

POST-WAR BRITISH WORKING-CLASS FICTION
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NOVELS OF
JOHN BRAINE, ALAN SILLITOE, STAN BARSTOW,
DAVID STOREY AND BARRY HINES

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
School of English
October 1990

ABSTRACT

This study is about British working-class fiction in the post-war period.

It covers various authors such as Robert Tressell, George Orwell, Walter Greenwood, Lewis Grassic Gibbon and D H Lawrence from the early twentieth century; writers traditionally classified as 'Angry Young Men' like John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Shelagh Delaney, John Wain and Kingsley Amis; and working-class novelists like John Braine, Stan Barstow, David Storey, Alan Sillitoe and Barry Hines from the 1950s and 1960s.

Some of the main issues dealt with in the course of this study are language, form, community, self/identity/autobiography, sexuality and relationship with bourgeois art. The major argument centres on two questions: representation of working-class life, and the relationship between working-class literary tradition and dominant ideologies.

We will be arguing that while working-class fiction succeeded in challenging and rupturing bourgeois literary tradition, on the level of language and linguistic medium of expression for example, it utterly failed to break away from dominant, bourgeois modes of literary production in relation to form, for instance.

Our argument is situated within Marxist approaches to literature, a political and aesthetic position from which we attempt an analysis and an evaluation of this working-class literary tradition. These critical approaches provide us also with the theoretical tool to define the political perspective of this tradition, and to judge whether it was confined to a descriptive mode of representation or located in a radical, political outlook.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Dr David Richards, for his constant advice and unfailing help throughout the research. Without his guidance and support this work might not have been completed.

My special thanks are to Amy Foxwell for preparing the footnotes and compiling the bibliography with *great patience*, and for two *long* years of help and encouragement.

Marwan Asmar has been a great friend to whom I owe a great debt.

Finally, my warm thanks are to my parents, Mohammad and Majida, who do not know what this work is about.

PART ONE : Orientations

Section I : Introduction

This study is a Marxist analysis and assessment of the working-class fiction which proliferated in Britain between the early 1950s and early 1960s. It is an attempt to investigate some of the cultural, social, economic and political changes which contributed to the emergence of this literary phenomenon in a mode almost unprecedented in English literary tradition.

Before I started this research, my acquaintance with English literature had been mostly confined to works falling within the 'bourgeois' literary tradition. I had learnt, during my university years in Syria and the years which followed, to think of English literature in connection with authors like Shakespeare, Milton, George Eliot, Hardy, Melville, Poe, Wordsworth, Byron, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Joyce and Lawrence. In D.H. Lawrence, I had seen something peculiarly different, but mostly muted and undeveloped, in other words components of a different tradition which was cut and eradicated in literary practice. My knowledge of a genre formed as 'working-class' literature came only through my readings of Marxist theory and Soviet literature. 'Working-class literature' was an absent vocabulary in my acquaintance with English literary tradition.

Ironically enough, the English novelists I studied at Leeds prior to this research were Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster. During that course, I happened to come across a statement by V. Woolf which articulated something to this effect: if you take working-class literature out of English literary tradition, this tradition loses nothing, and if one extracts middle-class literature from it, nothing remains. My immediate response to this statement was one of resentment and fascination; resentment at Woolf's utter exclusion of the means of expression of the vast majority of the British people, and fascination with Woolf's historical ignorance of the nature of literary practice and the material and ideological forces underlying literary production. In other words, in spite of Woolf's sharp and conscious division of literary agents into two classes, her statement failed to go beyond this graphic variance. My encounter with Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, David Storey's *This Sporting Life* and John Braine's *Room at the Top* did not lead to a long pondering before the nature of this research was determined.

Reading such novels, and particularly taking them as works for critical analysis, immediately posed various, intricate problems. The

most difficult task was to efficiently grapple with the linguistic expressions - especially dialogue - and the modes of social representation in these texts. This demanded continuous, arduous readings about British history, culture, politics, sociology and particularly the class nature of British society. E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, F. Engel's *The Condition of the English Working Class*, and R. Williams' *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution* were of tremendous value in this respect. Gramsci's work, especially the *Prison Notebooks*, opened wide avenues for understanding the relationship between class and literary production.

I have attempted in this study, with invaluable help from my supervisor, to view post-war fiction in the context of English working-class literary tradition, particularly in the early twentieth century. The objective is to substantiate my analysis of the recent fiction through locating it within this tradition as a whole.

This led to the division of this thesis into different but related parts. Part One provides a framework in a political and aesthetic theory through which literary texts will be analysed and evaluated in their relation to dominant ideologies. It orients my analysis in the direction of viewing literature as a social and ideological formation, a form of production determined mostly by historical, material and ideological forces, and enables me to relate the literary text to the class position of the author and his/her readers, and evaluate the political perspectives from which these works were written.

The second part deals with Tressell, Orwell, Greenwood, Gibbon and Lawrence to account for the distinguishing features of their works and trace their influence on post-war novelists. In this part, some of the major issues which I tend to emphasize are questions of language, form, community, identity, collective fictional autobiographies, and relationship with bourgeois art.

Part Three brings out issues of a more general nature relating to the critical approaches in Part One and to the historical survey in Part Two which are relevant to the texts of the post-war period, and which can only be made by a 'synchronic' and comparative view across the texts. These issues include the characteristics and tendencies of the 1950's 'angry' novels and plays, documentary realism which shapes post-war novels, and representations of sexuality and gender relations in these works.

The fourth part includes case studies of post-war working-class fiction. These studies of Braine, Barstow, Storey, Sillitoe and Hines are situated towards the end of this study for two reasons. Firstly, the strategy of the thesis has been to move from the generalized statements of theory, history and themes to an increasingly detailed view of the specifics of the texts themselves; a movement from the macrocosm to the microcosm. Secondly, the study of the individual texts raises questions about the critical approach and appropriation of these texts by a particular kind of Marxist literary criticism; the simple fact of them being 'working class' does not make them radical, committed or indeed 'political' in a left-wing kind of way. This point can only be understood when the basic principles of marxist literary criticism and the historical dimension have been taken into account - when we actually look at the texts themselves, prior assumptions and certainties only partly hold true because they are more various and problematic than they would first appear.

I have selected these particular novelists for two major reasons. First, they feature as working-class writers who had a major impact on the post-war British literary scene, and some of these works found their way into various forms of the media. Second, the works of these novelists possess qualities and show artistic and ideological tendencies typical of the problems working-class literature usually encounters in a capitalist social formation. I refer to other novelists like Wain, Cooper and Waterhouse in the course of the analysis in other parts of the thesis.

The major argument of this study is that while the 1950's and 1960's working-class fiction managed to incorporate radical means of expression, like its use of vernacular speech to reflect social and political experiences, it failed to break away from dominant ideologies, particularly in relation to literary form and political conceptions. I argue that instead of challenging the dominant ideology of 'affluence', these authors exhibited their acceptance of it both in their works and their later careers, as is the case with Braine and Sillitoe.

Section II : Critical Approaches to Working-Class Fiction

Any discussion of working-class literature poses immediate problems, one of which is the problem of definition. Working-class writing, as opposed to other writings, centres on the life experience of that class with an implicit or explicit recognition within the literary text of the difference of this experience from the traditional subject-matter of literature. It attempts to feature the problems and the true characteristics of working people, as opposed to the imagined ones. However, literature which takes workers as its subject does not necessarily reflect or promote identifiably working-class interests and values. Nor does it necessarily promote those interests or educate and inspire workers about their historical role in class struggle. Working-class literature is not in itself a 'proletarian writing', for the latter implies an awareness of class as a major determinant. It is a fallacy to assume that a working-class literary text will automatically reveal class consciousness, or promote a socialist or progressive understanding of history. In this section, I intend to examine various Marxist approaches to literature in an attempt to find a framework in a political and aesthetic theory which will lead to an analysis of working-class texts, and provide a situation from which these texts can be viewed.

Idealist aesthetics conceived of art as a reproduction of the ideal, detached from and neutral to actual reality. Art theoreticians and historians of the pre-Marxist period failed to come to grips with the origins of art forms, their development and decay, due to their study of these forms in isolation from human social existence.

Marx and Engels accounted for the relationship between art and reality, and the main aesthetic questions in general, on the basis of materialist dialectics. Unlike their idealist predecessors, they discovered that the origins, developments and social roles of art can only be deciphered through the analysis of the social system within which the economic factor and the corresponding relations of production play the most effective role. The internal laws of the development of art and literature were considered insufficient on their own to understand their origins and functions. Art and literature were viewed in their relation to material life, hence as forms of social consciousness corresponding in their changes to the development of social relations of classes. Marx and Engels started with real, active individuals and showed the development of the

ideological reflexes as a reflection of the real life-process of these individuals.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels write:

Language is as old as consciousness - language is practical consciousness ... Language, like consciousness, only arises from the need of intercourse with other men... .(1)

In his "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*", Marx establishes a materialist conception of the determination of social consciousness, and writes that it is

not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.(2)

It is the 'infrastructure', the material mode of production, which determines the 'superstructure', the legal, political and intellectual activities. Marx points out that in considering the transformation of the 'superstructure' according to the changes in the 'infrastructure',

a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical - in short ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.(3)

It is the material relations which change first, to which correspond the change and development of social consciousness that is governed by the contradictions of material life. Subsequently,

the production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men - the language of real life.(4)

People produce their ideas, but they are conditioned by the development of their productive forces. There is a dynamic intercourse, as such, between material conditions of life and social consciousness. Literature, as an ideological form of consciousness, is consequently defined as a social formation and not an idealized form.

The Marxist thesis of the determination of the 'superstructure' by the 'infrastructure' has always suffered misinterpretation which reduced it to a mechanistic understanding of determination. Although the economic factor is considered the determinant in the first analysis, there is a complex and dynamic system of interacting

elements constituting any social formation. Marxism does not regard social consciousness as a passive product of the economic system. Marx and Engels had often pointed out that various forms of social consciousness do influence the social reality which produces them. In *The German Ideology* they emphasize the principle of 'interaction' in considering the relationship between material life and social consciousness. Their concepts of *Wechselwirkung* - "reciprocal interaction" - and 'totality' clarify the interdependence of real material process of production and consciousness. From the Paris Manuscripts onwards, Marx regards art and literature, for example, as an integral part of the creative activity through which people create their world.

Marx' and Engels' historical materialism established a materialist understanding of the historical development of human society. From the same materialist point of view they provided a materialist explanation of the origins of aesthetics. Human aesthetic perception and artistic creativity are perceived of as resulting from the development of human society, and as originally produced by human labour. In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx reveals the role of labour in the development of human capacity to perceive and reproduce 'the beautiful' and to form objects "in accordance with the laws of beauty".(5) This notion was later developed in *Dialectics of Nature* where Engels notes that efforts of toil

have given the human hand the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini.(6)

In the analysis of artistic creation and aesthetic perception, Marx argues that it is the materialist product which originally generates the aesthetic perception necessitated by the mere existence of the product. "The need felt for the object", he writes in "Introduction to *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58*,"

is induced by the perception of the object. As *objet d'art* creates a public that has artistic taste and is able to enjoy beauty - and the same can be said of any other product. Production accordingly produces not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object.(7)

The aesthetic sense is, accordingly, socially acquired and not an inborn quality. Literature and its aesthetic perception are subsequently viewed as historically determined by material and

ideological forces. The bourgeois notion of 'high' and 'low' art is radically undermined by this materialistic concept on the basis of their ideological production by the dominant classes.

Both Georgei Plekhanov and Ernst Fischer advance arguments which correspond to this materialist interpretation of the origins of art and aesthetic perceptions. Plekhanov points out that human nature, culture and aesthetic tastes and conceptions change according to the material development of society and social conditions. He draws the conclusion:

The art of every nation is determined by its psychology; its psychology, by its conditions; and its conditions are determined in the last analysis by the state of its productive forces and its productive relations.(8)

In a similar method of analysis, Fischer traces the origins and development of art to the material development of human society in its need to control nature. Art, in this sense, is a collective production and not an individual one, and in the early stages of human progress it had

little to do with 'beauty' and nothing at all to do with any aesthetic desire: it was a magical tool or a weapon of the human collective in its struggle for survival.(9)

The relationship between art and social life has developed in more sophisticated and intricate ways than the above interpretation appears to assume. This analysis, nonetheless, is very valuable to any materialist interpretation of the historical development of art and aesthetic perception. It paves the way for a materialist approach to interpret various historical phenomena and processes, among which art and literature feature as major activities in the process of human development.

In their materialist analysis of artistic creativity, Marx and Engels discovered that the 'form' and 'content' of a work of art are not ideally produced in isolation from the material forces of production and the history of human society. On the contrary, both correspond to the changes and development of the material world and human social formations. This discourse leads to two notions crucial to the interpretation and evaluation of the work of art: the history of art is an integral domain of the 'general' history of human society, and every historical period of human development produces works of art which correspond to its specific characteristics. On this basis, Marx advances the notion that "There is no history of

politics, of law, of science ... of art, of religion."(10) Literature and art, among other ideological forms of production, are not autonomous activities which have their own separate existence, but part of human history. This argument is vigorously developed in *The German Ideology*:

Morality, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies, and their corresponding forms of consciousness, no longer retain ... their appearance of autonomous existence. They have no history, no development; it is men, who, in developing their material intercourse, change, along with their real existence, their thinking and the product of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.(11)

It is in relation to the development of human society and its productive forces that literature should be interpreted as a reflection of these changing modes of existence, and consequently as an ideological form of production. As I have mentioned earlier, this materialist analysis does not imply that the corresponding forms of consciousness - ideologies - do not influence social life. S. Praver is right to warn that Marx' and Engels' argument might tempt critics to overlook the fact that

literary forms do, to some degree at least, have a history and a development of their own, and that material life is, in not inconsiderable ways, affected by human consciousness.(12)

Both Marx and Engels recognised that social relations and dominant ideologies are reflected in art in a manner which is far from mechanistic. Although art corresponds to social and economic developments, it is a special form of consciousness which possesses its particular features and patterns. Although artistic works correspond historically to social structures, their value and significance are not nullified when these structures cease to exist. Marx cites the art and epic poetry of the Greeks as examples of literary works which "still give us aesthetic pleasures and are in certain respects regarded as a standard and unattainable ideal".(13) At the same time, Marx argues that no mythology or epic poetry similar to those of the ancient Greeks can be created under other conditions. Mythology was the quintessential basis of Greek art, and with the absence of this dominant concept the creation of such an art becomes inconceivable.

Marx and Engels found out, however, that the character of historical development is uneven. They explained that the periods of artistic creation do not necessarily coincide with social progress in other fields automatically. Marx wrote:

As regards art, it is well known that some of its peaks by no means correspond to the general development of society; nor do they therefore to the material substructure, the skeleton as it were of its organization.(14)

'Spiritual' culture is not determined only by the development of material production in a given historical juncture, but also by the identity of the social relations peculiar to that juncture, by class antagonisms and by the availability of specific conditions for the development of the individuals. This understanding is essential to any Marxist literary analysis because without it the Marxist discourse of interpretation could be easily reduced to a mechanistic dogma. More importantly, it is vital to comprehending art and literature as 'oppositional' reflections of ideology, for art and literature play an active role in opposing, in various ways, the dominant ideology which produces them in class society.

Marx and Engels disclose the class nature of art in class society, and argue that the ideology of the ruling class, which reflects its ideas and interests, is reflected in the art of the period. Subsequently

The idea of the ruling class are in every epoch of the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force.(15)

Mental production corresponds to material production, and the ruling class subjects the ruled classes to its dominant ideologies. The ruling ideas are a reflection of the dominant material relations determining the social structure of society. As members of the ruling class rule as a class, they also dominate as 'thinkers' in the sense that their ideas are the dominant ideas of their historical period. Marx and Engels established their analysis of the mechanism of this domination on the basis of the division of labour. The ruling class is divided into two 'forces': mental and material labour. Inside this class,

one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active ... ideologists, who make the formation of the illusions of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and

illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the creative members of this class and have less time to make illusions and ideas about themselves.(16)

Clashes between the two forces soon disappear to integrate within the common interests, or the general ideology, of the class as a whole. This understanding led Marx and Engels to the notion that

The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class... .(17)

Thus, any incidental opposition between the 'mental' and material' forces of the ruling class will not generate revolutionary ideas. The strength of any oppositional class consequently derives from the fact that its interests are, yet, those of the ruled classes whose very conditions entrench them in a conflicting position with the ruling class. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* states:

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of such age have been the ideas of its ruling class.(18)

Revolutionary ideas emerge from the appearance of new forces in the material production and the conditions of social existence, which usually accompany the dissolution of old ideas.

So, an understanding of 'spiritual' production, in a society grounded on class antagonisms, necessitates the analysis of the material mode of production and the corresponding forms and relations of production. In his criticism of Storch's ahistorical conception of material production, Marx writes that to establish the connection between 'spiritual' and material production, it is vital to comprehend the latter in a "*definite historical form*" and not in an abstract categorical sense, for

If material production itself is not conceived in its *specific historical form*, it is impossible to understand what is specific in the spiritual production corresponding to it and the reciprocal influence of one on the other.(19)

Because Storch fails to conceive of material production historically, he deprives himself of the means that would enable him to understand

partly the ideological component parts of the ruling class, partly the free spiritual production of this particular social formation ... for instance, capitalist production is hostile to certain branches of spiritual production, for example; art and poetry.(20)

From this imbalance between the social nature of production and the private form of appropriation stems the hostility to art and poetry to reveal the inherent contradictions in class society. Art and literature, in their depiction of reality, unmask the contradictions underlying the system, and disclosing the nature of exploitation fundamentally intrinsic to the governing relations. Consequently, artists - even those who belong to the ruling class - reflect the tragic collisions of bourgeois reality, and transcend the boundaries of bourgeois relations. In doing so, they depart from bourgeois positions by means of their own artistic expression.

In their study of writers like Shakespeare, Goethe and Balzac, Marx and Engels inferred that these authors were products of the contradictions inherent in their societies. They point out that the contradictions peculiar to these literary figures did not emerge from the individual features of their psychological make-up, but were an ideological reflection of the contradictions underlying their society. Although subjected to the dominant ideologies of their times, these writers succeeded in rising above their class positions in their powerful criticisms of the very system which produced them.

This materialist concept of art and literature in class society, and the recognition of these ideological forms as 'oppositional' reflections of ideology enabled Marxism to consider the role of literary and artistic production as a determining factor in the process of class struggle. Marx and Engels envisaged this 'oppositional' function on the basis of revealing the inherent contradictions in capitalist society. This begs the following question: does this concept lead to the assumption that literature, for instance, regardless of its class origins, is necessarily 'progressive', and consequently 'reactionary' literature does not exist?

Marxism gained its political dimension through Lenin. In his conception of an organized revolutionary party, and by emphasizing political struggle, Lenin opened the path for exploring revolutionary strategy and rescued Marxism from economism by raising politics to the level of an influential historical force. Gramsci opened new dimensions for Lenin's strategy of socialist revolution by emphasizing the political sphere of struggle, and stressing the active, political aspect of theory. Gramsci recognized, after the failure of the Second International, that socialist revolution would not emerge mechanically out of a linear pattern of the development of 'objective' (economic)

forces, but through organized human action at various historical junctures. He believed in restoring the 'subjective', political dimension of socialist revolution and placing conscious, human action at the centre of revolutionary process.

The 'strategic' element in Gramsci's writing was a development of Lenin. His central emphasis was on the unity of thought and action, theory and practice, a concept of 'praxis' which marked his life as a theorist and revolutionary. His most original contribution to Marxist tradition was his concept of 'ideological hegemony'. He stresses the role of ideological struggle, and conceives of class domination, especially in advanced capitalist systems, as practised through cultural spheres of civil society as much as through the state apparatus. 'Transformation of consciousness' is envisaged as a crucial aspect of the change towards socialism, and one that can be achieved through what he calls 'integrated culture'.

Gramsci understands change in its 'totality' where all aspects of society are included in the struggle. He emphasizes popular organic transformation which leads to the development of a 'mass' party linked with other popular structures like 'factory councils', for example. Gramsci departs here from the elitist concept of a centralized vanguard party with the task of seizing state power only. He believed in the transformation of everyday life gradually and constantly as a preparation for socialist revolution, where changes can be made under bourgeois rule.

Gramsci's Marxism is 'popular', and not limited in its theory and scope to particular institutions and parties. He advocates the strategy of popular participation and gradual infiltration into the bourgeois domination. The *Quaderni del Carcere (Prison Notebooks)* develops a new Marxist theory that could be applied to the prevailing conditions in advanced, capitalist social formations. Like Lenin, Lukacs and Korsch, Gramsci rejected the tendency of seizing the materialist, economic aspect of Marxism *per se*. He attempted to capture the elements of 'praxis' and 'totality' in his emphasis on the 'subjective' dimension of Marxism. Gramsci was in opposition to 'scientific' Marxism and economist interpretations of history (present in the Second International, Bukharin, the later Engels, Plekhanov, Kautsky, the Austro-Marxists, etc.) which sought to discover unlimited natural laws of historical development and an eternally valid system of empirical regularities. He strove in his writing to restore the meaning of 'dialectics' in Marxism as a unifying force as an

alternative to both speculative idealism and narrow empiricism. The answer came in the concept of 'revolutionary praxis':

It has been forgotten that in the case of a very common expression [historical materialism] one should put the accent on the first term 'historical' - and not on the second, which is of metaphysical origin. The philosophy of praxis is absolute 'historicism', the absolute secularization and *earthiness of thought*, an absolute humanism of history. It is along this line that one must trace the thread of the new conception of the world.(21)

Gramsci's reaction against the prevailing economic determinism in Marxism drove him to emphasize issues of education and culture.

For Gramsci, reality only exists in historical relationships with the people who make it, a notion developed in 'Problems of Philosophy' and 'Study of Philosophy' in the *Prison Notebooks*. Political consciousness generates political initiatives where a complex interplay takes place between 'subjective' forces (human will and actions) and 'objective' ones (historical material conditions). Gramsci insisted on the role of consciousness in bringing about revolutionary change:

The philosophy of praxis is consciousness full of contradictions, in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as an entire social group, not merely grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore action.(22)

In the *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci provides an understanding of the nature and role of ideology and politics. The relationship between 'base' and 'superstructure' is grounded on a reciprocal and constantly changing basis. Culture and politics are not wholly autonomous realms of thought and practice, and they could have a major influence at particular historical junctures. Revolutionary strategy is shaped by cultural, ideological and political forms where people develop consciousness and become active participants in the ideological field. At times of struggle, it is cultural, religious, ideological and even superstitious forces which motivate people's actions. To conceptualize the reciprocity between 'base' and 'superstructure' in terms of its relationships to political struggle, Gramsci developed the concept of 'hegemony', or 'ideological hegemony'. This concept is theoretically elaborated in the *Prison Notebooks* where this

ideological domination is 'materialized' and liberated from its idealist character in class struggle.

Gramsci understood domination as political (direct physical coercion) and 'hegemonic' (ideology and consent). Hegemony is the permeation through society (schools, churches, families, unions, etc.) of a whole system of values, concepts, moralities, etc. which enhance the political order and serve the interests of the dominant (hegemonic) class. Hegemony, in this sense, functions on two fronts: as a general concept of life for the masses, and as a set of principles advanced by a sector of the intellectuals. For socialism to find its way in the struggle, it must fight on this ideological (hegemonic) front. Hegemony is the most powerful force that subjects individuals to domination and subjugates them to the established order. With the domination of bourgeois ideology, class struggle cannot immediately produce 'socialist' consciousness. Gramsci understands hegemony as a dynamic domination corresponding to specific societies at particular historical phases. Any socialist movement should create a 'counter-hegemony' to break the ideological bond between the dominant class and different sectors of the masses. Before direct struggle begins, the position of the ruling class must be demystified at the popular level. Gramsci views this ideological demystification as an integral part of class struggle, through which the ruling class is transformed from a 'leading' class to a 'dominant' one:

If the ruling class has lost its consensus; ie. is no longer "leading" but only "dominant", exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe.....(23)

Dominant ideology, in Gramsci's analysis, is at work to strengthen its hold of society through its hegemonic apparatuses, and to defuse and destroy oppositional ideologies. Oppositional ideologies, on the other hand, strive to assert themselves and threaten dominant ideology in preparation for a hegemonic conquest of power prior to domination.

If Marx and Engels perceived of artists and writers as 'oppositional' to the dominant ideology by necessity, Gramsci assigned to them a conscious, historical role in class struggle. In his political vocabulary, literature, for example, becomes an ideological weapon with the primary role of unmasking and challenging dominant ideology. Literature, as an ideological form of production, becomes

an active determinant in the hegemonic sphere, acting as a demystifier of dominant ideology and a field for advancing and developing 'counter-hegemonic' culture. Both writers and readers become active elements in the ideological struggle which is grounded on class interests. Gramsci's theory of hegemonic struggle in the ideological domain calls for the establishment of a 'new' culture. In the creation of this culture, the class positions of artists and theoreticians and their consciousness of their role in the struggle for hegemony become determinant factors. The working-class writer, for instance, has a historical role in reflecting the interests of his/her class and advancing 'new' perspectives for understanding the world and changing it. In this sense, the literary text is conceived of as determined by the material modes of production, the mechanism of struggle for ideological hegemony, and more importantly by the position of both the author and his/her class in the overall structure of a particular class society.

Gramsci is concerned with the creation of 'intellectuals' from the working class, and his analysis is marked with a strong emphasis on the future formation of working-class intellectuals:

It is our aim to produce a new stratum of intellectuals, including those capable of the highest degree of specialization, from a social group which has not traditionally developed the appropriate attitudes, then we have unprecedented difficulties to overcome.(24)

Gramsci rejects culture as 'encyclopedic knowledge' as dangerous for the working class. It only helps to create "maladjusted people" who learnt some facts which came to form a barrier between them and others. Culture, to him, is a transformation of reality through gaining awareness and understanding of one's own historical role and value in changing society. The working class must be ideologically prepared to play its role in transforming society. Accordingly, culture is

organization, discipline of one's inner self, a coming to terms with one's own personality; it is the attainment of a higher awareness, with the aid of which one succeeds in understanding one's own historical value, one's own function in life, one's own right and obligations.(25)

Gramsci's concept of culture is almost identical with class consciousness. Change does not come out of the contradictions in the economic structure, but as a result of "intellectual reflection, at first by just a few people and later by a whole class... ." (26)

Socialist change begins with awareness which leads to unified consciousness and action,

It was through a critique of capitalist civilization that the unified consciousness of the proletariat was or still is being formed, and a critique implies culture, not simply spontaneous and naturalistic evolution.(27)

This concept of culture in its totality as consciousness underlies Gramsci's rejection of the notion of a 'new art' in favour of a 'new culture'. To speak of a 'new art' implies creating new artists. 'New' individual artists cannot be created without the creation of a 'new culture'. Here, Gramsci's materialist analysis is vigorously stated in his relation of cultural aspects of production to social, economic and political life:

One must speak of a struggle for a new culture, that is, for a new moral life that cannot be but intimately connected to a new intuition of life, until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality and, therefore, a world intimately ingrained in 'possible' artists and 'possible works of art'.(28)

The notion that individual artists cannot be created in an artificial, abstract sense does not imply that a 'new culture' will not produce 'new artists'. The new movement will inevitably produce 'new artists' because

A new social group that enters history with a hegemonic attitude, with a self confidence which it initially did not have, cannot but stir up from deep within itself personalities who would not previously have found sufficient strength to express themselves fully in a particular direction.(29)

Gramsci's theory, in its account of the production of 'new artists' through the creation of a 'new culture', manages to come to grips with ideological domination through economic and political power. It provides an analysis of major cultural and historical issues: the historical mode of creating means of domination and the corresponding ideological hegemony, the historical production of culture on a class basis, the exclusion of other cultures as 'low' in opposition to 'high' culture, the struggle for ideological hegemony, and the mechanism of eradicating 'dominant' culture through a total social transformation based on a political awareness of the self and the role of the individual in the process of change.

This analysis led Gramsci to emphasize the necessity of understanding 'popular' feelings and psychologies which motivate people's actions. From this emerged his interest in 'popular' novels. During his prison years in Milan (1927-8), Gramsci indulged in reading and studying commercially successful novels. In a letter to Tania (April 22, 1929), he explained that those novels become interesting

'if one looked at them from the following angle: why are these books always the most read and the most frequently published? What needs do they satisfy and what aspirations do they fulfill? What emotions and attitudes emerge in this squalid literature, to have such wide appeal?' (30)

Gramsci's 'notes' on popular literature explore the relationship between 'dominant' and 'subaltern' cultural forms as they act upon each other historically. As folklore contains traces of earlier dominant cultures, Gramsci sees in the popular literature of rural areas residues of earlier dominant literary forms (romances of chivalry, for example) and scientific conceptions of the world. He views popular cultural forms - by a converse process - being 'raised' into dominant 'artistic' literature. He attempts to analyse what is 'interesting' in art, in general, and narrative literature and the theatre in particular:

The nature of what is 'interesting' changes according to individuals or social groups or the crowd in general: it is therefore an element of culture, not of art... (31)

He argues that this does not imply that the element of 'interest' is completely separated from art, for art is 'interesting' because "it satisfies a requirement of life". He points out the 'moral' element as the most stable one of interest ('moral category'), and the 'technical' element is intimately linked to it. Not all elements are 'artistic', however, as is the case in 'commercial' literature where

The 'commercial' aspect comes from the fact that the interesting 'element' is not 'naive', 'spontaneous', intimately fused with the artistic conception, but is sought from without, mechanically, and is doled out industrially, as a sure element of immediate 'success'. (32)

Gramsci's analysis implies that 'commercial' literature must not be excluded from the history of culture because its success indicates its relatedness to its own time, the 'philosophy of age', and reflects the feelings and concepts of the masses. It should be taken into any account of cultural history for the role it plays in social life as a

popular 'narcotic', an 'opium'. Gramsci's interest in popular writings like 'social novels' and 'detective novels' lies in their quality as forms of popular cultural products reflecting immediate realities and dominant forms of thought, and bringing together the actual world of past history and the fantasy world, where "the fantasy world acquires a particular fabulous concreteness in popular intellectual life... ." (33) Different types of popular literature, particularly the novel, correspond to different popular tastes which are in themselves the products of different "cultural levels", different "'masses of feelings'", and various popular "'hero models'". Popular forms of literature are viewed as reflections of immediate realities with their illusions and contradictions, and national feeling as it is spontaneously expressed.

Marx's approach to literature from the Paris Manuscripts onwards viewed art as part of the universal creative activity through which individuals transform and create their own world and themselves. This analysis implies, in the words of Karl Mannheim, that

opinions, statements, propositions and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life-situation of the one who expresses them. (34)

This approach has made possible the development of the relationship between art and literature and the ideological sphere of struggle for hegemony, as was the case in Gramsci's writing. It has opened new avenues for investigating the forces and positions lying behind opinions, perceptions and interpretations in order to discover life-situations with which they are fundamentally connected. Louis Althusser and his disciples have attempted to discover the 'ideological field' which determines the author's work and against which he or she have to define their own perceptions of the world. Marxist interpretations of ideological domination enabled these critics and theorists to investigate the internal unity of a given system of thinking and feeling, and question its *problematique* which is marked by the presence of particular problems as much as by the absence of others.

Gramsci conceived of ideological practice as material and institutional, and of the 'intellectuals' as the agents of this practice in the way they elaborate and spread 'organic' ideologies. Gramsci's contribution was his 'materialization' of ideology which forms a practice inscribed in apparatuses which have a determinant effect on the development of a particular society. Although it was

Althusser who developed the concept of the materiality of ideological practice, "Gramsci's problematic" as Chantal Mouffe argues,

anticipated Althusser in several aspects: the material nature of ideology, its existence as the necessary level of all social formations and its function as the producer of subjects are all implicit in Gramsci... .(35)

Althusser, like Gramsci, rejected both humanist Marxism, with its emphasis on individuals as the subjects of history, and the simplistic economism which he considered inherent in traditional dialectic materialism. The major concern of the 'Althusserian project' was to define Marxist philosophy and question its theoretical right to exist. The objective was "the *investigation* of Marx's philosophical thought"(36), as Althusser put it in *For Marx*. Marxist philosophy is defined as a

theory of the differential nature of the theoretical formations and their history, that is, a theory of epistemological history.(37)

It is the theory of the history of the production of knowledge.

Althusser's work is an elaboration of dialectical materialism which contains a series of concepts pertaining to the nature and process of theoretical knowledge. In other words, his dialectical materialism is a set of 'epistemological' concepts. It incorporates, on the other hand, a set of historical concepts, the principles of 'practice' and 'production'. His epistemology is an attempt to elaborate the "new conception of knowledge"(38) a critical reading of Marx provided him with. In *For Marx*, he writes:

Where reality is concerned, we are never dealing with the pure existence of simplicity, be it essence or category, but with the existence of "concretes", of complex and structure beings and processes.(39)

Complexity is central to this Marxist conception of the social formation, and the various structures it constitutes ('practices', 'instances', 'levels') are different and distinct.

The principles of Althusser's theory are mapped out in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". In this essay, Althusser attempts to situate his theory of ideology in relation to the reproduction of conditions of production, and in particular to the reproduction of the relations of production. His general conceptual framework begins with the assumption that ideology is an autonomous "region", and his central thesis is: "Ideology interpellates

individuals as subjects" and it "has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects".(40) In doing so, it simultaneously subjects them to other absolute subjects such as God and the State. This thesis is complemented by an anti-empiricist thesis:

Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.(41)

Althusser maintains that ideology is not a representation of people's real conditions of existence but of their relations to the conditions of existence. Two further theses are advanced. First, "Ideology has a material existence", ie. "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices".(42) Second, "ideology has no history" and is "eternal", a notion suggesting that it is "omnipresent in its immutable form throughout history (= the history of social formations containing social classes)".(43) Althusser tends to see ideology as a distinct social practice, and not, as Gramsci regards it, as an organic part of social practices and struggles. The notion that ideological consciousness can be transformed by individuals who are subjected to dominant ideology is absent. K. McDonnell and K. Robins comment that Althusser's formulations regarding the question of ideology

are insensitive to the historical real world - and to their own status as mediated (historical) products. Althusser's fear of empiricism leads him to subordinate historical and social reality to his own abstract and inflexible theoretical principles. The mystified result ... is that the "real world is only the external appearance of the idea".(44)

Althusserianism, in an attempt to break with economism, emphasizes the autonomy of ideology and consequently disregards it as a sphere of struggle for domination. Althusser's concept of the 'ISAs' provides a thesis of divisions where Marx's notions of 'totality' and 'praxis' and his emphasis on historical specificity are marginalized through the division of the social whole into economic, political and ideological 'instances'.

In 'A Letter on Art in Reply to Andre Daspre', Althusser states:

I do not rank real art among the ideologies, although art does have a quite particular and specific relationship with ideology.(45)

Art, according to him, is a specific form of production inspite of its complex relationship with the ideological field. He writes in the same letter:

What art makes us *see*, and therefore gives to us in the form of '*seeing*', '*perceiving*' and '*feeling*' (which is not the form of *knowing*), is the *ideology* from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art, and to which it *alludes*.(46)

Althusser's emphasis on the notion that art makes us 'see' and 'perceive', but not 'know' the ideology shaping it implies that art distantiates itself internally from this ideology and gives us the 'lived experience' of ideology in its relationship to the real. This leads to a differentiation between art and science on the basis on the "*specific form*" in which they give us the object in different ways, the first in the form of '*seeing*' and the second in the form of "*knowledge*". Althusser's concept of art distancing itself from the ideology determing it is conceived as resulting from the nature of artistic expression, and perhaps emerging from the 'oppositional' character of art. So art becomes independent of cultural activities and establishes itself in a separate domain of its own.

In an almost Althusserian mode of analysis, P. Bourdieu deals with the Marxist concept of ideological forms, or "symbolic systems", as he calls them, as instruments of knowledge and communications understood solely in their relationship to the interests of the ruling class. He argues that dominant fractions, whose power is based on the economic, attempt to impose the legitimacy of their domination either directly through their own symbolic products, or indirectly through "conservative ideologies" serving the interests of the ruling class. But these ideologies serve these interests "only incidentally, ie. only to the extent they thereby serve their specific interests as professional producers".(47) Ideologists possess the power of threatening to 'monopolize' the capacity of defining the social world in a way which serves their own intersets, 'specific' interests, regardless of the common interests of the whole group. On this ground, he suggests that

'Symbolic systems' differ fundamentally depending on whether they are produced and by the same token, appropriated by the whole group or, on the contrary, produced by a body of specialists and, more precisely, by a relatively autonomous field of production and circulation... .(48)

Bourdieu attributes this to the division of social labour and the subsequent division into classes, and suggests that ideologies are formulated and structured on the basis of the specific historical functions they are designed to fulfil, first for the ideologists who produce them, and second - and only "incidentally" - to the class as a whole (ie. the non-specialists). This analysis, Bourdieu argues, enables us to escape the common trend in Marxist critiques which reduce ideological products to the interests of the class they serve, and to avoid the idealist 'semiological' conception of ideologies as self-contained entities subject to purely internal analysis. He points out that Marxist tradition does recognise the relative autonomy of ideologies and their producers, but it does not establish the foundations and social effects of this autonomy.

In his book *A Theory of Literary Production*, Pierre Macherey maps out a critical category focussing on the conditions of a text's production as inscribed "silently" within the literary text itself. The dominant strategy of his analysis is a development of Althusser's concept of the "symptomatic reading" - advanced in *Reading Capital* - which reconstructs a field of discourse to render possible the location of the conditions of a text's possibility. Macherey's objective is to articulate the hidden effects of ideological contradictions within the literary texts, contradictions which are veiled by various formal devices employed in the text (plot, character, etc.). In his investigation of the autonomy and independence of the literary text, he points out that

The work has its beginnings in a break from the usual ways of speaking and writing - a break which sets it apart from all other forms of ideological expression. This is why writing cannot be understood by analogy with some apparently similar activity that is in fact radically different... This break is not the same as the difference which separates art and life, nor is it the *real break* between ideology and theoretical knowledge; rather it is that specific difference which is defined by the characteristic use of the means of representation. (49)

This recognition of the formal identity of the literary text leads to the notion:

Through its relationship to the theoretical and ideological uses of language, the text is also influenced by the formal function of the writer and by the problem of his individual existence ... specific literary works are determined by

the history of literary production from which they receive the means of their own realisation.(50)

Macherey's formalistic analysis of literary production in *A Theory of Literary Production* was later developed in the light of Althusser's essay on "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". Macherey's and Etienne Balibar's essay "On Literature as an Ideological Form" adopts Althusser's analysis in its break with the 'essentialist' concept of ideology (ideology defined in terms of 'illusion' versus 'reality') and his emphasis on the material character of ideological formations in connection with the practices of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) and the process by which individuals become subjects to ideology. In the light of this analysis, they write:

the relationship of 'history' to literature is not like the relationship or 'correspondence' of two 'branches', but concerns the developing forms of an internal contradiction. Literature and history are not each set up externally to each other ... but are in an intricate and connected relationship, the historical conditions of existence of anything like literature. Very generally, this internal relationship is what constitutes the definition of literature as an ideological form.(51)

The production of literary effects are historically located as part of the ensemble of social practices. Literature, as an ideological form, is not a straightforward system of 'ideas' and 'discourses', but one which is manifested through the mechanisms and history of determinant practices in determinant social relations, ie. the ISAs. In more particular terms, the literary text is inseparable from a given "linguistic practice", which in its turn is inseparable from "an academic or schooling practice which defines both the conditions for the consumption of literature and the very conditions of its production also".(52) By relating literature to the material ensemble of practices, we are able to define its material connections which make literature a historic and social reality. In this interpretation, Macherey and Balibar relate literary production, its consumption, and its aesthetic effects to the dominant ideology, and conclude that the 'primary material' of the literary text is

the ideological contradictions which are not specifically literary but political, religious, etc.; in the last analysis, contradictory ideological realisations of determinate class positions in the class struggle.(53)

The 'effect' of the literary text, in the light of this analysis, is to provoke other ideological discourses which can sometimes be recognized as literary ones but which are usually merely aesthetic, moral, political, religious, discourses in which the dominant ideology is realized.(54)

Consequently, the literary text may be evaluated as "the agent for the reproduction of ideology in its ensemble".(55)

Terry Eagleton's study of the relationship between literary criticism and ideology is oriented in a similar Althusserian fashion. In *The Function of Criticism*, he points out the dialectic relationship between literary criticism and the ensemble of social practices, and comments:

The academization of criticism provided it with an institutional basis and professional structure; but by the same token it signalled its final sequestration from the public realm. Criticism achieved security by committing political suicide; its moment of academic institutionalization is also the moment of its effective demise as a socially active force.(56)

In his evaluation of the development of literary criticism, Eagleton states that it is only in its relation to 'culture' as a political project which reflects social reality that criticism could exist on any serious basis, and comments:

Today, apart from its marginal role in reproducing the dominant social relations through the academies... [criticism] is almost entirely bereft of such a *raison d'etre*. It engages at no significant point with any substantive social interest, and as a form of discourse is almost entirely self-validating and self-perpetuating.(57)

This attack on the institutionalization of literary criticism and its confinement to the academies attempts to restore criticism's relationship to political activity on the ideological level, and position it on a 'confrontational' ground with the bourgeois state and its institutions of hegemony.

Eagleton's discourse is further developed in *Criticism and Ideology* in which he seeks to establish in schematic form the major components of a Marxist theory of literature. The literary text must be an object to these modes of investigation: General Mode of Production, Literary Mode of Production, General Ideology, Authorial Ideology, Aesthetic Ideology, and Text. In his 'review' of a selection of English literary production from George Eliot to D.H. Lawrence,

based on investigating the internal relations between ideology and literary form, Eagleton points out that the most prominent ideological basis of this past literary culture is "organic form" based on bourgeois liberalism. The task of Marxist critics is subsequently defined in these terms:

The destruction of corporate and organistic ideologies in the political sphere has always been a central task for revolutionaries; the destruction of such ideologies in the aesthetic region is essential not only for a scientific knowledge of the literary past, but for laying the foundation on which the materialist aesthetic and artistic practices of the future can be built.(58)

It is on these grounds of the historical function of materialist critical practice that Eagleton attacks traditional 'Marxist aesthetics', and attempts to outline a strategy for 'revolutionary' criticism in his evaluation of Walter Benjamin in *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*. He states that 'Marxist criticism' originated as an uneasy alliance of two of the major variants of dominant ideology: "sociologistic positivism and neo-Kantian idealism".(59) Eagleton's argument emerges out of his critical analysis of Marxist discourses of culture and politics, and leads to the conclusion:

The production of Marxist analyses of traditional artefacts is an indispensable project: such artefacts, after all, are one of the grounds on which the ruling class has elected to impose its hegemony, and thus one of the grounds on which it must be contested. But such contestation cannot be the primary object of a 'Marxist criticism'. If that primary object is difficult to define, it is largely because it does not as yet properly exist. The primary task of the 'Marxist critic' is to actively participate in and help direct the cultural emancipation of the masses.(60)

Eagleton's vocabulary here is unmistakably Gramscian. The major emphasis is on the ideological struggle for hegemony which precedes the actual assault on physical institutions of the state. The primary function of 'intellectuals' (critics, writers, theoreticians, etc.) is to demystify bourgeois ideology and create a cultural consensus among 'subaltern' classes which is, in the final analysis, identical to class consciousness. Eagleton's use of Althusserianism is critical and vigorously productive, and his location of the struggle for power within the sphere of ideological hegemony shares with Gramsci's

discourse the emphasis on organization and the creation of a 'new' culture vital to the total transformation of social, economic and political formations.

Raymond Williams' work, which expands to engulf a wide range of discourses, provides analyses of 'culture' closely connected with vigorous enquiries into the material institution of culture. Williams' analysis makes no systematic distinctions between cultural processes and others. In *The Long Revolution*, he writes:

The truth about a society ... is to be found in the actual relations, always exceptionally complicated, between the system of decision, the system of communication and learning, the system of maintenance and the system of generation and nurture. It is not a question of looking for some absolute formula, by which the structure of these relations can be invariably determined. The formula that matters is that which, first makes the essential connections between what are never really separable systems, and second, shows the historical variability of each of these systems, and therefore the real organizations within which they operate and are lived.(61)

The same argument is advanced in *Marxism and Literature*:

Orthodox analysts began to think of 'the base' and 'the superstructure' as if they were separable concrete entities. In doing so they lost sight of the very process - not abstract relations but constitutive processes - which it should have been the special function of historical materialism to emphasize ... It is not 'the base' and 'the superstructure' that need to be studied, but the specific and indissoluble real processes... .(62)

Both passages imply the identification of particular distinctions, and the emphasis on the importance of totalities ("constitutive social processes") underlying these distinctions. They also advance the notion that the differences between economic production and other modes of formulation disappear in the actual process of 'creativity'. In this sense, all aspects of social and political production take a 'material' form. 'Culture', in this context, expands to all spheres of ideological and non-ideological modes of production.

Williams' concept, in spite of its materialist basis, poses difficulties. 'Culture' loses its precise characteristics and is difficult to define as a particular realm of hegemony possessing qualities different from those which characterize other modes of dominant modes of production. The problem this concept leads to is

the relationship between class and the production of culture. 'Class' is almost marginalized in its active role in the formation of culture, especially in Williams' early work. The conclusions of *Culture and Society*, under the heading "The Development of a Common Culture", suggest that culture is an inclusive term, an expansive concept potentially including all modes of production; "The idea of culture rests on a metaphor: the tending of natural growth".(63) In other words, "The idea of a common culture brings together, in a particular form of relationship, at once the idea of natural growth and that of its tending".(64) Williams approaches class culture in a classic form of idealist reduction. His 'culturalism' is envisaged by Anthony Barnett as an inversion of economism, a reduction "upwards".(65) Class culture is simplified into bourgeois culture - individualistic and modified by the notion of functionality and service - and working-class culture - centred around collectivity and solidarity. This is a reflection of Mathew Arnold's quest for elements of a 'common culture'. T. Eagleton defines Williams' approach as "historical materialism" and relates it, inspite of the difference of its basis (cultural and historical knowledge), to the nineteenth-century "moralists" he registers in *Culture and Society*.(66)

From our analysis of these approaches to class culture, which are Marxist in essence, we can summarize their major points of emphasis to establish the significance of these critical approaches in relation to our analysis and evaluation of working-class fiction. Literature is not an idealized form, but is defined as *a social formation*. It is not a neutral, autonomous sphere of production, but *a reflection of dominant ideologies*. The political vision of the individual author is determined by his/her *class position* in the society they live and work in. Writers reflect and perpetuate in their work the *interests of their own class* in their conceptions and their production of the literary material. Literature is *historically determined* by the particular *ideological forces* peculiar to the period in which it is formulated and produced. Concepts of 'high' and 'low' literature are not aesthetically constructed, but *historically determined* by the dominant ideological discourses in relation to other modes of cultural production (subaltern). Literary *representation* within the text is politically determined by the *class relationship* between *author* and *reader*, one that is originally initiated on the basis of class interests and ideological alliances. Art, by means of its depiction of reality, reveals *inherent contradictions* in the dominant ideology.

