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THE INDUSTRIAL NIGHTMARE: A STUDY OF THE EVILS OF INDUSTRIALISM FROM D.H.LAWRENCE'S *THE WHITE PEACOCK* TO *WOMEN IN LOVE*

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"Works of art are of infinite loneliness and with nothing to be reached as with criticism. Only love can grasp and hold and fairly judge them."

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Writer.*

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A B S T R A C T

The object of the present study is the analysis of the social and individual changes with the advent of industrialism, as they are seen through D.H.Lawrence's novels *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, and *Women in Love*. Lawrence saw "progress" as a necessary evil, responsible for both the stress and demand which led individuals to pay a high price for the doubtful benefits of it.

From the first novel analysed here, *The White Peacock*, Lawrence pictures a rural society which gradually becomes "industrialized" and loses its excellence in the process of industrialization. In the last novel analysed here, *Women in Love*, Lawrence shows a chaotic world in which some characters are irremediably lost, while others try to discover new ways of life through roads never tried before.

Analysing the main causes which led Lawrence to hate the industrial society so intensely, I have tried to show the influence of his environment on his work. The contrast between the country he knew in his childhood and the industrial society in which he lived in his adult life greatly influenced his vision of the world.

Through Lawrence's social ideas--some unacceptable to common sense, some painfully true even today,--it is possible to find a man extremely contradictory: Lawrence was, first of all, a man who believed in the human capacity for regeneration;

like a phoenix, his own symbol, he believed man was able to be born again from the ashes, full of vigour to live another cycle of life.

R E S U M O

O objetivo do presente estudo é a análise das mudanças sociais e psicológicas surgidas com o advento do industrialismo, tais como elas são vistas por D.H.Lawrence em seus romances *O Pavão Branco*, *Filhos e Amantes*, *O Arco-Íris* e *Mulheres Apaixonadas*. Lawrence via o "progresso" como um mal necessário que trazia consigo uma grande carga de pressões e exigências, levando os indivíduos a pagar um alto preço pelos seus duvidosos benefícios.

Partindo do primeiro livro analisado aqui, *O Pavão Branco*, Lawrence mostra uma sociedade rural que vai pouco a pouco se industrializando e perdendo em qualidade, com o progresso. No último livro estudado nesta dissertação, *Mulheres Apaixonadas*, Lawrence apresenta um universo caótico onde alguns personagens se encontram irremediavelmente perdidos, enquanto outros tentam encontrar uma nova forma de vida através de caminhos nunca antes experimentados.

Analisando as principais causas que levaram Lawrence a odiar tão profundamente a sociedade industrial, eu tento mostrar a influência que o meio em que ele nasceu e viveu teve em sua obra. O contraste entre o país que ele conheceu em sua infância e a sociedade industrial na qual ele viveu sua vida adulta, muito influenciou sua visão do mundo.

Através das idéias sociais de Lawrence--algumas inaceitáveis para o senso comum, outras dolorosamente verdadeiras mes

mo hoje--é possível encontrar um homem extremamente contraditório: Lawrence era, antes de tudo, um homem que acreditava na capacidade humana de regeneração; como a fênix, seu próprio símbolo, ele acreditava que o homem era capaz de renascer das cinzas, cheio de vigor, para viver um outro ciclo de vida.

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Chapter ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this dissertation I will be concerned with the social thought of D.H.Lawrence as it is related to the changes that industrialism has caused in modern man. Through the reading of his novels, his letters, and some of his essays his profound hatred of industrialism becomes clear and undoubtedly, as Leo Hamalian argues, most of "Lawrence's tremendous power as an artist was generated by his 'intense and unremitting' hatred of modern society."[1]

Lawrence's doctrine that the Industrial Revolution is responsible for the destruction of the man-nature relationship belongs to the tradition of protest against industrialism and is shared by many writers of the nineteenth century such as Carlyle, Ruskin and Coleridge and also by some of his contemporaries. But Lawrence added to this tradition a criticism that would have shocked some of those writers because he disbelieved in most of the social ambitions which are regarded as compensations for the evils of civilization. In his essay "D.H.Lawrence and Modern Society," Dan Jacobson says that Lawrence believed that "much of what had always been considered finest and most valuable found its logical culmination in the black horrors of industrialization."[2]

[1] D.H.Lawrence: A *Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Leo Hamalian (Introduction), p. 12.

[2] Dan Jacobson, "D.H.Lawrence and Modern Society," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Leo Hamalian, p. 135.

This work is an attempt to find the roots of Lawrence's bitter criticism of modern civilization through the analysis of his ideas about modern society. Why was D.H. Lawrence so opposed to industrialism? Why his hatred of the established society? Was he really the "Prophet of the Apocalypse" or just the last of the Romantics? Is it not interesting that his instinct for community (I will talk about his Rananim project later) coexists with his disbelief in the life of modern society? I will try to answer these questions throughout this dissertation by the analysis of the novels or by the direct examination of the ideas contained in his essays which will be used to illustrate my 'Background Chapter' and my chapters on his novels.

I have chosen to examine four of his earlier novels: *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* and I am also going to use some of his essays and some of his poetry because they will be useful to explain the topic under investigation. But I will chiefly focus my attention on *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* because in these two books, especially in the last one, the evils of modern civilization are more clearly and consciously explored. The characters of these books, more than those of the first one "live close to the sick heart of a doomed civilization and are implicated in its final illness."[3]

The "leadership novels" which follow *Women in Love* in sequence are in one sense Lawrence's most "social" but I have not chosen to discuss them because my criterion of choice was based on the artistic quality of the earlier work. Most

[3] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 88.

critics seem to agree that it is in this earlier phase that Lawrence's "genius as a creative writer is most undeniable."[4]

They also agree that after *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* Lawrence's "work deteriorated as art-with the exception of a few short stories which, however perfect in their kind, are minor."[5] So, using Vivas's terminology, I will be dealing with "the triumph of art" and leaving "the failure of art" out.[6]

The Lawrence of the "social novels" lacks the "poetry," the "self-sufficiency" and "the splendor" which makes his fiction fascinating. He is so dogmatic in his later phase that I would prefer to discuss his letters of this period. In *Women in Love* Lawrence establishes the "death" of the "modern" society, leaving, however, the road open to the establishment of a new one. After this, Lawrence is going to deal with the theme of "social resurrection" which is not the theme chosen for my dissertation.

[4] F.R.Leavis, *D.H.Lawrence Novelist*, p. 85.

[5] Eliseo Vivas, D.H.Lawrence: *The Failure and the Triumph of Art*. Preface, xi. One would suggest that *The White Peacock* is also a minor novel. In one of his letters Lawrence said: "I was very young when I wrote the *Peacock*--I began it at twenty. Let it be my apology." But I have chosen it because through this novel I can show all the beauty of pastoral England in such a plenitude which is not going to be found anymore in the books which come after it. And I need this "picture" of Victorian England to establish the contrast with the industrialized England of the other books.

[6] "The novels that succeed *Women in Love* are exploratory and experimental. In them Lawrence lives his problems in a tentative and immediately personal way that gives these books a different status as works of art from that of *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow*.

The novels that I have in mind in this description are *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*. The last seems to be a bad book and a regrettable performance... But the other two, though very much open to criticism as novels and works of art... are "apart from the works that show Lawrence's full creative power..." (Leavis, pp. 32-33).

I intend to show that in Lawrence's view there is a crescendo from *The White Peacock* to *Women in Love* in the evils caused by the process of industrialization of England. In *The White Peacock* it is possible to "feel" nature and "hear" the heart of the countryside pulsating; in *Sons and Lovers*, we witness the life in the mines and the beginning of the process of disintegration of the stable civilization of the past. In *The Rainbow* this process can be fully analysed since in this book we have a summarized picture of the whole process: the transformation of the Brangwen's farm by "progress". And then, in *Women in Love* it is possible to study Lawrence's view of the evils of the modern world.

So, besides artistic merit, the further reason for my choice is the fact that it is possible to make a contrast between the young Lawrence's view of England as it is seen in *The White Peacock* and the view of the man who wrote *Women in Love*: a man "angered over what had been done to the landscapes of industrial regions."[7] *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*, for example, could be considered "more social" than the ones involved in this dissertation but if I had chosen say from *The Rainbow* to *The Plumed Serpent*, it would not be possible to establish this contrast between the romantic rural country and the industrialized modern England, since these novels were written when he had already left England and they deal with alien or imaginary societies.

[7] Harry T.Moore, p. 207.

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

INTRODUCTION

When I started studying D.H.Lawrence's critics I soon discovered that there was seemingly little more to say about D.H.Lawrence's work. There is a long list of good critics who have already written about him and at first sight, it seems that all the topics possible were exhausted. The great amount of available criticism about him has analysed his work to such an extent that one finds it hard to discover anything that has eluded the critics. That is why I have tried to read as much as I could about him and about his work hoping to be loyal to his genius as far as it was possible for me.

Since I am going to deal basically with his social ideas I will try to keep myself closest to the critics that are more concerned with this aspect of his work and I will not be directly involved with his Freudian critics. There will however be times when they are called to explain or clarify some aspects of his social thought. My biographical sources will be fundamentally Moore[8] and Aldington,[9] to whom I owe the passport to enter Lawrence's world. They will be especially useful in the elaboration of the second chapter.

[8] Harry T.Morre, *The Priest of Love: A Life of D.H.Lawrence.*

[9] Richard Aldington, *Portrait of a Genius But...*

But it must be remembered here that, as in the case of the psychoanalytical critics, I will selectively discuss the aspects of Lawrence's life that are concerned with the theme of this dissertation. I will pass over many critics in this review, who will reappear throughout this work, according to their relevance in the explanation of some topic. My selection was done taking in consideration, especifically, those critics who are preoccupied with the development of Lawrence's social ideas. The order in which they appear here, just for the purpose of presentation, follows my personal criterion of the importance their analyses have to the theme of this dissertation. This order, however not strictly hierarchic, is presented in an inverse way. So the critics which will conclude this selection are those who better summarize the ideas presented in this dissertation.

THE CRITICS

Among the critics that have been discussing the importance of D.H.Lawrence's doctrine, Diana Trilling explores the response of the readers of different generations to his works. She sees in Lawrence's vision of social regeneration an appeal to present day readers. She believes that the rejection of "the values and ambitions and rewards of modern industrial society"[10] by the young people of today was shared by Lawrence.

[10] Diana Trilling, "Lawrence and the Movements of Modern Culture," *D.H.Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet.* ed. by Stephen Spender, p. 5.

But at the same time she calls attention to the fact that the "connection between Lawrence's view and those of a present generation is not as firm as it first appears"[11] because in certain aspects such as his view of sexuality he is somewhat misunderstood by many of his new readers. This gap lies basically in the difference between "coupling" and "mating." According to D.H.Lawrence, the "coupling" is not an end in itself but a way to salvation, a travel in the direction of a goal beyond love that could create a new world while the second is among other things an escape from the isolation that mechanical society has produced.

Julian Moynahan[12] believes that Lawrence's importance is in fact "more that any other writer in English" as he was preoccupied with "human feelings" and with the ties that put men together. Moynahan also emphasizes the great importance that the "social" has on the shaping of Lawrence's characters. According to him Lawrence "tries to show that the most valuable human enterprise is the dual fulfillment of the social and the inhuman selves within an integrated experience of life, and the end envisions the transformation of society into a new form within which such saving fulfillment could work themselves out."[13]

In his analysis of *The White Peacock*, Stephen Miko suggests that by treating his social creatures "as foolish but

[11] Diana Trilling, "Lawrence and the Movements of Modern Culture," *D.H.Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet* ed. by Stephen Spender, p. 5.

[12] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*.

[13] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 42.

clever"[14] Lawrence reveals a desire for a higher form of life at the same time that he distrusts it. This ambivalence will be present wherever Lawrence deals with the social.[15] Miko's observations are more related to the emphasis Lawrences gives to nature in his first book--*The White Peacock*. At the same time, Miko calls attention to the emergence in this book of the theme that he loss of contact with nature has caused men to lose their emotional security. It is Lawrence's principle that "closeness to nature helps; highly organized or systematized social activity hinders."[16] Miko calls attention to the fact that Lawrence's characters always have problems in reconciling their individual aspirations and the established social rules but like many other critics of Lawrence, he raises the possibility that Lawrence was uncertain about the social doctrine he had created.

Daleski, in *The Forked Flame*, sees Lawrence as a 20th century romantic preoccupied with the unconscious side of man aware that the civilization he was living in was reaching a dead end. According to Daleski it was the consciousness of a man who, in a world between two wars, was still capable of dreaming of better times:

[14] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 23.

[15] Miko criticizes the overintellectualization that Lawrence imposes to his characters' feelings in *The White Peacock* which, in Miko's opinion, indicates Lawrence's attitude toward "values which he never accepted but which nevertheless tempted a young man not yet sure of his own path." We know, however, that the same thing is going to happen in *Women in Love*, which proves that Lawrence always felt this attraction and repulsion to the social values presented in his books.

[16] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 187.

> After our civilization has broken, and the civilization of touch has begun
>
> war will cease, there will be no more wars.
> (Future Wars - *Poems*, p. 612)

Among strong arguments against Lawrence, Pritchard, in his Introduction to *D.H.Lawrence: Body of Darkness* agrees with Trilling about the everyday importance of Lawrence and inserts him in the category of Romantic Decadence. He finds in Lawrence characteristics of a Romantic: "the erotic mysticism," "the sexual disturbance," "the attraction by the primitive roots of man's culture." The fact that Lawrence makes of himself the prophet of "cultural collapse" at the same time that he believes in a "new life" gives him characteristics of a romantic writer.

In his *D.H.Lawrence* R.P.Draper broaches the matter of the "apparent similarity" between some of Lawrence's ideas and those advocated by the fascists and he agrees that it served to harm Lawrence's reputation, but the critic does not believe that he deserves this criticism. It is also the opinion of many other critics and people who shared his intimacy: Barbara Weekley, Frieda's daughter, says that Lawrence "detested Bolchevism and Fascism was not his taste either."[17]

Keith Sagar is more preoccupied with the "appropriate form" with which Lawrence's view of the world is envisioned in his writings. In the same way that Leavis is concerned with Lawrence and tradition, Sagar is more interested in "Lawrence's

[17] Barbara Weekley in Harry T.Moore and Warren Roberts, *D.H.Lawrence and His World*, p. 20.

reaction against[18] the English realist tradition,"[19] but he says that his work is an attempt to complement the work of Leavis in order to give a better understanding of Lawrence's work. Like Leavis, he is a great sympathizer with Lawrence's ideas.

In his *Double Measure*, Ford points out that Lawrence's hatred of mankind is irrational but in his discussion of the fact that Lawrence has always been classified as an anarchist, Ford believes this affirmation has not a strong support. According to Ford, if we read Lawrence carefully, it is possible to observe that he dreads people en masse in the same way that he hates authority. Ford agrees with those who say that Lawrence is not a pacifist and he states that if it is not "a good fortune" to Lawrence it surely is to his readers since Lawrence's "non pacifism" enables him to give us a kind of vision of the world such as the one presented in *Women in Love*. According to Ford, and it is an evidence, no "professing pacifist" could have written this novel. However it is the same Ford who admits Lawrence's contradictory ideas when he recognizes Lawrence's non-acceptance of the war: "... if anyone were to be left in charge of a push button in wartime, it ought not to be D.H.Lawrence."[20]

Collin Clarke shows that in Lawrence's fiction "corruption or disintegration are essential life-energy."[21] He

[18] Italics mine.

[19] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 55.

[20] George H.Ford, *Double Measure*, p. 182.

[21] Colin Clarke, *River of Dissolution: D.H.Lawrence and English Romanticism*, p. ix.

is against Ford's idea that the society Lawrence presents is only degeneration. To Clarke, this degeneration is also a source of life: the mud where a new kind of life could be generated. He is also against Leavis's moralistic interpretation of Lawrence's ideas which, in his opinion, hides "the satanic Lawrence who finds beauty in the phosphorescence of decay."[22] Like many other critics, Clarke believes in Lawrence's debt to the English Romantics even if he finds it difficult to determine the extent of any literary influence on him.

Although he does not deny Lawrence's importance in the shaping of modern thought, Graham Hough criticizes Lawrence for being alienated in relation to the facts of his time. He does not consider Lawrence involved with any political current of the time he lived neither he thinks that Lawrence could be aligned with right or left wing ideas because, in his opinion, Lawrence is only concerned with the interior life. Hough is against those who allege that Lawrence had proposed the salvation of England by sex alone but "a sensual tenderness and fidelity" that could present the place of consciousness. Hough also recognizes Lawrence's affinity with the "Victorian prophets," like Carlyle or Ruskin, because of his ideas against mechanism and materialism.

Baruch Hochman in his *Another Ego*, discusses Lawrence's treatment of the antagonism between self and society. Like Spilka and many other critics, Hochman also agrees that Lawrence has failed as a prophet but he praises Lawrence's

[22] Colin Clarke, *River of Dissolution: D.H. Lawrence and English Romanticism*, p. xiv.

ability to believe in "man's capacity to make a world"[23]. In his analysis of Lawrence's critique of the modern world, Hochman explores the idea that Lawrence "stands between the Romantic visionaries, who turned their attention to the workings of the deepest subjectivity, and such contemporary thinkers as Herbert Marcuse and Norman O.Brown, who envision possibilities of a nonrepressive mode of being that would free man from the negative, destructive burden of civilization,"[24] Hochman includes Lawrence among those writers such as Rilke and Nietzsche who are both "metaphysical rebels 'and' metaphysical reconstructionists."

Harry T.Moore, Lawrence's best biographer, even if he is not primarily critical, writes a kind of critical biography of Lawrence which is very helpful to any of his students. He is one of the few critics who believe in Lawrence, the prophet.

According to Mark Spilka, in his *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, Lawrence is not worried about solving the problems he presents in his books but in creating new possibilities to individual life in the future. He calls Lawrence "the prophet for individual regeneration" but he also agrees that Lawrence has failed as a prophet in spite of the fact that, to him, Lawrence's "final vision of society is essentially sound."[25] Spilka also disagrees with those who call Lawrence a fascist

[23] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, Preface x.

[24] Idem, Preface, xii.

[25] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 205.

in the social or political meaning of the word because, according to him, Lawrence is only worried about "living" relationships.

Mary Freeman is another critic who is preoccupied with Lawrence the artist and the prophet, and she sees that the apocalypse Lawrence foresaw to our culture is a consequence of Lawrence's belief that this culture "had become too complex to be compatible with individual viability."[26]

Dan Jacobson, who belongs to the later generation of Lawrence's critics, analyses Lawrence's political and social thought but he emphasizes that Lawrence's ideas must be understood only through his writing not through "historical currents." Jacobson believes that through the circumstances of his life Lawrence had the opportunity to face the "social and material revolutions of his time"[27] and he considers Lawrence a "thoroughgoing revolutionary and radical" in any "political or social meaning of the words."[28] In his analysis Jacobson emphasizes Lawrence's perception that as "civilizations increased in technological complexity"[29] it also increases the pressure society exerts on its members avoiding their blossoming as real individuals. Even accepting the fact that Lawrence has not presented a program of action to solve the problems he has

[26] Mary Freeman, *D.H.Lawrence: A Basic Study of His Ideas*, p. 2.

[27] Dan Jacobson, "D.H.Lawrence and Modern Society," *A Collection of Criticism* ed. by Leo Hamalian, p. 141.

[28] Idem, p. 141.

[29] Idem, p. 142.

presented in his books, Jacobson praises Lawrence's capacity to present us the aspirations and needs of twentieth century man.

