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INDUSTRIALISM IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S EARLY FICTION

by

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B.A., SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL STUDIES UNIVERSITY, 1982

M.A., SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL STUDIES UNIVERSITY, 1985

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of

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ABSTRACT

It is often taken for granted that D. H. Lawrence's works show a 'natural' rebellion against industrialism and urban dystopia. My study challenges this hermeneutical circle of history, culture and fiction by using Marxist cultural criticism, Perry Anderson and Martin Wiener to argue that anti-industrialism in English Culture is homologous with the dominance of the rentier class and financial capitalists. The point is illustrated through a brief examination of the coalmining industry in Lawrence's time. The coalmining industry spread a general prosperity in which Lawrence's family shared; however, it also experienced a relative decline in productivity due to resistance to technical innovation in the latter part of the 19th century.

Starting from this new perspective on culture and history, the study also takes into account Lawrence's working class origin and his psycho-sexual problem with his middle-class mother and miner father. Thus Lawrence's early fiction is situated in a dynamic context and its creation is shaped on many levels.

Lawrence's first novel, *The White Peacock*, advocates a pastoral ideology that can hardly contain the social contradictions which the text reveals and tries to suppress. In his early industrial stories and plays, however, the author explores the sexual battle in the miners' families with much

candor and, in depicting the working class community from within, subverts the traditional literary portrayal of industrial workers as barbarians in need of being tamed by a middle-class culture of refinement and domesticity. Lawrence's realism reaches maturity in *Sons and Lovers*, in which he struggles with his personal experience of growth and sexual perplexity in shaping it into a *Bildungsroman*. The novel shows a more potent force, unleashed by modern industrialism, that challenges the dominant middle-class culture with a new chronotope of sensual vitality and human communion. Thus Lawrence's early fiction exhibits ambiguities and ambivalences to industrialism that are actually a living embodiment of the personal, cultural and social conflicts of his time. It reveals not only the dominance, but also the subversion, of anti-industrialism in English Culture when tested in the text and its context.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Li Ping for sharing with me for years the wonderful .
experience of reading, translating and writing on D. H. Lawrence

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Introduction

D. H. Lawrence is often discussed as an example of a 'lived experience' of that version of cultural history in which an organic, rural Old England is disrupted and replaced by the mechanical social force of industrialism; culture by barbarism; order by anarchy. The list can go on and on, enumerating a general decline of English society and its values. This cultural theme started with the Industrial Revolution and has been carried on by such figures as Cobbett, Coleridge, Arnold, T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. Especially among critics of English literature, this version of history is very popular and influential in interpretation and evaluation. It is under this rubric that F. R. Leavis defends D. H. Lawrence and puts him in the canon of his Great Tradition.

This cultural assumption has been subjected to challenge and criticism in recent years. In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams examines the cultural attitude with a particular view to the real conditions in history. The Merry Old England, continually escalated to an idealized rural past, is often revealed as a mere apology for a feudal order of ruthless class exploitation and oppression. Criticisms of industrial capitalism, on the other hand, are examined as to whether they really represent the working class or the interests of the classes whose less efficient mode of production was threatened by the more advanced capitalist production, and whose dominance

was challenged by new social forces. Terry Eagleton in recent years has also attacked the organic ideal for its conservative and reactionary bent, a reification of an idealized culture in a certain historical period into 'the humanist tradition'.¹ This tradition does not consist of the rural myth only; but whatever form it takes, the condemnation of modernity and industrialism is taken for granted. The central problem of the cultural debate is industrialism and the different cultural responses to it from different classes and interest groups. What has really happened since the industrial revolution? Is there a uniform 'human' response, or are there different responses, some of which may not be allowed to be voiced in the mainstream culture? What class interests do these responses serve? What influence does a cultural myth exert on history and fiction?

Along with this debate about English Culture is a continual re-examination of D. H. Lawrence. His rural organic myth is widely challenged, but his attitudes towards industrialism elicit more complex and ambivalent responses from both conservative and progressive critics. After all, who wants to be suspected of advocating the ideology of progress for the interests of industrial capitalists? It seems that we are locked in this hopeless either...or... oscillation between the city and the country, industrial society and rural society, industrial exploitation and alienation and rural, organic harmony. This oscillation depends on an implicit acceptance of the version of history projected by the interest groups threatened by

industrialism. In the same way, as Graham Holderness has pointed out, many Lawrentian critics have taken Lawrence's version of his background for granted.² To be critical, we have to go outside the cultural bounds for different versions of history.

Anti-industrialism is the major premise of Leavisite criticism of English Cultural approach and is an implicit assumption in American New Critical approach. Since this paper challenges a very fundamental aspect in Lawrence criticism that has seldom been questioned by other critics, I do not think it necessary to have a detailed survey of Lawrence criticism, though the few dissenting voices will be referred to in the body of my thesis.

In my thesis, I will explore the industrial theme in Lawrence's early fiction from *The White Peacock* to *Sons and Lovers*. In this period, Lawrence was trying to gain entry into the literary circles of a culture where few writers came from working class origins, to write in order to be recognized by society. He was also struggling to find meaning in his own personal life troubled by his Oedipal fixation in a family split by his lower middle-class mother and working class father. An examination of the cultural, psychological and social forces that shaped Lawrence's personal response to industrialism, a response that came from a miner's son as he tried to use his talents for literary acceptance, would help illuminate the dynamic relationship between culture and society mediated through fiction. It would also throw some light on Lawrence's

transition from his ~~first~~ immature pastoral novel to a realist novel of great psychological complexity and social conflict about the miners' life. This transition means not only artistic maturity, but also a more frank portrayal of the author's emotional responses as he confronts the complexity of his own life experience. Before we talk about response, though, we have to start with the reality that elicits the response and the culture that shapes it.

CHAPTER I

INDUSTRIALISM, ENGLISH CULTURE AND LAWRENCE

Lawrence's essay 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' (1930) is often quoted as the historical background against which his works are judged. It begins:

I was born nearly forty-four years ago, in Eastwood, a mining village of some three thousand souls, about eight miles from Nottingham, and one mile from the small stream, the Erewash, which divides Nottinghamshire from Derbyshire. It is hilly country, looking west to Crich and towards Matlock, sixteen miles away, and east and north-east towards Mansfield and the Sherwood Forest district. To me it seemed, and still seems, an extremely beautiful countryside, just between the red sandstone and the oak-trees of Nottingham, and the cold limestone, the ash-trees, the stone fences of Derbyshire. To me, as a child and a young man, it was still the Old England of the forest and agricultural past; there were no motor-cars, the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape, and Robin Hood and his merry men were not very far away.¹

However, recent research has shown that this version is as fictional as his more imaginative works, which, due to their semi-autobiographical nature, are also often quoted directly by biographers without questioning their validity. If we contrast it, as John Worthen does, with another piece of less imaginative literature, *Wright's Directory of Nottingham 1893*, we shall get a different landscape:

Eastwood 'is a parish and large and improving village, situated on the top and sides of a considerable eminence on the Alfreton Road, Erewash river, Nottingham and Cromford canals, and borders of Derbyshire. It is a mile from Langley Mill station, on the Erewash Valley branch of the Midlands railway, half-a-mile from the Eastwood station, on the Great Northern Co.'s line from Nottingham to Pinxton, 8 1/2 miles N. W. from Nottingham, 10 1/2 from Derby, and 135 from London... Present estimated population over 5,000.'²

As John Worthen has pointed out,

Lawrence's eye passes clean over the industrial landscape, and the links between that landscape and its market; the only 'link' he notes is the river, which he views as a border, not a waterway. His landscape is empty of canals and railway lines; it is full of rocks and streams and trees. Finally, the eye looks back over the ground it has traversed and, as if for the first time, notices the industry: 'the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape.' In a sense: the very things that had made modern Eastwood, its houses, its industry, its population, its expansion, are seen as accidental, in contrast with the eye's and the heart's own place: the countryside.³

Thus we see a typical idealisation that Raymond Williams has traced in *The Country and the City* throughout English literature: the author idealizes his childhood as Edenic and laments the later experiences as fallen. Lawrence rusticates the industrial landscape and then presents a picture of industry invading and defiling the countryside.

Not only is the landscape picture selectively rural, but also life in general in Nottingham according to Lawrence: 'the life was a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England of Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and George Eliot.'⁴ Statistics show that in Eastwood the proportion of agricultural population in the occupational structure is 5.4 (1851), 4.5(1861), 1.4(1871) and 1.7(1921), whereas that of the mining population is 19.8(1851), 29.2(1861), 36.2(1871) and 43.2(1921).⁵ As Graham Holderness has pointed out, 'Eastwood was not...a semi-rural village, but an industrialised community.'⁶ Mining was no accident in the life there; it had developed as a natural extension of the cultivation of the land in a mixed

economy. Coal was a product for domestic consumption and coal-mining could be viewed as another branch of farming. The landowners had no scruples in utilizing mines for profits and agricultural labourers worked as miners during slack seasons. Class struggle between lords and tenants as to their respective rights to coal can be traced far back in history when coal became a commodity.⁷

The development of the coal industry was inaugurated by big landowners who, in 1739 in Nottingham for example, owned and worked most of the mines in the area.⁸ The gradual development of mining was an organic part of the economy as a whole. The construction of the canals and railways and the consequent growth of market size gave a great boost to the industry so that it absorbed a large proportion of labour from agriculture and hosiery (in the latter, new powered machinery destroyed the frame-knitting trade). Landowners would then lease out lands and transfer capital to the more profitable mining industry. For example, in the early 18th century, the founders of Barber, Walker leased coal from landowners like Squire Edge, Lord of the Manor of Strelley for 99 years at a rent of 1s 3d per stock load, equal to about 6d a ton.⁹ So the growth of the mining industry was a natural product of economic growth. It should be noted that in the Nottingham area, mining did not dominate society as completely as in other areas to the North or in Wales. Nottingham miners were more intermingled with the middle-class, and more influenced by Southern ways; in 1926 they

refused to join the national strike, and again in 1984.

Still, the industrial expansion led to a growth in every aspect of material life. Sales of coal increased by 169 percent between 1803 and 1849, and by a further 442 percent between 1849 and 1869 in the Erewash Valley mines. The output of Barber, Walker's collieries expanded from about 150,000 tons a year in the 1850s to just over a million tons a year in the early 1890s. The numbers employed in coal-mining increased from 19.8 percent of males aged over 10 in Eastwood Parish to 43.2 percent of males aged over 12 in Eastwood urban district. Population increased from 1,120 in 1811 to 1,720 in 1851 and to 4,815 in 1901 in Eastwood Urban district. The wages of piece-work colliers in the Eastwood district more than doubled between the 1850s and 1914 when they averaged 9s 10 1/2d a shift. The miners were able to support larger families: their family size in Nottingham increased from 4.75 in 1861 to 5.06 in 1871 and about 36 percent of miners' families had four or more children in 1871. The Barber, Walker company burned down thatched cottages and erected several hundred houses in Eastwood in the 1870s and 1880s, thus greatly improving the quality of housing for the miners. The educational level of the mining district was also greatly raised. In 1871, 82% of the sons and 77% of the daughters, aged 5 to 9 of Eastwood miners attended school, while in 10 to 14 age group, only 49% and 50% attended school respectively. By 1890s most of the children in these age groups were at school. The quality of education was considered to vary

between 'satisfactory' and 'very good' by the inspectorate. A few elite scholars of the miners' children were able to take training in the mining industry at college, or became pupil teachers in local schools.

For leisure, the miners not only had the pub but also the cultivation of gardens as a side-line income; the more pious also supported the chapel. There were periodic wakes and fairs, music and literature, and some miners even bought pianos at home. The Mechanics' Institute, partly financed by Barber, Walker, had a library of over 3,000 volumes in the mid-1890s, all well-used by the public. As to technological improvement, at Brinsley Colliery where Lawrence's father used to work, a shaft was sunk in 1855 to the Deep Soft Seam, and a ventilation furnace was built to provide a more reliable flow of air than the natural convection of the former days. In 1872, the ventilation furnace was replaced by a fan, a new shaft was sunk alongside the old one and new headgear and winding engines were installed. The result was greater productivity and also greater safety. On the whole, the miners' life was improving with economic growth. As G. A. Tomlinson recollected, 'My home, for all its hardships, was a wonderful place.... The miner is not, and never has been, the miserable object that writers would have the general public believe.'¹⁰

The improvement in material and cultural life shown by the above facts is not, and need not be, construed as propaganda for the ideology of progress on behalf of the ruthless and

exploitative capitalists. The miners contributed their labour in the general expansion and prosperity of the trade. Trade union negotiations were constant and while wages rose with profits during boom seasons, many trade union leaders were denied employment by coal-owners after strikes and agitations. The owners would also seek to reduce wages during a trade slump when they could afford a strike. Another reason why the miners were better paid with more benefits than most of the other labourers was that mining was a very dirty and dangerous job: better payment would keep the labour force stable and attract labour from other trades and other areas. Better safety measures also brought higher productivity in the mines. In fine, if the Industrial Revolution had brought forth a class of ruthless and exploitative capitalists in succession to the oppressive feudal landlords, it had also brought forth modern technology that would liberate the productive forces from the bonds of the feudal productive mode and its relations, and the modern proletariat who were more united and tied up with the more advanced mode of production, the development of which enabled them to struggle for and achieve better standards of material and cultural life and better working conditions.

The Lawrence family was closely tied up with and shared in the prosperity of the mining industry. D. H. Lawrence's paternal grandfather John Lawrence was a company tailor for Brinsley mine. Two of his sons, George and John Arthur (DHL's father) were well-to-do miners. In Lawrence's generation, the eldest

brother became a textile engineer, the second brother, a shipping clerk. 'A walk around Eastwood shows that the Lawrence family had a better house each time they moved, as Arthur Lawrence shared in the general prosperity of the mining industry.'¹¹ D. H. Lawrence's sister later had an even better and more lovely house as she rose in the world, as Lawrence discovered on his return to Bestwood in 1926.¹² Why, then, is he so bitter about industrialism and so attached to the rural myth? Lawrence's vision is more cultural and psychological than sociological. He is not without perception when he describes or re-creates the social contradictions and crises of his time, although he had formed his view in the general prosperity period, before the 1921 depression. Before going into a cultural analysis of his ideas about industrialism, I would like to dwell a little more on the social and economic contradictions of the period, in order to put English culture and the Edwardian frame of mind in its proper context.

In his opposition to industrialism from the standpoint of rural organic myth, Lawrence downplayed the achievements of the Industrial Revolution. When he directly treated industrial issues, we can still discern the influence of this basic stand. In his first, mainly pastoral novel *The White Peacock*, there is a brief mention of a miners' strike: 'The men in the mines of Tempest, Warrall and Co. came out on strike on a question of the re-arranging of the working system down below.'¹³ What is at issue is not clearly explained. The Cambridge edition has the

following note: 'The real-life original is Barber Walker & co.; their miners went on strike in 1893 and 1908, when Thomas Philip Barber forced unpopular modernisation.' 'What 'modernisation'? The novel and the note are both vague. From the context of the strike in the novel, it seems that Leslie Tempest, heir to the local coal-mining magnate, is trying some entrepreneurial and technological innovations for more efficiency and profits and the miners suffer as a result. Thus a contradiction between the men and the machine can be established within the coal industry in addition to such contrasts as the rural vs. the industrial and nature vs. civilization in the novel. In *Women in Love*, Gerald, another heir to the local coal-mining magnate, is also introducing modern entrepreneurial and technological innovations in spite of strong opposition from the miners on strike.

