

A Victorian Extension of *Sons and Lovers*: a Marxist Perspective

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Abstract:

*D. H. Lawrence is one of the most controversial writers in the modern period of English literature. His political stance in his works and place in the literary canon were an issue of great debate and conflict. There are various ideas about his position on the political spectrum. He is positioned around the far-left. He is also viewed as a moralist. As to the literary canon, he is located as a modern writer although his writings bear different characteristics from those of other modernist writers. Considering these issues, this article will problematize Lawrence's complicated position in the literary canon and unearth his political stance in *Sons and Lovers*. In this respect, firstly, *Sons and Lovers* will be analyzed from a Marxist humanist point of view. Secondly, some concepts like industrialism, capitalism, materialism, reification, monotony, victimization, alienation among family members and petty-bourgeois tendencies of the characters will be investigated. Thirdly, disintegration of the institution of the family substantially caused by industrialism and its extensions will be studied. And finally, Lawrence will be positioned as a writer in-between Victorian and Modern Periods and relocated as a reactionary writer whose morality norms indeed belong to petty-bourgeois conception of the world.*

Key words: D. H. Lawrence, Relocation, Alienation, Disintegration, Bourgeois Morality

D. H. Lawrence (1885 – 1930) is one of the most significant

representatives of the twentieth century English literature. He is a novelist, a short story writer and a playwright as well. However, M. Elizabeth Sargent and Garry Watson argue that besides being a novelist, Lawrence "was also both a critic and a theorist of the novel" and six of his significant essays were collected in the Cambridge *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* (Sargent and Watson 2001, 410). Although he is considered to be a modern novelist he is one of the most controversial writers of his period. His political stance in his works and place in the literary canon becomes an issue of great debate and conflict. It is not possible to locate him in the mainstream high modern wave due to the values he represents in his writing style. Thematic and formal characteristics in his fiction bear different features from those of the highly symbolic modern writers such as Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad and James Joyce. Lawrence does not make use of stream of consciousness, interior monologue or multiple narrative points of view in his novel. However, he uses a highly symbolic language and style which is directly connected with the social reality. Although Lawrence creates alienated individuals and focuses on their social, spiritual and personal collapse, he does not break away from the grand narratives or reject standard/traditional thoughts and ideas. Instead, he puts the blame on industrialism and capitalism's defeating, alienating and disintegrating forces for creating alienated individuals, disintegrated families and monotonous lives. Lawrence criticizes industrialism and its mechanizations in *Sons and Lovers* in a Dickensian manner and embraces some moral norms like conservation of the institution of family in Victorian Period and writes like a Victorian novelist.

F. R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* elucidates that Lawrence is a moralist who made use of art and turned it into a kind of instrument. To Leavis, Lawrence's moral seriousness and artistic integrity is found in much of his fiction and his fiction can be placed within the canonical great tradition of

English novel (Leavis 1950, 225-35). In fact, Lawrence is more “concerned with morality” and social realism (Childs 2008, 21). As Sargent and Watson claim Lawrence is committed to ethics and politics in his fiction as a requisite as he explores “the reality of otherness” (411). David. J. Gordon and Eliseo Vivas agree with Leavis and indicate that the real concern of Lawrence’s works and literary criticism lies in his art related with the concept of morality, not with his artistry (qtd. in Montgomery 1994, 2-3). E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* points out that Lawrence can be categorized as a prophetic novelist along with Dostoevsky and Melville (144). In this broad spectrum this paper will question Lawrence’s complicated position in the literary canon and locate Lawrence as a writer extending Victorian Period to the Modern.

Lawrence is a controversial figure and has been located in the canon from many perspectives. In the literary canon, he has never been regarded as a reactionary writer who belongs to petit bourgeois culture. However, some critics like Terry Eagleton and John R. Harrison briefly focused on the conservative side of Lawrence. For example, Eagleton in *Criticism and Ideology* argues that Lawrence has both an idealized version of bourgeois individualism and a so-asserted revolutionary protest against class-divided society. On the one hand he rejects the atomistic, mechanistic ideologies of industrial capitalism and on the other hand he interiorizes the values of bourgeois tradition (Eagleton 1976, 157). Similarly, Harrison discusses that Lawrence hated industrialism and modern civilization just because industrial society destroyed old relations among human beings (Harrison 1966, 169).

In this respect, the primary aim of this paper is to resolve the complexity related with Lawrence’s position in the literary canon and unearth his reactionary stance belonging to petit bourgeois culture in *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Until now the novel has been analyzed from diverse perspectives ranging from psychoanalytical (Moynahan 1963), ecocritical (Pissarello

2011), humanistic (Oliboni 1968) to feminist (Ray 2002), autobiographical (Tedlock 1963) and Marxist (Sagar 1966) approaches. In order to enrich these arguments and contribute to them, the secondary aim of the paper is to analyze *Sons and Lovers* from a Marxist humanist approach. Especially, the main focus will be to bring out the workings of the industrial system triggering alienation of the individuals, disintegration of family and debunking traditional norms by creating an illusion, namely false consciousness.

Marxist humanism is a branch of Marxism focusing on Marx's early writings like his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1884*. It defines itself in opposition to objectivist inclinations in the social theories. Marxist humanists reject the objectivist tendencies in historical materialism in which the agent of history is not seen as human beings but laws of history and means of production. They focus on human agency and subjectivity against structuralist interpretations of social theory (Dunayevskaya 1965). In this reading some concepts like Marxist alienation, self-actualization and disintegration will be investigated along with the relationships between Marxism, morality and the institution of family. Although the language of *Sons of Lovers* will be studied to uncover these problematic of the industrial system, structure will not be at the forefront as applied in structuralism. Hence, Lawrence's novel will not be examined as an object isolated for inspection in a deterministic way reducing it into a kind of aesthetic game.