With firmness and a strong feeling of admiration for Lawrence, Leavis has defended him from those who, like T.S.Eliot, had detracted Lawrence. According to Spilka, Leavis is "the ablest of Lawrence critics and the chief progenitor of his revival."[30] One cannot deny the excessive ardor with which he treats Lawrence's work but he is responsible for a sound appreciation of his work. Leavis emphasizes the moral value of literature and his "tradition" was characterized by strong moral individualism not by dependence on external guides. He advocates Lawrence's "active intellectual life" against T.S. Eliot's considerations that by being born a "miner's son at Eastwood in the eighteen-eighties"[31] Lawrence would lack the living tradition of those who were brought up in a middle class family. Leavis, on the contrary, considers this fact an important help to Lawrence's career:

> "If he had not been born into the working-class he could not have known working-class life from the inside. As it was he enjoyed advantages that a writer middle-class born could not have had: the positive experience and a freedom both from illusions and from the debilitating sense of ignorance. On the other hand, gifted as he was, there was nothing to prevent his getting to know life at other social levels."[32]

[30] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, Introduction, p. 5.

[31] F.R.Leavis, *D.H.Lawrence Novelist*, p. 371.

[32] Idem, p. 371.

No social critic can ignore Christopher Caudwell's point of view as it was acknowledged by Hochman (1970) and Pritchard (1971); as a Marxist, he had his own approach to Lawrence's social thinking. In his analysis of Lawrence's work, Caudwell establishes a link between Lawrence's own psychology and the socio-political ethic of the time he lived in. To Caudwell, the cause of modern cultural decadence lies in bourgeois economic exploitation and he says that the capitalist is responsible for the suppression of feelings and instincts as it is Lawrence's idea. Caudwell also shows how Lawrence hates the "competitive individualism." His essay is "hostile and somewhat doctrinaire" as Pritchard says, but it involves important insights into Lawrence's social ideas. Caudwell and Lawrence differ in relation to their ideas about individuation. Baruch Hochman establishes a good comparison between their different points of view about this matter and I quote him here:

> "To Caudwell, institutional relationships of an objective historical order are the ground for individuation. For Lawrence, the order of causation is reversed: individuality, sui generis, becomes the ground of the objective, institutional historical order."[33]

Among the critics I have analysed here, Raymond Williams's essay, "Lawrence's Social Writing"[34] was very helpful to expand my own idea of Lawrence's treatment of the "social". In the beginning of his article Williams carefully analyses the most common misunderstandings to which Lawrence has been exposed. Among them Williams broaches the fact of Lawrence being called a fascist and his supposed belief that

[33] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, Preface x.

[34] Raymond Williams, "Lawrence's Social Writings," *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 162.

"sex solves everything." According to Williams these are "matters of ignorance" which derive , he suggests, from the fact that Lawrence's social values are a mixture of his own ideas and ideas derived from other people but "because the intensity with which he look up and worked over what he had learned from others, this is in practice, very difficult to sort out."[35] Williams traces a comparison between Lawrence's social writings and Carlyle's. Like other critics, he accepts the fact that Lawrence follows a nineteenth century tradition of criticism of industrialism but, according to him, the writer to whom Lawrence's critique of industrialism bears the most remarkable resemblance is Carlyle. Williams calls attention to the fact that Lawrence "is little concerned, historically with the origins of industrialism"[36] but that it was a received fact to him. However, as Williams points out, we should not forget that Lawrence's social responses were not those of "a man observing the processes of industrialism, but of one caught in them"[37] and Williams believes that most of Lawrence's strength as a writer comes from the fact that "he was in a position to know the living process as a matter of common rather than of special experience."[38] As to his failure in finding a solution to the problems of the society he presents in his books: "Lawrence was so involved with the

[35] Raymond Williams, "Lawrence's Social Writings," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 164.

[36] Idem, p. 164.

[37] Raymond Williams, "Lawrence's Social Writings," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 165.

[38] Idem, p. 166.

business of getting free of the industrial system that he never came seriously to the problem of changing it, although he knew that since the problem was common an individual solution was only a cry in the wind."[39] According to Williams, Lawrence's "democratic" ideas are close both to socialism and to a "romantic anarchism." But he considers Lawrence's ideas about equality "the best thing" that has been written about this subject. Finally, as many other critics have done before, Williams also criticizes the way Lawrence "tries to separate the material issues and the issues in feeling, for he had the opportunity of knowing, and indeed had learned, how closely intermeshed these issues were."[40]

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Besides this chapter, this dissertation will include four other chapters which will constitute the corpus of my analysis and a conclusion.

In Chapter Two, the "Background Chapter" I will make an attempt to trace a summarized picture of the familial, geographical and social setting in which Lawrence lived. I will also provide some information about the coming of

[39] Raymond Williams, "Lawrence's Social Writings," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 166.

[40] Idem, p. 173.

industrialism to England hoping that it could throw some light on the questions raised in this dissertation.

Chapter Three will deal with *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers*. Here I will analyse Lawrence's view of nature, the pastoral life in opposition to the life in the mines and the foreshadowing of the changes that will be faced in "the world" of *The Rainbow*.

In Chapter Four I will try to examine, in *The Rainbow*, the emergence of industrialism and the movement of its characters in the "world of men."

Chapter Five will study *Women in Love*: the established chaos.

Finally, in the conclusion, I will try to show the changes which have occurred in Lawrence's social ideas from *The White Peacock* to *Women in Love* and I will speculate why these changes have occurred.

As far as this dissertation goes I hope to demonstrate that, through the analysis of the novels I have chosen to study, say *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, it is possible to show that, to Lawrence, industrialism is in the roots of the progress as well as in the state of disintegration at which modern world has arrived; a kind of necessary evil. Lawrence believes industrialism responsible for man's loss of contact with nature, for man's dehumanization and, in the last instance, for man's loss of equilibrium and consequent mechanization which leads him to be doomed if he does not find a solution or an escape from this chaotic society.

Chapter TWO

> For God's sake, let us be men
> not monkeys minding machines...
> D.H.Lawrence, "Let us be man."

INTRODUCTION

Accepting as a premise that D.H.Lawrence's hatred of industrial society could possibly have been influenced by his early environment, I will trace in this chapter a picture of the familial, the geographical, and the social setting in which Lawrence lived. I hope that the use of the biographical material can help in the explanation of some questions raised in this work since it provides some information about the process of industrialization in England. I believe that this will give a better understanding of the conditions under which Lawrence wrote the books I am going to study in this dissertation. It can also be useful to establish whether in point of fact he was a man related to his time or just a Utopian thinker, and it will make it possible to discover whether Lawrence's criticism of industrial society fits into the context of his time.

Where are the roots of Lawrence's hatred of modern society and industrialism? Is he convincing as a prophet? Did he suffer from a class inferiority complex or can we consider him a "class-traitor"? How does he treat the

problem of alienation? What about his Rananim project? These and other minor questions will occupy me in this chapter. These are recurrent questions in the criticism on D.H.Lawrence but in view of Lawrence's stature and complexity I feel they can be answered from a new point of view.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Before the Industrial Revolution, people in England depended basically on agriculture and because of this, the farmers and their workers were very important people, proud of living by what they produced. The English were a self reliant and capable people who belonged to a stable civilization whose basis was firmly rooted in their land.

> "They had that air of readiness for what would come to them, a kind of surety, an expectancy, the look of an inheritor."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 7)

However, by Lawrence's time the main critique of the industrialization of society is that it caused the separation of man from nature which, in his opinion, is responsible for man's loss of equilibrium and his sense of not having roots. The migration of population in the direction of the cities created a new class of people who were neither farmers anymore nor business men yet. Trying to break away from the farm and the old values of the past, they had not yet found a satisfactory new way of living. The need to change caused by

the great transformations that the whole society was suffering was mixed with the feeling that it was necessary to retain some kind of security to avoid losing themselves in the mechanized industrial world. In his opinion not all the people could find this ideal balance and so many were lost.

In the case of Lawrence's characters the need of adaptation to this new world leads to a desperate search for a new identity that, in some cases, is responsible for individual annihilation. This is true especially because most of them believed that a new man and a new society could simply be born through a new sexuality as for instance is the case of the main characters of *Women in Love*.[41] In this novel Lawrence states that "a living man or a woman who embraces the social destiny offered by industrial Western civilization embraces his own dying."[42]

At the beginning of the process of industrialization man was fascinated by the machine and thought that now mankind only had to let the "great iron man" work for them. But the machines soon generated other machines which produced more goods than were necessary at that time. Thus foreign markets had to be discovered, and the process initiated the vicious circle of capitalist production, earning and wasting money. As one of the consequences of this we have the whole mechanization of life, including the love-mechanization of

[41] Gerald is carried to death by his obsessive tie to Gudrun who becomes a "frozen snowwoman" and stays only partially alive in her "frictional" relation with Loerke. And Birkin - Ursula's relationship does not give, even at the end of the novel, sufficient evidence that they are going to succeed.

[42] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 88.

which Lawrence complained so much.

Another characteristic of the machines is that they are able to run by themselves, creating unemployment and the worker's sense that he is not so necessary as before: soon he discovers that he cannot find fulfillment only as producer and consumer. In *Women in Love*, Gerald experiences this feeling of uselessness when he finds out that his will is no longer necessary for the working of his machinery and he finds it difficult to accept. And having failed in the control of the machine he tries to exercise his will on human beings because "in the Lawrentian scheme of things the affinity between the 'machine' of the runaway mental consciousness and the machines of the industrial world is more than metaphorical. An individual who has turned himself into a machine, inevitably sees the natural world and human society as fields for the exercise of his will..."[43]

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution had already partly destroyed the man-land relationship, giving an out-of-proportion importance to towns. The stable agrarian civilization was over:

> "The Industrial Revolution, which began in the late eighteenth century was by now well under way, and the whole balance of life and work was changing."[44]

Born when England had already undergone the process of industrialization, D.H.Lawrence used the effects caused by the transformation of rural England into a highly

[43] Dan Jacobson, "D.H.Lawrence and Modern Society," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Leo Hamalian, p.136.

[44] *A History of Everyday Things in England*, p. 75.

industrialized country as the raw material for many of his books. So in spite of having lived the most part of his life in the twentieth century, Lawrence often set his novels in an earlier period. In *Sons and Lovers*, for instance, we have the social and economic aspects of Nothinghamshire region that go back nearly two centuries.

The first half of the twentieth century was a time of great changes not only in England but all over the world. It marked the beginning and the end of the First Great War . The depression and unemplyment that the Industrial Revolution had already started, increased with the war. Mussolini formed his Fascia di Combattimento in Italy, the Soviet Republic was established in Russia and Hitler started in German, the Nazy Party. The threat of another was helped to make the disillusionment of the post war period still more bitter, and Lawrence, like many other European writers of his time, was very sensitive to the transformation wrought by the war on the world's like.[45] As Moynahan says, Lawrence "keeps war out of the book (*Women in Love*) but he cannot keep out the feeling the war inspired in him. The vision of society-as-death reflects the cycle destruction through which Europe was passing between 1914 and 1918."[46]

[45] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 75.

[46] "The world is gone, extinguished, like the lights of last night's Café Royal - gone for ever -." (Letter to Murry).

GEOGRAPHICAL AND FAMILIAL BACKGROUND

I will try to avoid the "biographical fallacy" and "the genetic method"[47] as far as it is possible, but I also take into account that "the most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator"[48] and that some aspects of Lawrence's geographical and familial background have influenced his literary production very much. The circumstances of his birth, the way he lived his childhood and the journeys he made to different parts of the world gave him the ability to confront the social changes of his time and he wrote about this theme in almost everything he produced.

Lawrence was born in Eastwood, a mining village near Notthingham which, according to him, was "an extremely beautiful countryside":

> "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."[49]

However this "accident in the landscape" irritated him very much. Even if he pretended to see only the beauty of the country, the ugly reality of industrial England could not be hidden anymore and it created in him a strong form of attraction:

[47] René Welleck and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, pp.15-16.

[48] Ibidem, p. 75.

[49] D.H.Lawrence, "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside": *Phoenix* (vol. I), p. 133.

at the same time that he was impelled by the power of beauty he was also fascinated by the power of ugliness. And the more he hated it, the more he wrote about it - as he had used this as a catharsis to extirpate this hatred.

The environment where Lawrence lived his earlier life influenced very much his vision of the world and it is always present in his work. Alan Sillitoe ways that "if Lawrence hadn't been born in Nottingham he would never had been the same writer."[50] In the same way that it is possible that it was the sight of this bucolic countryside and the sweetness of his rural England that made unacceptable to him the ugliness of "man-made England." He was still there in the rural setting even when he left it. His mother had died and like many English writers he did not "like it here" anymore.[51] It was time to leave and find other landscapes more appropriate to his ideas. From then on he started to use this departure theme in his novels as we can see in the last lines of *Sons and Lovers* or in George's intention of going to Canada in *The White Peacock*.[52] The same happens in relation to his leaving England. Despite his relationship of love and hate with his country it was there that he wrote his best books and even when he had later travelled over much of the world, Nottinghamshire was present in many of the stories he wrote when he left it:

[50] Allan Sillitoe, "D.H.Lawrence and his District", *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet*, ed. by Stephen Spender,p. 67.

[51] See Joyce's case: He left Dublin (Ireland) but "stayed" there spiritually and wrote about Dubliners for the rest of his life.

[52] However it should be observed that when he left Eastwood he had published *The White Peacock*, written *The Trespasser* and started *Sons and Lovers*.

the industrialization of the Midlands is a recurrent symbol in his work.

The fact of being son of a miner and a "genteel middle class lady" mattered very much in Lawrence's case. From his father he inherited the attraction to the unknown, to the unconscious aspect of life. From his mother, he inherited his intellectual ambitions and the contradiction in his concepts about social classes. His family, the first social group about him, was an heterogeneous group and this marked him in his later contact with other people. His mother played an important role in his life and some believe that his inability to adjust either to his working class origin or to the higher strata to which he rose later, is a consequence of the different inheritance he had from home. He accepted his mother and denied his father but we know that both influences were strong.

Lawrence's insistence on writing about upper class women falling in love with working men can be seen throughout his works. Some believe that it is a reflexion of an inferiority complex, because like him (or like his father)[53] his characters usually fall in love with women that are socially superior to them. Other critics believe that his characters's choice of women involves Lawrence's projection of his mother. But this is more a subject for those who are interested in the psychoanalytical analysis of his work. This is not my case and I will drop it. But the fact is that nobody can deny the influence of his familial atmosphere in the shaping of his moral and social values.

[53] Lawrence's mother had been socially superior to his father and Frieda, his wife, was a German baroness and he was very proud of this fact.

The unfriendly relationship he had with his father could have been a consequence of his mother's influence. Because he deeply loved her and felt very much attracted by her "superior" qualities, he rejected the opposite values of his father perhaps only to be on her side. But inside him he could not "kill" the attraction of the world of his father on him.[54]

In the autobiographical novel *Sons and Lovers* there is a dialogue between Paul Morel and his mother where he explains his ideas about class:

> "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."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 313)

And he believes that

> "...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."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 313)

But Lawrence had to go away, from Nottinghamshire and later he had to leave England because of "the suffocating class atmosphere" existing there. He becomes a famous writer, he climbs socially, he gets involved in a sophisticated intellectual circle and then he is considered "a class traitor" by many people. In his "Autobiographical Sketch" he says:

> "As a man from the working class, I feel that the middle class cut off some of

[54] In his earlier books Lawrence favours his mother but later in his work he is going to praise his father instead of his mother and the "mine" remained a symbol of mystery for him all his life.

> my vital vibration when I am with them... Then why don't I live with my working people? Because their vibration is limited in another direction. They are narrow, but still fairly deep and passionate, whereas the middle class is broad and shallow and passionless. Quite passionless. At the best they substitute affection which is the great middle-class positive emotion. But the working class is narrow in outlook, in prejudice, and narrow in intelligence. This again makes a prison. One can belong absolutely to no class."[55]

Richard Aldington believes that Lawrence has a power complex and he shows how Lawrence wanted Frieda to submit or how he identified himself with God (like Quetzalcoatl in *The Plumed Serpent*). But it is also Aldington who calls the attention to his "acute" class inferiority complex and Alan Sillitoe says that Lawrence left England because "in Italy or Germany or Mexico an Englishman was more likely to be accepted as a 'gentelman', no matter how poor he appeared to be."[56]

There is an episode in his youth, presented by most of his biographers, when he told Jessie Chambers[57] that he was afraid of starting his career as a writer because he worried about what people would think of him: "A Collier's son a poet!"

As one of his critics says, Lawrence is "Whitmanishly contradictory" and if one is to obtain access to him it is impossible not to face his contradictions. Perhaps the best

[55] D.H.Lawrence, "Autobiographical Sketch", *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Leo Hamalian, p. 595.

[56] Allan Sillitoe, "D.H.Lawrence and His District", *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet*, ed. by Stephen Spender, p. 133.

[57] His first girl friend: she is going to be the Miriam of *Sons and Lovers* later.

way to look through his ideas is to follow his motto: "Trust the tale, not the teller" - because it may be that Lawrence elaborated most of his theories to guide the world of his characters, not his actual world. Götzsche, one of his friends, argues that "his ideas are so impractical that it is doubtful he will get anyone to accept him."[58] And he also changed his mind so quickly that it was almost impossible to follow him.[59]

Lawrence was apparently against most of the values acceptable to our society. He complains about democracy for trying to treat all men as equal:

> "We cannot say that all men are equal. We cannot say A=B. Nor can we say that men are unequal. We may not declare that A=B+C... One man is neither equal nor unequal to another man."[60]

His "hatred" of democracy could be another manifestation of his "power complex": he did not want to be equal to anybody because he wanted to be different.

In one of his letters to Bertrand Russell, July 1915, he says:

> "... You must criticise the extant democracy, the yound idea. That is our enemy. This existing phase is now in its collapse. What we must hasten to prevent is this young democratic party

[58] Richard Aldington, *Portrait of a Genius But...*, p. 267.

[59] Aldous Huxley said once that "it is impossible to prove him in the wrong for the simple reason that he never remained long enough in any intellectual position to be proved anything."

[60] D.H.Lawrence, "Democracy", *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 171.

> from getting into power. The idea of giving power to the hands of the working class is wrong. The working man must elect the immediate government, of his work, of his district, not the ultimate government of the nation... or we shall have another French Revolution."[61]

Besides this ironical prejudice,[62] Lawrence also had prejudices against "coloured races." In a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith he says: "The real sense of liberty only goes with white blood."[63]

He wanted a Utopian state where the absence of competition and the guarantee of basic material needs such as food and clothing could make it possible for the individual to flourish in his plenitude of being.

Education for Lawrence is "cold", "useless" and "cerebral" and he argues that "mental consciousness is a catastrophe for many people."

He was always suggesting a revolution to "smash" the rottenness of the modern world but, living in the time of the First Great War he did not take part in it,[64] and in a letter to Ottoline Morrell he says:

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[61] *The Selected Letters of D.H.Lawrence, ed. with an Introduction of Diana Trilling*, pp. 120-121.

[62] He was born in the working class.

[63] John Carey, "D.H.Lawrence's Doctrine." *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Leo Hamalian, p. 128.

[64] We know that he was considered physically unfit to be enlisted and so, this disbelief and rage in the war institution could have hidden another manifestation of his so-called inferiority complex.

> "As far as I possibly can, I will stand outside this time, I will live my life, and if possible be happy, though the whole world slides in horror into the bottomless pit."
>
> (*Letters*, p. 317)

It seems a paradox that instead of facing the problems of the world he lived in, Lawrence sometimes acted as if he were not commited to his time. He was very much criticized for that: A man who was aware of the problems of his countrymen was expected to "fight", even if he only fought with words. But Lawrence did not do so and he was considered a traitor[65] to his ideals of struggling for a better world. But who was going to assure him that the war was the "way of salvation"? He seemed not to believe so and he preferred "individual" solutions. But if we read his wartime letters we see how much pain was in his heart in observing the wounds the war was making in mankind. In his article, "Till the Fight is Finished," Denis Donohogue says,

> "... I do not agree that his attitude was cowardly... I think he judged the war by reference not to the fate of Europe or even the fate of the world but by reference to the laws of his own sensibility, his own genius, propelled by intimations of life as energy, purpose, "blood-consciousness" was outraged by the mechanical perversions which traded under their names from 1914 to 1918."[66]

He was especially unstable about politics and it is difficult to associate him with any of the contemporary political currents. He is against all the "isms"--bolchevism,

[65] He was persecuted by the Germans as an English spy and suspected by the English of being for the German side, which makes him an outcast from at least two of the most important societies in his time.

