

## Winnicottian Holding Environment, False Self and Play in W. Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*

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### ABSTRACT

This article distributes a psychological reading of William Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* according to Donald Winnicott, one of the eminent figures in object relations theory. Maugham's works depict the life of people who are struggling with their destructive relationship. This might refer to their childhood lack of holding environment or it may be caused by shaping false self as the loss of play. Although, Maugham leads his novels' characters toward success, they are entrapped in their incomplete childhood prototypes and consequently they choose inappropriate partners. Philip Carey is the protagonist of the novel who is orphan and he is sensitive because he has lost his parents and he is born with a club foot. These made him sad and alienated from others and led him toward proving himself as a successful person; while actually he is not. Incomplete childhood prototypes and lack of confidence result in wrong decisions and inappropriate accompanying. Object relations theory helps finding the hidden reasons behind the protagonist's actions, feeling and what he chooses in his life.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Family plays a key role in psychological analysis because each individual has been grown as a part in family union. For object relations theory parents are the first objects who the child distinguishes and the main character of the novel *Of Human Bondage* has experienced his parents' death. Although the study of object relations theory would have to begin with Freud and concepts such as mourning and melancholia, Freud pointed at the importance of different erotogenic regions in the developing personality structure. In object relations theory, the shift is toward an emphasis on the object; all libidinal strivings are seen as the seeking of an object and the infant's desire is for the mother or mother's substitutes. Object relations theory is rather a body of theory that has been developed by many analysts which the focus is on the significance of the understanding of the earliest beginnings of life that lead them to important connections between childhood prototypes and adulthood relationships. The answer to the question "how wrong patterns in

childhood can influence future relationships?" has been well put by Winnicott (Winnicott, 1980, 37-40)

William Somerset Maugham, novelist, playwright, short story writer and essayist, was the highest paid author among all his contemporary writers. In spite of the influence of the Modernist movement and many writers as Joseph Conrad, Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, William Faulkner, E. M. Forster and later on Virginia Woolf who mostly used the stream-of-consciousness technique, Maugham did not do the same. Maugham was under influence of modern themes and eventually his works are filled with different sorts of characters searching for love, meaning of life, fulfillment and many questions about the meaning of their existence. At the same time, they encounter with new social mores and smaller families and truly different relationships in comparison with the past. Maugham's works embody male characters more than female figures because it is said that he might tend to be a homo-social person.

Somerset Maugham in his works draws attention to the complicated relationships between couples. He practices a realist method of writing to highlight sufferings from and rejecting by a beloved whose entirely cold emotions have been displayed. To be interested in these sorts of love and to insist on staying in these associations might be a result of protagonists' childhood lacks which Maugham has attempted to verify. Even though they think that their relationships are not normal, they are entrapped by destructive loops of undone parental caring.

After the success of *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), he tried to bring more novels, plays and short stories. His great work is, semi-biographical novel, *Of Human Bondage*, which was read all around the world. Before that, he published successful novels such as *Mrs. Cradaock* and *The Magician* and during this time he had the manuscript of his masterpiece *Of Human Bondage*. It is said that the difficult life of Maugham has affected his novel *Of Human Bondage*. At the same time, the complex signs of relationships between couples and similarly in parental relationships and even employee/employer affiliations are clear in the novel and cannot be rejected.

Somerset Maugham was a talent to create various characters including people in reality and his mind. He was talented to mingle fact and fiction. For instance, Philip in *Of Human Bondage* can be regarded as Maugham himself and a reflex of one of his friends Edward (Ned) Sheldon. Like Philip Carey in *Of Human Bondage*, Sheldon was a man in doubt about his manhood who had been shabbily treated by a woman unworthy of him (Morgan, 1980, 165).

Maugham found his literary role models in Dryden, Addison, Swift and Cardinal Newman. He had adopted the form of the *Bildungsroman* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*<sup>2</sup>. In *Of Human Bondage* he used French language and Cockney speech for some of the characters. The style is realistic and the story is whatever the reader can believe. He had used a certain type of heroines such as in his previous works; immoral and untrustworthy. In this way, he introduces the theme of love as a bondage and Philip's clubfoot as his main bondage.

In addition, the story is about many obsessions Maugham himself had such as the loss of his mother, his stammer transposed into a clubfoot, the happy times in Heidelberg and Paris, medical school and so forth. Eventually, he published the novel by Heinemann in England on August 13 and by George

H. Doran in America on August 12 in 1915. Even though he was contemporaneous to authors like Virginia Woolf and Henry James, he went further from them when his book became highly sold out and he was known as a best seller author; He achieved success more than feminist authors like Violet Hunt who was quite famous at the time. During his lifetime, gaining money looked so much important to him that it is said he was called stingy because he used to go everywhere by bus while he had a great deal of money. Finally, he declared that he had the phobia of lack of money because he had grown up by the fear of losing all the money he inherited.

There exist famous critical essays and articles about this masterpiece that the most important one belongs to Theodore Dreiser published in the *New Republic* (1915). He admired the novel and called it a work of genius. He compared it to a Beethoven symphony, whose "bud notes and flower tones were filling the air with their elusive message, fluttering and dying (Morgan, 1980, 198).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The novel *Of Human Bondage* (1973) points toward life of an orphan boy who is grown up by his cold paternal uncle. He is interested in books and wants to be a doctor but there exist many issues and events that stopping him from insisting on gaining his goal. Through all these happenings and an unsuccessful love he even loses his goals and money. He searches for real love and meaning of life.