Works of art, though originally characterized by dominant ideologies, can be '*oppositional*' to the very ideologies in which they are produced. Finally, the establishment of a '*new art*' is not possible without the creation of a '*new culture*' which is '*oppositional*' in the ideological realm of hegemony to dominant culture. The creation of this '*new culture*' is a prerequisite to radical transformation of material production and social relations of production, and is vital to the success of socialist revolution. A '*new culture*', in this sense, is identical with *class consciousness* where individuals become aware of themselves and of their society, and realize their potentials in changing themselves and their society.

**PART TWO : 'The Seeds': Community and Identity in Early
Twentieth-Century Working-Class Fiction**

Section I : Robert Tressell, George Orwell, Walter Greenwood, Lewis
Grassic Gibbon

In her essay "The Leaning Tower" (1940), Virginia Woolf wrote:

In 1930 it was impossible - if you were young, sensitive, imaginative, not to be interested in politics; not to find public causes of much more pressing interest than philosophy. In 1930 young men ...were forced to be aware of what was happening in Russia; in Germany; in Italy; in Spain. They could not go on discussing aesthetic emotions and personal relations ... they had to read the politicians. They read Marx. They became communists; they became anti-fascists.(1)

Although this was a complaint about the hampering of 'literary developments' by the political factors of the 1930s, it is of great importance to us here because it was the impression of one of the pioneering 'modernists' of the 1920s. For if the 1920s were a decade when writers, like Woolf herself, shied away from social and political problems, the 1930s enforced a mode of commitment in one form or another. Aldous Huxley's concern with the intellect and its detachment, Woolf's preoccupation with sensibility and its subtle discriminations, and D.H. Lawrence's emphasis on dark emotional drives were rendered peripheral by the urgency and forcefulness of the 1930s' social, economic and political forces. What are these factors that necessitated such commitment?

To begin with, the First World War (1914-18) was an event of immense importance which left its marks on all aspects of cultural, social, economic and political life in Britain and elsewhere. New forces on the Left emerged, and under the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) socialism became a significant force in British politics. Mass unemployment, on the other hand, was a growing phenomenon as a result of the economic crisis after the war. In the inter-war years, the General Strike (1926) - caused by industrial dilemmas, political party feuds and social schisms - affected all aspects of British life. In 1929, the great Wall Street slump had disastrous repercussions everywhere in Europe. The 1930s witnessed the advent of an economic crisis that affected Britain, and Europe, in the form of persistent and endemic unemployment, and Britain knew deep economic depression, widespread distress and prolonged crises. The Labour Government collapsed, and a National Government was elected in 1931. The Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931, and Hitler came to

power in Germany in 1933 as a result of unemployment, social distress and militant nationalism. The Italians, under the control of another fascist dictator since 1922, invaded Abyssinia in 1935, and the establishment of Popular Front Governments in France and Spain followed in 1936. The Spanish Civil War broke out the same year, and a renewed Japanese invasion of Northern China took place in 1937. Nazi Germany invaded Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938, and the world crisis was crowned with the outbreak of World War Two in 1939.

The Spanish Civil War (1936-9) requires particular attention here because of the impact it had on British life. The war in Spain became international and turned to be the ideological battlefield of Europe. The Popular Front Government received help from the USSR and the International Brigade (whose left-wing opponents of Fascism included French and British elements), and the rebels, under the leadership of General Franco, were supported by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy to overthrow the Republican Government. British attitudes towards this war sharpened the schisms in public opinion, and the spell of pacifism was broken by the urgent necessity to fight against Fascism both at home (Sir Oswald Moseley established the British Union of Fascists in 1932), and abroad. Some young men, among whom was George Orwell, found a chance for positive action in volunteering to fight for Spanish democracy. On another level, the war intensified the spirit of class-warfare in political discussions which, in the last run, united the British Left which became militant and self-conscious. It is worth noting that the Marxist student movement moved from its 1920s individual rebellion and isolation from society to a collective one in the 1930s when it began to shed some of its romanticism and sectarianism, and understand its responsibility towards itself and the working class (Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics Unions). The climate was set for the entry of Marxism, and Marxists had to establish the Marxist approach to literature, history, philosophy and science as a genuine part of the discipline. In literature, for instance, there were scholars like Ralph Fox, Alick West, Jack Lindsay, Edgell Rickward, Montagu Salter, and a little later, Christopher Candwell, and Arnold Kettle. In brief, people in all types of creative activity, of different class origins, became conscious of the class nature of Britain and committed themselves to the working class. The class nature of Britain rose to the surface in many ways because of the economic crisis, skillful propaganda, explanation, writing and education. Important sections of the middle

class sympathised with the working class and wanted to take part in its struggle. The class-divisions of British society and the workers' activities (strikes, marches, etc.) awakened British intellectuals to an alternative culture and the responsibility of art. Consequently a new line for British intellectuals emerged where a transition from theories to real practice and commitment took place. In this atmosphere, many organizations emerged, some in support of the Republican Governments, others in support of General Franco. The British press was divided, and hundreds of pamphlets and books appeared. In general, the Left in Britain dominated public opinion, and of immense influence were the "New Statesman and Nation", the "Left Review" and the Left Book Club. The Left Book Club was founded in 1936 and aimed at education, dissemination of culture and the "creation of an educated public opinion".(2) The Club distributed and sold millions of pamphlets and books on various progressive issues. The emphasis was mainly on working-class conditions, war, and the nature of the capitalist crisis. Members of the Club ranged from intellectuals, professionals, clerks and manual workers. It had an immense impact on the political life in Britain: it associated new and unorganized sections of the population with the Labour movement, and created an atmosphere of understanding of various important issues like Fascism, racism and anti-semitism.

This increasing awareness to the nature of class divisions in Britain prompted an investigation, both fictional and sociological, into the conditions of the working class. J.B. Priestly envisaged, in his *English Journey* (1934), almost two nations in Britain; the working-class North and the prosperous middle-class South. George Orwell made a 'pilgrimage' to the 'depressed areas' in Northern England, and attempted to depict the conditions of working-class communities in his autobiographical book *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Both Walter Greenwood, in his *Love on the Dole* (1933), and Lewis Grassic Gibbon - in his trilogy *Sunset Song* (1932), *Cloud Howe* (1933) and *Grey Granite* (1934) - portrayed mass unemployment and conditions of work and living in working-class areas. Before the 1930s, there appeared, however, a small body of socialist fiction which attempted to bring into focus working-class conditions and socialist thought. Among these works were James Adderley's *Behold the Days Come* (1907), Robert Blatchford's *The Sorcery Shop* (1907), H.G. Wells's *The Misery of Boots* (1907) and *The Passionate Friends* (1913), Mary Agnes Hamilton's *Follow my Leader* (1921), James C. Welsh's *The Underworld* (1920), H.R.

Barbor's *Against the Red Sky* (1922) and Ellen Wilkinson's *Clash* (1929). In general, the novels of the period showed vagueness of perspective, naivety of approach, and sometimes a superficial and sentimental picture of the working class, and physical revolution is never suggested as a means to socialism.(3) The most important of the period's novels, written from within the working class and carrying a progressive ideology of the working class, was Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914). Before moving to consider the works of Orwell, Greenwood and Gibbon, cited above, I intend to account for Tressell's novel's significance and impact on the working-class writers to come.

Robert Noonan, Tressell's real name, was born in Dublin in 1871 in an educated Irish family. After his father's death and his mother's hasty re-marriage, he emigrated to South Africa where he lived and worked as a decorator. Upon returning to England, he lived and worked in Hastings until his aborted attempt to emigrate to Canada. He died in Liverpool in 1911. His experiences in both Johannesburg and Hastings had a major influence on the way he envisaged and portrayed the conditions of the English working class. His biographer F.C. Ball remarks that Tressell discovered that working men in Britain at the time were used as "doormats" and that they were regarded by their betters "with much the same lofty sentiments of contempt and distates as the black Africans had been in South Africa... ."(4) Another major influence on the manner in which Tressell portrayed the role of socialism and socialists in his book was the political atmosphere at the time, the rise of the modern Labour Movement nationally, and his own involvement in the politics and activities of this movement locally. These experiences were the raw material that Tressell used in writing *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. One fact to establish is that Tressell's identification with and commitment to the working class were not necessitated by his own origins, but rather motivated by political consciousness cultivated through his experiences and self-education. In spite of his artistic vocations and skills and his knowledge of several languages, he deliberately chose to become a worker. His niece confirmed to his biographer that Tressell was not born in the working class, and explained the motivations for his identification with them:

'He felt that the working class had been grievously wronged beyond all measures and he also believed that before he formed any

judgement or expressed opinions he would find out the smallest details and the innermost secrets from his own practical experience and life, and therefore he took upon himself and became the class he earnestly desired to help.' (5)

Tressell's experiences and his physical and political commitment to the working class produced one of the most profound statements about the conditions of the working class and their power to establish a socialist society.

Tressell's novel is the story of a group of 'Mugsborough' house painters and their relations to their tyrannical employers, and to their workmate Frank Owen who strives to show them the socialist path to freedom and dignity. The action covers one year and centres on the everyday exploitation of workers by the capitalist system. The dominant strategy of the novel is based on its satirical portrayal of the workers' ignorance and loyalty to the system, on presenting the case for socialism, and exploring the problems of disseminating political education and socialist thought among workers.

Tressell's depiction of the degrading social and economic conditions of workers is characterized with biting satire. This is inherent in the novel's title. He conceives of workers as the real philanthropists, a fact they do not know. Throughout the book, Tressell refers to them as 'philanthropists' in the sense that they sacrifice their labour force and lives, not for themselves but for their capitalist employers.(6) One of the striking features of Tressell's narrative is its satirical description of workers as supporters of the system that degrades them;

The ragged-trousered Tory workmen as they loitered about the streets, their stomachs empty, said to each other that it was a great honour for Mugsborough that their Member should be promoted in this way. They boasted about it and assumed as much swagger in this gait as their broken boots permitted.(7)

Examples of this bitter mockery are ample in the novel and take various forms. One of the workers, for instance, expresses his worries about the King and the Royal Family after Barrington's speech about socialism. And prior to any worker's articulation of anti-socialist opinions in support of the system, Tressell provides detailed physical descriptions of him to create a contrast between his real conditions and his expressed loyalty to the system. Tressell's criticism of the working class, for its inability to liberate itself

from the illusions hampering the fulfillment of its historical responsibility in the class struggle, is a continuation of a socialist realist style that was later developed in the writings of people like Gorky and O'Casey. Jack Mitchell points out that

This radical self-criticism conducted by the class through its writers is historically an essential part of the stripping for the common fight. In this way young proletarian socialist realism develops the constructive critical content and *function* of realism beyond anything achieved by bourgeois critical realism. The rising proletariat injects fresh blood into realism as such.(8)

Tressell's novel touches, in this sense, on one of the most significant issues of the historical construction of the working class: the contrast between the workers; illusory image of themselves with their actual conditions of life and work. In more political terms, the novel attempts to segregate 'false' consciousness from 'true' consciousness. Tressell's sarcasm, although it carries a pessimistic element, is the major thrust of the novel, for it brilliantly unmask the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in the very structure of capitalism. His satire gains significance once we realize that it is emerging from inside the working class, and that the book is consciously addressing itself to members of this class. The novel reveals the alienating effects of capitalist exploitation of labour both on workers and employers alike. Workers are shown to be alienated from their labour force, and there are various moments of realization of such alienation from work and from each other as they are sacked (Newman), made to spy against each other (Slyme), and compete with each other to satisfy their employers for

We must be selfish: the system demands it. We must be selfish or we shall be hungry and finally die in the gutter. The more selfish we are the better off we shall be ... it is a matter of self-preservation - we must either injure or be injured.(9)

Hunter, "Nimrod" the "Mighty Hunter before the Lord" as he is sarcastically described in the novel, is the tyrannical foreman who terrifies workers and suffers from the same treatment at the hands of Rushton, the firm's owner. On the other hand, he is a slave to his endless work and supervision of workers. His alienation and enslavement are evident in his illness and withdrawal in his office, and culminate in his suicide in a fit of temporary insanity towards the end of the novel. Tressell's sarcastic portrayal of the Council

members in "The Brigands' Cave" illustrates their ignorance and shallowness. The alienation of the 'masters' from their own property is cynically implied in Rushton's speech at the Beano dinner;

The masters could not do without the men, and
the men could not live without the masters ...
It was a matter of division of labour: the men
worked with their hands and the masters worked
with their brains... .(10)

The intellectual ability of the masters has already been revealed in their meeting in "The Brigands' Cave" where their complete ignorance demonstrates itself in their discussion of scientific facts in a manner that mocks Rushton's assigning of brain work to himself and the propertied 'masters' who dominate the town's economic and intellectual institutions. It is probably symbolic of the demoralizing effect of the capitalist system that Tressell chose the renovating of an old building for the novel's setting, rather than a new one.

The major characteristic of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is its quality and intention as a socialist propaganda. Yet, what distinguishes it from other novels of socialist propaganda, as Peter Miles points out,

is the extent to which it recognizes its own
status as propaganda and offers itself for use
as much as contemplation. It depicts suffering;
it also persuades the reader to recognize the
cause of the suffering.(11)

It is worth mentioning that William Morris, who assigned to writing the function of creating socialists, had a major influence on Tressell, one that manifests itself in the novel's orientation towards political didacticism. Both Morris and John Ruskin, we are told by Tressell's biographer, were among those Tressell used to quote in conversation.(12) The novel's consciousness of its propagandist tone reduces the risk of the obtrusive political content fragmenting narration and action. The power of the narrative lies exactly in the way its political content attempts to undermine the contradictory structure of capitalist society. The political content of the first chapter, "An Imperial Banquet. A Philosophical Discussion. The Mysterious Strange. Britons Never Shall be Slaves", provides explicit conversations about the causes of poverty and the idleness and ignorance of workers. At the same time, it provides an ironical comment on the contrast between the ideas discussed and the workers' actual behaviour. This contrast gives the obtrusive political content the function of commentary on the way the workmen's actions undermine

their very position. Owen's and Barrington's 'lectures' on socialism and the workings of capitalism in "The Oblong", "The Great Oration" and "The Reign of Terror. The Great Money Trick" may be viewed, according to liberal literary criticism, as didactic episodes that undermine the 'aesthetic value' of a literary work. But Tressell's dramatization of these lectures and the ironic effect they create in the overall context of the novel give them the power they have in the novel's structure. Raymond Williams recognizes the functional thematic effect these chapters have, and remarks that Tressell

includes - it is the most radical innovation in his work, often sitting uneasily with the other writing but there it is, and extraordinarily successful - the two interventions which do what to this day the fiction textbooks tell you can't do, I mean the two teaching chapters 'The Oblong' and 'The Great Oration'.(13)

Once we take into consideration that one of the central intentions of the novel is the problems underlying the dissemination of socialist thought among workers, and that both Owen and Barrington are educated workmen whose major concern is educating their fellow workers in socialist culture, these didactic speeches and conversations could be viewed as part of the novel's realistic, and ironic, depiction of its fictional world. Peter Miles locates these didactic speeches within the novel's attempt to promote "the activity of persuasion itself", one that is central to the novel as a whole. He argues that Tressell's use of such devices is not due to his incapability to dramatize, but rather he

is arguably involved most pointedly in objectifying the process of persuasion. This technique implicates the reader in the process of persuasion as subject as well as object, by imaging such favoured characters as Frank and Barrington, with whom identification can be made as propagandists within the fictional world. Here the activity of persuasion is firmly placed within the frame of the art-work.(14)

Owen's propagandist identity is one aspect of the novel's presentation of itself as a propaganda, and part of its major concern with unmasking both the contradictions in capitalist society and the 'false' consciousness of the workers. Tressell's book is a remarkable departure from critical realism in the manner it moves from a descriptive account of working-class conditions to a more dynamic exploration of the illusions that hamper the workers from acquiring 'true' consciousness. The central focus of the novel is the group of

workers of which, inspite of the differences, Owen is the quintessence. The novel introduces Owen's, and Barrington's in this sense, preaching through the collective work experience, and his impact is felt only through this dynamic collective experience. In other words, Owen breaks with the type of bourgeois hero and becomes a 'hero-collective'. His speeches and socialist thought become the articulation of the muted 'true' consciousness of his fellow workmen. He is granted a practical perspective through his socialist vision and the objective exploitation of his class. This portrayal of the 'hero-collective' has its impact on both the novel's political content and its structure. Tressell, in the words of Jack Mitchell, "replaced the old plot-in-length with a new type plot-in-breadth".(15)

The story of the central hero becomes, in this structural innovation, a reflection of that of the workers as a collective group living and working in a capitalist system. Various aspects of proletarian life are divided among different characters on the broad plane of daily experience. This division shifts the centrality of the novel from a single character, the hero, to the group of workers collectively where the hero is rendered an integral part of the collective work-life experiences. It is worth noting here that Owen's socialist 'Lectures' gain significance, in the structure of the novel, only in their relationship to the workers' conditions, to their ignorance and illusionary vision of themselves, and to their impact on individual workmen in the context of practical daily experience. Bert's sympathy with Owen and respect for him, Harlow's realization of his exploitation "'Workin' our guts out like a lot of slaves for the benefit of other people'", Easton's confession that "'I begin to think that a great deal of what Owen says is true'"(16), and Newman's realization of his workmates' solidarity and collaboration through their help after his sacking and imprisonment, all these examples and many other experiences give Owen's thought and preaching a collective character that is realized only through the workmen's collective experience.

This dynamic of collective experience is most evident in the problematic of the dissemination of socialist thought both in the book's fictional world, and the history of the novel's distribution and circulation in the real world. We have already referred to the influence Tressell's involvement in Labour politics and the 1905 General Election campaign had on his book. Tressell was acutely aware of the intellectual starvation of the working class, and he believed

that culture should be founded on their understanding of their own lives. One aspect of his political activism was writing leaflets, manifestoes, election addresses, and making posters for the SDP. In Chapter 43 "The Good Old Summer-time" of his novel, Tressell describes an attack on a Socialist van, an incident which took place during one of the meetings of the SDP.(17) Tressell envisaged culture and knowledge as belonging to everyone by right. In the novel, he gives priority to knowledge and social consciousness as the guarantee for human dignity. F.C. Ball points out that Tressell conceived of knowledge and cultural entertainment as vital aspects of working-class life, so he formed with Gover 'The South Coast Amusement Company' where lectures and entertainment shows were held. This emphasis on cultural activities found expression in his book, such as the Christmas party in "The Pandorama" where various workers and their families celebrate together and Bert works with the children to perform a pantomime about unemployment and exploitation. Another example is Owen's distribution of pamphlets and leaflets on socialism among his workmates, and his and Barrington's activism in the election campaign. One major aspect of Tressell's strong belief in the necessity of disseminating socialist thought manifested itself in his own written work that covered many years of actual experience. The raw material for his writings was notes from reading, of events in the press and at work, and tales told by friends. These pieces together were to become *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.(18)

A close reading of the novel shows Tressell's infusion of art with argument, its self-containment for the dissemination of ideas; the "Great Money Trick", "The Great Oration", etc. In this sense, the book offers itself as a political weapon against Conservative and Liberal politics and strives to establish an alternative political consensus among workers and socialists. Cultural forms of struggle are infused with political struggle, for the battle through cultural forms is already lost and political education is the only weapon left. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* has had no place in the literary canon, for proletarian literature is unable to develop in a bourgeois culture. The major reason for the survival of Tressell's book has been the readers' interaction with the text outside the history of the academy. The popular tradition of interpersonal recommendation and dissemination, inherent in the history of the British Labour movement, prompted the continuing reading and circulation of the book. It was through this tradition that the unabridged edition of the novel was

published in 1955 and was reprinted ten times by 1985 by one publishing house, Lawrence and Wishart. Similarly, the book was put on stage by Tom Thomas and performed by the Hackney People's Players in 1927, was adapted several times after that, and both the book and Tressell's life were dramatized on television in 1967 and 1983.(19) George Orwell recalls how he discovered the book in the early 1930s, and describes it as "a wonderful book".(20) Alan Sillitoe relates how the book was passed on to him while he was with the RAF in Malaya.(21) Sillitoe wrote an introduction to the 1965 Panther edition of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, and the practice of circulating the book finds its way into his novel *Key to the Door* where Brian Seaton is given a copy of Tressell's book in Malaya. This circulation of the book is integral to its mode of existence. Eagleton and Pierce remark that besides Tressell's book, "there cannot be many serious novels which frequently change hands on building sites, in factories and among trades unionists".(22) This is a breakthrough in the identity of the novel as a middle-class artistic expression, where the function of the novel as a private possession and leisure entertainment is transformed into a collective functional political weapon. As I have mentioned earlier, this functional role of literature that shaped the history and character of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is dramatically present in the book itself (Owen's small library of Socialist books and pamphlets which he lends to other workers). The ways in which readers have encountered the book have almost characterized and influenced their reading of it, and established its history and mode of existence outside the commercial circles. This popular tradition of circulation and lending goes back to the nineteenth century where autodidacts read and passed on books to other workers, and the Owenites and Chartists emphasized the necessity of disseminating socialist thought among the working classes.(23) Tressell's novel remains a *tour de force* in the publishing history of the British proletarian novel in its attack on capitalism, its propagandist vigour, and its break with the bourgeois novel's mode of existence and consumption.

At the beginning of this chapter, I accounted for the circumstances that gave the 1930s the characteristic of commitment, and prompted English writers from various class backgrounds to reflect in their works the central issues of the decade. As the working classes and their conditions were at the centre of attention, middle-class intellectuals found themselves faced with an intricate dilemma.

Willing to fulfil their self-appointed task of committing themselves to the English proletariat, they realized that they were bereft of any genuine knowledge of the working class or of its revolutionary potentials. Many of the left-wing middle-class writers had no experience of workers, and had hardly experienced their depravity and social hardship. Unwilling, or unable at their best, to cross the barrier into the ranks of these workers, most of them retreated, uneasily searching for a compromise. The attitude expressed by Arthur Calder-Marshall was characteristic of this dilemma;

We were like those neurotics who cannot cross a road; one step from the security of the pavement into the road and we retreated. And on the pavement, we argued, was the material for our art. All that we knew was the middle-class society which we denounced; we couldn't leave it, anymore than the scarabaeus can leave its ball of ordure. So in the fear of losing the old material of our art, we never acquired new material. (24)

Such writers had two alternatives; to form a Proletarian Committee to provide them with information about the conditions of work and workers in proletarian communities, or go on personal document-gathering excursions into working-class areas to try and learn about their social and economic conditions. Naomi Mitchison was one of those who depended on a Proletarian Committee to provide her with the raw material that made her novel *We Have Been Warned* (1935). A typical example of the other writers who attempted to know working-class conditions for themselves was George Orwell whose excursion into working-class territories found expression in his book *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937).

The 'Orwell Case', as I like to call it, is far from simple for various reasons like his class-background, the paradoxes in his 'working-class' writings, and his changing political convictions and beliefs. I will first consider *The Road to Wigan Pier*, then attempt to provide a brief analysis of the factors and forces which created Orwell, the writer and the socialist. Late in 1935 Orwell was asked by Victor Gollancz to undertake an investigation of working-class conditions in the industrial north of England and to register his findings for the Left Book Club. Orwell found in this offer a chance to solve some of his financial problems and, at the same time, to bring him the fame which his previous works had failed to do (the Left Book Club books were distributed to about 40,000 readers), and to provide him with a rich experience that would enable him to know the

real conditions of working-class life. Orwell, it is worth mentioning, had already had political beliefs that made him sympathetic to the working class and socialism; ones that he had failed so far to implement either in writing or in practice. *The Road to Wigan Pier*, in Raymond Williams' words

marked an entry to a new project: as a political writer, which was to last the rest of his life. For while the first part of the book is the kind of reporting that he had been asked for ... the second part is an essay on class and socialism which is effectively the first statement of Orwell's basic political position.(25)

The book is divided into two parts. The first includes detailed, and sometimes statistical, accounts of the mining industry, and an attempt to portray the life of the unemployed, their budgeting and dietary problems, and the conditions of the slums. This takes the form of autobiographical sketches from a personal perspective. The observation is clearly that of an outsider, and there is hardly any attempt to transcend the physical appearances of the people and the place. As Keith Alldritt notes, there is absolutely

no evidence of memorable contact with any member of the social group which Orwell had come expressly to seek out and to know.(26)

The only working men Orwell's experience in the area allowed him to mention were those he met during his stay at the Brooker's shabby lodging-house in Lancashire. The working-class identity is blurred through broad generalizations of attitudes and values which deprived the class from its individual human characteristics. One of the distinguishing features of Orwell's account of working-class life in this part of the book is the ambivalent attitude of sympathy and hatred, "a kind of conscious double vision ... central to Orwell".(27) What characterizes this attitude is Orwell's consciousness of it. An example of this is his analysis of the notion whether the "lower classes smell"(28) or not. On the other hand, Orwell saw the working class in almost the same stereotypical way it had been seen by other bourgeois writers. The working classes had always been connected with notions of ugliness, dirt, and squalor, and aspects of their dignity and humanness had been reduced to the narrow image of their physical conditions. Notice, for example, the way Orwell describes a working-class woman he happens to see through the train window:

At the back of one of the houses a young woman was kneeling on the stones, poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe which ran from the sink

inside and which I suppose was blocked. I had time to see everything about her - her sacking apron, her clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold. She looked up as the train passed, and I was almost near enough to catch her eye. She had a round pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and it wore, for the second in which I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen.(29)

This passage serves as a prime example of the extent to which Orwell actually knew about the working class during his trip that lasted two months. In the second part of the book, Orwell departs completely from this documentation to repeat his opposition to imperialism and the class system, and to attack most forms of the organized socialist movement and especially various kinds of English middle-class socialists. He draws social and political conclusions not to the taste of the left-wing orthodoxy. His attack against orthodox British socialists and what he knew as Marxism was an embarrassment to the Left Book Club, and Gollancz wrote a foreward in which he expressed his total rejection of Orwell's opinions about socialism. Orwell's attack was clearly directed against British middle-class socialists. At one point, he writes:

One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words 'Socialism' and 'Communism' draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist, and feminist in England.(30)

Orwell's inability to see the working class as a progressive force capable of achieving socialism was inevitable for his judgement, not only in *The Road to Wigan Pier* but in other works, was based on mere observation.

Born in a 'lower-upper-middle-class' home, Orwell expressed his resentment, guilt and pity for the working classes in his first three books: *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), *Burmese Days* (1934) and *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935). He similarly put the working class at the centre of his novels, *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* (1936) and *Coming Up For Air* (1939). In both these novels, Orwell's image is fatalistic as there is no alternative envisaged except total submission to the mechanical course of events, and the causes of his characters', Gordon Coimstock and George Bowling, are hardly identified. Orwell hated what he saw of the consequence of

capitalism, but he was never able to see it as an economic and political system. This inability to grasp the general forces involved in shaping society is evident in both his 'documentary' and 'fictional' works. Up to 1937, Orwell saw the world struggle as between the Left and the Right, and he sided with the former. Afterwards, he envisaged this struggle in different terms; between democracy and totalitarianism, and he did not care whether totalitarianism called itself Left or Right. What changed his outlook was his Spanish experience, where he joined the militia of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista) in 1937. With *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), Orwell completed his break with the orthodox Left which he had attacked in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Later in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), he bitterly satirized, by means of social allegory, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and post-war Stalinist Russia. By the time Orwell came to write these two books, he had already lost all political faith, and his books reflected his despair and loss of faith in the political religion he had always desired to believe in and identify himself with. Vital to the analysis of the 'Orwell Case' is an understanding of the political environment of which Orwell was a contemporary. First, his life as a socialist matches almost exactly the era of Stalinist domination and the frustration of revolutionary hopes. In Barcelona he had a bitter experience of that domination and frustration. Consequently, his work was to reflect directly that generation of despair. Second, his life as a socialist also coincided with the defeat of the British working-class movement. The failure of the General Strike in 1926 had a tremendous influence on the morale of British socialists, and the mass unemployment in the 1930s provided another blow. The depression and apathy induced in sections of the working class are strongly emphasized in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. The outcome was a gloomy theorization out of the very centre of Stalinist domination and defeated working-class militancy. Although Orwell pointed out that *Animal Farm* was not an attack on socialism but on Stalinism, the very form of the book, a fable, addresses the issue of the necessary and inevitable failure of revolution. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* projects into the future all the negative aspects Orwell witnessed in the 1940s. By the time he came to write his last book, he was totally alienated from the socialists and the working-class movement. In fact, the notion of 'alienation' is central to Orwell's life, vision, and work. Raymond Williams, although he rates Orwell as one of the most important

figures in the British literary scene this century, finds that the key to a genuine understanding of Orwell is unmasking the "paradox" which he terms "the paradox of exile".(34) His inability to separate socialism from the socialists he attacked, and his rejection of a society based on exploitation and contradictions led him to abandon the very standards he genuinely struggled for. Belonging to society meant, for him, being part of totalitarianism, and exile was the only way out. Williams' evaluation of Orwell's "paradox" sums up both his exile, his genuine intentions, and his influence:

He was a humane man who communicated an extreme of inhuman terror; a man committed to decency who actualized a distinctive squalor ... He was a socialist, who popularized a severe and damaging criticism of the idea of socialism and of its adherents. He was a believer in equality, and a critic of class, who founded his later work on a deep assumption of inherent inequality, inescapable class difference.(32)

A few years prior to the publication of Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Walter Greenwood and Lewis Grassic Gibbon had produced two works that had a tremendous impact on their time and the working-class literary tradition. Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* and Gibbon's trilogy *A Scots Quair* were significant landmarks in their reflection, though different in emphasis, of the social and economic condition of the British working class in the 1930s.

The economic depression, we repeat once again, after the Wall Street crash of 1929 gave way to a large economic crisis and to the rise and entrenchment of European Fascism which culminated in the Spanish Civil War and the outbreak of the Second World War. In Britain, this fundamental historical rupture manifested itself in social and economic terms with the working class, especially after the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, bearing the heavy burden of depression. And by 1933 mass unemployment among British workers was a concrete, pressing reality whose depression and mass unemployment were reflected in the introduction of the Means Test in 1931, and the Jarrow Hunger March of 1936. Both Greenwood's and Gibbon's works appeared on the backcloth of this reality. Set in the 1920s and early 1930s, *Love on the Dole* was based on Greenwood's experiences of work and life in Salford, Lancashire. The novel is a documentation of a specifically contained working-class community, Hanky Park, in the throes of the Depression. In spite of the novel's remarkable social impact during the 1930s and indeed afterwards, it fails to depart from

the traditional, bourgeois realist novel both in its form and ideology.

One of the major statements of *Love on the Dole* is the impotence of the working class and the uselessness of any collective class struggle. This notion underlies both the frame of the novel's narrative and its fictional events. In spite of its plot action, the narrative remains limited to the depiction of the static existence of the working class. Both the persistence of hardship and toil and the purposelessness of struggle against this monstrous environment are emphasized by the intended construction of the narrative's circularity. The novel ends where it started ten years earlier. This is how Chapter Two of the novel opens:

5.30 AM

A drizzle was falling.

The policeman on his beat paused awhile at the corner of North Street halting under a street lamp. Its staring beams lit the million globules of fine rain powdering his cap. A cat sitting on the doorstep of Mr Hulkington's the grocer's shop, blinked sleepily.

'Tsh-tsh-tsh-tsh-tsh', said the bobby and stooped to scratch the animal's head. It rose, crooked its back, cocked its tail, pushed its body against his hand and miowed...

At No 17, Mrs Hardcastle, an old woman of forty, came downstairs 'Ah-ah-ing' sleepily, hair in disarray ... It was cold. She stooped, raked out the grate and stuffed it with a newspaper ... Then she stood, indecisively, still sleep-dazed, as though at a loss what next to do: 'Oh, aye' she said: 'Coal' ... 'Harry, Sal. Come on, now; five an' twenty to six'.(33)

Ten years later - the novel covers the years 1923-1931 - this is how the novel ends:

5.30 AM

A drizzle was falling.

Ned Narkey, on his beat, paused under the street lamp at the corner of North Street. Its staring beams lit the million globules of fine rain powdering his cap. A cat, sitting on the doorstep of Mr Hulkington's, the grocer's shop, blinked at Ned, rose, tail in air, and pushed its body against Ned's legs.

'Gaaa-cher bloody thing', he muttered, and lifted it a couple of yards with his boot ...

In Mrs Hardcastle's house, Helen came downstairs, 'Ah-ah-ing' sleepily ... she shivered and shrugged. It was cold. She stooped, raked out the grate and stuffed it with paper ... 'Come on, Harry, lad. Five an' twenty t'six, Monday mornin' an' pourin' o' rain.'(34)

Both passages derive expressive quality from six major elements: time, place, conditions, action, generation shift and language. An analysis of these elements in relation to the novel's form and content would be sufficient to outline the underlying ideology of Greenwood's novel.

The time in both passages, 5.30 AM, is exactly the same although there is a temporal distance of ten years separating the action of the first from that of the second passage. The place is also the same, the corner of North Street in Hanky Park and the same house in the same street. Both physical and natural conditions are completely identical in both passages; rain outside and cold and squalor inside the house. Although action seems similar in both passages, it differs radically in relation to the policemen's treatment of the cats (or the cat?) while it remains the same inside the house. In the first passage, the local policeman's action is based on a human relationship between a powerful agent and a less powerful, that is not to say helpless, animal. In the second, this relationship is transformed into an almost 'fascist' aggression where Ned Narkey (the policeman who helps in the suppression of the demonstration against unemployment and participates in clubbing down Larry Meath one of the march's organizers and the strongest socialist voice in the novel) viciously kicks the cat for no other reason than aggression. It might probably sound as an exaggerated injection of symbolism into the scene if one conceived of this relationship in terms of authority and the working class. The scene, however, has a suggestive symbolic power. The rather superficial shift in generation, where Mrs Hardcastle and the local policeman in the first passage are replaced by the younger Helen and Ned, implies both the advent of a fascist domination (for Ned is one of the policemen who violently dispose the workers' march in which Larry Meath suffers injuries which cause his death) and the persistence of working-class poverty and squalor. Finally, language is used, almost word by word, to describe the setting of the scene and the description of action inside the house and outside in the street, except the words used to describe the policeman's treatment of the cats whose intimacy and gentleness are transformed into aggression and violence.

What does all this mean in relation to the novel and the symbolic message the frame of the narrative is set to convey? On the one hand, there is the explicit suggestion that all the events and tragedies depicted between the first and last pages in the novel had no effect on the material conditions of Hanky Park community. Helen, the new

Mrs Hardcastle after her marriage to Harry, is performing exactly the same tasks in the same way where the time and events of the novel mean nothing. Characters are still trapped in the same environment, and the only ones who manage to break through are Larry, ironically enough through his death, and Sally, more ironically through prostitution.

Greenwood denies, within the novel, any possibility for social, economic or political change. The novel is a descriptive expression of the depression, squalor and toil of the working class, and an assertion of the inescapability of this injustice. This is inherent in a naturalistic mode of expression that characterizes the novel and the pessimistic, fatalistic vision of the author. The outcome is a moving reflection of working-class poverty, one that is unable, in the nature of its shallow approach, to go beyond physical conditions to explore the potential for change, a weapon the working class is granted by its very conditions. The world of Hanky Park is consequently presented as unchanging and, more importantly, remote from any possibility for such a change. Like many other English working-class novels, *Love on the Dole* is exclusively confined to the task of stating the problem. The realistic stream of the novel's narrative transforms itself throughout the novel into a naturalism combined with escapist romanticism. This is most evident in Greenwood's treatment of the characters of Harry and Sally Hardcastle and Larry Meath. Harry's ambitions are limited to becoming a well-paid engineering craftsman. Like other characters, his dream is shattered by the world of Hanky Park. His apprenticeship, once it is achieved, makes nothing of him except an errand-boy with no contact with the factory machines from which he longed to derive his masculinity and status as a "man". Even when he gets promoted, his work is dull and underpaid. His attitude of "it made you dizzy, weary, having to think on all these things" (35) alienates him from the actual world around him, and marks his naivety, social conformism, inability to rebel, and his confusion and shock when he is made redundant and living on the dole. Even his resentment of his condition is expressed in questions he is not able to answer;

Didn't the people responsible know what this refusal to give him work meant to him? Didn't they know he now was a man? Didn't they know he wanted a home of his own ... Oh, what use was there in asking the air such questions? (36)

And when his dole money is completely cut with the introduction of the Means Test, we find him "mystified" and confused. His relationship

with a factory girl, Helen, blossoms in these demoralizing conditions when they manage to go on a romantic holiday after Harry wins a horse-bet. This escapism is interrupted by the harsh realities of Helen's pregnancy and their moving into her parents' house.

Greenwood centres the theme of *Love on the Dole* around the two central characters, Sally Hardcastle and Larry Meath. Sally is stereotypically presented as a heroine springing out of the pages of a romantic novel. There is hardly anything in her that belongs to Hanky Park. She is described as

Eighteen, a gorgeous creature whose native beauty her shabbiness could not hide. Eyes dark, lustrous, haunting, abundant black hair tumbling in waves; a full, ripe, pouting mouth and a low, round bosom. A face and form such as any society dame would have given three-quarters of her fortune to possess. (37)

This romantic idealization is further developed in her portrayal as different from other women in Hanky Park, politically conscious, sacrificing her virginity to the rich bookie, Sam Grundy, to guarantee her father's employment and take the role of the fallen but kept woman, and a heroine who loses her lover in a tragic circumstance. Her romantic image is woven out of the woman as a heroine and a slut. In many ways, Larry Meath is Sally's male counterpart. He is the classic romantic hero; moral, gentle, sick, intellectual and committed to socialism, one who is savagely sacrificed by Hanky Park. His romantic portrayal removes him, like Sally, from the world he inhabits, an alienation evident in his aloofness and remoteness from other workers and members of the community. He is the novel's only political figure whom Greenwood envisages as an alternative for the life of the people of Hanky Park. His romantic portrayal as an isolated individual confirms the novel's view that socialism can be adopted as a belief only by eccentric individuals removed, by their very individual nature, from their communities. One of the effective scenes, however, which is suggestive of the money trick episode in Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, is when Larry explains to his workmates the nature of surplus value. His sacking, nonetheless, for his views and his death in the demonstration he helps to organize hamper any development of his political message, for Greenwood's priority is dramatizing and romanticizing events. It is the plot that motivates events and characters, and not characters, beliefs or actions that make the plot of *Love on the Dole*. This is most evident in the only collective action the novel is able to show

Hanky Park capable of achieving; the demonstration against unemployment.

Greenwood injects the scene of the march to give variety to the plot and provide the final romantic thrust by mixing politics and love. The demonstration is depicted as a spontaneous collective action channelled by socialist elements like Larry. One of the policemen appointed to suppress the march is Ned Narkey who is Larry's rival for Sally. In the march scene, the romantic rivalry between the two men is savagely confused with the political causes that motivated the workers' march. The march is violently suppressed by the police and Larry is clubbed down and dies later. Greenwood's final emphasis in the scene centres on the confused Harry witnessing the event:

Speechless, Harry stared for a moment. He gulped, made a dive for Larry's hat, then, dazed, hysterical, brain a riot of confusion, he, hugging Larry's crumpled hat, pushed his way into the crowd on the pavement and was lost in the surging masses.(38)

Larry's death and Harry's inability to learn anything from it underlie the novel's conclusion that collective class struggle is pointless. On the other hand, any mention of the workers' demonstration or any results that might have influenced Hanky Park is completely absent from the remaining pages of the novel. Instead, the novel's conclusion ends on an escapist reconcilatory note. Sally brings happiness in the form of employment to her brother and father by prostituting herself to the local bookmaker. The personal tragedies which constitute the plot are resolved not by any political or collective action, but by Sally's offering of her beauty as a commodity. The political events in the novel are nothing, in the end, more than a background ornament to the plot. Carole Snee argues that Greenwood never challenges the form of the bourgeois novel or its underlying ideology, and writes that he is

a working-class novelist totally trapped by liberal ideology both as an explanation of the world, and as it shaped the novel form.(39)

I referred to the element of language at the beginning of my analysis of the two passages quoted above. I would like to point out two aspects of the use of language in *Love on the Dole*. While Greenwood seems not to compromise when it comes to his characters' language (ie. his use of tough colloquialism), he tends at times to interrupt the continuity of the dialogue to insert a translation of dialect words;

'An owld man (father) heard it from another
bloke...'
'an' two slops (policemen) dragged him off t'
prison.'
'let 'em try clemmin' (going hungry) like
us...'(40)

It is obvious that Greenwood was directing his novel to a non-working-class audience. This partly explains the novel's moralistic tone in its stating of the working-class problems in an attempt to stir middle-class consciousness. On the other hand, it helps to explain the liberal ideology underlying the novel's narrative and account for its strategy of dismissing class struggle as purposeless and tragic. When I previously included the element of 'language' as one of the elements in the two quoted passages derive their meaning from, I had in mind something deeper than the notion of the repetition of vocabulary as such. Language, be it narratorial or dialogue, is one of the major ideological tools in writing, particularly in working-class literature. In a class-divided society, class distinctions are directly reflected in speech, and the notion of the 'literary' in itself is established on the idea of difference.(41) In the two passages quoted before, the repetition of the same words in the same context carries more political meanings than it is assumed at first glance. In both passages, working-class vocabulary (Mrs Hardcastle's and Helen's words) is immediate, functional, and void of cognitive power. In the same way as the plot's action and drama are muted and rendered futile at the end of the novel, language had not acquired any novel dimension through fictional experience. On the contrary, it has remained self-contained, and unable to articulate the political experience which is rendered a momentary appendage of the romantic components of the plot. As Carole Snee argues in her analysis of *Love on the Dole*, the popularity and social impact of the novel were due to its depiction of working-class conditions in the 1930s, and its appropriation into the 'literary' was a result of the liberal bourgeois ideology underlying the text's form and content.(42).

In spite of the fact that Gibbon, like Greenwood, applies the circular frame of the narrative in his trilogy *A Scots Quair*, the novels of the trilogy strongly depict a fundamentally dynamic social transformation. This is achieved on two levels: the overall theme of the destruction of the Scottish peasant crofters and the rise of capitalist industrialization after the First World War, and the gradual shifts in consciousness from Chris's rural individualism to

the urban working-class collectivism of her son Ewan. While Greenwood employs political events to graft them on a static image of successive generations, Gibbon presents the growth of political awareness and collective action evolving and developing from within the dialectical relationship between individuals and social change.

Like Greenwood and Lawrence, Gibbon was born in the class and country he came to write about, growing up among the farmers and agricultural labourers of North-East Scotland. *A Scots Quair* is centred on the recent history of the Scottish Lowlands and the upheavals caused by industry in its rural communities. The trilogy's technique is well-gearred to the rich subject it deals with: a changing social, economic and political system in which people struggle to grasp the meaning of their economic and spiritual destiny. Chris Guthrie, the trilogy's heroine, progresses as an analogue to the various changes depicted in the novels. In *Sunset Song* (1952), the least overtly political and most autobiographical of the trilogy's novels, Chris grows to womanhood in the agrarian life of Kinraddie and becomes Chris Tavendale. Her first marriage produces a son, Ewan, who follows his mother through the remainder of the trilogy. The major event this novel concentrates on is the First World War and its cataclysmic effect on rural Scotland in the years 1911-1919. Chris's marriage to a farmer in this novel symbolizes Scotland's link with the land, and her conception and giving birth to a son underlies the land's productivity and richness. In *Cloud Howe* (1933), Chris moves from the agrarian life of Kinraddie to the squalid mill town of Segget where she marries a minister of the Church, Robert Colquhoun, a marriage that produces a short-lived child. The political and personal turning point of this novel comes with the 1926 General Strike, and depicts the Scottish economy in the post-war early depression. The defeat of the workers is symbolized in Chris's marriage that produces a short-lived child and in Robert's turning away from reformist socialism to religious mysticism. Chris's marriage to a minister in this novel symbolises the Church. In the final novel *Grey Granite* (1934), Chris moves from Segget to the industrial city of Duncairn, and becomes Chris Ogilvie. The novel's emphasis shifts from the consequent hardening of political attitudes after the defeat of the General Strike to the Communism of the 1930s. Ewan emerges as a communist committed to class struggle and political activism. Chris's marriage to an unemployed countryman symbolises the period's growth of industrialism and the depression years, and her

childless marriage gives meaning to the poverty, unemployment and social unrest characterizing the 1930s. The earlier Chris is the Chris of the censary impression of the land, the sharp emotive memory, the irrational love of tradition, family, and inherited loyalty and language. The later Chris is the woman striving for social advancement represented in education, school-teaching and a restrained independence within narrow, socially acceptable lives. Turning away from the land and coarse speech, she expresses her aspirations by language change. Throughout the trilogy, Chris is presented as a symbol of the Scottish land and culture and the changes influencing them;

Chris wandered from place to place like one seeking that which she wouldn't know - maybe something of that sureness mislaid in the past, long ago, when she was a quean. But here was nothing, nothing but change that had followed every pace of her feet, quietly-padding as a panther at night.(43)

It is Chris's return to the land and the croft where she was born that some critics have conceived of as representing the ideological element of liberal individualism. Jenny Wolmark remarks that this liberal ideology is implied in Chris's rejection of her son's radical politics and her return to the farm where she was born, and comments:

The trilogy ends at that point, and no attempt is made within the narrative to reconcile the different experiences and beliefs of Chris and Ewan. So the narrative structure presents two contradictory perspectives on the historical process: on the one hand it offers a radical and positive criticism of capitalism by focusing on Ewan's political consciousness. On the other hand, it presents a profoundly conservative idealisation of the past and a fatalistic acceptance of history as something to be endured rather than understood.(44)

Wolmark's criticism gains significance not only on the basis of the circular frame of the trilogy's narrative, but also on that of the structure and mode of narrative that express the collective consciousness of the Scottish peasantry. Much of the power of the trilogy in general, and *Sunset Song* in particular, derives from the fact that the story is narrated mainly by Chris, and partly by the changing and often anonymous voices of the crofters. On the other hand, like Lawrence and Hardy, Gibbon structured the development of his characters by reference to the seasons and cycles of growth on the land. This is achieved through identifying the parts of Chris's life

with farming seasons ("The Unfurrowed Field", "Ploughing", "Drilling", "Seed Time", "Harvest", and finally a return to "The Unfurrowed Field"), and by identifying her own cultural identity-crisis with agricultural problems. Although in constant renewal, this seasonal cycle is closed and always finishes where it begins. It is in *Grey Granite*, however, that Gibbon breaks away from this cycle to locate the struggle for the future within industrialism and capitalist production. While Chris remains, towards the end, free "concerning none and concerned with none"(45), her son Ewan emerges as a determined Communist involved in organising and participating in the class struggle of the emerging proletariat.

