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题目: An Analysis of Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma in
Sons and Lovers from the Perspective of Body
Politics

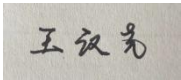
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**An Analysis of Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma in
Sons and Lovers from the Perspective of Body
Politics**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts**

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Abstract: *Sons and Lovers*, D. H. Lawrence's autobiographical novel published in 1913, set against the backdrop of early twentieth-century industrial England, traces the coming-of-age of its protagonist Paul Morel. In the novel, the body consistently serves as the central site where power operates: Mrs. Morel exercises emotional discipline in the name of care; Miriam suppresses bodily desire in the name of spiritual purity; Clara, in the name of bodily liberation, reimposes emotional bondage. Lawrence thus reveals that the body is not the subject's private domain, but the primary object upon which power struggles and disciplinary infiltration are enacted within intimate relationships. Therefore, this study takes Foucault's theory of bodily discipline and Canguilhem's theory of life norms as its theoretical perspectives, employing productivity, capillary infiltration, and intransigence as its analytical framework, corresponding respectively to the three female figures in Paul's life—Mrs. Morel, Miriam, and Clara—to dissect, layer by layer, the construction, infiltration, and consolidation of Paul's subjective dilemma. The findings reveal that Mrs. Morel molds Paul into “the mother's son” through emotional possession, depriving him of independent subjectivity; Miriam represses his bodily desire through spiritual intimacy, plunging him into a schism between soul and flesh; Clara, though briefly offering the possibility of bodily liberation, ultimately becomes a new disciplinarian. This study argues that Paul's subjective dilemma arises not from direct confrontation with power, but from three layers of discipline superimposed upon and reinforcing one another, silently eroding and fragmenting the subject in the most tender corners of everyday life. This predicament reveals the insidiousness and intransigence of disciplinary power, and reflects the profound difficulty of reconstructing the self from within the networks of power.

Key words: D. H. Lawrence; *Sons and Lovers*; body politics; subjectivity dilemma

摘要: 《儿子与情人》是D. H. 劳伦斯1913年出版的自传体小说，以二十世纪初工业化的英国为背景，讲述了主人公保罗·莫雷尔的成长历程。小说中，身体始终是权力运作的核心场域：莫雷尔太太以照料之名实施情感规训；米莉安以精神纯洁压抑身体欲望；克拉拉则以身体解放之名重新施加情感束缚。劳伦斯由此揭示，身体并非主体的私有领地，而是亲密关系中权力争夺与规训渗透的首要对象。因此，本文以福柯的身体规训理论与康吉莱姆的生命规范理论为视角，以生产性、毛细血管式渗透与顽固性为分析框架，分别对应莫雷尔太太、米莉安与克拉拉三位女性人物，逐层剖析保罗主体性困境的建构、渗透与固化过程。研究发现，莫雷尔太太通过情感占有将保罗塑造成“母亲的儿子”，使其丧失独立主体性；米莉安以精神亲密关系压抑其身体欲望，致其陷入灵肉分裂；克拉拉虽一度提供身体解放的契机，却最终成为新的规训者。本文认为，保罗的主体性困境并非源于与权力的正面冲突，而是三重规训层层叠加、相互补强，在日常生活最温情的角落悄然完成对主体的侵蚀与分裂。这一困境揭示了规训权力的隐蔽性与顽固性，也折射出个体在权力网络中重建自我的艰难。

关键词: D. H. 劳伦斯；《儿子与情人》；身体政治；主体性困境

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

As one of the most controversial and influential writers in the history of 20th-century British literature, D.H. Lawrence always focused on the alienation of human nature and the survival struggles of individuals under industrial civilization in his works. His writing is characterized by a delicate depiction of human emotions, a profound exploration of the relationship between individuals and society, and a persistent concern for the construction of individual subjectivity, which enables his works to transcend the limitations of the times and trigger eternal thinking about human survival. Lawrence's works have exerted a far-reaching influence on the development of modern British literature and even world literature, and he is regarded as a pioneer who bravely broke through traditional literary norms and explored the depths of human nature.

Sons and Lovers, Lawrence's early masterpiece written in 1913, is a semi-autobiographical novel based on his own growth experiences. Taking the growth trajectory of the protagonist Paul Morel as the clue, the novel delicately depicts his struggles and confusion in family, emotions, and society, and profoundly demonstrates the loss and alienation of individual subjectivity under the dual oppression of industrial civilization and traditional ethics. Since its publication, the novel has attracted extensive attention from the academic circle and the public: it has been highly praised for its realistic depiction of the times and in-depth exploration of human nature, and has also triggered discussions due to its bold expression of human desires. As an important work in Lawrence's literary creation, *Sons and Lovers* occupies a pivotal position in the history of 20th-century British literature and has become an important text for studying the survival predicament of individuals in the industrial age.

The body plays an indispensable and important role in *Sons and Lovers*. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Britain was in a transitional period of the in-depth development of the Industrial Revolution, and the residual traditional ethical concepts of the Victorian era were still deeply rooted. In this context, the body became a field where power operated and ethical norms were implemented—manual laborers such as miners were reduced to appendages of machines, losing the autonomy of their bodies; the patriarchal order also imposed constraints on individuals' bodies and desires, suppressing their true needs. In the novel, the description of the body runs through the whole text, and the changes of Paul's body perception, the constraints on his body, and the pursuit of physical freedom are closely

related to his subjective construction, which becomes an important entry point to interpret his subjective predicament.

Based on this, this study takes biopolitics as its theoretical perspective, focuses on Paul's subjectivity dilemma in *Sons and Lovers*, and analyzes the specific manifestations and root causes of his dilemma by integrating textual details. The theory of biopolitics, which originates from Michel Foucault's power theory and has been further developed and refined by Western Marxist and feminist scholars, provides a precise theoretical tool for interpreting the body and subjective predicament in *Sons and Lovers*. Its core view holds that the body is not a mere physical existence but a field where power operates, and power shapes the subject's consciousness and behaviors through implicit discipline.

1.2 Research Significance

As D.H. Lawrence's representative work, *Sons and Lovers* is of great significance for literary research. It reflects the author's profound concern with the alienation of human nature, the constraints imposed upon individual desire, and the loss of autonomous subjectivity under the dual pressures of industrial civilization and domestic bonds. Accordingly, this study adopts Foucault's biopolitical theory, especially the core concepts of "disciplinary power" and "biopower," to systematically interpret Paul's subjective predicament from the perspective of biopolitical criticism, which has important academic value.

Firstly, at the level of literary research perspective, this study breaks through the limitation of focusing only on Paul's Oedipus complex and ethical analysis. It takes Foucault's biopolitical theory as the core, focusing on how disciplinary power and biopower act on Paul's body and consciousness, shaping his behavior and leading to the loss of subjective independence, which enriches the research dimensions of the novel.

Secondly, at the level of interpreting the connotation of the work, this study analyzes the root causes of Paul's subjective predicament through three female characters. Mrs. Morel restricts Paul through emotional and spiritual control; Miriam binds him with religious constraints; Clara fails to help him get rid of the disciplined state due to her own limitations. Their combined influence deepens Paul's subjective confusion.