*Maugham* (1980) by Ted Morgan is the first complete biography of W. Somerset Maugham, and it examines the real life of Maugham from the beginning till his death. It includes mostly Maugham's letters to his friend and although he tried to destroy them but Morgan has collected everything in detail. This book is called like a background for the novel *Of Human Bondage* and maybe the best over Somerset Maugham's extraordinary writing career.

Anthony Curtis and John Whitehead have collected a great deal of information about Maugham in a book named *W. Somerset Maugham* (2013). This book brings subjects about Maugham's style of writing, the background of his works and history of his life as an interesting biography. These two authors mention critical passages regarding Maugham's works too.

The next main work which is used as one of the basic references in this research is *Holding and Interpretation: Fragment Of An Analysis* (1989) by Donald Winnicott. This book develops a line of

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<sup>2</sup> The second novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in four volumes and published in 1795–96. It can be called this novel has been written through the encouragement of Goethe's close friend,

Friedrich Schiller, a German philosopher. The novel demonstrates the ideal self-education, development of intellect and individual's role in society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

reasoning as a groundwork for explaining various psychological conditions related to the concept of holding. These conditions result from powerful internal tensions. The book deals with the foundations of health which are laid down in the ordinary caring by normal mother. The infant finds itself simultaneously engaged in the body of the mother (or her substitutes) as the place wherein one securely lives and whenever this caring be undone or incomplete, issues will appear. Winnicott has attempted to prove that mother's technique of holding, bathing or feeding does an important role in infant's future feelings.

The next important work used in this exploration by Winnicott is an article "Ego distortion in terms of true and false self" published in the book *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment* (1990) in London. It describes humans as struggling between two opposing selves: true self and false self. This is a process of pressures that environment and people around make person's feelings changed. False self could be the consequence of lack of protection and acts like a defense against an unsafe environment.

*Winnicott* (1988) is a book written by Adam Philips which has gathered summaries about Donald Winnicott's life and his main concepts in psychoanalysis. The historical theme of psychology community to the talking cure of Winnicott have been included in this new book.

### 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Maugham wrote most of his works in favor of complicated interrupted relationships and he maintained this idea through happenings of life of the characters who were tied in their past and particularly traumatized childhood. Behavioral disorders and damages done by parental objects have mutual relationship which may exacerbate destructive relationships. Maugham in *Of Human Bondage* displayed these motifs through associations and relationships between protagonist, Philip Carey, and his partners. In order to be more palpable, Maugham has chosen characters close to reality and even based on his friends' experiences. It does not only influence the way the story is understood, but also increases enjoyment. This research attempts to explore such characters conscious and unconscious actions, relationships, thoughts and behaviors based on theories of one pole of object relations, Winnicott. What distinguishes Somerset Maugham from his contemporary authors is while others were rarely writing about childhood sufferings, memories and their effects in adulthood life, by modern techniques, he indicated the significant role of objects in the life of the subjects and their interrelation through his simple

language and such narrating the story which is comprehended easily.

From this point of view, the theories of Winnicott can be traced in and applied to W. Somerset Maugham's characters. This theoretician has been selected for the purpose of this research because of the psychological analysis which he has done. Whenever there exists one person who does everything and does not care about its consequences, it directly shows self-destructive behavior. Sandore Ferenczi in his paper "The Confusion of Tongues" describes self-destruction as below:

The trauma victim, the child, the mentally-ill person reflects back to the aggressor a caricatured image of himself, thus expressing simultaneously his own suffering and protest and also those truths which the aggressor is striving to evade. Then, little by little, the traumatized person becomes so caught up by his own scenario that he closes for himself an avenue for escape (*Introduction XVIII-XX*).

This self-destruction might lead toward wrong decisions and choices as well. It can be found in Winnicott's false self concept which shapes in an inappropriate holding environment and it is made when the kid has a lack of reasonably attuned care-giving. Later on by this lack, false self plays its roles as a defense and acts like a mask to please others rather than express his/her own emotions and thoughts. This sort of personality tries to present him/herself a polite and mannered person in public and it may result being in a wrong relationship; a repetition of a wrong prototype of childhood relationships. Main character of the novel *Of Human Bondage* is involved with this sort of behavioral disorders which will eventuate failure in relationships and loneliness in life.

In psychological reading of the novel *Of Human Bondage* the reader is facing with main character who is suffering from lack of his parents. Because Philip has lost them when he was a kid; consequently, it has traumatized him. This juxtaposition of trauma and lack and items of wrong prototypes of childhood would result behavioral disorders that repeat the old patterns. This application takes different theories of Winnicott to explore the process of object relations between the person and people around and how the childhood relationships can be duplicated in maturity.

This study attempts to find the way how the novel depicts the parent-child relationships and its impact on adult social life or what psychological symptoms and disorders can be discerned in main character's behaviors. The article also tries to find links between

object relations theory and development of destructive relationships of Philip Carey and how Winnicott's key concepts such as holding environment and false self can elaborate more about problematic behavior of the key character of the novel *Of Human Bondage*.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Donald Winnicott, 19<sup>th</sup> century theoretician, helped develop the Middle Group of the British Psychoanalytic Institute, carving a niche between Anna Freud's focus on the ego and Klein's attention to unconscious fantasy. He articulated the individual's separation through dependence to a personal way of being, and the hazards of environmental failure. Theory, for Winnicott, was useful to the extent that it illuminated the patient's world (Shapiro 421). He believed that "cure, at its roots means care" (Phillips, 1988, 12).

