

Oedipus Complex in S. Manto and D. H. Lawrence: A comparative Study

Abstract: *In the beginning of 20th century the prose fiction writers and dramatists were highly influenced by Sigmund Freud's (1913) psycho-analysis theory 'Oedipus complex' that explains the child's sexual desire or fixation with the parent of the opposite sex and the competition with the parent of same sex. D. H. Lawrence, a modern English literary writer and Sadaat Hasan Manto, the prose fiction writer of Urdu language, are bonded together on one plinth of literary art by employing Oedipus complex. This article critically analyses, compares and contrasts the use of theory of Oedipus complex in the short stories 'The rocking horse winner' of Lawrence and 'Dhuha' of Manto. This is probably the first research in Pakistan that is going to discuss a socially prohibited topic like Oedipus complex in a comparative study in the writings from East and West.*

Introduction

The post-world-war period witnessed the paradigm shift in literature from the collective issues to the individual ones through psychoanalyzing. This literary trend attracted the literary figures, specially prose fiction writers and dramatists of this period to explore the secrete side of human nature in order to dig out influencing effects contributing in the development of an individual's behaviour. One such psychoanalysis theory is *Oedipus complex* presented by Sigmund Freud in his influential work 'Interpretation of Dreams' (1899). Oedipus complex refers to a desire for sexual inclination with the parent of the opposite sex and jealousy with the parent of the same sex (Freud, 1899). This theory has received the popularity in the writings of East and West. In this paper two short stories i.e., 'The Rocking Horse Winner' written by D.H. Lawrence and *Dhuan* (دھوان) written by Sadaat Hasan Manto are taken into account to trace out elements of Oedipus complex by comparing the texts.

Research question and Scope

This paper is poised on the following research question:

How far Lawrence and Manto follow the Oedipus complex in their short stories, *The Rocking-Horse Winner* and *Dhuan*?

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The importance of this article lies in its focus on the comparative study of Oedipus complex in the writings from East (Urdu) and West (English) which is an absolutely negligible topic particularly in Urdu literature.

Sadaat Hasan Manto and D.H. Lawrence have been compared several times in terms of treatment of subject and expression but their literary works have never been collectively analyzed to probe influence of Oedipus complex. This research paper develops a relatable link between two modern writers working on the same theory and help readers to understand the life philosophies of Manto and Lawrence and bridge a link between literature being produced in East and West. Before further discussion it is important to outline the stories of *The rocking horse winner* and *Dhuan*.

The story of *The rocking horse winner* revolves around a young boy Paul who is super-glued to his mother seeking love and attention but he gets a definition of luck. Paul's mother tells him that she is no longer a lucky woman because his father did not have money. Paul decided to fulfill his mother's dream to be a lucky woman. When Paul's sisters were playing, he rides his rocking horse with frenzy as he is in a quest to win the great prize and bring the luck for his mother. One day his uncle was delighted to know that Paul has good knowledge about racing. Paul received such information from his gardener Bassett, who lived his life in horse-racing. During the discussion Paul predicted name of victor in the coming derby event. He bats with uncle on a horse he predicted will be winner of race. Paul won. He requested his uncle to send that money to his mother without mentioning his name. His mother was happy receiving that money. Paul started to believe that when he is furiously riding his rocking horse, he is in trance-like state and rightly predicts the name of victor of the derby. This encouraged him to ride rocking horse with great rage and agitation. His family was getting money and luck and Paul was frenetically riding on rocking horse. He was wrong because in the next bat he lost. He started to ride his rocking horse more frantically. The reckless and intense passion killed him leaving his mother to contemplate whether money was luck for her.

The story of Manto's *Dhuan* revolves around a teenage boy Masood and his implicit sexual inclination toward her sister. One day in a rainy and frosty morning when Masood was going to school, he saw a butcher who had a basket on his head. There were two fresh slaughtered goats in it and the smoke was rising from the naked flesh. The heat wave was felt off by Masood on his cool cheeks just like his eyes use to tremble. He disclosed those feeling to his mother, but she neglected his odyssey. Meanwhile his sister asked him that she has pain in her waist and legs and if he can massage her. During pressing her waist and legs Masood felt same hot smoke that he had seen in the butcher's basket. He felt strange delight under his weight. When he returned to drawing-room he was feeling a strange sensation but could not understand anything. Suddenly he realized that he had an excessive power inside his hand. Masood hold a hockey stick and thought that if he would apply pressure, the handle would break down. He did but he could not break it even applying extreme force. He continued but when he was tired, he got rid of the hockey.