Thirdly, at the level of theoretical application and expansion, this study integrates Foucault's theory with literary text analysis, verifying the applicability of biopolitical theory in interpreting the novel. It makes up for the deficiencies in previous research and provides a new reference for the study of Lawrence's works.

Finally, at the level of practical significance, Paul's predicament reflects the universal problem of individual alienation under power constraints. This study helps clarify the impact of power operation on individual subjectivity, providing enlightenment for understanding the living state of modern individuals and the path of subjectivity construction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Research on *Sons and Lovers*

Foreign scholars' research on this work has undergone a process from controversy and criticism to understanding and diversified interpretation, which can be divided into several distinct stages based on time nodes.

In the early stage of its publication (1913 to the 1940s), *Sons and Lovers* was mired in intense controversy. For example, T.S. Eliot (1923) criticized the novel's depictions of sex as involving emotional heresy and moral degradation. He further argues that the work bears a strong autobiographical nature, which violates the "impersonality" principle of literary creation.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the academic community's attitude towards *Sons and Lovers* softened significantly. Freud's psychoanalytic theory gradually became the dominant tool for analyzing and researching this work, allowing Paul to break free from the shadow of Lawrence's personal experiences and be studied as an independent literary character. During this period, academic research on Paul mainly focused on his emotional predicament. For instance, Ernest Jones (2002) defines Paul's emotional dilemma as a classic manifestation of the Oedipus complex, pioneering the application of Oedipus complex theory to interpret Paul's behavioral patterns and psychological states.

Since the 1980s, various theoretical perspectives, including feminism, cultural studies, and ecological criticism, have successively intervened in the research on *Sons and Lovers*, enriching the interpretative dimensions of the text. Geoffrey Harvey (1987)'s criticism of Lawrence identifies the central tension in his work as that between self-realization and external constraint—an insight that resonates with Foucauldian theories of disciplinary subject formation. In his study of *Sons and Lovers*, Harvey reads Mrs. Morel's domination of Paul not merely as an Oedipal symptom, but as the product of a socio-psychological mechanism rooted in class disillusionment and marital despair, making Paul's crisis a case of internal colonization. Harvey thus illuminates the convergence of domestic and social discipline in Lawrence's fiction.

Entering the 21st century, Lacan's psychoanalysis, Foucault's biopolitics and disciplinary theory, as well as ecofeminism, have further deepened the academic interpretation of this work. At the same time, the introduction of emerging paradigms such as digital humanities and cognitive poetics has opened up a modern methodological approach for the re-reading of this classic text. Benefiting from the promotion of academic communities such as the International D.H. Lawrence Society, international collaborative

research has become increasingly intensive, presenting a prosperous pattern that emphasizes both the re-reading of classics and new theoretical interpretations. Terry Gifford (2023) focused on the integration of nature and gender in Lawrence's works, conducting an ecofeminist interpretation of *Sons and Lovers*. He emphasizes the dual oppression of women and nature by patriarchy and industrial civilization, and positions Lawrence as a pioneer of ecological thought.

2.2 Domestic Research on *Sons and Lovers*

In China, research on D.H. Lawrence first originated in 1922, when Mr. Hu Xiansu published an article about the author in *Xueheng*. Since then, scholars and translators such as Xu Zhimo, Du Heng, Yang Changxi, Zhao Jingshen, Yu Dafu, and Lin Yutang actively translated, introduced, and commented on Lawrence's works, promoting the in-depth development of research on Lawrence and his works in China. Nevertheless, specialized research on *Sons and Lovers* started relatively late, and systematic research did not gradually take shape until the reform and opening-up period. Before the reform and opening-up, there were few translations and introductions of the novel in China. The academic community generally regarded it as decadent literature, focusing on criticizing its explicit descriptions of sex while paying little attention to its literary and social value.

After the reform and opening-up, scholars such as Liu Mingjiu promoted the rehabilitation of Lawrence. The centenary of Lawrence's birth in 1985 triggered an upsurge in the translation and introduction of his works in China, and the complete Chinese translation of *Sons and Lovers* was published. Since then, the research focus has shifted to the psychological analysis of the "Oedipus complex" in the work and the alienation of human nature caused by industrial civilization, and scholars began to pay attention to the literary and social value of the text. Hao and Guo (1993) offer a macroscopic overview and assessment of the state of Lawrence studies in China during the early 1990s, covering the overall research on his creative thought and literary works, while also touching briefly upon the discussion of certain Lawrencean literary concepts—such as the Oedipus complex—during this period.

Entering the 21st century, domestic research on Lawrence's works has achieved a certain degree of revival and recovery. Various emerging foreign literary and sociological theories and research perspectives have poured into the Chinese academic circle, and the research on *Sons and Lovers* has entered a period of diversified expansion and theoretical integration. Many scholars have conducted research on the work around themes such as the Oedipus complex, criticism of industrial civilization, gender relations, and power structures.

In recent years, new perspectives such as biopolitics and ecofeminism have been continuously introduced.

Wang (2001) explored the character tragedy caused by the Oedipus complex in the novel, arguing that Paul in the book is completely emotionally attached to his mother, so he cannot love a woman he loved with all his heart like a normal person, nor can he achieve a natural and harmonious combination of spirit and body in gender relations. Instead, he can only obtain the full content of love from different women.

Cheng (2022) explored the issue of the recognition of the working-class community symbolized by the Morel family in *Sons and Lovers*, arguing that the root cause of the tragedy of the Morel family lies in the differences and conflicts among family members in their understanding of the community. He dialectically examined the significance of the working-class community for the citizens belonging to it, and at the same time conducted an in-depth analysis of the different views on the community within the Morel family. On the one hand, he criticizes Mrs. Morel's attempt to adhere to her middle-class origin and "transcend" the community; on the other hand, he affirms the positive significance of the community's "collectiveness" and "solidarity," demonstrating the life and vitality of the working class.

Luo (2024) took Giddens' post-traditional power order theory as the research framework, analyzing the intimate relationships between Paul and three important female characters, in order to interpret the identity anxiety and ethical dilemmas encountered by young men when facing family and social pressures.

2.3 Research Gaps in the Current Studies of *Sons and Lovers*

Although in recent years, academic research on *Sons and Lovers* has included interpretations from the perspective of biopolitics, which are limited by the inadequate localization of the theory. Some essays lack theoretical innovation and fail to integrate the theory with China's social reality and literary characteristics. Meanwhile, since the reform and opening-up, most studies on *Sons and Lovers* from the biopolitical perspective have focused on the three major female characters, with rare connections made to Paul, leaving a clear research gap. This situation therefore provides a research entry point for this project. By focusing on Paul and systematically examining the mechanisms, infiltration, and intransigent consequences of his subjective dilemma through the lens of body politics, this project addresses a clear gap in existing scholarship. It also advances the depth of theoretical application by integrating Foucault's disciplinary theory with Canguilhem's life norms,

while offering a new interpretive pathway for understanding the implications of Lawrence's open ending.