Winnicott was influenced by Darwin. Similarities between Darwin and Winnicott may be from two aspects; First, Winnicott would always observe children very carefully, just as Darwin had done with the different species. Second, Winnicott, like Darwin, could tolerate not knowing an essential attribute for a psychotherapist who might have to wait many long years before patients would reveal their inner most secrets (Brett Kahr, 1996, 24). Thus, he believed in a natural way of living as common people live their lives. He always let his patients find out about their problems themselves and also allowed children to do their activities freely. He never took leadership over his patients and rather followed their lead all along the way. And according to this view and Freud's theories, the life is a combination of id, ego and superego; Therefore, Winnicott combined the basic subjects of Klein and Anna Freud and a normal way of living. Meaning that, a person not only follows his/her instincts, but also thinks and decides what is the best to do in a society and this is exactly the combination of id and ego. But after a while, Winnicott continued doing his job opposing Darwin's ideas.

As Darwin wrote about whatever he had found even with many gaps about fossils, Winnicott believed that not knowing the whole history of a patient does not scare him and he could collect the necessary information through the course of therapy and observation and afterwards, this led him toward a basic concept named "transitional space" or "space in-between". Transitional space is that space of experiencing, between the inner and outer worlds, and contributed to by both, in which primary creativity (illusion) exists and can develop (Winnicott, 1954, 2). This happens when the child recognizes the objects as "not-me" and in order to keep his inner world in correspondence with the outside world, he/she chooses a transitional object and in Winnicott's words: this is

the initiation of an affectionate type of object-relation. The transitional space is something "in-between" the subject and the object which is merged with the mother and which is outside and separate from the infant/mother world. This can be a symbolic manifestation of how an infant creates illusions inevitably by experiencing loss and it is the gradual establishment of ego which in Winnicott's words happens when the child experiences loss of good-enough mothering'' (Winnicott, 1980, 7) of the mother and he calls it "an intermediate area of experiencing'' (Winnicott, 1980, 183). This third area may be a moment of illusory of outer world by experience and replacement of the loved object with another one which leads the child to real world. As an illustration, a child who feels his/her mother's absence might try to suck his/her thumb instead of the mother's breast. Next transitional objects in future may be blankets, teddy bears, and so forth.

Although he saw the baby and the mother as one, in his article "The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development" he says that "There is no such thing as a baby, there is a baby and someone." (Winnicott, 1980, 29-36). He considered the baby and his/her mother's relationship which seems impressive to shape the future character of the infant. He was not only a doctor who took care of children physically, but also a psychologist whose theories helped children reveal their inner hidden emotions and desires. Winnicott introduced concepts such as holding environment, true and false self and insisted on importance of playing in children's development. Attentive to both detail and context, he grasped that any bit of behavior reflects the whole interactive system. According to his beliefs, all stages of a person's life are linked and affective on each other. For instance, the childhood experience of being raped, would result a person who enjoys abusing other people sexually. The new events are just an alerted type of person's unconscious memories.

Winnicott considers that, in early life of an infant, instincts are not clearly internalized. "The instincts can be as much external as can a clap of thunder or a hit." (Winnicott, 1990, 2). He believes that, in this phase, the infant cannot distinguish between his needs and the environmental events because there is no distinction between the self and environment for him. Whenever the infant sees his demands alongside the environmental happenings, the self has is not developed because demand is not an internal part of the infant. But the more ego recognizes infant's id-satisfaction, the more he internalizes his needs and demands and the concept of the self is shaped and formed up. "When this development occurs, the id-satisfaction becomes a very important strengthener of

the ego” and it is felt as something internal (Winnicott, 1990, 2). True self is the result of the process of internalizing id’s needs and id-satisfactions by the ego and when the infant’s self feels objects factual and internalized.

Winnicott’s concepts are interrelated; but there is a concept which can be called as the background for all his introduced concepts: the holding environment. The theory of holding includes both bodily and emotional features and promotes the infant’s ego-incorporation, his/her aptitude for object relation, and ultimately his/her ability for object usage. Winnicott describes the holding environment as a developmental stage in which the child and mother are one entity, as yet undifferentiated in the infant’s consciousness. The core purpose of “holding” is to allow the child to be completely unconscious of his requirement for a separate individual: “It is axiomatic in these matters of maternal care of the holding variety that when things go well the infant has no means of knowing what is being properly provided and what is being prevented.” (Winnicott, 1980, 52). The holding environment facilitates the child’s transition to autonomy. Failure on the Mother’s part to provide an adequate holding environment results in a “false self disorder” (The Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis 2018).

Winnicott’s idea of holding also focuses on the emotional aspects of this developmental process as he describes the mother’s total attunement to her child is based upon her empathy with the child; this encompasses the holding purpose and allows the infant’s ego to integrate and his instincts to be fulfilled (Winnicott, 1960, 590). The holding environment results in the situation of “playing” for the child directly. Because the child would examine the environment by his/her act of playing. At the same time, the capacity for being - the ability to feel genuinely alive inside, which Winnicott saw as essential to the maintenance of a true self - was supported in his view by the practice of childhood play.