In Lawrence's time there were many miners' strikes including the famous 1893 lockout, nearly all of which were concerned with wage increases or maintaining a minimum wage which coal-owners would try to reduce during a trade slump. The trade unions' activity and their success varied with the slump and boom of the market economy. Instead of exploring the strikes as contradictions between the miners and the coal-owners over profits within the framework of industrial development, Lawrence postulated the contradiction as one between men and the machine, to fit his Luddite anti-industrial scheme. During that period when machines had become part and parcel of industrial life and helped to keep up the vitality of the economy after

coal-mining's first Industrial Revolution (1840-1860), there were some local disputes over the introduction of new techniques and equipment, but the miners were not opposed to technology per se; they were again concerned with maintaining their wage level. The contradiction was not fundamental and insoluble. During that period in the East Midlands, the introduction of coal cutting machines caused a series of disputes over rates of pay in many mines and 'at Clifton and Eastwood, strikes over the prices to be paid for machine-holed coal lasted for over a year and six months respectively. These two disputes were settled by arbitration in 1910.'¹⁵ In another dispute, the miners preferred to work with candles for better illumination and when forced to use less intense flame safety lamps, they demanded higher pay. When later electric lamps were introduced, some miners demanded on strike that the company should provide the new lamps and many companies agreed on a Council advice to buy electric lamps when they saw that efficient lighting meant more productivity.'¹⁶ So the miners' interests did not always lie contrary to technological innovations. This can also be shown even in the abolition of the butty system, which was much idealized by Lawrence:

And the pit did not mechanize men. On the contrary. Under the butty system, the miners worked underground as a sort of intimate community, they knew each other practically naked, and with curious close intimacy, and the darkness and the underground remoteness of the pit 'stall', and the continual presence of danger, made the physical, instinctive, and intuitional contact between men very highly developed, a contact almost as close as touch, very real and very powerful.'¹⁷

However, in 1918 (eleven years before Lawrence's writing of the

above), a ballot vote of union members in East Midlands showed a large majority against the butty system and in favour of the 'all-throw-in' system under which all men in a stall shall share equally in the contract earnings. The agreement met with oppositions from butty-led trade union branches until the introduction of face conveyors convinced most companies that the 'all-throw-in' system should replace the butty system as a more efficient way of production. Here, the miners' more democratic economic demands are in line with technological development.¹⁸

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence created the character of a mine manager, Tom Brangwen, a Satanic figure who modernizes the management and technical processes in the mine and turns the mining town into a dystopia of dark dissolution and ugliness. In reality, however, the mine managers of this period were indifferently remunerated despite their long training, burdensome duties and onerous responsibilities; so that, though miners were the 'aristocracy' of the British working class, the post of mine management was not attractive to the professionally-ambitious and able young men from outside the industry.¹⁹ The managers lacked vision and organizing power and were far from innovative. Nor were the coal-owners, who--like the land-owners in mid-19th century East Midlands who preferred 'to rely on the certain income from royalties and wayleaves'²⁰ by leasing out their lands--relied on the sure profits of a mainly labour-intensive industry instead of continuing with technological and managerial modernization. Historians concur

that declining labour productivity and increasing costs resulted in a general deterioration in Britain's relative efficiency as a coal-producer so that in 1920s the British coal industry was beaten by Germany and went into decline. 'Over the quarter-century between 1884-88 and 1909-13 the industry sustained a loss of 20 per cent in output per man employed within it.' 'Employment in coal-mining increased by 220 per cent between 1881 and 1911 over a period in which the total occupied male population was expanding by less than 50 per cent.'²¹ 'In a situation where profit-making was relatively easy, [the owners] had failed to make use of the opportunities which new techniques and practices were offering the industry. So long as demand ran ahead of supply, as it seemingly did in most years between 1898 and 1914, the British coal owner was content to leave well alone and simply ride the tide of the industry's success.'²² As A. J. Taylor has pointed out in discussing mechanization and the coal industry of the period:

The significance of the failure to make use of the coal-cutter does not lie primarily in its immediate consequences for the efficiency of the industry but in the extent to which it indicates the presence of attitudes of mind that might affect the conduct of the industry at more general levels. Insofar as unwillingness to persevere with the coal-cutter was symptomatic not of a rational assessment of its potentialities but of the operation of conservative tendencies in the industry, its consequences could be far-reaching. The roots of such conservative tendencies are to be sought both in the manager's office and the boardroom.²³

The consequences are indeed so far-reaching that responsibility may not lie totally with the managers or the owners alone, who were operating within the large framework of the whole economy.

As M.W. Kirby says, '...the conclusion must be that declining labour productivity and resistance to structural change were the inevitable consequences of the distinctive economic environment in which colliery owners operated.'²⁴

The environment is political, economic and cultural. Martin Wiener in his book *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit (1850-1980)* examines the mainly anti-industrial, rustic and nostalgic attitudes in a middle-and upper-class culture in England since the middle of the last century and holds this culture responsible for the gradual economic lag in a country that first started the Industrial Revolution. These attitudes inculcated in the sentiments of the nation reflect the opposition to industrialism from more traditional interest groups such as the landed and financial interests and rentier class, who actually dominate over industrial capitalism. In opposition to orthodox Marxist scholars who usually take England as the archetypal capitalist country ruled by the industrial bourgeoisie, Perry Anderson has argued that in fact it has been the landed and financial capital of the rentier class that has dominated economically and politically over the manufacturing industry of capitalist entrepreneurs in England. That dominance has contributed to England's relative economic decline compared with Germany, the United States and Japan.²⁵

Viewed against this background, the discrepancies between Lawrence's fictional creation of industrialism and the reality

of history are not merely a difference between truth and lie, reality and fiction (which creates another reality), not merely an innocent nostalgia or a naive love of nature, or another bourgeois free artist's romantic rebellion. They are products of both culture and society, impregnated with social change and cultural persistence. Lawrence echoed the dominant social and cultural resistance to industrial change during the late Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian periods by advocating the Rural Myth and condemning industrialism. The industrial spirit was declining due to this resistance, despite superficial prosperity and boom made possible through the earlier Industrial Revolution. Fiction approaches history through ideology and culture. They are inseparable. Lawrence created his fiction under the dominant cultural influence of anti-industrialism. On the other hand, he was also one of the few English writers coming from a working class family background--born in a miner's family with a dominant mother who despised her working class husband, in an industrialized mining town. His anti-industrialism has personal and psychological origins in a social context of 'lived experiences' which also have subversive potentials in such an artist unconventional in many respects. Indeed, a careful examination of Lawrence's early fiction from *The White Peacock* through some short stories and plays to *Sons and Lovers* will reveal a process of gradual change and maturation from a typical Edwardian pastoral of nostalgia and sentimentalism, a middle-class or country gentry's denial of the industrial reality, to a more frank portrayal of working class

family life with much realistic complexity of social, psychological and cultural dynamisms. The general trend in his early fiction shows a characteristic English cultural tendency to condemn, tame, or control the dynamic forces released through industrialism, while as Lawrence's art matures, the fictional world also reveals the impossibility of such control, be it through rural myth or domestic ideology. Even in the industrial theme, to borrow a Lawrentian dictum, 'Never trust the artist. Trust the tale.'

CHAPTER II

PASTORAL AND DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY IN *THE WHITE PEACOCK*

Lawrence's first novel *The White Peacock*, written between 1906 and 1910, is a pastoral that catches the Edwardian mood of nostalgia for the past combined with a sombre apprehension of what is to come. The blight of industrialism has crept onto the beautiful countryside and replaced the 'organic' rural England with the new 'mechanical' life that shuts Lawrence's characters out of the lost Eden. The language is a bit too poetical and artificially pale, full of the so-called pathetic fallacies that a literary gentleman might use on a vacation excursion to the 'unspoiled' rural country. There is a strain of naturalism in its fascination with the ugly and the cruel, which may be an influence from the French naturalist writers like Maupassant, whose tales Lawrence secretly shared with Jessie Chambers. But he was also reading and translating Virgil's *Georgics* and his favourite anthology of poetry during the period was *The Golden Treasury*. One of his own poems was later anthologised in *Georgian Poetry: 1911-1912*, which Lawrence hailed in 1913 as a Romantic liberation of joy and life and nature from the nihilist realism of Ibsen, Flaubert and Hardy.² Viewed from today's perspective, it is not simply a matter of different 'isms.' *Georgian Poetry* was a curious revival of rural and pastoral myth that, in terms of poetic techniques, is but a bunch of false sentiments and artificialities, and, when viewed in the context of historical change, served to cover the deep class

contradictions and cultural, social crises of an out-moded, crumbling empire. In the same way, *The White Peacock* fails to deal adequately with the social contradictions and social change of the time, and, while trying to indict industrialism and advocate the rural myth, only reveals insoluble contradictions in its own perspective characteristic of Edwardian culture.

The major plot of the novel involves a love triangle between Lettie, a middle-class girl with college education, Leslie, heir to the local mine-owner, and George, son of a tenant farmer. An implicit contrast between industry and agriculture is built into this characterisation. Lettie and her brother Cyril, the narrator of the novel, are said to project Lawrence's own concerns, George is modelled on Jessie Chambers' brother Alan, while Leslie is modelled on G. H. Neville, a philanderer, Lawrence's friend.³ An early version of the novel has Lettie seduced and jilted by Leslie and later married by George--the stereotypical story that we may find in many Victorian novels depicting the rich and the poor. Jessie Chambers recalled reading this version,

The Novel, apart from its setting, seemed to me story-bookish and unreal. The upright young farmer, hopelessly in love with the superior young lady (very conscious of her social superiority) who had been served shabbily by a still more socially superior young man, married her after a puritanical exposition of the circumstances by her mother, and a highly dubious conjugal life began in the melancholy farmhouse, with, one imagined, Letty always in the parlour and George in the kitchen.⁴

The final version makes Lettie more in control of her suitors: she marries Leslie and dominates her home, though her life is

empty and George degenerates into an incurable drunkard after toying with socialism and business. The farmer seems doomed to failure while the reader is made, through the dubious Cyril, to sympathize with him.

At the beginning of the novel, we see Cyril and George in rural scenes of fish and bees and ivy and lilac and honeysuckle, with Cyril projecting his sentimental nostalgia onto the landscape:

I stood watching the shadowy fish slide through the gloom of the mill-pond. They were grey descendants of the silvery things that had darted away from the monks, in the young days when the valley was lusty. The whole place was gathered in the musing of old age. The thick-piled trees on the far shore were too dark and sober to dally with the sun, the reeds stood crowded and motionless. Not even a little wind flickered the willows of the islets. The water lay softly, intensely still. Only the thin stream falling through the mill-race murmured to itself of the tumult of life which had once quickened the valley.⁵

The nostalgic mood fits in with George's degeneration from a robust farmer into a hopeless drunkard. The novel ends also with George and Cyril, watching another couple Tom and Emily working in apparent organic union with the fields:

I turned to George, who also was watching, and said: 'You ought to be like that.'

...
...

We were all uncomfortably impressed with the sense of our alienation from him. He sat apart and obscure among us, like a condemned man.

Such a story-bookish framework imposed on the novel does not quite cover the social change and contradictions it tries to deal with through the vicissitudes of the life of the characters.

In the novel, the Saxton family is served notice to leave their farm by the squire after disputes and conflicts over rabbits, which are the squire's livelihood and deadly enemy to the crops. What is dramatized in these conflicts is

the changing pattern of agriculture in England at this time. Low farm prices and poor returns led landowners to enclose commons traditionally available for communal grazing. Tenant-farmers were embittered but powerless, and the Nottinghamshire landowners sought to reap the profits of rich coal-seams rather than continue with uneconomic farming on land which is naturally more suited to forests and thus game.⁶

This general shift from farming to other more profitable trades had been going on for years in Nottinghamshire so that landowners either became coal-owners themselves or leased out their lands for coal-mining. Up until the mid-19th century, landowners still held three of the four largest companies in East Midlands.⁷ Economic motives lie behind each mode of production and there is nothing 'organic' or ideal behind any particular mode whether it yields profits for landowners or ceases to do so and is replaced by other trades. The Saxtons are modelled on the Chambers family, while the fictional Felley Mill is the Haggs farm transferred to Strelley Mill. The Chambers family had a bankrupt lace manufacturer great grandfather, a flute-playing adventurous grandfather, and the father started farming only after two early failures in business ventures. According to his daughter J. D. Chambers' memoir: 'he started farming, in a haphazard, happy-go-lucky sort of way and was moderately successful mainly as the result of the hard work of my eldest brother Allan.'⁸ The Chambers were tenants of Haggs

Farm from 1898 to 1910. 'Life at the Haggs was no fairytale,' as one of his daughters recalled.⁹ Though rabbit-farming may not have hit them as hard as it did the nearly abandoned Felley Mill Farm which Lawrence and Jessie Chambers once visited,¹⁰ keeping the farming business going at a profit was a tough job and the family had to quit in 1910. For Alan Aubrey Chambers, to try other trades and become successful like his fictionalized version George Saxton would really be a liberation from drudgery and there was nothing alienating, for he would just be doing what his father, grandfather and great grandfather had done before. In the novel, however, when George quits farming, he moves through his father's milk business, his wife's pub business, horse-dealing and some real estate transactions and socialist activities, but while his economic and political life becomes more successful, he declines physically and spiritually through continual drinking. Thus, Lawrence's myth of equating the post-agrarian with the post-lapsarian is completed.

However, if farming has become so unproductive that the squire would shift his care onto rabbits at the expense of crops, who is responsible for quitting agriculture? Certainly not the farmer. The pastoral myth idealizes one way of life and ignores the economic relations lying underneath. In front of a more advanced mode of production with new productive relations, such a myth serves to save an out-moded order under threat, an order in which the landed gentry could live in luxury with tenant farmers working on their lands.

The language in which the rise of the conflict is described is peculiarly like that of a fairy tale:

Now the squire of the estate, head of an ancient, once even famous, but now decayed house, loved his rabbits. Unlike the family fortunes, the family tree flourished amazingly; Sherwood could show nothing comparable. Its ramifications were stupendous; it was more like a banyan than a British oak. How was the good squire to nourish himself and his lady, his name, his tradition, and his thirteen lusty branches on his meagre estates? An evil fortune discovered to him that he could sell each of his rabbits, those bits of furry vermin, for a shilling or thereabouts in Nottingham; since which time the noble family subsisted by rabbits.

But the squire loved his rabbits. He defended them against the snares of the despairing farmer, protected them with gun and notices to quit. How he glowed with thankfulness as he saw the dishevelled hillside heave when the gnawing hosts moved on!

