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## LAWRENCE'S *SONS AND LOVERS* AS A STUDY IN FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY

**Abstract:** The present paper deals with the literary work of D.H. Lawrence *Sons and lovers* as a universal study on female psychology. The realistic setting at the turn of the nineteenth century described in the novel illustrates Victorian society's perception of women in England and provides a survey of women's status during that time. Through the events in the lives of the female characters from two generations, Mrs. Morel, Miriam Leivers, and Clara Dawes and their attitudes to their position in society, Lawrence exposes the reader to the changing social conditions for working class women in Britain, as they are struggling to become functioning members of society. Therefore, by exploring the relationships between Paul Morel and female characters in the novel and by depicting social conditions and the position of women at the time, *Sons and Lovers* becomes an in-depth study in female psychology.

**Keywords:** feminism, Oedipus complex, patriarchy, relationships, self-confidence, sexuality

### INTRODUCTION

Initially titled *Paul Morel, Sons and Lovers*, published in 1913, is one of the most successful novels of the famous English writer D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence's constant interest in human relationships affected all his fiction and particularly *Sons and Lovers*. The incomplete relationships and imperfect characters in this novel are among the most discussed and analyzed in English literature.

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The plot of *Sons and Lovers* begins in 1885 and ends in 1911, following the outline of Lawrence's own life. During that time, British miners battled their capitalist bosses for better pay and safer working conditions. As the rate of industrialization increased, so did the gap between rich and poor. One way out of the danger and poverty of the mining life was through education. The Education Act of 1870, which attempted to provide elementary education for all children, gave hope to many working class parents. Elementary schooling, however, was not entirely free until the 1890s. Before that, parents were expected to pay between one and four pence per week per child. William, Paul, Clara, and Miriam, the characters in the novel, all went to school, which increased their chances of finding better work. As a result of the Education Act, industrialization, and urbanization, more jobs became available at the end of the nineteenth century. There were more opportunities for men. Women, however, especially unmarried ones, could work as typists, secretaries or telephone operators.

Victorian patriarchal society denied working class women formal schooling, remarking that education conflicted with the traditional belief in the separate roles of men and women. Education Act made elementary education available for girls and boys, ensuring that girls received basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. Nevertheless, although society provided women with basic education, they still received submissive work and remained out of politics. However, by the 1860's women began to lead active campaigns. The change in women's self-confidence can be seen in the contrast between the characters of Mrs. Morel, Clara Dawes and Miriam Leivers.

Mrs. Morel is more educated and socially aspiring than most women from her environment, but she still lives a life that does not extend much beyond her home and family. The institution of marriage in Victorian times was, in the majority of cases, a loveless union used to provide a woman with economic security or it just served as an escape from parental home. An unmarried woman in the mid-nineteenth century was regarded as unfortunate. Gertrude Coppard's degradation to the lower class from her middle class family reflects the necessity of matrimony at that time. More than once, after being beaten, Mrs. Morel threatens to leave her husband but she knows very well that she cannot live on her own. Until the mid-nineteenth century, divorce was available only to the middle class and upwards. The Parliament passed a Divorce Act in 1857, but it was not until 1878 that women who separated from their husbands due to physical abuse could claim maintenance. At the time the novel was written women were basically domestic servants within a patriarchal household.

Clara Dawes, on the other hand, lives separate from her unfaithful, brutal husband, and "talks on platforms". As her name suggests (clara – clear, bright, sharp), she is a woman with both beauty and intelligence. Her education and independence make her different. As a member of the women's movement Clara has "acquired a fair

amount of education, and has taught herself French” (Lawrence, 1995: 127). She is not so possessive when it comes to Paul. He is more like a companion to her than an irreplaceable part in her life. She could live with him or without him. This also highlights her independence and self-confidence. Miriam’s attitude also changes with the times. Although she is not a member of any women’s movement, Miriam recognises that the patriarchal society is unjust because “the man does as he likes . . . and a woman forfeits” (Lawrence, 1995: 49). Clara and Miriam reflect the ‘new’ nineteenth-century woman. Clara in particular emphasises their changing social status when she remarks: “it’s not heaven my friend wants to get – it’s her fair share on earth” (Lawrence, 1995: 159). Clara Dawes thus transmits a universal message for all women of the time.