At this point it is significant to refer to the historical and cultural background of *Sons and Lovers* to understand Lawrence's stance in the novel. The novel was written at the turn of the century when British Empire was a huge and great empire militarily and industrially. In the empire, there were many factories, and energy for these factories came from coal. Similarly, a great many big industries were founded before the close of the nineteenth century, and coal fields along with iron fields in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire were discovered.

People working in mine-pits were living near these areas, and dust along with grime became part of their lives. In addition, they were generally in pubs to relive and to get rid of anxiety in their lives (Poplaswki 1996, 126).

Those scenes from British society at that time are well matched with *Sons and Lovers*. In fact, even the second paragraph of the novel provides us with an account of the emergence of big industrialists as if it were a historical text. That is, these judgments “come to us neutral, as history, free (as far as anything ever is) of value-judgment” (Shrubb 1980-1981, 89) and inform us about happenings. As Lawrence elucidates:

Then, some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers. The coal and iron field of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was discovered. Carston, Waite and Co. appeared. Amid tremendous excitement, Lord Palmerston formally opened the company’s first mine at Spinney Park, on the edge of Sherwood Forest. (7)

There are also a number of coal mines in the novel, and it is possible to come across with various local place names. These place names along with the names of local coal mines virtually correspond with real names in British Empire during that period. According to Pissarello, these fictional names which are “Carston, Waite and Co.” probably have a factual background. These names bear some similarities with some company names, “B.W. & Co.”, which Lawrence remembers from his childhood (Pissarello 2011, 34). In this context, Poplawski emphasizes this parallelism between coal mines in the novel and actual coal mines of the time:

The various coal mines that feature in the novel are easily identifiable as actual mines of the time (e.g., "Beggarlee" is Brinsley pit, and "Minton" is Moor Green colliery). Other fictional re-creations of local places are "Aldersley" (Annesley), "Keston" (Kimberley), "Lethley Bridge" (Langley Mill), and "Shepstone" (Shipley). Actual place-names of many other

places in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire are used, for example, Nottingham and Derby themselves, Ripley, Heanor, Ilkeston, Southwell, Crich, Whatstandwell, Ambergate. Further afield, Sheffield, Lincoln, and, on the Lincolnshire coast, Skegness, Mablethorpe, and Theddlethorpe appear, as do, more briefly, the Isle of Wight and London. (Poplawski 1996, 167)

Through these promoters of industrial progress, Lawrence aims at stressing the fact that industrialism defaced the rural landscape as a consequence of new pits. However, the worst destruction is imposed on the individuals as *Sons and Lovers* will exemplify.

In Lawrence's novel, symbols and metaphors are crucial since they function to reveal a reality and a fact in an objective and neutral way. Trying to attain the deeper meanings of these symbols help us find "the dichotomy of appearance and substance" in the novel through which Lawrence criticizes industrialism and its extensions (Pissarello 2011, 34). In fact, Lawrence's symbolic and metaphorical language introduces us to the novel even in the first paragraph:

"The Bottoms" succeeded to "Hell Row." Hell Row was a block of thatched, bulging cottages that stood by the brook-side on Greenhill Lane. There lived the colliers who worked in the little gin-pits two fields away. The brook ran under the alder-trees, scarcely soiled by these small mines, whose coal was drawn to the surface by donkeys that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin. 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-fields and the meadows. And the cottages of these coalminers, in blocks and pairs here and there, together with odd farms and homes of the stockings, straying over the parish, formed the village of Bestwood. (1)

Lawrence's descriptions of the landscape and neighborhood in

this paragraph function to suggest a doom and dark atmosphere. His “obvious symbolism provided by the blackness of coal and the grey of ash pits helps to conjure up the appropriate atmosphere for the story narrated in the novel, to suggest the doom impending both on protagonist’s lives and the countryside” (Pissarello 2011, 34). In order to deduce the importance of this quotation, symbolic meanings of these residential area names of the coal miners should be discussed because Lawrence’s “distinctive use of imagery carries a great deal of the novel’s significance” (Sagar 1966, 19). By describing the names of the housing of the miners and making use of some adjectives like “thatched” and “bulging” (1), Lawrence indicates the awful impact of industrialism upon the life conditions of the working-class people. Likewise, “donkey” metaphor in this paragraph is of significance since it symbolizes brutalization and animalization of coal miners who are working “like ants” in a mechanical and alienated way under industrialism. Disturbance of natural order suggested by unnatural changes in the landscape that had been going on since the regime of Charles II, another historical fact in the novel, is also spotted by “queer mounds and little black places among the corn-fields and the meadows” (1). A similar statement is also given by Pissarello:

The landscape in the novel was at the beginning almost unaltered by the little gin-pits so that “the brook ran under the alder trees, scarcely soiled by these small mines” . . . Then, “a sudden change took place”, a change that seemingly meant progress, since many new mines were initiated and the railway ran across the valley and the corn field and up to the hills. (Pissarello 2011, 34)

It is clearly seen that Lawrence has an affinity to Victorian writing in his novel as he depicts the machines of industrialism and their impacts upon common people. In his fiction, machine is generally represented by pits. In a wider sense, pits in his literary works are an emblematic connotation of the whole

modern and industrial civilization along with their organizations and institutions. In this way, Lawrence criticizes “the impersonality of the machine and its uncomplicated existence” (Harrison 1966, 173).