For the first time in the trilogy, the voices of the industrial proletariat are heard in *Grey Granite*; some aimless and desolate, others showing signs of firm political attitudes. The world depicted in this novel is different from that in the previous novels. The coherence and integrity of the previous novels give way to the fragmentation and incoherence of the industrial city of Duncairn. This is mostly felt by Chris, and expressed by the disconnected subplots and the alienation that overtakes most of the novel's characters strangled in a city in the Depression. While *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe* end with some kind of re-integration of personality and resolution of conflict in Chris, *Grey Granite* divides more than it reconciles, pushing Ewan in one direction and his mother in another opposite direction. This change is also metaphorically expressed; *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe* have a lyrical power expressed in "Homerick dawn epithets" signifying "the arrival of the morning in lyrical terms"(46), *Grey Granite* reflects the harsh fragmentary nature of industrialism in different linguistic registers ("Epidote", "Sphere", "Apatite", and "Zircon") which denote the process of industrial change, on the one hand, and express the crystallisation and hardening of Ewan's character, on the other hand. Ewan is repeatedly described as having "grey granite eyes", "grey granite glance", etc.(47) The 'granite' image contrasts Ewan's hardening political consciousness with Robert's dreamy political aspirations and the tragic figure of his father. Ewan appears here as the political protagonist who traditionally dominates the socialist realist novel, and represents the quintessence of the industrial hero in the Marxist sense. In *Grey Granite*, he develops as the central character overshadowing the symbolism of his mother, working first in a steel-mill, then as a labourer, and moving from Socialism to a hardened revolutionary

Communism. His development is presented as emotionally motivated through his sympathetic affiliation with the working classes and intellectually sustained by the political education he receives from Ellen Johns - a typical Marxist heroine one encounters in the novels of socialist realism (Gorky's *Mother*, Gladkov's *Cement*, etc.) who becomes Ewan's wife. Unlike Larry Meath, in Greenwood's *Love on the Dole*, Ewan's commitment to his cause is marked by his emergence with the proletariat and transcending his emotional instincts. He agitates the union men to strike against their employers, theorizes for the taking of Duncairn by the workers, joins "the Reds", and in spite of his suffering from poverty and oppression and imprisonment organizes, with Trease, a 500 miles march to London towards the end of the novel. On the other hand, he leaves both Chris and Ellen behind to pursue the course of the march. Gibbon allows Ewan to see the working class both as it is and what it will inevitably become, a historical change he expresses as "*the fight in the end between FREEDOM and God*".(48) What characterizes the theme of love and political commitment in *Grey Granite* is that the personal love between Ewan and Ellen, unlike that of Sally and Larry in Greenwood's novel, is intrinsically bound up with the political conflict of Duncairn's working class. As Ellen aspires to a respectable and economically secure married life, despite her socialist sympathies, Ewan's commitment to class struggle derives its strength from the lack of any illusions or idealisation of the workers. His reaction to Ellen's desertion of "extremist activities" and her decision to join the Labour Party is violent and dismissive of any retreat or compromise;

Go to them then in your comfortable car - your Labour Party and your comfortable life. But what are you doing out here with me? I can get a prostitute anywhere.(49)

It is Gibbon's portrayal of Ewan as such, on both personal and political levels, that his novel acquires the quality of political propaganda. It is significant to bear in mind that when Gibbon was writing, he was profoundly aware of both the suppression of the working class and the advance of Fascism. He wrote, soon before his death: "I hate capitalism ... all my books are explicit or implicit propaganda".(50) Aware of this synthesis of propaganda and art in Gibbon's trilogy, David Smith points to Gibbon's success in bridging the gap between the peasantry and the proletariat, and remarks that "he had with a large degree of artistic success moulded his experience and his peasant consciousness to his revolutionary consciousness".(51)

William Malcom, on the other hand, refers to the integration in Gibbon's writing of the epic form with the political mode of socialist realism, and comments;

The socialist motivation behind Mitchell's writing is reflected in his literary tastes, and in particular in his interest in the Russian experiment in socialist realism at the beginning of the century.(52)

Whereas Greenwood fails to bring politics into *Love on the Dole* (major political events that had a great impact on the working class and the Labour movement are completely absent in the novel, i.e. the General Strike and the General Election that immediately preceded the introduction to the Means Test), Gibbons approaches the political *Bildungsroman* on a large scale. He infuses both the personal and political levels of experience into his trilogy to produce a successful propagandist art where personal fulfillment is an integral part of political struggle. *A Scots Quair* remains a modern epic which mirrors, on a large scale, the modern changes affecting Scottish society, and works through this to express the universal political struggle both capitalism and fascism have rendered inevitable. The trilogy integrates realism with the visionary qualities of the epic to achieve a profound unification of the interests of the Scottish "folk", whether they are the peasants of Kinraddie, the rustics and Spinners of Segget, or the Duncairn proletariat. It is worth noting here that only Alan Sillitoe's *William Posters* trilogy, among the post-thirties working-class fiction, comes anywhere close to Gibbon's trilogy in its preoccupations with the political development of its character.

In 1940 F.R. Leavis remarked that "in matters of literature" the 1930s was "a barren decade".(53) Although pure aesthetic issues were not the major concern of the 1930s' working-class novelists, their integration of their working-class experience and perspective into the novel form had a remarkable influence on the language and form of their fiction. Their use of working-class speech and their mastery of the spoken word gave their works a quality absent from the dominant literary tradition. On the other hand, working-class speech was given the power to express radical political thought and revolutionary consciousness, and to unmask the workings of capitalism and Fascism. In the same way, their works offered themselves as collective biographies of the working class where both the process and influence of historical forces are weighed against this collective experience,

and are rendered changeable through radical thought and action. By assigning the historical role of controlling capitalism and Fascism to the revolutionary working class, these works showed the political consciousness and activism of this class as the real force of change. The novel form was consequently radicalized and revolutionized. While the bourgeois novel concerned itself with the individuals, works like Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and Gibbons *A Scots Quair* put the collective experience at the centre of the novel form, and injected it with vividness and power of expression provided by the immediacy of speech and the relevance of the historical material. To what extent the work of post-war novelists benefited from this radicalization of the novel form, and to what degree it succeeded in challenging the bourgeois ideology and its means of expression will be seen in the following sections of this study.

As we have seen above in the works of Tressell, Orwell, Greenwood and Gibbon, working-class conditions and experiences are employed as the essential material of the literary text. This strategy determined the literary substance and demanded a realistic approach in terms of language, narration and characterization, as well as the overall ideological perspectives. It is in Lawrence's work, however, that this realist representation featured most effectively where working-class life was explored in its complex relationships to its own inner mechanisms and to other oppositional modes of existence. Lawrence is perhaps the pioneering English writer to reflect this life form within with unprecedented intensity and power. His *Sons and Lovers* made available a radically new approach to the subsequent working-class novelists. The shaping of the fictional narrative and its plot on the common experiences of working-class community, and the realistic application of vernacular speech which charges the literary text with the power to unravel the contradictions and continuities of these experiences, opened up a rich reservoir of literary approaches to social and psychic forces of determination. The next section brings out Lawrence's major contributions to working-class literary tradition, and maps out his impact on later working-class novelists.

Section II : D H Lawrence

Lawrence's literary and cultural impact has often been brought out and acknowledged in numerous articles and books, and his contribution to the English literary tradition, philosophy and psychoanalysis is still being revived and occupies a prominent place, especially in the feminist discourse. Yet few critics have attempted to examine his work in a class context and evaluate its relationship to the English working-class literary tradition. The objective of this section is to examine the effects of his working-class experiences on his literary practice, and to assess his impact on subsequent working-class novelists. In my analysis, I will focus on Lawrence's first novel *Sons and Lovers* (1913) because of the place it occupies in the history of British working-class fiction, and because its artistic and thematic attributes are of great significance to the evaluation of working-class fiction in the post-war period.

Published about a year prior to the publication of the abridged edition of Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, *Sons and Lovers* could be seen as a turning point in the English literary tradition in relation to the author's social origins, his subject matter, and his linguistic medium. Raymond Williams states that in *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence gives us

the first major example of the English working-class novel, expanding the boundaries of fiction to kinds of work and living conditions which the earlier tradition had been unable or unwilling to reach... .(1)

Similarly, Gamini Salgado points out that *Sons and Lovers* is the first great novel of English working class life and the first to be observed from within. There is still nothing in English fiction to match the depth and sympathy with which the everyday life of the Morel household is depicted in the first part of the book. From this point of view *Sons and Lovers* can be seen as a triumphant culmination of the many nineteenth-century efforts to give a true and full picture of industrial life... .(2)

Both Williams and Salgado refer to the portrayal of the living experience of the working-class community from which the novel derives its significance. What are the artistic devices and discourses of social representation which render *Sons and Lovers* as a pioneering achievement in English fiction?

The most distinguishing feature of *Sons and Lovers* is the shaping of the raw material of life into the form of fiction. The working-

class community of Bestwood informs the novel's form and plot. Everyday life, living conditions, work, the community's characters and their language, everyday worries and aspirations charge the novel with realism and power which motivate both its form and content. The narrative emerges out of the communal experience, from within, and the characters' actions and interactions in the course of the communal, everyday experiences become the very material of the narrative. In this sense, working-class community becomes the form of fictional expression.

As with Tressell and Gibbon, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* is a fictional autobiography and a documentation of a collective experience through which the novelist attempts to come to terms with his community in expressions of engagement and alienation. Jessie Chambers saw Lawrence's greatest gift as a novelist in "his power to transmute the common experience into significance"(3), and pointed out that in *Sons and Lovers* he was "coming into his true kingdom as a creative artist, as an interpreter of the people to whom he belonged".(4) The significance of the community in *Sons and Lovers*, and indeed in Lawrence's other novels, is not confined to the notion of realistic documentation of collective experience *per se*, but is a vital element in Lawrence's thinking. Raymond Williams states that the "instinct of community" which his working-class childhood and youth gave him taught him that

sense of the continual flow and recoil of sympathy which was always, in his writing, the essential process of living.(5)

Lawrence himself expressed the vitality of the sense of communal experience in relation to his image of the creation of free individuals;

Men are free when they belong to a living, organic believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealised, purpose.(6)

Lawrence's characters are radically present in their community and are irreducible to individuals acting and living separately. They are both informed by the social milieu they inhabit, and they impinge upon it and transform it through their interrelations and actions. The presentation of the Bestwood Community in the novel is far from picturesque and static, and captures the complexities of living and changing. Characters are in constant struggle with their living conditions, with their emotions, and with each other.

Paul Morel's surrender to his mother, his contempt at his father's vulgarity, and his attempts to break away from his mother's domination through his relationships with Miriam and Clara, are all reflections of the social forces and individual impulses which shape and reshape the Bestwood Community. Although Paul is presented as the central character, since it is his emotional, intellectual, psychic and social development that the novel portrays, there are reaches of insight and understanding within the novel that go beyond his character. The son embodies the mother's social aspirations and her ideals of respectability in all of which her own marriage to a miner has disappointed her. The father is portrayed as the enemy, and Paul's support of his mother is seen as part of the struggle against him. Since the mining community is essentially masculine, shaped by the needs and authority of the men, the struggle against the father necessitates the son's acceptance of 'feminine' values. This manifests itself in restraint, gentility of speech, mental rather than manual work, and domesticity in preference to social companionship.

Paul is presented from the outset as linked to his mother's frustrations and desires in an intimate way. Unlike his brother William, Paul is small, frail, introverted and artistic. He is always acutely conscious of other people and what they say. With Paul, the victory is Mrs Morel's, for he offers no resistance to her domination, and his subtle antipathy to his father is passionate and supportive of his mother's exclusion of her husband. There are two prominent areas which signify Paul's association with his mother and antipathy to his father: linguistic discrimination and financial independence. Mr Morel is showed wholly confined to a dialect his wife distates, and he is inarticulate in his domestic setting. He is a collier who "often did the right thing by instinct"(7), and his "nature was purely sensuous".(8) At home he is irritable and exhausted by his work;

When he came home he did not speak civilly to anybody. If the fire were rather low he bullied about that; he grumbled about his dinner; if the children made a chatter he shouted at them in a way that made their mother's blood boil, and made them hate him.(9)

Contrary to this, Paul's language is the genteel English of Mrs Morel, and not the coarse dialect of his father. This language is one symbol of the expropriation of the father from his role as a provider for the family. On the other hand, Paul revels in laying his wages in front of his mother in an unconscious attempt to undermine the father's

economic role in the household. This comes to a head when Mr Morel is injured at work and is hospitalized, leaving Paul as the 'man of the house'.

The first part of the novel accounts for the process of Paul's succumbing to his mother and his subsequent distantiation from his father. In the second part, the narrative centres on Paul's futile attempt to break free from his mother and find a fulfilling relationship with another woman. This attempt is depicted through his relationships with two women: Miriam and Clara. It is interesting to note that the three central women-characters in *Sons and Lovers* are presented as frustrated. Mrs Morel is resentful of her husband's mannerism and vulgarity, and in her attempt to exclude him from her private life she claims an uncontested domination over her two sons. Miriam, who enters more deeply in Paul's life than Clara does, is shown as resentful of the drudgery at Hags Farm in which men dominate and make the decisions, while women are confined to domestic work. She is frustrated with the constriction of a woman's life on the farm, and with her brothers' affectionate contempt. Her frustration and aloofness are signified by her 'spirituality', an inheritance from her mother's deep religious feeling, and a tendency that could be viewed as an unconscious compensation for a woman's drudgery and subordination in a man's world. Her desire to break free from this assigned role is manifested in her educational aspiration, and her inclination to possess things. She

hated her position as a swine-girl. She wanted to be considered. She wanted to learn, thinking that if she could read ... the world would have a different face for her and a deepened respect.(10)

Similarly, her passion for flowers and bushes and her impulsive will to touch them and feel them metaphorically reflect her attempt to possess Paul as a means to break away from her environment. Paul mocks her inclination for possessiveness, and shows his cynical resentment towards it;

'You weedle the soul out of things ... You're always begging for things to love you ... as if you were a beggar for love. Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them... .' (11)

Clara is presented as a suffragette, the product of the women's awareness of the disparity between their own sense of possibility and society's confining grip over them. Her political awareness is regarded by Paul as the result of her emotional frustration in her

marriage. It is ironically significant that Paul comes to sense "a peculiar feeling" with Clara's husband, Baxter Dawes, "as if they were secretly near to each other".(12) In presenting Clara as amusingly "advanced", Lawrence fails to reveal the social and political dimensions of her psychological frustration. G. Slagādo writes that if Lawrence

had taken Clara Dawes and her views more seriously, instead of dismissing them with a kind of amused irony, she might have provided a perspective from which the inadequacies of the other two women [Mrs Morel and Miriam] might have appeared not purely personal and psychological.(13)

It is only in the case of Mrs Morel that Lawrence comes close to unmasking the social and economic roots of this frustration, as opposed to psychological ones.

Sons and Lovers has most of the major elements that characterize Lawrence's later writings and his social and political thoughts. In his presentation of the working-class community as a material for artistic expression, Lawrence made use of the place as an integral part of the life of this community. On the other hand, his attack on industrialization contained more central issues like class, gender, and the division between the 'body' and the 'mind'. His use of working-class speech, however, represents a breakthrough in English fiction, and might be considered one of his major contributions and the strongest element of influence on subsequent working-class writers.

One of the distinctive qualities of Lawrence's writing in his presentation of the place. The 'Spirit' of the East Midlands landscape was a factor in the genesis of his works. The setting of most of Lawrence's novels is the 'country of his heart', the region which he called the "real England, the hard pith of England".(14) The East Midlands features in many novels and takes various names. His native Eastwood is Bestwood in *Sons and Lovers*, Woodhouse in *The Lost Girl* (1920), Eberwich in *The White Peacock* (1911), Beldover in *Aaron 's Rod* (1922) and Willey Green in both *Women in Love* (1920) and *The Rainbow* (1915). The Chatterley novels are Lawrence's last hymn to these places. If Phyllis Bentley's definition of the 'regional' novel is not faulted, *Sons and Lovers*, and indeed most of his other novels, can be regarded as a 'regional' novel. Phyllis defines the 'regional' novel as

a novel which concentrating on a particular part, a particular region of a nation depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from others in the common land.(15)

Sons and Lovers is not 'regional' in this socio-geographic context only. It also integrates the particularities of the place into the fictional atmosphere and plot of the novel. The reader constantly encounters detailed descriptions of the landscape, and landscape is often treated as a metaphor for relationships, states of mind, feelings and moods. It also functions sometimes as a liberator where individual characters come to terms with their own nature and instincts. There are memorable scenes in *Sons and Lovers* where the landscape is evoked with such insight and intensity to be transformed into a living element in the relationships between characters. One instance is when Miriam eagerly shows Paul a wild-rose bush she has discovered. The scene is injected with symbolism to reveal Miriam's character and her ardent enthusiasm to reveal her inner depths to Paul. The isolation of the bush signifies Miriam's exclusion in the masculine world of Haggis Farm;

The tree was tall and straggling. It had thrown its briars over a hawthorn-bush, and its long streamers trailed thick right down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great split stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed into the darkness of foliage and stems and grass ... Point after point the steady roses shone out of them, seeming to kindle something in their souls.(16)

Sons and Lovers is distinctively a 'Midland' novel, one which is characterised - more or less like the novels of Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and Arnold Bennett - by a faithful reproduction of the 'spirit' of the area. It describes a community, partly rural and partly industrial, which informs the actions and desires of its characters as much as it determines their modes of existence.

Lawrence's strong feelings about this region and its communities, its warmth and its hostilities and difficulties, were the primary motivation for his vehement attack against the industrial England. He saw the development of technology and industrialization in that area as a destructive factor in frustrating the community and leading to its subsequent social disintegration. Lawrence regards the mines in

"Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" as "an accident in the landscape"(17), and not a natural part of the place. In *Women in Love* he laments the mechanization of the mines which destroyed the relationship between employer and employee, as he viewed it. There are recurrent references in Lawrence's work to the process of industrialization and the social consequences which resulted from the transformation of England to a disintegrated industrial society. Alan Sillitoe attributes Lawrence's hatred of industrial England and his escape from it to two factors: industrialization and its effect on human relationships and the landscape, and class divisions.(18) Upon his return to England in 1926, Lawrence saw the changes sweeping over the English countryside, and remarked later that "they've pushed a spear through the side of *my* England".(19) Raymond Williams considers Lawrence's intellectual achievement to be the major criticism of industrialism since the nineteenth century (especially Carlyle), and regards his general condemnation of industrialisation as an attitude of mind, and his social responses as those "not of a man observing the process of industrialism, but of one caught in them... ."(20)

Lawrence found in the Nottingham mining community a reflection of England's grim reality. The mining village of Bestwood in *Sons and Lovers* is an epitome of this repressive, dehumanizing reality with pits, colliers and industry. When Paul first looks for a job in the newspapers, he feels "Already he was a prisoner of industrialism".(21) In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), the gamekeeper Mellors is shown acutely conscious of the industrial world breaking the solitude of the wood and depriving him of any privacy or withdrawal into the natural domain. He conceives of his relationship with Connie Chatterley as one which was going to bring on him a "cycle of pain and doom", and reasons that the tragic reality of any relationship between a man and a woman

was not a woman's fault, nor even love's fault,
nor the fault of sex. The fault lay there, out
there, in those evil electric lights and
diabolical rattlings of engines.(22)

Lawrence saw the miner as both the epitome and the victim in the process of industrialization. Mellor's joining of the miners' ranks, at the end of the novel, signifies the victimization of the 'natural' man, and affirms the novel's opening sentence, "Ours is essentially a tragic age... ."(23)

It is this refusal to accept industry and mechanization as parts of the natural, instinctive world (which Lawrence's work strives to

advocate and validate) which resulted in what Graham Holderness terms as "Techniques of 'estrangement'" which are vital to Lawrence's "tragic realism".(24) The alienated vision of the mining community in *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Holderness argues, has its validity and value. He writes somewhere else: "by refusing to grant the industry the status of the natural, this fantastic discourse fundamentally questions its 'reality'".(25) Lawrence's novels tend to articulate this alienation most strongly and effectively in their descriptions of the miners and their families. In *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence writes:

In summer, the pits are often slack. Often on bright sunny mornings, the men are seen trooping home again at ten, eleven or twelve o'clock. No empty trucks stand at the pit mouth. The women on the hillside look across as they shake the hearthrug against the fence, and count the wagons the engine is taking along the line up the valley. And the children, as they come at school at dinner-time, looking down the fields and seeing the wheels on the headstocks standing say:

'Minton's knocked off. My dad'll be at home'. And there's a sort of shadow over all, women and children and men, because money will be short at the end of the week.(26)

Language in this passage is realistic and it goes beyond documentary naturalism. The use of direct statement in the narrative and the use of the present tense indicate the narrator as a participant in the collective experience, and reveal an implicit familiarity, not only with the physical details of the social scene, but with their emotional significance. The social and human structure of the mining community described here is presented directly without mystification, and demonstrated with clarity and straightforwardness without any attempt to address the reader or explain to him/her. The passage quoted above shows men utterly subjected to an alienating system. Although Lawrence tends to realize this system as a nightmare, an illusion, he still acknowledges its power and dehumanizing effects, not only on the miners as men, but also on their wives and children.

It is mostly in his representation of the miners that Lawrence achieves his mastery of capturing the significance of the living experiences of the working class. Miner characters are portrayed in his novels with great sympathy; their simplicity, naturalness, liveliness, rowdiness, muscularity and masculinity. In spite of the antipathy Lawrence felt for his miner father, explicitly verbalized in

Paul's contempt for his father in *Sons and Lovers*, his depiction of miners in his work never lacks sympathy and objectivity. Although Mr Morel is presented in the novel as an antagonist, his overall characterization is sympathetic and understanding of his personal vices in the domestic confine. For example, the scene where he is called out of the pit to be informed of Arthur's death is most effective in its language and 'silences', and exhibits tenderness and compassion:

...Morel said in a frightened voice:

'E's niver gone, child?'

'Yes.'

'When wor't?'

The miner's voice was terrified.

'Last night. We had a telegram from my mother.'

Morel walked on a few strides, then leaned up against a truck side, his hand over his eyes. He was not crying. Paul stood looking around, waiting ... Paul saw everything except his father leaning against the truck as if he were tired.(27)

What add to the emotional impact and depth of this scene are Morel's inarticulation, his coarse and almost monosyllabic speech, and his physical exhaustion from work which suppresses any verbal demonstration of emotions.

Yet in his image of the miners, Lawrence came to develop the notion of divisions between 'working' and 'middle class', 'masculine' and 'feminine', and 'body' and 'mind', divisions which had a major impact on his philosophy and writing. Lawrence saw the miners as a separate group of men confined to their underground world, almost a separate race. This concept is one of fascination as much as of contempt. Paul sees the colliers as "a new race of miners".(28) In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, miners are envisaged as a

wierd fauna of the coal-seams. Creatures of another reality, they were elementals, serving the element of coal ... Men not men, but animas of coal and iron and clay ... Elemental creatures, weird and distorted, of the mineral world ... The anima of mineral disintegration.(29)

This portrayal of miners as slaves to another reality which they have no power to change is mixed with a mystical fascination with their world, one which is instinctive, muscular, immediate and self-contained. Mr Morel is described as having

still a wonderful young body, muscular, without any fat. His skin was smooth and clear. It

might have been the body of a man of twenty-eight; except that there were, perhaps, too many scars, like tattoo marks, where the coal-dust remained under the skin, and that his chest was too hairy.(30)

The emphasis on Morel's character is purely physical here, and his body is seen as a product of his work and alien reality.

This image expands to engulf almost the whole working class as it takes distinctive qualities. The working class is seen as instinctive, unintellectual, and brutish. Lawrence celebrates in his work their unintellectuality, their earthiness, and their feelings without any attempt to explore any abilities they have for breaking out of their instinctive and rather primitive world. Paul tells 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 ... Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people - life itself, warmth. You feel their hates and loves.'(31)

This monolithic division of the world on the basis of class enhances the ideological bourgeois concept of the division of labour upon which the middle classes have always assigned themselves the role of leadership. Intellect, ideas, philosophy, art and the mere ability to think are strictly identified with the middle class. The working class subsequently belongs to the realms of the physical, the immediate, manual labour, and the inability to think about their own situation or that of the others. Lawrence's concept is based on contradictions and misconceptions which his own career and work reveal. In his attempt to advocate the notion that the working class embodies the instinctive and primitive sides of human nature, a concept he always regarded as the salvation of men and women, he alienated himself from it by the very means of his intellectual occupation and further by his physical alienation from the class he portrayed as the embodiment of "warmth", "hates" and "loves". This contradiction is most evident in *Sons and Lovers* where a class-conscious ideology of community and an individualist ideology of social mobility are related in the same text to reveal the rejection of the former and express the futility of the latter as a means to human fulfillment and social progress. It was probably this tension which provided Lawrence, in the first place, with an acute sense of community in his work. The emphasis of his writing fluctuates between

an empathetic engagement with the working-class community and a radical alienation from it. This contradiction characterized both Lawrence's life and his work.

The disparity between the working and middle class, which Lawrence advocated, runs deeper in his work to take on gender, and subsequently touch on the sphere of power. G.S. Fraser relates the characteristics of Lawrence's work to his experiences at home where he was "brought up in an atmosphere of struggle for dominance between man and wife, with his sympathies tugged sometimes towards his father's strength, rowdiness, and dumb anger, and sometimes towards his mother's hymn-singing." (32) *Sons and Lovers* illustrates more than any of Lawrence's novels the concepts which later dominated his work. Men like Mr Morel and Baxter Dawes are presented as the embodiment of masculinity, powerful physique and brutal domination by sheer force. Women like Mrs Morel, Miriam and Clara are subject to emotional frustration and desires, even if they happen to be dominant as is the case with Mrs Morel. Even Clara's political convictions as a suffragette are reduced to the emotional frustration resulting from her unsuccessful marriage. In spite of Paul's contempt for his father and Baxter Dawes, his sympathy is mixed with fascination. Lawrence's concept of men and women, in the context of individual relationships, developed beyond redemption in his later work as the primacy of political and social factors in the determination of individual relationships was marginalized. The leading theme in his later fiction is that of the woman in quest of a life more creative and fulfilling than the one assigned to her by her social milieu. This is the mainspring of many of Lawrence's shorter fiction, and lies at the centre of *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

To interpret Lawrence's 'mystique of sex', or 'phallic imagination' and 'supremacy' by deconstructing it into its separate constituents is the easiest way to do him injustice and consequently come out with a doctrine utterly different from the one he dedicated his work to explore and advocate. Lawrence did present his men as 'sexuality' in conflict with 'culture' (women). His writing does seem at times to be promoting male supremacy through which the female freedom should be fulfilled. But Lawrence's writing does not, on the whole, concern itself with male survival and domination through the subservience of the female. Lawrence strives in his works to open a path for survival for men and women alike, and his sexual politics go beyond the conventional concept of sex to engulf the terrains of the

individual self in its relation to itself and the universe. His main concern was not with morality in the ordinary sense, but with the psychic ebb and flow within and between his character - "the flow and recoil of feeling" as he called it. Lawrence regarded this as a highly moral investigation as it accounted for the individual's deepest self. *Sons and Lovers* is, in a way, an attempt to find the true meaning of the self through the presentation of a given experience. Some feminist interpretations of *Sons and Lovers* miss the novel's project altogether. Faith Pullin denounces both Paul Morel and Lawrence, and writes:

Instead of examining the interactions of real men and women, what Lawrence actually wrote about was the relationship between men and a series of female stereotypes.(33)

Diane Bonds shares the same contempt for the novel and remarks: "Readers ... similarly allow themselves to be victimized by the narrator of *Sons and Lovers*".(34) What these interpretations fail to grasp is that Paul Morel, and Lawrence, concludes his battle for identity not with any sentimental concept of future domination, but with the knowledge of his past experience.

In a letter to Ernest Collins, Lawrence wrote:

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true ... All I want to do is to answer to my blood, directly, without fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not.(35)

Lady Chatterley's Lover came as Lawrence's last effort to explore the means by which the "blood" and the "flesh" could direct individuals into the discovery of themselves and the world around them. This novel was the strongest expression of Lawrence's attempt to catch the "whole hog" of "man alive".(36) He wrote the novel as simultaneously a method, justification and metaphor for the intimate process of sexual discovery which he shapes through Connie and Mellors. The novel's narrative explains its theme and states and justifies its form;

It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel, properly handled can reveal the most secret

places of life; for it is in the passional secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening.(37)

This is the articulation of the phallic theme of the novel, intrinsically related to its language, to the developing affair of the protagonists and to our experience of reading the text. The novel teaches Connie, and at the same time leads us, to recoil "from a thing gone dead" which is symbolised in the novel by Connie's impotent husband Clifford, and from the sterile life he represents. The "passional secret places" of the novel lay in Lawrence's exploration of the unexamined areas of sexual life which he will explore against conventions and censorship, and more specifically in Connie's body which Mellors will explore. It is in this sense that the novel expresses its phallic theme. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is about the need for a rebirth of phallic consciousness rendered as the only means to personal and national regeneration. The novel is Lawrence's ultimate endeavour to salvage in his work the England that was trapped in its Victorian values and deadened by war, the England that was "so meager and paltry ... so unspiritual".(38)

It is in this context that Lawrence is a political writer. Frank Kermode states that Lawrence's sexual 'metaphysic' comprises of the notion that "sex and history are as two sides of a coin".(39) Lawrence saw relationships between men and women as a reflection of historical reality, and attempted to eradicate the hypocrisy and repressive force of religion and sexual conventions. His novels, particularly *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, depict the individual's attempt to break away from the circle of death and impotence and rediscover his/her instinctive, sexual, spiritual 'vocabulary'. In *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, Connie realizes that

Class is a_nachronism. It finished in 1914. Nothing remains but a vast proletariat, including kings, aristocrats, squires, millionaires and working people, men and women alike. And then a few individuals who had not been proletarianized!(40)

Here, the social and economic definition of class is replaced by an entirely psychological definition. This is why, in the first place, Mellors is presented as a divided character; in one sense a product of class, in another an outsider, de-classed, an initiate of the phallic consciousness.

It is complexities and contradictions like these which characterize Lawrence's work. A failure to come to grips with Lawrence's thought as a whole, and as it develops from work to another, is certain to lead to misrepresentations of Lawrence's concepts of class, men and women, and 'body' and 'mind'. Although Lawrence's characters and settings are defined in terms of class and region, the intentions of his novels go far beyond these concepts, and most of the times tend to dissolve them in favour of the individuals quest for and realization of the self as it is motivated and directed by 'blood', 'instincts' and 'phallic consciousness'.

Lawrence's impact on the English literary tradition and British writers is one of great importance. After the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 and the appearance of the first English edition of the novel in 1961, his influence affected state censorship in Britain, and radically transformed linguistic expressions of 'taboo' subjects. Of great importance to us here is Lawrence's impact on the subsequent working-class novelists. Many post-war working-class writers expressed the influence which Lawrence's writing had on them. What is more important, however, are the Lawrencian marks in the writing of these novelists, ones which vary from the thematic to the linguistic and the artistic form.

Lawrence's major contribution to this fiction may be conceived of in terms of the use of working-class speech as the linguistic material of dialogue. R. Williams regards Lawrence's use of dialect in *Sons and Lovers* as an integral element in his successful portrayal of the working-class community, where "The language and the feeling - new language, new feelings - come alive together," as a "sort of miracle of language".(41) Lawrence's use of the common speech gave the novel the power to reflect the thoughts and feelings of the people he depicted in a realistic manner. Language is used as a living aspect of the community, and is charged with utterances whose meanings derive directly from the real experience. Moreover, language conveys meanings central to the novel's theme and treatment of characters. We sense the presence of Mr Morel, for example, through his coarse dialect. When he is around, the fictional narrative is punctuated with words and expressions like "a good 'un", "does ter?", "'e says", "mun I?" and "An' what if I Shonna?". More importantly, language is one of the major elements of difference between Mr Morel, and his wife and son. Baxter Dawes' dialect, on the other hand, intensifies the antipathy between him and the educated Paul. As in many of Lawrence's

works, dialect is identified with spontaneity, masculinity, an immediacy in opposition to the intellect. Mellors is a prime example of this.

Working-class novelists used local dialects to similar effects. In Greenwood's *Love on the Dole*, Larry Meath's language is different from that of his fellow workers, a difference which signifies his education in political theory and reflects his alienation from other workers. The same is true in the case of Owen and Barington in Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. One of the most evident signs of change in Chris' character, in the process of her development, in Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* is the transformation of the language from Scottish to English to signify her education and alienation from the land. Post-war working-class novelists made the utmost use of language to create particular atmospheres and reflect a specific reality. Braine, Barstow, Storey, Sillitoe and Hines used regional dialects as one of the means to express and almost personify the atmospheres they set their novels in. Braine's *Room at the Top* employs working-class speech in a way identical to Lawrence's. Lampton's only reserve to win the women in Warley, when he fails to compete with men as strong and big as he is, is his dialect which is brought into play to evoke the sensuality and masculinity identified with the working class. Storey's first-person narrative in *This Sporting Life* carries a thematic significance in its poetic vocabulary and expressions to signify a break from the harsh realities characterizing Machin's life in the North. Working-class speech is a legacy handed to later working-class writers by Lawrence.

As I have mentioned earlier in this section, the most distinguishing characteristic of *Sons and Lovers* is its realistic documentation of working-class community where the form of the novel is informed by the lived experience. This quality is strongly present in Greenwood, Gibbon, Tressell and most of the post-war novelists. The place features in the works of these writers in a similar fashion to Lawrence's novels. Alan Sillitoe remarked that "Lawrence opened my eyes to Nottinghamshire".(42) Coming from a similar working-class background in Nottingham, Sillitoe's use of Lawrence is conscious. In his essay "D.H. Lawrence and His District", he expresses the impact his first reading of Lawrence had on him, and defines his attitude to the rural-industrial Nottinghamshire in terms similar to Lawrence's; love-hate attitude. James Gindin writes that both writers

Share a sense of the importance and the overwhelming physicality of the place. In both, too, history is constantly visible, the locality invariably echoing its past and its present. Yet history and class are also accounts of change.(43)

Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* depicts the industrial Nottingham, and explores its influence on its inhabitants. In all of Sillitoe's early fiction, often called "the Nottingham fiction", Nottingham is featured as the most influential factor which informs the mentality and actions of the fictional characters. As Lawrence rejected the industrialization which had changed the 'spirit' of the place, Sillitoe conceived of Nottinghamshire as the industrial trap from which a free spirit escapes, but not without the love for the place which characterized Lawrence's ambivalent attitude to it.

The most evident continuity in the celebration of the Northern countryside is in Barry Hines' work and life. Hines has insisted on living in his native Yorkshire and the confines of its open countryside. In both *A Kestrel for a Knave* and *First Signs*, mines are seen as "accidents" in the landscape. In both novels, too, the open fields serve as an escape for Billy and Tom. Billy escapes his repressive society and the rigid school system by identifying almost wholly with the landscape just outside the estate where he lives. His vulgarity and rudeness are radically transformed to gentility and care once he is out of the civil society and in the fields. The novel's major emphasis on the relationship between Billy and the landscape is symbolized in his intimate affinity with the kestrel hawk which marks his break from his careless family, his repressive community with its bullying men, and his tyrannical school. Tom Renshaw's identification with his home community, upon his return from Italy, takes a broader aspect in his feelings for the Northern countryside, "his country". This identification is complete when he decides to settle in his village, and builds his house in the woods.

Yet it is the creation of the working-class male character which demonstrates, probably more than any other aspect, Lawrence's influence on post-war novelists. As Lawrence presented the male as strong, powerful, muscular and almost vulgarly instinctive, later working-class novelists based almost all their fictions on the study of this character. Braine's Joe Lampton, Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton and Storey's Arthur Machin are typical Lawrencian men. They are physical, unintellectual and almost ineffective. Their main concern is work,

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drinking and sensuous pleasures like drinking, womanising and socialising with other men in clubs and pubs. In a way similar to Lawrence, in the world of these men women are envisaged as doomed to feelings and intuitions. They almost become appendages to the masculine world, particularly in the novels of Sillitoe and Braine. Hines, Sillitoe and Storey, on the other hand, present an image of the miner almost identical to the one Lawrence repeatedly described in his novels. Storey's portrayal of Margaret's father in *Flight into Camden* reflects Lawrence's characterization of Mr Morel in *Sons and Lovers*. Both men are physical, totally absorbed by their work in the mines, vulgar and aggressive at times, tender at other times, and almost inarticulate in their domestic settings. Storey refers to *Sons and Lovers* as a major influence on him, and comments

the potency of the material - its ability, and even need ... gave an urgency and thereby a directness to his [Lawrence's] writings.(44)

He points out to the "objectivity" which marks Lawrence's characterization of Mr Morel, and expresses his fascination with his treatment of him in the novel. In *Flight into Camden*, Margaret's encounter with her father at the pit is charged with an emotional intensity similar to that informing the scene where Paul tells his father about Arthur's death. Similarly, Sillitoe's description of the physique and temperament of his grandfather in his autobiographical work *Raw Material* is a repetition, in terms of vocabulary and fascination, of Lawrence's description of Morel in *Sons and Lovers*. The emphasis is on the muscular physique of the men and the effect of their work on their bodies and character. Hines' conception of the miners in *First Signs* as "cowboys" exhausted by toil and labour and inhabiting a reality distant from women and children, carries Lawrence's image of the miners as a separate 'race' inhabiting a dark world.

Lawrence's division of the working and middle class, the way this division takes on gender and leads to a division of the 'body' and the 'mind' is most strongly expressed in Storey's fiction. As we will see later in this study, Storey organized his first four novels on the basis of these divisions. *This Sporting Life* is an account of the 'body' represented in Arthur Machin, and *Flight into Camden* reflects the 'spirit' in Margaret and to some degree in Howarth. In *Radcliffe* Storey brings the 'body' and the 'mind' face to face in the encounter between Tolson and Radcliffe, and in the final novel, *Pasmore*, the

conflict is explored in the mind of a single man. Almost as in Lawrence, Storey's fiction presents two monoliths and attempts to bring them together. In this process, the conflicting forces are conceived in terms of the working class, the masculine and the body, on the one hand, and the middle class, the feminine and the mind, on the other.

Finally, what marks the continuity of Lawrence's writing in the work of post-war working-class novelists is the prominent tension between a strong class-conscious ideology of community and an individualist ideology of social mobility. Like Lawrence, these writers were alienated from their social milieu through education and art. Like him, too, their work is an attempt to restore this gap and identify with social origins. The ambivalence which characterized both Lawrence and these writers is directly reflected in the literary texts themselves. Lawrence's tragic ejection from the working class and his constant search for it, due to the hopelessness of the oppositoinal world he tried to identify with, may be regarded as the Lawrencian legacy handed down to the working-class writers in post-war Britain.

In our analysis of the literary attributes and ideological perspectives of the early twentieth-century working class fiction, we have argued that the effective use of regional dialects is one of the major ruptures in English literary tradition. The realistic treatment of the common experiences of working-class community shaped, in this work, the artistic form of fictional narratives by putting work experiences at the centre of the literary expression. In this representation, the texts depicted the communal experiences of everyday life in a documentary fashion, identified the relationship of the individual (both author and character) to his/her community, and brought into play the communal psychic, social and economic forces in their impact on the individual. We have also referred to the presentation of sexuality in this work, and revealed its affinities with broader social, economic and political factors, particularly in Lawrence where sexuality reflects history and is treated as a liberating passage to the discovery of the individual self and the reshaping of the world. Finally, we have studied the relationship of this fiction to bourgeois art, and argued that while it succeeded in challenging the artistic and political vocabulary of bourgeois literature, as in Tressell and Gibbon, it failed in other instances to

break away from the conceptions and strategies of the dominant ideologies, as in Orwell, Greenwood and Lawrence.

These notions of art and ideology will feature, as this study progresses, as central issues to the evaluation of post-war working class fiction, and the analysis of its relationship to the bourgeois art and its dominant ideologies.

**PART THREE : Post-War Working-Class Fiction: Themes
and Strategies**

Section 1 : The 1950s: 'Affluence', 'Nostalgia' and 'Anger'

In Arnold Wesker's play *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1959), Sarah Kahn voices her dismay at the loss of something essential and precious in post-war Britain;

it's different now. Now the people have forgotten. I sometimes think they're not worth fighting for because they forget so easily. You give them a few shillings in the bank and they can buy a television so they think it's all over, there's nothing more to be got, they don't have to think anymore! Is that what you want? A world where people don't think anymore? Is that what you want me to be satisfied with - a television set?(1)

The key to understanding Britain in the 1950's is the idea of 'affluence'. Emerging from the Second World War, British capitalism was undergoing fundamental changes. Britain was rapidly moving forward from the post-war 'austerity' and rationing to 'affluence'. The dominant ideology was based on two illusions: the equal redistribution of national wealth, and lowering traditional class barriers. This manifested itself in various aspects of life; the establishment of a consumer society, the creation of an affluent, free-spending young generation, individual social mobility based on financial and educational opportunities, and the insertion of migrant workers from British colonies into the booming capitalist economy. Accompanying these were changes in attitudes and values resulting from the effects of the war, and the emergence of a 'welfare' culture.(2)

The combination of welfare capitalism and Cold War ideology seemed to be creating a political consensus leading to conformism. As the basis of 'affluence' was gradually unfolding its temporariness and the fragility and the inequality of 'affluence' and the persistence of class divisions were revealing the illusory nature of the dominant ideology of 'affluence', political consensus, on the other hand, was shattered by the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the Russian Invasion of Hungary in the same year. A mood of discontent and tension was growing with these developments. Perry Anderson sums up the tactics of British capitalism in this period, and refers to the concerns of the British New Left;

British capitalism, under great pressure, learnt to satisfy certain fundamental needs; it had achieved a marked reduction in primary poverty, a considerable stability of employment, an extensive welfare network. Yet it remained a

potentially intolerable and suffocating system even, or precisely for, groups in the population which enjoyed a relatively high standard of living... As material deprivation to a certain degree receded, cultural loss and devastation became more and more evident and important. The chaos and desolation of the urban environment, the sterility and formalism of education, the saturation of space and matter with advertising, the automatisation of local life, the concentration of control of the means of communication and the degradation of their content, these were what became the distinctive preoccupations of the New Left.(3)

The creation of the 'affluent' society and the ensuing individual class mobility and 'mass' popular culture renewed interest in class. This interest manifested itself in two trends of cultural production. On the one hand, sociological works about working-class life and working-class autobiographies emerged out of a nostalgic need to reconstruct the traditional working class that was already disintegrating in the midst of 'affluence', and out of a discontent at the exclusion of a wide spectrum of the working class from 'affluence'. On the other hand, there were many educated people from both the working- and lower-middle-class who strongly felt a loss of identity in a peripheral world neither able to identify with the backgrounds they had deserted, nor enter the world of the cultural and economic elite they hoped would open to them with these changes. Their frustration was expressed in various novels and plays, and came eventually to be known as 'Angry Young Men'.

Sociological writing on working-class culture proliferated in the 1950s and the two decades to follow. This does not suggest that a genre of working-class studies was established, for the elements that bind these works together do not exist on the levels of theory and methodology. These works have common concern with the effects of social changes in the post-war period on the working class. They tend to present fragmentary, broad social patterns to present some aspects of working-class life, without considering the working class as a force for change or investigating the factors that determine its mode of existence.

Some of these works which deal with various aspects of working-class life and have different approaches of emphasis are N. Dennis *et al.*, *Coal is our Life* (1956), Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957), R. Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), R. Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961),

Jackson and Marsden's *Education and the Working Class* (1962), E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), Goldthorpe and Lockwood's *The Affluent Worker in Class Structure* (1968), Coates and Silburn's *Poverty: The Forgotten Englishman* (1970), and R. Roberts' *The Classic Slum* (1971). It is significant to note that these works, and others, emerged at the time when there was a wide proclamation that the English working class did not exist anymore. These studies came as a response to this claim in their discovery of working-class culture. This probably conditioned the features of these works in their concern with documenting working-class life as it really was and accounting for the changes the working class was undergoing at the time. Hoggart, Young and Willmott, and Dennis *et al.* emphasised the nature of traditional working-class life. Jackson and Marsden concentrated on the question of education and changes in attitudes and life-style. Goldthorpe and Lockwood, and, in a different way, Williams concerned themselves with theory. Another major factor that initiated the emergence of these socio-cultural studies was education. Most of these authors were the product of the 1944 Education Act, and their identification with the working class and Labour politics was central to their social and political allegiance. This identification is a central thematic element in William's own novel *Border Country* (1960).(4) Blackwell and Seabrook point out that this upsurge of interest in sociological studies of the working class

was the process of reconstituting the working class, which was already under way, and which ejected a whole group of individuals whose marginal, and sometimes tormented, relationship to these changes compelled them to express experiences in which they were both agents and victims.(5)

What characterises most of these works, especially Hoggart's and Roberts's, is an almost autobiographical identity, as they wrote about the life they knew and depended a great deal on personal accounts in the stories they told. On the other hand, some of these authors had already been removed from their working-class environments mainly through education, and the accounts they give carry a rather nostalgic image of the warmth, cosiness and closeness of working-class life as they used to know it.

This sociological documentation of working-class life is transformed into a kind of fictional documentation in the novels of the period. Novelists, in a similar way to these sociologists,

attempted to reconstruct traditional working-class life as they knew it (though for different reasons, as we shall see later in this thesis), and adopted their personal experience as the material for their fiction. This strain of autobiographical documentation of working-class life continued to find expression in more recent works. Historically speaking, working-class autobiography or memoir has always accompanied its fictional counterpart. As autobiographical experience has always been a vital source of inspiration and material for working-class novelists, particularly for post-war novelists, working-class autobiography can be regarded as part of the general history of working-class literature. It is worth noting that the historical transition from oral working-class culture to literary forms of expression was made through working-class autobiography and memoir. If we are to trace the history of this form of expression from the nineteenth-century to the present, we would undoubtedly realise the significant role it has played in the emergence of working-class literary forms, and the impact it has had on the subject-matter, style and linguistic qualities of these forms. One of the most prominent elements of working-class autobiography is documentation of labour and factory work. Books like *'Rolling Stone Mason' - the Autobiography of Fred Bower* (1936), and *These Poor Hands: the autobiography of a Miner Working in South Wales* (1939) by B.L.Coombes, and *What Nobody Told the Foreman: the Autobiography of a Woodworker* (1953) by Max Cohen, are characterised by their realistic approaches and detailed descriptions of work and working-class conditions of life. The relevance of such works to novels like Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and the more recent novels like Sillito's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and Hine's *The Price of Coal* (1979) is evident in both the material and realistic documentation. On the other hand, autobiographies like *Hard Times and Easy Times, and Other Tales by a Queens Park Cockney* (1980) by Bert Healey, *A Hackney Memory Chest* (1983) by George A.Cook, and *"Ain't it Grand" or "This Was Stepney"* (1981) by Jim Wolveridge, are organised around notions of locality, and the titles themselves are suggestive of this. These authors seem to be seeking to define a sense of their own lives, and characteristically adopt a public definition which locates their lives in particularly defined area. Like the sociological works referred to above, these autobiographies centre on personal experiences and are mainly concerned with reconstructing the social identity of the working class and its individuals. And like

many post-war working-class novels, their documentary character is inherent in their regionality and the notion of locality. As I argue later in this thesis, 'literary merit' is not an aesthetic value in itself but ultimately political, and the question of 'literary value' is not a fixed concept but a changing one. In this sense, the value of working-class autobiography is not reducible to its content, and the judgement of its value can not be divorced from what it says by solely regarding the way it says it. The fact that working-class people are speaking for themselves, particularly in the context of 'Federation' autobiographies(7), has a progressive political meaning inherent in the politics of its composition, production and distribution. 'Federation' groups are, in a way, a response to the dominant mode of writing, producing and circulating books outside the working class. Working-class 'Federation' autobiographies are consequently realising, in the content and the nature of their production, the class concept of literary products. They voice working people's views, and address themselves to these people. In fact, the political basis of literature in any class society is, in the final analysis, derived from its subject matter, content and form. The working-class literary material discussed in this thesis has a stronger affinity with working-class autobiography than one would assume at first glance.