### OEDIPUS COMPLEX AS ONE OF THE MAIN THEMES IN THE NOVEL

Much of Lawrence’s work is informed by his knowledge of the work of Sigmund Freud. In 1912 Sigmund Freud delivered a speech before the London Society of Psychological Research detailing for the first time his theories on the unconscious as a repository of thoughts repressed by the conscious mind. Lawrence probably wasn’t quite familiar with Freud’s theory of unconscious, yet many ideas of this theory take shape in his novels.

*Sons and Lovers* is the first modern portrayal of a phenomenon that later, thanks to Freud, became recognizable as the Oedipus complex. No literary character was more influenced by his mother’s love and full of hatred for his father than D. H. Lawrence’s young protagonist Paul Morel. On the example of the relationship between Paul and his mother, Lawrence portrayed a woman who is deeply unsatisfied with her life and marriage and he explores how her frustrations affect her children, especially her favorite son. There are so many parallels between the novel and Lawrence’s own life as the son of an illiterate coal miner and an educated, socially aspiring mother, that the novel can be called autobiographical. For Lawrence the bond which the author himself felt with his mother even transcended the Oedipal, giving Lawrence, and therefore his fictional projection Paul, the sense of a bond next to which other relationships to women seem ordinary and flat.

Freud took the old Greek myth of Oedipus, in which the hero unknowingly kills his father and marries his own mother, as a reflection of man’s subconscious sexual desires. He rebelled against the idea that children are asexual. He believed that a child’s earliest sexual attraction is to the parent of the opposite sex. Freud concluded his theory with the warning that if a boy did not eventually suppress this attraction and begin to identify with his father, he would never be able to transfer his early love for his mother to a suitable partner. In his work *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud says:

In my experience [...] the chief part in the mental lives of all children who later become psycho neurotics is played by their parents. Being in love with one parent and hating the other are among the essential constituents of the stock of psychical impulses which is formed at the time and which is of such importance in determining the symptoms of the later neurosis... This is confirmed by occasional observation of normal children that they are distinguished by exhibiting on a magnified scale feelings of love and hatred to their parents which occur less obviously and less intensely in the mind of most children. The discovery is confirmed by a legend that has come down to us from classical antiquity: a legend whose profound and universal power to move can only be understood if the hypothesis I have put forward in regard to psychology of children has an equally universal validity. What I have in mind is the legend of king Oedipus. (Freud, 2010: 508)

In his *Essay on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud pointed out:

It is justly said that the Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex of the neuroses, and constitutes the essential part of their content. It represents the peak of infantile sexuality, which, through its after effects, exercises a decisive influence on the sexuality of adults. Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim of neurosis. (Freud, 2010: 1548)

A Freudian approach to *Sons and Lovers* is necessarily the starting point in the analysis of the novel, but recent criticism, drawing on more modern psychoanalytic theories, moves the emphasis from Oedipal conflict. According to these theories, Paul's psychological traits are traced back to his failed relationship with both maternal and paternal images in his early years. In fact, many of the revisions Lawrence made in the latter half of the novel seem to reflect his own attempts to lessen Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation. Lawrence himself summarized the plot of the novel in one letter on 12 November, 1912:

It follows this idea: a woman of character and refinement goes into the lower class, and has no satisfaction in her own life. She has had a passion for her husband, so her children are born of passion, and have heaps of vitality. But as her sons grow up she selects them as lovers, first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother – urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives. (Lawrence, 1995: 3)

Of course, Mrs. Morel takes neither of her two elder sons as a literal lover, but nonetheless her influence on them is immense and is certainly beyond normal parent-child relationship. She is possessive and selfish at moments, but she is also a great parent – she is both a giving mother and a possessive tyrant. We learn that Paul

sometimes has fits of depression. When Gertrude attempts to discover the reason for his melancholy, she becomes angry at his inability to explain his mood. It prompts Gertrude to carry Paul out to the yard and set him in a chair: “Now cry there, Misery,” she says. From Gertrude’s perspective, we then learn: “These fits were not often, but they caused a shadow in Mrs. Morel’s heart, and her treatment of Paul was different from her other children.” In the “Birth of Paul” chapter, Gertrude describes her guilty feelings for having given birth to Paul without loving him, and she vows to compensate for that guilt.