Another symbolic imagery employed for colliers’ housing and accommodation is developed through the dichotomy of appearance and substance. That is, the real life conditions of the miners are different from what they are running through in reality. This is revealed by Lawrence in a subtle and witty way as such:

The dwelling-room, the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scrubby back garden, and then at the ash-pits. And between the rows, between the long lines of ash-pits, went the alley, where the children play and the women gossiped and the men smoked. So, the actual conditions of life 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. (8)

In this paragraph, rooms of the houses in “The Bottoms”, which have an unpromising name, are depicted. Then, the difference between the appearance of these houses and the real life conditions are revealed to be disparate. According to E. P. Shrubbs in his article “Reading *Sons and Lovers*”, through this paragraph,

we are presented with the contrast between the prettiness of the fronts and the ugliness of the backs, a contrast there is no apparent hope of making a hole of. The brook and the pit seem to have parted company; industrialism in making, in what was once a whole world, its own world, and that is the world in which men, women and children now live. (Shrubbs 1980-1981, 90)

In that world, which now belongs to industrialism, people from working-class seem to be enjoying their lives since they perpetuate their daily activities like gossiping and smoking. If

this is taken into account, it is plainly spotted that working-class people are running through an illusion, a false-consciousness process. As a result of this process, they cannot be aware of the dichotomy of appearance and substance, cannot act against it and become a cog in this machine. Eventually they are passivized and lead a monotonous life.

In a similar way, another example for the dichotomy of appearance and substance is viewed in the part in which Lawrence describes the houses of the miners as pleasant and well-organized on the outside, with flowers in the front:

The houses themselves were substantial and very decent. One could walk all round, seeing little front gardens with auriculas and saxifrage in the shadow of the bottom block, sweet-williams and pinks in the sunny top; seeing neat front windows, little porches, little privet hedges, and dormer windows for the attics. (8)

All these beauties and picturesqueness function as a kind of façade through which the real life experiences of the coal mines are covered up and swept under the carpet. Yet, hiding the unresolved issues piles up and causes bigger problems such as alienation and disintegration of family. There is one more point about neatness and well-organization of these houses. This is associated with the mechanization of these people and disciplining them who are identified with the machines in the industrial system. While Lawrence describes the Bottoms, he identifies it with a structure similar to a military building: “The Bottoms consisted of six blocks of miners’ dwellings, two rows of three, like the dots on a blank-six domino, and twelve houses in a block” (8). Even the monotonous depictions of the sequences and structures of the houses reveal the mechanization of space and stereotypical working-class created by industrialism.

In this way, Lawrence emphasizes mechanization and monotony caused by industrialism. According to Lawrence, along with stripping humanity out of their emotional and creative impulses, industrialism also disturbs the institution of

family and makes morality suspicious and repulsive. To quote Lawrence, he alleges that “the bourgeoisie, with their greedy dead materialism, have made morality and family and affection and trust all suspicious and repulsive” (Lawrence, 1932: 836). This is primarily related with industrialism which produces fixed concepts “like fixed society, fixed homes, fixed money, and even fixed love” (Harrison 1966, 169).

Lawrence exemplifies the fixed and monotonous face of industrialism in the portrayal of spaces. Paul Morel’s first job interview is with Thomas Jordan at Jordan’s Surgical Appliances factory in Nottingham. Paul and Mrs. Morel travel together and their first impression of the factory is a “queer, dark and cardboard factory” (112). The scene is crucial as Morels encounter the dark and cruel face of industrialism:

They ventured under the archway, as into the jaws of the dragon. They emerged into a wide yard, like a well, with buildings all round. It was littered with straw and boxes, and cardboard. The sunshine actually caught one crate whose straw was streaming on to the yard like gold. But elsewhere the place was like a pit. (112)

The labyrinth like archway gives a feeling of entrapment and Lawrence aligns this factory with “the jaws of the dragon” and “a pit” (112). Paul and his mother experience the pit like interiors in each step they take. Strikingly, ascending the factory steps resembles to the ascent of a miner from pits. Similar to the mines, the sunshine creeps into the factory yard from a single opening. Except for that little beam the factory is dark and grim yet Paul is “so much stunned” (112). The limited gold-like glimmer does not bring prosperity to the laborers who experience the entrapment and imprisonment under the burden of industrialism. In this reading Paul is thrilled with the illusionary power the factory represents. This can be explained by the concepts of illusion and false-consciousness which are distorted perceptions of reality and its consequences can be seen in Friedrich Engel’s letter to Franz Mehring: “The real

motives impelling him remain unknown to him ... hence he imagines false or apparent motives” (Engels 1893: Par 4). As a result, Paul with the other followers of these moral codes and norms interiorize the class values of the ruling class and act in contradiction to their class interests and values.

Lawrence creates the illusionary face of the factory using the disparity between public and private space. While the yard, exterior of the factory is resembled to a dragon signifying the devouring trait of industrialism, Paul and his mother notice that the interior part of the factory is substantially different from the exterior as they step in the big warehouse:

She pushed open the door, and stood in pleased surprise. In front of her was a big warehouse, with creamy paper parcels everywhere, and clerks, with their shirt-sleeves rolled back, were going about in an at-home sort of way. The light was subdued, the glossy cream parcels seemed luminous, the counters were of dark brown wood. All was quiet and very homely. (113)

The comfortable, bright and homely interior of the factory where production takes place contrasts with the dark and dragon-like depiction of the exterior space. The system distorts the perception of the workers as the warehouse where all the products are kept, look orderly and homely. In this disparity Lawrence maintains the Victorian separation of spheres. Yet, the Victorian domestic space is carried into the factory as a simulated version to make the workers feel an illusionary comfort while they are producing. Hence, feeling at home is worthy of consideration because it is another symbol of false-consciousness as pointed out by Engels. As a consequence of this, working-class people internalize the values of bourgeoisies and cannot perceive the reality behind the simulated setting. Ironically, there are a great many references to workers’ feeling at home in factories due to the clash between private and public spaces as such:

So the time went along with happily enough. The factory had

a homely feel. No one was rushed or driven. Paul always enjoyed it when the work got faster, towards post-time, and all the men united in labor. He liked to watch his fellow-clerks at work. The man was at the work and the work was the man, one thing, for the time being. (133)

Another example in the novel related with false consciousness is through the kitchen motif. Although domestic space is created in the industrial space to make workers feel the comfort of their homes, the kitchen is intentionally created to increase productivity. In *Sons and Lovers*, Paul and Polly eat together in the kitchen instead of the dirty dungeon. Polly provides Paul with a sense through which Paul feels himself at home. In this respect, Polly reminds Paul of his mother's "proud and unyielding temper" (15). Once Paul enjoys the warmth of the kitchen, he identifies it with home and his adaptation to the factory life starts; "Polly...offers to cook [Paul] something on her little stove in her "pleasant clean room" (138) ... and Polly's homey "kitchen" eases considerably Paul's adjustment from Bestwood to Nottingham" (Rodden 2011, 36).