3. Body Politics: From Georges Canguilhem to Michel Foucault

Body politics, a core branch of political and social theory, focuses on the relationship between the human body and power operations, with biopolitics as its key concept. Biopolitics, continuously enriched by scholars, refers to the power that manages, regulates and shapes the human body and population at both macro and micro levels. Michel Foucault, the foundational theorist of biopolitics, defines it as the power to “make live and let die” (Foucault, 1978: 85), which permeates social life to regulate individual bodies and population.

Many theorists have promoted biopolitics’ development. Besides Foucault, Agamben and Butler, Gilles Deleuze further developed Foucault’s theory with the “control society” (Deleuze, 1990: 45) concept; Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt combined it with Marxism to explore its relation to capitalist production; Roberto Esposito studied it from immunity and community perspectives. Giorgio Agamben argues it is the core logic of modern society, reducing the body to “bare life” (Agamben, 1998: 18) under power control. Judith Butler links it to gender power, noting the body is a site for constructing and contesting gender norms and power relations. Through continuous development and iteration, the theory ultimately become an important framework across multiple disciplines, including psychology, literary studies, and sociology.

3.1 Canguilhem’s Philosophical Thoughts on Life

Georges Canguilhem (1904–1995), a French philosopher of science and medicine, laid crucial groundwork for contemporary biopolitical thought and profoundly influenced later thinkers such as Michel Foucault. His major contributions center on a sustained philosophical inquiry into the nature of life, normativity, and the conceptual foundations of biology and pathology.

Canguilhem proposes that life is fundamentally characterized by what he terms “normativity”: the capacity of a living organism to generate its own norms in relation to its environment, to tolerate departures from these norms, and to establish new normative frameworks when circumstances demand it. Canguilhem’s core work, *The Normal and the Pathological* (originally published in 1943 as *Essai sur quelques problèmes concernant le normal et le pathologique*, substantially expanded in 1966), constitutes his most systematic investigation into the concepts that organize medical knowledge and practice. Through a detailed historical and conceptual critique of nineteenth-century physiological thought—particularly Claude Bernard’s positivist notion of homeostasis and Auguste Comte’s quantitative understanding of normality—Canguilhem demonstrates that the

pathological cannot be understood as a mere quantitative deviation from the normal, nor as the simple absence or diminution of health. Health, from this perspective, is not conformity to a statistically average state but the dynamic ability to overcome crises, adapt to environmental challenges, and institute new norms as needed. Pathology, conversely, designates the narrowing or collapse of this normative capacity—a state in which the organism can only function under strictly reduced conditions, having lost the plasticity required to create new norms of existence (Canguilhem, 1991: 196–198).

Life, in Canguilhem's account, is characterized by wholeness, autonomy, and an inherent purposiveness that mechanistic models cannot capture. Building on this foundation, he develops a sustained critique of the reductive tendencies within positivist science. He opposes any approach that treats the living body as a mechanism reducible to physicochemical laws, insisting instead on the irreducibility of biological phenomena to mere quantitative measurement. This argument, articulated in works such as *Knowledge of Life* (1952), emphasizes that biological knowledge must proceed from the recognition that the living organism is not merely an object of scientific investigation but also a subject of its own experience—a being that posits values and establishes norms through its very mode of existence.

A further dimension of Canguilhem's thought, with direct implications for the study of bodily discipline, lies in his conception of the relationship between the organism and its environment. He argues that the environment is not an objective given but is constituted as an environment for a particular organism through the organism's own mode of living. The relationship between life and its milieu is thus one of mutual construction: the organism selects, interprets, and to some degree creates the features of its environment according to its own normative orientation. This insight—that the body is neither passively shaped by external forces nor wholly autonomous, but exists in a dynamic interchange with its surroundings—proved foundational for subsequent biopolitical analysis and directly informed Foucault's later investigations into the disciplinary shaping of bodies (Canguilhem, 1991: 93).

As Foucault's mentor, Canguilhem's biopolitical ideas are closely linked to Foucault's bodily discipline thought. As a key forerunner, his exploration of life nature, life-environment interaction, and normality-pathology distinction provided crucial resources for Foucault's research on disciplinary power and biopolitics. His vitalism-centered philosophy inspired Foucault's exploration of power-body relations. Their connection has three core aspects, providing a theoretical context for analyzing Paul's predicament from a biopolitical perspective. Firstly, Canguilhem's "normativity of life" (Canguilhem, 2018: 67)

laid the foundation for Foucault's power-body understanding. Foucault extended this to power analysis, arguing modern power disciplines the body by redefining life's "norm" (Foucault, 2003: 28), focusing on how disciplinary technologies shape "docile bodies" (Foucault, 2003: 55)—complementing Canguilhem's focus on life's normative autonomy. Secondly, Canguilhem's life-environment interaction research inspired Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power operation. Foucault applied this interactive perspective, noting bodily discipline is a power-body mutual interaction: power constrains the body, while the body resists or adapts. Finally, Canguilhem's criticism of positivism and life objectification laid the foundation for Foucault's critique of traditional humanism. Foucault argued the "subject" is constructed by disciplinary power, and both opposed life objectification and subject alienation, supporting reflections on modern power-induced alienation.

3.2 Foucault's Theory of the Discipline of the Body

Michel Foucault, one of the most influential postmodern philosophers and intellectual historians of the twentieth century, developed a biopolitical theory whose core component is the theory of bodily discipline. The theory challenges traditional understandings of power and systematically articulates the operational logic of modern power, exerting a profound influence upon research across multiple academic fields. Foucault's redefinition of power and his account of the fundamental transformation in its mode of operation are centrally embodied in two canonical works, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*.

With regard to the redefinition of power, Foucault challenges, in *Discipline and Punish*, the traditional conception of power as a unidirectional, top-down coercive force. As he observes, "in political thought and political analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king" (Foucault, 1978: 88-89)—a claim intended to reveal that modern political theory remains beholden to an already obsolete concept of power. Under the traditional model of power, punishment was characterized by public violence. As the scene of public execution that opens *Discipline and Punish* illustrates, such punishment was "a manifestation of power above all" (Foucault, 1977: 48), its purpose being to reconstitute the sovereign's challenged authority through the direct destruction of the body. Foucault overturns this understanding, proposing instead that power is not a thing to be possessed but a mobile strategic situation that infiltrates the most minute levels of the social body.

The redefinition of power is further extended in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Here Foucault systematically demonstrates how modern power, through the construction of the discourse of "sexuality," brings the individual's body and desire under normalizing control. He argues that "sex" is not a naturally given biological fact, but rather

“a great discursive whole” (Foucault, 1978: 69), a modern invention carefully cultivated by the discourses of power since the nineteenth century. Power here reveals its most fundamental characteristic: it is not purely repressive, but precisely productive—it produces knowledge, produces discourse, produces subjectivity itself. As Foucault emphasizes, “what makes power accepted, is simply that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, 1978: 119).