Mrs. Morel is an extremely complex character. She often seems to be doing wonderful things for her children, but the resulting impact on their lives is opposite. She becomes so important to William and Paul that all other women come up short when compared to her. Paul admits to himself that no matter how wonderful his mother is, she is also the greatest burden in his life:

He had come back to his mother. Hers was the strongest tie in his life. When he thought round Miriam shrunk away. There was a vague, unreal feel about her. And nobody else mattered. There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost nonexistent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother. (Lawrence, 1995: 67)

William, Paul’s older brother, dies of pneumonia, but he also falls ill because he can’t resolve the conflict he feels between marrying his girlfriend, whom his mother hates, and remaining devoted to his mother. Paul even says that he’ll never find a wife while his mother lives. According to psychological theory as formulated by Freud, Gertrude Morel has replaced her husband with her sons. Gertrude, brought up in the respectable middle class, can’t accept her husband’s irresponsibility or drinking habits. Her values, isolation and sense of injustice permeate her perceptions – women and children are innocent while men are stupid brutes. She is alone and isolated. The cause of her alienation is her very condition as a woman, being a dependent mother of too many children and with not enough money. As a result of all this, she puts all her love and passion into her relationship with her children. She instills them with self-confidence, social and intellectual ambitions, and a great joy of living. At the same time, she makes it difficult for her sons to find happiness and fulfillment in love. In the *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* Freud said:

Incidentally, children often react on their Oedipus attitude to a stimulus coming from their parents, who are led in their preferences by difference in sex, so that the father will choose his daughter and the

mother her son as a favorite, or in case of cooling-off in the marriage, as a substitute for a love-object that has lost its value. (Freud, 2010: 65)

Not only does Mrs. Morel take Paul as a substitute for her husband, but she considers the other women in his life to be her rivals. She loathes Miriam from the start, understanding the girl's deep love of her son as a threat. Miriam soon notices: "She's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him. She wants to absorb him" (Lawrence, 1995: 121).

Meanwhile, Paul is incapable of committing himself to some other woman. He hates Miriam because she caused his mother to suffer. He even confesses to his mother: "I really don't love her. I talk to her, but I want to come home to you" (Lawrence, 1995: 230). When Paul breaks off with Miriam his mother welcomes his decision, but she also uses that opportunity to make a victim out of herself:

"Breaking off a pink he suddenly went indoors.

"Come, my boy", said his mother. "I'm sure it's time you went to bed."

He stood with the pink against his lips.

"I shall break off with Miriam, mother," he answered calmly...

..."Well", said his mother, "I think it will be best. But lately I decided you had made up your mind to have her, so I said nothing, and should have said nothing. But I say, as I have always said, I don't think she is suited to you." (Lawrence, 1995: 232)

The result of all this is that Paul throws Miriam over for a married woman, Clara Dawes, who fulfills his sexual desires but leaves him, as ever, without a complete relationship so there is still nothing to challenge his mother's love. In Miriam, he finds a generous but unsatisfactory partner, "a young woman willing to sacrifice herself on the altar of his sensibility" (Edwards, 2010: 224). This is the rival his mother forcefully rejects. By contrast, the older and more self-reliant Clara Dawes defines Paul's sexual maturity without challenging his mother's role.