In this context, kitchen shadows out the concept of private sphere. When private sphere is provided in the factory in an illusionary way, workers harmonize themselves with the factory conditions easily. Furthermore, food and kitchen as indirect perceptions are important for the lives of miners because they prevent them to be aware of the brutal realities of industrialism; alienation, monotony and mechanization. Even if the kitchen of the miners opens onto ash-pits and they work in harsh conditions, they are indifferent to this fact. What is vital for them is to get enough and to be full up, and the role of the kitchens in this vicious circle is to secure this sense. On that account, Lawrence implicates the significance of the kitchens manipulated by the ruling class to create false-consciousness.

In addition to the kitchen motif, another factor for Paul's feeling at home in Jordan's factory is associated with his relationships to the other workers. These relationships

resemble Paul's relationships to family members. When these relationships are studied, it is seen that Paul's sense of home in the factory sphere is illusionary. He feels the warmth of home since the atmosphere in the factory and at home is alike. If this is to be detailed, some minor characters like Mr. Pappleworth, Mr. Jordan and Baxter Dawes should be analyzed. According to John Rodden in "Paul Morel's Second Home: The Role of the Factory Employees in *Sons and Lovers*", these minor characters, with symbolic importance, appear like a synthesis of his father and mother (Rodden 2011, 32). Thence, these characters remind Paul of his situation at home in a negative or a positive way and make him still recall home. For instance, physical appearance and some attitudes of Pappleworth, Paul's supervisor, reminds him of his father Walter Morel who

... works well particularly well with his hands, writing "the entry rapidly, in a beautiful flourishing hand" (130). Similarly, Morel daces "as if it were natural and joyous in him" (17). Morel also has a rich, ringing laugh and the "sensuous flame of life" (14); like Pappleworth's playful criticism of Paul's penmanship, Morel's humor is "soft, non-intellectual, warm, a kind of gamboling" (17). (Rodden 2011, 32)

Mr. Jordan is another character whom Paul identifies with his father. Indeed, according to Rodden, Paul's behavior towards Jordan is similar to his view of Mr. Morel that he had in his childhood. That is, Paul "hated the little man, who had made such a clod of him" (114). In addition, Paul thinks that Mr. Jordan is a workman like his father, insensitive and bull-headed. It is also seen that Paul does not like factory when he comes across with Jordan. In particular, Paul hates the factory when he connects factory and its owner with "dirtiness and impersonality and alienation" which is similar to the cases in which "young Paul associates his father with savagery and dehumanizing industrialism" (Rodden 2011, 34). As viewed in the example of Mr. Jordan, Paul cannot be happy when he comes across with his father: "The children, alone with their

mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything. Nothing had really taken place in them until it was told to their mother. Yet as soon as the father came in, everything stopped" (77).

Another character that reminds Paul of his parents is Baxter Dawes. The relationship between Paul and Baxter has seldom received critical attention, however this relationship is crucial (Rodden 2011, 35). Baxter is Paul's rival in terms of Clara's heart. A similar situation, from an Oedipal aspect, is viewed for Gertrude between Walter Morel and Paul. For example, the reaction of Paul to Baxter is similar to his ambivalent feelings towards his father after they had an argument in the pub: "Paul had a curious sensation of pity, almost of affection, mingled with a violent hate, for the man" (408). For that reason, even after this argument, Paul tries to reunite Baxter and Clara and succeeds in this. As argued by Rodden, this reunion symbolizes a kind of reconciliation that Paul wishes to achieve for his own mother and father (Rodden 2011, 35).

Paul's philosophy about work is related with the subordination of love and willingness to work which is initiated by his feeling the coziness of home within the factory. In fact, this kind of happiness associated with thrift and desire for fulfillment of duty is a characteristic of petty-bourgeois morality, and subsequently self-actualization process related with subservience is sustained. Therefore, it can be argued that Paul, who is also trying to achieve the social status of middle-class gentry, essentially belongs to a petty-bourgeois culture.

According to Marx, self-actualization is associated with human essence, which is actually related with human nature and found in the collective unconscious of human beings. The creation of physical items/objects is an instinct found in human beings and it leads to self-actualization since persons are motivated to create items which symbolize the meaningfulness of their lives. This process is also entitled as objectification of

labor in Marxist terminology: “The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor” (Marx 1844, 29). Men try to prove themselves through objects that they create through free and spontaneous activities. Actually, these objects are a kind of evidence for the self-actualization of their abilities and self-meaningfulness of their going-on lives. This object is, in a way, the only thing through which workers can get an opportunity to confirm the significance of their lives. Indeed, labor is a means to attain self-fulfillment so that they can be aware of their potentialities (Wood 2004, 22). However, “in its current form, it cripples all human faculties and enjoins satisfaction” (Marcuse 1968, 227), and it causes false-consciousness and alienation as expressed by Marx:

Under these economic conditions this realization of labor appears as loss of realization for the workers; objectification as loss of the object and bondage to it; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation... So much does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces the less he can possess and the more he falls under the sway of his product, capital. (Marx 1844, 29)

When self-actualization is hampered, man cannot develop and carry out his essential functions and capacities. Wood alleges that men “find themselves in conditions where their need for self-actualization is frustrated, where they are unable to develop and exercise their essential human capacities” (Wood 2004, 23). Hence, they are alienated to their natural functions, and “even pleasure and enjoyment change from conditions under which men freely develop their ‘universal nature’ into modes of ‘egoistic’ possession and acquisition” (Marcuse 1968, 228). This is why self-fulfillment and self-actualization are obstructed and alienation is experienced within industrialism and capitalism.