Of course the most popular literary genres regarded as reflective of post-war Britain and its 'affluent' society, in both academic and popular spheres, are the plays and novels conceived of as the expression of the 'Angry Young Man'. The discontent and tension felt at the time were voiced by many young writers in both their articles and literary works.

Doris Lessing remarked in 1957 that "British life is at the moment petty and frustrating,"(8) and that everybody is "directly or indirectly, caught up in a great whirlwind of change".(9) Writers of the 1950s welcomed change, but realised the absence of any radical changes and found British life to be a 'stalemate'. This feeling is summed up in John Wain's statement:

During the five years of combat, in which social and political arrangements have necessarily been stalemated, and undercurrent of discontent has been gathering - discontent with the England of the Thirties, with its luke-warm snobberies and social fossilisations, its dole-queues, its slumbering Empire, the general feeling that the country is like a gutter choked with dead leaves ... The sweeping Labour victory of 1945 ... appeared to suher in a new revolution. I see no

sign of that revolution ... I want hampering old conventions, particularly class-distinctions, to be swept away. I want freedom, activity, adventure, and I do not see them in the society around me.(10)

This feeling of discontent produced several novelists and poets whose works reflected dissent and dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, and exhibited a renewed interest in class due to class mobility resulting from the workings of 'affluence'. These writers and their works were referred to as 'The Movement', and included Philip Larkin, John Wain, and Kingsley Amis. Their novels *Jill* (1946), *Hurry on Down* (1953) and *Lucky Jim* (1954) registered a shift in the English novel, and paved the way for a whole body of work which came to be known as that of the 'Angry Young Man'. This section deals briefly with the 'angry' work of novelists like William Cooper, John Wain, Kingsley Amis, Keith Waterhouse, Colin Wilson, Iris Murdoch, and Neil Dunn, and of playwrights such as John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Shelagh Delaney and Brendan Behan. The emphasis of my argument will lie on two questions: What were their writers angry about? And how did they express their anger in their works?

In his book *The Angry Decade* (1958), Kenneth Allsop argues that these writers have a quality misread and misnamed 'anger', and suggests that the more accurate word for their mood is "dissentience", which implies: disagreement with majority sentiment and opinion, rather than an organised separation block from the Establishment. He classifies these writers in three categories: "The Law-Givers" who are working for the overthrow of exhausted but tenacious ideas and are led by Colin Wilson, "The Emotionalists" who stand for reform and revolution represented by John Osborne, and "The Neutralists" - the biggest group - who share with Kingsley Amis a cynical disgust for authority, but opt for an inert neutrality or even conformity with some middle-class values. Allsop's division of these writers into three separate groups is vital to his, and our, understanding of the diversity of their works and emphasis, the absence of a unifying cause for anger, and the overall a-political tone that characterises both writers and works. This is implied in Allsop's interpretation of the qualities engendered in the term often used to describe them. He writes:

The phrase Angry Young Man carries multiple overtones which might be listed as irreverence, stridency, impatience with tradition, vigour,

vulgarity, sulky resentment against the cultivated and a hard-boiled muscling-in on culture, adventurousness, self-pity, deliberate disengagement from politics, fascist ambitions, schizophrenia, a rude dislike of anything phoney or fey, a broad sense of humour but low on wit, a general intellectual nihilism, honesty, a neurotic discontent and a defeated, reconciled acquiescence...(11)

What seem to have excited most anger among these writers were more cultural issues than political ones. Unable, at first, to join the powerful elite of British society, they attacked the debasing materialism dominating all aspects of life. These 'dissentients' came mostly from working-class or middle-class backgrounds, and were generally educated. They suddenly found themselves unassimilated, rootless, faithless and belonging to a 'classless' class. They had a mixture of guilt about deserting their backgrounds and contempt for the orthodoxy of their original communities and environment. On the other hand, this ambivalent attitude was accompanied with another frustrating situation. Because they failed to integrate into and be accepted by the world their education and learning led them to, they reacted to it with mockery and anger. The radical changes that seemed to have been taking place in post-war Britain offered them nothing, and they found themselves marginalised on the peripheries of influence and power with nowhere to go. A part of the 'affluent' generation, the affluence they enjoyed and the education they gained left them puzzled, looking for causes for their anger, but finding none. Disinterested in politics and political dilemmas, their frustration contained no possibility for anger, and the major motivation of their 'anger' was that they were not able to see anything they could be angry about. The outcome was a muted discontent, retreat and defeatism, and cynical mockery and distancing from society. There were various reasons, however, for the temporary effectiveness of their 'dissentience' and the wide popular reception of their works. One is the 'stalemate' in the literary culture of the 1940s and after, and before it the 1930s. Their works, new in tone and material, liberated literature from the confines of the ivory tower in which it was locked, and tackled class issues central to the changes taking place in the 'welfare' culture. The other is that they expressed the mood of frustration gathering momentum at the time, for the phrase 'Angry Young Man', as Allsop points out, "illuminated for large numbers of people a new state of mind in the Britain of the Nineteen-

Fifties".(12) Wain's interpretation of the success of his first novel *Hurry On Down* is most revealing of the period's psychological make-up;

perhaps that discontented and rather appalled young man [the novel's protagonist, Charles Lumley], banging away at his typewriter on Sunday mornings in that bungalow off the Wokingham Road, managed to hit a mood that a lot of people were dimly conscious of feeling, but had not yet found words for; and perhaps he, of all unlikely people, managed to find the words for them.(13)

Finally, these authors learnt how to manipulate popular mass media (newspapers, magazines, television, cinema, etc.) for the purpose of popularising their names and offering their works for public consumption.(14) They also offered themselves collectively in symposia like *Declaration* and "The State of Fiction"(15) which seems almost ironical once the later resentment of these individual authors at being identified with a group called the 'Angry Young Man' is considered. In his introduction to *Hurry On Down* in 1977, John Wain dissociates himself from both 'The Movement' and 'The Angry Young Man' group, and writes:

if there was a 'movement' at all, which I am inclined to doubt, I cannot be accused of tagging along behind it. I might then be credited - or blamed, if you will - for having *started it*.(16)

A fiercer rejection of identification with this group is voiced by Alan Sillitoe in 1979. In an interview, he suggests that it was accidental that all those 'angry' works that attacked middle-class values appeared at the same time. Commenting on his *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, he deliberately strips the novel of any implications of anger or protest;

I didn't attack any values particularly, I just wrote a novel about a young bloke that worked in a factory. Sounds silly, but that's just how it came about.(17)

An examination of the major works of the 'angry' writers is bound to reveal the diversity of their emphases, and illustrate the mood of 'dissentience' and frustration inherent in them, rather than any political tone of anger or protest. More important, such an analysis will undoubtedly unmask the nature of this 'dissentience', the motivations behind it, and show that the reasons for this frustration and 'dissentience' are quickly undermined and eradicated once the

doors of the affluent middle-class world are opened where conformity and reconciliation are made possible.

Although the concept of 'anger' in the 1950s was, and generally is still, connected with John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1956) and with names like Amis and Braine the mood of 'dissentience' was characterised by three novels written in the first three years of the decade. These were William Cooper's *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950), its sequel (the second in trilogy)(18) *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* (1951), and John Wain's *Hurry On Down* (1953). Cooper's *Scenes from Provincial Life* centres around Joe Lunn and his lower-middle-class friends in a small provincial town. Although the novel is set in 1939, the mood and behaviour of its narrator exhibit the impatience with tradition which was to characterise the 1950s generation and works. A young man caught in the provinces on the eve of the war, Joe Lunn is "rootless and unconforming."(19) He teaches in a poorly run state common school, and is cynical about his work as a teacher. His cynicism, which characterises his narrative throughout the novel, shows his contempt for traditional values and places him as a sceptical observer of his society, and a relatively unconventional young man in his private life (evident in his free sexual relationship with girlfriend). In spite of the novel's unobtrusive appearance on the scene, the conventionality of its realism and the simplicity of its style, it had a tremendous impact on the drama and fiction of the 1950s. This achievement lies in the novel's anticipation of future trends of 'dissentience', mockery and a colloquial sceptical tone. James Lee remarks that in many ways Joe Lunn

is the forerunner of all those anti-heroes with working-class first names who appear in British fiction of the 1950s Joe Lunn is merely the first of many dissatisfied, frustrated young provincials seeking a way out of their situations.(20)

The novel founded the first basis of dissentience, and helped other writers build on this in the context of the 1950s' mood. John Braine wrote that "the book was for me - and I suspect many others - a seminal influence."(21) If *Scenes from Provincial Life* had paved the way for the expression of 'dissentience' Cooper's second novel in this trilogy, *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* anticipated the ideological contents of the 1950s novels. Both its title and content suggest a tendency towards reconciliation with society, and the absence of any

desire to reform it. This muting of 'anger' through conformity was to characterise almost the whole work of the 1950s. Wain's *Hurry on Down* exhibits this tension between rebellion and conformity. Allsop points out that "Wain seems to be the first of the new dissentients to display signs of readiness to conform, to opt for orthodoxy after all." (22) After leaving university, Charles Lumley shows a determined dissentience from social norms by pursuing a professional career as a window-cleaner. This 'hurrying on down', symbolised in the novel by Lumley's descending the ladder he carries with him when he cleans windows, is soon reversed into a climbing of the social ladder. Charles's feelings of displacement and his attempts to make an existence outside of his class, which he feels is imprisoning him, and indeed out of the class structure altogether, are soon muted by a well-paid job and a desirable woman. His mockery of the artificial values of the commercial classes and his attempt to identify with the working class, which he manages to achieve only on an artificial level through his job, are determined by his entry into the middle class and further alienation from his own class. He continues, nevertheless, to assert his "neutrality" claiming that

the running fight between himself and society has ended in a draw; he was no nearer, fundamentally, to any rapprochement or understanding with it than when he had, a window-cleaner. (23)

Wain's novel reveals a genuine attempt to work out his relationship with his society. It is crucial to note that the novel was published in the United States in 1954 under the title of *Born in Captivity*. The title of the American edition is in fact more expressive of Lumley's dilemma for his 'imprisonment' is social and class initiated.

Kingsley Amis's first novel *Lucky Jim* (1954) expressed another aspect of post-war literature, and had a significant influence on young writers. Jim Dixon is a new post-war character; educated in a Red Brick university, he is contemptuous of all the traditions of the Establishment, a contempt that takes the form of a wild mockery and nervous bursts of aggression towards his elders and 'betters'. A history lecturer at a provincial university, Dixon is bored with his job and disgusted with tradition and hypocrisy. His antagonism is voiced in practical jokes and frustrated face-making appropriate for different occasions; Martian-invader face, Eskimo face, Edith Sitwell face, Lemon-sucking face, sex-life-in-ancient-Rome face, and so on. Verbal jokes, face-making and play on words are major aspects of

humour in Amis's novels. This comic image is central to the novel, and there are occasions where humour is inserted to interrupt a serious scene. As his academic career goes from bad to worse, his face-making and drunkenness distance him from opportunities to leave university work until he is hired as a private secretary to Gore-Urguhart and wins the middle-class girl he always dreamt of. Although Dixon's mockery is intended to express his contempt for the Establishment, it fails to gain depth due to his pettiness and conformity towards the end of the novel. Protest at conformity and competition is reduced from a genuine anger to an empty farce. Frederick Karl questions the representational credibility of Dixon and remarks that

As a comedian, Jim would make an excellent minor character. As a rebel, however, even as a rebel in a Restoration comedy, he fails almost completely... Jim's aim is not opposition so much as it is to seek a niche for himself. Like the rest, Jim is a pusher; only he cannot make it in their terms. Cast in this way, Jim's revolt is meaningless, merely another form of social and economic expedience.(24)

Lucky Jim, however, was one of the most popular works of the decade. Walter Allen goes as far as regarding Jim Dixon as a "symbol... a figure to be identified with... an archetypal figure, the hero of a generation."(25) The novel's break with tradition and the mockery that characterises the contempt of its anti-heroic protagonist had a great impact on the fiction of the period. Keith Waterhouse, in particular, was most affected by Amis's humour in his novel *Billy Liar* (1959). The novel relates one day in the life of Billy Fisher, the narrator of the novel. Billy is an adolescent who lives and works in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He abhors the two aspects of life there; phoney provincialism represented by a local newspaper columnist Man o' the Dales, and the Americanised milk-bar existence represented in his friends who, like him, are frustrated and disillusioned. Billy finds his escape in an invented land called "Ambrosia" where he is the national hero, and in lies. The first words of the novel sets his escapist imaginary flights; "Lying in bed, I abandoned the facts again and was back in Ambrosia".(26) The novel's mood and humour are characterised throughout by these imaginary flights and a series of lies and comic situations. Billy's attempt to leave for London to become a television performer and writer finishes in the train station and his return back home. The novel is a hilarious satiric picture of

life in a drab provincial town, and an interesting exploration of a disillusioned, frustrated adolescent. Billy is no reformer, and his main interest is to escape by running away to "Ambrosia" or London.

The mood of the period found a strong expression in three mid-1950s texts which explored the temper of the times through intellectual life and thought; Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net* (1954) and *Flight from the Enchanter* (1956), and Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* (1956). *Under the Net* centres on an episode in the rootless, restless life of James Donaghue, known as Jake, a talented but lazy writer living on translating pornographic French books for an English publisher. Jake's tramp-like life and his rootlessness echo the tone of the novels of the 1950s. In his first-person narrative, Jake expresses his outcast estrangement from society by defining himself as a "professional Unauthorised Person; I am sure I have been turned out of more places than any other members of the English intelligentsia." (27) His political orientation is made clear in the novel, and his support for Labour is one quality that relates him to his society. Although the novel is marked with action and colloquial humour, the first-person narrative provides the basis for reflection and analysis. Jake gradually realises that life is "Ragged, inglorious and apparently purposeless." (28) He similarly realises through his study of language that

All theorising is flight. We must be ruled by the situation itself and this is unutterably particular. Indeed it is something to which we can never get close enough, however hard we try as if it were to crawl under the net. (29)

Jake's realisation of the nature of the 'net' cast over reality, and his careless sex adventures on the fringes of London's underworld motivated early reviewers to group Murdoch with the 'Angry Young Men' of the 1950s. The London circles of shabby intellectualism provides once again the setting for *The Flight from the Enchanter*. The novel is a kind of fantasy about the poisonous effect of power on the people who seem impervious to it. In a dreamy way, characters impinge on each other simply because they incidentally encounter each other in the circle of life, symbolised by a mysterious character called Mischa Fox. In these two novels, no deliberate anger or rebellion is imposed on the characters, and the power of the narratives lies mainly in their philosophical dimensions. Murdoch was a university teacher of philosophy, and like Jean-Paul Sartre's, her novels strongly reflect this philosophical interest. Many of her novels show characters

flying from an 'enchanter', who brutally imposes patterns on reality, a figure who is essentially an artist.

What characterised the works of the 1950s most were a kind of delinquency, represented by Amis's Jim Dixon, and the self-containment and isolation of the outsider, his rejection of society and detachment from identification. In *The Outsider*, Wilson attacks the decaying Western civilisation, and expresses the mood of the 1950s in a different way from the novelists and dramatists of the period. The 'outsider' stands for truth and individuality against the mediocre collection conformity. He is consequently opposed to the middle classes, for he sees the world as "chaos" while they see it as "order". For him, the world is neither rational nor organised, and "*truth must be told at all costs, otherwise there can be no hope for an ultimate restoration of order.*"(30) Wilson's importance was as a philosopher, and he voiced a similar attitude to that expressed in the works of the period, but in a radically different way. His book was a call for a sort of religion, or for a Nietzschean superman perhaps. Various 'outsiders' are referred to in the book, Nietzsche. T.E. Lawrence, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Soren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Vincent Van Gogh. Wilson sees man trapped in a state of chaos with two options to follow, either conformity or retreat in the 'outsider' world where the individual creates his or her own rules. Wilson stated; "My Outsider fitted neatly into the pattern of obsession... I have found 'bearing me up and flattering me' for providing it with a catchword, a symbol ... for I have always believed that the Outsider is the heroic figure of our time."(31) The success of the book was due to its expression of a widespread state of feeling. Wilson's emphasis on the 'superman ideolog', however, was gradually being evaluated as a promotion of Faschist cult. Kenneth Allsop dedicates his whole chapter "The Law-Givers" to tracing Wilson's development, the critical reception of his book, and the evaluation of his thought. He acknowledges Wilson's valuable contribution in formulating a post-war philosophical attitudes, and remarks;

It is exceedingly strange, and profoundly disturbing if the dissentience (the 'anger') in our present semi-socialised compromised welfare society is going to swing retrogressively to the discredited and hateful system of murder gangs and neurotic mysticism which perished in its own flames. We know that there is political boredom and apathy in Britain; that the drive seems lost and the blood runs thin. Can it be so

intolerable that it is creating an ardour for the corrupt vigour of fascism?(32)

In the final analysis, *The Outsider* brilliantly diagnosed the spiritual condition of the 1950s, but the means it proposed for salvation transcended politics and radical reform to enter the sphere of Fascist cultism. The power of 'anger' that characterises the book loses its impact in the channelling of its potentials.

Eighteen days before the publication of Wilson's book, a play had been performed at the Royal Court on the 8th May, 1956. The staging of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* predated the Suez Crisis by several months, and was soon to set the mood of the decade's writing. The play was hailed as marking the breakthrough of the 'new drama' into British theatre. For many, Osborne represented the 'new dramatist', "the first of the angry young men and arguably the biggest shock to the system of British theatre since the advent of Shaw."(33) The immediacy and 'typicality' of the play identified both Osborne and Jimmy Porter as speakers for a whole generation. Jimmy Porter is a product of the Welfare State, and has much in common with Amis's and Wain's scholarship boys. He is a university graduate and a cultural snob who lives in an attic flat in a drab Midland town, and makes living by keeping a sweet stall in the market. Unable to adjust to the world which his education ushered him into, he revels in the hysterical outbursts of anger against his wife Alison, her family, the press, the American way, his own impoverished childhood, and simply against anyone and everything. He is dissatisfied with everything in his life and the life around him, and the tone of his conversation, which is "mainly monologue"(34) as Taylor points out, is consistently one of rage and contempt which his wife has to endure. In fact, there is hardly anything constructive or positively developed and clear in his rage, except his rage itself. His major complaint is at the impossibility of rebellion in this stagnating, stalemate atmosphere;

I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer. We had all that done for us, in the thirties and forties, when we were still kids. There aren't any good, brave causes left. If the big bang does come, and we are all get killed off, it won't be in the aid of the old-fashioned, grand design. It'll just be for the Brave New Nothing-very-much-thank-you. About as pointless and inglorious as stepping in front of a bus.(35)

Jimmy is a sample of educated post-war Britons who had seen a social revolution half take place and their economic opportunities blocked

contrary to their expectations. His frustration at his exclusion from the powerful elite of his society, and inability to conceive of any causes for rebellion render his 'anger' emotive and lacking in political meaning, a quality characteristic of the period's 'anger' as a whole. Taylor evaluates the play as "muddled" in what it says and the way it says it, and points out that

the force and intensity of the play derive mainly from the author's shifting, ambivalent love-hate relationship with his hero.(36)

Jimmy's complaint about the absence of "good causes" in a stalemate society is reiterated in a different way in Arnold Wesker's trilogy *Chicken Soup With Barley* (1959), *Roots* (1959), and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* (1960). Wesker's Trilogy attempts to sum up the situation of the post-war working classes, and looking back as far as 1936 to explore the roots of this situation. *Chicken Soup With Barley* covers twenty years in the lives of an East End Jewish family, the Kahns, from 1936 to 1956. The play operates on the personal level to reflect the social one. The first concerns recurrent patterns of behaviour from generation to another, while the second indicates the absence of big, clear-cut issues of the inter-war years due to the advent of both a socialist government and the Welfare State. What characterises the characters is their lives of social relationship and responsibilities. While Ada, Ronnie and Dane become disillusioned, a feeling represented in Ronnie's "I've lost my faith and I've lost my ambitions... I don't see things in black and white anymore", (39) Sarah - a dominant figure in the household and a political activist - remains firm in her convictions;

All my life I worked with a party that meant glory and freedom and brotherhood... Socialism is my light... A way of life... I've got to have light and love.(38)

Roots concerns itself with the personal level only, occupies a fortnight and centres on Beatie Bryant, a woman Ronnie has met and becomes engaged to in London. Influenced by Ronnie's ideals, she is received with coldness and indifference at her home in Norfolk. She realises, through the conditions of country workers, that Ronnie is correct in blaming them, for

The whole stinkin' commercial world insults us and we don't care a damn... It's our own bloody fault. We want the third-rate - we got it!(39)

At the end, she stands alone, but articulate and emerging out of a transition. The third part *I'm talking About Jerusalem* follows the story of Ada and her husband Dave who set off in Act Two of the first play to dedicate themselves to arts and crafts in an attempt to liberate themselves from the domination of industrialisation and the machine. The play ends with the defeat of Dave's vision, as he realises that

Once I had ... a moment of vision ... I had ideas ... now the only things that seem to matter to me are the day-to-day problems of my wife, my kids and my work ... machinery and modern techniques have come about to make me the odd man out ... Maybe Sarah's right, maybe you can't build on your own.(40)

Wesker's trilogy is an attack on the destructive ignorance and indifference of the lower classes, a hymn to individuals who struggle for self and political consciousness (Beatie in the second play), and a call for collective action which is a prerequisite to any fundamental change (Sarah's organisation of demonstrations and her orientation of the lives of those around her towards socialist principles, in the first play).

I have intentionally left to the end considering Brendan Behan's play *The Quare Fellow* (1955), Shelagh Delaney's play *A Taste of Honey* (1959) and Nell Dunn's novels *Up the Junction* (1963) and *Poor Cow* (1967). Regarding Behan, he is almost an outsider to the English literary scene of the period, and his political involvement gave his work a strength and clarity almost absent in the 1950s' work. On the other hand, although Delaney and Dunn are grouped with the 'Angry Young Men' they were angry young 'Women' who placed the feminine experience - almost wholly ignored in other major works with the exception of David Storey's *Flight into Camden* - but like Behan, though in a different context altogether - they knew exactly what they wanted to say and how to articulate it.

As far as Behan's work is concerned, the two most important facts in his life are his periods in prison, and his involvement with the IRA. Prison life features in his first play *The Quare Fellow* and the novel *Borstal Boy* (1959), and the IRA is the subject matter for his play *The Hostage*. The timing of *The Quare Fellow* is significant: the night of an execution when the prison is at the most revealing moment of its identity. The central character in the play is 'the quare fellow' to be hanged, and its theme is the effect which his fate has on the people within the prison, as well as on the audience. Although

'the quare fellow' does not appear on the stage, the dialogue is seldom removed from him and he dominates our minds and the minds of the prisoners. A great deal of the dramatic tension in the play rises from the fact that the only thing we know about 'the quare fellow' is his crime and his punishment. Prisoners and prison staff avoid mentioning the man's name, and euphemistically refer to him as "the quare fellow". They all feel there is something shameful about the act of legal execution, and the prison authorities try to keep the business as quiet and as secret as possible. This is an attempt to dehumanise him, to evade the fact that a human being is about to be killed in a carefully calculated manner. Behan's major idea in the play is that murder is a detestable act, and legalised murder is more so. The play is a cry for the dignity of human beings. Warder Regan seems at various points to voice Behan's ideas, particularly about capital punishment. He tells the Chief Warder:

You think the law makes this man's death somehow different, not like anyone else's. Your own, for instance.(41)

In a more mocking tone, he carries on:

I think the whole show should be put on in Corke Park; after all, it's at the public expense and they let it go on. They should have something more for their money than a bit of paper stuck up on the stage.(42)

The question of the public and audience is central to the structure of the play. The audience find themselves involved in the play due to the way in which it addresses them. There is a short interval of darkness, for instance, between the switching off of the auditorium lights and the rise of the curtain during which is heard a resigned voice singing a melancholy song. When the curtain rises, the audience sees a prison landing, and 'On the wall and facing the audience is printed in large block shaded Victorian lettering the word "SILENCE"'.(43) "This is as much a test of the audience as an instruction to the prisoners" as Raymond Porter writes,

The audience if examining an institution which it has created, sanctioned and maintained itself. The audience is society; it must respect its own security system, must certainly not laugh at it.(44)

Behan's use of black humour and satire is the play's strongest element which achieves the goal of making the audience laugh at the

institution they themselves have created. Black humour and bitter mockery reach a hilarious level when, five minutes before the hanging, the voice of one of the prisoners, Mickson, fills the prison yard with a vivid commentary description of the execution as a horse race. Throughout the play, the audience realise that Dunlavin and other prisoners are not callous, but rather using the only means at their disposal to ward off the approaching horror. Their division of the dead man's letters among themselves, in a business-like manner, to send them to the Sunday papers and get money for them, is the best example of their attempt to avoid the horror of what is happening. *The Quare Fellow* is a play within a play; there is the audience in the theatre watching characters on the stage, and the characters on the stage are an audience themselves witnessing the externals of a closet-drama of execution. As execution, murder, takes place behind the walls, neither audience nor characters can see it or do anything about it, at the theatrical moment that is. All they can do is laugh at it. The play is a ritual. There is a ritualistic element in drama originally, and the ritual of execution is taking place within this dramatic ritual. Behan seems to be suggesting that what is happening is too ridiculous to be true, this is not real but a ritualistic form of life, false and unreal. It is this legalised ritual of murder that Behan is angry about. Porter remarks that

After *The Quare Fellow* it is impossible to see judicial hanging as an element in an argument on crime and punishment: Behan has infixed in our minds the physicality of the action and the actuality of the hours before it.(45)

The Quare Fellow is relevant in the way it relates to the new questioning spirit that characterised the period's mood and works. The play is a statement about a society legislating murder, and dehumanising people and alienating those who do not conform, 'the quare fellows'. In spite of its humour and the laughter it provokes, this laughter "springs from the depths of our consciousness and registers the rebellious vitality of man against the forces of oppression, dehumanisation and death."(46)

Unlike Jimmy Porter, Jim Dixon, Charles Lumley or Joe Lampton, Delaney's and Dunn's are not 'angry' and frustrated at their exclusion from the middle-class world, and joining this world is not one of their objectives. They neither rail savagely against others, nor do they rage against their fate, authority, or the Establishment. Their vision is more realistic and positive, and the feminine world is at

the centre of their works. The plot of *A Taste of Honey* is simple. Helen, a prostitute, and her schoolgirl daughter Jo, move into a drab attic flat in a slum, but Helen soon decides to marry her latest friend Peter, and leaves. Jo has an affair with a black sailor. When we meet her next, she is pregnant with Geoffrey, a motherly art student, looking after her. This is interrupted by Helen's return who, after the failure of her marriage, decides that her place is with her daughter. Geoffrey leaves. Characters inhabit each other's world, and Jo's world is the central one. Even Helen seems to be part of it as she emerges and disappears as Jo's world requires. The play contains elements of urban poverty which are made to seem an ordinary part of the characters' experiences. The social environment provides the material for Jo's observations through which she discovers things about people, herself and love. She takes life as it is and tries to make the best out of it. She realises that her future is in her hands and acts accordingly. Helen's loss and desperation is the most immediate influence on Jo. Although her words come out mechanically and meaningless, they carry a lot of power at times. She tells Jo:

There's two W's in your future. Work or want...
We're all at the steering wheel of our own
destiny. Careering along like drunken
drivers.(47)

As in these words, the power of the play is in presenting human grievance as ordinary, an everyday experience, and in the reluctance to moralise or sentimentalise. This subtlety led critics like James Gordin to overlook the play's emphasis on the social environment which Helen and Jo inhabit. He writes:

any note of strident social consciousness, or
any call for the amelioration of the social
evils that form the background of the play, is
completely absent from the theme and texture of *A
Taste of Honey*.(48)

It is the social circumstances and Jo's awareness of them that motivate her action. Her defiance is both voiced and expressed in her determination to make her own world. Confronting her mother with "Why should I slave away for any body but me?"(49) and "You're nothing to me. I'm everything to myself"(50), she is both rejecting the conditions and conventions that made her mother what she is, and outlining a different feminine world that departs from that of her mother's generation. Her sarcasm and rejection of conventional notions of motherhood ("I'm not having a little animal nibbling away at me, its cannibalistic, like being eaten alive."(51)) are notions of

defiance, and her readiness to accept the responsibility for the child is another challenge to social conventions of family life. Helen's return to Jo at the end is the triumph of this independent mode of living embodied in Jo's experience. In Jo, Delaney created a post-war anti-heroine who, unlike her male equivalents in the period's works, is wholly free from the dilemma of conformity to an already created world. She recognizes that she is the sole master of her life, and without hesitation takes responsibility for running it.

The feminine world Delaney knew and wrote about was part of her childhood and youth in Salford, and the setting of *A Taste of Honey* is one of the most powerful elements of the character's world, particularly that of Helen and Jo. Nell Dunn came from a middle-class background and moved to Battersea in 1959. In fact, her first work *Up The Junction* was commissioned, like Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*. In a series of sketches, the book relates everyday lives of a group of working women in a working-class area of South London. These stories, some of which had originally appeared in the *New Statesman* and in volume form in 1963, are simple, realistic and first hand. Dunn's work in a local factory in Battersea, the friendly atmosphere characterizing the relationships between young women workers, their liberty and independence, and the social and sexual freedom sought and enjoyed are the material of *Up the Junction*. The book captures their lives as they experienced them, and ushers the reader into their thoughts about themselves, their work, and their rather promiscuous sex life. Hard conditions of work, "no windows in the room where we have been sitting since eight in the morning earning two-and-five pence per hour - ten pence an hour for the under eighteens" (52), do not suppress the humour and social and sexual liberty inside and outside the confines of the sweet factory. At work, the women's rebellious spirit is expressed in their colloquial offensive vocabulary of "get pissin' of", "ginks", "sods" and "fuckin", and in the stories of sexual adventure they relate to each other. Their world is defined in terms of class and gender, their drinking sessions and sexual freedom, and their indifference to the social reality around them. Their cynicism is the medium through which they express their attitude towards their conditions. Out of the slums, love songs breathe into the drab streets;

O come on, take me by the hand
 And lead me to the land
 Of Ecstasy - Oh Ecstasy! (53)

Life, hard and drab, is transformed into a dream world of happiness. Like Delaney's Jo, Dunn's women make their own lives, deal with their work, home affairs and frequent pregnancies and abortions without complaint in the course of coping with their life and making the best of it. It is not wholly ironic that Dunn gives her heroine the name Joy in her second work *Poor Cow*. In spite of the sequence of disasters in her life, Joy enjoys the lack of security and her independence. Left with a baby in her arms and a husband in prison, she falls in love with Dave and both share idle moments which are soon interrupted by the latter's imprisonment. She does not lament her luck, but works as a barmaid and a model, spends her evenings out, talks to her Aunt Emma about life, men and prostitution, and tries to seduce her driving inspector and her solicitor. The novel's frankness about sex, prostitution and the pleasures of the flesh in a hopeless inhuman world was taken at the time as scandalous and shocking. Margaret Drabble wrote that *Poor Cow*

was one of the first post-*Chatterley* books to speak out, to treat women's sexuality as though it were entirely natural, as natural as man's. (54)

The novel's narrative voice is poetic in its description of London's backstreets, pubs and cafes and attractive shopping streets. Joy's inner voice is both intimate and aggressive. Her relationship with her baby Jonny is warm, physical and evocative of motherhood, and her letters to Dave are explicit, sexy and romantic;

'Well my love, I have something to tell you, ha ha. Me and Beryl have taken up Modeling ha ha Yes ... I'll send you some photos in my bikeny Sexy ... if my divorce come through I'll marry you straight away I promise you that.' (55)

What characterizes Dunn's heroine is her ability to extract happiness and glamour out of her life, and disregard any moral approval or disapproval through her tenderness, cynicism, and exultation at her personal freedom and independence. She exists freely in her world, and her acceptance of it disarms the reader from any attempt to interpret her life and actions.

It is not without reason that David Lodge remarked that the Angry-provincial-neorealist fiction of the fifties doesn't seem, in retrospect, a particularly glorious chapter in English literary history. (56)

And it is not without substantial evidence that Allsop calls the 'angries' of the 1950s "dissentients", and Karl describes the protagonists of their works as "'snivelling"'.(57) At a time when there were many important and fundamental issues to be angry about (class divisions, domination of economic and political apparatuses by elites, trivialization of culture through a consumer-designed society and a 'mass' media, etc.), most of the period's prominent literary figures were raging in their works against the staleness of society and the impossibility of anger. Any potentials of rebellion are hastily muted either through conformity (this applies to protagonists and authors alike) or defeatism and self-pity. The protagonists of the 1950s' works are not angry individuals, but frustrated with themselves, with their social status in a transitional society, with their work and those around them, and with their frustrated aspirations for self-fulfillment. 'Anger' is reduced to foolishness in *Lucky Jim*, contempt for conventional, dominant middle-class values is terminated as soon as Wain's Lumley and Cooper's Lunn enter the very world they seem to reject. And Osborne's Jimmy Porter, the epitome of 'anger', fails to be capable of anger and indulges in a flood of tirades against his wife, and essentially himself. The search of these pseudo-rebels for values and worlds they dream about, away from class restrictions and social norms, undermines any social or political identification. Blake Morrison regards the period's work as that of adjustment and compromise, and comments that 'There is little sense that the social structure could be altered: the more common enquiry is whether individuals can succeed in "fitting in"'.(58) One symbol of aimlessness and quest for conformity is the picaresque style the novels of Wain and Amis adopt, for instance, one that characterizes the working-class fiction of the period, too. Most of the protagonists in the period's works are handicapped by their selfishness, egoism and inability to clearly define their relationship to their society. Karl points out that these individuals reject everything but have nothing to offer, "have nothing to draw upon; as empty as the people they attack, they too are parasites".(59) If there was any problem stated in these works, the scope of their vision does not usually go beyond stating it, and any search for alternatives is quickly reduced to defeatism and despair. Any anger that could result in positive action is rendered in personal individualistic terms leaving no room for any kind of political motivation. This is evident in the happy endings and conformism that characterize most of

these works, as characters - through 'luck' or effort - settle for compromises and social acceptance. Out of the works considered above, Behan's, Wesker's, Delaney's and Dunn's works seem to come closer to positive anger and clarity of vision and purpose. As the following chapters of this thesis will reveal, the qualities that generally characterize the works of the 'Angry Young Men' are not very uncharacteristic of the period's working-class fiction considered in this study.

Section II : Reaction Against Experiment: Documentary Realism

The 1920s saw the birth and development of two complementary myths; the disintegration of society as an organic whole, and the fragmentation of the individual. In the novels of Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Franz Kafka and Samuel Beckett, the individuality of the character or the narrator lies in the fact that they can no longer be individuals, members of a social group. They are reduced from 'individuals' to 'selves' where they no longer belong to a "Balzacian" society. This concept was central to the period's artistic, literary and philosophical products, and was reflected in Picasso, Cocteau, Freud and Pirandello. For these 'modernists', society is regarded as inhuman where people's lives are encased, regulated and rendered fragmentary by an anonymous automatism. This perception reflected these artists' vision of industrialism as depriving humans of their identity which is both negated and controlled by the machine and the modern system. The myth of 'modernity' emerged: industrial society turning life into automation. A work of art is the expression of a reality which has a meaning and a form in the artist's mind, and the artist's perception of reality is most clearly expressed in his or her techniques of transforming this reality or the perception of it, into art. Kafka, for instance, employed the linear narrative which corresponded to the one-dimensional nature of the world as he observed and experienced it. Beckett's work was a linear exhaustive treatment signifying the meaningless of life. It was through the formal character of their works and the techniques adopted in creating that formal character that 'modernists' exposed reality as they conceived of it. The notion of form concerns social reality as much as it does the work of art itself. In the case of the novel, the narrative is contained within language and derives most of its character from it. On the other hand, the form and content of the novel are directly related to social reality because novels often correspond to specific historical junctures of a particular society. The 1920s' novelists broke out of conventional literary styles to express their perception of modern society. D.H. Lawrence revolted against the old style of the English novel, Virginia Woolf rejected the 'materialism' of writers like Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells, and in his *Finnegans Wake* (1939) Joyce created linguistic and narrative devices that shattered the familiar fictional molds. It must be noted here that Lawrence remains one of

the very few novelists of the period who did not completely cut his characters off from their social environment, for he saw the modern city as the stage for the productive conflict between people.

The English fiction of the 1950s restored the 'individuality' of the character by regaining and re-establishing its ties with social reality. In the case of working-class fiction, this is achieved through the novelists' perception and creation of the individual in class terms, in the contexts of a particular, well-defined historical juncture, and a recognizable community defined by social, economic, political, and cultural forces. As Defoe attempted to penetrate to the core of actual social reality through the outer coverings of the religious and political order, the post-war novelists interpreted social reality in terms of class and social divisions in a changing society. Although the 1950s' English novelists wrote about contemporary social problems, few of them experimented with the form and style of their novels. They returned to the more conventional forms of the English novel, social realist in essence, and did not incorporate the techniques of Joyce, Woolf, or other experimental novelists into their own styles. Basically, they were anti-modernists, and most of them consciously rejected experimental techniques in their fiction, and turned instead to older novelist for inspiration. C.P. Snow and Angus Wilson, for instance, felt that the nineteenth-century novelists had influenced them most, Kingsley Amis and John Wain went back to the eighteenth-century novel and the fiction of the post-Victorian realists; Butler, Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy. Similarly, Sillitoe, Braine, Storey, Cooper and Waterhouse rejected the experimental novelists of the early twentieth century, and turned to older forms of the novel.

Graham Hough summed up the literary climate of the 1950s in these words; "There is no avant-garde".(1) Stephen Spender divides the writers of the early twentieth century into the "moderns" and the "contemporaries" and writes:

The "contemporaries"...see the changes that have taken place in civilization as the result of the development of scientific technology, and think that, on the whole, the duty of writers is to enlist their art to support the cause of progress. The "modernists", on the whole, distrust, or even detest, the idea of progress, and view the results of science as a catastrophe to the values of past civilization... .(2)

Spender is referring to G.H. Wells and C.P. Snow, in particular, to give examples of the "contemporaries", while the "modernists" include authors like Lawrence, Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Virginia Woolf, etc. Raymond Williams, whose major interest lies usually in the social aspects of English literary history, points out that the 1950s "could be fairly characterized...as a period of return to older forms, and to specifically English forms", and refers to the changes major literary genres were undergoing:

In the novel there has been a sharp reaction against the methods of Virginia Woolf as between the wars there was a reaction, led by Woolf herself, against the "realism" of Bennett and Wells. In poetry, there has been something of a conscious return to native traditions and models, and this has had its counterpart in a growing criticism, now almost fashionable, of the disintegrating effect of Eliot and Pound. In the drama, the most widely successful plays - of Osborne, Wesker, and Delaney - seem to represent a return to a kind of naturalism which again reaches back beyond 1914.(3)

There was a general consensus that the literature of the period was a clear rejection of 'modernism' and a return to the realism of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century fiction. Stephen Spender remarks that Sillitoe's fiction is hardly preoccupied by questions of style and form, and comments that re-reading Sillitoe's "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner",

I am struck both by its power and by the disturbing question whether novelists of his generation can go ^{on} ignoring, in their work, the techniques of 'Ulysses' and 'Women in Love'.(4)

This return in technique and style to earlier novelistic forms was necessitated by both the authors' reaction against 'experimental' fiction and their own concepts of the function of literature, and the changes in social, political and intellectual life in post-war Britain. I will first examine the 1950s' novelists' arguments against the 'Experimentalists' and their literary techniques and resources, then analyse the influence of social and culture climatic changes that determined the form and subject-matter of their works.

Some of the 1950s' novelists saw a dead end in the experimental novels of the modernists both in their relation to their readers and in the limitations of their artistic expression. William Cooper saw Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) as texts baffling to ordinary readers and jeopardizing their reading of

fictional works. He states that the intention, in the 1950s, was to reestablish this relationship between the text and the reader; consequently the experimental novel "had got to be brushed away before we could have a proper hearing".(5) In his essay, he noted that the experimental novel concentrated too much on "Man-alone" and the task was to see "Man-in-Society". To do this, character, plot and traditional forms must be regained to the contemporary novel. He writes:

Writing Experimental Novels is a retreat from writing about Man-in-Society by novelists who are unable to adjust or reconcile themselves to society; it is a retreat into writing about the sensations of Man-alone by people who cannot stomach present day industrialized society.(6)

Although Cooper's argument reiterates in essence the traditional Marxist evaluation of modern 'bourgeois' fiction his judgement is rather exaggerated, for the experimental novel did not eliminate character and plot completely. John Wain's assault on 'modernist' technique is more sophisticated and deals with the problem of the possible development of artistic techniques in their relation to social forms. He writes:

Technical experiments could be made, but the results could never be as far-reaching as the results of that great movement towards complete dramatization, complete imaginative possession, which had been made by the generation of 1860 to 1910. There was only one major step to be taken, and Joyce duly took it in Ulysses when he wrote a novel which dispensed with the central point of view and made each of his three main characters contemplate the same reality from different standpoints.(7)

He argues that the only option left, after Joyce, was to go down. Cooper's and Wain's novels overtly reflect their standpoints. Their styles are plain, their time sequences are chronological, they make no use of symbolism, stream-of-consciousness or myth, and their prose is realistic, documentary, and at times journalistic. Moreover, like other novelists of the 1950s, they do not even attempt to develop individual styles, and the difference remains limited to the diversity of their subject-matter. David Storey sees his novels deriving more from the traditional realist English novel than the experimental novel. In an interview, he stated:

The English novel is traditionally a social novel. The great momentum in society is social, not a psychological momentum created by

individuals. The ideal is to show how the social element is informed by the psychological element, but in most cases it doesn't work.(8)

Storey's commitment to the tradition of the English social novel is reflected in the manner the contents of his novels shape their forms, and more broadly in the way his characters are both situated, and physically and psychologically informed by their social environment. Moreover, almost all his novels are organized round a concept: the incompatibility of body and soul, one that is explored and examined in clearly-defined social and cultural contexts. The whole psychological make-up of *This Sporting Life*, to take an example, is informed by the atmosphere of physicality masterly created in the novel around both players and spectators alike. The fiction of Sillitoe, Braine, Barstow and Hines is similarly informed by the social and political realities of the characters' environment.

Many writers of the 1950s, whose style is influenced by the realism of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century and the late-Victorian and Edwardian novel, have pointed to the impact of this fiction on their works. John Braine pointed out that Dickens, Fielding and Wells are his favourite novelists.(9) Alan Sillitoe refers to the influence of writers like Arnold Bennett, and remarks in his introduction to Bennett's *The Old Wive's Tale* (1964):

if he was at the ending of a great stream of English writing, he was also in at the beginning of the more modern literature that has kept its scenery in industrial England. There have been many men from the north after him - many who are writing now, and are still young, novelists like John Braine, John Wain and David Storey; playwrights like Shelagh Delaney and John Arden; poets like Ted Hughes.(10)

John Wain similarly regards Bennett as an influential "excellent novelist",(11) and puts him in the rank of Lawrence. William Van O'Connor establishes Bennett's influence on contemporary writers like Storey and Wain by stating that their novels are "not very different from Bennett's, and deal with their subjects in a manner he might have employed".(12) Broadly speaking, the influence on the 1950s' novelists by earlier writers manifests itself both in form and, at times, subject-matter. Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954) shows this influence by the nineteenth-century realist novelist, the humorous and satirical writers of the eighteenth century, and the novelists of the early twentieth century like Wells, Bennett and Butler. Amis's,

Braine's, Sillitoe's, Waterhouse's and Storey's novels exhibit traces of influence by Edwardian writers; their protagonists are from the lower classes, and their novels are set in provincial towns. The impact of the nineteenth-century novelists is seen in the 1950s' works' realistic style and concern with social and moral themes, details of provincial and local life, and questions of money, power and sex. Many of the post-war novels that dealt with the attempts of a young man to rise above or break away from the poverty and narrowness of provincial towns (Braine's *Room at the Top*, Storey's *This Sporting Life*, Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Waterhouse's *Billy Liar* and C P Snow's *Time of Hope* (1949)) show colourless style, description of drab provincial towns, treatment of ambition, money and success, characteristics central to Bennett's work. The most influential aspect in the 1950s' fiction, to my mind, is the style and treatment of the eighteenth-century picaresque novelists. Both Amis' and Wain's novels directly derive from this tradition of satirical and picaresque novels. Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953) directly relates to this tradition; the hero Charles Lumley holds various jobs in many places before settling down, and his travels from a job to job give the book an episodic character. Sillitoe's *The Death of William Posters* and *A Start in Life* employ the same tradition in creating their protagonists.

The other factor that motivated the 1950s' novelists' imitation of Victorian and Edwardian novelists, and their rejection of the Experimentalists was engendered in the social, political and cultural changes sweeping over post-war British society. I have already referred to the changes that transformed British society after the war.(13) It is essential to the present argument, however, to point out that in post-war British society there was a partial breakdown of the class system and a corresponding strengthening of bureaucracy. The entry of lower-class educated individuals into middle-class territory was helped by the 1944 Education Act and the coming of Labour to power in 1945. The 1950s' fiction preoccupied itself with these changes and expressed them in its realistic form. It could be argued that the employment of the eighteenth-century picaresque tradition in the fiction of this period, and the emphasis on the question of class mobility directly reflected the changes taking place at the time. *Lucky Jim*, *Pasmore*, *Room at the Top* and *The Vic Brown Trilogy* have class mobility as their subject-matter. And the protagonists of *Lucky Jim* and *Hurry on Down* satirize and criticize the

middle-class social structure they find it difficult to adapt to. What I will try to illustrate is the way the commitment of the 1950s' novelists to reflect the social changes in post-war British society influenced the form and structure of their novels, and generated artistic expressions which derived from those of the Victorian and Edwardian fiction. Then I intend to relate these modes of expression to readership and the media.