The next important concept of Winnicott is playing. He considered playing as a key to make the child creative and confident so much so that in his book *Playing and Reality* (72) said: “It is in playing, and perhaps only in playing, that the child is free to be creative”. He also added that: “It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self”. By introducing this concept, he changed the psychological point of view to playing and had different ideas concerning playing in comparison with Melanie Klein’s method of playing. But what does a

normal child really consist of? Winnicott explains as follows:

What is a normal child like? Does he just eat and grow and smile sweetly? No, that is not what he is like. The normal child, if he has confidence in mother and father, pulls out all the stops. In the course of time, he tries out his power to disrupt, to destroy, to frighten, to wear down, to waste, to wangle, and to appropriate . . . At the start he absolutely needs to live in a circle of love and strength (with consequent tolerance) if he is not to be too fearful of his own thoughts and of his imaginings to make progress in his emotional development. (Winnicott and Cadwel and Taylor, 2017, 143)

In Winnicott’s point of view, playing is the key to emotional and psychological well-being. By “playing”, he meant not only the ways that children play, but also the way adults “play” through living their personal and social life. At any age, he called play as crucial to the development of a reliable self-hood, because when people play, they feel real and alive and show their real character, and they are interested in what they are doing. In this way, Schiller had the same thought about playing and considered it as an important part of the life of human beings.

Schiller believes, human beings have two drives: sense drive and form drive. The first represents man’s materialistic dimension and the second represents intellectual and moral dimension. But there is a third drive, the play drive, with which Schiller tries to solve the problem of contrast between matter and form or sense and reason. Winnicott said that it was only in and through the act of playing that people are completely their true selves; Therefore, for psychoanalysis the very act of playing seems necessary. (Shiller, 2005, 126)

The next part that playing can be observed in is to choose a “transitional object”. Winnicott said that this “object” itself is not important because it can be an old blanket, a teddy bear or whatever the infant is attracted to and keeps it. But the importance of transitional object is that this status is something between the infant’s imagination and what he/she feels is the real world outside. When an infant grows older and becomes a child, he/she communicates with others much more than he/she was younger and this communication is materialized through the act of playing. This relationship is necessary for the child, but if the environment does not respond a good reaction or the child feels unsafe, he/she would show

his/her "false self". Playing with a transitional object can be an important early bridge between self and other, which helps a child develop the capacity to be genuine in his/her future relationships.

Winnicott borrowed the term "self" from Freud theories but he considered it as the combination of id and ego. He called the self as an important part of mental and emotional well-being which plays a vital role in creativity (Winnicott, 1971, 72-3). He believed that people are born without a developed self and they must search for an authentic sense of it as they grow up. According to Winnicott, to feel real would result in being creative and feeling alive. Winnicott thought that the "True Self" begins to develop in infancy, in the relationship between the baby and its primary caregiver, in better words, the mother. This relationship is a welcoming response to the infant's spontaneous expressions, feelings, and initiatives. Consequently, the baby finds him/herself confident and powerful because the mother's behavior is not problematic or dangerous for him/her and the reactions of the mother are not preventive. Winnicott considered "true self" as the self which helps the person be creative and feel alive and real. On the other hand, there exists another self named "false self" which is mistaken by true self frequently. (Schiller, 2005, 126)

In Winnicott's writings, the "False Self" is a defense, a kind of mask of behavior that complies with others' expectations. Winnicott thought that in health, a False Self was what allowed one to present a "polite and mannered attitude in public" (Winnicott, 1990, 142). He thought that false self begins to develop in infancy, when the infant feels unsafe or overwhelmed because of a bad response or even lack of a response from parents or caregiver. Donald Winnicott called the attention the infant needs just an "ordinary devoted" or "good enough" attention to protect the baby. The child has to show his/her spontaneous feelings in a normal way but when the baby is not in a good situation, he/she wants to please the mother, father or caregiver in order to make them normal to pay attention to him/her. False Self is so powerful that can be seen in most parts of an adult's life and when he/she gets a success or gains whatever he/she wished before, there is no sign of happiness because he/she sees the situation as an unreal one. In Winnicott's terms, the healthy False Self feels that it is still being true to the True Self, while the unhealthy one cannot be recognized as an obvious False Self too. It means that the False Self does not have a healthy side because it is basically unhealthy even in its healthy mood. It occurs when a person feels unsafe and it is called a sort of mask. Therefore, False Self cannot be called healthy in each situation because it is not real. The real self is True Self without any mask or impurity. (Winnicott, 1990, 208)

As it was mentioned in previous paragraph, the true self is whatever is real in a person's characteristic while the false self is a mask for people to protect themselves from threats they feel around themselves. But when a person shows his/her false self and keeps doing that, it can be mistaken by his/her true self whereas the true self is spontaneously real and does not need to be shown or proved to others. The true self is the person himself without any change and the false self is an artificial personality.

Donald Winnicott thought that in playing the child (or adult) would reveal his/her fears, desires, hidden feelings, and all things that he/she is concerned about may show up. He has two famous methods of playing named the squiggle game and the spatula game. Winnicott called play such as "dreams which serves the function of self-realization" (Winnicott, 1971, 73). The child needs a trustful environment; therefore, he/she examines the parents by playfulness. Reactions and consequences of this being playful would shape the child's self step by step. It may give him/her confidence and would teach social standards of communication. As Winnicott said "there is for many a poverty of play", lack of play might result in false self disorder for the baby. True self would be shaped and shown in a trustful environment by a good enough mother through playing that links these concepts together.

Winnicott believed that children have a kind of anxiety which is shown by signs but he called these signs kind of defenses for children, which are not pathological, but the way that children use these signs can be harmful. For instance, a child was wetting her bed at night and did not like to talk to her parents and friends. Winnicott realized that she had lost her little brother some weeks ago and when he started talking to her, he told her it is obvious that how much she loves her brother and how much sad she is now because of her loss. After a while, the girl cried and admitted Winnicott's words, and then stopped behaving as an anti-social and bed-wetting girl. The signs would be parts of child's way to work on his/her life's inevitable problems; he/she will send his/her message to the environment by applying these signs. Therefore, the sign's background and history seems important to Winnicott and in opposition to Klein, gaining the exact history of how the signs were shaped can be a key to the cure (Minsky, 1996, 114).