'Are they not quails and manna?' said he to his sporting guest, early one Monday morning, as the high meadow broke into life at the sound of his gun. 'Quails and manna--in this wilderness?'

'They are, by Jove,' assented the sporting guest as he took another gun, while the saturnine keeper smiled grimly. (pp.57-58)

Population explosion, an evil fortune and unnecessary luxury--these are made responsible for the decline of the agriculture with a certain mode of production, neatly within the confines of a closed system, easy to understand and lament upon. The satirical tone, especially in the repetition 'The squire loved his rabbits,' is unmistakably directed against the squire, who, however, may totally agree with the narrator's nostalgia, 'If only things remained as they were before, when I could still live upon the farming labour of my tenants, without the threat of those industrialists getting more and more labour from under me and getting more influential in power!'

There is another lover of rabbits--the gamekeeper Annable. The words 'saturnine' and 'grimly' in the above context seem to put him at a distance from the squire and his guest. Many critics have hailed this gamekeeper as an unconventional hero rebelling against a rotten and corrupt civilization. Annable 'was a man of one idea:--that all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture.' (p.146) His advice to people is '"Be a good animal,..."' and '"Do as th' animals do."' (p.132) Out of this philosophy, he would protect the rabbits from the farmers and poaching miners. 'A vendetta was established between the Mill and the keeper Annable. The latter cherished his rabbits:"Call 'em vermin!" he said. "I only know one sort of vermin--and that's the talkin sort."' (p.146) 'Some miners had sworn vengeance on him for having caused their committal to gaol.' (p146) He also hates industry, as his widow later says of his attitude towards his children's future, '"My husband always used to say they should never go in th' pit."' (p.184) The gamekeeper knows his place and his job quite well: always fierce to trespassers but always deferential to gentlemen and ladies. Such a philosophy as the gamekeeper's may be very deep and fully appreciated by the narrator and many Lawrence critics. Put in the context of the social relations in the novel, however, one cannot help seeing its most reactionary and snobbish implications. His love of rabbits is not an innocent love of nature, for the rabbits are to be sold and killed anyway. His jealous protection only serves the economic interests of the squire at the expense of tenant farmers and

desperate poor people. His refusal to go in the pit keeps his family in dire poverty, for the squire does not seem to pay him well in spite of his devotion to his job. Cyril the narrator is ironical about the squire's love of rabbits, sympathetic to George, attracted to Annable the gamekeeper, but how can he resolve the contradiction involved between them? Should George also keep farming and live in poverty like the gamekeeper, loving nature innocently and serving the squire economically? The rural myth is thus revealed to be a mere myth, an ideological construct that breaks even within the fictional reality of the novel.

The White Peacock refers to vanity in women, specifically those women who refuse to love a full-blooded male animal that we usually find among males in organic bond with nature (or with such a potential) realized in such occupations as farming or gamekeeping for the country squire. Annable's ex-wife lady Crystabel gets 'souly' and falls in love with a poet; therefore she is condemned. Lettie refuses George the farmer, and marries Leslie the industrialist, therefore, she suffers for the rest of her life. It is easy to postulate from this some general sexual theories such as that women are more souly; men are more physical; or that animalistic man needs to be embraced by a more spiritual woman (or vice versa) in order to form an organic union of the body and the soul. Terms like the body, the soul, the female and male principles, nature vs. civilization are often equivocal and suspect in a social context, like their

counterpart on a more general level--human nature. Annable is often hailed as a symbol of nature in protest against civilization, but his love of rabbits fits in with his job of gamekeeping for the economic interests of the squire. Nor is farming so natural, for before farming there was hunting, and we can trace the natural back to the primitive people eating raw meat in their caves. In the novel, Annable and George the farmer are good animals that women should love. But George the non-farmer, Leslie the industrialist, the miners--they are either non-animals or drunken beasts (animals in a negative sense) that need to be redeemed by women--not souly women like Lady Crystabel, or beast women like Meg of the Ram Inn--but moral women. In these men are heaped the worst vices of industrial and other non-agricultural pursuits: George runs the Ram Inn, flourishes in horse-dealing, makes a good profit from land speculation (from a hosiery factory!), dabbles in socialist movements, while he is drinking himself into a beast. Leslie the industrialist 'is such an advocate of machinery which will do the work of men'(p.298), he starts the re-arranging of the working system in his mines and beats the miners' strike with iron hands. He also dabbles in politics, becomes a County Councillor and one of the prominent members of the Conservative Association and wins a conservative victory in the general election against the Liberal Party and George's Labour Party. But his home life is empty and sterile: his wife Lettie writes to Cyril 'in terms of passionate dissatisfaction: she had nothing at all in her life, it was a barren futility.'(p.290)

The voice of chastisement for these fallen men comes from the women. Leslie and George are like a pair of love rivals fighting each other out of mere spite and jealousy. In terms of the love triangle, Lettie is in a predominant position: she keeps her friendship with George, while her husband dare not show his jealousy openly, 'for fear of his wife's scathing contempt.' (p.298) This manipulation of love, however, threatens to invade the arena of politics. Though neither party listens to this woman's judgment, the immediate context tempts the reader to see it as valid. She writes gloatingly to Cyril:

'George Saxton was here to dinner yesterday. He and Leslie had frightful battles over the nationalisation of industries. George is rather more than a match for Leslie, which, in his secret heart, makes our friend gloriously proud. It is very amusing. I, of course, have to preserve the balance of power, and, of course to bolster my husband's dignity. At a crucial, dangerous moment, when George is just going to wave his bloody sword and Leslie lies bleeding with rage, I step in and prick the victor under the heart with some little satire or some esoteric question, I raise Leslie and say his blood is luminous for the truth, and Vous voilà! Then I abate for the thousandth time Leslie's conservative crow, and I appeal once more to George--it is no use my arguing with him, he gets so angry--I make an abstruse appeal for all the wonderful, sad, and beautiful expressions on the countenance of life, expressions which he does not see or which he distorts by his oblique vision of socialism into grimaces--and there I am! I think I am something of a Machiavelli, but it is quite true, what I say--.' (pp.295-296)

On the one hand, she does not agree with Leslie's advocacy of machinery; on the other hand, she does not agree with socialism. She is here repeating the rhetoric of organic life against industrialism and socialism, a rhetoric that fits in with the rural myth of the novel and that can be found in both conservative and 'socialist' propaganda in English history for a

return to the 'Merry Old England'. This woman's voice is supposed to be the voice of life. Another voice of life comes from Meg, who complains to Cyril that her husband George 'often made a beast of himself drinking,' (p.298), "what a brute he was in drink" (p.314) and "It's like having Satan in the house with you, or a black tiger glowering at you." (p.292) In contrast, Meg takes care of the child and goes to Church. She is the suffering wife and mother. There are also other drunkards that can be denounced from the suffering women's point of view: the miners, who poach, only to be sent to prison by Annable, are 'imprisoned underground' (p.318) in the pit, and when they come above ground, they do not go to the church, but 'were passing in aimless gangs, walking nowhere in particular, so long as they reached a sufficiently distant public house.' (p.306) Lawrence's father was a miner, but Cyril's estranged father modelled on Lawrence's is raised slightly in social stature into a somewhat prosperous businessman, though with the same addiction to drinking and its concomitant moral weaknesses.

My father was of frivolous, rather vulgar character, but plausible, having a good deal of charm. He was a liar, without notion of honesty, and he had deceived my mother thoroughly. One after another she discovered his mean dishonesties and deceits, and her soul revolted from him, and because the illusion of him had broken into thousand vulgar fragments, she turned away with the scorn of a woman who finds her romance has been a trumpery tale. When he left her for other pleasures-- Lettie being a baby of three years while I was five --she rejoiced bitterly. She had heard of him indirectly--and of him nothing good, although he prospered--but he had never come to see her or written to her in all the eighteen years. (p.33)

He comes back repentant and dying, destroyed by excessive

drinking, to be pardoned by a wife who has kept the children away from him and is 'afraid to find out too much' (p.40) about his business activities after his death, and whose middle-class family income source has been conveniently kept secret in the novel. Lawrence sends this embarrassing father figure to the tomb early in the novel, clearing our narrator Cyril of any connection with the vices of drinking and money-making, and finds for him a pastoral father--Annable, who 'treated me as an affectionate father treats a delicate son;' (p.147). Thus the domestic ideology of curbing the immoral forces of industrialism with the moral domestication by saintly mothers and wives is united with the rural myth against the invasion of industrialism into the agrarian Olde Englande.

There is apparently a gap between the domestic ideology and the industrial forces it intends to tame, a gap that makes domestication inadequate in function and suspect in intention. When the miners strike over Leslie's modernization down the pit, Lettie, who is said to have inherited democratic views from her mother, proceeds to debate warmly with her lover. But the industrialist will not listen to her.

He heard her with mild superiority, smiled, and said she did not know. Women jumped to conclusions at the first touch of feeling: men must look at a thing all round, then make a decision--nothing hasty and impetuous--careful, long-thought-out, correct decisions. Women could not be expected to understand these things, business was not for them; in fact, their mission was above business--etc., etc. Unfortunately Lettie was the wrong woman to treat thus. (pp.125-126)

The argument does not lead to any change, with Lettie remaining

opposed to Leslie's industrialism for the rest of the novel, though she later marries him. Here it is not a matter of reason vs. emotion, or male-chauvinism; Leslie's generalization applies well in the case of Lettie, who callously remains indifferent to and suppressive of the reality of her father when she is told the truth,

'Who knows?' she asked, her face hardening.

'Mother, Becky, and ourselves.'

'Nobody else?'

'No!'

'Then it's a good thing he is out of the way if he was such a nuisance to mother....' (p.43)

Where can she inherit any democratic compassion for the miners, who drink like her father? By denying her father, she has already forfeited her right to criticize reality.

There is a similar change in Meg when she is raised to a suffering wife and mother. Earlier, out of despair over his hopeless love for the intelligent Lettie, George goes to seek life in the Ram pub owned by Meg's grandmother where Meg serves as a bar maid. The whole association there is grandma's encouragement of alcoholism, liquor and Meg's fleshly sensuousness. In marrying Meg, George is going down the hill of sensuous deterioration, hence the pity of the cultured Lettie not marrying the robust and upright farmer. However, the narrator needs a moral tone on George and the image of a suffering wife/mother to chastise alcoholism and Meg seems the character of choice, though there is a clash with the other schema of Meg vs. Lettie.

Pastoral and domestic harmony is finally established in the last chapter of the novel in Tom Renshaw and Emily, who was modelled on Lawrence's girlfriend Jessie Chambers. Their idyllic Swinshed Farm was again taken from the Chambers' Higgs Farm. Lawrence even asked Jessie Chambers in a letter: 'Do you mind if, in the novel, I make Emily marry Tom?' ' If George's decline in character is paradise lost, then Emily's establishment on the farm seems to be paradise regained. 'It is rare now to feel a kinship between a room and the one who inhabits it, a close bond of blood relation. Emily had at last found her place, and had escaped from the torture of strange, complex modern life.' (p.319) She is in domination, especially in control of alcohol. When men over dinner want some drink, 'all the men in the room shrank a little, awaiting the verdict of the woman.' (p.322) George is again dragged in by the author as a contrast: he would brag about his material success and how he would bring up the children in a male way. Then comes the double solution of the pastoral and the domestic:

Tom looked at Emily, and, remarking he ~~was~~ angry. contempt, suggested that she should go out with him to look at the stacks. I watched the tall, square-shouldered man leaning with deference and tenderness towards his wife as she walked calmly at his side. She was the mistress, quiet and self-assured, he her rejoiced husband and servant. (p.323)

This alternative is too easy to be believable. The salvation of rural myth and domesticity looks pale beside the contradictions revealed in the novel. That is why the character Tom looks like a papier-mâché doll, dragged in very late in the novel to stand and serve Emily who is left in the lurch by Cyril, and also to

serve Cyril's version of what a country life should be. But this Cyril now living in London (whose source of income is not clear in the novel), though he can be nostalgic for Nethemere countryside and echo the stereotypical condemnation of the Crystal Palace, (p.260) can never be a Tom himself.

Anti-industrialism and domestic ideology are cultural constructs which are also an actual presence in Lawrence's own family. The lack of a miner character in *The White Peacock* is but symptomatic of a general attempt by the author to adopt the cultured manner and subject-matter of contemporary writing, to gain entry into literary circles where there were practically no authors of working class origin. This aversion from reality has led the novel into a cul-de-sac of contradictions where the ideology can hardly hold water. Ironically the novel was 'reviewed favourably by a number of critics who were sympathetic to socialism, and to Lawrence as a writer from the working class.'¹² (which bespeaks the impact of the rural myth even within the socialist movement itself.) Lawrence's origin excited much interest from literary circles and that contributed to his turning to the more immediate and familiar surroundings of the miners' family for raw material. Before his direct confrontation with his own experiences in the novel *Sons and Lovers*, he had also treated the industrial theme in some plays and many of his stories later to be collected in *The Prussian Officer*, through the relationship between the miner husband and his wife. My next chapter will examine how the anti-industrial and domestic

ideology is mediated through his Oedipal attachment to his mother in his treatment of working class families.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNAL VOICE AND ALIENATION IN THE EARLY TALES

Lawrence started *The White Peacock* at Easter 1906. The writing and rewriting took him four years, during which period he expressed continual dissatisfaction with his novel. His own complaints, and our criticism in the previous chapter, show that the initial mode of romance mars the novel through all its revisions. Despite a sympathetic portrayal of poor people the novel suffers from the awkward narrator, who is elevated above the real social interchange of the community and whose pastoral sentiments and domestic ideals cannot fit with the reality he reveals. Then comes the second novel, *The Trespasser*, based on his girl friend Helen Corke's diary about her brief affair with a middle aged man. The third novel *Sons and Lovers* settles Lawrence's place in modern English literature as a great realist novelist. The transition from the pastoral to the realistic cannot be accounted for by analyzing the novels only, though they follow each other in close succession. While working on his pastoral novel, Lawrence was also making his literary career in plays, stories and poems, experimenting with different subjects and modes of creation. In this chapter, I will examine the industrial theme in some of his stories and plays as an apprenticeship leading towards *Sons and Lovers*.