As regards the fundamental transformation in the mode of power’s operation, this historical transition receives its most systematic exposition in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault traces the trajectory from traditional “sovereign power” to modern “disciplinary power.” The operational logic of disciplinary power abandons public physical violence, turning instead to a set of meticulous disciplinary techniques—hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination—to shape, train, and reform the body. Its aim is no longer to destroy the body but to “train” it, rendering it a “docile and useful” subject (Foucault, 1977: 138). As Foucault puts it, disciplinary power strives above all to produce “subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault, 1977: 138). This power no longer operates as a vertical domination descending from above but as a horizontal operation diffused throughout the social body, infiltrating schools, factories, barracks, hospitals, and even the family.

The History of Sexuality further reveals another dimension of this transformation—the shift from a power to take life to a biopower to foster life. Foucault observes that sovereign power in the classical age was a form in which “the sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill,” whereas modern biopower presents itself as “a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (Foucault, 1978: 136). This power no longer operates through the threat of death, but through the active administration, regulation, and optimization of life—through dispersed micro-techniques, it infiltrates the most minute regions of individual life. This normalizing power is manifested with particular salience in the domain of sex and gender: any behavior deviating from the norm is brought under a pathologizing apparatus of scrutiny and correction, and the individual is thereby drawn into a continuous process of norm internalization. This achieves a fundamental transformation in the relationship between power and the body—from destruction to construction, from public display to covert regulation—and this constructive intervention is virtually omnipresent and omnitemporal.

Based on Foucault's elaboration on bodily discipline and the operation of power, the core characteristics of power in his theory can be integrated into three points, which clearly reflect the operational logic of modern disciplinary power: productivity, capillary infiltration, and intransigence.

Among these, productivity is manifested in that power is not merely repressive but a productive technology of domination. As Foucault emphasizes in *The History of Sexuality*, power "traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault, 1978: 119). Through disciplining individual bodies and shaping consciousness, it produces docile subjects who conform to social norms, internalizing domination into self-perception rather than resting content with external suppression. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault specifies the aim of this productivity as the manufacture of "docile and useful" individuals—disciplinary power strives above all to produce "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault, 1977: 138).

Capillary infiltration refers to the fact that disciplinary power infiltrates all corners of social life and the physical and mental dimensions of individuals in the manner of capillaries, rather than through direct external coercion. Foucault states in *Power/Knowledge* that power must be grasped "at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary" (Foucault, 1980: 96). Without relying on violent deterrence, it draws upon implicit norms, standards, and value orientations, gently yet resolutely penetrating into individuals' behaviors, desires, and will. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault further elucidates how this infiltration becomes diffused across social spaces such as schools, factories, barracks, and hospitals through the three disciplinary techniques of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination (Foucault, 1977: 170-194).

Intransigence means that the effects of disciplinary power are not temporary but enduring, running through the individual's entire life. Foucault points out in *Discipline and Punish* that disciplinary power is intransigent because it is internalized through repeated training, ultimately entering "the gestures, the movements, the everyday practices of the individual, and becomes part of his bodily techniques" (Foucault, 1977: 136). It does not disappear with changed circumstances or terminated relationships, but becomes internalized as self-restraint. More crucially, this intransigence manifests in power's capacity to absorb resistance—as Foucault reveals in *The History of Sexuality*, power's stability derives from its capacity to "incorporate resistance into its own operations, making it a constituent part of the reproduction of power" (Foucault, 1978: 95-96). Every effort to break free may thus be recaptured, ensuring that the predicament is perpetuated and consolidated in ever new forms.

Foucault's biopolitical theory and theory of bodily discipline have exerted a profound influence on literary studies. Their core value lies in providing a new theoretical foundation and analytical perspective for interpreting the existential predicaments, emotional constraints, and subjective alienation of individuals in literary texts. These theories guide researchers to move beyond the limitations of traditional literary interpretation, which focuses on character, plot, and social background, and instead to analyze the behavioral choices and mental states of textual characters through the lens of power's operation. By examining how disciplinary power infiltrates and shapes the individual's body and consciousness, researchers are able to penetrate deeply into the mechanisms by which subjective dilemmas are constructed in texts, thereby enriching the understanding of literary works' intellectual significance and contemporary relevance.

4. Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma from the Perspective of Body Politics

4.1 Mrs. Morel: The Origin of Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma

Paul Morel's subjective dilemma originates from a subtle interplay between disciplinary power and life instincts. By synthesizing Foucault's "productive power" with Canguilhem's "normativity," this section analyzes how Mrs. Morel's maternal love functions as a formative apparatus.

4.1.1 Productive Discipline: Maternal Love as a Shaping Force

In *Sons and Lovers*, Mrs. Morel is by no means a conventional "evil mother," but rather the core constructor and disciplinarian of Paul Morel's subjective dilemma. The disciplinary practice she deploys in the name of love constitutes a mechanism of power embedded in everyday life—precisely the form of micro-power identified by Foucault: it operates not through violent coercion, but through tender care, bodily proximity, and emotional dependency to permeate and shape the individual. At the same time, the consequences of this discipline upon Paul can be diagnosed through Canguilhem's theory of *The Normal and The Pathological*: Paul's predicament is, in essence, the pathological response, at the level of life instincts, of an individual disciplined to the point of losing the capacity for self-normativity. To elucidate this process, the following analysis separates the disciplinary mechanism from the predicaments it produces, first examining the concrete operation of Mrs. Morel's bodily discipline, and then analyzing the twofold predicament this discipline produces in Paul.

The complete transfer of Mrs. Morel's attention from William to Paul marks the impending full-scale deployment of disciplinary power. With regard to the preparation for discipline, Mrs. Morel's disciplinary power is not from the outset concentrated on Paul. While William was alive, Mrs. Morel's affection for her second son was "more delicate and subtle than that for her eldest son, and perhaps less intense" (Lawrence, 1913: 94), her energy and attention being primarily concentrated on William. Unlike Paul, however, William was confident, radiant, and full of vitality, possessing his own judgment and distinctive personal charm, making him resistant to his mother's bodily discipline; in matters of love, he consistently adheres to his own choices. William's premature death becomes a crucial turning point. Paul falls gravely ill in the wake of his mother's grief, and the severity of her younger son's condition jolts Mrs. Morel awake: "I must think of the living, not the dead" (Lawrence, 1913: 194). Thereafter, she devotes herself wholly to caring for Paul, often "lying in bed with him" (Lawrence, 1913: 194), a stark contrast to the impatience she had displayed during Paul's earlier bout of bronchitis. Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, the

substance of this turning point is the reselection of the disciplinary object: William's independent personhood enables him to resist discipline, whereas Paul's sensitivity and fragility provide a natural entry point.