According to Winnicott's theory, children need to be understood and he believed that in order to manage an anxious child, the psychologist should do inactive observation without being entrapped into anxiety himself. Later on, he called this action "appreciative understanding" (Phillips, 1988, 52) which would fulfill patient's need by appropriate action or studied inaction. Considering Freud's theories about the

psychologist and his patient, Winnicott said that all answers are in patient's hands. It is possible to lead him/her to realize what he/she has experienced and accept it. In addition to these ideas, Winnicott introduced new concepts such as holding environment, playing, sense of being real, illusion and disillusion, true and false selves and transitional object. Using a lot of verbal nouns proves that Winnicott's mind was focused on the process rather than the result (Philips, 1988, 38). The most important thing is that how a child has experienced a safe and trustful environment at first and was his/her mother a "good-enough" or not. A good-enough mother takes care of her child by bathing, feeding, loving, holding and whatever the mother does for her child. Consequently, this safe environment is called a "holding environment" for a child that Winnicott saw as a key to healthy development "the continuation of reliable holding in terms of the ever-widening circle of family and school and social life". (Winnicott, Brazelton, Greenspan and Spock, 2002, 238)

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Winnicott has brought the concepts that Klein talked about as something else and analyzed them from his point of view. According to Winnicott, "holding environment" seems important and impressive to him. Holding environment is whatever makes an infant happy and satisfied and finally, would make the separation process between the child and the mother or caregiver easy. A "good-enough mother" plays her role in this phase. And if this holding environment is not ready and the mother cannot be called a good-enough one, the true self of the child would not be revealed and he/she may show the false self instead.

Philip Carey has been held in his mother's arms in the beginning of the novel but his mother is not a good-enough one. Because she dies and she cannot take care of her son and at the same time Philip loses his caregiver too. He is moved to the Vicar's house and he is obliged to live in a small room in a different stair, bathing himself and taking care of himself. Thus, there is no sign of being loved, being taken care, being bathed, no empathy and the most importantly that the separation has not been successfully carried out. Under these circumstances, Philip's relationships are all finished in failure and ended in tears. Although Aunt Louisa always reminds him "I've tried to be like a mother to you. I've loved you as if you were my own son" (Maugham, 1973, 165) he looks for a safe holding environment in order to fill the mother's absence, but all these friendships are the repetition of his first relationship with parents, caregiver and also the Vicar and his wife. There is always the sense of shyness, fear of loss, fear of not to be loved and so forth.

To demonstrate the situation, Philip's relationships would help to get the point. Miss Wilkinson is a middle-aged woman who seems such as Philip's mother as Norah is. They both take care of him whether he passes his exams or not, when he is sick they make soup and insist that he rest, etc. Miss Price makes the holding environment by taking care of how good can Philip paint and teaching him how to do his job when he was in Paris. Even Sally notices him when his clothes are wet and warns him about getting cold. But most of these environments were not trustful and finished soon. Mildred's story is different because not only she makes a safe environment ready, but also obliges Philip to show his "false self" in order to be saved from her bad attitudes. His false self express hatred toward Mildred and her inappropriate relationships with other men and the rejecting personality of her, and he only attempts to keep his relationship with Mildred. He covers his hatred with a mask in order not to be left and rejected and specially not to be the object of Mildred's anger.

Throughout his life Philip thinks "I'm not lucky with women." (Maugham, 1973, 753). Norah, Mildred and Sally are the next women who Philip is in relationship with. All women in his life have the same characteristics in different situations. For instance, Norah, Sally and Aunt Louisa seem all the same; they are in-born mothers and give Philip whatever they think is better for him. On the other hand, Miss Price and Mildred are who reject his love on the surface and enjoy bothering and manipulating him. Even their appearance looks alike and their faces features remind the reader Philip's mother's last picture details. They just play the role of replacements for Philip to fill his mother's loss by choosing sort of women who are aged, thin with yellow skin, lonely and whoever is weak and her love is poisonous for him. Philip's own mother and Miss Wilkinson remain as unknown women to the reader and him and as if he avoids being faced with the truth of the reality of their lives (the age of Miss Wilkinson and his mother's religious beliefs and not to be called as a good mother). Therefore, these women roles remind the reader the same images in the mirror.

They are aged and weak such as Miss Wilkinson; or they are struggling with poverty like Norah and Miss Price; They may love him in a destructive way such the way Mildred and Fanny Price did; Or they prefer not to be forgotten by him like Emily Wilkinson and Miss Price who wrote a great deal of letters to him; They look alike his mother by having yellow skin thin in face which sadness and loneliness is the first thing in their eyes.

According to object relations theory, this replacement follows the inadequate care and love of parents for a

child that has a deep influence on his future relationships with others. The person would rather repair his bad experience in childhood by replacing parental roles by new partners who are examples of his parents. This replacement not only does not solve the problem, but also makes everything worse. Because this is the same loop of relationship.