[66] Denis Donohogue, "Till the Fight is Finished," *D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. by Stephen Spender, p. 208.

socialism, republicanism, liberalism, conservatism, communism--because in his opinion they are "all alike" governed by the only "principle of the idealized unit, the possessor of property."[67]

He had "political schemes for saving England" and it is about this that he often discussend and quarrelled with Bertrand Russell, the "philosophy-mathematics man." When they first met, in 1914, Lawrence had already finished *The Rainbow* and Russell, then a lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge, had already published his *Principia Mathematica*.

At first it appeared to be a perfect association between Russell's mathematic logic and Lawrence's "vivifying dose of unreason."[68] They were both in a "mood of bitter rebellion" at that time and they decided to take action and produce a series of joint lectures in London. These lectures would, according to Lawrence, result in the establishment of "a little society or body around a religious belief, which leads to action."

But they soon started quarrelling and Russell made the lectures without Lawrence's participation. In a letter of 1916 Lawrence says to Russell: "I don't believe your lectures are good... what's the good of sticking in the damned ship and haranguing the merchant pilgrims in their own language. Why don't you drop overboard? Why don't you clear out the whole show?"[69] This was a friendship based on "scolding," insults,

[67] D.H.Lawrence, "Democracy", *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 170.

[68] Russell's words.

[69] *The Selected Letters of D.H.Lawrence ed. with an Introduction by Diana Trilling*, p. 139.

compliments and curses": one of the most intense relationships of Lawrence's life.

They agreed in some points (that politics and psychology should go together, for example), but it was very difficult for the miner's son and the heir of an earldom to come to terms in many subjects. This difference of class did not necessarily have to separate them[70] but it should have mattered in this case. The same differences that first impelled them toward each other, separated them later. Lawrence was a man who had suffered in flesh and blood the problems of not having money, who had to fight for his place under the sun: a man who had not just been an observer of the processes of industrialism "but one caught in them." Russell, on the other hand, was the proper "English Constitution," as Frieda called him in a letter of May, 1915.

It is through the letters Lawrence wrote to Russell that we are going to find some of the best material to analyse Lawrence's social ideas. A paragraph on social reform is found in the first letter Lawrence wrote to Russell:

> "There must be a revolution in the State. It shall begin by the nationalising of all industries and means of communication, & of the land--in one fell blow. Then a man shall have his wages whether he is sick or well or old--if anything prevents his working, he shall have his wages just the same. So we shall not live in fear of the world--no man amongst us, & no woman, shall have any fear of the wolf at the door, for all wolves are dead. Which practically solves the whole economic question for the present.

[70] Most of Lawrence's friends were socially superior to him, but perhaps they did not intimidate him because he felt intellectually superior to them. It was not Russell's case.

> All dispossessed owners shall receive a proportionate income--no capital recompense--for the space of, say fifty years."[71]

He did not want a "materialist, Marxist revolution," but he was in favor of an "assertion of life." He was full of ideas of reform by that time, and so was Russell. But these ideas did not always coincide: Russell was repelled by Lawrence's "blood-knowledge" ideas, and Lawrence could not accept Russell's "mind consciousness." In a letter of February 1916 Lawrence says to Russell:

> "... You said in your lecture on education that you didn't set much count by the unconscious. That is sheer perversity. The whole of the conscious and the conscious content is old hat--the millstone round your neck."[72]

Later on it is Russell who states, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell that Lawrence's "psychology of people is amazingly good up to a point, but at a certain point he gets misled by love of violent colouring."[73]

Lawrence accused Russell of being in favor of the war:

> "Your basic desire is the maximum desire of war, you are really the super-war-spirit. What you want is to jab and strike, like the soldier with the bayonet, only you are sublimated into words."[74]

[71] *The Selected Letters of D.H.Lawrence ed. with an Introduction by Diana Trilling*, pp. 104-105.

[72] Ibidem, p. 139.

[73] Harry T.Moore, p. 302.

[74] *The Selected Letters of D.H.Lawrence ed. with an Introduction by Diana Trilling*, pp. 127.

On the other hand, Russell accused Lawrence of being spiritually responsible for the process that would eventually lead to the disaster of the Auschwitz slaughter. We know, however, that though some of his beliefs coincided with those of the Nazi killers he could not be considered "responsible" for Auschwitz since Lawrence's ideas were not directed to mass murder but they were entirely devoted to art.

Through his letters to Russell Lawrence builds up a whole theory on his "new state":

> "You must work out the idea of a new state, not go on criticizing this old one... And the idea is, that every man shall vote according to his understanding, & that the higher understanding must dictate for the lower understandings. And the desire is to have a perfect government perfectly related in all its parts, the highest aim of the government is the highest good of the soul, of the individual, the fulfilment in the Infinite, in the Absolute."[75]

> "You must have a government based upon good, better & best. You must get this into your lectures, at once."[76]

This antagonistic friendship ended in the Spring of 1916. Later on Lawrence parodies Russell as Sir Joshua Mattheson in *Women in Love*.

In 1953, more than twenty years after Lawrence's death, defending Lawrence from one of Russell's attacks on him in *Harper's*, Frieda states her belief that if Russell had accepted some of Lawrence's ideas "he might have been a greater

[75] *The Selected Letters of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 121.

[76] Ibidem, p. 121.

philosopher as he is a great mathematician; their friendship might have been a wonderful thing... As for calling Lawrence an exponent of Nazism, that is pure nonsense--you might as well call St.Augustine a Nazi."[77]

For many years Lawrence pursued the idea of creating a community sympathetic to his ideas. A place "where he should be happy with a select group of friends" able to escape from the madding world. This "Rananim"[78] project would be a kind of ideal society where he would gather together about twenty "aristocrats of feelings" chosen among his friends.[79] This subject is the material of many of Lawrence's letters. Writing to William Hopkin, on 18 January 1915, he says that he is planning to find "a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as the necessities of life go..." A community where "the only riches is integrity of character."[80]

Where were they going to establish themselves? How were they going to find food and clothes? He seemed not to have found answers to all these questions. In a letter to Campbell he talks about his hope "to find a place where one can live simply, apart from this civilization, on the Pacific,

[77] Harry T.Moore, p. 296.

[78] The name probably comes from one of Koteliansky's Jewish songs.

[79] At first he thought of having only men in his colony but soon he gave up and invited also his women friends. Among other people he invited W.E.Hopkin, Lady Ottoline Morrell,the Huxleys, Lady Cynthia Asquith, Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield, etc.

[80] This late statement is found in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell but Richard Aldington suggests that Rananim could have appeared to Lawrence as a solution to his money problems since at this period most of the periodicals for which he wrote were having financial problems, and some were only publishing war stuff.

and have a few other people who are also at peace and happy, and live, and understand, and be free." But in the same year he decided to shift Rananim to South America, in the Andes. At first sight the idea of establishing his colony in America could possibly have been influenced by Hawthorne's Brook Farm. Later on, when he was already in New Mexico he seems to have found the ideal place to set his Rananim. In an interview with a young writer, Maurice Losemann he says:

> "I should like to see the young people gather somewhere away from the city, somewhere where living is cheap--in a place like this, for instance; and let them have a farm or a ranch, with horses and a cow, and not try to make it pay. Don't let them try to make it pay, like Brook Farm."[81]

Moore, in his *The Priest of Love: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, mentions an interesting fact related to the above quotation: "As in an answer to this, groups of "hippies" in the 1970s established communes near Taos, building houses for themselves in the dymaxion-dome style of one of their heroes, Buckminster Fuller; Lawrence was another hero."[82]

In another letter of this period Lawrence talks about a ranch "rather free", "splendid", "real" where he could make a "central farm" which could be later transformed into the headquarters for Rananim.

Thinking of establishing his utopia sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, he "Rananimed" almost all his life, always hoping for a new start in a new country. Wherever he

[81] Harry T.Moore, *The Priest of Love: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 461.

[82] Ibidem, p. 461.

was this idea came to his mind:

> "Where is our Rananim? If we only had the courage to find it and create it, two years ago. Perhaps it was not utterly too late."
> (Letter to Koteliansky, in 1925)

As it did not succeed it is not possible to make a "critique" of it, but I can imagine Rananim finally being a pilgrimage around the world in which Lawrence was going to be a sort of Christ with his disciples running away from the "industrial ugliness" of England without setting long in any place. So the Rananim-place was not to be found because Lawrence was too restless to fix himself for good in any place. Aldington explores the idea that Rananim "would not be a free and easy republic of letters but an arbitrary autocracy under the rule of King David the First and Only."[83]

At first sight the Rananim community can easily be misunderstood as only a great contradiction for a man who spent his whole life denouncing society as "evil" and "mechanizing" but we know it is inconsistent to make this statement. He believed the "instinct for community" vital, even "much deeper than sexual instinct." He was not against society itself. What he could not accept was industrial society:

> "He attacked the industrial society of England, not because it offered community to the individual, but because it frustrated it... If in his own life he "rejected the claims of society," it was not because he did not understand

[83] Richard Aldington, *Portrait of a Genius But...*, p. 175.

> the importance of community, but because, in industrial England he could find none."[84]

But as Moore says, "Rananim was doomed from birth." In what was going to be his last visit to London he decided to invite some of his old friends and gave a party at the Café Royal[85] to celebrate his prosperity and try to revive the idea of his Rananim. Among the great ones invited were Murry, the Carswells, Koteliansky, Gertler and Dorothy Brett. They drank a good deal, made silly discourses and the famous "Last Supper" ended with "smashed wineglasses" and the participants' decision that they were not to join him in his "colony of escape." Only Dorothy Brett accompanied the Lawrences to America: she was the only colonist ever to come to Lawrence's Rananim in the New World.

Finally, in New Mexico, he gave up his communal ideas. In a letter to Frieda he argues: "A life in common is an illusion, when the instinct is always to divide, to separate individuals and set them one against the other."[86]

And failing in this project Lawrence failed in the only practical "solution" he ever offered to create a new kind of society.

[84] Raymond Williams, "Lawrence's Social Writings," *D.H. Lawrence, A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Mark Spilka, p. 167.

[85] The "Pompadour" of *Women in Love* where this episode is described.

[86] Harry T.Moore, *The Priest of Love: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 510.

Chapter THREE

Modern society is a mill
that grinds life very small

The upper millstone of the robot-classes
the lower millstone of the robot-masses,
and between them, the last living human beings
being ground exceeding small.
D.H.Lawrence, "Give us the Thebaïd."

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers*. Here I will try to explore the idea that much of Lawrence's hatred of the modern world is caused by the contrast between the beauty of the Eastwood of his childhood,[87] shown in *The White Peacock*, and the "ugly" industrial countryside Eastwood became later.

It also includes my analysis of *Sons and Lovers*. Here I will make an attempt to show the small changes that operate from one novel to the other in relation to the setting which evolves--from a rural setting to a mining village--and its effect on the characters' feelings and behaviour. We will see how these two novels, in succession, are a preparation for the greater changes which will occur in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

[87] I mean not exactly the Eastwood of his childhood because the place was already an industrial area when he was born but the Eastwood he had in his imagination from his reading of Victorian novels and by his sense of the still existing beauty of this countryside.

THE WHITE PEACOCK

The White Peacock was begun in 1906 and completed in 1909 and at that time Lawrence was only a "hapless provincial from a colliery village."[88] Here we are going to analyse Lawrence's view of nature, the pastoral life in opposition to the life in the cities and the emergence of most of the themes Lawrence is going to use in later novels most specifically the ones related to social themes.

The White Peacock is a pre-war book: it is Lawrence's portrait of the England he had loved before 1914. It is F.R.Leavis' opinion that *The White Peacock* is an "immature novel."[89] Leavis also criticizes Lawrence for being too literary.[90] But Lawrence's first book had not to be his masterpiece. And the improvements he made in his second book show that *The White Peacock* was just a rehearsal for what was still to come. Lawrence was very young [91] when he wrote it and

[88] R.E.Pritchard (*The Age's Lawrence: Body of Darkness*, p. 26) also says that it is "overwritten and uncertain in its grasp on structure and theme."

[89] Stephen Miko corroborates this statement by criticizing the overintellectualization Lawrence imposes on the characters of *The White Peacock*. In Miko's opinion it indicates Lawrence's attitude toward "values which he never accepted but which nevertheless tempted a young man not yet sure of his own path" (*Toward Women in Love*, p. 14). We know however that the same thing is going to happen in *Women in Love* which indicates Lawrence's attraction-repulsion for some social values.

[90] "I was very young when I wrote *The Peacock* - I began it at twenty. Let it be my apology." (*Letters*, p. 6, in Leavis, p. 19).

[91] His mother died a month before the publication of the book and the fifty pounds he earned with *The White Peacock* paid the doctor and her funeral.

he was naturally infatuated with the beauty of his countryside, full of young enthysiasm, and experiencing not only his first love but also his first great loss. That is why *The White Peacock* is so passionate: it is a book where everything fails except nature, which dominates the scene and brilliantly survives the tempest of the characters's lives.

The book is narrated by Ciril "a mother's boy incapable of independent existence." But the main interest of the novel is in the triangle of George, Lettie and Leslie.

Cyril fails not only in his love for Emily, George's sister, but also to fulfill his life expectations because he is "unable to live by the negative values accepted by George"[92] and at the end of the book he remains alone "in some no man's land, waiting."[93] In his last visit to Emily--by that time a happily married woman--he feels "distressed with a sense of ephemerality, of pale, erratic fragility" (p. 313).

Lettie believes in democracy and dreams of climbing to a higher social class but "fails to find in wealth the freedom and intellectual stimulus she has sought."[94] She is physically attracted by George's vitality and manhood on the one hand and by Leslie's social position on the other. Being courted by both men she chooses Leslie and at the end of the story we are going to find her "wealthy but bored" trying to find in her motherhood a compensation for her failure as a lover and as a being.

[92] Mary Freeman, *D.H.Lawrence: A Basic Study of his Ideas*, p. 26.

[93] Idem, p. 26.

[94] Idem, p. 27.

> "There was a touch of ironical brutality in her now... Having reached that point in a woman's career when most, perhaps all the things in life seem worthless and insipid, she had determined to put up with it, to ignore her own self, to empty her own potentialities into the vessel of another or others, and to live her life at second hand... She had, however, now determined to abandon the charge of herself to serve her children."
> (*The White Peacock*, pp.278-9)

By making the "wrong" choice Lettie "destroys her own integrity" and both George's integrity and security. The arrogant farm boy who appears in the opening of the novel ("He irritates me [Emily] past bearing, with his grand know-all way, and his heavy smartness-I can't beat it." *The White Peacock*, p. 9) is a man in a state of complete decay at the end of the novel.

Ford, in his *Double Measure*, states that "George's failure is a failure of will" not a social failure. But I think that the latter helped very much to determine the first. It could be argued that his social position influenced his insecurity and his inability to "fight" for Lettie. Even if only unconsciously, he feels inferior to Leslie and, being aware of her social ambitions, he gives her up in order to make her social ascent easy. From this point on he did everything he could to succeed and to be at the same level she is:

> "He began to speculate in land. A hosiery factory moved to Ebewich, giving the place a new stimulus to growth, George happened to buy a piece of land at the end of the street of the village... He took it, divided it up, and offered it as sites for a new row of shops. He sold at a very good profit.
> Altogether he was becoming very well off..."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 292)

But it was not just money or social position that he wanted. Success without her meant nothing to him and in spite of all his success in the business world he feels he is a failure. He discovers that neither money nor an established social position is the medium for love or fulfillment and he degenerates, becoming an alcoholic, a "wretched shell waiting in despair for death."[95] However it does not seem to me that it was Lettie's "fault". She helps his "destruction" only because he was not sufficiently self-assertive to find fulfillment in himself, independent of Lettie. He is a kind of predecessor of Skrebensky, Ursula's first lover in *The Rainbow*: a man who has "no fullness" and feels "dead, no existent" (*The Rainbow*, p. 459) without the woman he loves.

> "Somehow at the bottom I feel miserable and heavy, yet there is no need. I am making pretty good money, and I've got all I want. But when I've been ploughing and getting the oats in those field on the hill-side at the back of Greymede church, I've felt as if I didn't care whether I got on or not. It's very funny. Last week I made over five pounds clear, one way and another, and yet now I'm restless, and discontented as I can be, and I seem eager for something, but I don't know what it is. Sometimes I wonder where I am going. Yesterday I watched broken white masses of cloud sailing across the sky in a fresh strong wind. They all seemed to be going somewhere. I wondered where the wind was blowing them. I don't seem to have hold on anything, do I? Can you tell me what I want at the bottom of my heart?"
>
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 258)

The conflict of classes and the economic role play an important part in this story. Both Lettie and George believed that life could be complete if they moved from poverty to

[95] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 8 .

wealth, from their class origins to a higher class. It is a consequence of the new era in which they were living, that was responsible for competition, social ambitions and class mobility:

> "I'm going to get more out of my life, I hope" laughed George... Do you know, I am going to get pretty rich, so that I can do what I want for a bit. I want to see what it's like, to taste all sides--to taste the towns... I'll get rich--or at least I'll have a good try."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 186)

While Lettie marries the higher-class industrialist Leslie, George marries Meg, an earthy woman, unable to satisfy him spiritually and, later on, even sexually. Very soon her sensual beauty fades and she gives herself to the children, leaving him alone with his socialist dreams, his love failure and his alcoholism.

> "Meg never found any pleasure in me as she does in the kids," said George bitterly, for himself.
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 272)

But, as I have pointed out before, his decadence is related not <u>only</u> to love failures. There is an important aspect to be observed here. When Lettie marries Leslie, George marries Meg and goes to live at the Ram Inn, leaving the farm for ever. It is difficult to separate the two things, but the departure from the farm makes a great difference for him. George exemplifies the exodus to the cities and he is the first of Lawrence's characters to become a "lost" man by leaving the countryside to live in the "man's world." It was a vital loss for him and he says he feels as if his "leading shoot were broken off" (p. 222). After this, even when he was a successful business man, he always misses farm life:

> "I should like to get back on a farm."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 265)

We know George had been forced off his land but he could have acquired a farm in another place (Canada for instance, where his father was going to settle), but he gave up farming altogether. And by changing this natural way of life for a more sophisticated one in town, George breaks the strong ties which connect him with the land--the earthy, vital world to which his "natural" character belongs--and loses his peace and his security for good. This is going to be a recurrent theme in Lawrence's work and we are going to explore it further in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation.

Emily is the only one who finds happiness at the end. She marries a young farmer--someone outside their group--and goes to live a peaceful life, "retired to her house and her garden", a place that was "absolutely a home:"[96]

> "It was the home of the Renshaws, warm, lovable, serene. Emily was in perfect accord with its brownness, its shadows, its ease."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 313)

Stephen Miko says that it is possible that Emily "lacks Lettie's capacities for consciousness"[97] but he argues that we cannot ignore "the intimacy and security of this farm." In the passage of *The White Peacock* quoted above the word home is clearly related to happiness or, at least, to peace, and it is set against the strangeness and lack of any kind of security which compose modern life:

[96] Italics mine.

[97] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 32.

> "Emily had at least found her place, and had escaped from the torture of strange, complex modern life."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 313)

When we start analysing *The White Peacock* it is easy to find many of the themes which will be continued in later works. For instance, the gamekeeper theme, here represented by the figure of Annable. I agree with Sagar when he says that "Annable seemed to be a focus for all Lawrence's despair over the materialistic view of life he felt compelled to accept for lack of an alternative."[98] He is the first sample of Lawrence's "wild creatures." Annable is a man who had changed his life in Cambridge for a life in the woods:

> "He was a man of one idea:-that all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture... When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind--the decline of the human race into folly and weakness and rottenness. "Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct was his motto."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 146)

But a few lines later the author states that "with all this he was fundamentally very <u>unhappy</u>"[99] and his sudden death is a kind of "punishment" for a man who had defied the values of the society he lived in. Annable is the ancestor of Mellors, the gamekeeper who appears in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence's last novel. But there, in opposition to *The White Peacock*, at the end of the story, the gamekeeper stands on his feet, planning a new life for himself and his mistress. It is difficult to say whether it is Lawrence who has changed his

[98] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 12.