First of all, Lawrence's depiction of working class life comes from his own life experience as a miner's son. Whatever

sentiments he may have inherited from his middle-class mother, an honest semi-autobiographical depiction of his own life cannot but touch the life of the working class family, a realm that was seldom explored by novelists of non-working class origins. His first play, *A Collier's Friday Night*, was probably begun as early as the autumn of 1906.¹ The prospective young writer with such a background was also encouraged to explore working class life by the literary atmosphere of the time, especially by Ford's literary magazine the *English Review*. In October 1909, Lawrence wrote to Louisa Burrows from Croydon where he was a school teacher: 'You ask me first of all what kind of "paper" is the *English Review*: It is a half-crown magazine, which has only been out some twelve months. It is very fine, and very "new." There you will meet the new spirit at its best.... It is the best possible way to get into touch with the new young school of realism, to take the *English Review*.'² What attracted this miner's son from the Midlands was the leftwing bias towards a sympathetic depiction of lower class life in the *English Review*. An editorial in the first issue, for example, pointed out the class barriers in England, 'What, for instance, do we know of the life of the poor man? He has never been voiced: he is, in the nature of the case, inarticulate.'³ '[O]f knowledge of the lives and aspirations of the poor man how little we have. We are barred off from him by the invisible barriers: we have no records of his views in literature. It is astonishing how little literature has to show of the life of the poor.'⁴ In the same issue, there is a book review and recommendation of Stephen

Reynolds' *A Poor Man's House*, a sketch on 'How it Feels to be Out of Work' and a proposal of an old age pension plan for the poor. Lawrence established connection with the review through some of his poems sent by Jessie Chambers and accepted by the review for publication. When the story 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' came into Ford's hand, the editor felt that he had discovered a genius who could answer his call for a realistic depiction of English life. As Ford recalled later of the context in which he read and commended 'Odour of Chrysanthemums':

in the early decades of this century, we enormously wanted authentic projections of that type of life which hitherto had gone quite unvoiced. We had had Gissing, and to a certain degree Messrs. H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett, and still more a writer called Mark Rutherford who by now, I should imagine, is quite forgotten. But they all wrote--with more or less seriousness--of the 'lower middle' classes. The completely different race of the artisan--and it was a race as sharply divided from the ruling or even the mere white-collar classes as was the Negro from the gentry of Virginia--the completely different class of the artisan, the industrialist, and the unskilled labourer was completely unvoiced and unknown. Central Africa and its tribes were better known and the tombs of the Pharaohs more explored than our own Potteries and Black Country.⁵

The exploration of working class life with sympathy and understanding was then a challenge to literary taste, the class barrier and even English culture itself, in which the poor were seldom depicted except from a gentleman's point of view, with condescension and perhaps an air of slumming, or for a suspect ideological purpose such as a condemnation of industrialism from the stand of those interest groups threatened by social change. The evocation of the rural poor as the voice of the lower classes was more common than that of the workers, who were

usually considered as 'masses', a dangerous and subversive force generated by industrialism. Even in *The White Peacock*, there is no industrial working class character and the depiction of the rural poor characters seems to be manipulated by the pastoral sentiments of Cyril. What impresses Ford in reading 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' is that the author is observant and 'knows the life he is writing about in a landscape just sufficiently constructed with a casual word here and there.'⁶ Here is the voice from the working class itself, unheard of before in English literature. Lawrence was encouraged in this direction and continued to produce a few plays and stories depicting the family life of miners, before his first impressive realistic novel *Sons and Lovers*. It should also be stressed that these productions answered not only a social and cultural need for recognizing a hitherto suppressed voice and bringing the vitality of realism into English literature at the beginning of the century, but also Lawrence's personal need to come to terms with the family conflicts and Oedipal fixation in which he grew up. The personal and the cultural are merged into one, hence the power of its realism.

It is also in this context that Raymond Williams considers the early stories, plays and *Sons and Lovers* better in some ways than his later fiction. In his early works, 'the language of the writer is at one with the language of his characters, in a way that hadn't happened, though George Eliot and Hardy had tried, since the earlier, smaller community of the novel had been

extended and changed.'⁷ While acknowledging the visionary power of his later fiction as evoking the modern sense of alienation, Williams stresses the loss Lawrence suffered in his development, the loss of the sense of community with his characters, and also the loss of the conviction that his lower class characters exist as people in a given, authentic community. In his early fiction, Lawrence writes with the experience of a continued life, and his language stays within the working class community, in the sense that both the narrator and the characters share a communal perspective. Williams is arguing against a common view among Lawrence critics that stresses the artistic maturity and vision of his later fiction and sees the early one as a mere preparation. Williams' scheme of a living and authentic community broken by modern alienation, however, sounds very familiar in Cultural Criticism. This community could be religion, rural village life, or Austen's small circle of country gentry. But now it also includes the working class. Such a scheme cannot explain why Lawrence should lose the sense of community as he continued to write, since 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and *Sons and Lovers* were immediate successes; nor why artistic vision should be incompatible with working class community. Williams is talking with the following works in mind--'the stories up to *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, the first three plays, and then *Sons and Lovers*'⁸. Let us examine briefly the early stories and plays written before *Sons and Lovers* was published to see what kind of given 'unalienated' working class community is depicted, and how.

The early industrial stories and plays do depict working class life, and they reveal the tensions in D. H. Lawrence's life, rifts and conflicts in his family, which is far from homogeneous and harmonious, with an inarticulate miner as father and a lower middle-class former school teacher as mother. This personal situation points to a social change from the agricultural mode of production to the industrial one, with all the concomitant psychological repercussions. In the former mode, men and women work together at various occupations around the household and in the fields, and they can see each other working even when they have a division of labour. In contrast, in the industrial mode, especially mining, men work in the mines underground, while women work as housewives in the household; there is the split in labour and understanding, of the kind which does not appear in the 'pastoral harmony' in which the whole family work together with less clear-cut division of labour. The loss in homogeneity through 'alienation', however, should not eclipse the gain in affluence, leisure and opportunity. Since the miner earns more money than a farmworker, his wife can devote herself wholly to housework and she certainly has more leisure than a farmworker's wife does. This relative affluence also attracts women of the petit or would-be bourgeoisie who, with a little education and 'manners', would like to marry high, are not able to and have to marry 'with the left hand' into the relative financial security of the miners. The miners' children have access to basic education and can even manage to have higher education, unlike the farmworkers'

children who have to work in the fields. Indeed, the gain in all these respects contributes to the loss, so that there is split and tension between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between the underground father on the one hand and the mother and children above ground on the other. The uncomprehending wife of the miner may come from another social class, outside the mining community, and regard mining as sheer horror after the initial fascination with the underground myth. She may also turn away from her husband to her son and thus ruin her own marriage as well as her son's manhood and marital prospects. The son, growing up between the mother's domination at home and the shadow of a father whose world of manhood is denied and distorted to him, often has a hard time coming of age, and if he goes to college, would find it even more difficult establishing meaning and values in his life. The mine, the pub, the home, the church and the college--these are a few metonymic figures suggesting the contradictions in the changing lived experiences of the working class community.

Let us examine the industrial plays and stories: 'A Collier's Friday Night', 'The Daughter-in-law', and 'The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd' (plays); 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', 'Daughters of the Vicar', 'A Sick Collier', 'Strike-Pay', 'Her Turn' and 'The Miner at Home'.

The four sketches 'A Sick Collier', 'Strike-Pay', 'Her Turn' and 'The Miner at Home' are concerned with the miners' strike which began at the end of February, 1912, and are in Lawrence's

words, 'as journalistic as I can make 'em.'⁹ In 'The Miner at Home', after one of the characteristic back-washing scenes, there is an argument between the wife and the husband over the issue of a strike, the wife--for financial reasons-- being reluctant for him to join. In 'Her Turn', there is a domestic battle between the husband, who keeps the strike-pay and flees to the pub for the company of the proprietress and other men, as he has done before, and the wife, who plays a trick this time by spending all her savings on some household goods, thus forcing her husband to turn over the strike-pay. In 'Strike-Pay', the miners are having a carnival during the strike by going out in company, drinking, playing skittles, betting and going to a football match. They seem to have brought their underground camaraderie above ground and made a holiday of the strike-pay day. Ephraim, a young newly-wed miner, loses his strike-pay on the way to the pub, but his fellow-workers willingly share their pay with him. When he gets home, however, he is greeted by his mother-in-law's lecture on the evils of the miners and their strike. His wife attends to him later despite her mother's warning to the contrary, only to assert that 'he was her man, not her mother's.'¹⁰ These stories all have a light tone of comedy, but the gap they reveal between men and women in the mining community is unmistakable, a gap not only between the sexes, but also between the social and the domestic, which accounts for the strange behaviour of the young wounded collier in 'A Sick Collier'. Willy is a good miner, earns decent money, has a good home, has married a nice girl and is very proud of

his loving wife. Besides, he does not drink. The crux of the story comes when Willy is wounded in the leg and stays at home nursed by his wife. Then the national strike begins. Men are playing marbles and going to the football match with their strike-pay, in much the same carnival vein that we find in 'Strike-Pay'. Willy wants to join them to watch the match, but his wife argues that he cannot walk the nine miles. Suddenly he turns mad and shouts and raves that she has brought the pain in the wound and that he will kill her. The madness reveals the gap in this seemingly perfect marriage. Willy has his social side that belongs to the camaraderie of other miners, not shared by his wife. When he is wounded and reduced to an infant under her care and nurse, 'his almost infantile satisfaction' cannot survive the carnival, social procession passing in front of the door. Ironically, this rebellious outburst of manhood is released in a very infantile form.

In these four sketches, men tend to speak in more dialectal speech while their wives' English is more formal. This difference in speech register bespeaks a difference between nature and culture, the untamed inarticulacy of the miners underground and the refined eloquence and dominance of a wife at home, who, in 'A Sick Collier' for example, can even determine whether her husband knew what he was saying. When Lawrence explores the difference of class in the miners' families, the gap becomes more pronounced with more social complexities.

'Daughters of the Vicar' (also known as 'Two Marriages') and 'Daughter-in-law' depict the courtship and marriage between a miner and a socially superior woman. In 'Daughters of the Vicar', there is the contrast between the marriages of the two educated daughters of the vicar: the elder Mary marries into the financially secure, socially compatible, but spiritually sterile life of a clergyman Mr Massey; while the younger Louisa finds fulfilment in her courtship and marriage with the miner Alfred Durant. The tale ends with Louisa marrying Durant in defiance of social convention and both of them emigrating to Canada. In 'Daughter-in-law', Minnie, a nursery governess in Manchester, consents to marry the miner Luther in Nottingham after a long hesitation, during which time Luther gets another girl Bertha from a poor family pregnant. The scandal is discovered six weeks after the marriage and causes quarrels between the husband and the wife. The husband tells her he would rather marry Bertha because she understands him, and Minnie leaves for Manchester in anger. For a moment, it seems that the difference between the two of different social backgrounds threatens to break the marriage. The play ends in reconciliation with Minnie spending all her 130 pounds to remove the social barrier between them.

It is important to note that both of the above works also share an equally important theme: the young miner breaks away from his Oedipal love to become a real man before he can really become a husband. Alfred Durant is his mother's dear and stands the chance of never growing up into manhood. For him, to escape

the home is the only way to become a man.

Like the other boys, he had insisted on going into the pit as soon as he left school, because that was the only way speedily to become a man, level with all the other men. This was a great chagrin to his mother, who would have liked to have this last of her sons a gentleman.¹²

Anyone familiar with *Sons and Lovers* can see clearly that many of the behaviours and attitudes censured in the novel are presented here with humane understanding: he does not become a gentleman; instead, he goes down the pit where he admires the manhood in the fellow colliers, pretends to be more manly and feels 'a delightful comradery of men shut off alone from the rest of the world, in a dangerous place, and a variety of labour, holing, loading, timbering, and a glamour of mystery and adventure in the atmosphere, that made the pit not unattractive to him....'¹³ Though he knows 'The public-house really meant nothing to him, it was no good going there.'¹⁴, he returns there 'because he must go somewhere. The mere contact with other men was necessary to him, the noise, the warmth, the forgetful flight of the hours.'¹⁵ In 'Daughter-in-law', Minnie accuses Luther's mother Mrs Gascoign of being possessive of her son's feelings and tells Luther that he is not even manly enough to drink. In these two works, Lawrence is more aware of the malicious influence of Oedipal love than of hating the pit and the pub, which can even make a man of the hero. In each case the main character is helped by a girlfriend/wife. What appears to be the courtship and marriage between different classes points to the author's own problem in life that can be traced to a

split in marriage between different classes.

'A Collier's Friday Night', 'The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd' and 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' point to an irreparable split in the miners' families. In 'A Collier's Friday Night', the father Lambert is a slovenly and rude miner, hated by his educated daughter and his son who attends college. The mother seems to have come from a middle class family, since she tells her children proudly that her great-great-grandfather married a lady. She quarrels with her husband and encourages her children's hostility towards their father. She also dotes on her son and meddles with his courtship with Maggie Pearson. In the whole play, then, can be seen the conflict between the miner father on the one hand who speaks dialect and the mother, daughter Nellie and son Ernest on the other hand, who speak formal English, the son's college English being imitated in parody by the father in their quarrel. Another conflict is that between the community itself and Ernest, who feels that even his mother cannot understand what he learns at college, and shares his enthusiasm for learning with Maggie, in spite of his mother's disapproval. Out of the conflicts between the father and the rest of the family, between the son and the working class community, the only way out for Ernest seems to lie in education, as is also shown by the important and conspicuous position the bookcase holds in their kitchen. In 'The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd', the miner husband is again a drunkard, and even brings two tarts home from the pub. Mrs Holroyd hates her

drunkard husband, and her hatred is shared by her children, though the latter seem to enjoy the company of tarts. She is attracted by the electrician (electricians being 'the gentlemen on a mine'¹⁶) Blackmore and considers eloping with him to another country. When the husband dies in a mine accident, however, she is stricken with remorse and guilt for her disloyalty. The play is marred by such an ending relying on conventional sense of morality and guilt, an ending too simplistic for the intricate feelings revealed in the play.

We have examined all the industrial plays and stories of Lawrence's early period except 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. The four sketches, with the possible exception of 'A Sick Collier', remain journalistic for lack of depth. They are all quite short, and remain superficial in their treatment of working class life. The more mature ones try to reach some deeper significant meanings through the portrayal of everyday life in the working class community. They reveal two tendencies in the author's feelings, thoughts and inner conflicts at the period. On the one hand, under the influence of his middle-class mother, he hates his miner-drunkard father, hates the industrial drudgery underground, loves his mother's world of decency, respectability and moral earnestness, and wishes to escape the working class community through culture and education. On the other hand, he is aware of the emasculating nature of his Oedipal love for his mother and of her excessive maternal love at home, and longs to become a man in the real world outside, which may be

accomplished by following his father's footsteps--going down the mine to work, to the pub to drink, to the carnivalesque comradery of the dialect-speaking male world beyond the confines of his mother's moral uprightness. The former tendency is shown mainly in 'A Collier's Friday Night' and 'The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd'; the latter in 'Daughters of the Vicar' and 'Daughter-in-law'. In this light, the much anthologized, studied and praised story 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' seems to embrace all the characteristics of the above in its composition and revision.

In reading the first paragraph of the story, anti-industrial critics tend to emphasize the contrast between industrialism and nature: the locomotive as a symbol of industrialism invading the country of the startled colt, birds and flowers, with the human being Elizabeth Bates 'insignificantly trapped between the jolting black waggons and the hedge;'.¹⁷ However, Ford Madox Ford's reading as an editor is not so condemning of industrialism:

'The small locomotive engine, Number 4, came clanking, stumbling down from Selston,' and at once you know that this fellow with the power of observation is going to write of whatever he writes about from the inside. The 'Number 4' shows that. He will be the sort of fellow who knows that for the sort of people who work about engines, engines have a sort of individuality. He had to give the engine the personality of a number....
... 'But the colt that it startled from among the gorse... outdistanced it at a canter.'... anyone knows that an engine that makes a great deal of noise and yet cannot overtake a colt at a canter must be a ludicrously ineffective machine....