Mrs Morel is not only possessive when it comes to love, but she also considers all Paul's successes to be her own. On the other hand, he also thinks that he owes to his mother everything he has become. As Paul goes from the working-class mining world to the spheres of commerce and art, he accepts that his own achievements must be equally his mother's: There was so much to come out of him. Life for her was rich with promise. She was to see herself fulfilled... All his work was hers (Lawrence, 1995: 214).

This is also vividly depicted in the scenes which involve Paul's art. His mother is very supportive when it comes to his painting, and she is more than proud when he

achieves something. Nevertheless, when he gets the first prize in the competition, she feels his success to be her merit:

“Hurrah, my boy! I knew we should do it”...

[...] “Mother”, he exclaimed.

“Didn’t I say we should do it” she said pretending she was not crying.  
(Lawrence, 1995: 175)

On the other hand, Mrs. Morel is also a facilitator in Paul’s development, as she attempts to protect him from her husband’s vulgar habits and rescues him from a life in the mines. She also attempts to lessen the effects that the society in which they live has on her children.

Bestwood, a literary version of Eastwood, where Lawrence was born, is the setting of the novel and in the opening chapter Lawrence recounts the history of the Midlands countryside, Mrs. Morel’s childhood, and the time when she met and married Walter Morel.

In this way Lawrence describes the influence of Paul’s environment and family life on the development of his characters. Life in “The Bottoms” is largely full of despair. After a day in the mines, the men drink and cavort, while their wives tend to domestic chores. Mrs. Morel is unlike the other wives because she comes from a higher social class and has expectations for a better life.

Without his mother’s demanding presence Paul might not have developed his love for painting or his desire to move on beyond his provincial roots. Paul’s tortured relationship with his mother forces him to develop his own ideas about what personal fulfillment should be. Yet, Paul never comes to a complete understanding about himself and what he can and cannot control. By having to balance his need to please his mother with his need to have a healthy sexual and emotional relationship with a woman, he becomes incomplete, without knowing what it is that he wants or needs: “Paul became more and more unsettled. Annie and Arthur had gone. He was restless to follow. Yet, home was for him beside his mother. And still, there was something else, something outside, something he wanted” (Lawrence, 1995: 190).

Even when near death, Mrs. Morel does not want to die, for she feels that she must finally leave Paul. Upon her death, Paul feels nothing but a longing for his own death. He must then learn to live a life of his own, independent of the influence (and support and encouragement) of his mother. “Everything seemed to have gone smash for the young man. He could not paint. The picture he finished on the day of his mother’s death – one that satisfied him – was the last thing he did. When he came home he could not take up his brushes again. There was nothing left” (Lawrence, 1995: 378). However,

the spirit in Paul persuades him to turn away from death and walk towards the town and a new beginning.

All in all, Mrs. Morel is viewed by readers, and by most of the critics, primarily as a destructive figure in Paul's and William's lives. "Her Protestant ethos of self-denial, sexual repression, impersonal work, disciplined aspiration, guilt, and yearning for conversion – escape, not only defeats her already industrially victimized coal-miner husband but also contributes to the defeat of their sons" (Buchanan, 2000: 254).

Mrs. Morel always uses her possession to gain love. Her eldest son died of pneumonia, and her second son loses the ability to love and emotionally connect with women. Gertrude Morel dies of cancer and her illness is partly a product of her psychological condition. "As for Gertrude Morel illness, we know from Lawrence's letter to Garnett that he intended it to be partly psychosomatic in Origin, a mechanism, as we have said, for maintaining control over her straying son" (Gilbert, 1965: 63)

One of the central themes of Lawrence's work is the element of universal duality in all things in the world. This element is depicted through the relationship between the Male and the Female – the two parts of creation. Lawrence's central activity as a novelist was to understand and to show us to what there was in human personality that obstructs happiness, unity and progress. He constructed the world on the model of male-female opposition which became the underlying principle of his novel *Sons and Lovers*. The most extreme example of this duality is the relationship between Paul and Miriam.