It is widely accepted that the history and sociology of the novel are closely related to industrialization. In his book *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt establishes a close social connection between the development of the novel and the English middle classes, and suggests that this class relationship manifested itself in what he terms the "formal realism" of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. What defines this formal realism are the narrative techniques necessary for "a full and authentic report of human experience" in which the novelist provides his readers "with such detail of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the time and place of their actions... ." (14) He argues that it was the increasing secularization of culture that made the development of a realist epistemology, based on materialist philosophy, shaping the novel form possible. Nineteenth-century sociology was dominated on the whole by positivist methodology. Positivism, in the sphere of literary analysis, took the form of reducing literature to a reflection of the writer's biography, environment or the prevailing ideology. The novel became a means for providing historical information about the people and life of its time. It consequently became a form of documentation that performed a social function tying the novelist and the readers in its structure. So the novel was firmly located within the basic structure of bourgeois society, and its form and content were determined by the social and political forces it recorded. Realism emerged as the dominant literary form of the nineteenth-century novel, a form of representation able to represent the inner life of the author and the outer life of society. The post-war English novelists regained this function of the novel in their rejection of the early twentieth-century experiment in the novel and their emphasis on the social framework. As the 1950s' novelists regarded, as we have seen, the experimental novel as a cul-de-sac, they attempted to reestablish the relationship between the novel and social reality. This movement in fiction created parallels in emphasis, as there was a transition from the middle-class country-house novel of the pre-war era to a renewed

interest in the working-novel which attempted to present a realistic picture of working-class life, usually as the novelists themselves experienced it. This attempt at a realist representation demanded the use of realism drawing on Victorian and Edwardian novelists. As the lower classes were in a transitive mode of experience (education and class mobility), the post-war novel registered this transition and preoccupied itself with a realistic documentation of these changes from a working-class point of view. This function of the novel entailed an imitation of the forms of the nineteenth-century novel, and autobiographies, documentation, and emphasis on place and time determined the realistic form of the 1950s' novel. I will leave my critical analysis of this documentary realism to the conclusion of this study where I will relate the question of the absence of any trace of 'socialist realism' to the lack of political commitment in the novelists of the period. I will here concentrate on the traditional descriptive forms of realistic expression that dominated the techniques of the post-war novel.

One major aspect of documentation in this fiction is the novelists' employment of personal experience. Many working-class novelists of the period drew in their fiction on their experiences as working-class individuals. They adapted the life they knew and lived as a material for for their artistic expression. In the case of Sillitoe, the period of youth and awakening to one's own economic, social and political reality determines almost all of his early fiction because, as I have mentioned earlier, his personal knowledge and physical contact with the Nottingham working class was limited to the first two decades of his life before leaving it altogether. His first novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is partly based on a personal experience; factory work and life in working-class community. *Key to the Door* is more autobiographical, and accounts for his military service in Malaya, and the political influence his contacts there had on him. Barry Hines incorporated his semi-professional football experience in his first novel *The Blender*, and education is almost the central issue in *A Kestrel for a Knave*, *First Signs* and the play *Speech Day*. David Storey is a prime example of transforming the material of personal experience into artistic material. His experiences as a professional rugby player attempting to escape his working-class background form the basis of *This Sporting Life*, and his experiences as an art student - and other minor experiences referred to later in this study - find their way into his novels and plays.

Some of these novels resemble D.H. Lawrence's in spite of the fact that he was more concerned with the inner struggles of his heroes, while these novelists' emphasis was on the protagonists' struggle with their community and environment. On the other hand, this kind of novelistic documentation of personal experience has strong affinities, I think, with the sociological works and working-class autobiographies. This use of personal experience influenced the form of the post-war novel both in its realistic presentation of experiences and its narrative techniques. In terms of narrative mode, a large number of these novels adopt the first-person narrative technique where the narratorial 'I' becomes both a signifier of the author and the fictional character, and a bond between the text and the reader; that is a means of establishing an existential bond between the 'narratorial self' and the 'experiencing self' on the one hand, and between the reader and the fictional experience depicted in the narrative, on the other hand. I will illustrate more on this notion when dealing with the relationship between the post-war novelists and their reading public. In terms of form, realistic presentation found expression in fictional documentation of place, time and character which determined technique, structure and language.

John Holloway defines post-war English fiction as "fiction of work, and fiction of locality".(15) How is locality constructed in this fiction? And how and why is work a major element in it? It is essential to state from the outset that the main reality of the working class is work and the process of production which is the characteristic feature of industrial societies. In his analysis of work and working-class culture, Paul Willis argues that if a special use of culture signifies the material of daily life, understandings, feelings and responses, then

it should be clear that not only can work be analysed from a cultural point of view, but that it must occupy a *central* place in any full sense of culture. Most people spend their prime waking hours at work, base their identity on work activity and are defined by others essentially through their relation to work.(16)

What interests us in this section is the way presentation of work in post-war working-class fiction reflects various aspects of working-class culture, the way the concept of work is a central element in these novelists' vision of the working class, and finally the way these novelists perceive of work as a major element of polarity in relation to social changes and class mobility in post-war Britain.

Work is regarded as one living aspect of life which affects social nature in a profound way. There is a strong relationship between the nature of work and gender roles. The role of women in working-class communities is directly related to the nature of the work assigned to them. Their job is usually located outside the sphere of men's physical jobs, and limited to house work, having children and keeping a home for the family. In other words, the term 'housewife' becomes complementary to 'work-husband'. The role of working-class women is limited to this function from Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* to the novels of the post-war period. This role assignment and the nature of physical work play a significant part in constructing the notion of working-class masculinity. The brutal nature of physical work in a hostile dehumanizing environment generates a feeling of pride in the ability to survive, which is in itself closely connected with the notion of bravery and toughness. Manual labour power becomes a means of asserting masculinity and rooting it in the social structure of working-class society. Success at work is seen as implying persistence and challenge. Manual labour is consequently identified with masculine qualities, and it takes significance beyond its own nature to touch on notions of gender roles and even sexuality. The quality of goodness becomes associated with the essence of work. Joe Lampton thinks of his dead father as "a good workman... ." (17) And Lawrence's description of Gudrun's feelings, in *Women in Love*, when she passes between blocks of miners' dwellings, is a typical example of the suffusion of manual labour power with masculine qualities, "the broad dialect was curiously caressing to the blood. It seemed to envelope Gudrun in a labourer's caress, there was in the whole atmosphere, a resonance of physical men, a glamorous thickness of labour and maleness... In their voices she could hear the voluptuous resonance of darkness." (18) Vocabulary in this passage is unmistakably sexual. Similarly, Lady Chatterley's sexual attraction to the gamekeeper Mellors derives to a large extent from the physical nature of his work. The working-class north is identified in Storey's novels with the physical nature of work which takes on a concept of gender. Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* establishes notions of masculinity directly related to factory work and wage labour. Wage labour is an essential element of the work presented in post-war working-class fiction. Weekly wages define working-class labour, punctuate the life-style of workers and define their conception of time. In a way similar to Tressell's *The Ragged*

Trousered Philanthropists (1914), Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* bases the life of workers around their dependence on the wage money they earn at the end of the week. For Arthur Seaton, prospects of life and work are seen within the time limits of each week as it comes. On the other hand, the passage of time and seasons is felt "only at the weekend, on Saturday or Sunday, when he straddled his bike and rode along the canal bank into the country to fish." (19) In Storey's *This Sporting Life*, rugby is envisaged as a kind of work rather than an aspect of play. Competition between players in the same team is motivated by the necessity to keep the job. In his second trial match, Arthur realizes Taff Gower's intention to isolate him during the match, and relates Gower's effort to the fact that "I might be keeping one of his mates out of the team, stopping a wage." (20) This competition to maintain the wage is further intensified by the spectators' demand for success, and both factors determine the violence that characterizes the game.

Post-war working-class novelists strongly feel the impact of physical work on the mode of life in working-class communities. The individual is seen locked up in this continuous process of labour, and consequently removed from other cultural activities. For Storey, the concept of work among the working classes is envisaged as hindering any vocation that does not fall into the category of manual labour. Escape from this working-class background becomes a prerequisite for any artistic achievement. Barstow's Wilf Cotton realizes his estrangement in his native town in *Ask Me Tomorrow* for writing fiction is not regarded as a kind of work the working class would identify with or even acknowledge. Prior to their exit from their working-class environment, Sillitoe's protagonists in *Key to the Door* and *The Death of William Posters* have to spiritually or physically extricate themselves from their limiting physical work and seek learning in reading books. Brian Seaton's obsession with maps and geography signifies a yearning for a wilder world. Frank Dawley sees in books an educator and a liberator from the narrow everyday work in the factory. Books were not

the sort that taught electricity, plumbing, engineering or gardening, but they widened the world beyond the range of his eyes and softened the hitherto hard limits of his perceptions. (21)

Physical work with its dehumanizing limiting environment and the narrow life style it necessitates almost symbolizes the novelists' vision of working-class life as narrow and suffocating to the spirit.

One of the major functions of the presentation of work in the period's fiction is its significance in indicating the economic, social and cultural changes in post-war Britain. Conventional physical work (in factories or mines) is seen as a central aspect of working-class culture, and mental, artistic or office work is presented to signify social and economic changes and class mobility. Mining background is established in many working-class novels of this period as the backcloth of working-class life and culture. This presentation is assigned various functions in different novels. In Hine's *A Kestrel for a Knave*, the prospects of manual labour for Billy Casper, confirmed by the employment officer, is one aspect of the novel's attack on the education system and the 'Welfare State'. In Barstow's *A Kind of Loving*, mining is contrasted to the new generation's less physical work, a contrast that signifies aspects of culture, personality and life style. Victor's father talks about hard work down the mines and refers to young people whose hardest work is to "'lift a pint glass. They wouldn't last a shift down t'pit.'" (22) This argument is reiterated in Wilf Cotton's conversation with his miner father in *Ask Me Tomorrow*. (23) In both Storey's *Pasmore* and Williams' *Border Country* education and the class mobility it entails become an alienatory factor in the protagonists' life, and generate a dark sense of guilt. The psychological image of 'blackness' in both *Pasmore* and *Flight into Camden* is directly related to the darkness of the mines in which Pasmore's and Margaret's father's work. And Tom Renshaw's identification with his father in Hines' *First Signs* is closely related to his mining work, and his political involvement is shown to result from his identification with the history of the working class symbolized in his entry into derelict mines. Work is the major element which alienated post-war working-class writers from either class and background. Artistic practice and popular and financial success marked these writers' break from their communities and their entry into a middle-class world. This break radically altered the vision and commitment of some of these writers, as was the case with John Braine and Alan Sillitoe.

Work is one aspect of locality because it is a major element in the mode of experience of a particular region or a particular class. In his essay "Region and Class in the Novel", Raymond Williams gives three possible answers for the meaning of the 'regional novel'. First, a novel is 'regional' because it is concerned with certain places as 'regions' while others are not, and second a novel is

'regional' because it tells about places and life in these 'regions'. It is the third definition he gives of the 'regional' novel that comes close to post-war working-class novels, and concerns us most in this analysis;

one kind of novel is 'regional' because it is 'about' or 'set in' some specific social life, as distinct from novels which address broader and more permanent kinds of human experience. (24)

Working-class novels are regional, in this sense, in the way they distinguish themselves from the 'bourgeois' novel - whose main concern is individuals seen isolated from social life on the one hand, and in their emphasis on substantial elements of working-class experience in particular regions defined in terms of class, on the other^hand. It is the element of class in these novels that establishes their regionality in the first place. For class is a formation of social relationships within a whole social order that determines the experience of individuals in relation to this order. It is useful here to distinguish between the working-class novels of the post-war period and the industrial novels of the 1840s. The English industrial novels of Gaskell, Dickens, Kingsley, Disraeli and George Eliot were basically concerned with class relations, but they were not written from within these class "regions". Like Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* and Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, those novels were written by outsiders who were sympathetic to the working class or who had access to its modes of experience. In other words, they are not regional novels for the regional novel is characterized by the fact that it is written by individuals belonging to the class and the region it depicts. Post-war working-class novels are 'regional' in the sense that they are written by "natives", and in the way they establish locality in terms of social and economic experience, place, language and time. Almost all of these novels provide descriptive accounts of working-class life in the provinces, and derive their fictional material from various aspects of this life; work, money, sexual ethics, kinship, etc. Characters are presented as inhabiting this social environment, and their experiences are conceived of in connection to this environment whether taking place inside or outside of it. Even at moments of total detachment from their communities and background, working-class protagonists seem to be motivated, in their behaviour and judgement, by the ethics and conduct of their region and class. This generally manifests itself in the sphere of morality when

the working-class male protagonist is involved with a middle-class woman. In spite of Joe Lampton's total commitment to becoming part of Warley, when learning of Alice's modelling past she realizes that

Some of my standards were still Dufton standards, and in Dufton artist's models were thought of as tarts, not quite professionals, but simply the kind who couldn't be bothered to say no. (25)

Despite their social mobility, both Pasmore and Vic Brown realize that their provincial moral standards dominate their moral judgement. On the other hand, place and geographical locality are distinguishing features of this fiction. Novelists wrote about places they lived in and knew. In Sillitoe's early fiction, called by many critics the 'Nottingham' fiction, the industrial character of urban Nottingham is central to both the fictional world of the novels and the social environment that determines the life and conduct of characters. Machinery and industrial noise feature in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as an integral element of the city's life and that of its inhabitants. Once out of doors, Arthur and his father

were more aware of the factory rumbling a hundred yards away over the high wall. Generators whined all night, and during the day giant milling-machines working away on cranks and pedals in the turnery gave to the terrace a sensation of living within breathing distance of some monstrous being that suffered from a disease of the stomach. (26)

S. Atherton lists some of the urban landmarks which the reader soon becomes familiar with in Sillitoe's fiction like streets with back-to-back houses and recognizable places and pubs, and writes that

This urban setting is bounded by the nearby partially built-up areas of Strelley and Trowel, Lenton and Wollaton, Eastwood and the Bramcote Hills and it is normally within these circumscribed limits that Sillitoe's characters act out the dramas of their lives. (27)

Stan Barstow's working-class characters live in council houses, and Cressley features as the setting for most of his novels and becomes a geographical landmark that provides a link between his characters in various novels. Barry Hines, on the other hand, sets *A Kestrel for a Knave* and the second part of *First Signs* in a geographically recognizable place. The first is set in Barnsley, Hines' native town, although the name is not mentioned. The novel shows many of the features unique to this area: the climate and way of life are raw and

hard, buildings are drab and uniform, the town is dominated by mining industry and coal pits, yet it is only a short walk for Billy from his home to an unspoilt farmland typical of many northern towns. *A Kestrel for a Knave* stands in many ways as a typical regional working-class novel in its detailed description of a particular geographical region. In John Braine, place and locality become a strong element of contrast between two cultures with different life styles, ethics, and environments. Throughout Joe's narrative in *Room at the Top*, we encounter comparisons between Joe's native Dufton and the middle-class Warley he moves to. The first sight of Cyprus Avenue brings the image of the street where Joe used to live in Dufton;

It was broad and straight, and lined with cypresses. The street where I lived in Dufton was called Oak Crescent; it didn't curve one inch and there wasn't even a bush along it.(28)

This comparison is analogous to the constant contrasts Joe draws between Warley's streets, houses, river, signs of wealth and those in Dufton. Cultural differences between working-class Dufton and middle-class Warley are mostly seen in geographical regional terms.

In a similar way, language features in this fiction as a central regional and class element. Broad dialects, immediacy of speech, absence of figurative language, and specific expressions characterise the dialogue of working-class characters and carry particular linguistic and social qualities. In addition to the fact that these novels have found a new medium of expression, they have made colloquial speech a rich and varied source of linguistic and cultural articulation. References to members of the family as "our Chris" or "our Margaret", and to the mother as "mother" by both children and husband are exclusively working-class expressions. They reflect the world of warmth, closeness and intimacy which working-class people inhabit and through which they relate to each other. Use of dialect in working-class novels is another aspect of realistic documentation of working-class life. The novelist Alec Brown regards literary English as a jargon invented by the dominant classes, and encouraged the slogan "'WRITTEN ENGLISH BEGINS WITH US'".(29) The written word is not historically a working-class heritage due to lack of education and the dominance of oral tradition. The use of working-class dialects in fiction can be regarded as a challenge to the dominant middle-class expression and a discovery of a rich and realistic medium of expression that firmly places characters in a particular social and cultural environment. Ralph Fox expresses the significance of folk

language and points out that "The greatest treasure-house of expression is to be found in the folk language of the people." (30) He relates the dullness of 'modernist' writing to the fact that it had deliberately alienated itself from the rich source of constant renewal. In his defence of slang English as a medium of expression, Jim Wolveridge writes that slang

had its serious side too, expressions like "I've only a shilling to last me till Friday", "it's all I've got between me and starvation", "I haven't had a bit nor bite to eat all day", and "not a crust of bread has passed my lips since yesterday afternoon", said more about poverty than whole volumes of Mayhew, and "Nobody's been nigh or by for weeks" and "I haven't a soul in the whole wide world" says enough about loneliness. (31)

The major achievement of post-war working-class novels, in this context, is their success in employing working-class speech not only to depict the social and economic conditions of the British working class, but also to comment on the social, cultural and political structure of British society as a whole. David Storey is so conscious of the centrality of dialect in working-class culture that the major break from it in *This Sporting Life* is symbolized in the departure of Machin's first-person narrative from its terminology. One of the intricate problems in this fiction remains the sharp contrast between the language of the omniscient narrator (i.e. authorial language) and that of the characters inhabiting the narrative.

Another quality that gives the post-war working-class novels a broader aspect of locality is their temporal relation to the particular historical periods they situate themselves in. The descriptive phrase "post-war" is in itself suggestive of the interest of these novels as most of them were written against the backcloth of war. The "post-war" character of this fiction signifies a transitional period, and is the basis of exploring persistent traditional values and life styles and examining the change that transformed British society and working-class life. References to war are abundant in these novels, and phrases like "before the war" and "after the war" frequently recur in the texts indicating various changes in different fields of experience. Some of these works are constructed on this temporal transition to express these changes. Braine's *Room at the Top* structures itself on the historical transition of British society from the 1930s' 'Depression' to the 1940s' 'Austerity' to the 'Affluence' of the 1950s. This structure is

reproduced in the temporal distance of the narrative. The time of the actual events in the novel is the mid-forties, while Joe's first-person narrative takes place in the mid-fifties. The function of this temporal structural is to evaluate, through Joe's experiences, the morality of 'affluent' Britain. Arnold Wesker's trilogy follows a similar pattern as it glances back as far as 1936 for the root causes of the present situation of the working classes, and relates them to the post-war period. Barstow's Vic Brown Trilogy covers a time-span of twenty years of the life of its protagonist, from the late-1940s to the late-1960s. This enables Barstow to fictionally register social, economic, cultural and political changes taking place in this period. This fiction's documentation of working-class life is the basis for providing a strong link between the texts and their readers, on the one hand, and the texts and various forms of the media, on the other hand.

The relationship between post-war working-class literature and working-class readership can be best understood in the context of two historical phenomena: the conventional historical forms of working-class cultural products, and the question of dominant traditions in British culture. Popular radicalism in the 1820s, which E.P. Thompson regards as "an intellectual culture"(32), manifested itself in political activism and the struggle for the freedom of expression through institutional channels. Carlile's contest for the liberty of the press, growing trade unionism, growth of free thought, cooperative experiment and Owenite theory had all been aspects of articulating political consciousness which was the basis of working-class culture and education at the time. Workers strove to educate themselves politically by working on understanding and reading radical social thought. In Thompson's words, they

learned to see their own lives as part of a general history of conflict between the loosely defined 'industrial classes' on the one hand, and the unreformed House of Commons on the other. From 1830 onwards a more clearly defined class consciousness ... was maturing, in which working class people were aware of continuing both old and new battles on their own.(33)

It was Cobbett's, Carlile's and Hetherington's struggle in the press field that enabled the working press to express itself, and paved the way for the Chartist press. Working-class ideology in the 1830s put a high value upon the rights of the press, of speech, of meeting and of personal liberty. Working-class culture and education took various forms. Private study was one of the forms of workers' education, the

dramatic popular theatre was an arena for political propaganda and confrontation, the political print provided an expression of radicalism, and the tradition of the autodidact provided a break from the formal education of the establishment. William Cobbett created a radical intellectual culture in the sense that he found the "tone", the "style" and the argument that brought different workers into a common discourse. It is relevant to our argument here to note that these cultural products concerned themselves with the immediate struggle of the working classes, and emerged out of their response to their economic and political conditions. In the course of the development of the Chartist movement, the first consciously working-class novels in Britain emerged as an integral part of the struggle of this first organized political movement. Chartist writers in the 1840s documented the history and ideas of the movement in their works, and created a class-based literature. Martha Vicinus points out that literature

was a valued part of this way of life, and the foremost Chartist writers sought to create a class-based literature, written by and for the people.(34)

Chartist novels were generally based on popular fiction to establish a strong link with their working-class readers, and derived their material from earlier Chartist agitation to bring the movement together again after it started to disintegrate politically. Louis James writes that by 1830 "between two thirds and three quarters of the working classes in England could read, inclining towards the higher proportion."(35) Chartist literature started two working-class cultural traditions: establishing a wide popular readership, and breaking with dominant literary traditions through creating a class-based literature. I do not intend to impose parallels between the radical working-class culture in the 1820s and the Chartist literature, and the post-war working-class literature as both emerged in different historical contexts and differed in their political orientation. What I am trying to emphasize is the common politics of both literatures in corresponding to contemporary historical conditions of the working class in both periods, and adopting forms of expression that rendered a strong link between these forms of expression and a wide public readership possible. It is not difficult to detect similarities between the Chartist fiction, on the one hand,

and the 1930s' and post-war working-class fiction, on the other hand. One of the major problems that faced both, for instance, was that of form. Chartist writers had chosen the popular novel as a form because, as Martha Vicinus argues, "it supplied the most accurate psychological interpretation of their lives"(36), and the inadequacy of this literary form led to the entrapment of Chartist novelists in its conventions, which consequently jeopardized and suppressed any possibility for realistic political fiction and limited the literary potential of Chartist fiction. Similarly, the 1930s and post-war working-class fiction failed to puncture the bourgeois form of the novel in its dependence on a realistic, descriptive documentation of working-class life, and consequently alienated itself from socialist realism and political change.

The emergence of working-class literature in post-war Britain and its relation to working-class readership is relevant to dominant literary traditions, and the class concept of 'high culture', or what Williams refers to as "selective tradition". Williams argues that selection is always governed by various kinds of special interest, including class interest, and writes:

The traditional culture of a society will always tend to correspond to its contemporary system of interests and values, for it is not an absolute body and work but a continual selection and interpretation.(37)

As this process of selections is practised by the dominant classes through various institutions, its class character unfolds itself in its points of emphasis. What concerns us in the first place here is the mechanism of this selection in literary and cultural spheres. I will briefly examine three aspects of selection which illustrate the demarcation between 'low culture' and 'high culture': first, assigning cheap publications to working-class readership; second, suppression of radical culture; and finally, perpetuating the concept of 'high culture' through academic and institutional selection. Williams interprets the motivation behind producing cheap periodical publishing to "the desire to control the development of working-class opinion..."(38) In his book *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-50*, Louis James analyzes the politics of the popular fiction which proliferated in Victorian England, and examines the class ideologies engendered in its forms, contrasts and distribution. He points out that what strongly characterized this literature was the fact that it had been produced for working-class consumption in the way it was

priced to provide a working-class access to it. On the other hand, those who wrote for the working classes had "a middle-class background...[and were] good craftsmen able to vary their styles and plots as the popular taste changed..."(39) In addition to tales of fantasy, horror and adventure, James points out that the greatest category of the literature produced had religious tones aiming at the "instruction and moral improvement"(40) of the poor. This literature's adoption of popular traditions and its orientation towards mass readership had the intrinsic ideological goal of perpetuating the concept of culture in terms of class as it was completely cut off from the middle-class standards and values. This ideological selection has been reproduced in the form of 'mass culture' in post-war Britain, and manifested itself in weekly family magazines, commercial popular songs, and popular fiction of sex and violence, despite the partial fusion of 'low culture' and 'high culture' particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.(41)

Aesthetic values always have moral and political ingredients, in addition to criteria for the evaluation of various aspects of 'artistry'. One component of this criteria is language. The language of 'high culture', historically established as the basic means of 'good art' belongs to the dominant discourses in society. Mastering this language and its modes of literary and philosophical expressions is part of entering the sphere of social power. This is one of the major reasons why 'high culture' remains a sphere to be conquered by lower classes. Language and artistic forms of expression remain the basis for the exclusion of working-class literature from the literary canon and institutionalized realms of 'high culture'. Pierre Bourdieu's work on the sociology of culture locates the struggle within the intellectual field in the context of the struggle for power. His distinction between 'pure' taste and 'barbaric' taste is most relevant to our analysis of cultural selection. While the 'barbaric' taste, which Bourdieu argues is characteristic of the lower classes, insists on "the continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function(42), 'pure' taste is based on the premise of separating aesthetics from other aspects of life. So, the aesthetic demands particular forms of distanciation to gain adequate apprehension, while 'barbaric' taste depends on direct emotional involvement and priority of 'content' over 'form', 'pure' taste demands detachment, distanciation and priority of 'form' over 'content'. This implies that the demarcation between 'high' and 'low'

cultures gains strength in the sphere of 'artistic' expression. Most radical literature and working-class socialist texts have been excluded by literary institutions on the basis that they are sociological, propagandist and lacking in aesthetic qualities. In *Literary Theory*, Terry Eagleton points out the interdependence of literary practice, 'literary canon' and dominant forms of discourse, on the one hand, and the ideological apparatus of the modern capitalist state, on the other hand. He argues that dominant discourse is dependent on "the signifier" and not "the signified", and perpetuates itself by selecting meanings and positions as more correspondent to its ideological structure than others. He concludes that the concept of great literature is not purely based on aesthetic values, but is inseparable from the specific forms of social and institutional life, and writes that the power of critical discourse

is the power of 'policing' language - of determining that certain statements must be excluded because they do not conform to what is acceptably sayable. It is the power of policy writing itself, classifying it into the 'literary' and 'non-literary', the enduringly great and the ephemerally popular. It is the power of authority *vis-a-vis* others - the power - relations between those who define and preserve the discourse, and those who are selectively admitted to it. It is the power of certifying or non-certifying those who have been judged to speak the discourse better or worse. Finally, it is a question of the power-relations between the literary-academic institution, where all of this occurs, and the ruling power-interests of society at large, whose ideological needs will be served and whose personnel will be reproduced by the preservation and controlled extension of the discourse in question.(43)

This argument is reiterated in Williams' argument in *Marxism and Literature* that the exclusion or inclusion of "conventional" elements in the text "is not an 'aesthetic' choice ... but a variable convention involving radical social assumptions of causation and consequence".(44)

The post-war period witnessed a partial fusion of cultures as a result of education, 'mass' culture, and the intellectual challenge to the dominant cultural discourse. The entry of students from working-class or non-academic petit-bourgeois backgrounds necessitated an entry in the realm of 'high culture' in which the universities are central institutions. The attitude of these newcomers was ambivalent, for while academic education was their general conscious goal they did

not wholly embrace the academic components of 'high culture'. In a way probably similar to the nineteenth-century working-class autodidacts, they distrusted the culture they moved into, or probably failed to become part of it. Their social mobility placed them in a static cultural atmosphere; not properly integrated in the lower-class culture they left, nor in the upper-class 'high culture' they formally entered. One way out of this cultural limbo was a re-identification with their working-culture through their cultural activities and products. This was not a gesture of solidarity only, but functioned on the personal level as a satisfactory symbolic homecoming. The politics of identification in the context of working-class literature revealed itself in the material of their art (i.e., working-class life and its grievances), and in the form this material shaped itself; documentary social realism. This deviation from the components of 'high culture' worked on two levels: to provide a link between these authors and their working-class readers and partly fuse their 'barbaric' taste, to use Bourdieu's term, into the dominant discourse. Since the notion of 'high culture' does not refer to a fixed concept of discourse but rather to a set of institutions, certain types of media and texts, this complex material and cultural sphere is constantly undergoing changes, and some of the changes in the post-war period were fundamental. This does not imply that all types of institutions have been affected. Universities and other institutions of 'high culture' have remained part of the high-culture institutional realm. Another form of 'high culture' that has resisted these changes is 'elitism' within academic and intellectual communities. The advent of 'mass' culture, or what Williams calls "the development of a common culture"(45), and the development of 'mass' communication have had a significant effect in blurring the borders between 'high' and 'low' cultures. Mass media has created, in a sense, a democratization of culture in spite of the rift that still exists between cultural realms in terms of institutions, discourses and also in terms of traditions of cultural and artistic expressions. The late 1960s and the 1970s brought about a considerable increase in and new forms of scholarly interest in popular culture. These new approaches were characterized by an interdisciplinary conception of socio-cultural research, transcending traditional boundaries between various forms of cultural fields. This was mainly related to the contemporary revival of Marxist theory. The objectives of the early 'neo-Marxist' media research, for instance, represented a radical

challenge to traditional notions of art and cultural heritage within the academic sphere. They aimed at a reinterpretation of both 'high' and 'low' cultural texts to show the way texts contained and conveyed ideology and forms of consciousness that supported social repression. And, linked to the first objective, a rewriting of cultural history was undertaken to expose class- and gender-based expression in both society and writing. It has been easily established that the construction of cultural canons did not only rely on pure and socially neutral aesthetic and historical judgement, but more than anything else on particular ideological notions.

These changes and developments in the post-war period provided an atmosphere where novel forms of relationship between working-class literature, and lower-class readers and various forms of mass media were made possible. The emphasis of post-war working-class literature on social problems, the way these authors placed their art at the centre of common experience, and their use of realistic narratives have created a popular wide readership in Britain. Raymond Williams argues that the 1944 Education Act and the growth of cultural communication systems have placed national culture in the hand of the people as a whole. He provides a statistical account of the growth of the reading public in Britain, and concludes: "it is probable that in the 1950s, for the first time, we had a majority book-reading public... ." (46)

Arthur Marwick comes to a similar conclusion when he writes:

In 1950 a poll was conducted into personal reading habits. Fifty-five per cent of those interviewed claimed at the time of the poll to be reading a book. The reading matter was 'mostly fiction'. (47)

The reading public included readers from the lower classes, and the majority of books read were novels of lower-class life. Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, for example, was first on the *Sunday Times* best-seller list in September 1960. And Braine's *Room at the Top* sold half a million paper-back copies in seven months. The relationship between authors and their readers was reflected, as I have mentioned, in both the material and form of this fiction. Authors knew for whom they were writing; working-class people who expected to find their conditions of life reflected in this fiction. Working-class writers registered working-class life in a style that was to become social documentary realism. This style dictated accuracy of regional dialects, detailed description of working class

life as authors knew and experienced it, and concern with society and contemporary social problems and changes. Sillitoe's interpretation of the relationship between the 1950s' fiction and working-class readers is most illustrative of the reasons this fiction achieved popular success. In an interview, he states that up to the point of the publication and success of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

there wasn't such an amount of stuff that somebody, say, like Arthur Seaton could pick up and in which he could read about the sort of life he was familiar with. There had been books, of course, written before, but quite infrequently. Maybe I was very close to that sort of life or close enough in order to make it palatable to somebody like that without necessarily brutalizing it or politicizing it in any way. (48)

The other fact Sillitoe attributes the success of this fiction to is that these books were written from the middle of the working classes. Sillitoe's notion of the apolitical character of his book, which applies to most of the 1950s' fiction, says a great deal about the kind of realism these novelists adopted, and the absence of political commitment in this fiction.

The redirection of the novel's interest upon working-class life in the provinces in the 1950s, and the realistic style of the period's writers established a bridge with various forms of the media. The relationship between the novel and the cinema, in particular, is a complex issue that requires separate research. My main concern here is to refer, briefly, to the way the realistic style of the post-war working-class fiction made it a ready material for the realistic British cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. Before this, it is significant to point out the media elements inherent in this literature itself, for the influence was not functioning in only one direction. It is tempting to contemplate that working-class novels of the period regarded themselves as part of the media rather than part of the literary, and that these writers were not writing literature as such, but probably popular media. In a way, these texts liberated themselves from the literary and offered themselves as part of a consumable media in their emphasis on the ephemeral and consumable. A book like Joyce's *Ulysses*, for instance, creates a barrier with the popular media by means of its techniques. Working-class texts, on the other hand, are similar to newspapers, television and films, and can easily be reduced into other forms of the media. Waterhouse's *Billy Liar*, for instance, is a novel, a play and a film. Barstow's *A Raging*

Calm, to take another example, is both a novel and a television serial. And the more recent *Boys from the Black Stuff* by Alan Bleasdale is a book, a play, a film and a television serial. Examples of various media forms of these texts are ample. Another major media feature of these books is sequels. Popular media demands sequels usually, and many working-class writers worked within this tradition. Braine's *Room at the Top* was followed with the sequel *Life at the Top* and the TV series *Man at the Top* five years later. The three parts of Bartstow's Vic Brown Trilogy were written in 1960, 1966 and 1976, respectively. Waterhouses's *Billy Liar* was followed with the sequel *Billy Liar on the Moon* in 1975. Even Storey's first four novels could be considered as sequels in the way they thematically complement each other in their emphasis on body, soul, and body-soul. Sillitoe's William Posters Trilogy is another example of this sequel tradition, and *Key to the Door* is a continuation of the Seaton family saga. This is not a wholly novel tradition in the English novel, however. It brings to mind the novel's serialisation in Victorian England, and Dickens's novels in particular. At one point, one may question whether Dickens regarded himself as a literary man, or conceived of his books as part of the daily media; newspapers and magazines.

It is worth mentioning that in spite of the fact that 'modernist' fiction created barriers between itself and the cinema, for instance, the influence of cinematic techniques was vital in the creation of this fiction's novelist techniques of stream-of-consciousness, montage, cut-back, 'multiple view' or the 'camera eye', and so on. (49) In its conscious reaction against experimental modernist fiction, the fiction of the 1950s both offered itself as part of the popular media, and employed a realistic technique ideal for the British realist cinema in post-war Britain. Most of the 1950s' novels and plays discussed in this thesis found their way either into the television or the cinema, or both. John Hill's book *Sex, Class and Realism; British Cinema 1956-1963* (1986) is wholly dedicated to a critical analysis of the relationship between the British cinema industry, and the social problem film and the 'new wave' of working-class realism in the post-war period. His analysis ranges from the social history to the film industry and theories of realism. In the chapter on "Narrative and Realism" Hill establishes the relationship between the realistic mode of narrative and presentation, characteristic of the working-class fiction of the period, and the techniques and requirements of the

British cinema industry at the time. He refers to elements of 'telling a story', 'plot' and the dependence of the plot on the actions and ambitions of an individual character, and writes:

despite the determination to represent the working class there is a sense in which the individualising conventions of classic narrativity render this problematic [individuality and narrative resolution]. Class is presented as primarily an individual, rather than collective, experience, a moral, rather than socially and economically structured condition... the stress is on the inter-personal drama rather than the play of social and political forces ... Implicit in the structure of the narrative, its movement from one equilibrium to another, its relation of cause and effect, is a requirement for change. But, in so far as the narrative is based upon individual agency, it is characteristic that the endings of such film should rely on individual, rather than social and political, change... Alternative solutions [to the individual opting out of society, or adapting and adjusting to it], collective struggle or social upheaval are, in effect, excluded by the conventions upon which the films rely.(50)

The adaptation of these working-class texts to the cinema or television (most of the working-class and 'angry' novels and texts discussed in this thesis found their way either into television or film, or both) had various distortive effects, in addition to the political perspective referred to above by Hill. The most striking change is the total loss of narrative perspectives. As the 'classic realist' film depends on what John Hill calls the "articulation of narrative and vision" where "the events of narrative do not appear or proceed from anywhere in particular but simply unfold"(51), the first narrative element to be sacrificed is the first-person narrative. A typical example is the film *Room at the Top* where, in addition to the absence of narrative perspective, the events of the novel were considerably compressed (the script was not written by Braine himself), some characters disappeared altogether (Mrs Thompson and Charles), some characters were made less prominent (Eva), some events are altered (Joe's sexual relation with Alice starts earlier in the film), and giving Alice a new social background (in the film she is French, and came to England as a teacher in 1937).(52) Stuart Laing writes that the absence of narrative perspective in this film could have been avoided as the film as a medium is well capable of handling flashbacks and time-shifts, and argues that

The result, for this film, is the avoidance of any elements which would detract from an emphasis on direct pictorial realism, something which gives its audience unmediated contemporary experience. (53)

To conclude this argument, three important aspects of the intermarriage between the 1950s' novel and cinema could be mentioned. First, the adaptation of these novels to the cinema contributed a great deal to their popularity and that of their authors. This is particularly true of *Room at the Top* and John Braine. James Lee remarks that "what the novel had not done toward making Braine's name known internationally the motion picture did." (54) As with Hines's *Kes*, Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and Storey's *This Sporting Life* and many other texts, the films reinforced the presence of the novels. Second, this literary-cinematic contact ushered some of the working-class novelists and playwrights into the cinema industry, the radio and television. The success of the film of *Room at the Top*, for instance, made Braine "a celebrity in both literary and cinematic circles." (55) Barry Hines has been one of the writers heavily involved with writing for film, television and radio. His play *Speech Day* was originally written for television. Hines, on the other hand, worked very closely with the director Ken Loach and the producer Tony Garnett in making the film *Kes* based on his novel *A Kestrel for a Knave*. The film *Kes*, as a result, differs from the book in minor details, but it comes as near as possible to the novel in its spirit and mood. Finally, the cinema functioned as a mediator between this literature and the working class, for film was the most popular art which the lower classes had access to. I have noticed through my contact with different layers of British society that most people (working- or middle-class, educated or uneducated) know these works because they have seen the films, and not thorough reading the books.

The reaction of the 1950s' fiction to experiment and its adoption of 'social realism' that touches on the documentary, have characterised both its material and form, and determined its relationship to the English literary tradition in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel. On the other hand, it established new bases for a strong relationship with both popular readership and the media.

Section III : Male Narratives

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the novels discussed in this study is perception of the world either through the mind of a male-protagonist or through the male first-person narrative. I will take Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as an example of the first narrative politics, and Braine's *Room at the Top* and its sequel *Life at the Top*, Barstow's *Vic Brown Trilogy* and Storey's *This Sporting Life* as examples of the first person narrative method. I intend here to examine the way these narratives reflect and express the patriarchal order in working-class society which these novels present, the politics these novels adopt in constructing the feminine, and by doing so the way the masculine is itself constructed. In the course of this analysis, I hope to relate this argument to my major analysis of post-war working-class fiction by locating it within the context of the novelists' perceptions of their working-class milieu and their ambivalent feelings and attitudes to their social and economic structures.

Generally speaking, there is a fundamental power relationship between men and women, with men as the sex dominant in cultural, political, economic, sexual and domestic spheres. Although men's dominance is not reducible to class or relations of production, it is historically interlinked with class, the organization of production, its relation to reproduction, and the ideologies of culture which sustain them. But just like men, women are divided by class, race, sexual practice, religion and ethnicity, and there is more than one system of domination fracturing capitalist society. Femininity, nonetheless, has always been theorized and studied, while the idea of masculinity had rarely been studied until the emergence of Feminism and the ideological expressions it found in literary, social, economic and historical spheres. It is essential to draw a line between 'masculinity' and 'male dominance'. While the first has to do with the psychologies of men, the latter is concerned with the social structures and ideologies of male dominance. Masculinity, like femininity, cannot be understood separately from all the wider structures of gender. These structures have a social, cultural and institutional dynamic as well as an individual one. Masculinity is transformed into dominance in men's inevitable participation in divisions of labour, economic advantage, technical experience and skill. It exists in men's historical place in political and public

life, in cultural representations of 'men as humanity', in men's active role in discourses of sexuality, in men's historic control over women's reproduction, and finally in some men's physical and sexual violence against women. All these cultural and social practices are aspects of the meanings and importance attached to 'masculinity'. It remains to say that these practices of male dominance are not static, but developing, multiple and interlinked.

If our analysis is to gain clarity, it is significant also to differentiate between four terms; the construction of femininity, lived femininity, the feminine ideal, and the feminine stereotype. According to Rozsika Parker(1), the first term signifies the psychoanalytic and social account of sexual differentiation; the second refers to femininity as a lived identity; the third denotes a changing concept of what women should be; and the final one signifies a collection of attributes imputed to women and against which their concern is measured. It is the fourth term that concerns us most in this analysis, where women are categorized - in everything they are and everything they do - as essentially feminine denying any differences between individual women, whether economic or social. In the male narratives I have cited above, there is a synecdochic representation of women where they are reduced to one element and perceived of through this. A whole complex image is brought down to a one-dimensional concept as women are reduced to parts of the body, clothes, make-up, etc. This simplification presents language as a whole in this way as the world as a whole is reduced to simple items and concepts. When in the woods with Brenda, Arthur Seaton thinks,

'Women are all the same. If they do it to their husbands they would do it to you if you gave them half a chance.'(2)

In Arthur's mind, all women are reduced to one category, "Whores, all of them."(3) Braine's Joe Lampton exhibits the same tendency to classify women as a homogeneous entity characterized solely by femininity. When he kisses June, he conceives of the action as embracing all women;

I didn't kiss her but all women; I know they're stupid and unaccountable, ruled by the moon one and all, poor bitches... .(4)

Similarly, Vic Brown conceives of all women as a kind which is "the very devil to understand"(5), and when he tells Willy that Engrid is different, the latter comments:

'How's she different? ... She's got two at the front and one in the middle, hasn't she, like all the rest?' (6)

This reduction of women to the sexual is a distinguishing feature of these male narratives. Women and femininity are reduced to the sexual aspect of femininity where the role of women is identified in their sexual function as the only value they have. This concept is an aspect of the synecdochic representation, one which subsequently leads to conception of women as sexual objects, commodities, and a means of satisfying and assuring masculine sexuality. These narratives are more about how men bring women into reality and present them, than about a representation of women. Consequently, they assess the male mind and the way it is historically constructed to conceive of the feminine. In all these novels, there are recurrent references to women as "pieces", "samples", "tarts", "birds", and picking up women is identified as "hunting" where the woman is envisaged as a passive prey to be possessed and had. Joe Lampton states that he had no spiritual or physical attraction to Eva, but the temptation was simple, for he was a young man with "normal appetites", and

If you're hungry and someone is preparing a good meal, you'll naturally angle for an invitation. (7)

Susan, to him, would qualify "Grade One" sexually, even if she did not have money; "If flesh had a taste, hers, I imagine, would be like new milk." (8) Although women are "stupid and unaccountable" to him, there is still "a physical goodness" about them, and "their soft complexities are what gives us life." (9) Femininity is reduced to and redeemed by sexual beauty. Women's items of clothing, and their movement become identified with their sexuality. Upon hearing the rustle of Norah's skirt on her legs, Joe connects the sound with sexual excitement and violence;

It was that sound which undid me ... It hit a raw nerve, it awakened a sensuality which I had thought was tamed. I began to understand what makes a man rape a woman. It wasn't the need for sexual intercourse, it was the need for rape. (10)

The idea of rape is historically established to reflect and insert repression of women and violence against them into the sexual act to complete their subjection, a notion perpetuated even in modern psychoanalysis where rape is regarded as an innate desire in female sexuality. In *The Watchers on the Shore*, Conroy's conversation with

Vic about Cynthia implies this historically-constructed belief. When Conroy tells Vic that Cynthia is "'the biggest tease I've ever come across. A professional virgin. Works you up then won't let you get there without raping her'", Vic's comments springs from his received concept of rape as desired by women, "'Perhaps that's the way she likes it, as if it's rape.'"(11) Arthur Seaton conceives of fulfilling a woman's sexual desire as a key to possessing her for good, and reduces the role of his future wife in his mind to the task of "look [ing] after any kids I fill her with, keep [ing] the house spotless."(12) To Arthur Machin, resisting Mrs Weaver's seduction is like "turning down a free sample, and she gave all the appropriate grimaces of the disappointed salesman."(13) And Vic Brown sees Fleur's value only in the combination of her "looks and freshness" which should be enjoyed by a man while they are still there for "they can't last forever and I wonder if somebody's having it with her, because if there isn't it's a rotten crying shame."(14) This reduction of the female into the mere consumable, sexual commodity is both a historical outcome of patriarchal society and an outcome of male fantasy. Men are shown, in their fantasizing and theorizing about femininity and the female, to live out these fantasies and inhabit dreams. Arthur Seaton, Joe Lampton, Vic Brown and Arthur Machin are constantly theorizing about women and egotistically voice their knowledge of women's desires and conduct. Arthur Seaton's reflections on women's social status and their physical appearance is typical;

you could always tell a married woman from a single woman. It was a matter of intuition ... you could tell from her face, even if she was dressed in a voluminous coat, the size and shape of her breasts. With a light-lipped whippet-faced talkative woman they were as flat as porridge-plates or linier than pheasant's eggs, but with an open-mouthed cheeky-faced, laughing woman you always had something to get hold of. The still-waters-run-deep women were often hardest to solve in this matter, mostly they turned out well, but if by chance they didn't then they made up for it in passion.(15)

Once again, various aspects of femininity are rendered in sexual terms. Catherine MacKinnon analyzes the meanings engendered in the feminine stereotype;

Each element of female *gender* stereotype is revealed as ... sexual. Vulnerability means the appearance/reality of easy sexual access; passivity means receptivity and disabled

resistance ... softness means pregnability by something hard ... Woman's infantilization evokes pedophilia; fixation of dismembered body parts ... evokes fetishism; idealization of rapidity, necrophilia. Narcissism insures that woman identifies with that image of herself that man holds up ... Masochism means that pleasure in violation becomes her sensuality.(16)

In this context, femaleness is transformed into femininity which is, in its turn, reduced to sexual attractiveness and availability to the male.

The notion that femininity is natural to women and unnatural in men is a significant aspect of patriarchal ideology, establishing a strict and repressive division of labour and an assignment of gender roles. This division according to gender establishes the relation of sex to power. These texts we are looking at depict the workings of patriarchal society in three spheres; the working-class family, exclusion of women from male society and practices, and the relationship between men. The family, in patriarchal society, is the place where the women's psychology of inferiority is reproduced and the social and economic exploitation of women as wives and mothers legitimized. Femininity - the behaviour encouraged and expected in women - is both a social and psychological product of the family, the microcosm of society as a whole. Simone de Beauvoir writes in *The Second Sex*;

It is evident that woman's "character" - her convictions, her values, her wisdom, her morality, her tastes, her behaviour - are to be explained by her situation.(17)

In nearly all the working-class novels cited in this work, women's roles are either restricted to domestic work and family affairs or are seen as an appendage to the male quest. I will discuss the politics of Sillitoe's narratives in the William Posters Trilogy in the way they mock the male quest through female narratives. Even when women attempt to assert themselves in the outside world, their attempts are generally aborted by social and family pressures. A prime example is Storey's *Flight into Camden* where Margaret's break out of her family ends up with her sacrifice, and her return home at the end of the novel is an assertion of patriarchal rule and a triumph of the male ethics embodied in her brother, Michael. Arthur Machin, in *This Sporting Life*, fails to take Mrs Hammond out of the confines of her home and domestic work. His failure is an affirmation of the powerful conventions she is subjected to as a woman and a widow. It is

interesting to look at the image of the mother in these texts. In *The Uses of Literacy*, Richard Hoggart points out the "honoured place" of the mother in working-class families, and writes that

she is the pivot of the home ... She, more than the father, holds it together ... She keeps close contact with those other members of the family who live near ... She leaves the outer world of politics and even of the 'news' to her husband; she knows little about his job; such friends as she has from outside are usually his, since on marriage she drops her own.(18)

In spite of the important role the working-class mother has in keeping the family and managing domestic affairs, her world is usually limited to her house and her family. D.H. Lawrence's representation of his mother in *Sons and Lovers* is typical of the portrayal of working-class mothers in post-war working-class fiction. Despite the novelist's portrayal of young women as relatively liberated and inhabiting, or attempting to inhabit, a world of their own, the mother remains almost a mythologized figure inhabiting a world unaffected by the changes of post-war Britain. When Machin visits his parents, he finds his mother

baking, kneeling down in front of the coal fire and kneading the dough. Her face and hands were red with the heat and the effort, and her round, aproned figure wheezed and panted in the light from the near flames.(19)

This image runs through other novels where the mother's work, variable it may be, is reduced to the domestic.