The defining feature of Mrs. Morel's disciplinary power lies in its productivity. According to Foucault, disciplinary power differs from repressive power—it does not merely prohibit and negate, but functions as a positive shaping force, “manufacturing” specific subjects through continuous training and guidance (Foucault, 1977: 194). Mrs. Morel's discipline of Paul operates precisely in this manner: she does not simply forbid Paul from doing certain things; rather, through a set of meticulous everyday techniques, she produces Paul as “the mother's son.” The first dimension of this productivity manifests in Mrs. Morel's establishment of behavioral norms for Paul. She demands that pleasing his mother serve as his highest principle; only the Paul who submits to her arrangements in both academic choices and career planning can be deemed acceptable. This set of norms is not imposed through commands but embedded in the minutiae of daily life: when Paul seeks employment, Mrs. Morel accompanies him to his interview at Jordan's factory, interjecting to rescue him when he falters for words. The interview scene crystallizes the micro-operation of disciplinary power—Mrs. Morel's very presence functions as a mobile surveillance apparatus, her gaze and voice dominating Paul's behavioral responses, causing him to repeatedly look to his mother's expression and “make a fool of himself” (Lawrence, 1913: 127-128). What discipline produces here is a son deprived of the capacity for independent action.

The second dimension of productivity is more profound: Mrs. Morel's discipline not only delimits Paul's behavior but produces the very meaning of his existence. By means of the powerful shaping force of this bodily discipline, she makes gaining maternal approval the core drive of Paul's being. Paul ultimately accepts and internalizes this positioning—his outlook on life and principles of conduct derive largely from his mother, and he refuses to examine their rationality, merely “adopting these ideas as his own and defending them for her” (Lawrence, 1913: 221). The story shows that a “docile and useful subject” (Foucault, 1977: 138) is produced in precisely this way: disciplinary power manufactures not only a behavioral repertoire but a mode of self-understanding, such that the disciplined subject mistakes externally imposed norms for his own volition.

4.1.2 The Dilemma of Autonomy: The Loss of Independence

The disciplinary mechanism delineated above produces in Paul two interrelated predicaments. The first is a predicament of existential stance, whereby through emotional

possession and psychological control, Paul is constructed as “the mother’s son” rather than an independent man. The productivity of discipline reveals itself with particular clarity in this predicament: the views, principles, and even self-understanding Paul holds are largely produced by the disciplinary system. It is not that he lacks his own gifts and individuality—he “seemed precocious for his age, always able to perceive others’ emotions accurately” (Lawrence, 1913: 80), loves sports, and possesses a talent for painting—but these initiatives are perpetually suppressed beneath the identity of the “qualified son” that discipline produces. This is a loss of normativity, because “the healthy state of life consists in the individual’s capacity to actively establish and adjust its own norms so as to adapt to changing environments” (Canguilhem, 1991: 196). Paul’s condition is precisely the opposite—his norms are entirely constructed and fixed from without by his mother, and he has lost the capacity to generate norms of his own. His wholesale acceptance of his mother’s views is the direct manifestation of this loss of normative capacity.

The second one is the emotional predicament. Discipline not only delimits how Paul should think and act, but penetrates into how he should feel and love. Imperceptibly, Mrs. Morel causes Paul to accept as a matter of course that his emotional relationships must be premised on maternal approval, thereby depriving him of the power to define affection and to become a capable lover.

No woman can truly enter Paul’s inner world, for his subjectivity has long been disciplined by his mother into a closed system—he can only oscillate between conforming to discipline and resisting it, unable to establish genuinely independent emotional connections. Paul’s relationships with Miriam and Clara are, in essence, mirror reproductions of his relationship with his mother. Miriam’s spiritual puritanism and moral self-discipline, like his mother’s, impose discipline upon Paul’s body and desire, forcing him to repress his instincts; Clara, in turn, attempts to control Paul through physical intimacy, becoming yet another disciplinarian in his life. This is the core symptom of life’s pathological condition in Canguilhem’s sense: a healthy life ought to be capable of opening itself to its environment, continuously creating new norms to respond to new relationships; Paul’s emotional incapacity—his longing for love yet inability to sustain intimacy, his longing for independence yet inability to escape his mother’s shadow—reflects precisely the degree to which discipline has deprived him of this creative capacity. What the productivity of discipline ultimately produces is a fractured subject, incapable of independent thought in his existential stance and incapable of genuine love in his emotional life.

4.2 Miriam: The Infiltration of Paul’s Subjectivity Dilemma

If Mrs. Morel's discipline establishes the foundational framework of Paul's dilemma, Miriam's influence represents its "capillary" expansion into the deepest recesses of his psyche. Her discipline operates through subtle, everyday interactions that enforce ascetic norms, ultimately producing a pathological schism between Paul's soul and flesh.

4.2.1 Capillary Infiltration: Spiritual Communion and Ascetic Norms

In *Sons and Lovers*, Mrs. Morel's bodily discipline lays the foundation and basic framework of Paul Morel's subjective dilemma, while Miriam—his childhood companion and spiritual confidante—becomes the key figure who drives this dilemma toward deeper infiltration and unfolding. Unlike Mrs. Morel's explicit discipline, which relies on maternal authority and domestic bonds, Miriam's discipline is characterized by concealment, permeability, and spiritual dominance, and its fundamental nature can be defined through what Foucault terms as "capillary power". That is to say, power should not be understood as a force concentrated at the top and exercised downward; but, it must be understood as operating "at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary" (Foucault, 1980: 96). In other words, the true efficacy of power lies not in its macro-institutional center, but in the capillary vessels through which it infiltrates the most minute extremities of the social body. Therefore, the analysis of power must attend to "the circulation and infiltration of power at the capillary level" (Foucault, 2003: 28). Miriam's discipline is a paradigmatic practice of precisely this capillary power—it is not institutionalized coercion, but rather, through her most intimate spiritual exchanges and emotional interactions with Paul, infiltrates every corner of his bodily and psychic life in the gentlest and least detectable manner.

Miriam's discipline first takes as its conduit her uniquely intimate spiritual relationship with Paul. Before Miriam's appearance, Paul's inner world remains largely closed: his passion for art and literature is visible only to himself, while Mrs. Morel tends to focus solely on Paul's achievements and the satisfaction they could bring her, never serving as an adequate listener. Miriam is different—ardent, sensitive, unreservedly devoted to Paul, full of admiration, always his most loyal listener and disciple. In his companionship with Miriam, Paul "gained in perception and grasp of things. Miriam brought his passion for creation to a white heat" (Lawrence, 1913: 221). This spiritual intimacy does not in itself constitute discipline, yet it provides the ideal conduit for the capillary infiltration of disciplinary power—it is precisely in the process of Paul opening his heart, defenselessly regarding Miriam as his spiritual confidante, that Miriam's norms are able to flow silently into every extremity of Paul's spiritual existence.

On this foundation, Miriam's discipline penetrates into the micro-level of desire and affect for regulation. She longs to be with Paul "in a rapt, sacred communion, heart to heart" (Lawrence, 1913: 223), and throughout their romance consistently adopts the posture of a "soulmate," guiding Paul toward spiritual resonance while deliberately avoiding any scenario that might involve bodily intimacy, even responding to Paul's inadvertent physical contact and overtures with aversion and disgust. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault observes that the key to modern power's operation lies in its capacity, "through dispersed, minute techniques," to infiltrate "into the most minute regions of individual life" (Foucault, 1978: 99). Every act of resistance from Miriam, every tiny gesture of avoidance, constitutes one such "minute technique"—these gestures silently transmit the norm that the body is impure and only the spirit is sacred, gradually producing "the repression of bodily desire" as an internalized principle of Paul's self-discipline.

