship it is observed that William works hard and gives his earnings to his mother to make her happy. He even won the competition including the egg cup championship, to bring happiness to his mother. The disapproval of his fiancé by his mother brings disturbance in the relationship and the love letters which have been received by William created jealousy in his mother which surged the oedipal relationship which brought William to an exhausted position and he died. After his death, Paul is having autocratic relationship with his mother. When Paul tried to contrast these two loves, it generated so much strain between them that he started detesting Miriam. This situation can be compared to the one that guided to William's death. Paul is the receiver of most of his mother's deep emotional feelings and has with her a bond tighter than normal. Because of this, Paul has trouble handling and being comfortable with his own relationships.

The relationship of Mr. Morel's with his children is noteworthy because of absence of interaction and all the time the children avoided their father whether they were kids or adults. Mrs. Morel's dissatisfaction, if not hate, towards her husband has a tremendous influence on the children's sentiments about their father. In sharp contrast to Mrs. Morel's paternal bond with the children, Mr. Morel appears to live like a stranger in his own house. At the time of death of Mrs Morel, he waits up for Paul to return home, so that he is not alone in the house with the dead body. Paul, who had considered Morel to be fearless, is taken by surprise.

The novel is seemed to be dominated with the theme of ambiguous relationship between Paul and his mother. Although there is no clear sexual relationship between Paul and his mother yet their relationship reflects Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex of which even they are not aware of. The novel ends with Paul on his own, turning away from the darkness and walking "towards the city's gold phosphorescence". Even after her death, Paul's mother holds and grips his soul.

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**Conclusion:**

To sum up, we can say that *Sons and Lovers* is the story of false relations between family members of different relations. There are so many conflicted relationships; between husband and wife, father and sons, physical and spiritual love. Lawrence also wants to convey that physical love devoid of nourishment of soul is useless and crumbles. *Sons and Lovers* is primarily a study of human relationships.

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