[99] Italics mine.

mind or if this different approach to the subject is a sign of the many social and moral transformations which occurred in the interval between the two novels which made possible Mellors' "survival" in opposition to Annable's "elimination."

It is well known that Lawrence had a deep love for Eastwood[100] and its surroundings, and *The White Peacock* is a celebration of this love. Even the action seems less important than the evocation of that pastoral setting:

> "The hills of Nethermere had been my walls, and the sky of Nethermere my roof overhead. It seemed almost as if, at home, I might lift my hand to the ceiling of the valley, and touch my own beloved sky, whose familiar clouds came again and again to visit me, whose stars were constant to me, born when I was born, whose sun had been all my father to me."
>
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 255)

When Lawrence wrote *The White Peacock* he had not left Nottingham yet. He had not known other places and he saw it with the eyes of a young and passionate lover who believes that his love is the most beautiful, the most perfect of all.

> "The yellow corn was dipping and flowing in the fields, like a cloth of gold pegged down at the corners under which the wind was heaving. Sometimes we passed cottages where the scarlet lilies rose like bonfires, and the tall larkspur like bright blue leaping smoke. Sometimes we smelled the sunshine on the browning corn, sometimes the fragrance of the shadow of leaves. Occasionally it was the dizzy scent of new haystacks."
>
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 239)

[100] There is no doubt that the "Strelley Mill" of *The White Peacock* is Felley Mill, north of Eastwood. By writing a novel describing all the beauties of his rural England he could pay a tribute to Nottinghamshire and start his literary crusade against urban and industrial environments.

Moore says that "the principal charm" of the story "remains the landscape pictures of Eastwood region which Lawrence invests with a morning-light quality."[101]

The poignant descriptions of the countryside, present throughout the novel, are also going to be present in the opening section of *The Rainbow* and, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence turns back to them again. But by then he had already left his place and these later descriptions betray the experience of other landscapes they are then impregnated with a certain smell of nostalgia that remind us of Cyril, but lack the passionate-almost-to-hurt intensity of the descriptions of *The White Peacock* permuted with Cyril's acute and lyrical view of nature

> "The cottages of Greymede filled the shadows with colour of roses, and the sunlight with odour of pinks and the blue of corn flowers and larkspur. We drove briskly up the long, sleeping hill, and bowled down the hollow past the farms where the hens were walking with the red gold cocks in the orchard, and the ducks like white cloudlets under the aspen trees revelled on the pond."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 235)

> "The miners' cottages, dreary, but dreary with that queer, exciting smallness and crudeness of a hundred years ago, now lined all the way, the road became a street, and you forgot instantly the open, rolling country where the castles and big houses had once dominated like lions. Now you were above the tangle of naked railway-lines, and foundries and other works rose above you, so big that you were only aware of walls. And iron clanked, and lorries shook the earth, and steam whistles screamed."
> (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p.158)

After *Sons and Lovers* "the local bucolic intensity" that filled the first books is replaced by an "ash-grey" landscape unlike the fresh pastoralism of *The White Peacock*.

[101] Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love*, p.109.

In *Women in Love*, for instance, when the "mechanical thing" had already "killed" the lyric Eastwood, the adjectives become cold, machine-like:

> "What she could see was mud, soft, oozy, watery mud, and from its festering chill, water-plants rose up, thick and cool and fresh, very straight and turgid, thrusting out their leaves at right angles, and having dark lurid colours, dark green and blotches of black-purple and bronze."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 132)

The White Peacock begins with a mill-pond and the description of "the tumult of life which had once quickened the valley," (p. 5) raising memories of "the young days when the valley was lusty" (p. 5). Its picture of nature is rich and detailed.

> "All the ground was white with snow-drops, like drops of manna scattered over the red earth, on the grey-green clusters of leaves. There was a deep little dell, sharp sloping like a cup, and white sprinkling of flowers all the way down, with white flowers showing pale among the first inpouring of shadow at the bottom. The earth was red and warm, pricked with the dark, succulent green of bluebell sheaths, and embroidered with grey-green clusters of spears, and many white flowerets. High above, above the light tracery of hazel, the weird oaks tangled in the sunset. Below, in the first shadows, dropped hosts of little white flowers, so silent and sad; it seemed like a holy communion of pure wild things, numberless, frail and folded meekly in the evening light."
>
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 129)

A sense of vitality is present throughout the book as if the whole of nature were pregnant like "the cluster of eggs" in the opening scenes of the novel. In contact with nature "the children of the valley of Nethermere" (p. 233) were happy

and innocent , walking along the country[102] but sophisticated and artificial when they were indoors. But, in general, it was a good life, a still quiet life, typical of rural England. It was the kind of life that was soon to be destroyed by the hurry and ugliness of the industrial world.

> "Who ever would want streets of gold", Emily was saying to me, "when you can have a field of cowslips!"
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 207)

There are flowers, sun, and clean air everywhere and "life" is always present either in a rabbit that jumps here and there or in the "liquid stars" which shine in the dark nights and are accomplices of secret dates.

However, even by that time, they felt they were not real farmers anymore:

> "You can't call it farming. We're a miserable mixture of farmer, milkman, greengrocer, and carting contractor. It's a shabby business."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 63)

Here and there there are hints of the coming decadence of rural England:

> "Farms were gnawed away; corn and sweet grass departed from the face of the hills; cattle grew lean, unable to eat the defiled herbage."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 59)

And it starts by then the desire to leave the country, mixed with his awareness of the implications of this change. It is a change they fear but which attracts them all the way.

[102] It was a time when they still talked about "one's hopes-and the future." (*The White Peacock*, p. 61).

Contradictory statements by George exemplify this mood:

> "Besides, you feel somebody in your own countryside, and you're nothing in a foreign part, I expect."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 66)

> "The town, anywhere's better than this hell of a country."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 79)

When the first part of the book ends it marks also the end of both the best part of their lives and of a time in England. The second part of the book begins with "strange blossoms and strange new budding" (p. 125). The words "strike", "system", "gangs", appear as a signal of the new time and the adjectives change: "spiritless", "awful" and "hopeless" help to create the "atmosphere of sorrow and trouble" (p. 125) which is going to involve both the country and also George's life:

> "It was time for us all to go, to leave the valley of Nethermere, whose waters and whose woods were distilled in the essence of our veins."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 233)

As Moore points out, "the setting of *The White Peacock* is the countryside around Eastwood... without[103] the mines" which are almost evaded from this novel where they appear only occasionally:

> "As you walk home past Selsby, the pit stands up against the west, with beautiful tapering chimneys marked in black against the swim of sunset, and the head-stocks etched with tall significance on the brightness. Then the houses are squat in rows of shadow at the foot of these high monuments."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 179)

[103] Italics mine.

As we can observe, even referring to the mines, Lawrence does not face them in their full squalor. By using the same adjectives to describe them as he uses to describe nature he is, perhaps, trying to hide an ugliness he cannot conceal in the later novels. Why has Lawrence almost avoided industrial ugliness in the first novel when it is going to be one of the leading themes of his later novels?

Perhaps he would like to have avoided the presence of the mine completely but by using it here he betrays his worry over the subject at the same time that he gives the reader the first picture of this sore which had come to change the peaceful life of traditional England. As Cavitch says, Cyril is "the sad, departing observer of the breakup of a cherished, but irretrievably disintegrated way of life."[104]

SONS AND LOVERS

The action of *Sons and Lovers*, if rearranged in chronological order, begins with the marriage of Walter Morel, a miner, and Gertrude Coppard, "a woman of character and refinement."[105] It goes on with the description of Paul Morel's childhood, his Oedipal relationship with his mother, the "spiritual" love shared with Miriam, his admittance to a "man's world" and the "physical passion" he experienced with Clara. Then comes his mother's death and he gives Clara back

[104] David Cavitch, *D.H.Lawrence and the New World*, p. 20.

[105] D.H.Lawrence in a letter to Edward Garnett.

to her husband and turns toward to "the glowing town," "the sea," "the endless space:" a new man is "born."[106]

In spite of the fact that some critics suggest that "the real framework" of *Sons and Lovers* is "the Morel family itself,"[107] I will be concerned here with the fact that "the use of the class structure of the mining countryside"[108] if it is not "the realistic framework of the novel" could not be considered a mere intrusion. It is not by chance that Lawrence himself refers to *Sons and Lovers* as "the colliery novel"[109] and Hough believes that "it seems quite likely that the original idea was a well-made story of a colliery life."[110]

Different from *The White Peacock*, where the mines appear almost incidentally, *Sons and Lovers* opens with the description of the pits "whose coal was drawn to the surface by donkeys that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin" (p. 7). Here the mines are going to be a strong "presence" and the first part of the novel represents a good picture of industrial, working class life in England in the same way that *The White Peacock* portrays the pastoral life in that country.

> "The tall meadow-sweet was in bud along the tiny beach and we walked knee-deep among it, watching the foamy race of

[106] "Paul's death as a son implies his birth here as a man, and the potential birth of Lawrence himself as a man and artist." (Spilka, p. 39).

[107] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 87.

[108] Ibidem, p. 87.

[109] Lawrence liked *Sons and Lovers* better than *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*: he apologizes for the first books but of *Sons and Lovers* he says, "it is a great novel."

[110] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun:A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p.41.

> the ripples and the whitening of the willows on the far shore. At the place where Nethermere narrows to the upper end, and receives the brook from Strelley, the wood sweeps down and stands with its feet washed round with waters."
> (*The White Peacock*, p. 14)

> "And all over the countryside were these same pits, some of which had been worked in the time of Charles II, the few colliers and the donkeys burrowing down like ants into the earth, making queer mounds and little black places among the corn-field and the meadows."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 7)

Sons and Lovers marks the beginning of Lawrence's lifelong preoccupation with the fall into mechanism by English society. In this novel Lawrence prophetically delineates the situation that by the time of *Women in Love* is going to be presented in all its complexity. In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence shows the mines have already changed the landscape introducing "black places among the cornfields" (p. 7). Industry was already interfering in the characters' way of life:

> "So, the actual conditions of living in the Bottoms, that was so well built and that looked so nice, were quite unsavoury because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchens opened on to that nasty alley of ash-pits."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 8)

But the "sense of outrage of what man has done to nature and specifically to himself"[111] is only going to be fully portrayed in *Women in Love*.

Descriptions of nature are in *Sons and Lovers* not so frequent as they were in *The White Peacock* and when they appear they are not "explored for their own sake" but are always

[111] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 77.

related to the characters. In *The White Peacock* the human failures are "almost absorbed" in the joyous rhythm of nature but in *Sons and Lovers* the conflicts are more intense and here nature is not just the setting for the idyllic passages: "the relation between man and nature is direct and vital and sun, blood, and moon are more 'integral' than symbolic."[112] But in this novel it is still possible to see that Lawrence has not yet turned completely against the industrial world and sometimes this world and nature seem to be almost integrated.

> "Paul went joyfully, and spent the afternoon helping to hoe or to single turnips with his friend. He used to lie with the three brothers in the hay piled up in the barn and tell them about Nottingham and about Jordan's. In return, they taught him to milk, and let him do little jobs--chopping hay or pulping turnips--just as much as he liked."
>
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 185)

Even admitting that Cyril is the embryo of Paul Morel, *Sons and Lovers* is, in every sense, superior to *The White Peacock* as an autobiographical narrative. The Nottinghamshire region that served as the background where the Morel family is settled was not just the woodland that surrounds Cyril's home but also includes a colliery village and an industrial environment that comprises the ghastly village where Paul gets a job and first begins to feel "a prisoner of industrialism" (p. 113). This background is essential to the development of the story and the diagnosis of the basic conflicts of the novel.

> "It conditions the struggle of some of the characters to realize themselves and helps explain the baffled comprise that other characters make with the circumstances into which they were

[112] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 41.

> born. I know no other English novel, with the possible exception of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, where people are so rooted in concrete social history, and in a region so concretely rendered."[113]

Let us briefly examine here how this social context influenced the problems of the family. Much of Gertrude Morel's incompatibility with her husband is "conditioned by social facts." Because she "comes from a class just a notch higher than her husband"[114] she feels "superior" to him and critics generally say that as soon as the physical attraction she felt for him subsides she turns to her sons, treating her husband as a stranger and helping to carry him to be the "lost, forlorn" man he is at the end. But it is not just a matter of class. Money also plays its part in the breaking of their mutual understanding and the episode when she discovers that he had not paid for their furniture is a turning point in their relationship:

> "'Look here', she said at night, after he was washed and had had his dinner. I found these in the pocket of your wedding-coat. Havent't you settled the bills yet?'
> 'No. I haven't had a chance.'
> 'But you told me all was paid... I don't like sitting on another man's chairs and eating from an unpaid table.'"
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 20)

Now she despises him:

> "She said very little to her husband, but her manner had changed towards him. Something in her proud, honourable soul had crystallized out as a rock."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 22)

[113] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 20.

[114] Eliseo Vivas, p. 182.

The divergent ways of facing things had already made Mrs.Morel feel "very lonely, miles away from her own people" (p. 23) even when Morel was present but when she realizes that he also fails as a provider, "there began a battle between husband and wife" (p. 23) and now, more than ever, she cannot accept his drinking because he wastes on alcohol the money that could buy, in her opinion, both the financial and the "social decency of the family."[115]

Morel is also a victim of the social context: "The warm physical nature" which attracted Gertrude when they met is destroyed by his hard work in the mines and by drink. So he is not just the irresponsible husband of whom Mrs.Morel so much complains. The man who had been "full of colour and animation" (p. 17) feels oppressed by the confrontation with his "superior" wife, her "superior" relatives, his exhausting work and by the cold and fearful treatment his children gave him. And the more unhappy and isolated he was, the more he drank. It becomesthen a vicious circle: feeling disillusioned with him, Mrs.Morel does everything she can to "separate" him from the children and, apparently, she succeeds because they came to hate him.[116]

[115] Mary Freeman, *D.H.Lawrence:A Basic Study of His Ideas*, p. 13.

[116] I said "apparently" because even having been taught to hate him, Paul cannot avoid a certain kind of "love" for his father. Perhaps his "hatred" for him is not actually genuine but only a way to "love" his mother because in that family to be against Morel was to be on Mrs.Morel's side. See the contradiction contained in this prayer of Paul's.

> "'Make him stop drinking', he prayed every night.'Lord let my father die',he prayed very often. 'Let him not be killed at pit', he prayed when,after tea,the father did not come from work."
>
> (*Sons and Lovers*, P. 79)

But feeling himself an "outsider" in his own home he does nothing to make the situation better:

> "He ate his food in the most brutal manner possible and, when he had done, pushed all the pots in a heap away from him, to lay his arms on the table."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 81)

It was very difficult for the "educated" Gertrude to accept this kind of man as her husband[117] and she is blind to his other still present virtues of being warm ("Morel had a warm way of telling a story. He made one feel Taffy's cunning", p. 83) and sensitive (he is happy to tears when his son William comes to spend Christmas with them). That is why Mary Freeman says that "they are victims of their own rigid class attitudes"[118] Mrs.Morel was not so perfect as Paul's blind love sees her. At the same time she was not completely responsible for her middle-class prejudices. She believed that preventing her children from being miners, giving them a "better" education, she was both preventing them from being like their father and also creating for them a better life. But we know this did not happen. The truth is that neither was Gertrude Coppard the right woman for the miner, nor was Walter Morel the right husband for her. The battle between the Morels is more than a conflict between husband and wife: "it was a class warfare,

[117] She did care a lot about rules and good manners and cleanness and he did not. She could not accept his "dirt" as a natural thing, related to his work. She seemed always to be ashamed of it

> "He's very particular to wash himself to the waist, but below he thinks doesn't matter."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 108)

[118] Mary Freeman, *D.H.Lawrence:A Basic Study of His Ideas*, p. 17.

burgeoisie against proletariat."[119]

Morel is associated with the image of coalpits, with its darkness and its death-life rhythm. Every day when he descends and ascends from the pit he participates in the natural rhythm that governs life and this participation in the great rhythm of the universe makes him survive the "dead", cultural and social values of his wife. There is an aura of death around Mrs. Morel and her children, but Morel "wants to live, by hook or crook"[120] and even if unconsciously, Paul associates the pits with being alive, with the "life principle" in opposition to the "death principle" of his mother's doomed white world. Paul shows a certain sympathy for this world up to the point that, at the end, the life principle that his father represents is stronger in him than the death principle related to his mother, and he chooses life instead of death.

Failing in her efforts to "reform" her husband transforming him into a genteel, good-mannered middle-class gentleman, Mrs. Morel transfers her social ambitions to the education of her children. And she almost carries them all to "death." Torn between the colliery world of their father and the world of "culture", "education" and "money" of their mother they tried to take the direction she indicates them to follow but they proved to be unable to take either one side or the other. Encouraged by their mother's ambition, Paul and William get "white-colar jobs" and break definitevely the association with the proletarian

[119] Harry T.Moore, *The Priest of Love: a Life of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 20.

[120] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 21.

world of their father. William is the first to go "to London to start a new life" (p. 74) and when Paul "launches into life" Mrs.Morel feels satisfied:

> "Now she has two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would work out what she wanted."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 127)

But William is also the first to be "lost" in the business world:

> "But now there seemed to come a kind of fever into the young man's letter. He was unsettled by all the change, he did not stand firm on his own feet, but seemed to spin rather giddily on the quick current of the new life."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 115)

And even when the city "kills" the first one, she does not give up in encouraging Paul to go on in this world. As Moore points out, it is interesting to observe that Lawrence had three careers in the city of Nottingham but when he is going to make an autobiographical narrative he chooses to memorialize his work as a clerk, in spite of the fact that he stayed only a few months in this job. And he makes Paul's staying in the business world not only longer than his but also a more harmful experience. Since the beginning, Paul feels "a prisoner of industrialism" and all the time he regrets, like Cyril did in *The White Peacock*, the "dark and fascinating" woods of his "home valley." The entry of the factory looks to him as the "jaws of the dragon" and it seems ironical that the first time he goes there - with his mother, by the way - he says that "elsewhere the place was like a pit."

Through Paul's experience Lawrence presents a harsh picture of the factory world and he shows how the mines and the factories represent two different stages of English industrial development: the mining people still keep a basic amount "of human feeling and genuine human relations" but the factory workers are "cold", "mechanical", "unable to stand firm on (their) own feet" (p. 115). The factory is portrayed as "an insanitary, ancient place" (p. 128) where people ate "hurriedly" and the "departments were for ever at war" (p. 140).

> "The man was the work and the work was the man, for the time being."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 141)

There is always a clear contrast between the "gloom and desolation" of the interior of the factory: "... all the time he was there his health suffered from the darkness and lack of air and the long hours" (p. 137) and the "brightness" and "the freedom of the streets" which made him feel "adventurous and happy" (p. 136).

Later on Paul succeeds as an artist but, like George in *The White Peacock*, he fails in love. We have already analysed George's failure, but why has Paul failed? There is his Oedipal relationship with his mother which is too clear to be denied. Since I am not going to be dealing with this theme, I would like to call the attention to the "social" aspect of this failure.

Paul could not love the "superior" Miriam because she had also been trapped by social circumstances. She follows the

tradition of women of her social class who had been taught to be "tender", "loyal" and "submissive" and which see love as a commitment where possession is to be fully exercised: "And he did not hope to give life to her by denying his own." (p. 508). Miriam asked him too much "respect" and her frigid attitude toward sex--also obviously conditioned by her familial and social background--helps to separate them. She satisfies a part of Paul's "superior" aspirations--those which his mother had instilled in him--but there was also Paul--the collier's son who needed a flesh-and-blood woman to love.

Clara Dawes represents the opposite of Miriam: she is "independent, emancipated, experienced and physically uninhibited."[121]

> "Miriam was his old friend, lover, and she belonged to Bestwood and home and his youth. Clara was a newer friend, and she belonged to Nottingham, to life, to the world."
> (*Sons and Lovers*, pp.337-338)

Clara attracts Gertrude's son in the same way Gertrude had once been attracted by the "soft, non-intellectual,warm", (p. 17) Walter Morel. Paul is fascinated by this lower-class women who could be his "mate", not his "conscience" as Miriam had been. But again he does not succeed. He had escaped from being a prisoner of the pits but had become a slave of the industrial system, trapped by his mother's social values and he is incapable of giving himself completely either to Miriam or to Clara:

[121] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 48.