The further unfolding of this discipline manifests in Miriam's demarcation of the boundaries of Paul's emotional expression. Whenever Paul attempts to break through this spiritual constraint and pursue a unity of body and spirit, he encounters Miriam's gentle yet unyielding resistance. While discoursing on Michelangelo's theories of bodily tissue and vital substance, the enraptured Paul "was gradually frightening her," and Miriam's response was "'Don't talk any more.' She pleaded softly, laying her hand on his forehead" (Lawrence, 1913: 272). Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* that the modern form of disciplinary power is embodied in a "micro-physics" (Foucault, 1977: 136)—it operates upon the body's gestures, movements, and utterances. Miriam's words "Don't talk any more" constitute a gentle prohibition upon the direction of Paul's intellectual exploration, while her hand laid upon his forehead is a somatic intervention exercised in the guise of care. As Foucault emphasizes, the fundamental feature of capillary power lies in the concealment of its mode of infiltration: power need not roar; "power needs not roar when it can whisper" (Foucault, 1980: 97). Miriam's gentle plea and tender touch are more penetrating than any coercive command, rendering the disciplined subject incapable of resistance, barely even aware that discipline is taking place.

4.2.2 The Dilemma of Fragmentation: The Schism between Soul and Flesh

The capillary disciplinary mechanism delineated above produces in Paul a profound subjective predicament, whose core manifestation is the thoroughgoing fissure between spirit and body. Under Mrs. Morel's discipline, Paul had already lost the capacity for self-normativity; Miriam's spiritual discipline, through its capillary mode of infiltration, drives this fissure further, extending it through every micro-vessel of Paul's spiritual world.

The novel offers clear textual evidence of this condition: Paul's "sexual instinct, long purified by Miriam, had become extraordinarily strong," and in Clara's presence he felt "a thickening in his chest, as if something alive were there, a new self, a new center of consciousness," yet "in his soul he loved Miriam," and "he felt that he and Miriam were truly united in heart" (Lawrence, 1913: 393-395). Desire points toward Clara, but his soul belongs to Miriam—this is the most direct symptom of the fissure between spirit and body. Each time Paul attempts to bridge this rift and approach Miriam as a lover rather than a spiritual confidante, her gaze would cause "the blood in his body to run cold": "Her big brown eyes looked at him beseechingly... her look was like that of a beast awaiting slaughter," and Paul "could hardly bear it," afterwards feeling "a dull ache in his soul," finding that "the thought of death, of the afterlife, felt so intimate, so comforting" (Lawrence, 1913: 406). Physical intimacy with his beloved, far from bringing about a unity of spirit and body, makes him long for death—spirit and body can no longer coexist within the same relationship.

According to Canguilhem's theory, this is a pathology produced by normative conflict. Canguilhem argues that the pathological condition of life does not arise from an absence of norms, but may precisely arise from the conflict of multiple norms—when an individual is simultaneously governed by two mutually incompatible normative systems and is unable to establish effective coordination between them, the normative capacity of that life is thereby damaged (Canguilhem, 1991: 182-183). Paul's situation is precisely this: Mrs. Morel's discipline centers on "gaining approval," demanding that Paul become the "man" who meets his mother's expectations, a norm that does not preclude the existence of the body and desire; Miriam's discipline, in contrast, centers on "spiritual purity," demanding that Paul repress bodily desire and exclude it from emotional expression. These two norms operate upon Paul simultaneously, locked in mutual conflict yet both inescapable. It is under the sustained pressure of this predicament that the relationship moves toward irreversible rupture. In the end, Paul confesses to his mother, "I don't want to marry her—I don't love her" (Lawrence, 1913: 412), declaring the relationship's end. Yet the rupture of the relationship does not resolve the predicament—Paul's fissure between spirit and body does not heal with Miriam's departure; he merely oscillates from one pathological state to another: leaving Miriam, the embodiment of spirit, for Clara, the embodiment of flesh. What the capillary infiltration of discipline ultimately produces is a fractured subject—incapable of independence in stance, incapable of unity in desire, incapable of self-coherence in spirit.

4.3 Clara: The Persistence of Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma

While Clara Dawkins offers Paul a fleeting opportunity to reclaim his bodily desire, her presence ultimately reveals the intransigence of disciplinary power. His struggle through Clara does not break the disciplinary cycle but instead leads to an inescapable cycle, proving that the internalised norms of his past remain inescapable.

4.3.1 Attempted Resistance: Bodily Attraction and Its Limitations

In *Sons and Lovers*, after enduring Mrs. Morel's coercive discipline and Miriam's spiritual confinement, Paul encounters Clara in the workplace—another pivotal figure in the unfolding of his subjective dilemma. She briefly triggers Paul's reflection upon his predicament, yet ultimately reinforces, in yet another form, the intransigence of bodily discipline. Unlike Mrs. Morel's coercive control rooted in maternal authority, or Miriam's concealed spiritual bondage, Clara's influence is grounded in corporeality and emotional intensity. Her appearance offers Paul, long subjected to the dual repression of spirit and body, a fleeting possibility of release, prompting him to begin interrogating his own fractured subjectivity. Yet, constrained by a deep-seated discipline long since internalized, Paul fails to achieve genuine self-awakening or liberation. Instead, Clara's own anxieties and desires transform her into yet another disciplinarian, and Paul's repeated attempts to resist discipline, only to be recaptured, bear witness to the very core characteristic of disciplinary power—its intransigence.

Clara exerts the operative form of discipline not as a disciplinarian, but rather its very antithesis. Clara's distinctiveness lies in her rejection of the spiritual asceticism that Miriam championed, and her unabashed embrace of her own bodily desires and emotional authenticity. As a woman who had endured a failed marriage and long suppressed her own desires, she harbors an inner spirit of rebellion against social norms and moral constraints. A committed feminist, she boldly separated from her husband Baxter and, while still legally married, entered into a relationship with Paul, igniting a mutual attraction grounded in bodily intimacy—a sharp contrast to the Platonic spiritual bond between Paul and Miriam.

For Paul, long trapped by his mother's and Miriam's discipline in a fissure between soul and body, his carnal relationship with Clara becomes, for a time, a rare form of resistance. Their relationship is grounded from the outset in bodily attraction. Clara appears early in the novel, when Miriam shows Paul a photograph of her. What Paul notices first in this photograph is Clara's body: her strong shoulders and full head of red hair. Within the Western literary tradition, such physical features conventionally signify sensual beauty and robust carnal desire; one may thus say that Lawrence's characterization of Clara points from the very beginning toward the corporeal dimension. After his prolonged and torturous

emotional experience with Miriam, Paul “was nearly always at Clara’s side” (Lawrence, 1913: 423). Moreover, he even begins to question his mother’s power: when discussing marriage with his mother, he refuses, declaring, “So long as you live, I shall never find the right woman” (Lawrence, 1913: 490).