Literature review

After First World War a huge paradigm shift is observed in the literature as a rebellious break through blowing a refreshed and permissive freedom of expression (Mark, 1965). This new beckon of liberalism deemed to unveil and disclose reality of an individual's life. The use of bold topics as the themes in the literature illustrates the dramatic shift from conventional and conservative approach of 19th century leading towards the modernism of 20th century. In this period literature was realistic opposite to idealistic literature of past. The writers of modern age inclined to reveal the truth and present life of an ordinary individual without any pleasant edifying picture. The literary figures were relying on various theories from Psychology, Sociology, Political Science etc., for this purpose of exposing the private and darker side of modern man (Derek, 2013). In this regard Sigmund Freud's (1899) psychological theory *Oedipus complex*, also known as *Oedipal complex*, was a popular notion helping the writers in the understanding of modern man. The term *Oedipal complex* is derived from the famous Greek tragedy "Oedipus the Rex" by Sophocles. The hero of this drama is Oedipus who married with his mother Jocasta in ignorance. When Delphic oracle disclosed the truth, Oedipus was so ashamed and felt himself a great sinner. He, then, plugs out his own eyes out of remorse, agony and guilt. Freud's theory of Oedipus complex demystifies the obsession of a son for his mother and hate for his father (Freud, 1920). In other words, Oedipus complex explains the cognitive status of a child and the feelings and desire for his or her opposite-sex parent and jealousy and anger toward same-sex parent (Freud, 1920). English writer David Herbert Lawrence and Urdu writer Saadat Hassan Manto are two great prose fiction writers from West and East who used the Oedipus complex with a new zest breaking the literary and moral taboos of time. Both writers had to pay a lot during their life time but they whitewashed every social pressure.

David Herbert Lawrence, a controversial prose fiction writer was born in 1885 in Eastward in an educated and religious family. Being the brilliant student of psychology he was highly influenced by Freudian theories. His writings emphasis on the characters' irrational activities (Bing, 2011). Due to bold and unusual themes Lawrence faced bitter criticism but he continued fight for freedom of expression till his death on 2nd March 1930 in the age of 44.

Lawrence explored human nature by fusing the Freudian therapy for portrayals of sexuality and enchanted religious subjects to reveal the changeless nature of human beings beyond the changing circumstances of day-to-day life (Finney, 1990). The autobiography of Lawrence shows that he was highly influenced from his mother and the eccentric relationship of mother-son is unequivocal in his famous works - *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; *Sons and Lovers*; *The Rocking-Horse Winner*; *The Woman Who Rode Away*. His short story *the rocking-horse winner* is a classical example of the Oedipus complex revolves around unconventional relationship of son Paul and mother Hester. Paul hates father and shows intense passion for his mother. The story never mentions that Paul has any sexual attraction mothers but the critics (Mark, 1966; Humma, 1978; Finney,

1990; Gao, 2006, etc.) believe the character of Paul is the best illustration of the feeling of 'mother-fixation'.

On the same literary plinth we find Saadat Hasan Manto who was born on 11th May 1912, in a village Samrala, in India. He came from a very disturbed family, surrounded by step sisters and brothers along with strict father. After graduation he chose to be a writer but his father constrained this wish. After his father's death he started his career as a writer. He had God gifted power of observation that enabled him to explore human psychology, dissect human mind and heart and peep into the souls of his characters in his short stories which was a forte.

Manto never trusted in the supposed abstract standards of 'goodness' and 'consideration' set by instructive authors of his time, rather he believed in kiss-and-tell the truth regardless of how unpleasant and terrible it was (Jalal and Jalal, 2012). Manto never weakens reality in his writings. Like a mud slinger, he jabs his nose into the dirt, rakes it, and afterward holds it up to the reader and shows it in all its profound ugliness and unique beauty. Some of his most famous stories are: *Bu* (Odor); *Khol dou* (Open it); *Dhuan* (Smoke); *Toba Tek Singh* (Name of a town in Pakistan) and *Thanda ghost* (Frost meat) etc. Following his avant-garde literary philosophy, he penned on bold and taboo themes and the socio-cognitive issues of modern man which were hardly addressed and in fact there was least acceptance for such themes. He was arrested for being writing on offensively bold themes. Later on he was vindicated from those cases but he never knee-down, rather he expanded the range of bold themes reviling communalism, deception of devotees and misuse of woman and gore to divulge the characterless tip top of Indian society (Alvi, 2003).