Paul's development and his difficulty with anxiety is prolonged as a result of his mother's behavior. As he matures and his sexual urges begin to drive him, he opts for a woman, Miriam, who offers some of what his mother does – the emotional support that helps him cope with the anxiety. It is also one of the reasons he maintains his relationship with her until the end of the novel. He seeks Miriam when he needs approval, and he imagines he loves her because she offers him the emotional support he needs: "He clung to the hope of her. He could feel her, across the night, wanting to come. And she never failed him. With her, the inner life counted for everything, the outer for nothing" (Lawrence, 1995: 150).

Miriam is romantic in her soul but timid and sensitive in appearance. She is a shy girl who loves poetry and the novels of Walter Scott and resents being kept at home to do housework. At the same time Miriam has little self-esteem, fearing that people will think of her as a swine-girl and not see the princess underneath. Often represented by nature, Miriam resembles Gertrude in purity and intellect. Paul naturally falls in love



with her because she reminds him of Gertrude – she is religious, pure but also possessive, and he loves her because of their common appreciation for nature.

Miriam lives in some kind of spiritual ‘mist’. She is a dreamy, impractical girl who “almost fiercely wished she were a man. And yet she hated men at the same time” (Lawrence, 1995: 177). Nothing is ordinary or simple for her. Her special or spiritual way of seeing things is indicated when Paul is trying to teach Miriam algebra. She wants to learn things that men learn because she is convinced that it is a disadvantage to be a woman. Thus, Paul challenges her to learn some things he knows. Yet, when he teaches her algebra he recognizes the obstacles that her spiritual approach to life presents to her. Paul gets impatient, and struggles with how to relate to her. “He was always either in a rage, or very gentle”. Then he asked: ““What do you tremble your soul before it for?” he cried. ‘You don’t learn algebra with your blessed soul. Can’t you look at it with your clear simple wits?’” (Lawrence, 1995: 144).

For the spiritually oriented Miriam it was inevitable either to come into conflict with or be despised by Paul’s mother. Nevertheless, Paul was drawn to her and Miriam was fascinated by Paul. She loved to discuss books and ideas with him. She was mesmerized by his mind and his speech:

But to hear him talk was life to her: like starting the breathing in a newborn baby. She appreciated his art, and he wanted to show her every product of his creativity. But there was more: 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, 1995: 190)

Thus, while his mother may have given birth to Paul’s creativity, Miriam nurtured it and drew it out of him. Yet, his mother characterized it as a way of sucking life out of him. Mrs. Morel is resentful of the closeness that Paul and Miriam share, and she treats Miriam with disdain. Mrs. Morel, with her strength and domination, feels as though she possesses Paul’s soul and will now allow room for Miriam in Paul’s life.

Despite her intense spirituality Miriam is not a free soul. In the silent atmosphere of her home she looked like “a maiden in bondage, her spirit dreaming in a land far away and magical” (Lawrence, 1995: 168). “All the life of Miriam’s body,” Lawrence further tells us,

was in her eyes, which were usually dark as a dark church, but could flame with light like a conflagration. Her face scarcely ever altered from its look of brooding... There was no looseness or abandon about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, overcharged, closed in on itself. (Lawrence, 1995: 176)

The failure of Miriam's relationship with Paul is highlighted through her unhealthy and tragic thoughts. She imagined Paul to be so ill and weak while she is stronger than him and is his mistress: "Then she could love him, take care of him ...have him in her arms..." (Lawrence, 1995: 201). When Paul breaks up with her, Miriam frequently returns to the word "bondage". She feels enslaved to Paul, and is upset that he has so much power over her. Miriam's character is best described when contrasted with her sister, Agatha, who appears only in one scene. Their mother has taught both daughters to turn the other cheek, yet the elder daughter rejects this lesson and has a professional career as a teacher. Even though she wanted to be a teacher too, Miriam blames the men in her family for her condition as the family drudge. Although she believes she "must have something to reinforce her pride, because she felt different from other people" (Lawrence, 1995: 165), she passively submits. This difference, however, has less to do either with her sex or her environment than with her temperament. Furthermore, during the lessons when Paul reacts angrily and throws a pencil in her face, she says nothing.