> "Gradually, some mechanical effort spoilt their loving, or, when they had splendid moments, they had them separately, and not so satisfactorily. So often he seemed merely to be running on alone; often they realized it had been a failure, not what they had wanted. He left her, knowing that evening had only made a little split between them. Their loving grew more mechanical, without the marvellous glamour."[122]
>
> (*Sons and Lovers*, p. 443)

According to Ford, *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers* "represent the flowering and the exhaustion of his (Lawrence's) youth"[123] but the latter is obviously more intense than the first. The spread of industrialization is here openly faced, but not in a so harmful way as it appears in the novels we are going to analyse next.

The Morel family is here presented as a miniature of the mechanistic organization where competition and "possession" hinder the blossoming of individuals into full beings. But in *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence still has hope in the individual's capacity to free himself from the oppression of the modern world. This hope comes not through the idealization of the past, as it does in *The White Peacock* but by Lawrence's facing of facts looking for future solutions to them. *Sons and Lovers* is then a bridge between the pleasant security of the past and the call for change which is going to culminate with the chaotic world presented in *Women in Love*.

[122] Italics are mine.

[123] George Ford, *Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 23.

Chapter FOUR

> Why have a financial system to strangle us all in its octopus arms?
> why have industry?
>
> D.H.Lawrence, "Why —?"

This chapter is an attempt to show that it is possible to analyse, through *The Rainbow*, the whole process of transformation operating in the English society as a consequence of the industrialization of the country.[124]

I will approach the novel through the analysis of the three generations of the Brangwen family and I will try to show here that the process of transformation they undergo starts with the coming of "progress" to Marsh Farm,[125] which brings to the people who live in it, a fever of restlessness and a dream of "foreign parts" which is going to break the ancient security they had always enjoyed. They feel uneasy in their own land and, by leaving it for the cities and the industrial world, they have to face the social and individual conflicts this change implies.

Even though industrialism is not the main theme in *The Rainbow*, it is impossible to deny the role it plays in the

[124] Ford in his *Double Measure* says that "*The Rainbow* can convey impressively a sense of sixty years or more of English social history from 1840 to 1905 let us say, and yet convey more impressively a sense of timelessness." (p. 132)

[125] H.M.Daleski points out in *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H.Lawrence* that it is "in relation to the establishment of the colliers near The Marsh that we are tacitly asked to note, in Tom a deviation from the traditional attitudes and responses to life of the Brangwen men." (p. 82)

events of the novel. Here the industrial world is not only "the setting where human events take place"[126] but strongly influences both characters and events.

The Rainbow still has an English setting but it was written in Italy[127] during the war period.[128] Most of the critics agree that *The Rainbow* marks the beginning of Lawrence's mature way of writing and it is in this novel that Lawrence begins "to make definite statements about those negative aspects of the outer world against which he has to fight the rest of his life."[129]

It is unquestionable that Lawrence has grown in experience and maturity since *The White Peacock* and, when he wrote *The Rainbow*, he was not that youth of the earlier novels anymore. He had already left the country and had a German wife. By that time he was in a period of transition, full of the excitement of escape both from his early environment and, especially, "escape from an old self."[130] It is Hough's opinion that *The Rainbow* is "almost a return to the

[126] Dilvo Ristoff, "Industrialism in *The Rainbow*," p. 2.

[127] "*The Rainbow* looks back on the old midland scene, but from other countries and other ways of life. Emotionally, as well as socially and geographically, Lawrence begins to stand in a different relation to his material" (Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 54).

[128] Lawrence wrote the material which was to become *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* from 1912 to 1915. It can perhaps explain *The Rainbow*, the first part of the material, produced when the war was at its beginning. It still keeps a "note of prophetic hope" which is going to be absent from *Women in Love*.

[129] Stephen Miko, *Toward Women in Love*, p. 156.

[130] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 55.

mood and manner of *The White Peacock*, but with the idyllic and pastoral element in the background and a far deeper sense of physical and organic life."[131] *The Rainbow*, as a whole, does not present "the pleasant security" we find throughout *The White Peacock* or the curtain that hides part of the "ugliness" of the colliery world in *Sons and Lovers*. The hint of a new beginning which the end of *Sons and Lovers* suggests is carried out by the characters of *The Rainbow* . Here they cross the doorway toward "the future", the unknown world of urban civilization. It is the doorway which Paul Morel, uncertain, stands before at the end of *Sons and Lovers*:

> "In a sense the farmers of Cossethay relate to the rhythms and urgencies of nature much as the adolescent Paul had related to his mother... Just as Paul must break out of his symbiotic relationship with the mother who is the source of his being and come to experience his independent erotic relation to self and world, so the people at Cossethay are forced to evolve toward a "finer life"...
>
> . . . . . .
>
> They must achieve a more highly individuated, self conscious personal existence through a more complicated intellectual and social awareness than any they had previously known."[132]

The Rainbow is the story of three generations of the Brangwens. The first generation is close to the earth and its story is told under the men's eyes while the last generation is alienated, rootless. In this generation the story is told

[131] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 60.

[132] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 367.

through the women's point of view. Two things are developed in this book: traditionalism and modern world.

In the opening of *The Rainbow* there is "an almost complete harmony" between man and the natural world.[133] The description of Marsh Farm reminds the reader of how "good", "pleasant" and "secure" was life in the agrarian England before the industrialization of the country. The first pages of *The Rainbow* present a kind of summary of both the Brangwen's chronicle and the history of traditional England. The first part of the book deals with a pre-industrial world and from the first paragraph we have the establishment of the profound relation existing between the first generation of the Brangwens and their farm. They have lived there "for generations" and there is a strong connection between them and the land: "Their moods correspond to the changes in the weather. Their lives are directed by the rhythms of the seasons:"[134]

> "They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the day-time, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and inter-relations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 7)

[133] As Baruch Hochman points out in *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, "the farmers at Cossethey live in a state of blood unit with nature." (p. 36)

[134] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 45.

The fact they live in a land of their own gives them a kind of security proper to those who know they do not have to "fight" for shelter and food, a kind of struggle which is going to be faced by modern working people:

> "There was a look in the eyes of the Brangwens as if they were expecting something unknown, about which they were eager. They had that air of readiness for what would come to them, a kind of surety, an expectancy, the look of an inheritor.
>
> They were fresh, blond, slow-speaking people, revealing themselves plainly, but slowly, so that one could watch the change in their eyes from laughter to anger, blue, lit-up laughter, to a hard blue-staring anger; through all the irresolute stages of the sky when the weather is changing.
>
> Living on rich land, on their own land, near to a growing town, they had forgotten what it was to be in straitened circumstances."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 7)

It is this security which makes the first generation feel "stronger" than the other ones. They are aware of the importance of roots to their equilibrium since every time one of them dreams of living in "foreign parts," he thinks of the very strong root which held him to the Marsh, to his own house and land" (p. 26). It is a kind of bond peculiar to those people who are born and live their early childhood in a farm or in a small town. The call for change and for life in more advanced places is always mixed with the desire of retaining some kind of security. In the case of Lawrence's characters this security is generally related to roots in the same way that, to Lawrence, rootlessness seems to be usually associated with disintegration. This is one of the points I will try to show in this chapter: how the majority of the characters are not able to keep their emotional equilibrium if they do not

have their feet deeply rooted in some known, firm place. From the first Tom Brangwen "the attempt to establish contact with the world outside the Marsh and Cossethay,"[135] is always in conflict with the strong roots which held the Brangwens to the security of their home land.

The first generation lives a "natural" life in the farm "working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money" (p. 7). But in 1840 Marsh Farm was "invaded" by the canal[136] which connected it to the "newly-opened collieries of the Erewash Valley" (p. 11) and their lives suffered as many transformations as there had been changes operated in their land:

> "The Brangwens received a fair sum of money from this trespass across their land. Then, a short time afterwards, a colliery was sunk on the side of the canal, and in a while the Midland Railway came down the valley at the foot of the Ilkeston hill, and the invasion was complete. The town grew rapidly, the Brangwens were kept busy producing supplies, they became richer, they were almost tradesmen."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 12)

From then on they had to live in a world completely different from that of their ancestors, and this affected them a lot:

> "At first the Brangwens were astonished by all this commotion around them. The building of a canal across their land

[135] H.M.Daleski, *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 83.

[136] The "presence" of industrialism is first represented by the canal, but later on, this presence is going to be more vivid in young Tom Brangwen's colliery, and in the "man's world" Ursula is going to move into.

> made them strangers in their own place, this raw bank of earth shutting them off disconcerted them. As they worked in the fields, from beyond the now familiar embankment came the rhythmic run of the winding engines, startling at first, but afterwards a narcotic to the brain."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, pp. 12-13)

But as the first generation continued living in Marsh, which still "remained remote and original" (p. 12), they preserved a kind of self-sufficiency which enabled them to recover from the "damage" this "invasion" made to their souls:

> "Tom Brangwen was glad to get back to the farm, where he was in his own again. 'I have got a turnip on my shoulders, let me stick to th' fallow,' he said to his exasperated mother. He had too low an opinion of himself. But he went about at his work on the farm gladly enough, glad of the active labour and the smell of the land again, having youth and vigour and humour, and a comic wit, having the will and the power to forget his own shortcomings, finding himself violent with occasional rages, but usually on good terms with everybody and everything."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 18)

The first part of the book serves, then, to establish a contrast between the "happy darkness of man's past" and "the deplorable decline following our so-called enlightened progress"[137] and helps to explain the nostalgia for the past so common in the Brangwen family. However, all the critics I have read agree that, since the first generation, there is a difference between the Brangwen men and the Brangwen women.

> "It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrows to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet

[137] Ford, *Double Measure*, p. 124.

> wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed. . ."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, pp. 8-9)

> "The women were different. On them too was the drowse of blood-intimacy, calves sucking and hens running together in droves, and young geese palpitating in the hand while the food was pushed down their throttle. But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the lips and the mind of the world speaking and giving utterance, they heard the sound in the distance, and they strained to listen."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 8)

In *The Rainbow* the influence of women as "culture bearers" is remarkably prominent. Since the first generation they aspired to a world different from the one they lived in, they "wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy" (p. 9). Such had been the patriarch's wife's ideas and this germ was passed from generation to generation up to Ursula, in the third generation. The Brangwen women had always been attracted by "a more refined and socially complex world than that of the Brangwens."[138] Ursula's grandmother Lydia and her mother Anna[139] carried on

[138] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 68.

[139] It seems to be the germination of Lydia Lawrence's ideas which had already been transmitted to Gertrude Morel and is now, again, injected in the Brangwen women: They all have this ambition of higher intellectual levels for their children.

this desire which, only through Ursula, is going to be fully fulfilled.

According to Ford, Lawrence explores here two basic forces which govern mankind:

> "The first, generally but not exclusively associated with men, and generally, but not exclusively associated with darkness, is here embodied in the cycle of rural life, a force representing warmth, mindlessness, with some instinctive awareness of cosmic powers, an awareness comparable to the religious sense supposedly characteristic of man in the primitive stages of his development.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The other force, generally but not exclusively associated with women, and generally but not consistently associated with light, is embodied in those who look beyond 'the teeming life of creation' to the world of the critical intellect, of science and literature, the civilized world which has emerged from centuries of human effort to dispel the darkness."[140]

Though the first generation of Brangwen women "cannot see beyond board school, church and hall"[141] they ask the question which is going to be the basic question of the women of the other generations:

> "Why must they remain obscure and stifled all their lives, why should they suffer from lack of freedom to move? How should they learn the entry into the finer, more vivid circle of life?"
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 10)

[140] Ford, *Double Measure*, pp. 118-9.

[141] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 47.

As we have observed, this desire to break away from the established values is present from the time of grandmother Brangwen. To her son Tom , she directed her aspirations of having, at least, one of her sons in "the finer circle of life." At twelve he went to a Grammar School but he was a failure there, and the call of the natural, instinctive world of Marsh Farm was stronger in him:

> ". . . he went about at his work on the farm gladly enough, glad of the active labour and the smell of the land again."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 18)

But, in a certain way, he carried on his mother's ideas by marrying a "foreign" woman who was the widow of a revolutionary, had lived in the "man's world," and was an "émancipée." She is going to influence the new generation of the Brangwens with the "progressive" ideas of which Ursula, her granddaughter, is going to be the greatest heiress. It is interesting to notice how the Brangwen men tried to seek in "foreign" women the satisfaction for their need of change, or for their need of the unknown. So Tom married Lydia Lensky, a Polish lady, trying to find in her both a means to escape from his monotonous life and a place in the foreign world she represented; Will, his nephew, married Anna who was the daughter of a Polish revolutionary, in spite of having been educated by Tom Brangwen. The same pattern is going to be repeated in the third generation, by Ursula, through her relationship with Skrebensky. But soon she realizes that this is not the way to liberation, and if she wants to escape the traditional world, this escape could not be only through a "foreign" love partner.

In the second generation Will and Anna are not real farmers anymore, nor are they prepared to live in the "man-made world." They are not so rooted in the land as the first generation had been, and they float in their private world of "a sensuality violent and extreme to death" (p. 237), separated from the rest of the world like rootless plants. Will turns then to his carving, while Anna turns to motherhood unsatisfied, unfulfilled:

> "He lived simply by her physical love for him. And he served the little matriarchy, nursing the child and helping with the housework, indifferent any more of his own dignity and importance. But his abandoning of claims, his living isolated upon his own interest, made him seem unreal, unimportant.
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 208)

> "She respected him, that he could serve her so simply and completely. Above all, she loved to bear his children. She loved to be the source of children."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 208)

But it is young Tom Brangwen, Anna's brother, who breaks away from the past and becomes the first true "mechanized" Brangwen. He is also the first to initiate Lawrence's gallery of characters who are going to become slaves of the "great machine." In relation to the Brangwens, it seems to have been a slow process of "mechanization" since the "invasion" of industrialism at Marsh Farm. At the end of his life Tom Brangwen, the father, was "fairly well-off," "became indolent" and "developed a luxuriant ease" (p. 242). The fact could be interpreted as a certain relaxation due to a sense of having lived a satisfactory life, but it is also possible to connect this "luxuriant ease" with a certain mechanical indolence, related to a mechanical way of facing

life. Like an old machine-tool which knows it is not necessary anymore, he has a kind of scornful attitude toward the world. Fred, the other son, behaves as a typical example of the intermediate generation to which he belongs:

> "He drank in the hotels and the inns with better-class farmers and proprietors, he had well-to-do acquaintances among men. But one class suited him no better than another."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 242)

Young Tom is the first to practise the dream of his predecessors of launching out into unknown places. He "refuses" the traditional life in the farm and jumps into the world in search of a life other than the one that his ancestors had known:

> "When young Tom Brangwen was twenty-three years old there was some breach between him and his chief which was never explained, and he went away to Italy, then to America. He came home for a while, then went to Germany; always the same good-looking, carefully-dressed, attractive young man, in perfect health, yet somehow outside of everything. In his dark eyes was a deep misery which he wore with the same ease and pleasantness as he wore his close-sitting clothes."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 242-3)

> "To Ursula he was a romantic, alluring figure. He had a grace of bringing beautiful presents: a box of expensive sweets, such as Cosethay had never seen; or he gave her a hair-brush and a long slim mirror of mother-of-pearl, all pale and glimmering and exquisite; or he sent her a little necklace of rough stones, amethyst and opal and brilliants and garnet. He spoke other languages easily and fluently, his nature was curiously gracious and insinuating. With all that, he was undefinably an outsider. He belonged to nowhere, to no society."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 243).

According to Daleski, "the flood at the Marsh. . . in which Tom (the father) is drowned washes away an epoch."[142] After his father's death, young Tom, the first Brangwen to be "lost" in the industrial world, leaves Marsh Farm for good. He seems to be much affected by the death of his father and at that time Ursula does not find him so "romantic" and "alluring." Instead, he seems now "bestial, almost corrupt" (p. 252) and Ursula "never forgot to look for the bestial, frightening side of him, after this" (p. 252). At that time while Fred "threw himself into the work of restoring the farm", Tom "said good-bye to his mother" (p. 252) and gave himself to the "automatic machine" (p. 332). In the chapter "Shame" we are going to find Tom living at Wiggiston colliery where "all was grey, dry ash, cold and dead and ugly" (p. 351) and he himself was already "at the end of his desires":

> "He had done the things he had wanted to. They had all ended in an utterly tolerant good-humour. He no longer cared about anything on earth, neither man nor woman, nor God nor humanity. He had come to a stability of nullification."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 344)

He "belonged to nowhere, to no society." Following a tradition of Lawrence's characters who become lost in their search of a world different from that of their origins, he becomes a soulless man.

If we compare the descriptions of Marsh Farm in the opening chapter of *The Rainbow* with this "amorphous"

[142] H.M.Daleski, *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 107.

industrial setting which young Tom Brangwen has established himself, we have a sense of how much the country has changed and how these changes have modified people who lived there:

> Marsh Farm:
> "In autumn the partridges whirred up, birds in flocks blew like spray across the fallow, rooks appeared on the grey, watery heavens, and flew cawing into the winter. Then the men sat by the fire in the house where the women moved about with surety, and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 8)

> Wigginston colliery:
> "The place had the strange desolation. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation. There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin-disease."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 345)

Young Tom Brangwen and his mistress, Winifred Inger, are presented by Lawrence as "dead" people. They had given themselves to the system, they were only automatons, and when they met each other, Tom "did not care anymore, neither about his body nor about his soul" (p. 345) and Winifred was at the same time "afraid", "repelled", "and yet attracted to him" (p. 347). When they got married it was not a matter of love, but of convenience because "he detected in her a kinship with his own dark corruption." (p. 347). They lived apart in the "grey-black mecadamized" colliery: "His real mistress was

the machine, and the real lover of Winifred was the machine"[143] (p. 350):

> "He wanted children. Neither marriage nor the domestic establishment meant anything to him. He wanted to propagate himself. He knew what he was doing. He had the instinct of a growing inertia, of a thing that chooses its place of rest in which to lapse into apathy, complete, profound indifference. He would let the machinery carry him; husband, father, pit-manager, warm clay lifted through the recurrent action of day after day by the great machine from which it derived its motion. As for Winifred, she was an educated woman, and of the same sort as himself. She would make a good companion. She was his mate."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 352)

But what Lawrence seems to preach is that even as a slave of the machine Tom still keeps his "roots" in the "black trodden earth" of his colliery or in his desire to perpetuate himself in the children he wanted to have in the same way Anna and Will tried to keep some roots through maternity and manual work.

When we come to the third generation, the Brangwens had already suffered a whole process of transformation, and the story of Ursula, the elder daughter of Will and Anna, is going to be set against an urban and twentieth-century environment. She has to face her problems of adjustment and emancipation in a geographical and social context, completely different from that of the first generation. She takes the unsatisfied aspirations and changes already conquered by the

[143] It is interesting to observe that, in *The Rainbow*, when Lawrence talks about the "second generation" of the Brangwens it seems that he is referring more specifically to Anna and Will, as if Tom and Winifred were really "outcasts".

early generations, and moves into the unknown territory of the future. Sagar calls Ursula "the first 'free soul' in the English novel:"

> "Ursula is emancipated and uprooted: she is as free as her parents and grandparents were not, but free as a man overboard without a lifebelt is freer than those trapped aboard a sinking ship."[144]

The story of a village girl who struggles to find herself in the modern world could have been commonplace, but this was easily avoided because Ursula was not a common girl at all:

> "She wants to read great, beautiful books, and be rich with them; she wanted to see beautiful things and have the joy of them for ever; she wanted to know big, free people; and there remained always the want she could put no name to."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 406)

The two strongest influences on Ursula come from her grandmother Lydia and her uncle Tom. From the first she inherited her characteristic of assimilating experiences and going on beyond them, which makes both women respectable: "Life must go on", Lydia taught her. They used to talk a lot and the grandmother's bedroom seemed to Ursula "a paradisal land" where she built up her dreams of freedom and emancipation. There she heard about her "foreign" grandfather and, from her grandmother's memories, she developed her feminist ideas:

> "Lydia still resented Lensky. When she thought of him, she was always younger than he, she was always twenty, or twenty-five, and under his

[144] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 57.