After independence Manto moved to Pakistan but he was a *persona non grata* in the literary circles of the newly freed state in due to his candor. Numerous literary pundits criticised him that he composed just sexually unequivocal stories with a small understanding that does not manage to create a rapport between characters and their desire (Jalal and Jalal, 2012). However, Manto disregarded such criticism till his death in 1955 in the age of 42 due to excessive alcohol consumption, almost in the same age to that of Lawrence. In his short life, Manto delivered an earth shattering oeuvre of short stories and plays, which portray the tantamount to the best in any dialect.

Manto gave Freud's Oedipus complex theory a unique turn by adding the harsh and naked picture of society. Hashmi (2012) analysis Manto from psychiatric perspective and links his Oedipal feature with a psychological disorder known as *Dipolar disorder* which is result of his disturbed life where he was in stringent vigilance of father and vacuum of mother (2012, p.¹⁰⁹⁵). This is the reason that Manto portrays female characters with love and sympathy revealing his admiration for his mother (Hashmi, 2012). He "can never come out from the labyrinth of Oedipus complex as mythical Oedipus could not" (Ahmed, 2012, p.⁶¹). In the history of Urdu literature Manto is a maverick, a strange and savagely striking author who opened a new windows of courage for his predecessors and received immense popularity in a short span of time due to his bold and blunt themes and pithy writing style.

Data analysis

As explained earlier this paper is poised to mark out the elements of Oedipus complex in the text from Lawrence's 'The rocking-horse winner' and Manto's 'Dhuan'. In this portion, firstly some examples from 'The rocking-horse winner' are analysed to trace elements of Oedipus complex. The very first excerpt is highlighting the spirit of mother-fixation as indicated in the dialogue of mother Hester and son Paul:

Excerpt 1

"I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed."

"Why?"

"Well--never mind! Perhaps I'm not really," she said.

The child looked at her, to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

"Well, anyhow," he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."

"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it.

"God told me," he asserted, brazening it out.

"I hope He did, dear!" she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

"He did, mother!"

"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhere, and made him want to compel her attention.

In this conversation between mother and son, Hester's discloses her feelings for the spouse whom she considers 'unlucky'. She says that they are not lucky because they have no money. To make his mother happy Paul replies that God told him that he is lucky. Here the palpable effect of Oedipus complex indicating Paul's desire "to be lucky" is the implicit desire to replace his father in his mother's life and get her whole love (Wilson, 2009).

The Oedipal effects are eminent in the following excerpt 2 when Paul bet and won money and rendered that money to his mother without knowing his name to make her happy:

Excerpt 2

"Well then!" said the uncle. "What are we doing?"

"I shouldn't like mother to know I was lucky," said the boy.

"Why not, son?"

"She'd stop me."

"I don't think she would."

"Oh!"--and the boy writhed in an odd way--"I don't want her to know, uncle."

"All right, son! We'll manage it without her knowing."

Paul decided to catalyze action in order to mitigate his mother's feeling of want for money as directly proportional to luck. Paul is determined to earn money via luck on his rocking horse. He was provided with a chance to bet and earn 5000 pounds. He

requested his uncle to render money to his mother but not let her know so that she would not feel bad. Paul's struggle to earn money by any mean deemed to fulfillment of his mother's wishes. Hester's desire casts a murky shadow on Paul's mind that has strappingly influenced the tyke's entire life. Similar Oedipal feelings are perceptible in the following concluding dialogues between Paul, Hester and Basset, the gardener.

Excerpt 3

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Basset, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Basset?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and get there, then I'm absolutely sure--oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I am lucky!"

"No, you never did," said the mother.

But the boy died in the night.

The concluding dialogues of the story are saddening as the little boy die because he cannot bear the extremism of his obsession for mother and to prove himself a better displacement of his father. One can say that the mother-fixation can be the sole reason of Paul's tragic end because the effect of oedipal desires was larger than his age and experience and he dies after confessing everything before Hester.

On the similar plinth of Oedipus complex is the Manto's story *Dhuan*. The English translation of Urdu text is given in parenthesis.