In the novel, we are often shown the importance of sex through the inbuilt irony. Miriam is disgusted by it and is revolted at the thought of any physical intimacy. This is largely because her mother has made a confidante out of her and has given her a disproportionate view of the man-woman relationship. Women learn about sexuality in their family of origin. A girl who had a safe, loving family often grows into a sexually healthy individual. For women who grew up in a family where love, touch, empathy and trust were all connected, attachment to another person should be associated with safety. Miriam's attitude can also be seen as a result of the prudishness of the age, and such thinking was to be expected in a society that repressed sex. Even on an everyday level she is physically fragile and lives in some kind of constant tension.

The intimacy between her and Paul was abstract, more a matter of the soul than of the body. This basic attitude of hers is further shown through her fascination for flowers more than for men. In the chapter titled "The test of Miriam", Paul told himself that the root of the trouble was sort of "over strong virginity in him and in her which neither could break through" (Lawrence, 1995: 203). Therefore, despite loving Paul intensely she "never realized the male he was" (Lawrence, 1995: 205). They engage in an intercourse, but Miriam only sacrifices herself to Paul and does not connect emotionally. Thus, Miriam and Paul's relationship inevitably comes to an end.

Several scenes demonstrate Miriam's temperament and her sensitivity as well as her natural tendency to avoid the unfamiliar, which for her includes physical proximity to men. The narrator has made it clear on several occasions that Miriam "hated men". The first scene occurs during one of Paul's early visits to the Lievers' farm. Miriam's brothers and Paul feed a hen from the palms of their hands, after which

Edgar invites Miriam to do the same, but she doesn't want to. The two younger brothers tease Miriam because she never tries new experiences but remains absent, fancying herself 'The Lady of the Lake'. Miriam became "crimson with shame and misery" (Lawrence, 1995: 111). One could understand her embarrassment, but the shame suggests her hypersensitivity. Miriam's shame comes even from her brothers because Paul is present. Paul then comes to dinner, and he describes Miriam's appearance, after which the narrative shifts from Paul's description to her reaction: "She went into the scullery, blushing deeply. And afterwards her hands trembled slightly at her work; she nearly dropped all she handled. When her inside dream was shaken, her body quivered with trepidation. She resented that he saw so much" (Lawrence, 1995: 148). In the swing scene, Miriam shrinks from Paul's touch. Paul invites her to swing first, but "You go," she pleaded." After Paul swings, he once more invites Miriam to do likewise, and she responds, "No, you go on" (Lawrence, 1995: 194). When she finally allows Paul to push her, Lawrence describes her feelings: "She felt the accuracy with which he caught her ... and she was afraid. Down to her bowels went the hot wave of fear" (Lawrence, 1995: 194). Eventually Paul allows her to swing by herself. Miriam's attitude cannot be explained by simple modesty. Physical proximity to Paul triggers anxiety that certainly goes beyond Victorian social norms. Her behaviour reflects the psychological explanation of the inhibited temperament. "Infants with an inhibited temperament tend to develop into children who avoid people, objects, and situations that are new or unfamiliar, whereas uninhibited children spontaneously approach novel persons, objects, and situations" (Edwards, 2010: 128). Both Paul and Miriam illustrate the difficulty some individuals have in adapting to new experiences, not necessarily because of childhood trauma, but because of their inhibited temperament. Moreover, *Sons and Lovers* provides an example of the difficulty for young women with an inhibited temperament to adapt in a patriarchal world that has already limited their choices.

Miriam's character is symbolically expressed by the swing at the Willey farm. She has nothing physical to offer to Paul and their relationship is depicted through an alteration between love and hate and it is symbolized by the swing that moves backward and forward but makes no progress. The whole novel is actually structured like ocean waves. There's a rhythmic return pattern to various themes and this serves to show that there are no clear-cut resolutions in life. People make the same mistakes again and again. Miriam is held captive by Paul and by her own lofty hopes and dreams. Paul strings her along in their relationship, with no future for them. This lack of future for them is partly based on Mrs. Morel's dislike of Miriam but she is also held captive by her own dreams. She envisions herself more as a princess, than as a wife of an office clerk. Her aspirations are unattainable, and she is therefore kept down by her own insecurity and illusions.

