

Influence of Oedipus Complex in D.H Lawrence's 'Sons and Lovers'.

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Introduction-

Sons and Lovers is an autobiographical novel which was written by D.H. Lawrence, who was one of the most famous or prominent novelist of the Modern times. This novel is as autobiographical as the first half of Charles Dicken's 'David Copperfield and Arnold Bennet's 'Clayhanger'. We also find the impact of Sigmund Freud in the novel. The Oedipal Complex is also known as the Oedipus Complex, it is a term used by Sigmund Freud in his theory of Psychosexual stages of development to describe male child's attraction towards his mother. Freud proposed that Oedipus Complex played a very important role in the phallic stage of Psychosexual development.

What is Oedipus Complex

The Term Oedipus has been obtained from the name of the King Oedipus of Thebes, who married his own mother and also had children with her. Sigmund Freud used this term to explain the revelation of infantile sexuality in relation of the child to its parents. The Oedipus Complex is a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. If a son who is extremely fond of his mother- as Paul Morel fond of Mrs Morel- and prolong his fondness beyond puberty, affecting the harmony of his relationship with other girls. It can also be said that he is a victim of the mother fixation.

Oedipus Complex in Lawrence Himself

It is well acknowledge fact that D.H Lawrence himself was the victim of Oedipus Complex. His mother had a very strong bond with him, and Lawrence too treated his mother as his lover. She was the one who gave him life- warmth. He started writing or he came into

Literature because of the inspiration his mother gave him. In the year 1910, when Mrs Morel was on death bed, Lawrence wrote to his publishers of 'The White Peacock' to publish it as soon as possible so that his mother could see it while she is alive. That they loved each other like young lovers, which is repeatedly expressed in his early poems.

Oedipus Complex in "Sons and Lovers"

Blake Morrison writes in 'The Guardian' in his article "Sons and lovers", 'A Century on the sexual bond between mother and the son is established early, also Graham Hough in 'The Dark Sun', while Discussing Sons and Lovers says that "The whole situation in the novel presents the Freudian Oedipus imbroglio in classic completeness". Mrs Morel was Disillusioned with her husband Walter Morel, her relationship with him was not going the way it has to. She then took her two sons William and Paul as husband substitutes one after the other.

UNHAPPY MARRIED LIFE OF THE MORELS AND THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX IN WILLIAM

Gertrude Morel, a moral and religious woman, who marries a sensuous, amenable man, Walter Morel who had a hearty laugh and moist mouth. In the novel we can see that the first few months of their married life were very happy and joyful, but gradually and after some time their bond was not as strong as it was. Mrs Morel was feels sickened with her husbands drunkenness, his obliging and lethargic ways and his passionate dishonesty. When her eldest son William grows up, she starts alienating her husband and also seeks emotional attainment through her son. William too intimately responds to her mother. There is an instance in the novel when William was seven years old, he brings two egg- cups with moss roses on them for her from the fair and gave them to her almost like a lover." She loves him passionately". In these lines it is believed that Mrs Morel would do anything for William, and she feels inordinately jealous of his relationship with other young girls. She worries the girls will distract him or take him away from her. There was another instance in the novel, when William brings home the first prize he won at school, Mrs Morel receives it like a queen. She is very possessive that when William comes in contact with other girls and when he dance with other girls, she feels extremely jealous and finds it difficult for her to tolerate them. However, she expresses her hatred towards them in a rude and jolting way. When William falls in love with a girl named Gyp and when he brings her home to meet his mother, Mrs Morel gets very upset and also she vigorously criticised her. Under the influence of her mother, William finds it difficult to strike a balance between his love for his mother and his obsession for Gyp, he suffers from frightful spiritual agony and finally dies.