Fragility and vulnerability of these women that are modeled on Philip's mother's last photo and ending state of being and as recorded in last picture. In other words it is clear that those final moments of his mother and her early tragic end which nonetheless apparently has had an everlasting impact on Philip and all the fragility, vulnerability, loneliness and solitude of his mother which lurk behind the story of those final picture of her have come to perpetuate a curious sense of motivation in him to find a replacement for her nonexistent empty place by trying to replace her with similar cases and women with perplexingly similar attitude apparition and features. All in all, these feeble feminine figures that seemingly attract him all over again are sort of shadows of his long gone mother from whom he only has got a weak and vague memory plus an old packed photo which suggest a world of hurt, pain and brokenness.

In the Vicar's house, where is not a good holding environment in Winnicott's words, Philip cannot play freely and whenever he wants. Because his aunt has warned him not to make noise when the Vicar is asleep or is reading religious books, or even when he is writing his speeches. Consequently, Philip's main sense of childhood which is playing is stopped and accordingly, his false self starts to grow in order to keep safe. He shows the unreal reactions to the others because he does not want to be in danger or in lonely. Particularly, he does so because he has the fears loss. He shows his false self and express his love to Mildred many times while actually he hates her. He does that in order not to lose her and her company. He tolerates the middle-aged women because he is scared of not being in a relationship. He thinks that if he is not in a relationship, it would mean that no one likes him because of his club foot. These all result in destructive relationships whose main motive and reason in compensating with the incomplete early relationships with parents and caregivers. Curtis and Whitehead (2013) answer the question of why does Philip Carey loved Mildred? "critics frequently answer the question by vague references to an alleged feeling of inferiority caused by his club foot". These authors say that "Philip hates himself and that his love for Mildred is an attempt at self-annihilation" (Curtis and Whitehead, 2013, 121)

The ability to play is an achievement in Winnicott's theory of emotional development. "In playing, the infant/child/adult bridges the inner world with the

outer world within and through the transitional space" (Abram, 2007, 246). Transitional space or the third and intermediate area is the area which is neither the infant him/herself and the inner world nor the outer world. Winnicott brought the term "playing" from the early years of his work and developed it till his last years of life and he called playing "a feature of his consultative technique" (Winnicott, Caldwell, Taylor, 2017, 299). Somerset Maugham expressed *Of Human Bondage* protagonist, Philip, a boy who likes to play but is not allowed to do so. Significantly, when he wanted to choose painting to free himself from all his life rules instead of being an accountant his uncle blamed him and said "painting wasn't a serious profession; it was Bohemian, disreputable, immoral. And then Paris!" (Maugham, 1973, 340). To do play or not to do it has consequences which Winnicott believed would manifest themselves in adulthood friendships, relationships and all self-experiencing throughout life.

As Winnicott sees playing important for children, he claims that this ability shows itself as "choice of words, in the inflections of the voice, and indeed in the sense of humor" for adults (Winnicott, Caldwell, Taylor, 2017, 300-1). Philip cannot play when he is at the Vicar's house because his uncle directs his home with strict rules. Additionally, he is unable to play when is sent to school because of his club foot. Other students tease him and he prefers not to play and talks to them in a way they bother. Philip's characteristics analysis proves that even when he grows up, he cannot make normal relationships and friendships with others which Winnicott calls it the result of not playing in a trustful environment that does not reflect bad feelings to the child.

Donald Winnicott considers that when a child plays, he/she would show his/her aggression, anxiety, anger or every bad feelings among other emotions. He sees playing as a tool to gain self-experiencing and get the ability how to make friendships and relationships. For instance, children understand the aggression as "some bad substance that could be got rid of" (Winnicott, Caldwell, Taylor, 2017, 150). Philip wants to get rid of his aggression and anxiety of unconscious loss of his parents and caregiver by play as other children do, but playing is forbidden for him because of mentioned reasons. Therefore, his normal way of development remains incomplete and demonstrates itself as creativity in loneliness such as painting, studying in order to get best result and furthermore, as bitter words in adulthood and being unable to make friendship with others. As an illustration, when Mildred leaves him for the first time, he makes friendship with Norah and attempts to get best marks at university but at the same time because he feels insecure, he bothers Norah and his male friends with his jealousy and bitter words.



There exists another side of Philip's character which might not be clear in the story; The fact that either he succeeds in finding a replacement for the lost playfulness of his childhood or that he suffers its lack. Examples would help the reader to find the best answers. For instance, when Philip goes to France to become a famous artist and he chooses painting may be an example of replacement because in this way he would get rid of his unpleasant feelings of losing his parents specially his mother by painting naked female figures. He might want to show his hatred toward his uncle by replacing art instead of religious thoughts. At first, he was interested to religion and faith and now he did not know "what had happened to him when first he was seized by the religious emotion" (Maugham, 1973, 134) and at the end he quits painting too. But he is not successful and his teacher reminds him that he would never become a famous artist. Nevertheless, he keeps all his paintings and quits painting. At the same time, Philip still suffers the lack of playing because he not only cannot even find a replacement for it, but also he loses all his paintings when Mildred sets fire to all of those beloved nude paintings. This is the starting point of Philip's way of living to find a new job, new lover and new life. It can be said that he is always searching for replacements for his lack of playing and and the same time he is suffered by its lack.

The first time that Philip sees a naked model who looks like his mother, Mildred and Miss Price is interesting:

... He did not know how to begin. He had never seen a naked woman before. She was not young and her breasts were shrivelled. She had colourless, fair hair that fell over her forehead untidily, and her face was covered with large freckles. ... to Philip's eyes the figure looked strangely distorted. (Maugham, 1973, 354)

Afterwards, Philip just keeps these kinds of nude paintings for himself and hangs them on the wall of his house. The reason behind this act might be that he gets passionate playfulness by painting and looking at these women and this is the way that he shows his suffering from lack of play, parents and the destructive result of losing all having been woven into his adult life.