**CLARA DAWES AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF A “NEW” TWENTIETH-CENTURY WOMAN**

There was a time when it was a widely accepted belief that women were in fact “imperfect men” and their imperfectness arose from their sexual inadequacies. This thinking came from the brilliant minds of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as Sigmund Freud and his followers. It was even believed that women became hysteric and neurotic when their desire to be like men could not be fulfilled. He said that women were envious for all that men stood for and that this envy started in the early childhood. (Freud, 2010: 1514) For more than 150 years this theory was accepted without any major questioning and women suffered a lot because of this thinking that was spread in the society as a norm.

It was only in the early and later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that this belief was challenged by some brilliant women psychoanalysts and psychologists. They challenged Freud’s theory by advocating the fact that Freud was actually a prisoner of the culture and social conditions of his time. In the nineteenth-century Victorian culture women were living a very discriminated and marginalized life and had a lot of restrictions. Whenever a woman got frustrated and tried to challenge the system she was rebuffed strongly and was ridiculed for trying to “imitate men”.

By introducing the character of Clara Dawes, Lawrence depicted the woman of the “new era”. Clara Dawes is the sensuous older woman who comes to replace Miriam as the love interest in Paul’s life. She’s a feminist even before it became fashionable. Determined to be independent, she leaves her husband and earns her own living. Clara can be viewed as a representative of the many post-Victorian women who rebelled against the traditional image of woman as the “weaker sex”. She is also extraordinarily intelligent, with a good critical mind. Clara is a character with an element of mystery about her. She has peculiar dressing habits and in comparison to the other girls at the place she works, she does not like to mix with her fellow workers. Clara Dawes is an influential person in this novel, because her existence makes Paul mature from a boy into a man not only physically but also mentally. Moreover, different from other women, she is open-minded, realistic and mature. All these characteristics give her an image of women who can make a living by their own income and pursue their own life bravely. Sadly enough, she eventually compromises with life and goes back to her husband.

Lawrence’s theories about human behavior revolved around what he called “blood consciousness”, which he opposed to “mental and nerve consciousness”. Lawrence argued that modern society had somehow come to be dominated by mental consciousness and so was largely unaware of its own desires. He wrote articles about his theories of human behavior along with his theories about male-female relationships. In *Sons and Lovers* he clarified and developed his ideas on the importance of love

between man and woman. In this novel you get a strong feeling that survival in the modern, industrial society depends on strong heterosexual relationships. Such a relationship is only possible when both man and woman are spiritually and physically vital.

Paul has a spiritual love with Miriam and a sexual one with Clara. Clara is a more experienced, mature woman and seems a more promising partner for him. Yet, as with Miriam, he inevitably projects his own feelings onto Clara: “he loved her... A kind of eternal look about her, as if she were a wistful sphinx, made him mad to kiss her...” (Lawrence, 1995: 340). Paul is particularly attracted to what he sees as Clara’s ability to be something else, something that transcends her human limits. At the same time she gives him a chance to get beyond his ordinary self, as we see from Paul’s strange account of his feelings during the play he attends with Clara: “The drama...seemed far away inside him. He was Clara’s white heavy arms, her throat, her moving bosom. That seemed to be himself. Then away somewhere the play went on, and he was identified with that also. There was no himself” (Lawrence, 1995: 312). Clara complains that the man in love doesn’t notice that the woman exists and tells Paul that he knows nothing about her. When they make love Paul becomes “not a man with a mind, but an instinct” (Lawrence, 1995: 341). Finally, his confusing and contradictory reactions repulse Clara and she comes to an understanding that “there is no man loving her”. The same conflicts that obstruct Paul’s relationship with Miriam arise between him and Clara. Both relationships leave him unfulfilled because he needs a love that combines both spiritual and sexual elements in one woman.