> domination. He incorporated her in his ideas as if she were not a person herself, as if she were just his aide-de-camp, or part of his baggage, or one among his surgical appliances. She still resented it."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 256)

From her uncle Tom, Ursula inherited the attraction-repulsion of the industrial, mechanical world. Since she was very young, his "strangeness" had much attracted her and she admired him a lot. This admiration was firmly rooted in the fact that he was "different", that he was connected with another world different from the one Marsh Farm represented:

> "It was young Tom Brangwen, with his dark lashes and beautiful colouring, his soft, inscrutable nature, his strange repose and his informed air, added to his position in London, who seemed to emphasize the superior foreign element in the Marsh. When he appeared, perfectly dressed, as if soft and affable, and yet quite removed from everybody, he created an uneasiness in people, he was reserved in the minds of the Cossethay and Ilkeston acquaintaces to a different, remote world."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 241)

But his cynicism and the "perverse satisfaction" she feels in him about the colliery and the people who live in it, kills the admiration she had always felt for him:

> "'But is this place as awful as it looks?' the young girl asked, a strain in her eyes.
> 'It is just what it looks,' he said. 'It hides nothing.'
> 'Why are the men so sad?'
> 'Are they sad?' he replied.
> 'They seem unutterably, unutterably sad,' said Ursula, out of a passionate throat.
> 'I don't think they are that. They just take it for granted.'
> 'What do they take for granted?'
> 'This--the pits and the place to fit themselves. It is easier,' he said.
> 'And you agree with them,' burst out his niece, unable to bear it. 'You think

> like they do--that living human beings must be taken and adapted to all kinds of horrors. We could easily do without the pits.'"
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 347)

It is in Wiggiston colliery that Ursula "grew up". She feels "miserable" and "desolate", but she decides that she is not going to be beaten and with the same intensity which she learns to hate her uncle and Winifred Inger, she abominates the world they represent:

> "Hatred sprang up in Ursula's heart. If she could she would smash the machine."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 350)

When she decides that she is going to face the "man's world" and fight for her place in it, she had also decided that she would not let it smash her: she is going to be Ursula Brangwen, not an anonymous instrument to serve the machine. First, she thought she could find in a job, as school mistress, the door to the "greater world of activity" (p. 361):

> "She dreamed how she could make the little, ugly children love her. She would be so personal. Teachers were always so hard and impersonal. There was no vivid relationship. She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 367)

But from the initial act of filling in the application forms she finds how "mechanical" this world could be ("The whole thing was so cruel, so impersonal" - p. 360) and she realizes that the whole system was like this:

> "Ursula was rather frightened by his mechanical ignoring of her, and his directness of statement. It was something new to her. She had never been treated like this before, as if she did not count, as if she were addressing a machine."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 370)

The school seems to her like a prison and there, instead of being Ursula Brangwen, different, unique, she only becomes Standard Five teacher. From now on it seems to be clear Lawrence's intention to show how "mechanical", impersonal and "dry" the school was. It represents in *The Rainbow* the "man-made world." For Paul, in *Sons and Lovers*, this world was the factory where he and Clara worked; for Uncle Tom it was Wiggiston colliery with the difference that, even the "rigid, amorphous confusion of Wiggiston" (p. 349) seems to be more "humanized" than the "world" in which Paul and Ursula work. Because, like the "colliery world" of *Sons and Lovers*, the colliery people of Wiggiston have a kind of unconsciousness which keeps them "alive" even in that dead world they live. In the same way that the pits "use" them, they "use" the pits to get money to spend on food and drink, the means for their survival and for their pleasure. In a sense, they are freer than Young Tom Brangwen. They knew "the pit was the main show, the raison d'être of all" (p. 349) and, by accepting this truth, they avoided the fight for power and domination which makes Tom a captive of his own possession. The colliers are also free of the social conventions existing in the factory and in the school world:

> "They're not interested enough to be very immoral--it all amounts to the same thing, moral or immoral--just a question of pit-wages."
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 349)

Soon Ursula discovers that "in school it was power, and power alone that mattered" (p. 377) It is only a question of knowing who is going to win in the long run--whether it is the teacher or the students. The school then becomes more than a field of art and science:

> "She saw Mr. Brunt, Miss Harby, Miss Schofield, all the school-teachers, drudging unwillingly at the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and attention, and then of commanding their acceptance of various pieces of knowledge. The first great task was to reduce sixty children to one state of mind, or being. This state must be produced automatically, through the will of the teacher, and the will of the whole school authority, imposed upon the will of the children."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 383-3)

From chapter "Shame" on, words such as "mechanical," "system" and "automatic" become the dominant words of the novel: "The taking tea was just a mechanical action" (p. 401), "the children, the scholars, they were insignificant little objects" (p. 384) and she "worked mechanically according to a system imposed" (p. 395), up to a point that "the class-teaching itself at last became almost mechanical" (p. 497) and Ursula discovers that "she was incapable of fulfilling her task" (p. 385):

> "Why should she give her allegiance to this world, and let it so dominate her, that her own world of warm sun and growing, sap-filled life was turned into nothing? She was not going to do it. She was not going to be prisoner in the dry, tyrannical man-world."
>
> (*The Rainbow*, p. 410)

When Ursula realizes that the "man-world" could not bring her the freedom she had sought, she is in a dilemma because home was also a prison to her. And, in her struggle to get rid of both prisons, we are going to find her missing the days of her childhood and trying to find refuge in the memories of the field of Marsh Farm. As we have analysed in relation to the characters of *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers*, this return to the past is a recurrent device used by Lawrence's characters to escape the problems they have to face as "modern" people. This past is always related to the "natural", the "agricultural", usually associated with security and set against the dangers of the modern world. Lawrence's characters who leave their farms to live in the cities, always have these moments when they desire to go back to the past: "What more does one want than to live in this beautiful place, and make things grow in your garden?" (p. 416). But when Ursula rejects the farmer Anton Schofield, she is also rejecting the traditional past of her ancestors which life with him could represent. As Ford points out, it "is painful for her but as 'a traveller on the face of the earth' she knows she cannot return"[145] and I agree with Ford when he states that it could also imply that Lawrence longs for the past, but accepts the fact that there is no going back and that "the denial of civilization" is not going to solve the "ills of mankind":

> "She must break away from this sunless, lifeless, enclosed form of life. But she will not retreat 'into her fields where she was happy.' She will continue to fight for 'joy, happiness,

[145] Ford, *Double Measure*, p. 125.

> and permanency' within modern industrial society."[146]

Failing to exert her will on her students, Ursula tries to do it with her lovers. While her Uncle Tom treats the machine as a lover, Ursula treats her lovers as machines. Her feelings for Skrebensky, her first lover, are as "perverse" as the industrial system she hates. When they met each other it seemed that the kind of alliance that the Brangwen women had always desired was going to materialize: Ursula, "the scion of the Brangwen world," was going to meet "a representative of the old aristocratic Europe, with long-rooted complications of habit and breeding."[147] But there is no melting in their relationship. They use their love to defy social conventions, but Skrebensky is obviously related to the system and she defies, in him, the world he represents. At the beginning they were both afraid and they defy each other; but like Eve, Ursula calls Skrebensky to Fall: she tries to carry him to consciousness and this carries him to "death". She had changed, achieving a kind of stability which enabled her to "defeat" him because, like Uncle Tom, he had given himself to the machine, he had no inner life.

At the end of *The Rainbow* Ursula emerges as "the newly emancipated daughter of the working class"[148] and as Sagar points out, "her story is of disillusion but also of courage

[146] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 60.

[147] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 68.

[148] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 69.

which transcends it".[149] Through Ursula, Lawrence seems to present the aesthetic idea that one has to die in order to live, that we must enter the corruption of the mechanical world in order to go beyond it. Ursula had to be corrupted before she achieves the state of grace she seems to be at the end of the book and Frank Kermode states that if we interpret Ursula's "rainbow as a promise of 'the earth's new architecture' she speaks also for England, in her crisis, in the pause before the new age."[150]

The Rainbow is Lawrence's farewell to the England of his youth, and a saga of the man's organic connection with the natural world. After this novel Lawrence seems to accept the idea that civilization is a necessary evil and also that it is impossible to go back: "The bonds of the world were broken. This world of England had vanished away." (p. 472).

It is true that the book ends with a rainbow--a symbol of hope--but if this hope could be applied to Ursula's future it does not seem that it could be applied to the future of her country and her countrymen as Lawrence is going to show in *Women in Love*. The "clink-clink-clink of the wagons blown between the wind" (p. 451), "the blackened colliers trooping from the pit-mouth" (p. 13) and the "sulphurous smell of the pit refuse" (p. 13) had definitely replaced the smell of grass and honeysuckles which were so frequent in *The White Peacock*. *The Rainbow* is "the baptism to another life", the

[149] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 55.

[150] Frank Kermode, "The Novels of D.H.Lawrence", *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet*, p. 85.

threshold of the world of corruption and disintegration of *Women in Love*.

Chapter FIVE

Our epoch is over,
a cycle of evolution is finished
our activity has lost its meaning
we are ghosts, we are seed;
for our word is dead
and we know not how to live wordless.
D.H.Lawrence, "Dies Irae."

The main purpose of this chapter is to show that in *Women in Love* we find the analysis of the culmination of the process of industrialization in English society. The assumption that industrialism has destroyed both nature and the best part of man, which was initiated in *Sons and Lovers*, is here fully developed. This chapter aims then to establish a conclusive comparison between the "garden of Eden" presented in *The White Peacock* and the hell which *Women in Love* represents. I will make an attempt to demonstrate how Lawrence's hatred of the mechanical world of industrialism has increased from *The White Peacock* to *Women in Love*,[151] how the pastoral settings have been gradually replaced by decadent urban environments. By having all social classes represented here, Lawrence gives an "apocalyptic outlook" on the problem of social mobility and class differences which has occupied him since *The White Peacock*. But, more than anything else, implied in *Women in Love*

[151] Baruch Hochman in his *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, describes the world of *Women in Love* as "a fallen world, almost a demoniac world, where evil is a concomitant of experience, and where salvation is possible only for those who are willing to renounce that world completely." (p. 116

is the idea that Western industrial society has come to a final illness and, worse than this, Lawrence suggests that there is no way back since this society has already lost "touch with its own deepest source of being."[152]

Lawrence's comment when he had finished *Women in Love* --"the book frightens me; it is so end-of-the-world"[153] --gives an idea of the chaotic world the book describes. *Women in Love* sums up the theme of this dissertation: while its first chapter resembles Victorian England, the other chapters, especially the last ones, represent an England which, having been "mechanized" in the process of being "modern" and suffering the impact of the First World War[154] , has arrived at a "condition of frozen entropy."[155]

The Rainbow and *Women in Love* come from the material which was to be entitled *The Sisters* but, in spite of being set in the same pre-war England, *Women in Love* must have suffered, more directly, the reality of the time when it was written. So it is not only industrialism which is responsible for the mood of bitterness that hovers in *Women in Love*: though explicitly absent from the book, the war has helped to cause the state of disintegration of the civilization Lawrence presents in this

[152] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 88.

[153] *Letters*, p. 380.

[154] "It is a novel which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war, though it does not concern the war itself." (D.H.Lawrence in his Foreword to *Women in Love*).

[155] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 76.

novel.[156] However I will not carry this point further since it is the influence of industrialism which I am trying to analyse in this dissertation.

Women in Love[157] was drafted in a period when Lawrence, having already achieved literary reputation, was enjoying associations with distinguished literary and political people.[158] It is in these years, under the influence of these people, that Lawrence broadens his social experience, adding to his knowledge of working-classs people a vision of the world of power, wealth, and intelligence. Among his new friends Lawrence also discovers the power of ideas and it is by this time that Lawrence, the prophet, emerges. Birkin, one of the main characters of *Women in Love* is said to be the spokesman of Lawrence's ideas. Lawrence's experience of social mobility gives him a larger view of the whole social scene: "Like many people who have changed their class position, Lawrence has a very acute sense of class differences, an infallible nose for the atmosphere of particular groups, and he is not tied to standards of any of them."[159]

The criticism of modern civilization presented in

[156] As Ford points out in *Double Measure*, "it is perhaps a useful corrective to see that the horror in *Women in Love* is not exclusively industrialism. . ." (p. 199)

[157] *Women in Love* was finished in 1916 but only published in 1920.

[158] Russell, David Garnett, Katherine Mansfield, among others.

[159] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 90.

The Rainbow is much more intensified in *Women in Love*[160] and the note of possibility which ends *The Rainbow* is replaced in *Women in Love*, by somber notes of destruction and dissolution:

> "There is a phase in every race... when the desire for destruction overcomes every other desire."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 432)

Women in Love continues to relate the story of Ursula Brangwen, the heroine of *The Rainbow*, and also of her sister Gudrun who, in that book, had not played any important role. They had behind them the Brangwen background already presented in *The Rainbow* and emerge in *Women in Love* as newly emancipated women: Ursula, a teacher and Gudrun an artist:

> "The sisters were women, Ursula twenty-six, and Gudrun twenty-five. But both had the remote, virgin look of modern girls, sisters of Artemis rather than of Hebe. Gudrun was very beautiful, passive, soft-skinned, soft-limbed. She wore a dress of dark-blue silky stuff, with ruches of blue and green linen lace in the neck and sleeves; and she had emerald-green stockings. Her look of confidence and diffidence contrasted with Ursula's sensitive expectancy. The provincial people, intimidated by Gudrun's perfect sang-froid and exclusive bareness of manner, said of her: 'She is a smart woman.' She had just come back from London, where she had spent several years, working at an art-school, as a student, and living a studio life."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 8)

> "Ursula having always that strange brightness of an essential flame that is

160 ". . . the content of the book is so rich, the themes so numerous, that it is only possible to give an intelligible account of it by missing a good deal out. But the chief subsidiary theme--so powerful at times that it is hardly subsidiary--is a criticism of modern society." (Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 73).

> caught, meshed, contravened. She lived a good deal by herself, to herself, working, passing on from day to day, and always thinking, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own understanding. Her active living was suspended, but underneath, in the darkness, something was coming to pass. If only she could break through the last integuments! She seemed to try and put her hands out, like an infant in the womb, and she could not, not yet. Still she had a strange prescience, an intimation of something yet to come."
> (*Women in Love*, pp. 9-10)

The story goes on relating the love affair of Ursula and Rupert Birkin and the liaison of Gudrun and Gerald Crich, "contrasting types of men who become intimate friends."[161]

Mark Schorer[162] divides the characters of *Women in Love* into "free" and "bound" characters. According to him, the "free" characters are limited to four, the four who actively seek out their fate through the plot movement" and the "bound" are all the other characters of the book who, according to Schorer, "are fixed in their social roles" and only "caricatures whose fate is sealed before the outset."

The four "free" characters are, obviously, the two pairs of lovers formed by Gerald and Gudrun and Birkin and Ursula. The first ones, Gerald and Gudrun, "take the way to death" in the sense that their social roles "become more important" while Birkin and Ursula "take the way of life" in that social roles become less important. Although the essence of the novel cannot be defined "in terms of the love affairs

[161] David Cavitch, *D.H.Lawrence and the New World*, p. 60.

[162] Mark Schorer "Women in Love and Death", *D.H.Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays* edited by Mark Schorer, p. 53.

alone,"[163] I have chosen the development of their relationships to present this chapter.

In *The Rainbow* Ursula tries to escape from a world that she hated but, when she finds that this escape is impossible, she enters *Women in Love* trying to seek "the rainbows that might arch from the shards of civilization."[164] Birkin, on the other hand, repudiates the world presented in the novel and chooses to escape: "When society is death, life can only be found outside any given social context:"[165]

> "Ursula's task is to persuade Birkin to abandon his fatalism so that together they may begin to build life anew. Birkin's task is to make Ursula see that the world as she knows it, and the ideals of that world are doomed."[166]

Being the spokesman of Lawrence's ideas in this novel, Birkin acts as a prophet of the apocalypse and as the forerunner of the renascence: "His blood, which he metaphorically offers to Gerald, would have been a saving quickening transfusion from the bright river of life."[167] There is also Birkin, the Salvator Mundi:

> "Ursula watched him as he talked. There seemed a certain impatient fury in him, all the while, and at the same time a great amusement in everything, and a

[163] Eliseo Vivas, *The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, p. 237.

[164] Mary Freeman, *D.H. Lawrence, a Basic Study of His Ideas*, p. 55.

[165] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 197.

[166] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 74.

[167] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 87.

> final tolerance. And it was this tolerance she mistrusted, not the fury. She saw that, all the while, in spite of himself, he would have to be trying to save the world. And this knowledge, whilst it comforted her heart somewhere with a little self-satisfaction, stability, yet filled her with a certain sharp contempt and hate of him. She wanted him to herself, she hated the Salvator Mundi touch."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 143)

Like Lawrence, Birkin's vision of the decadence of contemporary society is related to his hatred of the modern world :[168]

> "I don't believe in the humanity I pretend to be part of, I don't care a straw for the social ideals I live by, I hate the dying organic form of social mankind—so it can't be anything but trumpery, to work at education. I shall drop it as soon as I am clear enough — tomorrow perhaps—and be by myself."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 147)

And this hatred comes from the same root as Lawrence's hatred: the materialistic world that industrialism has helped to create:

> "When I see that clear, beautiful chair, and I think of England,—even Jane Austen's England—it had living thoughts to unfold even then, and pure happiness in unfolding them. And now, we can only fish among the rubbish-heaps for the remnants of their old expression. There is no production in us now, only sordid and mechanicalness.'
> 'It isn't true,' cried Ursula. 'Why must you always praise the past at the expense of the present? Really, I don't

[168] "In the vision that is enunciated through Birkin,we see how one of Lawrence's nightmares has come true. The novel shows how "the ideal mind, the brain, has become the vampire of modern life sucking up the blood and the life". . . Society itself is identified with the life-destroying intellect." (Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 105)

> think so much of Jane Austen's England. It was materialistic enough, if you like—.'
> 'It could afford to be materialistic,' said Birkin, 'because it had the power to be something other—which we haven't. We are materialistic because we haven't the power to be anything else—try as we may, we can't bring off anything but materialism: mechanism, the very soul of materialism.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, pp.400-1)

But, like Lawrence, again, Birkin seems to believe that dissolution is the opposite of life:

> "If only man was swept off the face of the earth, creation would go on so marvellously, with a new start, non-human. Man is one of the mistakes of creation--like the ichthyosauri. If only he were gone again, think what lovely things would come out of the liberated days;--things straight out of the fire."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 142)

Birkin advocates the idea that the regeneration of society could only be achieved through a new kind of "union with a woman:"

> "The old ideals are dead as nails--nothing there. It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman--sort of ultimate marriage--and there isn't anything else.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 64)

And he feels "deeply injured in his soul"[169] waiting for something to happen to avoid the "crumbling nothingness" in which he believes his country is going to fall "in a few years." (p. 59). But when Gerald Crich, the "industrial magnate," his friend, asks him for a programme of change, Birkin has none:

[169] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 74.