Oedipus Complex in Paul

After the death of William, Paul takes the place and becomes his mother's favorite. By seeing her actions, it can be seen as she thought of him as an admirer. There is an instance in the novel where she accepts a bottle of perfume spray from Paul and says 'Pretty!' in a very curious tone, while accepting the gift from her son. When Paul reaches adulthood, it is evident that the Oedipus Complex has taken him over. His relationship with his dad becomes strained and becomes jealous of him. Paul even asks his mother Mrs Morel not to sleep with his father anymore."Mrs Morel clung now to Paul. He was quiet and not brilliant. But still he stuck to his paintings, and still he stuck to his mother. Everything he did, was for her. She waited for his coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had pondered or all that had occurred to her during the day. He sat and listened with his earnestness. The two shared lives." In the novel it is seen that Mrs Morel had very strong belief in Paul as she says "There was so much to come out of him, she was to see herself fulfilled by him". She thinks he will love her and he cares for her as a lover and brings present for her. "His soul seemed always attentive to her". In these lines Paul from a very young age devotes himself to his mother, and their bond is clear. As Paul matures, his love for his mother morphs from admiration to romantic affection. "The excitement of lovers having an adventure together". In these lines Paul takes his mother with him to Nottingham for his job interview. They treat the trip as a mini vacation, acting more like lovers than mother and son. This highlights the strongly presented Oedipal theme of their relationship. Paul meets Miriam Leivers, though he likes her a lot, he too repeats the same misogynistic behavior as William did with Lily, He feels as if he is betraying his mother by being with Miriam. However Mrs Morel finds it difficult to accept the fact that her son Paul is interested in someone else rather than her, she becomes extremely jealous and that also shows an attempt to break the Oedipal Fixation that he has. Though, Mrs Morel counters the attempt by making him feel guilty for loving and wanting to be with Miriam. She says that " I can't bear it, I could let another woman- but not her. She 'd leave me no room, not a bit of room. And I've never- you know Paul I've never had a husband, not really". The same behaviour Mrs Morel proclaimed with William, by being jealous of Gyp and now she becomes jealous from her son Paul's love Miriam. She then boosts the feeling of Oedipus complex that is within Paul by oppressing him and asking him indirectly to replace her husband. Paul then reduces his relationship with Miriam to friendship. Paul has to suppress his romantic feelings that he has for Miriam, so that his mother is not replaced by her. Later in the novel it is seen that Paul and Miriam do have physical relationship, but Paul remains emotionally detached from Miriam. Paul succumbs to the Oedipal affection for his mother. In the novel it is stated that Paul has an affair with a married but separated woman named Clara Dawes, Paul had this relationship because he knows that certainly this relationship will always be there. He knows that Clara will never give divorce to her husband. He thinks that she is not a threat to his oedipal fixation to his mother. Paul believes that there is no threat of her taking his mother's side. Mrs Morel becomes ill, as she is on bed rest and in pain, Paul gives her medicine. He gave overdose of medicine to her which was a reason of her death, it is seen that by doing so he is releasing himself from the Oedipus Complex completely. Paul feels shattered and alone after his mother's death. Miriam still wants to be with Paul, but he refuses. It is very clear from this that after his mother's death, he is still attached to her he still misses her and because of this he chooses to

be alone. The deteriorated relationship with his mother is still present in Paul's life and it seems that the feeling of Oedipus Complex is still there and it is unbroken. It seems that Paul is not able to believe that his mother is no more.

Hatred Between the Father and the Son

Due to Oedipus Complex which is present in boys, the feeling of love for his mother is the main reason for the hatred between a father and a son. A child looks at his father as a rival in his domination over his mother's love. As in the novel 'Sons and Lovers' it can be seen that both the boys William and Paul are jealous of their Father and also they both hate him as he keeps their mother in his control and doesn't treat the way she deserves to be treated. There is an instance in the novel when Mrs Morel asked Paul to show his prize he has won to his father, Paul feels that it would be easier to forfeit the prize than to approach his father for approval. Paul hates his father so much that he doesn't even want to look at him at all.

Conclusion

"Sons and Lovers" by D.H. Lawrence is a successful novel in changing the perception about sexuality. The introduction of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory has helped in understanding the Psychology of William and Paul. Oedipus Complex affected the lives of not just William, Paul and Mrs Morel but it also affects the lives of Miriam and Clara too. William underwent an emotional battle between his love for Lily and Mrs Morel which made him sick and that was the only reason for his death too, on the other side Paul too finds her difficult to accept Miriam as his lover after developing physical relations with her. Clara too sees and understands Paul's passionate love for his mother. D.H. Lawrence had received a lot of criticism due to the way he has depicted sexuality and gender structure in the novel. But this novel had helped the audiences to discover a deeper understanding about certain behaviours. Irony is that Oedipus Complex is the reality of today's modern world. There are many male children who feel so connected to their mothers that it becomes very hard for them to get along with their life partners. They both got confused as to how to maintain the glory of a pure relationship with their mother and wives. The best solution to this could be the better and responsible role by both the parents. If Mr Morel proved to be a better husband and father, Mrs Morel would never get dissatisfied with her married life. And William and Paul's view on marriage would have been sacred and happy institution and would have avoided the chaos in their lives. The overturn case in this novel has helped to identify the Psychological problem in today's society. This was the reason why the novel remains a classic example of psychosexual development.

Reference-

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