Yet it is precisely within this seemingly transgressive relationship that the intransigence of disciplinary power began gradually to reveal itself. Even as Paul resolves to embrace his own desires, he falls into a dependence on Clara’s body. He believes himself to hold the initiative in this relationship; yet when Clara, angered by Paul’s ambiguous feelings toward Miriam, refuses intimacy and leaves him to take the train home alone, Paul is thrown into passivity and restless torment (Lawrence, 1913:456-460). This scene reveals the first layer of disciplinary intransigence: even when the object of discipline temporarily escapes the original disciplinarian, the dependence structures long since internalized cause him to unwittingly surrender agency within the new relationship, thereby furnishing conditions for a new round of discipline to take root.

Later in the story, Clara becomes progressively estranged into yet another disciplinarian. She yearns to establish a deeper emotional connection with Paul, yet finds it perpetually impossible to enter his inner world. Clara tells Paul frankly: “You’ve never given yourself to me” (Lawrence, 1913: 507). It is precisely this implicit resistance on Paul’s part that precipitates the metamorphosis of Clara’s disciplinary form—no longer content with the initial free relationship grounded in bodily intimacy, she begins to exert pressure upon Paul through emotional coercion. When Paul attempts to maintain some distance from her, Clara’s responses grow sharp and accusatory: she says to him, “You’ve never loved me. You love Miriam, you’ve always loved her” (Lawrence, 1913: 508), and then “she began to cry, her tears falling one by one onto Paul’s hand” (Lawrence, 1913: 509), using tears and reproach to drive Paul into guilt and passivity. Clara, who had initially been a resistant partner offering Paul a possibility of unity between spirit and body, has thus metamorphosed into a new disciplinarian—a concrete textual demonstration of disciplinary intransigence. As Foucault reveals in *The History of Sexuality*, power relations are not unidirectional domination, but a mobile strategic situation—power derives its stability precisely from its capacity to “incorporate resistance into its own operations, making it a constituent part of the reproduction of power” (Foucault, 1978: 95-96). Clara’s transformation from a resistant partner into a disciplinary partner is a concrete textual demonstration of this very mechanism.

4.3.2 The Dilemma of Inevitability: The Inescapable Cycle of Discipline

The disciplinary intransigence determines that Paul is ultimately unable to escape his subjective predicament through his relationship with Clara. As bodily passion gradually subsides, Paul falls into a new bewilderment: he could neither fully accept Clara's mode of affection nor genuinely cast off the shackles of past discipline; he even unconsciously applies the disciplinary standards of his mother and Miriam to judge Clara, recoiling from her bodily initiative and emotional directness. He begins frequently bringing up Miriam in Clara's presence; when discussing marriage with his mother, he refuses, declaring, "So long as you live, I shall never find the right woman" (Lawrence, 1913: 490); while on a seaside holiday with Clara, he thinks her "fretting, and never satisfied" (Lawrence, 1913: 499). Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* that the reason disciplinary power is so intransigent lies in the fact that it is not imposed upon the individual from without, but through repeated training and internalization, ultimately enters into "the gestures, the movements, the everyday practices of the individual, and becomes part of his bodily techniques" (Foucault, 1977: 136). Paul's resistance to Clara's bodily initiative is manifest evidence of this internalization—the discipline of Mrs. Morel and Miriam had long since been deposited as Paul's bodily technique, becoming the unconscious framework through which he perceived and judged intimate relationships. Even as he sought to cast off discipline through Clara, this framework continues to exercise its power in silence, rendering him incapable of receiving Clara with fresh eyes.

Ultimately, after a brawl with Clara's husband Baxter, Paul chooses to withdraw and return Clara to him. This resolution is not liberation, but the ultimate confirmation of disciplinary intransigence: Paul finds in this relationship not self-redemption, but a deeper, more visceral appreciation of the inescapability of his own predicament. What this reveals is a thoroughgoing paralysis of normative capacity—pathological life is not life without norms, but life that has "lost the capacity to create new norms," and can only rigidly cling to old ones, or "exhaust itself oscillating among multiple sets of norms without ever being able to establish a new stability" (Canguilhem, 1991: 186). Paul's trajectory is the complete enactment of this pathological process: Mrs. Morel's discipline deprives him of the capacity to independently construct norms; Miriam's discipline plunges him into a fissure between spirit and body; and the relationship with Clara ultimately proves that even when confronted with someone who offered him a momentary possibility of release, he is powerless to convert that possibility into genuine self-reconstruction. He flees from Clara, yet moves not toward freedom, but back into the inertia of the old disciplinary structures. The disciplinary system within which Paul is trapped thus exposes its most entrenched characteristic: it "incorporates resistance into its own operations, making it a constituent part of the reproduction of power"

(Foucault, 1978: 95-96). Every effort to break free is recaptured, and the predicament is perpetuated and consolidated in ever new forms. Paul's subjective dilemma is thereby locked into an inescapable cycle.

5. Conclusion

This study examines Paul Morel's subjective dilemma in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* through the lens of Foucault's bodily discipline and Canguilhem's life norms. Through the analysis of the progressive disciplinary system formed by the three female figures—Mrs. Morel, Miriam, and Clara—this study has traced the origin, infiltration, and consolidation of Paul's subjective predicament.

The research findings can be stated as three points. First, Mrs. Morel's discipline, with productivity as its core mechanism, lays the origin and foundational framework of Paul's subjective dilemma. She does not suppress Paul through violence; rather, through emotional possession, bodily companionship, and the establishment of behavioral norms, she produces "pleasing his mother" as the core drive of Paul's existence, thereby depriving him of the capacity to independently construct his own existential stance. Second, Miriam's discipline, characterized by capillary infiltration, drives Paul's subjective dilemma deeper into the spiritual dimension. In the name of religious piety and spiritual purity, and through her intimate spiritual relationship with Paul, she silently infiltrates the norm of "repressing bodily desire" into the depths of Paul's consciousness, plunging him into a thoroughgoing fissure between spirit and body. Third, although Clara briefly provides Paul with a bodily liberation and an opportunity for resistance, she ultimately becomes estranged into a new disciplinarian, confirming the intransigence of disciplinary power—once discipline is internalized, it recaptures every act of resistance, locking the subjective predicament into an inescapable cycle. Synthesizing these findings, this study argues that Paul's subjective dilemma does not arise from a single external oppression, but is the cumulative result of three layers of discipline superimposed upon and reinforcing one another. Through the continuous operation of productivity, capillary infiltration, and intransigence, disciplinary power shapes a life subject originally possessed of independent potential into a fractured individual—incapable of autonomy in stance, incapable of unity in desire, incapable of self-coherence in spirit.

