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Summary of The Kite
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The name of Oedipus has been borrowed from the classical story of king Oedipus who unknowingly married his own mother and had children by her. The psychologists, Sigmund Freud and others use the term Oedipus complex for 'a manifestation of infantile sensuality in the relations of the child to its parents. It is a state in which a person shows excessive affection for the parent opposite in sex to him or herself, and corresponding distance from others'. A great part of his life is actually controlled by this subconscious desires and passions, over which he has no control.

The Kite by Somerset Maugham is a study of particular psychological theories with reference to particular characters. The central theme of the story is Oedipal and it has been examined in all its ramifications. The story line is based on the primal relationship between Mrs. Beatrice Sunbury and her son Herbert. Here is replete with psychological truths, revealing attitudes, situations, and emotional states.

The over-possessive mother exercises an unhealthy influence on the emotional development of the growing boy. From the very early days Mrs. Sunbury wishes to nurture her son self-centric and possessive, her advice to her son is quite understandable. She says, "Now, Herbert, do what I do, keep yourself to yourself and don't have anything to do with them than you can help". Even she does not allow a single independent assertion on Herbert. Hence, when Herbert is twenty years of age, holding a steady job, Herbert's father Samuel Sunbury asks if Herbert be get married Mrs. Sunbury's reply is sharp and vicious. She answers: "I don't hold with a man marrying till he knows his own mind' "And a man does not know his own mind till he is thirty or thirty-five". Such a typical negative response is obviously of a jealous mother unwilling to share her son with a wife and who is trapping the soul of her son and ruins his personal.

Herbert loves her mother almost like a mother-lover. The mother is the very axis and pole of his life. The bond between this mother and her son deepens when they fly the kites as fancy and hobby almost like a ritualistic manner every Saturday. Flying kites is like an imaginary escapism from the monotony of life. The soul of Herbert is so possessed by the mother figure that this kite flying is like nearing to the mother denying the rest of attraction. If emotions are treated as manifestation of physico-psychic phenomena, Herbert's fatal attraction for the kite is cul de sac of mother fixation.

Herbert's love for Betty and his choice of getting married to her is a desperate attempt to free himself from the excessive attachment to his mother. But he cannot give to Betty what he has already given to his mother; and thus results the terrible and torturing conflict within him. Like Mrs. Morel in Lawrence' Sons and Lovers Mrs. Sunbury is Jealous of her daughter-in-law. Mrs. Sunbury dislikes Betty who will suck all her Son's Soul and leave nothing for her. Therefore, she does her best to break up their relationship. In the dark shadow of the mother image that comes between Paul's relations with Miriam in Sons and Lovers, can have its

parallel to Herbert – Betty relationship. Alike Paul, Herbert is incapable of satisfactory sexual adjustment owing to his mother fixation. The Oedipus complex in him has weakened and stunted emotionally.

In this story the whole thing is given a symbolic significance through flying a kite. It is an act of affectionate attachment. Even it is not a plaything, rather an extension of Beatrice's control over her son. After the marriage what Betty objects and rebels against is Herbert's flying of the kite on Saturdays with his parents. She dislikes this childish act and warns Herbert from doing this silly favour. But Herbert's fatal attraction for the kite is a string of mother fixation. Mrs. Sunbury pulls the thread of the kite (emotional attachment) to control over her son. When all the possible pleadings result in vain, Betty hacks down the kite which ultimately aggravates the situation. Herbert chooses the prison instead of providing the alimony to his wife. The smashing of the kite is a kind of matricide for him which he can not forbear.

The entire complication of the story can thus be read through the Freudian complexes. Maugham is an explorer of human relationships and in this story he has studied sex relationship from different angles. Mrs. Sunbury and Betty are both wrong in being too possessive. Both of them want to possess the soul or the personae of Herbert. But satisfactory relationship result only when we recognize the otherness of the other individuals. Successful adjustment would have resulted had these two women recognized that Herbert has a separate identity with separate personae of his own, which can reach fulfillment in its own way. The mother fails to recognize this truth and so ruins the life of Herbert.