Lawrence illustrates the alienation process of workers in Paul’s instance. Paul receives an invitation letter from Jordan’s

factory with a satirical picture on it. It is “a picture of a wooden leg, adorned with elastic stockings and other appliances” (110). This letter seems “monstrous” to him since a business that could be “run on wooden leg” seems to be confusing and bewildering (111). Here, there is a clear association with “Walter’s breaking his leg in a mining accident in the same chapter” (Rodden 2011, 33). With this metaphor, Lawrence suggests that industrialism and capitalism run on shaky, insecure and wobbly grounds and are prone to collapse one day. In this way, Lawrence undermines and debunks the perception of the invincibility of industrialism. The wooden leg can be interpreted in different ways as well. In the eye of the employers, wooden leg is a symbol of the workers who are not strong and have the potential to fall off at any time. It also suggests that even if a leg is lost, it can be replaced with a fake one and production can still be perpetuated. In this example, Lawrence exemplifies how human values are corrupted and man is alienated to his “external nature and human aspect” under industrial capitalism (Marx 1844, 32).

The concept of alienation in Marxist terminology is pointed out in Karl Marx’s systematic theory of capitalism called “Marxist Alienation” in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. In this theory, Marx points out that people are doomed to be estranged from themselves and each other in capitalist industrial production. According to 1844 writings, there are four aspects of alienation. These are successively alienation to the product of work, to the working process, to human nature and alienation of man to man.

In the first type of estrangement, worker is alienated to the product/object of his labor. This is related with the fact that what is produced by worker is appropriated by the capitalist. That is, workers do not have the possibility of possessing or making use of things that they produce no matter how much they use their creative abilities: “The more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects

which he creates over and against himself, the poorer he himself – his inner world – becomes, the less belongs to him as his own” (Marx 1844, 29).

The second aspect of alienation is the process in which workers are estranged from the labor process. In this process, workers do not have a control over working conditions, working hours and how the work is organized. Everything related with work is determined, measured and laid out by property owners. At this point, the capacity of the workers is transformed into its opposite in which workers experience passivity, impotency, emasculation. Marx’s argument on this issue is as follows: “It is activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating, the worker’s *own* physical and mental energy, his personal life ... as an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him” (Marx 1844, 31).

The alienation of human beings to species being – human nature- is the third element of alienation. For human beings, labor is instinctually about satisfying a need in which human beings maintain their physical existence. This is a conscious life activity carried out voluntarily. However, there is a division of labor along with forced labor under capitalist production conditions, and this is opposed to men’s personal tendencies and collective interests. Man also proves himself to be a species-being as a result of his work upon the objective world. However, the instinct to create things as a spontaneous and free activity is transformed into an unfreely maintained activity under the service and dominion of another man – capitalist. For that reason, man is alienated to “his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his human aspect” (Marx 1844, 32).

Estrangement of man to man is the fourth and final aspect of alienation. This alienation occurs partly as a consequence of the antagonisms that take its source from the class structure of society. Therefore, we are initially estranged from those exploiting our labor and what we produce. Secondly,

we are alienated to each other since we can only know each other through the objects that we buy and consume. We are only connected to each other through those products (Cox 1998, 48). Instead of viewing each other “as fellow-men having equal rights”, we only see each other “as superiors or subordinates, as holders of a rank, as a small or large unit of power” (Fischer 1996, 63). We consider each other not “as individuals, but as extensions of capitalism” (Ollman 1996, 144). About this final phase of alienation, Marx accordingly states as such:

What applies to a man’s relation to his work, to the product of his labor and to himself, also holds of a man’s relation to the other man, and to the other man’s labor and object of labor. In fact, the proposition that man’s species-nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man’s essential nature. (Marx 1844, 32)

In fact, the estrangement of man to man is realized and expressed in Paul’s relationships with other characters. Estranged man under industrialism preferably cares only for his own interests and views others in accordance with his own standards and profits. As seen in the “wooden leg” metaphor, Paul and the other workers are alienated to their “external nature and human aspect” under industrial capitalist system. In addition to Paul, Gertrude is alienated to her husband and sons because of her materialist tendencies. These are examples for the third and fourth aspects of the alienation theory. In each case, individuals run through an estrangement process resulting in disintegration as will further be studied.

The third aspect of Marx’s alienation theory could also be applied to nature. In industrial systems rural landscapes change, pollution starts and human beings are alienated to the idyllic nature they once enjoyed. Lawrence’s language in the novel reveals such examples and reacts against the disastrous consequences of industrialism. For instance, Lawrence’s selection of a floral name, Morel, for the central characters in *Sons and Lovers* is not only because of his interest in botany

(Gillespie 1982) but also because of his criticism of industrialism. 'Morel' has two different meanings in Oxford dictionary. It corresponds to two types of plants which are successively mushrooms and nightshades. One of these morels is an edible and delicious mushroom which grows on burnt-out land, matures early in the spring and mushroom hunters tastefully search for. Morel is also the name of an edible nightshade which has hairy, poisonous foliage and white flowers (Gillespie 1982). Characters take comfort in living side by side with nature; however they are exposed to victimization and alienation caused by industrialism. In this reading, Morel family becomes a victim of industrialism just like morels in nature. For that reason, symbolic revelation of this floral imagery is crucial since Lawrence criticizes industrialism by means of nature images.