One of the main aspects of Clara’s personality is, once again, connected with Lawrence’s idea of universal duality. She is supposedly independent and self sufficient, but we see many times that she actually “needs a man”. In one instance, after expressing her bitterness about the status of women, Clara makes an awkward statement about Miss Limb. Paul and Clara meet her and they become aware of her loneliness and of her love of horses. Clara then states that Miss Limb’s love for animals is the product of her need for a man. Clara has a will of her own, but at the same time she is trying to hide her vulnerability. We get the impression that she lives in some kind of fear of being dependent upon a man. At the same time she is aware of her natural need for a male partner. The duality of Clara’s nature is also demonstrated when Paul visits her at her home for the first time: “...she spoke humbly to him. He had surprised her in her drudgery” (Lawrence, 1995: 332). She is embarrassed in front of him, because she always talks angrily about the menial tasks to which women are subjected. The bottom line is that Clara is a feminist by conviction, but her nature is more fragile than the first impression we get.

The final part of Clara's character we reveal while reading the novel is her loyalty and a sense of justice. We see that she is righteous when she persuades Paul to reconcile with Miriam, but her loyalty is depicted at the very end when she returns to her husband. Although she has many moments of happiness with Paul, though mainly physical ones, Clara's guilt about leaving her husband intensifies. Her feelings are heightened when she finds out that Baxter is ill. At this moment she acts courageously telling Paul that the relationship with Baxter was more complete. In a sense she feels that she has used Baxter's illness, and therefore she decides to return to her husband. In this way there is a natural, rather healthy end to her relationship with Paul since she went back to where she belonged: "Clara went with her husband to Sheffield and Paul scarcely saw her again" (Lawrence, 1995: 397).

In *Sons and Lovers* we witness something that can be called the dawn of a new literary era. Lawrence openly questioned the standards of the time. He was not afraid to discuss questions such as the dysfunctional relationships within the family or the problems of sexuality. By explicitly depicting human sexuality in his novel, Lawrence flouted the moral conventions of the time.

Some critics consider *Sons and Lovers* to be an anti-feminist novel. They state that all the female characters are ultimately subdued, in one way or another, by their male counterparts. Lawrence also exposes many women's weaknesses like nagging, turning the children against their father, being over-possessive, quarrelsome and loose in morals. Yet, a great majority of others consider that Lawrence wanted the future of women to be liberation from drudgery and male domination. He envisioned for them a new world of education, meaningful work and independence of thought. On the example of his female characters he provided us with a deep insight into the lives of women of his time. By depicting the lives and the minds of several completely different female characters, he created a universal study on female psychology.

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**МИЛИСАВ ИЛИНЧИЋ**

### **ЛОРЕНСОВ РОМАН *СИНОВИ И ЉУБАВНИЦИ* КАО СТУДИЈА ЖЕНСКЕ ПСИХОЛОГИЈЕ**

**Резиме:** Овај рад се бави аутобиографским романом Д. Х. Лоренса *Синови и љубавници* који на најбољи начин приказује време у којем је роман настао. Кроз догађаје у животу женских ликова из две генерације, госпође Морел, Миријам и Кларе, као и кроз њихове ставове према положају у друштву, Лоренс приказује услове за рад жена у Британији као и њихову борбу да постану функционални чланови друштва. Представљајући живот и мисли кроз ове женске ликове, он је створио универзалну студију о женској психологији. Такође, кроз њих писац описује и три врсте љубави према протагонисти романа Полу. Изразиту љубав сина према мајци можемо схватити као Фројдов Едипов комплекс, љубав према Миријам представља духовну љубав, а љубав према Клари сексуалну пожуду главног лика. Управо ово је утицало да овај роман постане један од најанализиранијих романа у енглеској књижевности.

**Кључне речи:** феминизам, Едипов комплекс, патријархат, односи, самопоуздање, сексуалност.

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