....
... The engine and the trucks are there, with the white smoke blowing away over hummocks of gorse. Yet there has

been practically none of the tiresome thing called descriptive nature, of which the English writer is as a rule so lugubriously lavish.... Nor, since the engine is small, with trucks on a dud line, will the story be one of the Kipling-engineering type, with gleaming rails, and gadgets, and the smell of oil warmed by the bearings, and all the other tiresomenesses. You are, then, for as long as the story lasts, to be in one of those untidy, unfinished landscapes where locomotives wander innocuously amongst women with baskets.'⁸

The opening does not present a completed, harmonious picture of industrialism and 'nature', since reality itself is never completed in its process of change. But industrialism here is accepted as a product of human labour and endeavour, as a tool and companion in production and indeed is given an 'innocuous' 'individuality' and 'personality' in Ford's words. There is an acceptance of industrialism as part of the realistic environments in which we live and work. This acceptance is also reflected in human relations. Elizabeth Bates grew up in a working class family, has a father working as an engine-driver and is herself married to a miner. Though she disagrees with her father about his remarrying too soon after her mother's death, though she frets about her husband's irresponsibility and alcoholism, these discords are presented as given in life, on a realistic and instinctive level, without much imposition of cultural prejudice. The story is told from the third person limited point of view of Elizabeth Bates, so that much sympathy is generated through a minute description of her moods and feelings. Her antipathy to chrysanthemums, which is part of the symbolic title of the story and whose odour escapes the majority of people except those few observant, as Ford comments,⁹ puts

her feelings and moods against her husband at a distance so that the reader will see them more objectively, while being pushed by her anxiety in anticipation of her husband's return, on her part to see the outcome of the day, on the reader's part to bring the story to its significant conclusion with everything in its proper perspective.

The problem with the ending when her husband is brought home dead from a mine accident is well discussed by many critics tracing the three versions of the story published in 1909, 1911 and 1914. I will not quote extensively and repeat their opinions.²⁰ Briefly speaking, the early versions show more of the first tendency while the last version replaces it with the second tendency that we have summarized earlier. In the early versions, in Mrs Bates and Elizabeth Bates' lamentations over the corpse of the miner, maternal love from the mother and the wife is emphasized so that they seem to thank death for a chance to love him as a baby or as a knight (anything but a miner), to escape a bad marriage. Death does not bring about any realization of the truth, only fixing Elizabeth more in her prejudiced attitudes towards her husband as a miner. There is also a passage where the authorial comment lectures on the evils of the public house, praises women's sense of honour and moral uprightness in soul, and awkwardly projects the dead miner as a young knight 'bucklered with beauty and strength.'²¹ Such so-called artificial sentimentality or lack of objectivity from an artistic point of view, or symptoms of Lawrence's Oedipus

complex and ignorance of conjugal love from a psychological point of view, also bespeak a cultural pattern in English literature--the domestic ideology that uses women or family as signs of culture to tame the wild forces of industrialism. ²² In the final version in 1914, Elizabeth is presented more as a wife, who, in front of her husband's death, is shocked into a realization of the alienation between her and him, of her own sense of isolation, and of the tragic failure in her marriage. In this illuminating epiphany, she has to recognize the other, the underground, death, the alien male world as different from the female-dominated world of family and home. Chrysanthemums are common enough and may be boring to her, but the odour of chrysanthemums is the extraordinary in the familiar, and has to be accepted as part of life, just as drunkenness, the underground, the pit-dirt and ugliness and death itself are part of the reality not to be denied by any rigid sense of morality in the changing process of life.

The problems and conflicts revealed in Lawrence's early industrial plays and stories are the problems and conflicts in the society, culture, and the author's personal life through the mediation of fiction. They provide a good background for us to evaluate the merits of *Sons and Lovers* as an industrial novel that probes the industrial reality with complex psychological and cultural responses in a social context of transition. As J. Harris says of Lawrence's early realistic tales, 'they lead, quite clearly, to *Sons and Lovers*. They point the way to his

first great novel as neither *The White Peacock* nor *The Saga of Stegmund* (published as *The Trespasser*) could.¹²³

CHAPTER IV

OEDIPUS BETWEEN HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY

Sons and Lovers is an autobiographical novel. Intricately related to this novel and Lawrence criticism is the myth of Lawrence's origin, of his working class community, and of Lawrence as the voice of the proletariat. There is also the myth of the miner, since his working environment is not generally known to outsiders except in fictional forms such as Zola's *Germinal*, which is in any case the product of an outsider's observation and imagination. The personal subjectivity of the autobiographical novel is Lawrence's claim to authenticity; but it should warn us not to take his identification with his working class father on a conscious, cultural and ideological level, nor to take his recognition of the industrial forces on the landscape as an unmediated reflection of reality.' The advantage of choosing *Sons and Lovers* over other industrial novels in approaching the industrial theme is that it is not an industrial novel in the sense that the novelist sets out to explore the 'condition of England' issue, so that the novel contains less prejudice through cultural patterns characteristic of the issue. Its autobiographical nature is centered around the author's own psycho-sexual and social identity crisis through the literary creation of a hero-artist growing up in a family torn by its estranged working class father and domineering middle-class mother. Biographical facts are mediated into fiction through the special problems and desires of such an

author in his peculiar position. An exploration of these problems in relation to the values embodied metonymically in the industrial landscape will show a highly subjectivized version of an artist caught within the opposition between the mine, the pub, the country, the home and the chapel, where personal growth and sexual emergence becomes problematic amid various cultural and social forces.

It is well known that D. H. Lawrence, ten years after the completion of *Sons and Lovers*, expressed the feeling that he had done his father an injustice in that book 'and felt like rewriting it'.² Other biographical materials also tend to put in doubt the narrator in the novel, notably E.T. (Jessie Chambers)'s *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*. Since the father is the centre of the 'injustice' and the only working class minority in the family, it is relevant here to compare the fictional version and the versions given by other voices in life to discern certain attitudes of the author in the novel.

In *Sons and Lovers*, Mr Morel is very low in money and in character. He earns lots of money when he gets married. But afterwards there is a general decline as he gets worse and worse stalls in return for his disobedience to authority. Also the profits of mining depend on the boom and slack seasons, as we have touched upon in our first chapter. And the novel seems to be shadowed by slack seasons more than the boom ones. In moral character, Morel is presented as a liar, drunkard and wife-beater, and an irresponsible father. As early as the

beginning of chapter II, his decline seems to be complete:

...there was a slight shrinking, a diminishing in his assurance. Physically even, he shrank, and his fine full presence waned. He never grew in the least stout, so that, as he sank from his erect, assertive bearing, his physique seemed to contract along with his pride and moral strength.³

Within the novel, there are more positive aspects about the father, yet his financial irresponsibility and alcoholism are never questioned by the narrator.

Let us now listen to some other voices about Lawrence's father Arthur Lawrence. Professor J. D. Chambers, the brother of Jessie Chambers and himself a social historian in economic and social history in Nottingham, gives a different picture of Lawrence's world in his introduction to his sister Jessie Chambers' memoir *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*. According to this version, the Lawrences did not live in poverty: his father had been 'a highly skilled man, bringing home good money, occupying a house with a bay window and separate "entry" of which the Lawrences were immensely proud, and handing over to his wife enough money to give three of their five children a good education.' He also quotes a contemporary as recalling that 'though Mr Lawrence went home merry, he was never drunk nor aggressive'!⁴ (which at least lessens the degree of his drunkenness as described in the novel.) In 1955, a local miner recalled with bitterness towards Lawrence that he was 'Given a tip-top education by his father -- as fine a man as you'd meet in a day's march. That was on a butty's pay, pound to fifty shilling a week.'⁵ One of the daughters recalled, 'it was really

Friday or Saturday evening that [father] really took more than he ought to. Through the week he didn't. He was never drunk on Sunday, never.'⁶ Roy Spencer after his research into Lawrence's life also casts doubt on the portrayal of the father in the novel. There are 'the overwhelming number of local witnesses who swear to the good character, the gentleness, the affability of the real Mr Lawrence.'⁷

For Lydia Lawrence the grass was always greener on the other side of the fence. She never knew when she was well off. Did she realize how well off she was, how proud she should have felt, as 1900 drew to its close? Her favourite son was earning what seemed a fortune in London; she was still secretary of the Women's Guild; she had a comfortable existence, for Emily Una shared the housework; her eldest son George Arthur was now under the wing of her younger brother George Beardsall, training to be an engineer. Her darling Bertie was holding his own at the High School and her youngest daughter Ada was now a pupil-teacher at Beauvale. There was sufficient money coming into the house, earned by Arthur, now a somewhat estranged member of the family, despite his position as breadwinner.⁸

According to Spencer, her discontent with her marriage influenced her son in the composition of *Sons and Lovers*. This is by and large true. But the gap between facts and fiction has other facets as well. Let us first turn to an argument about Lawrence's social origin.

George Watson, in confusing the term 'mining contractor' with the 'big butty', claims that Lawrence's proletarian origin is a myth, since his father 'was not, by the period of Lawrence's upbringing, dependent on wages, being in charge of a group of miners, and his income was good.'⁹ The confusion has since been corrected by many scholars showing convincingly that

'mining contractor' is but a grandiose term for a little butty who is but a team leader in mining without any investment.¹⁰ The confusion, however, is understandable in consideration of the general prosperity shared by the miners at the time--so that social status is not necessarily equivalent to income. Mrs Lawrence's middle class background, for example, did not keep her away from the marriage with Mr Lawrence, a miner with better income than her father's. Watson's essay has confused the two.

Watson's claim about Arthur Lawrence's social status has been convincingly refuted by Holmes in his article 'Lawrence's Social Origins'.¹¹ The good income argument, backed by the Chambers' claim that the Lawrences were moving upward each time they moved to a new place and by the fact that the children were climbing up the social ladder through good education, still holds strong against Holmes' counterargument. Holmes describes the apparently improving living conditions of the Lawrences as a case of 'lace curtains and nothing for breakfast', which is not likely since there is no evidence that Mrs Lawrence saved on essential things such as food. Pretentious or not still depends on the income, for the real poor cannot even afford to be pretentious. For the rest of his argument, Holmes seems to have accepted too readily the myth created by Lawrence in his novel and his sister in her memoir that the achievements of the family depend upon the mother's 'save and sacrifice'. If the father earned little and squandered so much in drinking, how much could the mother save without starving the family? If 'lace curtain

and no bread' shows truly one facet of Mrs Lawrence and her children's pride and pretension, this facet is also shown in creating an idealized mother who can do wonders through 'save and sacrifice' in spite of (and at the cost of) a much impoverished and debased father.¹² For the author of *Sons and Lovers*, apart from his mother's influence as mentioned by Spencer, the downgrading of the father reflects a psychology that is the reverse of 'lace curtain and no bread': to show to the literary circle ready to welcome a working class writer what adverse circumstances he and his mother have overcome through moral character.¹³

Such a tendency can be further discerned through a comparison between biography and the novel, which is still often taken as literally true. In the novel, we are given this background about Walter Morel, 'His grandfather was a French refugee who had married an English barmaid -- if it had been a marriage.' (p.17) His parents are curiously omitted except in a money-grubbing mother-in-law who sent her son down the mine at the age of seven. In real life, Arthur Lawrence's father was a tailor, with his own shop. The mother was the daughter of a Nottingham lace and silk manufacturer. Thus the background of Arthur Lawrence is not as inferior to that of Lydia Beardsall (Lawrence's mother) as is suggested in the novel.¹⁴ In financial terms, Arthur Lawrence's family is definitely superior to Lydia Beardsall's. Now, if Arthur Lawrence's income can lead critics to question Lawrence's working class origin, the situation with

the Beardsalls is exactly the opposite. Lydia's grandfather was a bankrupt lace manufacturer. In her father's generation the family was beset ~~with~~ poverty. What marks her backgrounds out as middle class is the fact that her father was a well read lay preacher, and that she had managed to get some education through helping in a private school, became a school mistress and governess herself, acquired a Southern accent and was devoted to respectability and social climbing. The Beardsalls had middle-class traits and aspirations without the income to support them. Roy Spencer reports that 'George Beardsall remained a hired fitter throughout his twelve years' service, earning an average of 5s 8d a day six days a week'¹⁵ to support a wife and five children. Later he became a victim of an accident, thus having to live on an allowance of 18.25 pounds a year and let his daughters become 'lace drawers.' In the novel, George Coppard is described as an engineer -- even 'foreman of the engineers'¹⁶ -- a grandiose term that George Beardsall had also used in his daughters' marriage certificates in the same way that 'mining contractor' is used for 'butty'.¹⁷

The cultural difference between Lawrence's parents has been much stressed and explored by Lawrence and his critics. The family tragedy as a result of cultural difference, however, is made possible by the normalcy of such a marriage economically. In fact, apart from the attraction between a superior lady and a lively miner, the courtship and embarrassment between the two members from different classes, the marriage is not as romantic

as the root metaphor 'falling in love at a dancing party' suggests in the novel and in some memoirs. According to Harry T. Moore,

Arthur Lawrence met Lydia Beardsall at his aunt's home, which was also the home of Lydia's uncle. This may seem a bit complicated, but Alice Parsons, the sister of Arthur Lawrence's mother, had married John Newton, Jr., brother of Lydia Beardsall's mother. Thus when Arthur Lawrence and Lydia Beardsall became husband and wife, they made an intra-family marriage.¹⁸

Economically, the collier earned in a week nearly as much as Lydia's crippled father received in three months.¹⁹

In the novel, the courtship and marriage are founded on polarities and attraction: 'Walter Morel seemed melted away before her. She was to the miner that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady.' (p.17); 'she looked at him, startled. This was a new tract of life suddenly opened before her. She realized the life of the miners, hundreds of them toiling below earth and coming up at evening. He seemed to her noble. He risked his life daily, and with gaiety. She looked at him, with a touch of appeal in her pure humility.' (p.19) The marriage begins to show cracks when Gertrude Morel discovers in the seventh month the unpaid bills for household furniture, that he has debts and that the house is rented instead of owned by him. The economic reality, it seems, drives away her former romantic attraction to the miner, which now looks not so romantic after all, for it is surely founded on economic considerations in the first place: 'They lived, she thought, in his own house. It was small, but convenient enough, and quite nicely furnished, with solid,

worthy stuff that suited her honest soul.' (p.19) 'He had told her he had a good bit of money left over.' (pp.20-21) Here, if one had interpreted Arthur Lawrence's 'lace curtain and no bread' mentality as a sign of poverty, one may well follow Gertrude Morel's story of herself being trapped by the miner's physical attractiveness into sheer poverty. However, given her financial acumen and pretension of wealth as demonstrated in the 'save and sacrifice' myth, given the extended courtship of one whole year, it is not likely that she has not known clearly beforehand the earning capacity of a miner at the time. If Morel really earns little, the morally honest Gertrude would have challenged his financial pretension in the first place. In life as in fiction, cultural prejudice can distort economic facts.