There are a great many parts of the novel in which we trace the fondness and closeness of Morel's family to nature. In one of these parts, the children of Morel family go out to hunt some mushrooms and to help their family economically:

While they were so poor, the children were delighted if they could do anything to help economically. Annie and Paul and Arthur went out early in the morning, in the summer, looking for mushrooms, hunting through the wet grass, from which the larks were rising, for the white-skinned, wonderful naked bodies crouched secretly in the green. And if they got half a pound they felt exceedingly happy: there was the joy of finding something, the joy of accepting something straight from the hand of Nature, and the joy of contributing to the family exchequer. (83)

The children of Morel family find peace in nature and feel substantially happy. They are not alienated to each other and not running through a mechanical life. They do not even have distorted relationships since everything is based on sincere and intimate grounds. Meanwhile, their individual identities are not lost. Through the hands of Nature, they denounce the

degrading and alienating impacts of coal-mines and industrialism. In a similar way, Gillespie in “Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*” alleges that

the relationship of children to the mushrooms ... reflects several of the novels major themes: the struggle to wrest sustenance from a hostile environment, the paradox of an object that provides nourishment and enjoyment while it is at the same time tinged by the threat of sickness and disease, and the importance of decision-making even in the most mundane of circumstances. (Gillespie 1982, 38)

Lawrence’s subtle use of morel image is powerful as it suggests the victimization and alienation process caused by industrialism. There is a similarity between the victimization of Morel family and nature by industrialism and Lawrence extends his critical attitude with further use of vivid imagery in *Sons and Lovers*. For example, Mrs. Morel has an intense argument with her husband, and she is forced to leave home. Then, she goes to the garden and tries to console herself there. In the garden, flowers shine with moonlight and Gertrude feels peaceful from then on: “She passed along the path, hesitating at the white rosebush. It smelled sweet and simple ... their fresh scent and cool, soft leaves reminded her of the morning-time and sunshine” (33). Mrs. Morel becomes happy only when she aligns herself with nature. In another instance, she enjoys serene, quiet and restful environment when she goes out and finds herself in nature since she is unable to endure her husband indoors:

With Mrs. Morel it was one of those still moments when the small frets vanish, and the beauty of things stands out, and she had the peace and the strength to see herself. Now and again, Annie came up with a handful of alder-currants. The baby was restless on his mother’s knee, clambering with his hands at the light. (46)

In this instance, Mr. Morel’s behaviors are seen as a reflection of the brutal and inhumane face of industrialism whereas Mrs.

Morel manifests herself as a symbol of nature. Mrs. Morel's escape from Mr. Morel lies in the alienated relationship with her husband.

The clash between nature and industrialism is further depicted in the love affairs of Paul. Miriam likes flowers in her garden and loves nature, and she is sensitive and very intense in certain times: "When she bent and breathed a flower, it was as if she and the flower were loving each other" (206). Paul and Miriam talk about daffodils and have a shared love towards natural life. They explore flowers and fields. After a while, Miriam becomes the artistic muse of Paul. As to Clara whom Paul meets through Miriam, she is cold, emotionally reserved and has a closed off appearance. She is also never seen together with other girls in the factory. However, Paul is physically attracted to Clara. In this instance, it is possible to state that Miriam is the symbol of pastoralism whereas Clara signifies industrialism. Paul finds peace and warmth when he is with Miriam but he is not able to find that emotional intimacy with Clara despite the fact that he is physically attracted to her. Paul's attachment to Clara is similar to Paul's devotion to the dark, grim yet stunning factory he experiences earlier in the novel (112). Yet, Lawrence underlines the fact that neither Miriam nor Clara is able to capture the heart of Paul. For that reason, Paul is stuck in between these two different worlds. There is a pastoral life on the one hand and there is a cold, dark future of industrialism on the other hand. Instead of giving himself over to either of these worlds, he walks through life in which he imagines to be beautiful and attractive as the end of *Sons and Lovers* reveals.

Meanwhile, it is also a striking detail that Clara, who is so-called reserved, superior and aligned with industrialism, is actually living in poverty. One day, Paul visits Clara in her home, and what he sees at home is really interesting since her home is similar to "nasty valley of ash-pits" nonetheless the fact that she has a "high and mighty" (306) appearance: "It was a

small, stuffy, defunct room, of mahogany, and deathly enlargements of photographs of departed people done in carbon” (306). In this instance the pretentious, alienating and impoverishing impacts of industrialism is seen upon the working-class. Although Clara seems to be tidy and reserved outside, she hides her real self behind a mask just like industrialism. Industrialism is tidy, reserved and clean as explored in the sequence and structure of the Bottoms. However, it is not so in reality. Life conditions, happenings and inner circumstances in the Bottoms do not square with its outer appearance. Therefore, dichotomy of appearance and substance prevails in addition to the clash of spaces. Factory is like home, and home is like a pit. There is ambivalence and confusion within the monotonous cycle of industrialism.

Disintegration of family is another defeating factor of industrialism and is criticized by Lawrence in *Sons and Lovers*. The relationship between Mr. Morel and Mrs. Morel reveals Lawrence’s stance towards the institution of family and morality at large. As industrialism destroys nature, alienates human beings from nature and from the other members of the society, the family unit is also affected from this vicious circle of false-consciousness created by industrialism.

In the first part of the novel, Lawrence forms the pattern of narration in which Mrs. Morel judges her husband in accordance with social and economic standards- a petty-bourgeois tendency. She is not actually happy with these standards because she has a refinement in contrast with the lives of the miners. This is why she does not like the tedious, depressing and suffocating life she is leading as “the prospect of her life made her feel as if she were buried alive” (12). Besides, she has a husband opposite to her. He, unlike Mrs. Morel, is from a lower class family. This is also suggested through the dialect of Mr. Morel which is not like her wife’s refined English. She does not even like his smell that reminds her of mines and pits: “She only breathed freely when he was gone out of the

room again, leaving behind him a faint smell of pit-dirt” (42) After the first six months of their marriage, the true nature of Mr. and Mrs. Morel appears. One day, while Mrs. Morel is “brushing” Morel’s “Sunday coat” (19), she finds some papers. Later on, it is unveiled that Morel does not own the house in which they live in. After this occasion: “She said very little to her husband, but her manner had changed towards him. Something in her proud, honourable soul had crystallized out hard a rock” (21).