In patriarchal societies, the 'I' signifies the male desire which surfaces in the symbolic system of patriarchal culture. Language under patriarchy is founded on and endlessly reproduces fundamentally dichotomous relations between the sexes, in which women are placed as object, as 'other', subordinated to the male. What men seem both to fear and to desire, in patriarchal society, is an explosive fusion with the 'other', a dissolution of ego-boundaries which they fear will destroy them. In order to evade such a fusion, the female body and femininity are produced as a guarantor of difference. Exclusion becomes necessary for domination. In this context, the setting and the place become signifiers of this exclusion. In traditional working-class culture, there are sacred places which are prohibited to women such as men's clubs. This exclusion represents the social fabric of the patriarchal social order, a social cohesion based on rules of exclusion reflecting the social traditions of the community. There are two paradoxes in the case of this exclusion in working-class

culture. First, these places where men only are allowed in are both private, due to exclusion of women, and public because they are open to any man; secondly, working-class solidarity is enforced by divisions and exclusions. Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy as:

relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men to enable them to dominate women.(20)

Men's societies are usually identified with what is conceived of as 'masculine' character; business, drinking, etc. The element of physique is stressed in almost all these novels considered here where physical qualities immediately identify the male individual and the masculine world. Arthur Seaton is described as a "tall, iron-faced, crop-haired youth"(21), Joe Lampton defines himself in physical terms as "five foot eleven in my socks"(22), "big and strong"(23), and Vic Brown - though he avoids identifying himself with the image of the 'tough' working-class youth - still takes pride in his physique; "a good build ... a nice deep chest ... and square broad shoulders."(24) In *This Sporting Life*, the physique of rugby players is strongly present on the pitch, in the changing rooms, and even outside the rugby world. Physical images define the world of the novel as a whole. We find Frank patting his "huge thighs", Maurice has a "stocky figure, almost contorted by precocious muscle"(25), the young footballer Arnie has "abnormally developed muscles"(26), "lithe muscles sliding across his back"(27), and Arthur sees himself and is seen by others as an "ape", "Big, awe-inspiring."(28)

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning opens with the drinking scene where Arthur Seaton, "with eleven pints of beer and seven small gins playing hide-and-seek inside his stomach"(29), asserts his 'masculinity' and 'toughness' in a drinking competition with a sailor. Heavy drinking characterizes men's gatherings in *Room at the Top* where

The routine is to meet in the Bar Parlour for a couple of pints, have dinner upstairs and a couple more pints, then return to the Bar Parlour for some serious drinking.(30)

Men who cannot keep up with drinking sessions are mocked and identified with the feminine (the librarian who at first feels obliged to keep drinking, but later leaves sick). The establishment of places and meetings exclusive to men is a strong symbol of the rules of exclusion on which patriarchal society is based, and they signify the social and economic divisions. The British Legion Club is a meeting

place for influential men in *This Sporting Life*, and signifies the economic power men enjoy in society. Machin favours the Club for the "absence of women" there and the identification of the place with influential men he aspires to be one of. In *Life at the Top* the settings are mainly clubs and meetings inhabited by business men, a quality which signifies Joe's entry into the influential business world.

Eve K. Sedgwick relates relations between men and the exclusion of women to patriarchal structure, and argues that patriarchy structurally requires what she terms in her study "homophobia". She writes;

in any male-dominated society, there is a special relationship between male homosocial ... desire and the structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power : a relationship funded by an inherent and potentially active structural congruence.(31)

This relationship between homosocial desire and patriarchy necessitates the affirmation of heterosexuality and the suppression of homosexuality. Sexual roles become not only the means for reproducing dichotomous relations between men and women but also the symbol of the workings of patriarchal society where women are conceived of as sexual objects for the desires of men. Furthermore, patriarchal heterosexuality is the use of women as exchangeable property for the purpose of establishing bonds between men. Levi-Strauss writes that

The total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners.(32)

I will take the question of sport, using Storey's *This Sporting Life* and *The Changing Room*, to show the reproduction of social and sexual sources of masculinity in patriarchal society. Sport has traditionally been one of the major male preserves, and has consequently gained a significant role in patriarchal structures. The patriarchal character of modern sport reproduces and maintains male hegemony, and produces and reproduces masculine identity. Sport is an ideal example of the workings of the structures of ideologies and values that determine the power-ratio between the sexes, and the way it is reflected in economic, social and sexual spheres. The involvement of violence and fighting, which require physical strength and red^ainess for violence, preserves sport as a masculine medium of

activity. Sport becomes, in this sense, a reproduction of war and battles. Politics of exclusion in rugby, for instance, manifests themselves in various ways. The male striptease is a ritualistic mocking of the female stripper. Initiation ceremonies are customary to rugby subculture. Excessive drinking and obscene songs often accompany the 'masculine' rituals enacted either in the clubhouse bar or on the way to matches or home. Obscene songs are usually oriented towards mocking women and homosexuals. This is motivated by the male resistance to any fusion with the female, the 'other', on one hand, and by the desire to reinforce masculinity by mocking homosexuals in order to strip off the physical contact rugby players have with each other from any sexual character or desire. The violent masculine style of expression that takes the shape of football hooliganism is channelled into the socially approved medium of rugby, as violence becomes an integral aspect of the game. Thus, sport is modified to control forms of male aggressiveness. It is only recently that the patriarchal character of sport has been questioned by feminist writers. And inspite of the participation of women recently in men's activities, clubs and celebrations, sport remains male-dominated. The setting of the play *The Changing Room* is significant in the way it signifies domination and exclusion. The physical presence of the rugby players in the changing room, their nakedness, massaging each other, and their language and jokes establish the male world as masculine and exclusive.(33) Obscene vocabulary and references to women as "tarts" are reflective of the defensive and exclusive character of male society. On the other hands, *This Sporting Life* presents the world of rugby in more complex terms due to Storey's intention to challenge and puncture the masculine world from the inside. Violence is shown as a prerequisite for success in the game. It is rather significant that the novel opens with Machin getting his teeth broken on the pitch. It is through his acute awareness of the game and its influence on players that we are able to see the game as it is. In spite of his attempt to extricate himself from the code of the game, Machin still sees himself as

big, strong and could make people realize it. I could tackle hard, with the kind of deliberation I took pride in later, really hurt someone.(34)

Another aspect of aggressiveness in rugby league is the spectators who always try to push the game to be more aggressive. Arthur is aware of this, and although his success manifests itself in the crowd's

response on and off the pitch, he gradually resents his supporters who are changing him into a "court jester, big and dumb, a centre of confidential amusement."(35) Storey's strongest challenge to the masculine world of rugby lies in the homosexual undertones that run throughout the novel; Arthur's relationship with his hanger-on Johnson, and his attraction to Maurice. Arthur is sensitive about his physical contact with Johnson, a sensitivity reflected in his narrative;

We were outside the front door ... When
Johnson suddenly touched me arm... .
I pulled away from him.(36)

On another occasion, he feels "Johnson's body pressed close to mine."(37) While resentful of Johnson, Machin's admiration of and relationship with Maurice, another rugby player, carry homosexual undertones. Both the hill scene (where they indulge in a childish-like physical play) and the Scarborough episode (when they wrestle in water) are expressive of the physical intimacy made void of any feelings in the professional world of rugby. I find it symbolic that both Arthur and Maurice sleep with the same woman, Judith. The child she has is in a way both Maurice's and Arthur's.

One aspect of the patriarchal society some of these working-class novels almost put at the centre of their thematic interest is the relationship between the male-protagonist and his father. In Storey's *Pasmore*, Williams' *Border Country*, Barstow's *Joby* and Hines' *First Signs* identification with the father or reestablishing a suspended relationship with him are central elements to the development of the male-protagonist, or to the reestablishment of his ties and his working-class roots. Why the father? In patriarchal society, the father is an embodiment of security, protection and power both in his relationship to his work and the relation of other members of his family to his work and to him. Richard Hoggart states:

The point of departure for an understanding of the position of the working-class father in his home is that he is the boss there, the 'master in his own house'. This he is by tradition, and neither he nor his wife would want the tradition changed.(38)

This "tradition" is established historically through division of labour where the man's role as a provider for his family positions him as a master of his home. This domination on the family level has always taken more general political contexts where political leaders

establish themselves in patriarchal societies as dictators, fathers that defend the nation and protect its interests.

Barstow's *Joby* differs, in a sense, from the other novels cited above because of its treatment of the development and social and sexual awakening of a young boy. The relationship between Joby and his father and their reunion at the end of the novel carry meanings of the boy's awakening to the facts of life, particularly those related to social and sexual experiences. With the illness of his mother and her hospitalization, Joby finds himself bereft of her care and attention. It is significant to note that Joby was supposed to go to a grammar school that summer. The element of academic education is transformed in the novel, skillfully and symbolically, into learning about essential truths and facts of real living. The identification with the father, accidental perhaps, gains importance in this particular context. With the absence of his mother, Joby turns to his father for the protection and assurance he now lacks. His knowledge of his father's affair with his cousin Mona is strongly connected with his awakening to his sexuality with the local girl, Mollie, and his witnessing of the sexual scene in the woods between Agnes, Mollie's sister, and a local boy. Joby's encounter with his father by the river, towards the end of the novel after the latter leaves home, is an unconscious quest for the realization of his own sexuality and future manhood. In the terminology of psychoanalysis, this identification is a means of the boy's discovery of his heterosexuality and role as a male. Richard Klein writes:

In the normal development of the little boy's progress towards heterosexuality, he must pass ... through the stage of the "positive" Oedipus, a homoerotic identification with his father, a position of effeminized subordination to the father, as a condition of finding a model for his own heterosexual role.(39)

The novel's final passage, when Joby's father carries him on his shoulders on the way home, expresses the identification with the father, his strength, maturity and assurance;

There was nowhere for Joby to hold on to with his hands, but his father's hands were gripped firmly round his legs, just below his knees, and after a little while he had got the hang of balancing and swaying to the motion of his father's strides ... He rode in silence, looking about him at the approaching night. He was eight feet tall and from where he rode he could see the lights of the town sprinkled all over the dark hill side. Somewhere among them

was the light of home. He couldn't see it, but he knew it was there.(40)

This identification with the father takes a different form in the other three novels, and functions on a different level. In Hines' *First Signs*, Tom Renshaw's return to his northern village and the reestablishment of his relationship with his miner father gain social and political meanings. His link with his father, the strongest physical tie he has with the village, signifies his clinging to his working-class roots. As a miner, his father symbolizes, for Tom, a continuation of a long history of working-class toil and struggle, one Tom is committed to. On the other hand, his father's political activities in the Miners' Union becomes synonymous with his own involvement in the educational field. Both ties signify the assignment of work and politics to the male, a notion that reflects the politics of patriarchal society. Tom's own image of the miners implies this politics; they are

heroes ... like cowboys weary from the toil, their torn and dirty uniforms told of epic conflicts fought in a private man's land away from the eyes of women and little boys.(41)

The classification of "women" and "little boys" together in their exclusion from the sphere of work and politics is a reflection of the typical patriarchal ethics in terms of assignments of gender roles.

Similarly, in both Storey's *Pasmore* and Williams' *Border Country*, identification with the father and reestablishing relations with him become vital to restoring the male-protagonist's sanity or erasing his deep sense of alienation and uprootedness. Due to the psychological impact Pasmore's education and his alienation from his working-class community have on his character, seeking physical links with his native community becomes essential to his mental stability. The links are almost reduced to his relation with his father. The father, in this instance, becomes a symbol of stability, certainty and authority, qualities Pasmore's life in the South lacks. The bond between Pasmore and his father gains a strong expression in the tense encounter between the two. His father conceives of his relation with him in terms of total sacrifice; "'I've given up all my life ... so that you can love her.'"(42) To Pasmore, this given life is a burdensome legacy; "'You handed it over. Don't ask me to get it back.'"(43) In spite of this tension, the link between the two is established in their walk to the pit together, and more deeply in the

symbolic redemptive feelings Pasmore experiences at the end of the novel;

He still dreamed of the pit and the blackness.
It existed all around him, an intensity, like a
presentiment of love, or violence... .(44)

In *Border Country*, the politics of reestablishing physical links with the working-class community the male-protagonist is uprooted from through education are almost identical with those of *Pasmore*. It is through his sick father that Matthew Price bridges the gap distancing him from his roots. His father's character and what it signifies is central to his own life;

'All my life I've had one centre, one thing I
was sure of: that his life was good. And I
suppose I'd believed that the good is somehow
preserved. Until now.'(45)

In spite of his father's death, Matthew - like Pasmore - experiences a redemptive feeling of the ending of his exile; "'For the distance is measured, and that is what matters. By measuring the distance, we came home.'"(46) Male identification with the father in these novels is a metaphorical expression of the structure of post-war working-class families and a reflection of patriarchal social order where bonds between men signify "homosocial desire", in Sedgwick's terminology, assignment of gender roles, and rules of exclusion.

One of the distinguishing features of the male narratives I have cited in the beginning of this chapter is the stereotypical image that characterizes the portrayal of working-class male-protagonists. I will look at the way central male-characters are stereotyped, and analyse the working of the stereotype in this fiction. In *Mountains and Caverns*, Alan Sillitoe points to the stereotypical images of working-class men in the mid-1950s. He writes:

Working men portrayed in England by the cinema,
or on radio and television or in books were ...
presented in unrealistic terms ... behaving in
the same jokey but innocuous fashion. They
lacked dignity in fiction because they lacked
depth.(47)

It would be incorrect to claim that working-class male-protagonists are a continuation of the historical working-man stereotypes encountered abundantly in previous works of fiction and media. Yet, it would be a fallacious assumption to regard these portrayals as seeking, and succeeding, to discover an existence outside stereotypical notions of masculinity. Like almost all stereotypes, stereotypes of

working-class masculinity are products of ideology that enter the sphere of mythology with time. These stereotypes reflect the workings of specific dominant ideologies, and are perpetuated in various cultural products like art, literature and the media. Roland Barthes' semiological analysis of modern mythology in *Mythologies* (1957) is a masterly account of the mechanism of creating and perpetuating stereotypes. In "The Poor and the Proletariat", he explores the politics of portraying "a kind of primitive proletarian, still outside Revolution"(48) in Charlie Chaplin's movies. He defines 'mythology' as "a type of speech chosen by history"(49), and conceives of it as "a part both of semiology in as much as it is a formal science, and of ideology in as much as it is an historical science: it studies ideas-in-form."(50) Stereotypes, one aspect of mythology, involve both ideology and semiology. I will try to answer two questions here. First, what is the ideological basis of the working-man stereotype? Second, what are the forms or signs that construct this ideological stereotype and give it force? The creation of the working-class, masculine stereotype is undoubtedly a product of industrialism and the division of labour ensued. Division of labour between 'mental' and 'physical' took different more general concepts; 'feminine' and 'masculine', 'middle-class' and 'working-class' and so on. Since the working class has been the bearer of industrialist production, it is identified with the 'physical'. The 'physical' implies, in this sense, a strong, tough, and enduring physique. From this emerged the image of the working man, identified almost wholly in physical terms. More complicated and diverse stereotypes have been developed from this basic stereotype; language, behaviour, sexual qualities, drinking, and perhaps a whole way of thinking and living. These dichotomies are most clearly expressed in David Storey's novels, where the 'physical' and 'spiritual', the 'masculine' and 'feminine' take forms of gender, class and place.(51)

Arthur Seaton, Arthur Machin, Joe Lampton and to a lesser extent Vic Brown are clearly and directly identified in physical terms. At one point Seaton's character is brutally reduced to his physical qualities; "What am I? he wondered. A six-foot pit-prop that wants a pint of ale."(52) Sillitoe's portrayal of Arthur as a potential rebel fails to undermine the rooted entrenchment of the working-man stereotype of masculinity. Joe Lampton takes pride in his physique which becomes his passage to Warley's rich women. Apart from financial status, Lampton's comparison of himself to other men is

based on physical grounds. He states that what annoyed him most about Jack Wales, his rich rival for Susan, was "that he stood four inches above me and was broader across the shoulders." (53) The same physical comparison is applied later in the novel when Joe is involved in a fight after Alice's death. Language, on the other hand, transcends its representational function in realistically reflecting the protagonist's dialect to signify the stereotypical image of the working-class man as masculine and tough. When Jack Wales is about to leave with Susan, Joe turns to Eva and says:

'Tha doesn't have to coax *me* to sup some ale, las,' ... deliberately dropping into broad Yorkshire to counter-attack Wale's genuine officer's accent... .' (54)

Storey seems to be aware of the affinity between language and working-class masculinity, and his use of poetic metaphorical language in Machin's first-person narrative is one of the most effective devices of subverting the working-man stereotype. As a whole, these stereotypes are made to inhabit a world and indulge in activities (drinking, fighting, violence, etc.) that correspond to their stereotypical images. The sexual element is an illustrative example of the way masculinity is mythologically and stereotypically perceived. In a way not dissimilar to this stereotype, the working-class male is stereotyped in the sexual sphere. Lawrence's portrayal of the gamekeeper Mellors, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is an example of this identification of working-class masculinity with sexual gratification. Machin is nick-named "Tarzan" by women around him, and Judith tells him;

'You know at one time I had my eye on you, Tarzan. Most of the girls did, I suppose ... What put me off in the end was the thought of us in bed. Somebody mentioned what a frightful crush it would be.' (55)

It is interesting here to identify the nick-name "Tarzan" with the notion of primitiveness in the 'black' stereotype. Similarly, Eva's concept of Joe Lampton as a "'strong brute'" carries sexual tones. She tells him: "'I couldn't resist a big, brutal, sweaty boxer.'" (56) One could conclude that in spite of the "depth", to use Sillitoe's word, given to working-class male-protagonists in this fiction, stereotypical images remain at work on more than one level.

Questions of gender roles and sexual relationships feature in post-war, working-class fiction as a significant element in the social and economic fabric of working-class life. Ambivalent feelings

towards the working class characterize almost the whole bulk of the period's working-class fiction, and are expressed in various ways. In David Storey, breaking with the 'physical', 'masculine' character of working-class life and culture in the north becomes a prerequisite for the nourishment of 'spiritual', 'feminine' and artistic tendencies. And nearly all his fiction is preoccupied with an attempt to reconcile the two contradictory forces. In John Brin, detachment from the squalor and mundanity of the working-class north is motivated by individual ambitions for financial gain and power. In Sillitoe, the repressive and limiting urbanity of industrial Nottingham, presumably responsible for producing aggressive working-class masculinity, is shunned in favour of a broader world with wider horizons and cultures where anger and rebellion can be nurtured to take a positive form. Although some of the masculine character traits of Arthur Seaton still exist in his later protagonists, the emphasisⁱⁿ his later fiction shifts to centre more on a more positive understanding of the self and the world. And in Stan Barstow, the working-class community is envisaged as a crippling force demanding conformity and repressive of individual freedom. It is crucial, in this context, to note that this vision is materialized in his narratives in the domestic sphere where the relations between the sexes become the major thematic problematic. The conventionality of Ingrid and her mother gain symbolic power in that it signifies a patriarchal society based on subordination and submission. Issues of masculinity and femininity are presented as an integral part, in fact a product, of the social and economic structure of working-class life.

PART FOUR : Case Studies

Section I : John Braine: The Individual and the Morality of Choice

The most distinguishing style of Braine's early work is "Yorkshire provincialism". The early novels depict the mode of life in urban industrialized Bradford and the rural areas of the West Riding. The provincialism that colours this writing aims at portraying the detailed everyday life of the region in a style that reflects the "plainness and sparseness of Yorkshire life... ." (1) The novels reveal the morality of the region represented in dedication to work, to duty and to living ascetically. Both *Room at the Top* (1957) and *Life at the Top* (1962) condemn laziness and the neglect of work and duty, and *The Vodi* (1959) openly rejects apathy and failure.(2) This reflects Braine's perception of the ethics of his region. He calls Bradford a place "which more than any other in England is dominated by a success ethos"(3), and regards it as a city dedicated almost wholly to making money out of the wool trade. Towns like Dufton and Warley, names he uses for Bradford in the novels, are dull places where trade and making money take an unchallenged priority.

Region, class and the church are three factors which figure prominently in Braine's early work. The first two shape *Room at the Top*, *The Vodi*, *Life at the Top* and four of the six sketches ("Something for Everyone", "Nowhere", "Number Nine Rock" and "Portrait of a Provincial Intellectual") written between 1950 and 1957, while the third finds expression only in *The Jealous God* (1964) and two of the sketches ("Irish Quarter" and "A Devil for Dancing"). Nonetheless, there is a common thread that connects the early novels and shapes their thematic structure, and that is the individual's struggle to change his/her status and the morality and individual responsibility which results from this struggle. The four novels studied in this section share these themes, where Joe Lampton, Dick Corvey and Vincent Dungarvan all belong to the lower order of society and are mainly concerned with the change of their status.

First published in 1957, *Room at the Top* epitomizes its time by probing into the central problem of the period and exploring the social and economic factors contributing to the cultural mode of the 1950s. It expresses the social dissent of the frustrated, ambitious and underprivileged whose response to their exclusion from the world of wealth and power in 'affluent' Britain was to force their way into the economic elite. The novel depicts the ethics of the period and ,

assesses the moral coast of individual social mobility. Its appeal to contemporary social dissent and its evaluation of the morality of the age made it an exceptional commercial success by a largely unknown author, and one of the literary landmarks of the period.

Braine states:

in the Welfare State the young man on the move has to be a bit tougher and learn how to fiddle more cleverly. My job writing about Joe Lampton was to look at him clearly. It is not the job of a novelist to pass moral judgements. (4)

Room at the Top is an insight into the character of this ruthless tough young man who knows exactly what he wants and is prepared to do and sacrifice anything to get it. The novel centres upon Joe Lampton, a young angry and ambitious working - class youth who tells about his experience of abandoning his humble origins and climbing the social ladder to become a part of the World of wealth and power 'at the top'. The politics of the narrative gain expression through the moral judgements and psychological disintegration of the hero. Joe's dissatisfaction with his social and economic status and his awareness of the riches and luxuries he is excluded from drive him to leave his Northern home town, Dufton, to take a job in the wealthy middle-class district of Warley. There, his ambition and anger set his mind on a choice he has already contemplated; to obtain what he felt were his rights "a signed and concealed legacy", "an Aston-Martin... a three guinea linen shirt... a girl with a Riviera suntan" and "enjoy all the luxuries"(5) the young man he saw through the window of Sylvia's Cafe enjoyed. To collect this "legacy" Joe plans to wage a war against the "rich... my enemies"(6), to move "into the attack, to open "hostilities", and to conquer Warley that is lying "below in the valley waiting to be possessed."(7) This angry vocabulary of assault, hostility and conquering characterizes the language and details of the narrative which connected Braine's name and novel with what was coined the "Angry Young Men" of the 1950s.

The novel progresses by interweaving episodes from the development of two relationships Joe has with two women; Alice Aisgill, a married middle-class actress he falls in love with, and Susan Brown, the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Warley. The meanings and values of his relationship with Alice stand in sharp contrast to those embodied in his relationship with Susan, and the vocabularies and connotations of the interweaving episodes express the antithesis of love and money. With Alice, he is himself "complete"

where "the act of love was becoming not distasteful, not unnecessary, but only one of a series of pleasures; of pleasures which were solely dependent upon her", (8) and both form "one happy person, one reality". (9) It is interesting to notice that the values and honesty involved in his relationship with Alice are most strongly expressed in connection with Dufton. Joe is able to talk to her "as freely as I would talk with Charles" (10), and with her they could become "as firmly rooted and as good as my father and my mother. We could enter into marriage, not just acquire a licence for sexual intercourse." (11) It is a "kinship" he could never share with Susan. This is significant to the thematic structure of the novel as Alice is intentionally associated with the lost values of Dufton and those of Joe's parents, killed in the war, and Alice's violent death towards the end of the novel provides another connecting thread. Joe's statement that "Alice didn't belong to Warley" (12) is a metaphorical expression of this connection. In contrast to all this, his relation with Susan is a means to an end. With her, his "loneliness" is "real", he feels "rich", she is his visa to "a damned good job." (13) With her he has to be pretensions to "transform myself into a different person," (14) and making love becomes "wearisome" once the novelty had worn off. To Joe,

Susan is not a person but a Grade A lovely,... the daughter of a factory-owner,... the means of obtaining the key to Aladdin's cave of my ambitions... (15)

The novel is structured by the contrast between Joe's feelings for the two women and the values they represent. As each relationship moves towards a climax of resolution or dissolution, the opposing values represented in each came into sharp contradiction and require Joe to make a choice between the two ways of life represented by the two women. It is this choice that fabricates the moral dilemma of the novel as a whole. Joe's quest for wealth and power leads to a ruthless solution of his conflict. His love for Alice is true and fulfilling, but he "couldn't have both her and Warley" (16), and a brutal sacrifice is imminent;

I had to love Warley properly too, I had to take all she could give me; it was too late to enjoy merely her warm friendship, a life with a Grade Six girl perhaps, a life spent in, if I were lucky, one of the concrete boxes of houses on the new Council estate... I had to force the town into granting me the ultimate intimacy, the

power and privilege and luxury which emanated from T' Top.(17)

The conflict is resolved with Alice's violent death in a car accident and Joe's subsequent marriage to Susan is laden with a sense of guilt and despair which accompanies the consummation and success of his plan.

The structural backbone of the novel is the historical transition of British society from the 1930s' 'Depression', through the 1940s' 'Austerity' to the 'Affluence' of the 1950s.(18) The time of the actual events in the novel is the post-war period (1946-7), and the time of narration is the present (1956) as Joe looks back at an earlier different self. The situation of the novel on this historical transition is an attempt to evaluate, through the hero's experiences, the morality of post-war Britain.

While the contrast in the early 1950s was between the 'Depression' and unemployment of the 1930s, the Conservative heritage and Labour's post-war full employment and 'Austerity', the comparison shifted in 1955 to that between Labour's 'Austerity' and the 1950s' Conservative 'Affluence'. The most visible change in the 1950s was the advent of an 'affluence' that, unlike the Welfare State, "cared little about inequalities of wealth... placing high values upon material success and comfort... ." (19) The Conservative government's policy of creating a "property owning democracy" by capitalizing on private rather than public development attempted to create an image of a future open society, and encouraged individuals to change their social and economic status. With the symptomatic phrases 'You've never had it so good' and 'I'm all right, Jack,' the notion of 'classlessness' and the idea that class-based politics were a redundant policy belonging to the "bad old days", formulated the dominant ideology created and promoted in the 'mass media'. The 'affluent' society offered itself as a transitional period where money and position were the means for social stratification leading to the termination of class distinction and what was allegedly called the 'embourgeoisement' of the working class. *Room at the Top* presents the changes of the period, and offers itself as "a commentary on this transition in a variety of ways - most obviously through the changes in Joe himself"(20) as his experience of 1930s' Dufton and his post-war subordinate position lead to his entry into the 1950s' 'affluence'. Many critics saw the value of the novel as "another sociological case history of welfare stateism"(21), and

an oppositional account of a contemporary society... while simultaneously ultimately endorsing as 'realistic' the ideology of affluence and individual material gain, of embourgeoisement and political pragmatism.(22)

The moral evaluation of 'affluence' and the human cost of its materialistic ethos are implied in the historical structure of the novel, and directly expressed in Joe's experience and his own narratorial comments on this experience. The contrast between the 1930's and the 1950's is reflected in both physical and moral terms. There is a constantly recurring structuring of Dufton and Warley and presentation of the different values they embody. The word 'world' is used to indicate a general atmosphere of a particular lifestyle, Two 'worlds' are set against each other with the different concepts they evoke; Dufton, poor and humanistic, and Warley, rich and materialistic. And words like 'class', 'grade' and 'grading system' are employed to refer to the contrast existing between the two 'worlds'. Joe sees his flat at the top in Warley and Cyprus Avenue against

the background of Dufton, the back-to-back houses, the outside privies, the smoke which caught the throat and dirtied the clean linen in a couple of hours, the sense of being always in a charade upon Hard Times.(23)

Warley's affluence and luxury are always seen by Joe against Dufton's squalor and poverty. On the other hand, Joe's parents, his Aunt Emily, and Alice represent the values and morals savagely sacrificed to usher in the materialism of 'affluence'. His mother's "'Your father would starve before he'd sell himself for a handful of silver'"(24), his father's "'Mind what Ah say, Joe. There's some things that can be bought too dear'"(25), and his aunt's "'Money marries money, lad... What good's a girl like that [Susan] to you? Get one of your own class, lad, go to your own people'"(26) express a set of values that in itself judges the morality of the world Joe aspires to be part of. These distant voices and Joe's visit to the site of his destroyed home in Dufton imbue the novel with a nostalgia for working - class values similar to those expressed in various sociological studies of the period like Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, published one month before *Room at the Top*.

Alice's character and life-style are in contrast with Susan's upper-middle-class respectability and Joe's working-class background. Stuart Laing observes that

the location of authentic human values in a representative of a particular faction of the middle class is not accidental nor... insignificant...(27)

He connects the creation of her character in the novel with the rise of the CND movement which coincided with the appearance of Braine's novel and whose members' political views and morality were in conflict with those of pragmatic materialism and the 'grading system'. Braine himself was a member of the movement and an occasional speaker. Alice stands in the novel as a representative of the ideals of this movement which crystallized in advancing an alternative form of social organization where materialism should be replaced by human and professional principles. On the other hand, the relationship between Joe and Alice expresses the tension developing between his working class background with its emotional values, patterns of life, and the kinds of sexual identification and her middle-class style of life which Joe has to adapt himself to and which is typified by intellectual interests, an educated accent and liberal sexual ethics and conduct. The romantic-sexual episodes in the novel become effective representations of more general cultural problems. The clash between Joe and Alice, upon Joe's learning of her past career as a model, is symptomatic of this tension and expressive of the cultural problems as an indecent way of making money is shaped by his "Dufton standards" because

in Dufton artists' models were thought of as tarts, not quite professionals, but simply the kind who couldn't be bothered to say no.(28)

In response, Alice's assault on this mentality is vicious and immediate;

'I can just see you in Dufton now, looking at nudes in the magazines, drooling over them. Saying you wouldn't mind having a quick bash. But blackguarding the girls, calling them shameless.'(29)

Joe's attitude, in addition to its cultural dimensions, is suggestive of masculine hypocrisy.

War functions in the novel as a destructive symbol of transition. The war kills Joe's parents and also the Thompsons' son allowing Joe, who is the 'image' of the dead Maurice Thompson, to break with his background and move into a vacant space, literally the dead son's bedroom in a middle-class home. The violent death of Alice is a climax of the novel, but it is also suggestive of the war which is an

integral element of its memory and meaning. Her death is symbolic of the suppression and eradication of the values and style of life that dominated before the war, and of a mode of living swept away by the advent of the 'affluent' society. This is most evident in the way Joe talks of Alice's death;

Alice had been killed, and what I saw was the components of a huge machine that now only functioned out of bravado: it had been designed and manufactured for one purpose, to kill Alice.(30)

and:

I saw quite clearly that there were no dreams and no mercy left in the world, nothing but a storm of violence.(31)

Laing, commenting on the novel's presentation of this violent transition, writes:

by structuring human values on the metaphorical axis of life/death and then transporting this into the physical world, the novel presents human values as inevitably subject to destruction, frequently of a violent and total kind.(32)

The novel offers itself in various ways, structurally and thematically, as a commentary on the transition into 'affluence', as addressing the issue of individual class mobility, as commenting on the 'embourgeoisement' thesis, and as inserting itself into the debate about social mobility and the disappearance of classes in 'affluent' Britain. Its description of the values and lifestyle of Warley and the dominant social and sexual conduct, and the structuring of the first-person narrative are the most prominent and expressive devices in the narrative.

The novel is mostly preoccupied with the depiction of an affluent style of life and class social conduct most illuminated by Joe's ambition, anger and sharp observations of the signs and symbols of this affluence. His appetites are sharpened by a meticulous eye for status, class and material value, which colours the narrative with a constant register of prices and possessions to the extent that the language of the narrative becomes an expression of the society the novel describes. His understanding of the laws and conducts of this society and his comments emerging from this comprehension lend the narrative a powerful evaluation of Warley's values and morality. The world at the top is luxurious with its big houses, expensive cars,

luxurious commodities, expensive clothes and perfumes and Conservative clubs where

decisions are taken, deals made between soup and sweet ... where the right word or smile or gesture could transport one into a higher grade overnight ... [where] the smelly swineherd became the prince who wore a clean shirt every day.(33)

Everything and everyone is measured against their material value, and Joe's ambition to become a "Successful Zombie", as he ironically calls himself, requires his full knowledge of Warley's values and conducts. His conception of this society dictates his conduct. He realizes his short-comings as lacking "the necessary background, the poise, the breeding ... essentially vulgar"(34), and knows that in order to be part of Warley he has to undergo a total metamorphosis of character in terms of personality, dressing, style, social conduct and accent. He is prepared to fake all to penetrate the world at the top, another aspect of his moral disintegration. This metamorphosis of character finds a strong symbolic expression in Manet's *Olympe* hung on the wall of his room in Warley. The woman in the painting is a symbol of prostitution and nudity, and her body is a kind of commodity among other kinds, and one, like Joe's, constructed for sale. Her image in the dream growing bigger and bigger is metaphorically suggestive of Joe's gradual moral disintegration. Moreover, his joining of the small theatre group in Warley is ironically expressive, too, for, as James Lee suggests, Joe is a

consummate actor ... the whole of his success depends on his ability to assume the dress, deportment, and speech of the upper middle class of Warley.(35)

It is interesting here to notice the language of Joe's narration, an acquired educated middle-class language coloured with a frequent use of French, and the way he uses his Northern dialect functionally; either to reflect upon past events and conversations in Dufton, or an instrument of humour in his conversations with Warley's people or to assert his aggression when threatened.

Joe sees people in Warley as an embodiment of money and a reflection of its value, in fact he sees them as money. Bob and Eva give him the sensation of the "wicked, exciting, above all, wealthy world", (36) Jack Whale's house (Jack is his rival for Susan) is seen as "a physical extension" of his big and strong body, and when Brown asks to meet him at the club, Joe is frightened of the meeting because

A man with only a few hundred in the bank ... is powerless against a man with a hundred thousand. (37)

The connection between money and power, freedom and sex is clearly expressed in the novel and in Joe's own conception of it. Joe realizes that "honour, like freedom, is a luxury for those with independent incomes", (38) and knows that obtaining the money and wealth of Warley provides a licence for sex, position and power. The "Lampton-Lufford Report on Loves", which he ironically writes with Charles, confirms this already made concept where the beauty of women corresponds to their husband's money. When Joe sees the rich man and woman through the cafe's window, he conceives of the ownership of both the car and the woman as "a question of money", and when he kisses Eva he feels her body "expensive". Even Susan is seen as

the daughter of Harry Brown with a hundred thousand pounds as a barrier between her and real sorrow. (39)

This connection between money, sex and power enables the novel to reflect the morality of affluence and the ethics of 'affluent' Britain.

Frederick R. Karl fails to grasp the mechanism of Joe's concept of Warley and its women as an integral part of the novel's analysis and criticism of affluence and materialism by suggesting that "Like Defoe ... Braine allows his predatory hero to confuse love with money." (40) If Defoe's *Moll Flanders* confuses love with money, Braine's Joe Lampton is fully aware of the difference between the two, an awareness that creates the complexity and morality of his choice. Money in *Room at the Top* is a metaphor for power, and is used to explore other issues related to sex, class individuality and freedom, but it is never suggested as a licence to love. This is explicitly expressed in the novel in Joe's comparison between his feelings for Alice and Susan. When Susan, for instance, asks him if he loves her, he ironically answers "'A hundred thousand pounds' worth... ." (41).

The most significant technical device in the novel is the structure of the first-person narrative for the vigour it gives the story, the way it enables Braine to analyse the inner psychology of his hero, and most importantly the moral thrust it lends to the novel. Joe relates the events from a vantage point ten years after their happening. He seems to be telling the story most of the time as it happens, and the reader is not allowed to know incidents in advance. There are few flashbacks to his years in the RAF and his life in

Duften. Nonetheless, the narrative is more concerned with Joe's attempt to rise in Warley than anything else. Hardly any use of sub-plot is made due to the limitations of the scope of narration. As the central conflict is told in Joe's relationships with Alice and Susan, he is almost constantly telling of episodes of these relationships, and is rarely concerned about other people. The sub-plots (Joe's relations with his landlady and landlord, with other municipal employees, for example) function within the narrative as developments of his character.

Although the 'experiencing self' claims the larger part of the narrative, the 'temporal distance' - separating the act of narration from the time of fictional experience - enables the 'narrating self' to impose itself on the narrative as the narrator turns into reflector or commentator. This creates an equilibrium between the two 'selves' forming an existential bond between the two. There are instances where both 'selves' are closely at work together turning the narrative into a mixture of narrating and commentating. When Joe and Susan are in the opera house;

I passed her a block of chocolate; my hand brushed hers and hovered over it for a second but it had no responsiveness; if a girl wants her hand to be held it tightens over yours the moment it's touched.(42)

Here the shift between narration and commentary is swift and takes place in the same sentence, and is marked by a change of tense from past to present. Elsewhere, the 'narrating self' is freely at work operating on its own;

The notion that there is only one woman to suit a man may appear foolishly romantic. All I knew is this: there wasn't any other woman with whom I could be happy. There wasn't any obsessive compulsion towards each other, nor was our love efficient, an exact matching of virtues and defects. When I say that she suited me I use the word in the Yorkshire sense too, meaning pleased with, delighted about...(43)

Words seem to come almost spontaneously at the time of narration as the 'teller character' of Joe changes into a 'commentator character'. Examples of the two 'selves' functioning together in the narrative or operating on their own are ample in the novel, and mark the narrative structure of the whole novel. This structure functions on more than one level in the novel, the most important of which is the thematic one touching upon the moralistic tone of the narrative.

This enables Braine to evaluate the hero's experiences from his own - the hero's - point of view as the prime motivation of the act of narration is the need of the narrator - hero to seek a pattern for the experience of the naratorial 'I' which has matured and outgrown the confusions of the 'experiencing self'. Joe's presence in the fictional world delimitates his scope of knowledge and perception of characters and events, and the boundary between recollection and creation is suspended as ten years separate events from narration and the 'narrating self' is at work to establish the pattern of experience of the 'experiencing self'. The reader's judgement of Joe remains limited to his or her faith in the reliability and honesty of his version of events. Joe is his own judge, and his constant comments on his action redeem the fictional experience from a moral standpoint, and at the same time distance Braine from his hero.

Joe's judgement lends strength and clarity to the novel's evaluation of individual class mobility through wooing the Establishment. He is aware of the cost of his sacrifice and talks of the "muck one's forced to wade through to get what one wants." (44) On the other hand, Joe accepts full responsibility for the choice he made;

What has happened to me is exactly what I willed to happen. I am my own draughtsman. Destiny, force of events, fate, good or bad fortune - all that battered reportery company can be thrown right away of my own story, left to starve without a moment's recognition. But somewhere along the line ... I could have been a different person ... I suppose that I had my chance to be a real person. (45)

And he talks of the pretences he has to fake in order to achieve his planned success, pointing out that "the game was worth the candle; if I sold my independence at least I'd get a decent price for it." (46) Braine shows Joe is fully aware of his choice and responsible for his decisions; thus undermining tragic tendencies of the narrative. Braine does not exaggerate the degeneracy of Joe's situation, and shows him motivated more by the desire to succeed than by the misery of his situation. What makes *Life at the Top* less powerful and expressive than *Room at the Top* is the absence of the tension between the 'narrating self' and the 'experiencing self' in the former novel.

Braine's use of the first-person narrative was both praised and attacked, and his relation to his hero was consequently critically examined. James Gray wrote that "all the gusto that might have

belonged to an objective story of shameless adventure is lost.. ." (47) Lee points out that the narration of Joe's drunkenness after Alice's death, his seduction of Mavis, a working-class girl he meets in a pub, and the fight with her boyfriend, seems to be told in a different mood from the rest of the story, and writes:

It is almost as if the final section had originally been written in third person and changed to first when the rest of the novel was written. (48)

And Fraser refers to the weakness of the novel as lying in the fact that "Braine...[is] not emotionally detached from Joe Lampton, but half admires him" (49) for doing what any other man would do in his place, and Lee comments that Braine's "failure of artistic distance causes the reader to sympathize with Joe when he does not deserve sympathy." (50) These attacks almost undermine one of the greatest achievements of the novel; the inner analysis of the psychology of the hero's moral disintegration. (51) It is only through first-person rendering of the story that Braine could analyze Joe's motives and conflicts and trace his gradual, inner, moral dissolution. The novel is not solely concerned with individual class mobility in 'affluent' Britain, but its primary objective is to study and evaluate the moral impact of such mobility on the individual self, and the first-person narrative from a 'temporal distance' of ten years enables Braine to achieve his task. For the authorial narrative claiming omniscience is often handicapped at particular instances of the fictional experience and requires the author's imposition of his or her own interpretation of the psychology and motivations of the fictional character. Moreover, the narrator's view in a first-person narrative, as I mentioned earlier, is not binding for the reader due to the subjective mode of narration. Braine does not seem to be attempting to create a particular type in Joe, but an individual whose ambition and anger drive him to force his way into the world of wealth and power. This, in no way, undermines the novel's questioning of the morality and values of 'affluence' and its assessment of social conduct and class mobility in post-war Britain. Fraser's and Lee's criticisms of Braine's failure to distance himself from his hero come from a misreading of the way the first-person narrative functions in the novel, thematically and structurally. One of the reasons the reader sympathizes with Joe, at one point or another in the novel, is the way both the 'experiencing self' and the 'narrating self' operate together enabling Joe, the narrator, to disarm the reader by condemning himself

almost from the outset of narration, and showing his motives to have been shaped by the social and economic forces in his society, although he claims full personal responsibility for his choice. The tone of the narrative is "I had to" which almost annuls the availability of choice.

The narrative device employed at the end of the novel is the final moral thrust of Joe's narrative. It is not a purely technical device, as Lee seems to suggest, but rather a metaphorical expression of Joe's moral split indicating the radical change his earlier character underwent at the beginning of the novel. It is a condemnation and a rejection of the character which emerged through the fictional experience. His,

I didn't like Joe Lampton... He was a sensible young accountant... He always said and did the correct thing and never embarrassed anyone with an unseemly display of emotions... I hated Joe Lampton but he looked and sounded very sure of himself at my desk in my skin; he'd come to stay, this was no flying visit.(52)

is a condemnation of what he has become at the end of the novel, and a nostalgic longing for his previous self. This loss is most tellingly expressed when he thinks of himself and Alice, a corpse now, as

myself and a corpse... I was the better-looking corpse; they wouldn't need to bury me for a long time yet.(53)

This moral split resembles Vincent's cry in *The Jealous God* "'It is not me'" when he walks away from Laura after learning of her marriage.

After *The Vodi*, a study of the mystique of failure, Braine goes back to examine the world of success *Room at the Top* led to. Published in 1962, *Life at the Top* is wholly dedicated to the exploration of the life Joe Lampton fought for in *Room at the Top*.

Set ten years after the events of the first novel, *Life at the Top* covers six months in Joe's unsatisfactory life of success. He is thirty-five now, married to Susan, and has two children; Harry, a boy of nine almost brought up and shaped by his grandmother and a boarding school, who is taught to regard his father as working class and treats him with scornful politeness, and Barbara, a four-year old girl who is Joe's strongest tie with his home and family life. They live in a luxurious house with the financial security Joe's job in Brown's company provides. Susan has become more and more dissatisfied with her empty and purposeless life and seeks a change by having at least

one love affair. Joe, dissatisfied with what he has now and what he has become, desperately seeks a way out of the monotony of his life at home and work. Most of what characterizes *Room at the Top* as a powerful novel is absent here; the vigour of the conflict, lively settings, the functional complexity of the narrative, and the development and interactions of characters within the narrative framework. The novel depicts and enacts the hollowness and aimlessness of Joe's tedious, successful world in Warley. The major theme of the novel is Joe's acceptance of responsibility which *Room at the Top* had already expressed.

The dominant setting of the novel is the business world which Joe is part of now. Joe has to come to terms with

a thousand other evenings like this, a thousand other evenings listening to people like these. The prosperous middle-aged grumbles, the solid sensible citizens; I would sit in here or in the committee room listening to them; taking a great care not to offend them, and, without realizing it I would become exactly like them. Waiting my turn to grumble, waiting my turn for thrombosis, awaiting my turn for death. And Harry would continue to grow away from me and Barbara, even Barbara, would stop loving me. The world would laugh her out of it; and she'd marry some steak type like Hethersett ... And Susan would become Susan's mother. (54)

This image Joe has of himself and his family and their future sums up the price he has to pay for sacrificing his background and its life style and a true love, Alice. While in *Room at the Top* Joe is in command of Warley and of his choices, it is Warley's affluent business life that controls and directs the course of his life and his social conduct. The novel's reflection of the monotonous, hypocritical business life where money is the most influential factor prompted A. Alvarez to describe it as "a kind of Tory fairy tale" (55) where the materialistic structure of the prosperous industrial society, inhabited and shaped by people like Brown, Tiffield and Hethersett, is seen from the inside.