This cultural prejudice that sees industrial workers as dirty, mean, drunken and irresponsible masses and idealizes certain middle class cultural and moral values into myths, at the expense of economic reality, is expressed through the mediation of the lived experience of a miner's son over-attached to his bourgeois mother. Embodied in the flesh and blood relationship of people in the novel, as well as in life, this sick fixation with all its prejudices finally shows its harmful effects on the growth of the son, which Lawrence was also aware of during the composition of *Sons and Lovers*. Therefore, despite the obvious prejudice through the mother's influence, a recognition of the positive values embodied by the father -- the sexual vitality of the working class emerging in association

with the more advanced productive forces, as well as political and social forces eager to have their voices heard -- is also discernible in the novel. Let us turn to another significant gap between facts and fiction.

For three months in 1901, Lawrence became a junior clerk at the house of Haywood, manufacturer of surgical appliances and wholesale dealer in druggists' sundries. He earned thirteen shillings a week, and took an early train to the city six mornings out of seven in a week. 'There was no half-holiday at midweek, as in his school days: the factory didn't close until eight at night, even on Saturdays, though sometimes work finished about two hours earlier on Thursdays and Fridays.'²⁰ It was a tough job for a fragile boy of fifteen. He told his bitterness about his father to his friend George Neville, 'He wanted me to go to school till I was thirteen and then go out and start to "bring summat in" no matter whether I was fit for it or not, as so many other colliers' children have to do.'²¹ According to Neville's memoir, he also had very bad experiences with the working girls in the factory, who liked to sear his youthful innocence with coarse jokes and jibes and once they even tried to strip him in a warehouse, to the great annoyance of the innocent youth sensitive about sex under his mother's good breeding.

In the novel, however, we get a different version. He prolonged his three months of clerkship into several years and drew upon his schoolboy and college student experiences of the

city for the portrayal of a factory clerk. At first Paul Morel's reaction expresses a fragile schoolboy's fear of industrialism. As he timidly searches newspaper ads for jobs in the library, he feels that 'Already he was a prisoner of industrialism.' (p.113) His first impression of the factory of surgical appliances for artificial limbs is not without Dickensian grotesque humour:

Paul looked at the picture of a wooden leg, adorned with elastic stockings and other appliances, that figured on Mr Jordan's notepaper, and he felt alarmed. He had not known that elastic stockings existed. And he seemed to feel the business world, with its regulated system of values, and its impersonality, and he dreaded it. It seemed monstrous also that a business could be run on wooden legs. (p.116)

The place is also described in Dickensian terms: "It was gloomy and old-fashioned, having low dark shops and dark green house-doors with brass knockers, and yellow-ochred doorsteps projecting on to the pavement; then another old shop whose small window looked like a cunning, half-shut eye." (p.118) The place is compared to 'the jaws of the dragon,' and significantly, to 'a pit'. (p.118) Here is a continuation of the kind of vocabulary describing the miners as 'imprisoned underground'²² in *The White Peacock*. To continue the Dickens comparison, Lawrence may well use his unpleasant experiences and present Paul Morel as a kind of Oliver Twist, who, in Dickens' novel, is frightened by his bizarre experience with the mobs and thieves in the city and flees to his suburban middle-class home to preserve his innocence and purity.

However, Paul Morel has no such retreat. He could turn back home to his middle class mother, or climb up the social ladder

like William with a respectable job and middle class associates far above the most respectable in his home town. However, both roads would prove disastrous to the sexual emergence of our hero in this *Bildungsroman*. What happens in the novel is that Paul Morel blends easily into the work environment and community and later becomes 'an important factor in Jordan's warehouse' as spiral overseer with a wage increase (p.241) while preserving his dignity and sensitivity. He even gains patronage of his art from Miss Jordan. The women and girls there are gentle and petting. Work there looks like an integral part of life, involving the individual in a social environment of production and working class communion.

So the time went along happily enough. The factory had a homely feel. No one was rushed or driven. Paul always enjoyed it when the work got faster, towards post-time, and all the men united in labour. He liked to watch his fellow-clerks at work. The man was the work and the work was the man, one thing, for the time being. (p.141)

This dramatization of his work experiences at a factory is more than mere sentimentalization of a certain period in Lawrence's youth. It approaches, though not quite catches, the kind of underground communion that Lawrence later would relate to his father's work down the real pit. For Paul Morel, it is here that he is really 'launched into life' (title of the chapter). He will grow more mature in life with a solidity that would not look likely if he remained a student. There he will also develop a relationship with the sexually liberated new woman Clara that will mark his sexual emergence. Such an emergence could not be achieved if he pursued a road of pure art by becoming an artist

living in a cottage with his mother and thirty or thirty-five shillings a week. It cannot be achieved by reading poetry on the farm with the high-minded Miriam, who is too much like his mother. Nor can it be achieved by climbing into the middle class and marrying a lady, as his mother has planned for him, for no lady can liberate him sexually from his mother's love.

The two significant gaps between facts and fiction show two different attitudes towards industrialism embodied in a more personal problem of sexual emergence of Paul Morel and D. H. Lawrence. The coincidence of the social and personal (psychosexual) aspects may be accidental, yet it enables the author to show the industrial landscape and its impact on social psychology in a way beyond cultural reification of the image of industrialism. Let us look more closely at this aspect of *Sons and Lovers*.

In the previous chapter, we have analyzed the dichotomy between the mine and the house, male and female, as a result of the development of the coal industry and the conflict between the miner and his wife dramatized in Lawrence's early stories. In *Sons and Lovers*, the same dichotomy persists in more developed and complicated forms. We can draw a diagram here:

Middle-class House Chapel Female Reason 'Nature' (metaphor)

Working class Mine Pub Male Emotion 'Nature' (metonymy)

Unlike the stories focusing on the conflict between husband and wife, the novel as *Bildungsroman* focuses on how the son can grow and emerge out of his Oedipus complex into manhood under this familial, social and cultural split. At the time which is described by the novel and when the novel was actually composed, the predominant Victorian values tend to idealize what is embodied in the upper row and condemn the values in the lower row in our diagram. One can achieve a ready-made cultural coherence between meaning and existence if one stays within the upper row and denies the lower row, as Cyril has done in *The White Peacock*. For Lawrence as well as for Paul Morel, however, staying within the upper row means that he will remain a sissy and an effete artist all his life. In order to achieve his second birth, he has to come to terms with the lower row, whose cultural emergence from underground is closely tied up with his sexual emergence.

The items in our diagram can be seen as defining various focal points in the novel: social positions, different work places, social and cultural centres, external social groups embodying different inner needs (what Lawrence would call 'male and female principles'), the bodily lower and upper strata, and landscapes as seen through different modes of perception. They are metonymic places characteristic of the novel as a genre of metonymic writing. They carry with them connotations from their realistic social context, which defy any cultural assumptions and ideological prejudices of any consciousness working in a

monological way.

Bakhtin in his essay '*Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)' defines the most significant branch of the *Bildungsroman* genre in terms of the hero's emergence in concrete biological and historical time and space. 'In it man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence.' 'He emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself.' 'The image of the emerging man begins to surmount its private nature (within certain limits, of course) and enters into a completely new, *spatial* sphere of historical existence.'²³ In *Sons and Lovers* all the spatial items listed in the diagram with various levels of abstraction are realized in concrete historical and social context as background for Paul Morel's growth. While the values in the upper row tend to absolutize and monologize, and to deny the values of growth through historical change as embodied in the lower row, all the items are put in personal and historical chronotope to dramatize the hero's growth 'on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other.'²⁴

Let us have a close look at the context established by the first chapter in the novel.

The opening sequence of the novel has impressed many critics as coming from a viewpoint with intimate knowledge of the landscape being described, expressed not in the voice of the

educated middle class but in that of the working class, who not only view the landscape but also live in it in their struggle for survival.²⁵ The matter-of-fact tone of the working class speech is also impressive in historicizing the process of industrialization from the viewpoint of these common people whose life has been closely tied up with the process of development. Thus we are told that coalmining has been a natural way of production and subsistence for the colliers since 'the time of Charles II'. The image of 'the few colliers and the donkeys burrowing down like ants into the earth, making queer mounds and little black places among the corn-fields and the meadows' gives a realistic view of human labour as an integral part of the natural scene. 'Then, some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers.' The positive side of the change is also fully acknowledged: 'About this time the notorious Hell Row, which through growing old had acquired an evil reputation, was burned down, and much dirt was cleansed away.' Then new houses, 'The Bottoms', replace 'Hell Row'. What we have now is a landscape of a curious mixture of old England and the new, agriculture and industry.

Carston, Waite and Co found they had struck on a good thing, so, down the valleys of the brooks from Selby and Nuttall, new mines were sunk, until soon there were six pits working. From Nuttall, high up on the sandstone among the woods, the railway ran, past the ruined priory of the Carthusians and past Robin Hood's Well, down to Spinney Park, then on to Minton, a large mine among corn-fields; from Minton across the farm-lands of the valley-side to Bunker's Hill, branching off there, and running north to Beggarlee and Selby, that looks over at Crich and the hills of Derbyshire; six mines like black

studs on the countryside, linked by a loop of fine chain, the railway. (pp.1-2)

There is no conventional contrast between nature and culture, past and present, no myth of nature being spoiled by the invasion of the 'barbaric' industrialism, or the wonderful cultural tradition running into seed before 'barbaric' modernity. The 'black studs' and the 'loop of fine chain' show an aesthetic appreciation of the scene that is unalienated from human labour and industrial development. Culture and nature, past and present, and agriculture and industry coexist in this landscape in a process of historical change that breaks down any static absolutes. Thus 'The Bottom' succeeding to 'Hell Row' is a positive improvement in the colliers' living conditions, but it is not perfect. The decent front of the houses, described and praised with an 'estate-agent's view' in an impersonal syntax: 'One could walk around', is undercut by the more personal, participant's knowledge of the unsavoury living conditions of the kitchen where people must live, facing the 'nasty alley of ash-pits'²⁶ -- a criticism that comes from the lived experience and is set in the context of change, in an unfinished landscape in time preceeded by 'Hell Row' and succeeded by the later moves which the Morels are so proud of. In sum, to borrow Bakhtin's words in praise of Goethe's nature scene, here on the landscape are 'signs of historical time --essential traces of human hands and minds that change nature, and the way human reality and all man has created are reflected back on his customs and views.'²⁷ This 'historical time, ... is inseparable from the natural

setting (*localitat*) and the entire totality of objects created by man, which are essentially connected to this natural setting.'²⁸

We are next introduced to the mind of Mrs Morel, who 'descended to it [The Bottoms] from Bestwood' and 'enjoyed a kind of aristocracy' -- a 'superiority in station' by renting a more expensive, more private endhouse with an extra strip of garden. Though herself a miner's wife, 'she shrank a little from the first contact with the Bottoms women.' (p.9) Thus the mind of a middle-class woman is inserted into the working class community. This mind tends to widen the already existent difference between male and female, the mine and the house, the pub and the chapel, and absolutize the values of the upper row at the expense of the lower one. In the whole first chapter, then, we see Mrs Morel sticking to her own castle -- her 'fixed and stable' home-- where she drudges, idealizes her middle class origins and condemns her husband who enjoys the wakes and the pub. She does not like the local popular festival, the wakes, and curtails her son's spontaneous enjoyment, using a language full of negative tones that is characteristic of the Commandments -- the language of the church.

Mrs Morel is also associated with nature, especially with flowers, which is somewhat incongruous with her strict puritanical morality of reason if we associate nature in a romantic sense with emotion and spontaneity and sensual vitality. A closer look at the details, however, would reveal

that nature as perceived by Mrs Morel is not so natural. Her communion with nature is often an alternative to the working class community she is trapped into. It offers a transcendental experience of emotional intensity to the exclusion of the human, in a setting abstracted from the totality of the landscapes we have just analyzed. Nature in its purity from any human objects has a strong religious overtone, offering an escape from what she thinks is the sordid, mean and poor reality of the working class community, and reinforcing her class prejudice against what is in favour of what she or her puritanical morality considers 'ought to be'. A classic example can be cited from Chapter Two. Mrs Morel is very thick with the chapel minister, who visits her at home, talks to her for hours and becomes her children's god-parent, to the disgust of the returning miner Walter Morel. Thus we have a direct confrontation between the mine, the house and the chapel as metonymic points of value conflicts. After the minister leaves, there ensues another quarrel between husband and wife. Then, one more place is introduced as a metonymic point of solace for Mrs Morel.

One evening, directly after the parson's visit, feeling unable to bear herself after another display from her husband, she took Annie and the baby and went out. Morel had kicked William, and the mother would never forgive him.

She went over the sheep-bridge and across a corner of the meadow to the cricket-ground. (p.49)

On the cricket-ground children are playing happily while a few gentlemen are practising, who, presumably, would never kick their children. So far, the scene remains metonymic of cricket-playing middle class leisure in contrast to the drudgery

that Mrs Morel has suffered at home, for which she blames the moral weakness of the miner. Then the scene is charged metaphorically in Mrs Morel's mind with religious intensity.

A few shocks of corn in a corner of the fallow stood up as if alive; she imagined them bowing; perhaps her son would be a Joseph. In the east, a mirrored sunset floated pink opposite the west's scarlet. The big haystacks on the hillside, that butted into the glare, went cold.

With Mrs Morel it was one of those still moments when the small frets vanish, and the beauty of things stands out, and she had the peace and the strength to see herself. ...

In her arms lay the delicate baby. Its deep blue eyes, always looking up at her unblinking, seemed to draw her innermost thoughts out of her. She no longer loved her husband; she had not wanted this child to come, and there it lay in her arms and pulled at her heart. She felt as if the navel string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot love went over her to the infant. ...

Once more she was aware of the sun lying red on the rim of the hill opposite. She suddenly held up the child in her hands.

'Look!' she said. 'Look, my pretty!'

She thrust the infant forward to the crimson, throbbing sun, almost with relief. She saw him lift his little fist. Then she put him to her bosom again, ashamed of her impulse to give him back again whence he came.

'If he lives,' she thought to herself, 'what will become of him -- what will he be?'

Her heart was anxious.

'I will call him "Paul",' she said suddenly; she knew not why. (pp.49-51)

There is a quasi-religious intensity in her communion with nature, backed up by Biblical references. The sun, the hilltop, the shocks of corn and so on have undergone a transformation through her imagination into a metaphor for God -- a puritanical God that only widens the gap between husband and wife, and has no place in heaven for the poor miner. In this light, what is 'natural' here is only a few objects in nature highly abstracted

through a narrow-minded consciousness that does not really comprehend the ways of Nature or God. As a result, Paul is subjected to the most unnatural love in the world and, in the view of some critics including Lawrence himself once in a summary of the novel,²⁹ is crippled for life.