This is the breaking point in the relationship of the Morel couple. Then, Mrs. Morel, who enjoys “a kind of aristocracy among the other women of the between houses, because her rent was five shillings and sixpence instead of five shillings a week” (9), is gradually alienated to her husband. This is predominantly a consequence of Mr. Morel’s inability to provide her with a luxurious and comfortable life: “He never saved a penny, and he gave his wife no opportunity of saving” (26). At this point, Daniel Schwarz states that the fact that Mr. Morel “pays his mother’s rent disturbs her as much as or more than that he has lied ... integrity in a husband means something rather narrow to her: the ability to pay one’s bill and to provide for one’s wife. (She would not deign to take in mending like other Bottoms’ wives) (Schwarz 1976, 260).

Strait economic circumstances are one of the reasons of alienation between Mr. and Mrs. Morel because Gertrude “attributes almost magical significance to money”, an example of reification, and Walter Morel is not able to provide her with it (Schwarz 1976, 262). Second reason for alienation is related with the long working hours of Mr. Morel and his habit of drinking after work. In the story, Walter Morel has been working in mines since he was ten years old. He is depicted as a brute, heartless and irresponsible character throughout the story who is not interested in family issues and always goes out for drinking after working long hours: “On Friday night, Saturday and Sunday, he spent royally, getting rid of his

sovereign or thereabouts. And out of so much, he scarcely spend the children an extra penny, or bought them a pound of apples. It all went in drink” (26). Because of Walter Morel’s irresponsibility, the Morel couple almost always argued and fell out.

Indeed, such attitudes of Walter Morel, who is “a prisoner of industrialism” (108), were identical with the other workers in that period. Working long hours in harsh conditions, these workers tried to freshen up by means of drinking. By this way, they thought that they could escape from realities and perceived unpleasantness of daily lives, which is mainly related with Marxist escapism as clarified by Marx in his *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (Marx 1843/44, 3). This escapism is essentially about religious escapism. However, religious escapism prevents individuals from becoming aware of the incidents and occasions around them. In this respect, this theory of Marx can also be adopted to other situations that hinder people to make out realities under industrial capitalism. Thomas L. Jeffers, considering historical background of worker’s habit of drinking, claims:

In a typical working-class household, then, the father earned the money out in rough-and-tumble worlds of men, where long and exhausting hours necessitated the refreshment of drink and camaraderie in the pub. When he finally came home, it was often as a tired, grimy, tipsy intruder. (Jeffers 2000, 292)

It is seen that in Moral family alienation is caused by strait economic conditions, Mr. Morel’s long working hours and his habit of drinking. There are some other details contributing to the process of alienation in this particular family as well. For instance, Walter Morel wakes up early in the morning, gets straight out of bed, goes downstairs and struggles into his pit-trousers left on the hearth to warm all night. Then, he makes his own breakfast in the kitchen:

He toasted his bacon on a fork and caught the drops of fat on his bread; then he put the rasher on his thick slice of bread, and cut off chunks with a clasp-knife, poured his tea into his

saucer, and was happy. With his family about, meals were never so pleasant ... then, in solitude, he ate and drank, often sitting, in cold weather, on a little stool with his back to the warm chimney-piece, his food on the fender, his cup on the hearth ... He preferred to keep the blinds down and the candle lit even when it was daylight; it was the habit of the mine. (36)

These are some of the mechanical behaviors that Walter does every morning. It is interesting to trace that Walter does not like to have his breakfast with his family and he is happy when he is alone which is a characteristic of alienation process. His desire to be alone is also related with his work habits as seen in the last sentence. That is, he is shaped by and become a part of the working conditions within industrialism. In fact, the degrading working conditions in the mines and alienation in the pits are reflected in Walter Morel's behaviors towards his family. It seems that workers internalize the working conditions where each laborer is alone and alienated to the rest and extend this to their family. Lawrence tries to show in Morel's instance, how a personal process of alienation is eventually extended to the modern industrial society at large.

There are other examples to the mechanical responses of Walter's to his family. For instance, Walter's visit to his newborn son, Paul is also striking. When the news is told, Walter goes upstairs to see him for the first time. The description of this scene by Lawrence reveals how hard work and long working hours cause alienation between family members:

Then, in his stockinged feet, he went reluctantly upstairs. It was a struggle to face his wife at this moment, and he was tired. His face was black, and smeared with sweat. His singlet had dried again, soaking the dirt in ... He was tired, and his bother was rather a nuisance to him, he didn't quite know where he was ... he blessed by rote-pretending paternal emotion, which he did not feel just then. (42)

Exhausted and bored Walter's emotional distance from his own

wife and son is critical. As a father, Morel is not interested in and keen on visiting his new-born baby. The reason of this situation is significantly suggested through words Lawrence uses connected with hard work like sweat, dirt, tiredness (42). Besides, Morel pretends to be blessing his new-born baby in a reluctant way. This is also an example of hypocrisy associated with industrialism if the dichotomy of substance and appearance is taken into account.

As Gertrude experiences her husband's alienation from herself, sons as well as family matters, she turns to Paul. She becomes obsessed with her sons' social and economic success and "seeks fulfillment in her sons" because her husband, Walter, cannot provide her with an opportunity through which she take pride in recognition and economic status (Oliboni 1968, 171). For that reason, after her husband's failure, she starts to identify herself with her two sons:

She felt ... that where Paul determined to go he would get ... Now she had two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centers of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would work out what she wanted, they were derived from her, they were of her, and their works also would be hers (108).