Trapped in this society, Joe attempts to construct an image of himself as "a respectable and responsible citizen, father of two children, candidate for the St Clair Ward" (56), not out of place in the first-class compartment on the London train but "where I belonged with the sensible ones" (57), and a Tory councillor in Warley "'A cunning one... The most dangerous kind.'" (58) He sees himself in the same way he used to look at the wealthy people of Warley in *Room at*

the Top, exactly what he planned to be. This brings no consolation as Joe finds himself subjected to a grinding machine where things "were riding over me, on me, trampling me into submission, and sometimes I felt every one knew it"(59), and realizes that his life is ruled by the Browns, wondering "if there ever had been a time where they hadn't ruled my life."(60) His unhappy life at home strengthens his feelings of exclusion and dissatisfaction, as the sole difference between home and hotels becomes "the greater comfort, the greater amount of buyable things."(61) This urges Joe to attempt another breakthrough for he realizes that the symbols of power he vehemently struggled to obtain are not enough;

I had stopped wanting things. I wanted power ... to put through my own ideas; I wanted to be taken seriously. I wanted to be something more than the boss's son-in-law.(62)

His early struggle to attain identity through possessing symbols of power changes here into a negation of these symbols for the recognition of this identity. Through Joe's dissatisfaction and half-hearted determination to break out are expressed in the novel, yet it is not always clear what forces are in conflict. He seems to be in contest with the whole materialistic society around him, but the identity of the conflict is blurred and vague. Norah, an attractive journalist, seems for a while to provide an outlet as "It was time for a change, time for my life to take a new shape."(63) His attraction to, and desire for, Norah seem to strengthen his need for an escape, and his discovery that Susan was having an affair with a dissatisfied married friend opens his eyes to the fact that his manipulation of Susan whom "for a long time now I'd not thought of ... as a person."(64) At the same time, he has the illusion that this discovery opened the door for his freedom;

I was free and Susan had set me free... It was as if I'd been given back the ten years of marriage.(65)

And that "the sound reliable man, the understanding forgiving cuckold, had set himself free."(66) The sexual desire he has for Norah appears to him as a powerful urge to free himself from the frustration and tediousness of work and home. For an instant, we sense in Joe's language and frame of mind the vigour that characterised him in *Room at the Top*;

It was that sound which undid me [the rustle of Norah's skirt on her legs]... It hit a

raw nerve, it awakened a sensibility which I thought was tamed.(67)

One faces here the previous Joe with his sharp response to the glamorous details of movements, sounds and shapes. This awakening drives him to attempt a break from home and work, and his desertion of Susan and Brown's company to live with Norah in London seem for a while the signs of another assault. But soon the realization comes that his attempt is not a search for an alternative but rather

Drifting was exactly what I wanted to do ... I wanted to do nothing. I had rejected my old life and was on the verge of a new one; but was I sure that I wanted that either?(68)

This escape, that "abdication of responsibility, the retirement from the arena"(69) and the confusion and uncertainty of Joe's mind about an available alternative make the vagueness of the conflict in the novel and weakens its plot. Most of the time, Joe does not know what he wants, and his comfort in the company of the seductive Jean Welfrey and his affair with Norah fail to establish a solid ground for a radical change. The failure of his attempt to establish a new life in London is only an indication of his confusion and inability to break out. At the end of the novel, he is brought back to Warley by his son. A lost child returning to another lost child.

The resolution of the conflict with the unconvincing coming together of Joe and his family is marked by a false note of optimism and a sense of failure;

I was happy, happier than I had been since childhood. It couldn't last, it was already evaporating as I began to be grateful for it, but I knew it would come again.(70)

This resolution is created and made unconvincingly possible by two twists in the novel. The first is Susan's unexpected and unprecedented confrontation of her father as Joe is preparing to leave and join Norah in London;

'You've pushed me around all your life. You've treated me like a puppet, you treat your grandson like one, you try to boss everyone. You're a bully and a tyrant. I won't have you here telling me what to do. And I won't have you talk to Joe like that.(71)

The second is the radical and sudden change of Harry's relationship with his father. Joe first thinks that Harry was the fruit of Susan's long affair with Mark, but comes to know that he was his own son. Both twists are imposed on the plot to give it colour, and to prepare

the false ground of Joe's return home. His happiness at the end seems to negate any necessity for change and to validate his present life.

Although the novel attempts to present itself as a moral statement on the price of individual class mobility and an evaluation of affluence, it fails^{to} go beyond the moral judgement achieved in *Room at the Top*. The novel was considered a failure, and Braine was attacked for depending in the sequel on the success of his first novel. The plot is almost "disastrous" as is the characterization, as Lee suggests. Joe's character is one dimensional, and comes to life only in the episodes with Barbara. Dialogue is monotonous and lifeless most of the time. The vagueness of Joe's conflict weakens the plot and undermines any achievement the novel could aspire to. The narrative is laborious, lacks the vitality and vigour of the first novel, and is exhausted by various aimless detail. The narrative distance which charges *Room at the Top* with power is absent here as Joe narrates events in the present. If there is any value to the novel, it may be in the way the monotonous narrative metaphorically reflects the hollowness of the wealthy world Joe inhabits.

It is through the concept of success in *Life at the Top* that failure is conceived of in *The Vodi*. Dick Corvey's failure to obtain Lampton's social and financial gains is envisaged as the result of his weakness, illness, and inability to break away from the dream world which he creates for himself. While Joe Lampton sees life as a struggle to achieve material success, Corney is a consumptive who surrenders to his failure by attributing it to fate, a domineering power symbolized by the Vodi. The Vodi are identical evil characters led by Nelly, a huge and powerful troll-queen. In his attempt to justify his failure, while lying in a sanitorium, he relates his misfortunes to Nelly and the Vodi

because it enabled him to make sense of what had happened top him ... it explained why he was here and told him what to expect in the future. If he could only accept the idea of Nelly and the Vodi, he'd be saved ... he'd be able to accept everything, to stop fighting and stop torturing himself.(72)

Although the time of the novel covers Dick's life from the 1930s, through the 1940s and to the 1950s, Braine does not present his protagonist in any recognizable social, economic or political context. There is no clear identification of the forces subjecting Corvey to his failure, and the novel's central emphasis is the condemnation of failure. It is interesting to note that while Lampton is presented as

a strong, healthy young man, Corvey is envisaged as consumptive and weak. Braine communicates the notion that success is health and power while failure is sickness and weakness. On the other hand, Corvey's aspects of failure are seen in the light of Lampton's symptoms of success; women, money and social status. The novel ends on a false note of optimism as Corvey leaves the secure confines of the sanatorium and has a sudden and ungrounded revelation that life is a struggle he should enter into.

The Vodi has many weaknesses and fails, both thematically and structurally, to match Braine's study of success in *Room at the Top*. The plot is loosely-knit and lacks effectiveness. Flashbacks and constant shifts of focus diffuse any intensity the narrative might have achieved. Nurse Mallaton's conflict, which occupies the latter part of the narrative, distracts from Dick's story and does not appear to be relevant to his own, or contribute to his story. The fragmentary nature of the plot is most evident in the abandonment of the Vodi and Nelly midway through the novel for it becomes difficult to see what Dick is struggling against. Many critics welcomed the novel for its departure from the subject of *Room at the Top*. *The Vodi* does not depart from the subject of success, for its condemnation of individual failure is a condoning of the world of *Room at the Top* and *Life at the Top* and is a statement about success as much as a study of the mystique of failure. Braine's achievement in this novel remains limited to his realistic depiction of Yorkshire life and speech, and confined to the firm sense of milieu captured through Corvey's flashbacks of his childhood in the North.

First published in 1964 *The Jealous God* departs from the success-failure nexus of the previous novels. The working, and lower-middle classes of the industrial Yorkshire are not the focus of the book. Characters are drawn from the Irish-Catholic middle class of the region, and the mode of the novel is governed by its social-religious background. As region and class form major factors in Braine's early life and figure prominently in his early works, religion and the church were another factor that found expression in his work also. Braine came from a lower-middle-class Irish-Catholic family who came to Yorkshire during the potato famine of the 1840s. He lived his early life in the Irish-Catholic ghetto-like quarter in Bradford, and went to St. Bede's Grammar School, a Catholic school in Heaton, a Bradford suburb. This Irish-Catholic background is presented in *The*

Jealous God and in "Irish Quarter" and "A Devil for Dancing", two of six sketches written and published between 1950 and 1957 in *The New Statesman*, which express the mentality and conventions of Irish-Catholic characters drawn from Braine's own family.

The Jealous God is about thirty-year old Vincent Dungarvan, the youngest son in a north-country Catholic family, a school teacher, and still a virgin under the protective influence of his religion and mother. The novel focuses on the conflicting forces shaping his experience; religion and a future priesthood, and desire for sex and marriage. Vincent is another Lampton in the sense that the concept of his conflict is between two monolithic dogmas: flesh and bodily pleasures, and religion and the Church.

The theme of the novel is summed up in this passage:

Hail Mary, full of grace, he repeated to himself as he drove away from the sound of the bells and into Hurley Lane, the long straight road which led out of the city, out into the suburbs, the Lord is thee, blessed is the fruit of thy womb...

It was a prayer he used every day and not it had no meaning; it should have driven Clare out of his mind but instead it forced her farther in; it reminded him of womanhood, of the one organ that was specifically female, of the mystery, of that night in Battle Woods and of Clare's resentful expression as he suddenly stood up and said that it was growing late. Her face had been transformed by what could have been nothing else but disappointment...(73)

The sharp contrast this passage reveals between religious vocabulary and sexual images and desires charges the whole novel with a painful struggle for the assertion of the natural tendencies of the human self and the transcendence of the conventions imposed on this self.

Vincent's struggle is with sin, a concept planted in his mind both by the church and his mother. Brought up and encouraged to be a priest and used by his mother to fulfill desires and ambitions she wants him to achieve, he has to break both barriers. At first, he reluctantly evades confrontation lulling his frustration with the notion that "One didn't have to pick a flower in order to enjoy it"(74), to realize that "The flower could be enjoyed by picking it...."(75) His image of his future self as "Father Dungarvan, Society of Jesus, austere and withdrawn but fulfilled at last, rid of the troubles of the flesh because I shall have gone through and beyond them"(76) brings no consolation, but rather strengthens his desire to immerse himself, body and soul, in the mysterious realm of the flesh

to consummate his human nature. This longing, suppressed by the burden of sin, gives way to jealousy and disgust, evident when he sees a man and a woman in the wood, "the real animals ... the worst animals, the destroying and fouling animals."(77)

This conflict of passions leads to a painful passage to sexual awakening. Once in response to Maureen's flirtatiousness, he shockingly wanted to touch her blond hair for "she was a woman whom he could imagine undressing, going to bed, she was a woman just as Clare was a woman..."(78) He comes to terms with his sister-in-law's feminine identity in the way he realizes that Laura, when he first approaches her in the library, was "a person ... she was real..."(79) There are recurrent instances in the novel indicating Vincent's awakening to the physical aspect of feminine identity. This awakening leads to an affair with Maureen, who later gets pregnant and has a miscarriage, and with Laura, a Protestant woman he discovers to be married. The sexual episodes with both women employ a ritualistic vocabulary which is in conflict with, and alternative to, Vincent's mechanical and meaningless religious rituals ("a prayer he used everyday and now it had no meaning"). The act of 'kneeling' beside Maureen and down before Laura, Maureen's repeated question during the act of love "'Aren't you ashamed, Vincent?'" and the phrases "a kind of reverence" and "an act of homage" used to describe his physical contact with Laura, all provide a ritualistic atmosphere of fulfillment and revelation. As this entry into the mystery of the body gives way to a religious sense of sin, for this was "the actuality of sin ... he was at last in the human race"(80) and he was "not being tempted; with his eyes wide open he was rushing into sin; he had created the occasion of sin"(81), a recognition of fulfillment and an establishment of another self emerge. For now, there was "no division of his mind, no sense of sin"(82), he had at last been "rid of his identity [his "machine" identity], and with it the sense of sin"(83), and with the feeling of freedom from church, religion and the concept of sin

The door of the confessional closed behind the penitent; but ... the priest is a penitent too, we absolve each other as soldiers did on the battlefield.(84)

This conflict leads to a painful eradication of the 'religious' and the establishment of the 'human' and Vincent's cry - when he walks away from Laura upon learning of her marriage - "'It isn't me, Laura, it isn't me'"(85) is an affirmation of the painful struggle for

change. The resolution of this conflict crowns Vincent's experience and his awakening to jealousy and desire, his coming to terms with Ruth's frustration (Ruth is Laura's friend whom Vincent thinks to be a lesbian), with Maureen's desire, Robert's homosexuality, and Laura's unhappy marriage with Robert, and consummates the realization that sexual gratification is an integral element of the whole and complete human self and that the body is an essential component of the spirit. *The Jealous God*, in this sense, shares with Lawrence's novels and David Storey's *Radcliffe* a dissatisfaction with the suffering caused by the division of the body and the spirit.

Although Vincent's brothers, Ruth, and Robert have a bearing on his experience and the development of his character and conflict, one of the central and most powerfully-drawn representations in the novel is his mother, for through her character Braine succeeds in expressing the Irish-Catholic social-religious background, and materializing Vincent's conflict with the church and Catholic social conventions. Her dominance over Vincent's character since childhood is the strongest oppressive element lending strength and effectiveness to his struggle and the novel's plot as a whole. It is mostly through her character and influence on her son that Braine manages to portray the milieu he came from. Her character is foreshadowed in both "Irish Quarter" and "A Devil for Dancing" where the social-religious Irish-Catholic background is revealed. Her disapproval of Laura as a Protestant and married woman intensifies the conflict and gives it immediacy, and transcends the boundaries of her religious motives in a way strikingly reminiscent of Paul's relation to his mother in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, and has parallels with the oppressive role given to Margaret's parents in Storey's *Flight into Camden*. She persistently sharpens Vincent's conflict with his vocation and tries to force him into submission;

'You don't belong to Clare or to Laura or to any other woman. You belong to the Church, Vincent. Why do you fight against it?' (86)

Vincent's conflict with the church is part of his struggle against his mother's domination as his struggle against her is part of his conflict with the church. As this conflict intensifies, he develops a feeling "near hatred" towards her and gradually feels he is sharing the house with a stranger, the house that became "his grave, the grave above the ground... ." (87) His break away from his mother and her house becomes a symbol for his escape from the domain of the church

and the vocation of the priesthood which he tells his mother he never had and never will have. With her knowledge of his affair with Maureen, his sister-in-law, comes the collapse of her efforts to direct Vincent's life, and with it the revelation of the personal dimensions of this domination. In a last effort to assert herself, she uncovers his dead father's past, his father who "'died with a woman ... in the act of adultery, in mortal sin'"(88), unfolding her motivations to direct the course of Vincent's life towards the priesthood; to redeem, through her son, what the father and the husband has done and to eradicate her sense of shame and guilt. It is interesting to notice the language his mother uses in her attempts to exploit him as a tool for her redemption. It is a religious vocabulary mixed with a moralising material language; "'My pride and my joy, my fine clever son"(89), "'the mother who bore you in pain and suffering is asking you to do this one thing'"(90), and "'you're on her side [Laura's] already'"(91)

Unlike previous novels, the plot of *The Jealous God* progresses chronologically through five or six months of the major character's life. There are no shifts in the narrative and the focus on Vincent's conflict and choice is central. Characters are brought to life by their own motivations and conflicts. The style of the novel reflects its theme, and the dialogue is mature and realistic and corresponds to the characters and their psychological and social make-up. One example is the way Laura's situation, as a deserted wife, and her sexual and social needs create and motivate her speech and attitudes. Her plea to Vincent and her sarcasm at the expense of his Catholic principles and his suppressed desires in "'I want something hard and definite, but I want to be looked after ... You Catholics don't have any doubts, do you?'"(92), and "'Your body's ready. It's your damned conscience'"(93) reflect her need for the physical and spiritual love her marriage with Robert failed to provide her with.

The novel touches upon the notion of the continuous conflict between human nature and various imposed moralities and conventions by providing a historical connection on both personal and general levels. Apart from Vincent's conflict which forms the pivotal focus of the novel, there is a thread connecting his conflict with that of his father, and with that of Henry the Eighth who, as Vincent tries to explain in his history class, did not publish the Act of Succession to secure absolute power but to be able to make his marriage to Catherine of Aragon null and void so he could make his marriage to Anne Boleyn

valid. Braine is consciously using these personal and general threads to emphasize the continuation and persistence of human nature's struggle to assert itself against social, religious and political notions. The resolution of Vincent's conflict at the end of the novel is a statement of the affirmation and fulfillment of human needs and desires is a prerequisite to the consummation of the individual self. Although this solution is achieved through compulsory twists and incidents in the plot (the meeting between Robert and Vincent and the latter's elusive answer to Robert's question whether he slept with Laura after his return, and Robert's consequent suicide, and Laura's return to Vincent; twists that imitate the endings of romance tales), this shortcoming is redeemed because, as Lee comments, the main conflict is between Vincent and the church, and his marriage to Laura is just a consummation of his break out and not a prerequisite for it.

What characterizes Braine's early work is the provincialism that conveys the microcosmic life of Yorkshire life and reflects the ethics and style of life in the region against the morality of the age in a realistic literary style marked with details and precise descriptions. This realistic style of the Northern working-class content underlines the artistic practice of the 1950s and 1960s and made the fiction of the period available to a popular audience, an aspect partly responsible for the commercial success of this fiction. This realist style enabled regional writers to break with the literary practice of the previous generation which placed greatest emphasis on complex literary forms. Braine's early novels contribute to this rejection of this style, and gives priority to a working-class regional content expressed with economic dialogue style and a brittle language. In his view, there is no need to consider complex aesthetic issues since

there is nothing you cannot say within the framework of the straight-forward realistic novel.(94)

This linear convention reflects a concept of reality and the notion that life can be given a pattern. This is most expressively communicated in *Room at the Top* where both narrative and style reflect the culture of the period with its

bright, clean-cut functionalism, the carefully planned layout ... the automatic all-embracing, 'technological classlessness' of the times....(95)

Lee conceives of Braine's style as influenced and shaped by American literature and provincial attitudes in the way it is

free of the rather lengthy, ornate sentence structure that is considered typically British by most Americans.(96)

This style enabled him to reflect the harshness and drabness of life in the North and openly express the style of life and attitudes towards failure, success, religion and sex.

Braine's successful break with bourgeois dominant literary practice was marred by his failure to depart from, or challenge, the hegemonic ideology of the period. This is most evident in his thematic treatment in his early novels, especially in *Room at the Top* and its sequel *Life at the Top* and the location of his characters within the sphere of the dominant ideology where they have to operate handicapped by the limitations of this ideology. With the imposition of the limitations of this sphere on his character, the structures and plots of the novels emphasize the notion that individuals are the sole responsible forces in establishing the patterns of their experiences. In spite of the moral dimensions of Joe Lampton's narrative in both novels, the hero's success and his breakthrough are admired and praised as the healthy response to the mechanism and morality of British 'affluent' society. This condoning of the ethos of success is further evident in Braine's condemnation of failure in *The Vodi* where Dick Corvey is blamed as the sole cause for his failure without clearly identifying the forces he is in conflict with. The limitations of this fictional world fixed within the boundaries of the success-failure nexus, arbitrarily excludes any alternative patterns of life that depart from the political and economic structure shaping the period. As in his first three novels, Braine disapproves of failure and expresses a yearning for the wealth and status, for which Lampton was to become a symbol, in the early sketches "Nowhere" and "Portrait of a Provincial Intellectual". This philosophy runs throughout his work from the sketches of 1950-1957 to his early fiction to mark his later works with an unmistakably Conservative resentment of radical politics and tendencies. Braine's later conservatism emerged from the success ethos which motivates his early work, and, like Lampton's, a longing to join the wealthy world which is glamorously detailed in the Lampton novels.

In my analysis I have shown that Braine's early sketches and the four novels considered here are preoccupied mainly with the success-

failure nexus. I have also argued that in advocating the notion of material success and in condemning failure, Braine's work reflected the dominant ideology of 'affluence' and failed to break away from the bourgeois notion of individuality. In the next section, I will look at some of Stan Barstow's novels to analyse their relationship to the dominant ideology, to evaluate his fictional portrayals of the working class, and to point out the notions of liberty adumbrated in his work.

Section II : Stan Barstow: 'The Tangled Web'

In *A Raging Calm* (1968), Andrea Warner tells Tom Simpkins:

'People's lives are often other than they seem to be on the surface... And sometimes what's underneath and hidden is the best part of all, the part of real value.'(1)

The major concern of Barstow's fiction is the evocation of what is "'underneath and hidden'" in the individual self. His narratives are voyages of discovery through which the self strives to fulfil what is inside in its complex relationships with the debilitating force of what Richard Hoggart describes as "The Group Sense" which functions strongly among working-class people and "can express itself as a demand for conformity."(2) In the quest for individual fulfillment, a tension between two conflicting discourses emerges to structure the fictional narrative and the pattern of experience; the individual self, on the one hand, struggling to assert what is inside, and the monolithic group force, on the other hand, in its imposition of communal patterns of living on its individuals. Barstow does not portray the working-class community in fixed preconceived terms, but captures it in its constant changeability and dynamism. The individual break out of the community and its ethics is neither defined in financial terms as in Braine, nor in alienation, as in Sillitoe, or sacrificing the individual as in Storey. The notions of freedom advocated in his fiction relate to the realms of intellect and wider social experiences through which the individual self attempts to challenge and transcend the conventional social and cultural boundaries of the community. In the Vic Brown Trilogy, written between 1960 and 1976, *Ask Me Tomorrow* (1962) and *A Raging Calm*, the final emphasis is on the gratification of the individual self and the placing of real values on what is inside, "'underneath and hidden'", as the fictional experiences are oriented to undermine and transform received values and the limiting 'group sense'.

A Kind of Loving (1960) and its sequels, *The Watchers on the Shore* (1966) and *The Right True End* (1976) dramatize, by means of first-person narratives, the experiences of the Northern working-class character Victor Brown. He is seen coming to terms - the hard way - with adult life, his entrapment in the conventional confines of matrimony, and his search, as he grows older, for "something I can't bear to be without, because anything else must be in constant jeopardy."(3) The narratives, spanning for a period of twenty years,

are characterized by a laborious questioning of orthodox values and a constant search for a gratifying end of Vic's involvement with the beautiful but conventional Ingrid, his meeting with the actress Donna Pennyman in Longford, his break with his wife and Northern home town of Cressley, his success and loneliness in London, and his reunion with Donna ten years after their separation.

As his marriage to Ingrid, forced on him by his conventional community after her pregnancy, proves unsatisfactory because of financial and social pressures and unfulfilling due to his wife's shallowness and disinterest in any valuable intellectual activity, Vic realizes his entrapment and suddenly awakens to the emptiness and hollowness of a life imposed upon him "with a wife I don't particularly like, let alone love, and a chico on the way!"(4) His attempt to make the best out of his marriage and try and find "a kind of loving to carry us through"(5), for as his sister Chris tells him "'you don't *love* a person until you know him or her inside out, until you've lived with them and shared experience ... share living before you can find love'"(6), proves a failure as he gradually questions the validity of a conventional life centred around a job, a house and a family, and realizes that amidst the calm surface of married life "There's a part of me ... that never accepts, that's always holding out against a final surrender to the facts."(7)

Vic's awareness of a wider world and the "riches you might reach out and touch"(8), beyond his wife's and his community's perception, motivates his break from both his wife and his Northern town where sex is looked at as "shabby and dirty ... something you put up with because it's necessary to make the world go on"(9), and "'Culture's a bit of a dirty word... .'"(10) Barstow, through Vic's concepts of life in his working-class town, evokes the various aspects of pressure close communities and the 'group sense' imposed on individuals. The novel exposes collective ethical monoliths, the concepts of marriage, virtue and shame, the people who "'sit on your back and stop you doing what you want to do ... put pressure on you just by being there'"(11), the people who "'don't agree to differ ... crucify one another. Right's right and wrong's no man's right'"(12) This demand for conformity, where the individual self is negated by larger social and ethical sets of values, is presented in Barstow's fiction as a limiting force which the individual self has to challenge and break with before achieving any fulfillment. Nonetheless, despite its repressive atmosphere Vic's working-class community is portrayed in A

Kind of Loving with a warmth and vitality that sometimes resembles D H Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*; closeness, security, warmth and care. Surrounded by the coldness and commerciality of London, Vic later longs for "the genuine warmth in somebody's eyes, the touch of loving hands"(13), and reflects upon his visit to his sister on the comfort that "comes from all we know about each other, all we've shared" and realizes that true loneliness is "not when you can't have what you need, but when you look round and find that there's nobody, nobody at all, who needs you."(14) The dilemma that lies at the heart of these contrasting feelings, and one which almost characterizes the whole of post-war working-class fiction and is deeply rooted in Lawrence's life and writing, is in the tension between being part of this warmth and closeness and liberating one's self from the collective repressive demand for conformity which hinders any genuine individual growth and development. This dilemma is expressed in Vic's questions, as he tries to find an expression for his individual self;

where does your responsibility to other people cross with responsibility towards yourself? And how far can you sacrifice one for the sake of the other?(15)

With his awareness of a "whole world out there that I know next to nothing about and I want to see it and hear it and taste it ... to live in it"(16), Vic's determination to explore the outside world "cold and dark" as it is overcomes his readiness to conform to a fixed pattern of living. For he realizes that

How to live your life depends on knowing who you are, and who you hope to be ... Nobody knows but you. It's you who makes the decisions and lives with them.(17)

In Longford, where he takes a job in a new engineering firm, he finds a kind of freedom he lacked in his home town, and meets with Donna Pennyman, an actress in whom he finds the intellectual stimulus and the love he failed to find in his wife. As his affair with Donna proves more fulfilling, in its "completeness" and the lack of any "masturbatory fantasy in the totality of my feeling for her"(18), Vic starts to question the validity of conventional marriage and realizes that fulfillment is not necessarily achieved in an institutionalized union between "a man and a woman who are everything to each other. Voluntarily, with no resentment."(19) Barstow explores the real value of sexual gratification questioning the dominant social morality of society as a whole;

Go to bed with another woman you love and you're outside the pale; but masturbate into the body of your wife ... and you're exercising your conjugal rights, and everything is nice and respectable and normal.(20)

After Donna's departure to London to take a job there and Vic's divorce, *The Right True End* is set in London ten years after the incidents of the previous novel. Vic is relatively rich now, holding a good position as a development engineer in a North London firm after obtaining a university degree in London, travelling around the world on business trips, and leading a promiscuous life. His previous questioning of conventional morality gradually develops into an almost existential search for a meaning to his liberated life marked with a "sexual confidence [which] increased with my improvement in position and income... ." (21) He is still battling to get hold of something valuable, and end in itself, and asking:

how long do you have to live waiting for something round the corner that will make you sit up and shout, 'Yes, yes! This is it!' And what a rotten joke to reach the end of life, look back at a time, and say, 'Ah, yes! If only I'd known, that was it.' (22)

His refusal to establish a permanent relationship with any of the women he knew in London is due to his fear of "any alternative that's tempted me for longer than it's taken me to consider the hell of getting it wrong a second time." (23) Upon meeting with Donna again, with a child ten years after their encounter in Longford, he realizes that although the freedom he has been enjoying is priceless, still "it's no substitute for a fulfilling partnership" (24), something he finds in his relationship with Donna and the child he knows to be his own. As the trilogy closes with them getting together, the end to their relationship is not clearly defined, for

I know that some kind of end is a part of whatever beginning we're about to make. So then we must live as though it will never happen, until the day it does. (25)

This ending suggests that any definition of the end undermines the value and validity of discovery which remains within the boundaries of the fictional experience of exploration and growth.

Vic's experience is explored in its relation to the changes taking place during the time of the narrative, which spans between the late 1940s to the late 1960s. The changes are seen to affect both his working-class community and post-war British society as a whole. The

three novels forming the trilogy are very precisely located in their own times. Although Vic's community, in *A Kind of Loving*, is still close and conventional enough to force him into marriage with his pregnant girlfriend, it is also increasingly influenced by the new trends of the 1950s. The change that "rushes at us with alarming speed"(26), as Barstow puts it, is captured in ample references to immigration, growing affluence, the new mass market for TV and pop records, and a more liberal morality that

would eventually allow an actress called Donna Pennyman to admit openly in a newspaper interview that although she'd never married she was the mother of a nine-year-old boy who doted on her and was doted on in his turn.(27)

Barstow's criticism of the commercial consumer culture, invading all aspects of cultural life in post-war Britain, is in placing a real value on the interest some of his characters show in classical music; Vic, Albert Conroy and Van Huyten who nurtures a love for music in Vic. Like Charles Bukowski's fictional autobiographical protagonist(28), Victor Brown's interest in classical music symbolizes his rejection and resentment of the 'Hit Parade' that "'go in one ear and out the other'"(29), and the young people's "music, their fashions, their spending-power ... with huge encouragement from the catches of commerce... ."(30) Vic's growing knowledge of classical music becomes a metaphor for his voyage of discovery and the widening of his intellectual and social horizons. It becomes the symbol of his feeling that he is "part of something bigger than this minute and the latest passing fancy"(31), a feeling he could not pass to Ingrid whose interest was limited to magazines, pop music and TV quiz shows, and one which brings him together with Albert Conroy and Donna Pennyman. Throughout the trilogy, classical music and books symbolize Vic's "climb out of ignorance; from taking things for granted to a state where I could start to compare, looking for terms of reference not just in my own little world but in a wider one outside it."(32)

While Vic Brown breaks out of his community and marriage to find himself in the outside world, the characters of *A Raging Calm* are trapped in the conventions of their own community and the complexity of their relationships, as much as in the intricately woven plot which symbolizes their entrapment. Set again in the Northern town of Cressley, the novel progresses by structuring various narratives which gradually interlink to portray the "labyrinthine complexity of human relationships"(33) and the characters' struggles to free themselves

from their limiting, repressive social environment. Through the conflicting passions that give the narrative its energy and vitality, Barstow merges the public and private together and renders human activities to notions of love, loyalty, betrayal, individual needs and social conventions.

Tom Simpkins' character is central to the novel's plot and its theme, one developed through his own reflections on his suppressed childhood and adolescence and late-development delayed by his conventional, propertied "irascible, perfection-mad father who later depended upon him with an assurance that seemed cruel in contrast to earlier reiterated experiences of non-confidence."(34) His marriage to the now dead Nell gave him spiritual and physical satisfaction and a sexual confidence that developed later with his war service and authority at the Works which he took over from his father. In the process of this growth, he developed into an influential man who found gratification in a promiscuous life and the freedom from "all kinds of inhibitions, both personal and social, which had hampered him before."(35) Although his status in the town - as an alderman, ex-mayor and owner of property - situates him among the Conservatives of his town, he has a liberal mind more characterized by his humane convictions than any political convention. Like Vic, his character is a vehicle through which Barstow comments on the social, cultural and political trends of the time the novel is set in. He conceives of the modern division between body and soul as an act of politics where the gap is filled by other interests, and while "some people liked Bingo; he liked Bruckner."(36) For him, the alternative for the dreadful tally of destructive wars and human stupidity where "Man's place in the sun was still being forged in blood and death" lies in reform and questioning dominant values, and in "the presence in the world of a greater moral concern than ever before."(37) His character may be seen as a continuation and development of Vic Brown and the affinity between the two is emphasized in their knowledge of each other (Simpkins mentions Van Huyten's music shop, which is now a commercial records shop, and Vic Brown with whom he used to talk about classical music), in their political awareness which almost has an influence on their views of life, and more importantly in their search for a fulfilling life free of deceit and hypocrisy.

Simpkins is related to the town's people in an almost tribal fashion through his position and financial status through which he comes to meet Norma Moffat. The linear narrative of the novel is

interrupted to give an account, in the third and fourth chapters, of their meeting and the development of their relation over seventeen years prior to the opening of the novel's present events. As the death of the Thompson's son in Braine's *Room at the Top* enables Joe Lampton to move into Warley and occupy the dead Maurice's room, Norma's husband's debility and frequent impotence, resulting from his war service, allow Simpkins to replace him in Norma's sexual life, and later, after his death, in her social and family life as their long secret affair leads to Shirley's birth. As in the case of Vic Brown, Simpkins finds that casual affairs are no alternative to a solid partnership, one he finds in Norma who, in return for his protection and the sexual satisfaction he provides, is expected to allow him "share in some way the strength and vitality"(38) in her. Through their relationship, Barstow portrays the growth of Nick and Shirley, Norma's children, and their awakening to the adult world, an awakening Simpkins has to deal with by coming to terms with their development and understanding of his relationship with their mother. In Shirley's resentment of the situation, and Nick's growth through university life away from home and his first awareness of adult life and sexuality through Caroline and the homosexual Roger, Barstow captures the various changes in sexual and social ethics.

Barstow's interest in analysing the awakening of the youth to the complexity of adult life is strongly expressed in *Joby* (1964), a novel solely concerned with a Northern working-class protagonist's coming to terms, the painful way, with the facts of life during the summer prior to his Grammar School education. As the adult world gradually reveals itself in various aspects of illness, betrayal, war, death, sexual awareness and alienation, the events of that summer "had contracted themselves into a sharp point of loneliness and uncertainty which ripped a small tear in the protective fabric of his world."(39) While Joby retreats to the security of his home, Nick and Shirley grow as a part of Simpkins' and Norma's life and yet independent from it.

The other major narrative in the novel explores the entrapment of Philip Hart and Andrea Warner in the tangled web of their situations and their aborted attempt to liberate themselves from their arbitrary isolation. Barstow presents the individual self in conflict with repressive social conventions, and challenges orthodox notions of marriage, relationships and fulfillment. Philip is a married man whose life is torn apart by "questions of honour and loyalty, deceit and betrayal"(40), and his despair is marked with his comprehension of

the fact that the individual self's attempts to fulfil what is inside it is merely a kicking "'against myths and customs and taboos that people accept as the final word, whereas somewhere there must be a rationale that would solve it all.'"(41) He provides the novel with a rather philosophical dimension in his opinionated reflections on the historical construction of human nature that perpetuates falsity through evasion of truth and the creation of fantasy, and his analysis of notions of strength and weakness related to human behaviour;

'there is a kind of strength which, unless it's super-human, just topples over into weakness. And there's another kind of strength, an ability to act according to one's nature which, while people might deplore certain aspects of it, is seen as somehow inevitable and natural and in tune with the universe.'(42)

In the end, his relationship with Andrea is destroyed by his return to his wife and children. Andrea, on the other hand, manages to break with her conservative; religious family background inspite of the pressures to get married, something she refuses to do for its social value preferring to be "'the mistress of a man I loved than be married to somebody I didn't love.'"(43) Her reluctance to gain happiness by destroying Philip's marriage overpowers her need for the fulfillment she found in him, leaving her with the hope that the honesty and openness of their feelings towards each other "'can't be for nothing; that somehow, somewhere, there must be something for us.'"(44) What makes Barstow's questioning of conventions and values is the emphasis of his fiction on the redemptive value of the experience itself where salvation lies in the essence of the self's voyage into discovering what is inside against what is historically constructed and socially and politically perpetuated, for "we are betrayed by what is false within."(45)

By bringing together all his characters as local elections take place in the town's hall, Barstow turns a political assembly into an arena of conflicting passions where the personal and private, the hidden feelings of each character, are seen as dominant factors in shaping the life of the community rather than the external political and social conventions and loyalties which are illusions floating on the surface of the inner feelings which give life its value. This contrast forms the political thrust of Barstow's fiction as a whole, and defines the politics of his fiction for, like his protagonist Wilf Cotton, the challenge as a writer

lay in the extended narrative and the character development demanded by the novel... You wondered how much you ought to know before you began, how much should be planned and how much left to grow out of itself. The main thing you knew was to beware of plot ... But it should be the people. The people were everything.(46)

In *The Vic Brown Trilogy* and *A Raging Calm* Barstow comments on various aspects of cultural changes in post-war Britain, and refers to the phenomenon of a spreading working-class literary culture. In *The Watchers on the Shore*, actress Donna Pennyman who plays a role in Wilf Cotton's play, tells Vic Brown that "'Regional accents are in. It's what's being written'" and to be working class is "'money in the bank for an actor these days... .'"(47) The working-class writer Wilf Cotton, who features as a popular success in *The Watchers on the Shore*, is allowed to pointedly answer some of the criticisms levelled against working-class writers of the period. He explains to Vic and Conroy, upon their meeting at Donna's party, that now

'People won't take north-country working-class stuff for its novelty value any more. It's got to be good in its own right ... Some like to stick close to their material and others benefit from shaking the provinces off their backs for a bit and seeing the thing in perspective.'(48)

The success of working-class writers in the 1950s created a dilemma as this success might alienate them from their raw material. *Ask Me Tomorrow* (1962) is about Wilf Cotton's attempt to establish a name for himself in the literary world, and is where Barstow deals with questions concerning the problems, literary and social, facing the working-class writers 'on the make'.

The limitations of the working-class community are conceived of here, as in the other novels, as jeopardizing any individual fulfillment. For inspite of local people's respect and appreciation of any "achievement even in a field strange to them", Wilf finds that

the interest of the local people ... mostly embarrassed him, emphasizing to him his differences and smiting him with a self-consciousness that he was afraid might cripple his future work.(49)

This cultural limitation is envisaged on public and personal levels, for as the people of the village do not have the power to "comprehend a mind and imagination which would roam beyond the confines of the village, the pit and the home"(50), the conventionality and kindheartedness of Glynis, Wilf's girlfriend, were not the qualities

he looked for in marriage, for the "body's flare should react to the heart's, passion match passion. Sweet reason was no substitute for fire and learning."(51) Freedom from the village community and its relations becomes a prerequisite for literary success because, as Wilf tells Glynis, "'This is the kind of life I want to write about because it's the only life I know; but I've got to get away from it first.'"(52)

Moving into a larger Northern town, Wilf finds the anonymity and freedom to live his own life and indulge in his literary practice. There, he works as a wages clerk during the day and writes at nights. His affairs with the middle-aged Poppy, his landlady, and the young Marguerite symbolize two complementary necessities essential to his growth as a writer. In Poppy, he finds care and sexual satisfaction without the demands of marriage and family, and Marguerite provides him with the "intellectual stimulus", "a level of general conversation, an contact with like-minded people, that would to some extent have relieved the feeling he often had of working in complete isolation."(53)

In spite of the emphasis on the necessity of breaking out of the limiting confines of conventional community, Barstow stresses the vital connection between the working-class writer and his or her experiences and raw material. Wilf's first work, a short story broadcasted on the Northern radio, is inspired by his miner father, "a man whose life had been that of the pits for nearly forty years"(54), a man whose experiences he did not share, but knew of as a "legacy" handed down to him like others of modern generations. Barstow conceives of working-class writers as distanced, in this sense, from the working experiences they wrote about. When Wilf's father questions his knowledge of working in the mines, he finds his remark

the last dismissive resort from a man in a man's world to one who was a slightly contemptible, if necessary, appendage to the real business of earning a living.(55)

This alienation from 'traditional working-class jobs' is redeemed in the novel by Wilf's own experiences with Poppy and Marguerite; his knowledge of Poppy's problems and her horrible death at the hands of her husband, of Marguerite's past life and childhood tragedy, and of his brother's disastrous involvement with Bentley's flirtatious wife, experiences that would provide a living, raw material for his art. Wilf's determination, like Barstow's, not to leave the North and move to the South is motivated by maintaining contact with the life "I want

to write about and I don't see any point in leaving it"(56), a contact essential to what Barstow called the question of "continuity".

Barstow comments on the cultural trends of the time through his protagonist's division of writers into "'caterers'", who work according to needs of a commercial market, and "'creators'" who establish their own market motivated by their own literary talents rather than by the demands of a ready-made one. On the other hand, he refers to the commercial publishing policy, oriented towards a mass consumer market, through the rejection of Wilf's novel, at first, as its "'setting and the characters are such that they are likely to appeal to only a limited audience.'"(58) This was one of the major challenges working-class writers had to face in their relations with literary institutions.

D.H. Lawrence is frequently referred to in the novel, and is elevated as a model of the working-class man who achieved literary recognition. One could easily envisage the affinity between Barstow's fiction and the work of Lawrence going beyond the latter's being a model of achievement for Barstow's Wilf Cotton. The similarity between both novelists lies in the way they tackled the political issues of their times by exploring the social politics that determined individual relationships, and through their conception of physical and spiritual fulfillment as a means of transforming both society and political structures. Their characters are firmly placed within a political framework they are aware of, one that has a strong influence on their psychological make-up and their conception of their own lives. Vic Brown conceives of the year 1963, one full with political and economic changes, as a time when for him "the choice was between climbing and sinking"(59), and Tom Simpkins

had to admit the dreadful tally: two world wars
... Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus,
Suez, Hungary, the Congo, Vietnam ... Man's
place in the sun was still being forged in blood
and death ... In an age of doubt and anxiety
wasn't the other side of the coin a healthy
questioning of values and standards and an urge
towards reform?(60)

Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1960) opens in a strikingly similar fashion:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse
to take it tragically. The cataclysm has
happened, we are among the ruins, we start to
build up new habits, we have new little hopes
... We've got to live, no matter how many skies
have fallen.

This was more or less Constance Chatterley's position. The war had brought the roof down over her head. And she had realized that one must live and learn.(61)

In both Barstow's and Lawrence's fictions, the tragic character of the times is redeemed through an artistic and moral emphasis on individual relationships and the attempt to bridge the gap between body and soul, where stories come "'out of the people and not the reverse'"(62) and "Passions spin the plot".(63)

Another characteristic common to Barstow's and Lawrence's fictions is the warmth and humanity marking the portrayal of the working-class community in Barstow's *A Kind of Loving* and Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, and the tension between the vitality of the protective, assuring working-class milieu and the urgency to break away from it in order to find an individual expression for the self (compare *Ask Me Tomorrow* with *Sons and Lovers*, for instance). One of the distinguishing aspects of Barstow's fiction is the manner in which the working-class community is captured in its closeness, morality and changeability. Nowhere in post-war working-class fiction is the working-class community portrayed in the totality of its feelings and mode of existence as it is in Barstow's fiction; its conventional ethics, its changing styles of life, its political allegiances, and its political and radical prejudice and tolerance. Barstow's novels are set in strongly-defined places and times, and one gets the feeling that Cressley community with its local people and characters is a living human unit throbbing with life as characters and incidents in one novel became an integral part of the life depicted in another. Examples are ample; Wilf Cotton features in *Ask Me Tomorrow* on his way towards independence and literary acceptance, and we meet him in *The Watchers on the Shore* already a popular success married to Marguerite whom he meets in the former novel; and Van Huyten's record shop in the Trilogy is mentioned in *A Raging Calm* as Simpkins remembers his visits to the shop and conversations with Vic about classical music. This thread does not only provide continuity and concreteness to Barstow's Cressley community, but also enables him to portray the political, economic and cultural changes structuring and restructuring this community's life amidst the various changes sweeping over Britain in the years that followed the war. Barstow gets his artistic stimulus from a particular social structure with deep roots, a stimulus he finds vital to the "continuity" of his fiction and vision, and one which has motivated his clinging to his native Yorkshire.

I have examined in this section the ways in which Barstow's characters aspire for fulfilling patterns of living and experience, and the way they are torn between class politics and de-classing. I have also shown how the text and the literary practice are pulled apart from each side, where particular forms of experience in terms of class are opposed to a discourse that removes it from a class context to a universal one. The question of the universality of experience is a political discourse, and by universalizing experiences the work is suggesting the absence of differences and social divisions and subsequently leaving them where they are. Although Barstow's work does not intend to embrace this discourse, there is a recognizable tension between class-based discourse and a universal one in the novels' emphasis on individual relationships. I will now go on to consider David Storey's work, and assess the thematic and structural politics of his work in order to analyse its exposition of the individual and class society.

Section III : David Storey: "Bringing the Pieces Together"

In "Journey Through a Tunnel" (1963), David Storey evokes the concept and ethics that formed his vision of working-class life, one that has had a tremendous impact on the politics of his writing. The West Riding culture, he writes, with its concern with "very simple, practical things" was constructed in a "profound and ironical puritan distrust of the isolated and solitary man"(1), and

In the working class, and in the mining community in particular in which I lived, the code was amended in this way: that physical work is good, and mental work is evil. Invariably mental work implied any activity conducted from a sitting position.(2)

Storey left the North to study art at the Slade in London to become an artist, a decision he made "almost as a political act, as a recoil against everything I was being directed towards"(3), and a determination to extricate himself from a society in which he felt "a total spiritual outcast", a society which is "ignorant, vicious and ferocious."(4) The inevitable outcome was a

huge emotional problem of being a muscled giant painting bloody pictures with a father who worked down the pit and crawled home prostrated. It seemed absolutely ridiculous.(5)

Out of "feelings of guilt and inadequacy"(6) Storey signed on as a professional rugby league player where he used to leave London every Friday evening to go to Wakefield to play football to make money and finance his studies, and to do something "useful" because art was regarded in his working-class community as "useless". With the demand to be effective in both, "I went on painting pictures, but with increasing despair, obsessed with guilt at the one thing and by the futility of the other."(7) Playing rugby in the North and studying art in the South, Yorkshire and London took on gender, became male and female. "The northern terminus of that journey", Storey writes,

became associated with a masculine temperament; and when I came to write about its southern counterpart - the intuitive, poetic and perhaps precious world to which I felt I had escaped - I immediately associated it with femininity, and a woman's sensibility and responses.(8)

This feeling of the self being torn apart, with no hope of reconciliation, is strongly reflected in Storey's work where his characters, both in novels and plays, prove to fit, in one way or

another, into his own suggested dichotomy; physical and spiritual (or mental), body and soul, exterior and interior, masculine and feminine. The feelings of being torn apart are as strong at the close of *Saville* (1976) as they had been sixteen years earlier in *Flight into Camden* (1960). *This Sporting Life* (1960) and *Radcliffe* (1963) are among four novels particularly planned to express these feelings. Both *Pasmore* (written in 1964 and not published till 1972), the fourth in the planned sequence, and *Saville*, along with *A Temporary Life* (1973) present men of vision and integrity finding themselves cast out on the periphery of a society they fail to become part of after alienating themselves from their repressive communities. *Saville*, a novel that invited frequent comparisons with Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, relates the early life of a working-class boy whose growing up and education in the 1940s and 1950s lead to a destructive conflict and an unresolved tension and self-divisions similar to the ones which forged Storey's life, although the author rigorously effaces autobiographical elements in the workings of imaginative creation. Like Storey himself, *Saville* - like Margaret, Pasmore and Freestone - escapes from his mining village to the south to preserve his vital self. Storey's characters are always trying to reconcile between the bonds and divisions that tear them cruelly.

In an interview in 1963, Storey explains that he planned a sequence of novels to come to terms with the conflicting forces tearing him apart, and to try and reintegrate himself. He states:

In the first I tried to isolate and come to terms with the physical side in the footballer Machin. In *Flight into Camden* I isolated the other half, the spiritual, interior and - and I conceived it - feminine part of my nature by writing a first-person narrative in which the narrator is a woman. In *Radcliffe* I bring the two halves face to face embodied in two separate characters, and then in the fourth, the key work ... I am trying to reconcile them into one person: the conflict moves inside, and is fought out in one man's brain.(9)

This Sporting Life, the first in this sequence, is the story of a tortured love between two different people, the footballer Arthur Machin and his middle-aged, widowed landlady, Mrs Hammond. Both are self-destructive as the one indulges in pure physical activity as a means for success, while the other seeks self-protection through spiritual withdrawal. As both cannot live with each other, nor can they live without each other, their relationship proves to be a kind

of "a classic encounter between the irresistible force and the immovable object."(10)

Machin is motivated by his ambition to achieve an identity for himself through rugby stardom to keep his head "above the general level of crap... ."(11) He refuses to be compromised and tries to use society as a means of achieving his goal. His tragedy is caused by the power and vigour of his ambitions. He was, as Storey put it,

insisting on a larger view of life in the evangelical sense of having a vision and wanting people to come to it. He felt he could transcend the circumstances into which he'd been born and the circumstances into which Mrs Hammond had been born.(12)

Machin does all he can to make Mrs Hammond care for him and confess to this care and love, but though she gives herself physically she refuses to admit any emotional involvement insisting on the preservation of her love for her dead husband whose boots symbolically stand on the hearth shiny and ready for use. She has a great sense of guilt towards her husband, who she feels she "'hadn't made ... feel that he belongs'"(13), and a great fear of freedom, symbolized in the dim confines of her house. The more Arthur tries to break through her reserve, the more she is frightened and reluctant to open up, a stress that kills her in the end. Although Machin seems dominated by his body, for the satisfaction and vividness it provides, he is capable of emotions and self-analysis. It is the impossibility of Mrs Hammond that prevents him from expressing his feelings, an impossibility he finds begging for more attempts, and inviting more effort. Machin comes to realize that her aim is "making herself as small, as negligible as possible. So small that she didn't exist"(19), that she is dead, torn apart between wanting him and her fear of committing herself, "so she just went on pushing me off, hurting herself as much as me, and building up a fire and pain between us that neither of us knew how to handle."(15)

This tension is central to the novel as the connection between Machin's emotional life and his professional footballing is vital to the development of his character. Mrs Hammond's "aggressive sort of indifference roused in me a kind of anger, a savageness, that suited the game very well."(16) This tension has its impact on Mrs Hammond's life, too, as Machin is looked at with contempt, a menace to her body and mind, one she would decline into a death-like passivity without; "'You tear about the house like a madman ... You're always looking at

your body in the mirror ... You just bluster about. Anybody who gets in your way - you just knock them down. Anybody who's stopped being useful - you just throw them over on one side.'"(17) As Machin's growing ambition and his constant attempts to break through her reserve weigh heavily on her her last resort of escape is death, caused both by an "'exceptionally low morale'"(18) and the loss of the will to live during the year of their separation.