> 'And how do you propose to begin? I suppose you mean, reform the whole order of society?' he asked.
> Birkin had a slight, tense frown between the brows. He too was impatient of the conversation.
> 'I don't propose at all,' he replied. 'When we really want to go for something better, we shall smash the old. Until then, any sort of proposal, or making proposals, is no more than a tiresome game for self-important people.'
> (*Women in Love*, p. 60)

Ursula of *Women in Love* is different from the Ursula of *The Rainbow*. Ursula II does not seem to have the same courage with which Ursula I faces the world. When *Women in Love* begins, we are going to find her as an emancipated woman, a modern heroine, who has already experienced life in *The Rainbow* with such an intensity that it seems now there is little to be tried: she had already exhausted the world of passion ("... in passion she was at home." p. 350), she had already found her peace in the "man's world" and now there was only marriage left to be tried ("More likely to be the end of experience," p. 7). But in spite of the fact that she does not appear to be eager to get married like the "traditional" girls of her generation ('... oh, if I were tempted, I'd marry like a shot. I'm only tempted not to,' p. 8) she is not, in *Women in Love*, the dauntless Ursula of *The Rainbow*. She seems to be quieter and perhaps just willing to be fulfilled as a human being. She does not want to be the pioneer of anything and, if to achieve her peace she has to journey into "nowhere," like Birkin suggests, she rather prefers this flight into the "unknown" than the destruction which is implied in the "everywhere." Of course, this change in her attitude is a slow process to be undergone. In the first part of *Women in Love* she is still uncertain and a little

bit "depressed" with the idea of "going-away for-ever, never-to-return" (p. 495):

> 'But where can one go?' she asked anxiously. 'After all there is only the world, and none of it is very distant.'
> 'Still,' he said, 'I should like to go with you--nowhere. It would be rather wandering just to nowhere. That's the place to get to--nowhere. One wants to wander away from the world's somewheres, into our own nowhere.'
> Still she meditated.
> 'You see, my love,' she said, 'I'm afraid that while we are only people, we've got to take the world that's given--because there isn't any other.'
> 'Yes, there is,' he said.
> 'But where--?' she sighed.
> 'Somewhere--anywhere. Let's wander off. That's the thing to do--let's wander off.'
> 'Yes--' she said, thrilled at the thought of travel. But to her it was only travel.
> 'To be free,' he said. 'To be free, in a free place, with a few other people!'
> 'Yes,' she said wistfully. Those 'few other people' depressed her.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 355-6)

But at the end of the novel Ursula seems to have changed her mind, or decided to submit to Birkin's ideas. But even in this second alternative we can doubt whether she submits because she does not escape the love-submission tradition and has perhaps only been caught in Birkin's arguments because "word-force could always make her believe what she did not believe,"(p. 492). But the fact is that she accepts following him as we can observe in this "last talk" she has with Gudrun:

> 'I think,' she said at length, involutarily, 'that Rupert is right--one wants a new space to be in, and one falls away from the old.'
> Gudrun watched her sister with impassive face and steady eyes.
> 'One wants a new space to be in, I

> quite agree,' she said. 'But I think that a new world is a development from this world, and that to isolate oneself with one other person isn't to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one's illusions.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'Perhaps,' she said, full of mistrust, of herself and everybody. 'But,' she added, 'I do think that one can't have anything new whilst one cares for the old--do you know what I mean?--even fighting the old--do you know what I mean?--even fighting the old is belonging to it. I know, one is tempted to stop with the world, just to fight it. But then it isn't worth it.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 492)

We are now going to examine the other couple, Gerald and Gudrun. While Ursula and Birkin try to find new ways to escape the industrial world, Gerald and Gudrun are going to represent the apotheosis of this world and I will, then, be more interested in them. Concomitantly I will be relating the four, because even representing "wholly opposed experiences," the two couples "interwine throughout the book."[170]

The industrial world, which had been avoided in *The White Peacock*, and made its début in *Sons and Lovers*, loses its mystery in *The Rainbow*. But, in *Women in Love*, it is impudently shown from the first pages. In the beginning of the book we are to find,through the description of Ursula and Gudrun's walk in Beldover, a world whose "ugliness" had largely superseded the beauty of the world of *The White Peacock*. It is in this "country in an underworld" that Gudrun is going to be placed: a kind of world that attracts and repels her in the

[170] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 81.

same way that the best representative of it, in the novel, Gerald Crich,is going to interest her later:

> "The two girls were soon walking swiftly down the main road of Beldover, a wide street, part shops, part dwelling-houses, utterly formless and sordid, without poverty. Gudrun, new from her life in Chelsea and Sussex, shrank cruelly from this amorphous ugliness of a small colliery town in the Midlands. Yet forward she went, through the whole sordid gamut of pettiness, the long amorphous, gritty street. She was exposed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of torment. It was strange that she should have chosen to come back and test the full effect of this shapeless, barren ugliness upon herself. Why had she wanted to submit herself to it, did she still want to submit herself to it, the insufferable torture of these ugly, meaningless people, this defaced countryside? She felt like a beetle toiling in the dust. She was filled with repulsion.
> They turned off the main road, past a black patch of common-garden, where sooty cabbage stumps stood shameless. No one thought to be ashamed. No one was ashamed of it all.
> 'It is like a country in an underworld,' said Gudrun. 'The colliers bring it above-ground with them, shoved it up. Ursula, it's marvellous, it's really marvellous--it's really wonderful, another world. The people are all ghouls, and everything is ghostly. Everything is a ghoulish replica of the real world, a replica, a ghoul, all soiled, everything sordid. It's like being mad, Ursula.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, pp.11-12)

The first time Gudrun meets Gerald she is with Ursula and the different ways in which they react to him can show both the different nature of the two sisters and can also be viewed as a foreshadowing of their destinies. Ursula does not seem to be so much touched by Gerald's presence. To her he was just "peaceful and charming" (p. 52) and she makes a prediction of what is going to happen to him: "He'll die soon, when he's made

every possible improvement, and there will be nothing more to improve" (p. 53). Gudrun, on the other hand, appears to be fascinated: both by his manhood ("'God, what it is to be a man!' she cried"-p. 52) and by the class and power he represents:

> "Gudrun envied him almost painfully. Even this momentary possession of pure isolation and fluidity seemed to her so terribly desirable that she felt herself as if damned, out there on the high-road."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 52)

Later on Ursula and Gudrun will be together again facing the scene in which Gerald makes his mare stand and wait at a level-crossing while a noisy train passes:

> "The locomotive, as if wanting to see what could be done, put on the brakes, and back came the trucks rebounding on the iron buffers, striking like horrible cymbals, clashing nearer and nearer in frightful strident concussions. The mare opened her mouth and rose slowly, as if lifted up on a wind of terror. Then suddenly her fore-feet struck out, as she convulsed herself utterly away from the horror. Back she went, and the two girls clung to each other, feeling she must fall backwards on top of him. But he leaned forward, his face shining with fixed amusement, and at last he brought her down, sank her down, and was bearing her back to the mark. But as strong as the pressure of his compulsion was the repulsion of her utter terror, throwing her back away from the railway, so that she spun round and round on two legs, as if she were in the centre of some whirlwind."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 123)

Gerald's violation of the mare's instinctive behaviour is an offense against instinctive life. His sadistic, mechanical behaviour, makes Gudrun "faint with poignant dizziness" but "when she recovered, her soul was calm and cold" (124) and "she was not afraid." Ursula does not think

the same way. She could not accept his behaviour. Her reaction is normal and purely spontaneous:

> 'But why does he do it?' cried Ursula, 'why does he? Does he think he's grand, when he's bullied a sensitive creature, ten times as sensitive as himself?'
> (*Women in Love*, p. 125)

As Spilka points out, "in the early stages of their affair, Gudrun's attraction to Gerald seems based upon his command of social power"[171] but at the end she is going to reject "the social world of money and industrialism to which he would bring her."[172]

According to Draper the effect of the mare scene "is to make Gerald appear as an ally of sterile, mechanical forces"[173] and the chapter "The Industrial Magnate" is going to show Gerald as "the God-head of the productive machine."[174] He inherited the mines from his father who was a humanist "so constant to charity, and to his love for his neighbour. Perhaps he had loved his neighbour better than himself." (p.241). This Christian love was especially directed to his miners:

> "He had been so constant to his lights, so constant to charity, and to his love for his neighbour. Perhaps he had loved his neighbour even better than himself--which is going one further than the commandment. Always, this flame had burned in his heart, sustaining him through everything, the

[171] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 136.

[172] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p.84.

[173] R.P.Draper, *D.H.Lawrence*, p. 53.

[174] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 86.

> welfare of the people. He was a large employer of labour, he was a great mine-owner. And he had never lost this from his heart, that in Christ he was one with his workmen. Nay, he had felt inferior to them, as if they through poverty and labour were nearer to God than he. He had always the unacknowledged belief that it was his workmen, the miners, who held in their hands the means of salvation. To move nearer to God, he must move towards his miners, his life must gravitate towards theirs. They were, unconsciously, his idol, his God made manifest. In them he worshipped the highest, the great, sympathetic, mindless Godhead of humanity."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p.241-2)

Gerald was his opposite. When his father asked him to help in the firm he discovered his lust for power and while his father had managed the mines paternalistically, Gerald was "pure instrumentality" and "go". From this point on we are going to face, through Gerald, Lawrence's harsher picture of industrialism,[175] He had never been so crude in his descriptions and analyses of the industrial world. The whole chapter "The Industrial Magnate" is written as if Lawrence's relentless hatred which, up to a certain point, had been repressed in the earlier novels, has burst out here. His style, full of "mechanical" images, has the precision of Gerald's machines and the locomotives, the electrical circuits, the mines, the motor-cars, the tick-tack of the clocks, the "maddening music" of the sirens, etc. His sense of a mechanical struggle for power supersedes anything presented by Lawrence before:

[175] To Eliseo Vivas, Gerald is "a mere caricature whose function in the story is to serve as a foil and a cathartic stimulus for Lawrence's hatred!" (*The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, p. 241).

> "He (Gerald) saw the stream of miners flowing along the causeways from the mines at the end of the afternoon, thousands of blackened, slightly distorted human beings with red mouths, all moving subjugate to his will. He pushed slowly in his motor-car through the little market-top on Friday nights in Beldover, through a solid mass of human beings that were making their purchases and doing their weekly spending. They were all subordinate to him. They were ugly and uncouth, but they were his instruments. He was the God of the machine. They made way for his motor-car automatically, slowly.
>
> He did not care whether they made way with alacrity, or grudgingly. He did not care what they thought of him. His vision had suddenly crystallized. Suddenly he had conceived the pure instrumentality of mankind. There had been so much humanitarianism, so much talk of sufferings and feelings. It was ridiculous. The sufferings and feelings of individuals did not matter in the least. They were mere conditions, like the weather. What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual. As a man as of a knife: does it cut well? Nothing else mattered.
>
> (*Women in Love*, pp.251-2)

"He[176] was the God of the machine." Perhaps here lies Gerald's great mistake because, in the world of production, it is the machine, not the man, who is worshiped as God. But he does not perceive this at the beginning and, acting as Deus ex Machina he makes up his mind to reform the mines and "takes the coal out of the earth profitably" (p. 252).

> "He had his life-work now, to extend over the earth a great and perfect system in which the will of man ran smooth and unthwarted, timeless, a Godhead in process. He had to begin with the mines. The terms were given: first the resistant Matter of the underground; then the instruments of

[176] Italics mine.

> its subjugation, instruments human and metallic; and finally his own pure will, his own mind. It would need a marvellous adjustment of myriad instruments, human, animal, metalic , kinetic, dynamic, a marvellous casting of myriad tiny wholes into one great perfect entirety."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 257)

Gerald devoted himself to this task "with an almost religious exaltation" (p. 256). The description of the process of transformation he imposes on the mines is something that approaches madness:

> "As soon as Gerald entered the firm, the convulsion of death ran through the old system. He had all his life been tortured by a furious and destructive demon, which possessed him sometimes like an insanity. This temper now entered like a virus into the firm, and there were cruel eruptions. Terrible and inhuman were his examinations into every detail; there was no privacy he would spare, no old sentiment but he would turn it over. The old grey managers, the old grey clerks, the doddering old pensioners, he looked at them, and removed them as so much lumber. The whole concern seemed like a hospital of invalid employees. He had no emotional qualms."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 257-8)

The miner's reaction to these changes is also permeated with Lawrence's profound criticism of the human condition in industrial society. At first they try to react because "they had to work hard, much harder than before, the work was terrible and heart-breaking in its mechanicalness" (p. 259). But soon they are infected with the virus of the industrial system and "find a perverse satisfaction in abandoning themselves to his power"[177] even at the cost of

[177] David Cavitch, *D.H.Lawrence and the New World*, p. 69.

their happiness:

> "But they submitted to it all. The joy went out of their lives, the hope seemed to perish as they became more and more mechanized. And yet they accepted the new conditions. They even got a further satisfaction out of them. At first they hated Gerald Crich, they swore to do something to him, to murder him. But as time went on, they accepted everything with some fatal satisfaction. Gerald was their high priest, he represented the religion they really felt. His father was forgotten already. There was a new world, a new order, strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness. The men were satisfied to belong to the great and wonderful machine, even whilst it destroyed them. It was what they wanted. It was the highest that man had produced, the most wonderful and super-human. They were exalted by belonging to his great and superhuman system which was beyond feeling or reason, something really godlike. Their hearts died within them, but their souls were satisfied."
>
> (*Women in Love*, pp.259-60)

It is interesting to call attention here to an aspect which has already been analysed in the previous chapters of this dissertation. The miner's life is associated with a kind of "dark" happiness, different from this "mechanized" satisfaction obtained through "this participation in a great and perfect system" (p. 260).[178] The kind of life of which

[178] Clarke and Pritchard are among the critics who agree that Lawrence sees something positive in the corruption of the industrial society. They emphasize that Lawrence seems to preach that one must "experience" the mechanical world in order to go beyond it. Like Lawrence himself, his characters are repelled and yet attracted to the perverse satisfaction of the machine. whether this satisfaction is sought in power, in productivity, in the cultivation of "the sordid" or in breaking away the established rules whether they are social rules or individual patterns. It has been so in relation to many of his characters as if one had to go into the mud in order to blossom; Tom and Lydia only achieved a "perfect union" after Tom had "dirtied" himself with a street-girl; Birkin had first to have his

Walter Morel is a representative, in *Sons and Lovers*, is more in accordance with Lawrence's concept of the life in the collieries. These ideas are clearly enunciated in Lawrence's essay "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside:"

> "And the pit did not mechanize men. On the contrary. Under the butty system, the miners worked under-ground 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 highly developed, a contact almost as close as touch very real and very powerful... If I think of my childhood, it is always as if there was a lustrous sort of inner darkness, like the gloss of coal, in which we moved and had our real being."[179]

And in one of the first chapters of *Women in Love*, Gudrun sees a kind of "strange glamour" in the mining world which arouses in her a "hot attraction" which "quite stupefies her" (128):

> "Now she realized that this was the world of powerful, underworld men who spent most of their time in the darkness. In their voices she could hear the voluptuous resonance of darkness, the strong, dangerous underworld, mindless, inhuman. They sounded also like strange machines, heavy, oiled. The voluptuousness was

"perverse" relation with Hermione before he could meet Ursula and Ursula herself was only able to "love" after she had "experienced" Skrebensky and Winifred and even the Birkin-Ursula union does not escape certain hints of sodomy and mechanical perversity before they achieve a kind of stable balance. Gerald, Gudrun, and Loerke find their perverse satisfaction by violating the "natural" forces and by experiencing "the mechanical."

[179] D.H.Lawrence, "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," in Collin Clarke, *The River of Dissolution*, p. 74.

> like that of machinery, cold and iron."
> (*Women in Love*, p. 128)

Later on, Gerald is going to embrace her in the same place the miners used to kiss their girls, a fact which gives her a strange satisfaction:

> "Ah, it was terrible and perfect. Under this bridge, the colliers pressed their lovers to their breast. And now, under the bridge, the master of them all pressed her to himself! And now much more powerful and terrible was his embrace than theirs, how much more concentrated and supreme his love was, than theirs in the same sort!"
> (*Women in Love*, p. 373)

As Hough points out, in the butty system the men "worked together, drank together, and took their pleasures together; it was a system which put the accent on personal loyalty."[180] So, by transforming his miners into mere robots, Gerald depersonalizes them and replaces their human feelings with his mechanical ideal.

As had happened in the mare scene, he violates, again, the natural order of life in order to assert himself.

But soon the whole system was "so perfect that Gerald was hardly necessary any more."[181] (261) and Ursula's prediction, in the beginning of the novel, becomes true: "he had applied the latest appliances" (53) but "in a strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened." (261) He had

[180] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 67.

[181] According to Cavitch, "the mining operation as reorganized by Gerald into an efficient industry expresses the common man's despair and rejection of spontaneous, warm life." (*D.H.Lawrence and the New World*, p. 69)

accomplished the instrumental task he had established for himself and now he has to face "the horror of his own vacuity."[182]

> "He had done all the work he wanted to do--and now there was nothing. He could go out in the car, he could run to town. But he did not want to go out in the car, he did not want to run to town, he did not want to call on the Thirlbys. He was suspended motionless, in an agony of inertia, like a machine that is without power."
> (*Women in Love*, p. 300)

He has denied his feeling in the name of productivity and now that he has succeeded in the task of modernizing the Crich's mines, he turns to Gudrun in search of love. But as Hochman emphasizes, Gerald had sought power because he could not love. This idea leads to a crucial point since now, power, per se, has proved not to be sufficient to satisfy him. Mary Freeman states that Gerald can be related both to George Saxton ("a conservative and aristocratic George") and to Skrebensky ("a civilian Skrebensky") and these comparisons foreshadow his love failure.

Most of the critics agree that Gerald's role as a lover is, undoubtedly, linked with his social role. Ford's suggestion is that Gerald's "tragedy is not so much the emptiness of his economic role but his lack of inner fulfillment in relation with others"[183] as it is Vivas' opinion that Gerald's failure in love has its source in his dedication to the wrong God, the Machine."[184]

[182] Eliseo Vivas, *The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, p. 243.

[183] Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 136.

[184] Eliseo Vivas, *The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, p. 231.

Gerald and Gudrun's love affair seems to be doomed from the beginning. Their first union happens soon after Gerald's father's death. It has been much discussed that the chapter which describes their "coming together" is entitled "Death and Love" and opens with this sentence: "Thomas Crich died slowly, terribly slowly" (p. 362). In the way Gerald's going to Gudrun is described, it seems to be implied that he wants too much of her and has almost nothing to offer besides his money and his social position. He is completely "lost", childish, "blind to her, thinking only of himself" (371) and depending on her:

> "I care for nothing on earth, or in heaven, outside this spot where we are. And it isn't my own presence I care about, it is all yours. I'd sell my soul a hundred times-but I couldn't bear not to have you here. I couldn't bear to be alone. My brain would burst. It is true."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 372)

What happens on the night of his father's death is going to be his next step in the direction of his own death. The first one had been his dedication to the machine world. In a previous chapter, he had a dialogue with Birkin in which he had already talked about the place of work in his life:

> 'Tell me,' said Birkin. 'What do you live for?'
> Gerald's face went baffled.
> 'What do I live for?' he repeated. 'I suppose I live to work, to produce something, in so far as I am a purposive being. Apart from that, I live because I am living.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 61)

The second is his turning to Gudrun. He sought her because he was "deeply, and coldly, frightened in his soul" (381), because he needed her, not specifically because he

loved her. It was "a fixed idea" and he had decided "not to go back" even "if it cost him his life" (382).

> "He set off walking straight across the fields towards Beldover. It was so dark, nobody could ever see him. His feet were wet and cold, heavy with clay. But he went on persistently, like a wind, straight, forward, as if to his fate."
>
> (*Women in Love*. pp. 382-3)

It is a bad omen that before he comes to her he is impregnated with the deadened "scent of chrysanthemums and tuberoses" at his father's grave and there was clay on his boots and his trousers:

> 'You are so muddy,' she said in distaste, but gently.
> He looked down at his feet
> 'I was walking in the dark' - he replied.
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 387)

It is quite different from the first union of Birkin and Ursula which occurs in the open air--in Sherwood Forest--and "their happy awakening in the morning light after the discovery of each other in the darkness."[185] If we compare the description of the two first "coming together" it is easy to compare the difference in style and, consequently, in the mood of these passages:

> Ursula and Birkin:
> "They slept the chilly night through under the hood of the car, a night of unbroken sleep. It was already high day when he awoke. They looked at each other and laughed, then looked away, filled with darkness and secrecy. Then they kissed and remembered the magnificence of the night. It was so magnificent, such

[185] George Ford, *Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 209.