Initially, Gertrude's favorite son was William. Yet, Paul replaces William and Gertrude's favorite son becomes Paul when she perceives that William is attached to Gipsy and is betraying her trust and love: "Mrs. Morel clung now to Paul ... Everything he did was for her. She waited for his coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had pondered, or of all that had occurred to her during the day ... The two shared lives" (121). From that part on, Paul, in a way, tries to prove himself to her mother economically and socially. This relationship between mother and son can also be taken into consideration from adult and non-adult worlds (Watkins 1987, 297-8). The social and cultural reality behind this relationship is dominated by Mrs. Morel whose real desire is to

have sufficient money and to take pride in an upward mobility. In order to satisfy mother's economical desires, Paul works in factory where he suffers from darkness and lack of air, and he produces wealth for her mother. From this perspective, Paul is categorized as a worker while her mother is classified as a capitalist. As a consequence of this relationship, Paul is valued for his economic functions by his mother. To elaborate, he is valued by his mother as long as he earns money and spends it for his mother. This is viewed in the example of William, who does not spend it for her mother after a while and is neglected by her. Then, Paul is spiritually alienated to himself and loses his personality. Paul's dissatisfaction with the women in his life is linked with this alienation process. (Watkins 1987, 297-8)

It is also seen in this relationship between mother and son that Gertrude debunks the concept of motherhood. As argued, industrial capitalism causes alienation among family members, and alienation is resulted in disintegration. In this point, the concept of motherhood is also debunked as a consequence of petty-bourgeois tendencies of the mothers and alienation between mothers and their sons. Lawrence depicts a selfish, manipulative and money-oriented mother to bring out the exploitive and extensive power of industrialism. This depiction is in contrast with the concept of motherhood, in which mothers do best for their children and husbands and deserve the approval of their children, in our collective unconscious. To give more examples about Mrs. Morel, it is seen that Gertrude Morel's relationship with people around her is also economic. Moreover,

Mrs. Morel is aggressive and even hostile to those with whom she has an economic relationship; one need only recall the waitress at Nottingham, the man who drives the carriage to the cottage that the family has rented, or even the man from whom she buys a decorated dish. While Paul's response to the mine is aesthetic, imaginative, and organic, hers is primarily economic. (Schwarz 1976, 261)

Likewise, Mrs. Morel sacrifices her husband as an outcome of strait economic conditions as clarified above. That is, she slants all such circumstances against Walter Morel so that Walter could be passivized since he is seen to be responsible for economic failures. In addition, Mrs. Morel is not happy with the situations of her children and she wants them to achieve the social status of the upper middle-class. Gerald Doherty indicates that

A rhetoric of incessant abasement, “mercilessly” exploited by Mrs. Morel (25) reduces her husband to the figure of a “filthy” intruder, a “cowardly beast” whom she desires to “smite” ... down” (33) in order to impose the family unity she feels it most lacks. As the family combine to expel him, Morel is at once the generator and the victim of the violence directed against him. In this particular economy of sacrifice, familial success and uplift are the reward ... her sons ambitiously climb into middle-class structure. (Doherty 2010, 6)

In the light of all these examples, Lawrence suggests that petty-bourgeois tendencies, alienation, monotony and mechanization, which are all interrelated with each other and caused by industrialism, lead to the disintegration of the institution of family. Disintegration of the marriage of Clara Dawes and Baxter Dawes is another example for this allegation. Debunking of the concept of motherhood associated with petty-bourgeois morality of the mothers is also another reason that “wrenches family relationships” (Schwarz 1976, 258). For instance, there is no problem between Gertrude and Walter as long as Gertrude carries out and internalizes traditional roles of wife such as cleaning, washing and cooking and so on. The primary problem that leads to the disintegration starts after Gertrude stops taking comfort in living with strait life conditions. If these are taken into account, it is seen that industrialism, for Lawrence, distances humans from each other, causing alienation among them and finally wrenching family relations. On the one hand Lawrence criticizes industrialism’s

oppression with a Marxist-like approach; on the other hand he tries to impose moral norms about the unity of traditional family structure. This creates an ideological crisis in Lawrence's stance in the novel when the relationships between Marxism, morality and the institution of family are regarded.

As a conclusion, Lawrence condemns industrial capitalism and launches a harsh criticism upon its alienating, corrupting and disintegrating impacts. His approach to industrialism and capitalism in his novel is in a way closer to that of Marxists. However, despite his opposition and hostility towards industrial capitalism, he ironically defends the institution of family and this creates an ideological contradiction/crisis. This is the key aspect in the relocation of Lawrence especially when the relationship between capitalism and the institution of family is taken into account. The institution of family serves to the interests of the bourgeois class in many different ways. Within this respect, though he has feudal inclinations and seems to be criticizing the evils of industrial capitalism, Lawrence ironically tries to reconstruct and impose a number of morality concepts like conservation of the traditional family structure. When the relationship between the institution of family and bourgeois morality is taken into account, it is seen that the institution of family serves to the social demands of the prevailing mode of production, capitalism. In this sense, by revealing the deficiencies of capitalism like its alienating, corrupting and disintegrating influences upon individuals, Lawrence basically creates awareness in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, stimulates bourgeoisie to take precautions against such social happenings and prolongs capitalism's life. Thence, Lawrence essentially legitimates and reforms the prevailing mode of production.

As to Lawrence's position in the literary canon, it is seen that Lawrence does not primarily belong to modernist literature in terms of thematic and formal characteristics in his fiction. Although he creates alienated individuals who run

through social, spiritual and personal collapse due to industrial capitalism, he does not break away with grand narratives or reject traditional and standard values and concepts. Instead, he implicitly tries to inject some conservative Victorian moral norms like conservation of the traditional family structure and importance of being a good mother into the unconscious level of the readers as exemplified in *Sons and Lovers*. Additionally, he is not basically concerned with aesthetics but with content like a Victorian writer as he focuses on social and cultural problems in a Dickensian manner. Considering these arguments, in the literary canon, Lawrence can be located as a writer in-between Victorian and Modern Periods.

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