Excerpt 1

جب اسکول روانہ ہوا تو اس نے راستے میں ایک قصائی دیکھا جس کے سر پر ایک بہت بڑا ٹوکرا تھا۔ اس میں دو تازہ ذبح کیے ہوئے بکرے تھے۔ کھالیں اتری ہوئی تھیں اور ان کے گوشت میں سے دھواں اُٹھ رہا تھا۔ جگہ جگہ پر یہ گوشت جس کو دیکھ کر مسعود کے ٹھنڈے گالوں پر گرمی کی لہریں سی دوڑ جاتی تھیں، پھڑک رہا تھا جیسے کبھی کبھی اس کی آنکھ پھڑکا کرتی تھی۔

(Going towards his school he [Masood] saw a butcher who had a basket on his head. There were two fresh slaughtered goats in it. The skins were high, and the smoke was rising from the naked flesh. At the place where this meat was fluttering, the heat wave was felt off by Masood on his cool cheeks just like his eyes use to tremble.)

The confusing state of Masood reveals the cognitive development of a 12 year old boy when he saw the fresh meat of slaughtered goats which has developed some absurd thoughts in him. Manto fixated on minute details and use rich imagery as a tool to prepare his readers for some unusual happenings. It would be more observable in the later parts of the story when Masood returns home and her sister asks him to massage her as indicated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 2

ایک دو بار مسعود نے یہ بھی محسوس کیا کہ اس کے پیروں کے نیچے گوشت کے لوتھڑوں میں حرکت پیدا ہوئی ہے۔ اس قسم کی حرکت جو اس نے بکرے کے گرم گرم گوشت میں دیکھی تھی۔ اس نے بڑی بددلی سے کمر دباننا شروع کی تھی، مگر اس سے اس کام میں لذت محسوس

ہونے لگی۔ اس کے وزن کے نیچے کلثوم ہولے ہولے کرا رہی تھی۔ یہ بھینچی بھینچی آواز جو مسعود کے پیروں کی حرکت کا ساتھ دے رہی تھی، اس گنم سی لذت میں اضافہ کر رہی تھی۔

(Once again, Masood felt that under his feet the movement of meat was created. The type of movement that he had seen in the butcher's shop rose from fresh meat. He started massage very undesirably, but now he was feeling delighted. Under the weight of him, the Kulsoom was hollowing. This whimsical voice was pushing with Masood's feet faster, was increasing this unknown enchantment)

These lines are indicating Oedipus complex where Masood is thrilled by an unknown and exuberant attraction towards his sister Kulsoom when he was massaging her waist and legs. He is now able to connect the smoke of fresh meat of slaughtered goat with the warmth of body of his sister. The moving meat of her legs under his feet and hollowing of her sister were increasing his passion to touch her deep so he started rubbing her with more force. This feeling was strange but congenial and satisfactory. Similar sign of Oedipus complex is also obvious in the following excerpt (3):

Excerpt 3

مسعود کچھ سمجھ نہ سکا۔ اس کے دماغ پر دھواں سے چھا گیا۔ وہاں سے الٹے قدم لوٹ کر وہ جب بیٹھک کی طرف روانہ ہوا تو اسے معاً اپنے اندر ایک اتھاہ طاقت کا احساس ہوا جس نے کچھ دیر کے لیے اس کی سوچنے سمجھنے کی قوت بالکل کمزور کر دی۔ بیٹھک میں کھڑکی کے پاس بیٹھ کر جب مسعود نے ہاکی کو دونوں ہاتھوں سے پکڑ کر گھٹنے پر رکھا تو یہ سوچا کہ ہلکا سا داؤڈالنے پر بھی ہاکی میں خم پیدا ہو جائے گا اور زیادہ زور لگانے پر تو بینڈل چٹاخ سے ٹوٹ جائے گا۔ اس نے گھٹنے پر ہاکی کے بینڈل میں خم تو پیدا کر لیا مگر زیادہ سے زیادہ زور لگانے پر بھی وہ ٹوٹ نہ سکا۔ دیر تک وہ ہاکی کے ساتھ کشتی لڑتا رہا۔ جب تھک کر ہار گیا تو جھنجھلا کر اس نے ہاکی پرے پھینک دی۔

(Masood could not understand anything. He was surrounded by smoke. When he returned to drawing-room, he realized that he had an excessive power inside his hands, but he was unable to think any thing. Sitting in drawing room near window, Masood hold an hockey on both the hands and placed it on the knee. He thought there would be line in hockey and if the pressure is increased more, the handle would break down. He created hooks in a hockey handle on the knee, but he could not break it even applying extreme force. He continued to fight with hockey for a long time. When he was tired, he got rid of the hockey by throwing it away.)