Philip obviously finds art a tool to satisfy himself and a person exacerbates this process, Cronshaw. Cronshaw is an artist who can be called as Philip's father; because he has a deep impression on this orphan boy till his death. Even though Cronshaw is a poor man and has destructive relationships with street women who leave him after stealing his little money, Philip praises his philosophical points of view. Cronshaw feels that Philip is different from other

young men too. And gives him an Iranian carpet in which he believes Philip can find the the meaning of life. Young Carey keeps it till his thirties and finds the philosophy of it in the simplicity of life.

One day Philip is in a meeting accompanying Cronshaw, he thinks that art is the most important thing in the world but Cronshaw rejects it and his answer seems interesting when Philip asks so why we have gathered in an artistic place:

... What you're here for I don't know. It is no business of mine. But art is a luxury. Men attach importance only to self-preservation and the propagation of their species. It is only when these instincts are satisfied that they consent to occupy themselves with the entertainment which is provided for them by writers, painters, and poets. (Maugham, 1973, 382)

Cronshaw does not see art a significant part of a person's life and at the same time he calls art a luxury which would be attractive after self-preservation and when basic instincts are satisfied and re-production is done. Not only does he want to keep Philip away from art, but also reminds the reader of the Vicar's role in Philip's life when he warned him against the playful and liberating effects of art. This tendency toward art may resemble the notion of play and playfulness which now Philip is prohibited from both.

It is obvious that Philip searches for new experiences but what is the real reason behind his decisions? Creativity, liveliness and the sense of feeling real are the hallmarks of the healthy individual and –as concepts- of Winnicott's work. In his article "Why Children Play", Winnicott (2016) says that "the child gains experience in play" and "just as the personalities of adults develop through their experience in living, so those of children develop through their own play, and through the play inventions of other children and of adults" (168). Reaching self-discovery, children gradually get the capacity to accept the outer world and understand the real world. For Philip, because he could not play in his childhood, he tries to become experienced as soon as he can but the result is always failure. Because his childhood patterns have not been completed and there are gaps in his development. He goes to school and wants to be a teacher at a famous church, he goes to Germany to work and study, he decides to go to London to work as an accountant and get a good salary, he chooses painting and goes to France to see the lovers' city, and so other wrong decisions which show that he is unsure about what he wants exactly in his life. According to Winnicott, if a child does not get to play enough and have a playful

childhood, they may try to compensate for it with trying new things and going after new experiences as does Philip in this novel.

Winnicott saw playing as the “gateway to the unconscious” (Abram, 2007, 253). Apart from the repressed part that must be kept hidden, Winnicott believes, each individual wants to know more about the rest of his unconscious, and play, like dreams, serves the function of self-revelation (Winnicott, Caldwell and Taylor, 2017, 170). Philip attempts to take risks in his life many times and he just wants to know himself more. When for the first time Miss Wilkinson suggested him to go to Paris and study art he did not care but when he failed in London, remembered what she told him about his talent in art.

He had no fear of a second disillusion; he yearned for romance and beauty and love, and Paris seemed to offer them all. He had a passion for pictures, and why should he not be able to paint as well as anybody else? ... Philip saw it (Paris and living there) with eyes blinded with illusion. ... “If I’m going in for painting I must do it thoroughly, and it’s only in Paris that you can get the real thing.” (Maugham, 1973, 333-343)

In fact, loss of the parents and beloved caregiver and lack of play are the repressed and hidden parts of Philip’s unconscious. But his desire to know more about life and people demonstrates his wish to understand the different aspects of his character but because his early prototypes had not been shaped completely, he cannot link his life’s chain of events. He goes to France to fulfill gaps made by lack of playfulness and he sees painting the only tool to gain his wish. As Winnicott say that play, such as dreams, serves the function of self-revelation, therefore, Philip follows his dream about painting in Paris. This dream might become true by finding a French mistress or being a famous artist. He faces difficulties in affording costs of living in Paris, painting nude models and complicated people like Fanny Price but these all experiences cannot fill gaps made by loss of playfulness as he guessed at first. It is said that he does not have any talent to become a painter or he is not successful in being Miss Price’s love. The result is that he reaches failure again. The key is that in each failure Philip tries to find a replacement quickly and satisfy himself. For example, when he come back from Paris, the Vicar asks him are those two years regarded as wasted time? But Philip’s answer seems quite interesting:

I learned to look at hands, which I’d never looked at before. And instead of just looking at houses and trees I learned

to look at houses and trees against the sky. And I learned also that shadows are not black but coloured. (Maugham, 1973, 515)

As it is discussed, Philip is repeatedly involved in destructive relationships. He experiences his incomplete childhood pattern again and again. He has lost his parents and cannot reach them anymore, he has not had a good relationship with his paternal uncle and even his kind wife, he always wears his false self mask to get attraction of who are rejecting him all the time and at the same time to keep himself safe from what can hurt him. Others are hurting him from outside view, but he himself chooses destructive relationships to be irritated.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In overall according to the object relation theory the way that the child establishes a relationship with or attachment to the initial object of desire that he/she chooses will be impressive in future life. He/she might encounter at the earliest state of childhood with all its failures, despairs, dis-satisfactions and losses or quit the contrary all the fulfillment, commitment success love and care that it could set forth will constitute an attachment or relational model. This model determines the intensity success/failure manner mode and direction of any tentative future emotional and relational connection that the person develops with other people as an adult.