Similar communion with nature occurs in another character, Miriam, who 'could very rarely get into human relations with anyone: so her friend, her companion, her lover, was Nature.' (p.205) She has a similar power of transformation which evokes from nature a God that favours her isolation: 'to Miriam, Christ and God made one great figure, which she loved tremblingly and passionately when a tremendous sunset burned out the western sky, and Ediths, and Lucys, and Rowenas, Brian de Bois Guilberts, Rob Roys, and Guy Mannerings, rustles the sunny leaves in the morning, or sat in her bedroom aloft, alone, when it snowed.' (p.177) Thus she isolates certain elements from nature, upon which she then imposes religious and romantic meanings abstracted from other sources. Nature treated in this way serves for the characters to escape certain elements of reality unpleasant to them. They would not be able to accept a more comprehensive version of religion that sees everything, the good, the bad, the beautiful and the ugly as part of God's creation.

In contrast to the women's desperate, metaphorical way of wheedling the soul out of nature, Mr Morel's expression of feeling is much more natural and is situated in a more natural

environment. When Paul breaks the news of William's death to his father, it is amid the machines and the busy productive activity of the pit-bank:

'E's never gone, child?'

'Yes.' ...

Morel walked on a few strides, then leaned up against a truck side, his hand over his eyes. He was not crying. Paul stood looking round, waiting. On the weighing-machine a truck trundled slowly. Paul saw everything, except his father leaning against the truck as if he were tired. (pp.171-2)

As Holderness has commented, 'There is no "instinctive" human nature or emotion separable from the miner's actual conditions of existence; the machinery of his labour is dramatized as an essential component of his human experience.'³⁰ The miner's sorrow is understated and hidden, and hence more powerful so that Paul cannot bear the sight. This male way of hiding emotion links contiguously with the very male environment of which the miner finds himself as an integral part: he leans against the truck as if he were tired. It is a human sorrow with a full understanding of the vicissitudes of life that one has to go through in the real world and make a living. Later in the novel, when Paul's painting success reminds the father of William, the mine association is also emphasized even when the location has changed from the pit-bank to the home:

Morel stared at the sugar-basin instead of eating his dinner. His black arm, with the hand all gnarled with work, lay on the table. His wife pretended not to see him rub the back of his hand across his eyes, nor the smear in the coal-dust on his black face. (p.311)

Emotion in working class people such as Morel is then contiguously associated with the living environment, with life.

In Mrs Morel and in Miriam, it is subjected to reason, morality and religiosity. Their sorrow and frustration tend to reject the actual living conditions in which they find themselves.

Therefore Mrs Morel will shut herself up in an oblivious death wish after William's death.

The positive role of Morel has long been recognized by critics. He embodies the emotional, sexual, spontaneous sensual vitality of the underground miners, and these values are crucial for Paul to grow out of his Oedipal love. The symbolism of darkness which derives from the myth of mining underground presents a cluster of rich associations characteristic of this 'uncivilized' father figure. Along this symbolism of dark unconscious one can indeed establish a thematic continuity from Morel in *Sons and Lovers* to the gamekeeper Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as one critic has cleverly suggested in pointing out the anagrammatical relationship between the two names. However, as Lawrence became explicitly anti-industrial and contemptuous of the working class later, the metonymical connection of the symbolism with the pit and the industrial working class is dropped. Nature is then treated in a more and more metaphorical way not dissimilar to the way of Mrs Morel and Miriam -- outside the historical and social context of the lived experience of the community. In *Sons and Lovers*, though, darkness is still tied up metonymically with the industrial landscape and the working class community and should be celebrated as part of this living totality.

What is the position of Paul Morel in the novel? As the hero of a *Bildungsroman*, he grows and changes. So intense are the conflicts between various influences on his psychology that Paul shows various tendencies throughout the novel whose ending still remains ambiguous.

Of the cultural difference, the division of labour and the economic reality between the parents, and of the various opposites listed in our diagram, the sexual incompatibility between his parents exerts the most immediate and personal influence upon Paul's growth and, as it results in the problem of his sexual identity (Oedipus complex), shapes his response to the cultural, moral and economic reality as well as human relationship in society. The marriage and sexual life of the Morels illustrate the grotesque aspect of Victorian morality and sexual reality. As Mrs Morel becomes more morally upright, she loses her love for her miner husband; yet they continue to produce babies. Marital sex without love becomes an ironic reflection upon the sacredness of marriage as preached by Christianity, which Mrs Morel devoutly believes and which Mr Morel ignores. Mr Morel is shown to have sensual vitality, which even Mrs Morel has to acknowledge occasionally. He sings and dances, loves the company of other people, and, though treated with hostility by his family members, shows his love for them throughout his life. His attitude towards his sons' choice of girlfriends may be, from Mrs Morel's point of view, irresponsible; but in the context of the novel, it shows a

tolerance, sympathy and understanding for the ways of lads at that age, because he also had his fling during his youth. In contrast, Mrs Morel hates mingling with other 'common' people of the mining community, shows open disapproval of her husband's and her sons' dancing, and is morally critical of her favorite sons' girlfriends. Her demand for moral perfection influences their attitudes towards women to whom they are sexually attracted. The parents' sexual incompatibility leaves in Paul Morel (with his bias against his father) a fatal opposition between sex and morality, one which he has to outgrow before he can really grow up. The following dialogue between Paul and Mrs Morel illustrates the dilemma.

'You know,' he said to his mother, 'I don't want to belong to the well-to-do middle class. I like my common people best. I belong to the common people.'

'But if anyone else said so, my son, wouldn't you be in a tear. *You* know you consider yourself equal to any gentleman.'

'In myself,' he answered, 'not in my class or my education or my manners. But in myself I am.'

'Very well, then. Then why talk about the common people?'

'Because--the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves. Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people--life itself, warmth. You feel their hates and loves.'

'It's all very well, my boy. But, then, why don't you go and talk to your father's pals?'

'But they're rather different.'

'Not at all. They're the common people. After all, whom do you mix with now--among the common people? Those that exchange ideas, like the middle classes. The rest don't interest you.'

'But--there's the life--'

'I don't believe there's a lot more life from Miriam than you could get from any educated girl--say Miss Moreton. It is *you* who are snobbish about class.'

She frankly *wanted* him to climb into the middle class, a thing not very difficult, she knew. And she wanted him in the end to marry a lady. (pp.313-314)

We need not follow the schematic opposition and its application too rigidly. For one thing, Miriam *is* full of ideas and, in terms of morality and sex, is presented in the novel more like a middle-class Mrs Morel than an ordinary tenant farmer's daughter. And yet the untrustworthy narrator has also presented Miriam as physically attractive and full of life.³ Leaving aside the schematic opposition between common people with life and ladies and gentlemen with ideas, we can say for certain that Paul and William find it difficult to marry lower-class girls without ideas as well as English ladies with ideas: the former would fall short of their mother's expectation while the latter would be too much like their mother. Since the schema is itself arbitrary, as in Miriam's case, the only way out of this double bind is to break the schema in order to achieve a fusion of life and ideas--which is a central issue in the novel and in all of Lawrence's works.

In the battle between the mother and the father, Paul sides with his mother:

Paul hated his father. As a boy he had a fervent private religion.

'Make him stop drinking,' he prayed every night. 'Lord let my father die,' he prayed very often. 'Let him be killed at pit,' he prayed when, after tea, the father did not come home from work. (p.79)

He is centred around the apron of his mother and is kept from going down the pit as the father has wished. He will remain unmarried and faithful to his mother until forty-four. "Then I'll marry a staid body. See!" ... "And we'll have a pretty house, you and me, and a servant, and it'll be just all right. I

s'll perhaps be rich with my painting." ... "And then you s'll have a pony-carriage. See yourself -- a little Queen Victoria trotting round." (p.301) So he tells his mother about his plans for the future. At times, Paul is also capable of going the other way. On one excursion to a nearby town, we are shown a neat difference between Paul and Miriam: 'Paul was interested in the street and in the colliers with their dogs. Here was a new race of miners. Miriam did not live until they came to the church.' (p.207) But once inside the church, 'Her soul expanded into prayer beside him. He felt the strange fascination of shadowy religious places. All his latent mysticism quivered into life.' (p.207) We are also told that while 'Morel never went to chapel, preferring the public-house,' 'it was wonderfully sweet and soothing [for Paul] to sit there for an hour and a half, next to Miriam, and near to his mother, uniting his two loves under the spell of the place of worship.' (p.236)

This kind of sentiment persists until the very last page, when he mourns his mother's death:

There was no Time, only Space. Who could say his mother had lived and did not live? She had been in one place, and was in another; that was all. And his soul could not leave her, wherever she was. Now she was gone abroad into the night, and he was with her still. They were together. But yet there was his body, his chest, that leaned against the stile, his hands on the wooden bar. They seemed something. (p.510)

His consciousness works in the way of his mother until the last two sentences. In a romantic metaphor, death has been transformed into just another place. Without Time, Space acquires religious eternity in which Paul will no longer regret

that his mother is too old. The cosmos has really become a vertical order of absolute values of Heaven, the world, and Hell rather than a historical chronotope of change. 'There is no Time' also reminds one of previous references to time in Paul's lack of growth. When he shrinks away from his relationship with Miriam, she tells him, '"I have said you were only fourteen -- you are only *four!*"' '"You are a child of four," she repeated in her anger.' (p.361) She thinks, 'He was an unreasonable child. He was like an infant which, when it has drunk its fill, throws away and smashes the cup.' (p.361) When he breaks with Clara,

Clara thought she had never seen him look so small and mean. He was as if trying to get himself into the smallest possible compass. ... She despised him rather for his shrinking together, getting smaller. Her husband at least was manly, and when he was beaten gave in. (p.494)

Paul is thus unable to emerge into his second birth from the womb of his times.³² He is a failed hero of this *Bildungsroman*. The crucial sexual problem caused, among other things, by his parents' sexual incompatibilities seems to remain unresolved.

However, the last two sentences of the quoted paragraph 'There was no Time ...' points to a different conclusion. Paul becomes aware of his body, of his material surroundings. Throughout the novel, we are also shown that his consciousness is capable of appreciating the objects associated with the values of his working class father.

On the fallow land the young wheat shone silkily. Minton pit waved its plumes of white steam, coughed, and rattled hoarsely. ...
... [Mrs Morel] was silent whilst [Paul] worked, looking round at the afternoon, the red cottages shining among their greenness.

'The world is a wonderful place,' she said, 'and wonderfully beautiful.'

'And so's the pit,' he said. 'Look how it heaps together, like something alive almost -- a big creature that you don't know.'

'Yes,' she said. 'Perhaps.'

'And all the trucks standing waiting, like a string of beasts to be fed,' he said.

'And very thankful I am they *are* standing,' she said, 'for that means they'll turn middling time this week.'

'But I like the feel of *men* on things, while they're alive. There's a feel of men about trucks, because they've been handled with men's hands, all of them.'

(pp.153-4)

As Holderness has commented on this passage,

To convey the atmosphere of the industrial landscape Lawrence uses a descriptive prose which weaves the different elements into an effortlessly unified presentation: while the wheat shines like a manufactured material (silk), the pit waves its 'plumes' (actively, as if it were a living creature) and coughs 'hoarsely', like a man. Paul insists that the pit is alive, and that the objects of human labour cannot be distinguished so sharply from humanity: ...! ³³

The comparison of the trucks to beasts carries an overtone of the historical change in the working conditions, for the trucks are doing the job that used to be done by animals: 'the few colliers and the donkeys burrowing down like ants into the earth. ...' (p.1) Mechanization is a *natural* development. If there is any change, it lies in the fact that while before they worked like ants, now they handle tools and machines, and hence their labour is less beastly. In several places in the novel, Paul's joy or sorrow is shared by his awareness of the lights of the pit, the glare of the furnaces (p.98, p.141, p.238 and p.474) as part of the landscape. He even attributes a Biblical meaning onto the industrial objects:

'What a pity there is a coal-pit here where it is so pretty!' said Clara.

'Do you think so?' he [Paul] answered. 'You see, I am so used to it I should miss it. No; and I like the pits here and there. I like the rows of trucks, and the headstocks, and the steam in the daytime, and the lights at night. When I was a boy, I always thought a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night was a pit, with its steam, and its lights, and the burning bank -- and I thought the Lord was always at the pit-top.' (p.389)

If there is an attempt at a new fusion of meaning and existence, Paul is yearning for a version of religion more broad-minded than his mother's, a religion more tolerant rather than suppressive of life in its diverse forms.

Lack of such a union between the material and the spiritual constitutes the central problem for Paul's emergence. Paul knows that '"from middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people -- life itself, warmth.'" (p.313) Though Miriam is a farmer's daughter, her exceptional spiritual and cultural aspirations make her too spiritual in Paul's eyes, too much like his own mother with whom he suffers an Oedipal love; therefore, he rejects her. Clara is a factory woman, a sexually liberated wife separated from her rude, Morel-like husband. For Paul, she embodies the liberation of the body. With her, Paul goes through 'a sort of baptism of fire in passion,' (p.387) and achieves sexual emergence. With her husband Dawes, Paul has a fist fight in pitch-darkness, with overtones of bodily contacts and sexual pleasure, before they communicate verbally and become real friends. He has psychologically come to terms with his father through Dawes.

Paul's relationship with Clara and Baxter Dawes induces a psychological explanation through a comparison between the Morels and the Daweses. In the latter, we see almost a repetition of the marriage situation: an intellectually superior woman married to a very physical worker. Dawes is another Walter Morel: he is a worker, very physical, going downhill in physique, does not go on well with his 'white-skinned' refined wife, is inarticulate and dialect-speaking, and Paul Morel's enemy for the love of his wife. Clara, different as she is from Mrs Morel in many ways, is also her mirror image in Paul's mind. Mrs Morel is less worried about Clara, a married woman, believing that the latter will only take her son's body, leaving herself the soul. After the initial ecstasy of sexual liberation, Paul feels that he is trapped in a devouring mother of bodily passion. When he frets about his mother's health, Clara 'pressed him to her breast, rocked him, soothed him like a child.' (p.458) The awareness of this devouring mother figure becomes more complicated as he meets with Dawes' jealousy, defeats him with his glib tongue and reason (inherited from his mother), and then, curiously smitten with guilt, reaches a reconciliation through physical contact. For a moment in the narrative, Paul is significantly referred to as Morel--which has always been reserved for the father. The above comparison offers another psychological explanation of Paul's leaving Clara and restoring the Daweses' marriage: since Clara appears as a mother in his mind (either because she acts as mother, or because he acts as child, or both), he cannot go on with her, and he feels

the urge of guilt to reconcile the couple. Whatever the reason, the act shows at least a partial solution of his sexual problem, an effort at solving a case of sexual incompatibility much like his parents'. (In fact, the difference between the sexes is a life-long interest for Lawrence, who likes to put fair ladies and dark men together with various degrees of success or failure.) At the end of the novel, when Paul has rejected Miriam for being too spiritual, lost his mother, and parted with Clara for being pure passion with little intellect, he 'walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.' (p.511)

Apart from the verbal cue 'quickly' (livelily), 'the faintly humming, glowing town' itself points to the fire of life in the same way that the fire of the pit does. They interilluminate each other. Just as the pit is once loaded with Old Testament connotation of the Lord, the town is now reminiscent, as Paul Delany has pointed out,³⁴ of Paul Morel's New Testament namesake going to the city of Damascus after the holy call.³⁵ The New Testament Paul is to be converted into a new life, while Paul Morel is to achieve his second birth. Whether this is a sign of hope, or an ironic death disguised as life remains a critical controversy among critics including Lawrence himself, who says in a summary of the plot that Paul is drifting towards death.³⁶

Now Lawrence's own summary has been challenged by many critics, who will trust the tale, not the artist. However, working with the text alone does not solve the ambiguity, and even the narrator is not always trustworthy, for many of the

biases against the father are built into the narrator's words rather than within the character Paul Morel only. That is why so many pages of this chapter are devoted to a comparison between facts and fiction, and other texts have also been included by critics in their discussion (such as E.T.'s *D. H. Lawrence: a Personal Record*). While the narrator is not totally fair, he is not so nasty as to kill life in his characters, so that these characters still retain their own voices to argue for their way of life, even with the author himself. What we have now is an unresolved, on-going dialogue triggered by the text between various characters, the narrator, the author, his contemporaries and later critics and readers. What we can say for certain is that Lawrence has provided us with a textual experience (including an awareness of the author's problem) of the totality or the lived experience in an industrial community at the turn of the century in England. His merits lie in a dramatization of the various aspects of life of the working class community that have hitherto been viewed mostly with a cultural bias in literature. He may have started with a concern about his own personal problems, yet the result offers a new vista of culture and society on the industrial theme, more authentic for starting from a personal lived experience, with the text being enriched in a living connection with the author's life and his time.