The final lines of the story explain the utter confusion and disparity of the young boy who is inexpert to understand and control his overwhelmed feelings. He tries to curb his thought by breaking the hockey stick to take the edge off this frustration. He tried and felt normal when exhausted. He threw away his hockey stick indicating that he had overcome his feelings. This excerpt is indicating a grave state of confusion and the psychological influence of bizarre feelings which Masood is trying to trounce.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysis of data reveals that Lawrence and Manto have maneuvered the contemporary literary trends to depict implied reality of individuals in modern civilizations. Both did not lag from discovering the mysterious and murky side of human nature. Both belong to entirely different continents and spheres of life but they worked on a common literary paradigm – i.e. to disclose the secretive side of an individual in order to shape a better liberated society free from the false dogma and conviction. However, their philosophy was less accepted but they never kneeled down rather both of them made freedom of expression their mission and entwined ideas from psychology to kindle a search for real human psychic to eventually expose the plaster side of their society.

One such common rudiment is 'Oedipus complex' reflected in the stories of Lawrence's *The rocking horse winner* and Manto's *Dhuwan* which are screening the strong emotional inclination for female family members. Lawrence's hero is spell-bound with his mother's wish to make her happy and lucky while Manto's hero is awestruck by the unknown physical attraction towards his sister. Both heroes distinguished with a smidgen differences of age: Masood is a 12 year old school going teenage boy, who is a keen observer of his surroundings, while Paul, the protagonist of '*The rocking horse winner*' is a 6 year old boy who's life revolves around his family, servants and his rocking horse. Both heroes are frustrated and they go through some severe mental disorders. The end of stories apparently seems different but actually are slightly similar as both boys show act of aggression to reduce their mental disturbance. However, Paul dies because he was too young to sustain pressure of oedipal emotions while Masood overcomes his Oedipus complex. Both stories reveal aloofness, confusion, doubt, ignorance and hurly-burliness which are miniature of modern man. Similar is palpable in the psychic of kids as portrayed in the characters of Paul and Masood. The contrary sex, mother and sister, make the boys to feel that they are physically different. Paul's urge to bring home the god-spurned "luckiness" which Hester pined for a considerable measure is the desire to replace his father, who is botched to satisfy his wife's fantasies (Goldberg, 1970). To do that, he needs to ride his shaking horse sufficiently hard which at last prompted his getting blacked out and his passing toward the end. It is an indicator of the flawed Parent's relationship which thusly influences the tyke's entire life. Subsequently, individuals must figure out how to remain far from shaping Oedipus complex, which will have genuine mischief to man's wellbeing both physically and rationally. Likewise, Manto by adapting the satirical tone and minimalist in style exploring the unexplained sex desire of a teenage. The parents' indifferent attitude towards their children and paucity to understand their emotional and metal status creates the confusion and vacuum in the lives of the kids. Masood disclosed his confused thoughts to his mother when he saw skinned off meat of goats but she hardly paid attention to understand his confusion. While during massaging his sister, Masood compares smoke and warmth of goat meat with the flesh of his sister revealing the secrete thought process of modern men. This is likewise the dynamic importance of the story depicting that parents should have their correct position in the household because the distorted couple relationship or ignoring the mental situation will affect children's personality and lives (Nasrullah, 2016). However, close analysis of

both the stories indicate a distinctive approach to deal with Oedipus theory. Lawrence had remained under 'mother-fixation' in early life which is indicative in his major works, contrary, Manto lost his mother and lived his life under vigilance of his strict father. Moreover, he has created an imaginary world where female is dominated and attractive. Thusly female-fixation is the main theme in his famous works (Hashmi, 2012).

It is concluded that 'Dhuan' by Manto and 'The rocking horse winner' by Lawrence are two oedipal stories in which the writers have depicted clandestine side of modern man impressively. Their highly impressionistic and spirited fight for freedom of creative expression exposed the out-and-out brutalities of modern man.

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