This means that the failure and success in the mode of attachment to the primary objects in childhood which is naturally either the parents themselves or the immediate caregivers is reflected upon adult relationships and played the role of decisive factor in the future relationships and connections that a person will experience with same degree of success or failure which is remodeled unconsciously in someone adult choices of friends and partners.

Now with regard to Somerset Maugham life’s itself, since his novels are mostly autobiographical, and that of his main character or protagonist Philip in novels *Of Human Bondage*. We can clearly trace a trajectory of the same nature which starts up with certain failed attachment with the primary object in the lives of these figures and then is developed into relational models intricately doomed to fail at the time of adulthood. In case of Somerset Maugham himself the fact that despite his extreme need for relationship with his mother we clearly see that the untimely death of her establishes the deeply rooted dysfunctional model of emotional attachment and relationship in his unconscious so much. Therefore, he keeps entering relationships that are not emotionally reciprocated supportive and built upon respect and trust with the

future women he meets and steps into relationship with.

In other words is quite clear that the abundant sense of loss and emotional hunger that Maugham as a child had to go through given the tragic loss of his mother as overshadowed more or less all of his future life and also amounted to an overflowing an overarching sense of need for getting an idealized emotional feedback from rejecting characters who are not psychologically and characteristically capable of giving which means a reiterated model of getting into failure bound relationships again and again causing him a great deal of emotional suffer in face of continuous failed relationships throughout his adult time with various women. It could be said that protagonist keeps looking for love, respect and care in places in which such things are doomed not to be found and thus on the bases of the primordial sense of loss he continues failed relationships in which any desire attachment ends up with raptures and traumatic separations. Philip is entrapped into his childhood traumatic relationships and he repeats it again and again.

In addition to the traumatic and unsettling effects of this early separation from the mother that results in the sense of loss, detachment, and an eminent incapability of relating to others in form of a well-established emotional bond, we clearly see that Phillip, as a fictional character in the novel called *Of Human Bondage*, and Maugham, in the reality of his life, goes through a complicated and troubling relationship with his father, and then, in time, the substitutive male-care-givers, which can be interpreted as a juxtaposition of contradictory and often mutually exclusive feelings that would range from dissatisfaction, anger, sadness, hopeless attachment, unsuccessful connection, envy and the like to indifference and a bleak detached state in terms of emotions. This lack of a perpetually nourishing relationship based on a sense of equilibrium and balance, later in the life of both figures, that is, the fictional one and the author himself, results in a state of perplexed homo-social bonds with other male figures among the peer age. This bond is, again, a reflection and reminiscence of the problematic relationship and attachment to the fatherly figures of their earlier phases of development. In the fictional world of the novel, however, this homo-social bond is translated into a series of challenging and demanding relationships with other male figures such as Phillip's German-dwelling time friend, Hayward, and his classmate Rose, or Cranshaw, the man who advises him about finding the meaning of life in the aesthetic patterns of Persian carpets with a distinct philosophical taste and a similarly tragic end and demise. These bonds are all, as far as the object relation theory is concerned, reiterations or

reenactments of that primordial failed relationship with the fatherly figure or figures at the earliest stages of his life.

It is obvious that there is a mixing pot of varying and even often contradictory feelings involved here from seeking to find a role model and a supportive and guiding male figure to trying to create and emotional bond that would function on the basis of such feelings as fraternity, trust, and unconditional friendship and care. However, the author himself, as far as his documented biography is concerned, develops this actually homo-social bond into an unexpressed and not out of the closet homosexual desire which here and there interferes with his heterosexual and then normative relationships with his wife or other mistresses in time. These developments, that is the fictional homo-social and actual homosexual bonds, both and in each in their own right represent the mode and manner of the primary problematic object relations that the author and his created and imagined personality in the novel experienced during their childhood in terms of the relationship they had with either the father himself or his later replacements.

Philip has lost his parents. In order to forget or fill their absence, the protagonist tries to find replacements. He has lost his mother and he finds women who looks like her and rejects being in relationship with him. But these people have rejecting personalities and protagonist insists on remaining in his relationships because he is in the wrong circle of his childhood traits and lacks. As object relation theory mentions, all incomplete relationships throughout childhood would reveal themselves in the adulthood's life specially in destructive relationships and friendships. The protagonist tries to fix the problems but he is in the unconscious loop of childhood lacks. He is searching for destructive relationships with rejecting partners who tend to leave him.

In this manner, according to Winnicott's concept of holding environment which includes good-enough mothering in a safe environment in the child development process. If there was holding environment provided, true self would shape and the child grows in a healthy status. But if the child feels insecure, he/she would show his/her false self in order to keep him/herself in a trustful situation. False self is such a mask for the child whenever he/she feels him/herself in danger. Therefore, it works like a defense. Philip has not been in a safe holding environment because he has lost his mother. The protagonist shows his false self soon because Philip lives in a place with strict rules (the Vicar's house, boarding school, etc). Consequently, the reader faces false self of the protagonist instead of his true self in

order to keep himself away from others anger or because of not losing them.

The last point is that according to object relation theory, incomplete relationships traits in the childhood will directly have impacts on the future life of children. Fear, anger, loss, abandonment, punishment and whatever gives the baby sense of insecure would transforms itself to something else that leads toward unpredictable results that one simple example is destructive relationship made upon incomplete childhood relationships. Philip seems a successful man but he cannot be called grown-up; influenced by incomplete childhood prototypes, he can never find his own place in relationships and he always chooses to be the child of his partner instead of having a mutual relationship.

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