Based on the above findings, the significance of this study can be articulated in two respects. At the level of textual interpretation, by focusing on Paul as the central character, this study addresses the gap in existing scholarship, where studies from the perspective of body politics have largely concentrated on the three female figures while neglecting Paul himself. Furthermore, it offers a new interpretive pathway for understanding the deeper implications of the novel's open ending—namely, that discipline can shape and alienate the subject, but cannot wholly extinguish the possibility that the individual may, at the site of discipline's rupture, undertake a new tentative gesture toward reconstruction. At the

theoretical level, this study organically integrates Foucault's disciplinary theory with Canguilhem's theory of life norms, employing the three core concepts of productivity, capillary infiltration, and intransigence as analytical instruments to conduct a layered dissection of the mechanisms by which Paul's subjective dilemma is formed, thereby advancing, to a certain degree, the depth and systematicity of the application of body politics theory in literary textual analysis.

This study also has a number of limitations. First, the analysis centers primarily on Paul's relationships with the three female characters, while paying relatively little attention to the role of male figures such as Mr. Morel and William in the formation of Paul's subjectivity; a more complete analysis of the family's gender structure could yield a more multi-dimensional explanation of Paul's predicament. Second, this study devotes limited attention to the industrial civilization context and class structure within which the novel is set, a socio-historical dimension that is likewise indispensable for understanding the sources and operative fields of disciplinary power.

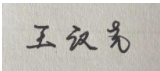
Future research may proceed in the following directions. First, the alternative form of corporeality represented by Mr. Morel—a crude, alcoholic male body consumed by industrial civilization yet never fully incorporated into domestic discipline—could be brought into the analytical framework, and its potential role in the construction of Paul's subjectivity could be explored. Second, *Sons and Lovers* could be situated within the broader arc of Lawrence's creative career, and a longitudinal comparison with his later works such as *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* could be conducted, so as to examine whether Lawrence's thinking on the subjective dilemma of the individual underwent change and deepening, thereby achieving a more comprehensive understanding of Lawrence's literary response to the existential condition of modern humanity.

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附录：本科毕业论文（设计）中使用AI工具情况说明表

学 院	外国语学院	专业	英语
学生姓名	王汉尧	学号	2219112019
指导教师	陈建君		
论文（设计）题目	An Analysis of Paul's Subjectivity Dilemma in <i>Sons and Lovers</i> from the Perspective of Body Politics		
是否使用 生成式人工智能	☐ 未使用AI工具 ☒ 使用AI工具		
使用生成式人工智能的阐述或申明 (可加页)	本人在毕业论文（设计）的撰写过程中，使用了“Deepseek”应用程序，来辅助毕业论文（设计）“Body Politics: From Georges Canguilhem to Michel Foucault”章节的句子翻译，该软件在英语学术语言表达和翻译句式结构上为我提供了参考。具体内容为“Clara exerts the operative form of discipline not as a disciplinarian, but rather its very antithesis. Clara's distinctiveness lies in her rejection of the spiritual asceticism that Miriam championed, and her unabashed embrace of her own bodily desires and emotional authenticity. As a woman who had endured a failed marriage and long suppressed her own desires, she harbors an inner spirit of rebellion against social norms and moral constraints. A committed feminist, she boldly separated from her husband Baxter and, while still legally married, entered into a relationship with Paul, igniting a mutual attraction grounded in bodily intimacy—a sharp contrast to the Platonic spiritual bond between Paul and Miriam.”使用时间集中在2026年3月，提问指令为“请以高度严谨的学术态度，对我所给出的英语原文进行语法检查”。对于AI生成的内容，已进行了严格的审查和修改，确保其与我的研究主题和思路一致。同时，并未在文中直接使用AI生成文本，以维护学术诚信和尊重知识产权。		
学生诚信申明	本人郑重声明，上述关于生成式人工智能使用情况的陈述真实无误，已对使用此类技术的所有细节进行了全面且诚实的报告。本人深知学术诚信的重要性，如有任何隐瞒或虚假之处，愿承担学术不端行为带来的相关惩处。 学生（签字）： 2026 年 5 月 15 日		

Acknowledgements

At the moment I strike these words, the spring outside the window is gentle and the scenery bright. Looking back, my four-year undergraduate journey is drawing to a close. I deem these four years at Huaqiao University a period brimming with gains and growth. Over the past four years, I have complained countless times about the cold, damp winters and the overly humid air here. Yet, as I type these final words, a surge of reluctance and emotion wells up in my heart, lingering like the soft spring breeze.

Throughout my four years of academic pursuit, I owe my deepest gratitude to all the teachers of the School of Foreign Languages at Huaqiao University for their nurturing and guidance, especially my supervisor, Professor Chen Jianjun, during the writing of this thesis. Without the hard work and dedication of all the teachers, how could I have successfully completed my four-year undergraduate studies, and how could I leave this university with a wealth of knowledge? In the process of writing this thesis, it was precisely due to Professor Chen's guidance and encouragement that I was finally able to complete the research and writing of this study on time and with high quality. I am a student who tends to be stubborn and get bogged down in trivial details. During the writing of this thesis, I once felt deeply troubled by the topic selection and the writing of the main chapters. Fortunately, I had a good teacher by my side. Professor Chen held several face-to-face discussions with me, offering many valuable suggestions. I am obtuse and may have caused much trouble to all the teachers—please accept my sincere apologies.

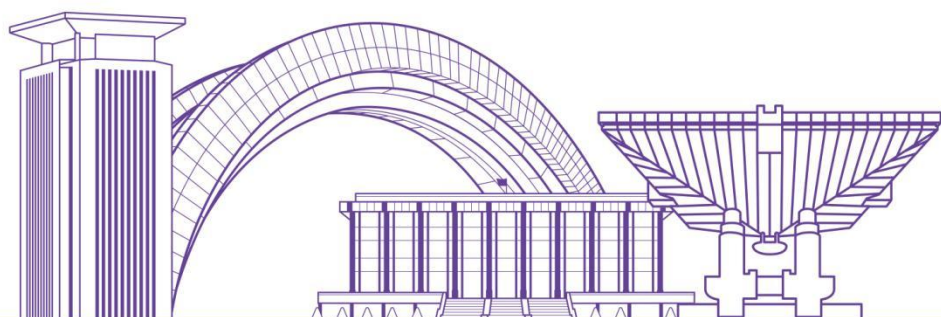
Secondly, I must express my gratitude to my parents and my elder sister. On my arduous journey of learning, my family has always been my most reliable support. The care and support from my family have always been the motivation and confidence for me to move forward. When I was born, in an era when the family was materially poor, my parents still insisted on providing me with plenty of books. Without this, I would not have developed such a profound interest in literature and language. When I was trapped by trivial matters of school and life, feeling agitated and uneasy, my parents could always perceive the changes in my mood keenly. During video calls, all my anxiety and fear would dissipate with the warm smiles of my parents. Father, mother, you have worked so hard!

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preparation for the postgraduate entrance examination some time ago, you have always been my closest comrades and brothers, bringing me endless joy and encouragement. Thank you all!

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The dust has settled, and the sky is clear and boundless. With this thesis, I conclude my beloved undergraduate life.



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