We have discussed *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers* with the industrial plays and stories as transition. If we compare the two novels, the improvement of the latter over the former is

very obvious. Graham Holderness sees this maturity as the triumph of realism over aestheticism. While *The White Peacock* aestheticizes reality in complicity with the author's denial of the realistic conflicts in his life, *Sons and Lovers* explores reality with all the frankness of an autobiographical novel, letting into play the author's inner conflicts which he has experienced more deeply than most of the readers, though he is not in full control of his feelings. *The White Peacock* hides away, instead of confronting, the author's psycho-sexual problem, with the father elevated in social status and dispatched early in the novel, and Cyril living with the mother and sexually inhibited. Since this aspect was crucial to Lawrence's perception of his lived experience, its avoidance and denial constitute the most important factor for the failure of the novel, more important than the difference in literary isms. In *Sons and Lovers*, the hero's confrontation with the sexual reality in his life, family and society opens a new vista to the life of the working class community hitherto ignored or portrayed from without, instead of from a consciousness growing with all the agonies and ecstasies from within. Georg Lukács, in *The Theory of the Novel*, explores the problem of the genre in terms of the split between meaning and existence in the bourgeois world. In *The White Peacock*, the author has the narrator Cyril secure in his middle-class position, from which he imposes a pastoral ideal upon a sordid reality going from bad to worse and incapable of its own evolution for the better. In *Sons and Lovers*, middle-class idealism, whether moral, sexual or

literary, is tested in the polyphonic, created reality of the genre. Though Lawrence is much influenced by naturalism, *Sons and Lovers* is not a mere destruction of idealism by sordid reality. For Lawrence, it is 'not the Word made Flesh, but the Flesh made Word.'³⁷ Throughout the novel, and especially in the latter part, there is a lyricism evolving out of the realistic portrayal, a new pastoral that gains strength from its interaction and interillumination with the contradictions of reality. The sexually charged descriptions of nature and the language embodied in the root metaphor of the material bodily principle unfold before the reader a new chronotope with meaning deeply rooted in the lived experience of the working class evolving out of the very conflicts of the time. It points to new forces emerging from inside the industrial society, new voices of human beings as subjects capable of constructing a new world from within the industrial society. Thus, as fiction mediating between reality and ideology, *Sons and Lovers* poses a subversive challenge to the dominance of anti-industrialism in English Culture.

Conclusion: After *Sons and Lovers*

Lawrence was born into an age of great industrial development in England. While the economic boom was a result of industrial revolutions and the Victorian ethos of entrepreneurship, the industrial working class was also growing in political strength. Yet during the same period, conservative cultural attitudes homologous with financial and rentier capital interests had also remained predominant in England, deploring and negating the great social changes and new social forces brought about by industrial development.

Lawrence started his first novel *The White Peacock* in a conventional, pastoral, aestheticist mode of writing that appears inane and effete in its social context. His early industrial stories and *Sons and Lovers* explore the life of the working class community from the personal experience of a miner's son growing up amid the conflicts between working class tradition and the predominant middle class culture. The triumph of realism in the dramatization of his own experience subverts the middle class cultural values with which even the author may have retained some degree of sympathy throughout the composition of the novel.

After *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence's art became more 'mature'. 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' underwent revisions in 1914, which shows a less biased view of the miner husband by the wife, and reveals the mysteries of the estranged miner's life and death

before which Elizabeth cannot but feel a sense of awe and reverence. The completion of *Sons and Lovers* with the help of Frieda and his elopement with her had liberated Lawrence from his Oedipus complex in Nottingham. And just as Paul Morel heads towards the town leaving much bitterness behind, the 'mature' Lawrence would never return to the same kind of immediacy to lived communal experience as he did in *Sons and Lovers* and some short stories. He became a more liberated, déclassé, and alienated artist with a more mythical vision of the world.

After the suppression of *The Rainbow* and his unpleasant experiences in the Great War, and the war itself as a collapse of the values of Western culture and bourgeois civilization, Lawrence drifted into exile on his savage pilgrimage. His vision became a more European and global dystopia of modernity, in the somewhat de-historical modernist tradition of Eliot, Yeats and Pound. His modernist art offers many pertinent and perceptive criticisms of bourgeois culture in modern society. His experiments with new techniques of writing and his role in sexual liberation and the liberation of literature from censorship in the twentieth century are undeniable. However, his 'artistic maturity' was achieved at a heavy price. His fiction became more and more distanced from the immediacy of the lived experience of the common people and became less credible. In *The Rainbow*, he invented the myth of a rural organic society (the Marsh Farm) being invaded by the encroachment of industrialism (the canal) with concomitant psycho-sexual degeneration (Will

and Anna). The mining village of Eastwood was turned into a dystopia of Wiggiston, where the manager (Tom) and the miners led a less than human existence of moral and physical decline through their association with modern industrial organization and mechanization. In *Women in Love*, after the breakdown of a paternalistic industrialism described with irony and nostalgia, the miners become mere masses and their strikes are put in as negative a light as the management and technological innovations by the industrial magnate Gerald Crich, whose concern with industrial development through modernization (which the British industry was actually in need of) leads to his sexual inadequacy and final death. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a return to a realistic style with mythic modernist dimensions, the aristocratic Clifford becomes the industrial magnate concerned with modernization of the mines. His spiritual sterility due to his fascination with mechanization and his sexual impotence which confines him to a mechanical wheelchair make him lose his wife Connie (an aristocratic woman with much sexual vitality) to his gamekeeper Mellors, an Annable figure (from *The White Peacock*) who loves animals and nature and lives with much animal instinct unspoiled by mechanical civilization. There are, of course, occasional later works that deal with the industrial issue in a more realistic way and listen to the voices from within the industrial society.' However, this strain remains peripheral in the later Lawrence, is subject to a kind of 'organic industrialism', and is without the kind of artistic depth achieved in *Sons and Lovers*. It is significant that in *The*

First Lady Chatterley the gamekeeper (Parkin) actually returns to his working class origins by becoming a steelworker and a communist. The final version of the novel, however, poses an abstracted nature or human nature in contrast to culture and civilization, thereby eliminating any possible evolving mediation between people as producers and techniques of production. The miners were again mere masses with a human nature distorted by their participation in the process of mechanization.

Lawrence never made full sense of his lived experience as dramatized in *Sons and Lovers*. Even in 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside', where he eulogizes the miners' love of life and nature and underground blood intimacy, he merely presents an idealized version of the miners cut off from the real social and economic exchange in life. For example, when he contrasted the instinct for beauty and nature in the older generation of miners with the materialism of the younger generation, he seemed not to know the history of farm labourers abandoning agricultural labour in search of better wages in the pits. This mythical version of pure natural instincts was more safely deposited in the peasants in Italy, which was distant enough, or with Connie and Mellors, who were planning to flee to Canada, still a virgin land ready to solve problems for English people and fictional characters in trouble.

The anti-industrial rural myth is a strong force in English culture. Lawrence's *The White Peacock* is but part of a large

pattern of the myth shared by many intellectuals and writers at the turn of the century. E. M. Forster's *Howards End*, for example, postulates two families as representative of the rural and the urban industrial in a nostalgic depiction of Edwardian England, with the rural values safeguarding the authentic English tradition. As Peter Widdowson has pointed out, such values are the last cry of English liberal humanism in crisis, for it tries to cling to ideals difficult to preserve in a materialist world without compromising itself or allying itself with its opposite. Widdowson argues that this ideological weakness, together with Forster's allegiance to the conventional realism of mimesis, forced him to stop writing novels about England (and his achievement in *A Passage to India* relies to some extent on a resort to nihilism and mysticism).² Lawrence felt the same kind of inadequacy in content and form after his first two novels until he started his third novel *Sons and Lovers (Paul Morel)*: 'Paul Morel will be a novel -- not a florid prose poem, or a decorated idyll running to seed in realism; but a restrained, somewhat impersonal novel.'³ *The White Peacock* and *Howard's End*, it seems, lead their authors to look for new subjects, new forms and even new settings for artistic creation.

The anti-industrial rural myth is not embodied in liberal humanism and realist writing only, though they have much popular appeal. It shows a strong cultural adaptation and persistence in more 'radical' literary forms as well. Thus, there is a thematic continuity from *The White Peacock* to Lawrence's later works, and

the rural myth survives with new strength from Lawrence's innovation of style and experimentation with form. The change in form, of course, involves much change in content. However, the continuity also involves a transition from what Paul Delany calls the 'soft' to the 'hard' version of anti-industrialism in British literature:

The soft version centers on Bloomsbury but also includes novelists like Ford, Galsworthy or Evelyn Waugh. Its world view is that of the Southern rentier class, oriented towards some version of the 'country house (or country cottage) ideal.' The hard version alternates between nostalgia for antique or primitive societies, and dystopian visions of modernity. Its leaders include Lawrence, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Orwell.⁴

While the soft version is easier to expose under scrutiny, and its ideological weakness is often blamed on its conventional realist form, the hard version with the list of canonical authors is more controversial, for its conservative bent is hidden within an aesthetically radical art form. When the form has become not so novel over the years, though, the inquisitive reader will grope further for the elusive, hidden ideological implication, by re-contextualizing the text, and evaluating it not in terms of form only, but in the totality of culture and society -- a reintegration of art in the lived experience of the people. In this light, formal innovation can even be shown to serve a politically reactionary aim. As Michael Hastings says of T. S. Eliot,

In retrospect it does not appear so surprising that the revolutionary stylist turns out to be an apologist for High Church and ruling-class loyalty. Ernst Fischer found nothing strange in a bourgeois society when 'stylized art is bound up with aristocratic systems and

realist art with working-class movements';... Fischer indicates: 'Form is the manifestation of the state of equilibrium... We might define form as conservative and content as revolutionary.'⁵

Now this kind of statement, just like Widdowson's on the limitation of realism in discussing *Howards End*, has to be contextualized in relating the text to its social and cultural environment. Otherwise it would be difficult to attribute universal virtues to certain art forms, whether realist or modernist. Indeed, the worship of form is itself political: it decontextualizes itself in defense of a reified Official culture that is afraid of the familiar zone of contact with the subversive forces of social change and alternative popular cultures, which draw from the lived experience of the people.

A Marxist cultural critique of the anti-industrial rural myth in British literature, then, would involve not only an examination of the text in its historical, cultural and social backgrounds, with a critical awareness of the cultural hegemony of the dominant rentier gentry and financial capitalists, but also an assertion of the unofficial working class culture and tradition. There has been much written on working class novels as a genre, and such journals as *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* have contributed much to a recognition of the historical importance of British working class culture. English novelists of working class backgrounds have continued to explore their origin after Lawrence. It is not that we should expect any idealization of the working class or industrialism from these studies and literary creations. Much of the older working class

tradition may not be admirable, can only be understood in its context, and may be passing away, sometimes regrettably, as Richard Hoggart admits in *The Uses of Literacy*. What is worth retrieving, however, is a more authentic version of history, a way of life which will open more facets about English culture and society in their continual process of formation and reformation. In this respect, Lawrence's fiction proves a rich field for our scrutiny and exploration.

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3. Ibid.
4. DHL, 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside'.
5. A. R. and C. P. Griffin, 'Eastwood and the Mining Country',

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6. Graham Holderness, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*, p.4.
 7. A. R. Griffin, *The British Coalmining Industry* (Buxton: Moorland Publishing Co., 1977), p.16.
 8. Graham Holderness, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*, p.48.
 9. Griffin, p.20.
 10. The above material is based on the Griffins' 'Eastwood and the Mining Country'.
 11. Paul Delany, 'D. H. Lawrence and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit', paper delivered to the D. H. Lawrence centennial conference at Tufts University.
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22. Ibid. p.55.
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3. Lawrence himself had only one unpleasant experience with the son of a local industrial magnate, whom he did not know personally.
4. E. T. , p.116.
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20. See J. T. Boulton 'D. H. Lawrence's "Odour of Chrysanthemums": An Early Version.' *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 13 (1969):4-48. M. Kalnins 'D. H. Lawrence's "Odour of Chrysanthemums": The Three Endings.' *Studies in Short*

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21. Quoted in M. Kalnins's article of the previous REF, p. 476.
22. cf. Chapter Two, and C. Gallagher's *The Industrial Reformation of the English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985)
23. J. Harris, p. 5.

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11. See the previous note.
12. cf. This father figure could be elevated up the social ladder as well as downgraded in finance and morality out of the same pride and pretention in *The White Peacock*, where the mother is spared the myth of save and sacrifice, dependent on an obscure income source.
13. Of course ten years later, if Lawrence had rewritten the novel, the father figure would have turned out to be a Mellors, which is another way of exploiting his origin in the literary circle, as Watson has noted of Lawrence's

behaviour to Edith Sitwell as a defence against the superiority of his superior acquaintances. (See George Watson, *Politics and Literature in Modern Britain*, p.117 and also George Neville, *A Memoir of D. H. Lawrence*, p.47.)

14. Roy Spencer suggested that 'At the time they married Arthur Lawrence was socially superior to his bride for his father was a settled hard-working and respected man in a widespread community and his mother ran a successful shop. Lydia Beardsall, on the other hand, still belonged to those starving millions who moved about Europe searching for work and bread.' (See Roy Spencer, *D. H. Lawrence Country*, p.63) Here is the same confusion of social status with income.

15. Roy Spencer, *D. H. Lawrence Country*, p.68.

16. Ibid. p.15.

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18. Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love*, p.10.

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24. Ibid. p.23.
25. Richard Hoggart, 'A Question of Tone' in *Speaking to Each Other: About Literature* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), pp.194-9; and Holderness, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology, and Fiction*, pp.135-6.
26. cf. Holderness, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*, pp.138-9.
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32. The metaphor comes from D. H. Lawrence's 'The Study of Thomas Hardy', p.494.
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