> an inheritance of a universe of dark reality, that they were afraid to seem to remember."[186]
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 361)

> Gerald and Gudrun:
> "She wished his warm, expressionless beauty did not so fatally put a spell on her, compel her and subjugate her. It was a burden upon her, that she resented, but could not escape. Yet when she looked at his straight man's brows, and at his rather small, well-shaped nose, and at his blue, indifferent eyes, she knew her passion for him was not yet satisfied, perhaps never could be satisfied. Only now she was weary, with an ache like nausea. She wanted him gone."[187]
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 393)

Hough calls attention to the fact that Lawrence has usually preached that "the negation of consciousness, the reassertion of pure sensuality is the only escape from the hard --shelled separateness of modern civilization."[188] This escape had been tried by the Brangwen farmers in *The Rainbow* and it is the state through which the miners (in Lawrence's writing, since *Sons and Lovers*) live. But this is not going to function in Gerald and Gudrun's relationship because they are both afraid of being "unconscious:" "One must be cautious. One must preserve oneself," (393) that is what Gudrun thinks. While Birkin and Ursula submit to the mystery of otherness to achieve peace,"[189] Gudrun and Gerald try to dominate each other, and this eventually leads him to death. Gudrun could not give

[186] Italics mine.

[187] Italics mine.

[188] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 80.

[189] Keith Sagar, *The Art of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 93.

Gerald abandonment because she was afraid that he could "destroy" her. But at the end she survives while Gerald only finds his "freedom" in death. As I have said before, Gerald has been compared to George Saxton and Skrebensky. They have all been "defeated" by their women. What do they have in common which lead them to these failures? With George Gerald has in common his dependence upon a woman in order to be fulfilled. They are not complete in themselves. Like George, Gerald had tried to find in material and mechanical success a way to fulfill his life. They have both tried to deny the importance of feelings in their lives and, when they discover that they need love but are not able to give or to receive it, they succumb. Like Skrebensky, Gerald is a victim of the system of which they are representatives. They are both unfree, limited to their social values and, perhaps, not strong enough to win the "battle" with their women. It also could be that, as we have suggested in Walter Morel's case,[190] Gudrun was not the right woman for Gerald, and vice-versa:

> "Gerald conventionally successful, conventionally effective, yet divided from his own inner being, ultimately fighting and destroying himself; Gudrun a born free-lance, outside society, yet too assertive and self-conscious ever to find real rest, real self-forgetfulness..."[191]

If we accept the premise that Gerald is the embodiment of the values of the industrial society,[192] his death can

[190] In the opposite way, of course, because Gerald has the money and "education" Mrs Morel lacks in Walter Morel, while he lacks the "warmth" and spontaneity that Morel had.

[191] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p.80.

[192] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 112.

symbolize Lawrence's belief in the rotteness and decadence of the entire "social , intellectual and technological civilization with which he is identified."[193] Lawrence has many times been accused of being a fascist and Gerald is clearly, a fascistic type, but, by "killing" him, Lawrence shows his disbelief in the efficacy of power.[194]

Lawrence also believes that intellectual knowledge is another means of depersonalizing people. In the same way that Lawrence criticizes the "social equality of men" defended by the liberal intellectuals such as Sir Joshua Mallesson ("The great social idea, said Sir Joshua, was the social equality of men", p. 114), he also criticizes the ideas of equality of spirit presented by Hermione ("If, said Hermione at last, we could only realize that in the spirit we are all one, all equal in the spirit, all brothers there--the rest wouldn't matter, there would be no more of this carping and envy and this struggle for power, which destroys, only destroys.", p. 115) and those embodied by the habitués of the Café Pompadour or those which are represented by artists such as Loerke. In a way or another, all of those people have all sold their souls to the great iron system. Lawrence presents them as being all "dead," like the system to which they had given themselves. Hermione Roddice, "full of intellectuality and heavy-worn with consciousness" (p. 17) is "a medium for the culture of ideas (p. 17) but her love for knowledge is what "kills" her:

[193] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 105.

[194] According to Ford in his *Double Measure: A Study of the Novels of D.H.Lawrence*, Gerald's "suicide is one of those instances of an effective finale which the reader feels is appropriate to the character's situation and state of mind." (p. 214).

> "She was apt, mentally, to condescend to women such as Ursula, whom she regarded as purely emotional. Poor Hermione, it was her one possession, this aching certainty of hers, it was her only justification. She must be confident here, for God knows, she felt rejected and deficient enough elsewhere. In the life of thought, of the spirit, she was one of the elect. And she wanted to be universal. But there was a devastating cynicism at the bottom of her. She did not believe in her own universals--they were sham. She did not believe in the inner life--it was a trick not a reality. She did not believe in the spiritual world--it was an affectation. In the last resort, she believed in Mammon, the flesh, and the devil--these at least were not sham. She was a priestess without belief, without conviction, suckled in a creed outworn, and condemned to the reiteration of mysteries that were not divine to her. Yet there was no escape. She was a leaf upon a dying tree. What help was there then, but to fight still for the old, withered truths, to die for the old, outworn belief, to be a sacred and inviolate priestess of desecrated mysteries? The old great truths had been true. And she was a leaf of the old great tree of knowledge that was withering now."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 329)

According to Daleski, Hermione's attack on Birkin is not only an extension of her desire to kill, but it also represents the "inherent destructiveness of the world in which she lives."

Loerke, the German sculptor, with whom Gudrun betrays Gerald is a symbolic figure, a "dwarflike" figure, embodying in "his obscene propensities all that is repulsive in the dying civilization that this book portrays." He takes Gudrun from Gerald and shares a part in Gerald's "murder." He does so by offering Gudrun her escape "in new forms of sensual abstraction, from obscene mockery of all human achievement to a theory of utter divorcement of art from life":

> 'And do you think then,' said Gudrun, 'that art should serve industry?'
> 'Art should interpret industry as art once interpreted religion,' he said.
> 'But does your fair interpret industry?' she asked him.
> 'Certainly. What is man doing when he is at a fair like this? He is fulfilling the counterpart of labour--the machine works him instead of he the machine. He enjoys the mechanical motion in his own body.'
> 'But is there nothing but work--mechanical work?' said Gudrun.
> 'Nothing but work!' he repeated, leaning forward, his eyes two darkenesses, with needle-points of light. 'No, it is nothing but this, serving a machine, or enjoying the motion of a machine-motion, that is all. You have never worked for hunger, or you would know what god governs us.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 477)

Under different points of view, Loerke's acceptance of the idea that in the triumph of the machine is implied "the reduction of human life to mere instrumentality"[195] is the same as Gerald's but both Gerald and Birkin dislike him, "Gerald because he destroys his dreams, Birkin because he denies new ones":[196]

> 'What do the women find so impressive in that little brat?' Gerald asked.
> 'God alone knows,' replied Birkin, 'unless it's some sort of appeal he makes to them, which flatters them and has such a power over them.'
> Gerald looked up in surprise.
> 'Does he make an appeal to them?' he asked.
> 'Oh, yes,' replied Birkin. 'He is the perfectly subjected being, existing almost like a criminal. And the women rush towards that, like a current of air towards a vacuum.'
> 'Funny they should rush to that,' said

[195] F.R.Leavis, *D.H.Lawrence Novelist*, p. 203.

[196] Mary Freeman, *D.H.Lawrence: A Basic Study of His Ideas*, p. 68.

> Gerald.
> 'Makes one mad, too,' said Birkin.
> 'But he has the fascination of pity and repulsion for them, a little obscene monster of the darkness that he is.
> (*Women in Love*, pp.480-1)

Gudrun however was fascinated by him, "fascinated as if some strange creature, a rabbit or a bat, or a brown seal, had begun to talk to her." (p. 480):

> "It was curious, too, how his poverty, the degradation of his earlier life, attracted her. There was something insipid and tasteless to her in the idea of a gentleman, a man who had gone the usual course through school and university. A certain violent sympathy, however, came up in her for this mud-child. He seemed to be the very stuff of the underworld of life. There was no going beyond him.
> (*Women in Love*, p. 480)

"Ursula too was attracted by Loerke" (p. 480) but this attraction is always mixed with repulsion or anger as appears in their discussion about the statuette of the girl and the horse:

> "The horse is a picture of your own stock, stupid brutality."
> (*Women in Love*, p. 485)

But Loerke and Gudrun "were almost of the same ideas" (p. 504) and it is interesting to analyse their "sentimental, childish pleasure in the achieved perceptions of the past" (p. 509). Gerald, being a representative of contemporary civilization, represents the present. Birkin, denying the past and not accepting the present, escapes from them both in the direction of the future while Gudrun and Loerke, "repelled by the world of usurping 'idea' and will with its triumphs of automatism and mechanical order, can both only react to the

other extreme, or cultivate the finished perfections of the past in a subtler denial of creative life in the present":[197]

> "They played with the past, and with the great figures of the past, a sort of little game of chess, or marionettes, all to please themselves. They had all the great men for their marionettes, and they two were the God of the show, working it all. As for the future, that they never mentioned except one laughed out some mocking dream of the destruction of the world by a ridiculous catastrophe of man's invention: a man invented such a perfect explosive that it blew the earth in two, and the two halves set off in different directions through space, to the dismay of the inhabitants: or else the people of the world divided into two halves, and each half decided it was perfect and right, the other half was wrong and must be destroyed; so another end of the world. Or else, Loerke's dream of fear, the world went cold, and snow fell everywhere, and only white creatures, Polar bears, white foxes, and men like awful white snow-birds, persisted in ice cruelty.
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 509-10)

If we go back to the other novels analysed in this dissertation, say *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* we see the importance setting has played in the development of their plot and how it was, in each novel, more or less divided into rural and urban, with the predominance of the rural scenes. Even when the characters of those novels exchange the country life for the urban environment they are always rooted emotionally in their land. Another aspect to be considered in each of the earlier novels is the fact that the setting is not so diversified as it is in *Women in Love*. In this novel there is a "locative structural principle" since each

[197] F.R.Leavis, *D.H.Lawrence Novelist*, p. 206.

place is a representative unit in the social organism. Beldover, Ursula and Gudrun's home, is inspired by Eastwood: Strelley Mill in *The White Peacock*, the Bottoms in *Sons and Lovers* and Marsh Farm, in *The Rainbow*. The Crich's home, Shortlands, is the home of industry as Wiggiston had been in *The Rainbow*; Breadalby, Hermione's country house represents the "dead" house of "knowledge" in the same way that the Café Pompadour is the headquarters of London bohemians. Besides these places, all important in relation to particular themes developed in *Women in Love*, we still have the Tyrolese hostel where the major characters of the novel have their lives changed.

An atmosphere of corruption permeates each environment presented in *Women in Love*. Lawrence's intention is clearly to show that the death of a whole society[198] comprises economic, social and cultural as well as personal decadence.

It is interesting to observe that the novel opens with the description of Beldover, a mining world, as it occurs in the beginning of *Sons and Lovers*. So, the opening of *The White Peacock* is a picture of a rural setting, while *Sons and Lovers* pictures the mining scene in its early pages; *The Rainbow*, in its initial pages, carries the reader back again to the beautiful world of pastoral England, represented by Marsh Farm but, in *Women in Love*, this world has already been replaced by the "replica of the real world" (p. 12) which Beldover represents. The place exerts an strange kind of attraction-

[198] Important to remember that in Lawrence's fiction, "society" is, in general, identified with Twentieth Century industrial England.

repulsion in Gudrun.[199] At the same time that it "fills her with repulsion" (p. 12) she suffers from the fascination of it:

> 'It is like a country in an underworld,' said Gudrun. 'The colliers bring it above-ground with them, shovel it up. Ursula, it's marvellous, it's really marvellous--it's really wonderful, another world. The people are all ghouls, and everything is ghostly. Everything is a ghoulish replica of the real world, a replica, a ghoul, all soiled, everything sordid. It's like being mad, Ursula.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 12)

It may be that Gudrun finds it so "marvellous" and "wonderful" because its ugliness and sordidness has found home in her but, Ursula, who had already experienced this "ugliness" in the world of Wiggiston colliery, in *The Rainbow*, only feels repulsion to it:

> "She clung to Ursula, who, through long usage, was inured to this violation of a dark, uncreated, hostile world. But all the time her heart was crying, as if in the midst of some ordeal: 'I want to go back, I want to go away, I want not to know it, not to know that this exists."
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 13)

We have already discussed Shortlands when we described Gerald. In spite of being introduced, in the chapter which has the same name of "Shortlands", as "picturesque" and "very peaceful," peace is not exactly the thing we are going to find in the hearts of the people who inhabit it. Far from this, the house is impregnated with an atmosphere of death. Besides the brother Gerald had

[199] A kind of feeling which, even when Lawrence is being more critical about industrialism, he could not deny.

accidentaly killed when he was a boy, and the accident described in the "Water-Party" chapter, there is his father's illness and subsequent death:

> 'There's one thing about our family, you know,' he continued. 'Once anything goes wrong, it can never be put right again--not with us. I've noticed it all my life--you can't put a thing right, once it has gone wrong.'
>
> (*Women in Love*, p. 206)

The Bohemian chapters describe the "degenerate" intellectual people which stay at the Café Pompadour: there is an atmosphere of decadence, a rage to destroy and to be destroyed, a failure to live a meaningful life. The rottenness of London Bohemian which these chapters reveal is, in Daleski's words, just "an instance of the general rottenness in the state of England. To move from the Pompadour to Breadalby, for example, is to move to a different world, but the smell of putrefaction is the same."[200] It is not by chance that the Alps,[201] the distant mountains, where the story has its climax, is a "cold", "white" place. Gerald is a symbol of the "white

[200] H.M.Daleski, *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 137.

[201] "The scenes in snow valley constitute the most brilliant writing that Lawrence ever did, and some of the finest writing in the history of the English novel as well. The valley is a real place and simultaneously, a symbol of fate for both Gerald Crich and civilized society. Throughout the novel, his fairness and whiteness have been repeatedly emphasized and associated with the inhuman purity of his social ideas. Here where his vitality is at last to be bled white and empty by Gudrun's hatred, the mathematically perfect forms of snow flakes, composing a chaos of white,mock him and his concepts of fulfillment. It is a world all in one mode, a world without conflict or relief. Gerald as skier, as "snow-demon" is perfectly adapted to it and finally fuses with it when is being comes crashing down in "sheer nothingness" after Gudrun removes the last prop." (Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 86).

races" and when he dies in those icy mountains "it is suggested that the entire civilization with which he is identified dies with him."[202]

The theme that roots give stability has, in *Women in Love*, its final support. In this novel the characters "are no longer rooted in any settled ground."[203] In *The Rainbow* the farm used to serve as a point of reference to prevent characters from being completely "lost" in the modern world. But, in *Women in Love*, they are all emancipated, uprooted, some walking toward death, some moving toward an unknown future.

The prophetic note of hope embodied in the end of *The Rainbow* has not materialized in *Women in Love*. Lawrence has here ultimately suggested that if one "embraces the social destiny offered by industrial Western society in the early twentieth century one embraces his own dying."[204] He shows all the sadness that arises from the fact that men, who had been the creator of the machine is now its slave. And, at the end of the book we are left wondering if Ursula and Birkin's discovery of each other and their journey towards the "future" mean that the way to salvation could be found only outside any given social context, or if it only implies Lawrence's failure to solve the problems of the civilization he has analysed. I rather agree with Frank Kermode when he says that *Women in Love* "ends without ending" which means that, in spite of the

[202] Baruch Hochman, *Another Ego: The Changing View of Self and Society in the Work of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 114.

[203] Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence*, p. 76.

[204] Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life*, p. 88.

pessimistic mood of the novel, in its final pages Lawrence leaves open Ursula and Birkin's fate as if to suggest that now that civilization has undergone a whole process of disintegration; it will be possible that, through the waters of this "dark river of dissolution," this couple, like the passengers of Noah's Ark,[205] could arrive at another Promised Land and find another "silver river of life" where everything could be started again:

> "There's somewhere where we can be free--somewhere where one needn't wear much clothes--none even--where one meets a few people who have gone through, and can take things for granted--where you can be yourself, without bothering. There is somewhere."
> (*Women in Love*, p. 356).

[205] One of the titles Lawrence considered for *Women in Love*.

CONCLUSION

> Oh great god of the machine
> what lousy archangels and angels you have to surround
> yourself with
> And you can't possibly do without them!
> D.H.Lawrence, "Oh Wonderful Machine!"

As I come to this conclusion I hope I have demonstrated, through the development of each chapter, what I have myself proposed to show in this dissertation: that Lawrence was, first and foremost a bitter oponent of industrialism. He believed, as other writers had done before him, that "progress" is an evil--even if it is a necessary evil--which has helped to destroy nature, and has mechanized and brutalized man.

The previous chapter on *Women in Love* has, to a certain extent, performed the role of a kind of conclusion to this dissertation because my intention was to present the theme in a crescendo so that the last chapter on the novels could well represent the last word on what I have to say about Lawrence's idea that industrialism could be responsible for the state of decadence of the modern world.

Throughout this dissertation I have tried to whow that Lawrence's hatred of industrialism increased with age and experience. At the same time I have tried to analyse the motives responsible for the changes operated in Lawrence's view

of the world. In relation to this aspect, it seems to me that the influence of Lawrence's early environment can be said to be prominent in his hatred of modern society. The fact that he was born in Eastwood and that he was son of a miner and an educated, middle-class woman, has greatly influenced the shaping of his social ideas. The contrast between the country he knew in his childhood and the industrial environment in which he lived later, makes him aware of the evils of industrialism. In each novel analysed here, the awareness of this problem is reflected in his images, in his treatment of settings, and in the way his characters are affected by "the great iron system."

But whichever way we approach Lawrence, it is possible to detect his own contradictions. It is difficult to find a definite answer to most of the questions about his social thought because, in his social concepts, as in almost everything else, Lawrence's ideas are contradictory: he is unstable about politics; sometimes he is called "the prophet of the Midlands" and yet, he could not be considered a fully commited artist; he hates the machine and yet he is undoubtedly attracted to it, he believes society is dead and yet he still believes in regeneration; finally, he preaches he loves "common people" but he is apparently fascinated by higher social or economic classes.

He may not have been convincing as a prophet, but he was surely able to show us how harmful "progress" has been, how the desire to get money and success is insatiable, how competition has replaced warmth in human relationships, and how the sense of not belonging--a psychological implication of industrialism--has generated many of the frustrations and inner conflicts of modern man.

Sometimes Lawrence seems to be a dreamer, unable to face reality as it is, but, above all, he seems capable of still believing in man's capacity for regeneration which is the predominant theme of his later novels. As Eliseo Vivas points out, without him, "we would be likely to be blind to the specific process of disintegration of which we are victims."[206]

This process of disintegration has been fully described from the very first attempt in *The White Peacock*; then it has been barely touched in *Sons and Lovers*; next it has received full treatment in *The Rainbow* to be, at last, the central focus of *Women in Love*. Side by side with it, there is a subtle suggestion of a growing sense of perversity first presented in a concentrated form in the unhappy episode of Annable, the gamekeeper, the unwilling victim of his first wife and the social stones of prejudice. Annable's brief interlude contrasts sharply with George's slow process of decline and deterioration--a technique that is developed further in William's brief life and tragic death as contrasted with Paul's slow and painful process of maturing in *Sons and Lovers*. But the social theme is really central in the three generations of the Brangwens in *The Rainbow*.

Later on perversity is not only hinted at, but it is fully presented in characters such as Tom Brangwen and Winifred Inger in *The Rainbow*, and it is finally juxtaposed in the central quartet of *Women in Love*, in which deterioration and perversity take over the fate of Gudrun and Gerald, and in Birkin and Ursula's union. Apparently

206 Eliseo Vivas, *The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, p. 272.

Lawrence suggests that almost no one can escape the world of machines and the evils of deterioration and perversity--not even love itself. But that has been Lawrence's main message from the days of the Beardsalls to the times of the Brangwens--the other half of the rainbow always lies hid in the mud and misery of the mechanical world of men and it is most of the times invisible to the ordinary man. Only prophets and poets, like Lawrence, see it, and reveal it to the world at large.

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