Arthur tries to preserve his vital self, and rise above his society through the fame and financial comfort of rugby stardom, but as Storey wrote in his introduction to the novel, "the society that Machin knows seeks to use people rather than nourish them."(19) He is still a commodity selling his labour power both at work as an engineering worker and on the field as a rugby player, this is in addition to his failure to make any sense out of his relationship with Mrs Hammond. The major thrust of the novel lies in its depiction of the various pressures that subject individuals to constant expropriation and strip off their emotions. Toiling at the lathe, Machin, like Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), soon finds his actions becoming automatic reducing him, both as a worker and a human being, to an extension of the factory's machinery (hence the name, Machin). The body and its pleasures provide a refuge from the monotony of work in a class-ridden society. Sports provides Machin with a vitality essential to the preservation of his dignity where the team's collective endeavours release alienation and frustration, and the pain involved in personal relationships. But Machin soon realizes that professional football, supposed to be a kind of play, is turned into a kind of expropriatory work by the social establishment he and other players are alienated from. It ceases to be satisfactory; "I wanted a bit more than a wave. I wanted to have something there for good: I wasn't going to be a footballer forever."(20) He finds himself gradually degenerating into a performing animal;

I was an ape. Big, awe-inspiring, something interesting to see perform. No feelings, It'd always helped to have no feelings. So I had no feelings. I was paid not to have feelings. It paid me to have none.(21)

Machin is repeatedly described as "big", a physical quality associated with an equally sizable ego; "'it makes you feel good'", Mrs Hammond tells him, "'it makes you feel big - you know how you like to feel big.'"(23) On the other hand, Machin himself finds satisfaction,

though temporarily, in his violence on the field, one that provides an outlet for emotions that cannot be expressed either at work or at home. This is in addition to the participation in a collective endeavour in which Machin finds an alternative reality into which everyday anxieties cannot intrude.

Rugby is presented in the novel as a business where managers and owners use the players to their own ends. Before he has even signed his contract, Machin is told he is now "property of the City"(23), and soon remarks that "they bought and sold players"(24) like any other commodity, and realizes that he has been reduced to an animal whose performance produces financial profit for his owners. The dehumanization on the playing field, by both owners and spectators alike, matches that at the factory lathe. Arthur's attempts to express more tender emotions cause much of the pain in his life. The pain he faces with Mrs Hammond is as acute as the one he feels on the playing field. Ironically, it is the same personal traits which make him a successful rugby player which hinder his relationship with Mrs Hammond; violence, aggression, and a determination to destroy whoever stands in his way to success. This is the destructive division that characterizes Machin; his genuine attempt, on the one hand, to save Mrs Hammond and introduce her to a richer, larger life, and his irresistible desire to destroy and dominate, on the other hand.

This Sporting Life has genuine affinities with the 1950s' 'angry' fiction; its tough Northern setting is similar to that depicted in Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and Machin both shows some aspects of Arthur Seaton's domineering behaviour, and shares some of the material ambition of Braine's Joe Lampton. He is both resentful of, and attracted to, the new affluence and its symbols; TV, cars, fur coats, etc. But unlike Sillitoe's and Braine's novels, *This Sporting Life* is more perplexing and subtle and its elusive first-person narrative reveals a mind more complex and human than that of the conventional provincial angry young man. Unlike Seaton, Machin's sensitivity and humanity, evident in his narrative, enable him to penetrate into other people's minds and sympathize with them. Apart from his feelings for Mrs Hammond, he exhibits a great understanding and sympathy towards fellow players like Frank and Maurice, Johnson, and Mr Weaver. His limitation lies in a failure to acknowledge his emotional nature or communicate its character to others, so it consequently reveals itself in the intense feelings and poetic language of the narrative. His loss of feeling is redeemed in the

novel's narrative in the same way as Storey's self-divisions found expression, and are redeemed, though not solved, in literary practice. Although angered and expropriated, Machin transcends his subjection to his body via the narrative language that implies feelings and emotions free of any repressive control. His narrative language is so powerfully emotive that it is difficult to indicate where rhetoric and metaphor start and end. I will, nonetheless, refer to a few examples to illustrate the way the narrative language of the novel is transformed into a metaphorical device to signify the vitality and humanness of Storey's hero. Arthur is able to distance himself at times and see things as an outsider at the very time he is at the heart of them. This is most evident in the way he conceives of the game, players and spectators. "The players", he says, "ran around in groups small and unreal beneath the half empty terraces; insects released in a space... leaving us in the shell of the stands."(25) He is able to distance himself from the scene and, at the same time, see the futility of the whole thing. In the same way, Machin reveals nobility of mind and feeling in the manner he perceives of, and expresses his feelings towards, other characters. Johnson and Weaver, after they cease to be useful, are "withered limbs of my ambition"(26), and when Johnson rushes to see him with excitement after his first match, he sees that "the light showed up his small anxious face, an irritated mask in the darkness"(27), an image that throws light both on Johnson's psychological make-up and his exclusion in the background of Arthur's success and glory. When Mrs Hammond argues with him about his hanger-on Johnson, he remarks: "She hung the cups on their respective hooks in the cupboard as if her argument fell into place in the same way"(28), an expression that provokes Mrs Hammond's aloofness and indifference even at the exact moment of involvement, a quality central to her character in the novel, and although he sees her face "screwed up like a dried weed"(29) during her illness, he still makes a final effort to distil some kind of life out of her dying body in the hospital bed; "The vein pumped and pushed like a wire in her wrist, and the struggle went on in her throat - strings tugging her body to a remembrance of life."(30) The most emotive language and metaphorically expressive images in the narrative are those used by Machin to convey his own feelings and emotions. Expressions like a shoulder came up to my jaw and "rammed my teeth together with a force that stunned me to blackness"(31), "the ground continually surged up to absorb me"(32), "the air dropped down my

throat like lumps of filed lead"(33), and, when he finds himself touching the back of his mother's thigh imagining her to be Mrs Hammond, "She knew what it was. I split open and bled"(34), all reveal intense inner emotions charged with a humanity which is in sharp contrast to the persistingly recurrent animal imagery in the novel.

While Arthur externalizes the forces battling against him, he conjures up the impact of external forces in emotional and spiritual terms rather than in physical ones. Unlike Seaton who makes the reader feel unwelcome to see beyond his physical and exterior actions, Machin seems to "split open" to reveal emotions and feelings that symbolize his resistance of a total surrender to the social forces around him. It is significant, in this context, that the novel ends in the changing room rather than on the playing field itself, for the latter is the site of the devalued commercial ritual the game has become. The novel's closing on the purgatorial collective gathering of the team in the changing room does not negate the grief Machin feels, but it is the final structural device asserting a kind of life and meaning suppressed in the outside world.

Finally, the novel challenges the same physical, masculine world it presents as dominant both in the world of professional rugby and outside it. The homosexual undertones in the relationship between Machin and Maurice are evocative of sentiments and feelings that transcend the code of the Northern, tough, masculine and purely physical atmosphere. This is expressed both in Machin's voiced - in the narrative - fascination with Maurice's physique, and in the rather intimate physical encounter of both players off the playing field. Their rolling together down the hill "pulling each other up, pushing each other down, holding together to keep upright, fighting and making noises" and climbing the hill "with our hands wrapped round each other"(35), and their fight in the water in Scarborough, "When I caught him we quickly became intense. And Frank, seeing we were seriously concerned with drowning each other, brought the boat over and lifted up the oar ... I strengthened my hold on Maurice, and the next thing I knew something had crashed around my shoulders and numbed my arms ... He [Maurice] pulled the bag of muscles on board, then drifted over to me and lifted me under the arms ... We lay breathless on the bottom"(36), these intense encounters are described in a language so emotive and far from a mere account of physical encounter, one that invites comparison with the wrestling scene between Gerald

and Birkin in Lawrence's *Women in Love* and E M Forster's novel *Maurice* (one might see the name Maurice in Storey's novel as allusive of Forster's novel!). There is another element of sexual ambiguity in the novel directly relevant only to *Radcliffe* among Storey's works. Connections could be easily detected between Mr Weamer, one of the club owners, and Radcliffe's uncle Austin who develops an obsession with the pub entertainer Blakeley, and between Johnson, Arthur's hanger-on, and Blakeley's hopeless passion for Tolson. The narrative of *This Sporting Life* seems to be pulling in various directions, both thematically and structurally, against the world it presents in an attempt to negate it, or at least resist it in the same way Margaret's narrative in *Flight into Camden* constructs a valuable experience defiant of the protagonist's final sacrifice.

The feelings of being torn and unresolved which characterize Machin's experiences are central to Storey's second novel, *Flight into Camden* where Margaret tries and fails to escape from her conventional life in a Yorkshire mining village and her close relationship with her parents whose dependence and emotional blackmail bring her back as "the sacrificial goat brought back to the alter to be bled"(37), as Storey puts it. Conflict between children attempting to make their own lives and censorious, intolerant parents, greedy for attention, duty and obedience on the part of their children is a theme expressed in abundance in Storey's works, but most prominently in *Pasmore* and the plays *In Celebration* and *The Farm*, and is central to *Flight into Camden*.

Writing the novel from a woman's point of view, Storey states, was something

I felt I could identify with, writing as a woman and seeing society as an oppressive system which denied every kind of feeling and ambition she might have had. I felt it was my own experience, and it was true of what I felt was the feminine experience of the time.(38)

In identifying with the feminine, Storey manages both to explore the structures of power subjecting women to subservience in a patriarchal, conventional working-class society, and metaphorically to express the repression of the spiritual, artistic, feminine side of his character in his mining community with its physical, mundane, masculine qualities. What characterizes Margaret's narrative is an acute feminine sensitivity to people, emotions and things, and an awareness of the mechanism of emotional and social manipulation of the feminine,

mostly in the confines of her family. The pressures of her family are expressed in a language and feelings torn between frustration and resentment, and loyalty and love. Margaret's feelings towards her father are symbolic and expressive of this tension and irresolution. At home, he is sensed "as if his feelings burnt like a furnace in the next room"(39), and his aggression is felt in his "miner's indifference to the physical, a savage complacency, that turned his silent reproach on me with a long association of childhood meanings."(40) Her most intense feelings of guilt and love are revealed in the scene where she meets her father at the pit, coming

across the harsh, dirty yard of men, a tiny figure against the inanimate scale of the workings... His hard-worked, nugget-like shape made me helpless and monstrous. He'd been hiding this from me all my life: his work and his fear of it. ...I imagined my father moving through the earth below me... Behind me was a great deadness, as if I'd only been grasping his shadow.(41)

Margaret's sense of guilt at her father's conditions of work is central to Storey's life and art. Like Pasmore feeling the blackness of the pit following him to London, Margaret feels, on the way to London with Howarth, as if being "chased the whole of the journey."(48) Similar to Paul's encounter with his miner father at the pit in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Margaret's meeting with her father signifies her total exclusion from his world; masculine, dark and dismissive of both women and children. Her inability to be part of this world or come to terms with it is reflected in her despair at the distance separating her from him, "I longed for him. I wanted him. I wanted him to talk to me, and to laugh and to show his rough affection. He turned his look away quickly"(43), and her feeling of guilt and self-reproach for causing his unhappiness, "I would have bled rather than hurt him, rather than have him condemn me."(44) In the same manner, her mother

Like all experienced housewives ... learnt how to humiliate or make guilty any one of her family by the direction and intensity of her work. She exhausted herself in order to reproach me.(45)

Storey shows the blackmail of working-class parents in emotional terms, subtle and engendered in passive, unexpressed pain rather than direct physical or verbal reproach and exploitation. Like Mrs Hammond's aggressive indifference and indulgence in domestic work

intensifies Machin's anger and resentment, Margaret's parents' aggressive, silent suffering has a powerful impact on her conflicting feelings and the tone of her narrative where manipulation takes a dark, introverted form that proves more binding and repressive.

Like the more demonic Tolson in *Radcliffe*, Michael, Margaret's brother, is an embodiment of the physical and masculine that aggressively seeks spiritual things by attacking others who embody the 'soul', hence his aggression towards Margaret, and his attack on Howarth whom he dismissively conceives of as an "artist". Michael represents the aggressive masculine aspect of patriarchal working-class society, derisive of sentiments and femininity and insistent on the subservience of women. His hypocrisy and aggression manifest themselves in his responsibility for the interruption of Margaret's education, derision of Howarth, his physical violence to take Margaret back home after her escape to live with Howarth in Camden, and his marriage to Gwen, a woman who embodies, as Margaret conceives of it,

Everything he had reproached and derided in me... My femininity, my original wish for education, my domesticity, my concern with my clothes and appearance: he had ridiculed these in his youth, then more subtly and implicitly in his maturity; only to resurrect them in Gwen. ... He seemed to have produced her at my own expense, as if her appearance were a direct result of my defeat.(46)

In her attempt to escape, Margaret takes to Howarth who she wants to be the 'body' but who proves to be 'soul' too. He is rapidly revealed not as the balanced, decisive sort of character Margaret has first supposed, but as another victim who, she feels, was as oppressed as she was, and who in the end "reverts to the masculine system." (47) Mental and emotional breakdown is an obsessive theme in Stacey's work. Like Pasmore and Middleton, Howarth's flight is a neurotic one, a way of avoiding breakdown for awhile. He can not separate himself from his former life, his wife and children, and he can not begin anew life. Storey often works with psychological disruption, and Pasmore, Howarth and Middleton are clearly going through a neurotic withdrawal from life, rather than making a meaningful and purposeful change; their flights become symptoms of their sickness. As Taylor writes, Storey's 'escapes'

never seem to be strong and decisive enough to take their fate into their own hands, for good or ill, or to make their own decisions confidently or carry them through.(48)

Howarth's weakness is gradually revealed, and Margaret recognizes that his loneliness has an element of "destructiveness" in it, and it was "the uselessness that excited him"(49), a uselessness symbolized in his fascination with, and entry into a wet, dark and disintegrating mine when they are in the country together. There are constant references to the crowd uniting Margaret and Howarth together; Howarth "seemed to accept it: that the crowd had united us"(50), and later he leaves and is "soon swallowed up in the crowd."(51) This signifies his subjection to collective external forces outside himself, and his inability to make sense of his life on his own, something that characterizes his character and the confusion in Camden where he escapes with Margaret. His weakness manifests itself to Margaret in his escape from problems and situations he finds difficult to handle;

I was afraid he had walked out on his marriage the same way... He walked away from things. I began to dread that his weakness was in relying on others and on his technique to escape to solve anything that grew unbearable... He had only a vast emptiness to turn to ... he had run back and I had shared his lust for his freedom.(52)

With Margaret's success in London and her growing confidence, liberty, independence and a job provide, on the one hand, and her family pressures to go home, Howarth grows more desperate and gradually sinks in bitterness, despair and cynicism symbolized in a growing inwardness and self-destruction that make him feel "'I'm only a figment of my own imagination.'"(53) For Margaret, "the process of tearing myself away" had already started with her rejection of her family, and identification with Howarth and an independent life, and her choice of Howarth leads to her defeat and sacrifice at the end of the novel. Her tragedy lies in her dependence on another victim of society, who deserts her, as she goes back for a visit, and reverts to the same system that victimized both of them, through his affirmation of Michael's logic and his return to his wife. Although Margaret's return home is a defeat, and she feels "betrayed" being among the same people she rejected and escaped from, her flight has transformed her into a different person from the one she was at the outset of the narrative. Her feelings that "There was so much between us now, dividing us; and it was solid"(55), and that "as if Howarth had been ripped away from within me"(56), confirm once again that both her experience and narrative prove redemptive of her aborted attempt to escape. The notion that Howarth is ripped from within her may be seen

as metaphorical of her liberation from her earlier subjection to her conventional repressive society, for Howarth is the symbol of this subjection and victimization. As Machin's narrative ends up in the positive collective atmosphere of the changing room in *This Sporting Life*, Margaret's alienation from her family, though mentally and emotionally, at the end of the novel carries a sense of independence and self-assertion, as much as isolation. Her aloofness and sinking in her own thoughts and feelings, and her awakening at the tea invitation when her family is gathered together, give the impression that her flight might have been mental rather than physical.

In both *This Sporting Life* and *Flight into Camden* Storey's approach to the self-divisions of his characters is traditional in the sense that both novels trace rather clear trains of demeanour and almost follow coherent patterns of experience. *Radcliffe* starts a vein of writing that characterizes both *Pasmore* and *A Temporary Life*, and is later broken by *Saville*. Although the narrative remains graphic, episodic transitions and characters' behaviour seem to be motivated by impulses rooted in territories hidden from the reader's sight. Storey's vision is at its most extreme and obscure in *Radcliffe* as the opposed polarities explored in the previous novels (physical/ masculine vs. spiritual/feminine) are taken to their extremes where the mental, spiritual, artistic, feminine is conceived in connection with the submissive, homosexual, upper-class Leonard Radcliffe, and the physical, earthy, working, masculine in connection with the dominant, heterosexual, working-class Victor Tolson. In the encounter between these oppositional forces, seen in isolation in the previous two novels, is expressed in the destructiveness their division and conflict aggravates. Stevenson is right to note that although Leonard's struggle with Tolson is "partly connected to the renewed class-consciousness of the fifties", the novel, however, "goes beyond the social issue of class."(57)

The novel establishes Leonard and Tolson as embodying qualities in total contrast to each other. Since their childhood at school together, Radcliffe is described as "small ... pale ... [with an] expression of condolence"(58) and an "unusual ... erratic intelligence"(59), and Tolson as having a "muscular figure ... set in an instinctively aggressive pose"(60) characterized by "strength and agility ... cool ferocity"(61) and "a physical assurance."(62) The development of their characters, their homosexual relationship, and their encounters are punctuated with these oppositional polarities

throughout the whole novel. Radcliffe does not belong to the working-class mining family often encountered in Storey's novels, but to a kind of decayed, rather aristocratic family symbolized by The Place, the family house, and its relation to the industrial town surrounding it. Nor does Tolson have the familiar background, for all we know about him is that his father had been killed in the Second World War. Radcliffe symbolizes the 'spirit' in his passive nature, slightness of physique, his inwardness and his concept of people and things as "states of feeling and association"(63), and the references to him as a "reluctant Messiah" and the "divine idiot". Tolson, on the other hand, represents the body with his aggressive physicality and violence and his will to dominate. It is in their encounters as 'body' and 'spirit' that Storey explores the destructiveness and tragedy of self-divisions, and transcends their individual conflict to touch upon more general historical issues that formed these divisions.

It is through Tolson that Radcliffe comes to terms with reality and the physical, and it is through his "sudden and violent intrusion that he learnt to identify feelings with people... ." (64) In spite of his attraction to him and need of his physical assurance, evident in his homosexual relationship with Tolson, Tolson's physical strength and his violent domination generate in Leonard a "kind of frustration, a scarcely suppressed antagonism which resulted in sudden and irrational bursts of violence." (65) Leonard's need of Tolson as "'the only real touch I have on things'" (66), and his search for something beyond physical satisfaction, something "'almost communal and personal'", "'huge and absolute ... an ideal ... an order for things'" (67), drive him to the conviction that in this search and need, "'Either to be loved or to be destroyed.'" (68) On the other hand, it is the impossibility of Tolson, his violence and spiritlessness that necessitate destruction, for as the pub entertainer Blakeley who is desparately in love with Tolson himself tells Leonard, Tolson's destructiveness lies in his intuitive will to dominate and suppress, his lust for power to possess people with a spirit, and

'it's *spiritual* things Tolson seeks to possess most of all. Things he can't acquire through his own temperament. He's bound to attack, to *consume* people in whom he recognizes some sort of spiritual quality. And naturally, they're the ones who are most vulnerable to his physical sort of energy.' (69)

Tolson is seen in this light by Blakeley, Leonard and Kathleen - Blakeley's daughter from whom Blakeley has children, and who conceives of both Leonard and Blakeley as victims of Tolson's overpowering domination and destructiveness. Leonard's growing frustration is aggravated by Blakeley, who tries to distance him from Tolson to have him for himself by constantly evoking Tolson's destructive working-class qualities, and by Tolson's violence and his affairs with the girl at the camp site and Elizabeth, Leonard's sister who later gets pregnant from Tolson. After various violent encounters between Leonard and Tolson, Leonard kills Tolson with a hammer in his house. The destructive circle is complete with Blakeley's killing of his family and himself, and Leonard's mental disintegration and death at the end of the novel.

Storey seems to be evoking historical structures of European society to account for the division between the body and the spirit, and explore the destructiveness their conflict and irreconciliation make inevitable. This is achieved through the novel's analysis of the impact industrialisation has had on European society, and the role of religion in strengthening these divisions and perpetuating them. The Radcliffe's house and their history and their relationship to the industrial town engulfing the Place is one of the major symbols in the book. The novel is characterized by darkly visionary passages, especially those situated in the old house whose Gothic decor insists on some unstable heritage. Significantly, most of the violent encounters between Leonard and Tolson take place either in the old house or in the dark, Gothic, family church. There are frequent references to the place being affected by the gradual industrial domination. This domination is symbolized by the decaying structure of the Place, and the crashes shaking the entire structure of the house caused by "the construction of the railway tunnel and later by the mining in the area." (70) Motifs of decay run through the whole novel, and Leonard is constantly haunted by images of insects floating around the place. The industrial town encroaching all around the place takes over, in the final page of the book, so completely that even the site where the house stood is obliterated;

When the workmen came, tractors tore off effortlessly at the old stonework. Steel hawsers were clamped round the walls and pillars, and within a few days the building that, in its older parts, had stood for nearly five hundred years was levelled to the ground.

The church too was demolished, its foundations pronounced to be dangerous from subsidence due the mining beneath... .(70)

This rather ritualistic destruction of the place, and the gradual appearance of a housing estate on its obliterated site, signify the death of an era, and a style of life and values.

These changes are metaphorically reflected in the style of the novel's narrative. Pages seem to flood straight up from the subconscious symbolized in the novel by the railway tunnel that passes under the family's Jacobean house and which shakes its foundations. On the other hand, there is a clear affinity between the house and Leonard, as the decaying house becomes a metaphor for his disintegrating mind. At various moments of intense feelings, Leonard feels the place as an extension of his own mind;

His habitation of the Place was like his habitation of his own brain, its cellular structure disposed around him as the endless ramifications of his thoughts. The identity of the building itself, its size and the scale of its architecture, its sense of duration, seemed to be the exact image of his own mind.(71)

As the condition of the Place reflects the mood of the novel's narrative, the rather confused and erratic prose of the narrative seems to be a reflection of Leonard's own disintegrating mind. These connections manifest themselves in the sudden, rather unaccountable, behaviour of some characters. One example is the extreme episode in which Tolson assaults Radcliffe in the church, and the symbolic, almost nightmarish appearance of Elizabeth and Blakeley which adds to the complexity and confusion of the scene as a whole;

Suddenly he grasped Leonard's wrist and, as Leonard cried out, covered his mouth with his own. The whole of Tolson's body seemed centred on the wrist, bowed, stooping towards it as his fingers forced open the skin. For a moment he withdrew, listening to Leonard's cry. Then, curving his body more leniently, he enclosed Leonard fully, pulling him between his thighs and locking him securely. Together, with Leonard's smothered cries, they swayed hip to hip, swung to and fro like a huge and single pendulum, their mouths pressed against each other's...

Tolson paused. He tightened his grip. Between his lips came a fresh suffusion of cries. He gazed into Leonard's face: mouth, eyes, nose, head were flung back in a shriek of pain and, driving home his thumb and finger

against the pierced wrist, he tenderly covered with kisses the screaming face.(72)

The mysterious and obscure character of the novel, evident in encounters and feelings similar to those in the above passage, makes *Radcliffe* Storey's most powerful and disturbing novel, and, as Taylor wrote, a lot of its power

comes from the sense we have of not quite grasping what it is about, and our feeling that the author does not either: that it represents an almost uncontrollable boiling up of violent emotions which are shaped and forged ... on the anvil of art.(73)

The relevance of industrialism and the division it created between the body and the mind, to the conflict in the novel is evident in the physical, destructive dominance of Tolson and the overpowering invasion of the industrial town of the Place at the end of the book; hence Blakeley's frequent remarks to Leonard about the working classes - who are the product of industrialism - and Tolson's mining background;

'I've had enough of the working man, the ordinary man and his shit-stained mind. I want a king, I want dignity and authority ... and *certainty*. Because without it it's the death of all extremes, and it's only at the extremes that man is finest and noblest of all.'(74)

Leonard himself associates Tolson with the same concept. He tells his father:

'You don't know how ugly and spiritless he is... Working men are the most thoughtless and lifeless people that have ever lived. And not because they are workmen, but because of what they are themselves ... Caterpillars.'(75)

Leonard's torment and the disintegration of his mind spring from his hopeless effort to bring the mind and the body together through his relationship with Tolson, to merge himself with him as an inseparable unit that acts harmoniously in response to its component parts without one dominating the other. He tells Blakeley, who is tortured by self-doubt and self-divisions;

'just think what if this *separate thing* were in one man, and the body, the acting part in another? What if these two qualities were typified ideally in two separate men? Then, just imagine ... just imagine the unholy encounter of two such people!'(76)

Like Storey, Lawrence advocates this unity between the 'body' and the 'soul', conceived of in terms of the 'male' and the 'female'. But while Storey's concept is one of harmony and balance, Lawrence's is one based on male domination and supremacy. The other historical force the novel analyses as responsible for these divisions is Christianity. Leonard's conversation with the Provost about Christ throws light on the way Christianity deepened these divisions through separating Christ's body from his soul;

'What a trivial thing you've made of Christ. You've cut his body away from his soul, and condemned us to live with the body and to be ever wanting for the soul. You've condemned us to separate things when our salvation lies in wholeness and completeness. When the body and the soul are the *one thing*.' (77)

It is ironic that Leonard comes to destroy the body, Tolson, in the novel, and by doing this he destroys the soul too, himself. What is significant is that the means of destroying the body is a physical one (Tolson's stolen hammer), and the killing scene is strikingly physical and violent. The novel's final assessment of these historical forces that led to the division between body and mind is explicitly voiced in Leonard's statement to the court, after the discovery of the murder, that:

'The battle was so intense between us because we could see something beyond it. It was the split between us that tormented us; the split in the whole of Western society.' (78)

In spite of the novel's darkness and morbid intensity, often compared to the atmosphere of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by early critics, and in spite of the narrative's movement beyond the straightforward realism of the 'angry young men' of the 1950s, *Radcliffe* contains episodes of a compelling force created by the strength of the physical imagery shown with a naturalistic clarity, especially the scenes where Tolson and Radcliffe are working for the contractor's crew putting up and taking down tents and marquees for the county show (chapters 5-9). These episodes show the way the two men become close, particularly through Radcliffe's fascination with Tolson's physical vigour, whether riding his motorbike on the site (at night the bike "sleeps" in the tent beside them like a metal "fetid monster") or dismantling tents at an astonishing speed. The social and physical community at the site is dramatized with an immaculate detail. Craig suggests that where the novel drags or tails off,

it is perhaps because Storey could not conceive of other areas of life in which men like Tolson and Radcliffe might naturally meet and interact, so he fell back on the rather unreal and stage-managed business of Radcliffe's dilettante uncle Austin and his friendship with the club comedian Blakeley. (79)

In spite of the larger-than-life quality about the novel and the symbolic significance it has (whether Radcliffe and Tolson are aspects of the same person), the realistic character of the novel is still significant for it lends credibility to the conflict between the two men who are, more or less, located in particular habitations, and whose passion for each other is carried through other generations; i.e. the relationship between Leonard's uncle Austin and Blakeley, and Blakeley's desperate love for Tolson. The novel, as Taylor points out, is not about homosexuality and it does not fit easily into the context of the 'homosexual novel'. Nonetheless, Taylor's attempt to strip the novel of its symbolic implications in suggesting that "Tolson and Leonard are not merely body and soul, they are not even primarily that" (80) is an exaggeration of its realistic character and a blurring of its main thematic thrust. Even the intensely-felt landscape and the highly-detailed physical world are charged with allegorical power informed by the psychic and emotional qualities that characterize the novel's narrative as a whole. In *Radcliffe*, Storey has managed to grant license to his feelings of self-division to shape and determine his artistic material. Any confusion and unaccountable workings of the narrative and the characters add, to my mind, power and meaning to what the novel aspires to convey.

The division between the 'body' and the 'mind' is further intensified in Storey's fourth novel *Pasmore* (1972) where the conflict takes place in the mind of a single man. Due to the similarity between this novel and Raymond Williams' novel *Border Country* (1960), I have opted to analyse Storey's novel in comparison with Williams'. Both novelists appear to be transforming intense personal experiences into overwhelming fictional patterns through which the emotional dilemmas resulting from upward social mobility could be resolved and redeemed. Both novels demonstrate the uncertainty of class identification as class allegiance becomes one of many contradictions resulting from the contrast between achieved income and life-style, and received values and emotional ties. The major achievement of these novels lies in their direct confrontation of this personal crisis and the exploration of its impact on the protagonists.

Both Colin Pasmore and Matthew Price have broken out of their communities and class through the state education and the demands of their careers as university lecturers in the metropolis. Both set out on a journey back home, Pasmore because of his alienation and desertion of his wife and children, and Price due to his father's illness. They are subsequently faced with the painful process of re-establishing emotional and physical links with their families and class. Their sense of guilt and alienation is a result of their estrangement from their communities and their loss in the middle-class society in which they work and live. In the process of their attempts to re-establish links with their origins, sharp contrasts in values and life-styles are emphasized. While Storey establishes the differences between the North and the South of England, Williams achieves this in presenting 'Welshness' and 'Englishness' as opposed to each other, an opposition symbolized by the 'border' between England and Wales. In both novels, there is symbolic identification with one's own class within the very field which alienates both protagonists from their origins. Pasmore's academic interest is in the evangelical idealists who had lived in the early nineteenth-century, industrial Britain, and Price's research is on population movements in the Welsh mining villages during the Industrial Revolution. The centre point in *Border Country* is Price's realization that the statistics, facts and graphs of the academic historian cannot reveal the emotional pattern of what had been taking place in reality, that the ways of measuring this movement "are not only outside my discipline. They are somewhere else altogether... ." (81) Williams is suggesting that the novel can capture the emotional pattern of emotional change, which eludes the academic historian, for its capacity to account for the emotional side of human experience. The novel appears to be linking the protagonists social mobility, and probably his own, to the earlier population shifts as both involved a movement away from rural areas and occupations. On the other hand, the narrative attempts to re-establish these broken ties, a tendency symbolized in the novel by Price's frequent journeys between Cambridge and Glynmawr. Travelling and communications have an ambivalent role in *Border Country* where railways and roads connect different parts of the city, obliterating frontiers. At the same time, Williams shows that connections and ties are hard won. In witnessing the changes in Glynmawr, symbolized by the death of his father, Price feels he has witnessed

the course of death ... and the horror beyond it, the drive into darkness, with the mind still active but reduced to this single rhythm. And behind the head a different darkness was forming, and innumerable figures moved through it yet were part of the darkness... The terrible mindless rhythm allowed nothing but itself, its own annihilating darkness.(82)

This image of "darkness" is central to Storey's *Pasmore* which, like *Border Country*, presents journeys as symbols of re-establishing physical ties with one's origins and emphasizes the emotional aspect of identification with one's class and community. Pasmore's dream of "blackness" both signifies his guilt at deserting his home and symbolizes the mine in which his father works. Unable to account for his loss in terms of work or private life, he sees himself set in

an era of disintegration, a period in which there was a complete disruption of those processes which in him were ... so wholesomely integrated. Almost furtively, and with increasing resistance, he had begun to see how everything that was good in his life ... was irrelevant to the kind of life which he felt obliged to live.(83)

Storey shows that the resolution of the tension between received values and an acquired life-style is vital to the mental stability of the individual. *Pasmore*, unlike *Border Country*, centres on the emotional disturbance of its protagonist. Pasmore's confusion and sense of loss drive him away from his wife and children, and his alienation culminates in his nervous breakdown. By locating the conflict between the 'body' and the 'mind' within the brain of a single man, Storey manages to clearly identify this division in terms of madness and mental instability.

Randal Stevenson envisages the psychological bearing of Pasmore's guilt in terms of "connecting questions of social mobility with deeper existential problems of identity, role and self"(84), and identifies the protagonist's sense of loss with the nothingness which Existentialist writers saw surrounding the individual in an "era of disintegration." Whether this is the case or not, Storey's presentation of the dilemma of his protagonist is firmly located within the concept of class and cultural differences. Although Pasmore's sufferings are almost tragic, his gradual psychological disintegration is meant to have a comic effect. Pasmore is presented as an individual in the process of disintegration for his inability to be part of either the world he has left behind or that in which he had

found himself. The comic effect, as Storey points out, lies in the fact that he is "a working-class protagonist whose goal is the elusive fruits of middle-class security, which does not exist when he gets there." (85) Unlike Braine who tackles a similar problem in *Room at the Top*, Storey does not moralize in terms of class and values. His main concern is to show the mental effect of self-division, and to emphasize the vitality of bringing the 'body' and the 'mind' together to the mental stability of the individual.

Storey's novels and plays are autobiographical in that they trace, in their material, a recognizable pattern of experience. The mining background appears again and again particularly in *This Sporting Life*, *Flight into Camden*, *Pasmore* and *In Celebration*; football is the background of *This Sporting Life* and *The Changing Room*; painting recurs, though marginally, in *Flight into Camden*, *Pasmore*, *Radcliffe*, *A Temporary Life*, *In Celebration*, and centrally in *Life Class*; teaching features as an unsatisfactory occupation of central characters in *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton*, *Flight into Camden*, *Pasmore*, *A Temporary Life*, and *In Celebration*; tent-raising is encountered in both *Radcliffe* and *The Contractor*; and parents' greed for attention occurs almost everywhere, but most notably in *Flight into Camden*, *Pasmore*, *In Celebration* and *The Farm*. Though autobiographical, Storey's fiction and plays transform the experiences they present through their imaginative quality, and the reader does not need any knowledge of the autobiographical background to understand and judge the works. Storey has a unique ability to transform reality into symbols while, at the same time, maintaining the realistic qualities of his presentation. This is perhaps more evident in his plays than his novels. Despite the realistic qualities of *The Changing Room* and *The Contractor*, for example, it is not difficult to see the allegorical dimensions both plays have. In the first, a football team gather in a changing room, go out to play a tough game, return in the interval, come back afterwards to change and leave. In the second, five workmen come to put up a tent for a wedding breakfast, erect it, take it down the next morning and leave. In both plays, characters are realistic and convincing as real people graphically depicted doing their work. Yet, one could, for instance, see them as metaphors for artistic creation, its process and usefulness. The same is evident in *Home* where no physical action takes place although the scenes have a strong physical presence. Through the way the characters move and speak inside the confines of

the house-stage, we come to see them as people locked up in the same mental institution. Storey's plays, yet, are similar in interest to his novels, whose individuals are torn apart by their inability to reconcile their inner and outer selves. Taylor writes that Storey's strength as a dramatist lies in his

isolation from fashion, his ability to follow his own vision unswervingly in the theatre and find to his hands precisely the right means of doing so.(86)

Storey has found in his art a means to express his own self-divisions and his feelings of being torn apart between his physical, masculine, working-class background and the spiritual, feminine, rather middle-class artistic world he found himself compelled to move to. In his introduction to *This Sporting Life*, he writes:

It is no virtue to feel oneself torn apart, either from the world, or from one's own spirit or soul; neither is it any virtue to be unable to find any resolution. However, although for some there is no choice, for all of us there is, I believe, the obligation to try and bring the pieces together, at least in touching distance. As my novels progress, if they do at all, I hope that this resolution in some sense at least will be drawing nearer.(87)

Storey's novels show that torn feelings are not resolved. The 'closed circles' of the first two novels' narratives - where the main characters finish up where they had originally started from, though they are in a sense transformed - the total destruction at the end of *Radcliffe*, and the persistence of self-divisions in *Pasmore* - all imply that torn feelings are not resolved and inner and outer selves are not reconciled. Storey has only managed to express these torn feelings in his art, and bringing the pieces together remains limited to what Raymond Williams called "coming home by measuring the distance."

In my evaluation of Storey I have suggested that class-struggle has no weight in his work, and have argued that the main priority in his early fiction is given to the division between the 'body' and the 'mind'. In bringing these conflicting forces together, Storey's work has emphatically highlighted the tragic consequences of self-division. I intend now to explore the ways in which Alan Sillitoe's work establishes the influence of class politics on the individual, and to assess the anger and rebellion of his working-class protagonists in the Nottingham fiction.

Section IV : Alan Sillitoe: Metaphors of Rebellion

Alan Sillitoe is the only novelist, among post-war working-class writers discussed here, who overtly expressed ideas of class struggle and placed the issue at the very centre of the characterisation and thematic streams of his fictional narratives.(1) In this chapter, I will be arguing that Sillitoe created metaphors of rebellion in his Nottingham fiction to express the mentality and attitudes of the English working class, rather than attempting to theorise on the politics of revolutionary insurrection in British society. Whether revolt is expressed in individual personalised terms as in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) and some of the short stories in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (1959), or implemented in positive action in *Key to the Door* (1961), the short story "The Good Women" in *The Ragman's Daughter* (1963) and the first two novels of the William Posters trilogy, *The Death of William Posters* (1965) and *A Tree on Fire* (1967), and to a lesser degree in the third, *The Flame of Life* (1974), Sillitoe's main concern remains, to a great degree, limited to a metaphorical expression of the grievances and anger of his working-class characters. Basic to this expression is the 'them-us' dichotomy which Sillitoe envisages as characterising the mentality and attitudes of the post-war English working class.

The 'them-us' dichotomy is analysed as a concept forming the working-class mind in various works in the post-war period. Richard Hoggart dedicates a whole chapter, "'THEM' AND 'US'",(2) in his *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) to the dimensions and social implications of this mentality from a working-class point of view. Paul O'Flinn uses the term metaphorically in his book *Them and Us in Literature* (1975)(3) to refer to the difference in presentations, perceptions and views in middle- and- working-class literary works. And Tony Harrison conceives of this dichotomy in a linguistic and poetic context, and writes in his poem "Them & [UZ]":

4 wards only of *mi 'art aches* and..." Mine's
broken,
you barbarian, T.W." *He* was nicely spoken.
'Can't have our glorious heritage done to
death.'

I played the Drunken Porter in *Macbeth*.

'Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those
 Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose.
 All poetry (even Cockney Keats?) you see 's been
 dubbed by [AS] into RP,
 Received Pronunciation please believe [S]
 Your speech is in the hands of the Receivers.'

'We say [AS] not [UZ] T.W.'....(4)

Sillitoe uses the 'them-us' dichotomy to a great effect in his early fiction to account for the physical and psychological conditions of his working-class characters, and to explore their social and political awareness of the class-ridden society they live in. More significantly, his fictional presentation is an attempt, in the final analysis, to reveal his perception of the mentality of the working class and identify his own relationship with this class.

Sillitoe published an article, in April 1964, in a special Nottingham issue of *Anarchy* in which he attempted to analyse the psychology of the working class. Pointing out the central bias of working-class life, he wrote:

The poor know of only two classes in society. Their sociology is much simplified. There are *them* and *us*. Them are those who tell you what to do... use a different accent... pay your wages, collect rent... hand you the dole or national assistance money... live on your backs... tread you down.(5)

Expressions of 'them-us' mentality pervade the Nottingham novels and stories. Characters define an allegiance to their own class, 'us', by expressing feeling of hostility towards a broad spectrum of non-working-class institutions and individuals collectively classified as 'them'. This mentality reflects Sillitoe's working-class characters' comprehension of English society as divided between 'us' and 'them'. As they see themselves rejected, exploited and persecuted in this system, they attempt to assert themselves through feelings of solidarity with each other and defiance of the others. This attitude finds expression in their thoughts, words and actions. The class tension resulting from the perception of society as divided between 'them' and 'us', the privileged and unprivileged, forms a major part of the dramatic mainspring of much of Sillitoe's early fiction. Sillitoe infuses an overt language and class consciousness into his early work as his characters' sentiments are pervaded with an overt and undisguised animosity towards the world of 'them'. Advocating and often participating in violent hostility against the perceived world

of 'them', Sillitoe's characters are motivated by a common set of assumptions and attitudes. Their background is clearly defined, and they are fully aware of their identity and where they belong. As soon as they appear on the page, they are presented as sharing a developed sense of social awareness, an awareness that establishes the society divided between 'them' and 'us' as a battleground on which both sides perpetually confront each other. This confrontational atmosphere constantly determines the characters' language and action and motivates their behaviour, often aggressive and rather anarchistic, especially in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*.

Perceiving of their world as divided between 'them' and 'us', Sillitoe's working-class characters often exhibit feelings and attitudes of class solidarity with other members of 'us'; anyone persecuted, poor, suppressed or trapped as they are. The struggle between a wartime general and the orchestra he has accidentally captured, in *The General* (1960), carries overtones of class struggle and class solidarity. The orchestra leader regards the general as an aristocratic agent set on suppressing and destroying the orchestra members. At first, he is solely concerned with preserving his own dignity but realises later, when his orchestra is captured and faces death, that the destruction of the orchestra, his group, his class, is a more important issue than his own fate.(6) In the short story "The Fishing Boat", in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, a postman realises after the death of the wife who consistently took advantage of him that her deceptions did not matter as both of them belonged to the same group and were involved in the same class struggle, and he wishes he could have helped her more. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Arthur Seaton tries to help the drunken man, who breaks a shop window, escape from the army woman calling the police to arrest him. And in the fishing scene, at the end of the novel, Arthur's feelings for the caught fish are so intense that he throws his catch back in the stream. Similarly, the growing political awareness of the factory woman Liza Atkin in "The Good Women", in *The Ragman's Daughter* (1963), motivates her to shelter the deserting Welsh soldier, Robert, and cover him up by giving him one of her son's identity cards and letting him stay in her house as a lodger. Upon hearing of his death later, she feels as if "'I've lost a son of my own.'"(7) From these few examples, one infers that the pressure of circumstances and the struggle of a dispossessed group against

powerful establishments push Sillitoe's working-class characters into a kind of unity, a kind of fellow feeling directed against the powerful, hostile world of 'them'. This is the significance of the 'them-us' mentality in Sillitoe's work, and herein lies the power of his metaphorical expressions of defiance and rebellion. Yet, one should not hasten to overpoliticise his characters' feelings and attitudes especially in the early fiction. For this unity is more instinctive than an ideological conscious standpoint. Generally, Sillitoe's characters are not concerned with any kind of a united action motivated by political belief; they simply recognise that others are caught in the same trap as they are. The major achievement of this perception and representation of working-class solidarity lies, to my mind, in the way Sillitoe's work shows the historical inevitability of this solidarity, one that is necessitated by shared social, economic and political conditions of living. Contemplation of fighting against those who control and perpetuate unjust social orders, and belief in the possibility of establishing a just egalitarian society are to quote Atherton, "spiritual resources" which Sillitoe's working-class characters draw on in the Nottingham fiction to redeem the various pressures and injustices afflicting them. Although the lines of battle are clearly drawn in the works cited in this chapter, it is only later - with the exception of "The Good Women" - in the first two novels of the William Posters trilogy that Sillitoe's characters take positive action to implement their feelings and attitudes. Nonetheless, it is the metaphorical power of Sillitoe's Nottingham fiction, as we will see later, that gives it expression, continuity and significance.

In both *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner", Sillitoe presents his protagonists as sharing a strong feeling of being trapped in the mechanism of a hostile jungle-like world, and search for ways to escape and transcend this jungle. Although their defiance and revolt are expressed in personalised and individualised terms, they have a symbolic power that finds various forms of expression in later works. Arthur Seaton, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, conceives of his world as an inherently hostile place where "there had never been any such thing as safety, and never would be", (9) and defines his relationship with this world as one or perpetual struggle for survival;

I'm a bloody billy-goat trying to screw the world, and no wonder I am, because it's trying to do the same to me. (10)

And when the swaddies beat him up, ones he conceives of as representing "the raw edge of fang-and-claw on which all laws where based", (11) he broods over the inevitably of being overpowered by the two swaddies who "he had known... would and had bested him on the common battleground of the jungle." (12) In the fishing scene, towards the end of the novel, Arthur's image of the world as a jungle dominated by the ethos of survival is heightened through his metaphorical contemplating on his relationship to the fish he has caught;

Whenever you caught a fish, the fish caught you... and it was the same with anything you caught, like the measles or a woman. Everyone in the world was caught, somehow, one way or another, and those that weren't were always on the way to it. As soon as you were born you were captured by fresh air that you screamed against the minute you came out. Then you were roped in by a factory, had a machine slung around your neck, and then you were hooked by the arse with a wife. Mostly you were like a fish: you swam about with freedom, thinking how good it was to be left alone, doing anything you wanted to do and caring about no-one, when suddenly: SLUTCH! - the big hook clapped itself into your mouth and you were caught. (13)

Although he strongly identifies with the first fish he catches, for both of them are caught in the jungle, and throws his catch back into the stream, Arthur conceives of the cycle of destruction as inevitable and continual. As he is viciously caught by various repressive forces in his society, he feels content to inflict similar pain on the next fish he catches, for

This time it was war, and he wanted fish to take home, either to cook in the pan or feed to the cat. It's no trouble for you and trouble for me, all over a piece of bait. (14)

What distinguishes the fishing scene in the novel is its metaphorical power that does not only sum up the psychology of the novel's protagonist throughout the narrative, but also offers a philosophical interpretation of life outside the working-class confines of the novel's world. The statement "Whenever you caught a fish, the fish caught you", in the passage quoted above, implies a defiance central to the novel as a whole. Those who control others and suppress them are controlled and suppressed in their turn, they are caught in the mere action of catching others. Sillitoe metaphorically readdresses the balance between 'them' and 'us' by philosophising the psychology

of domination and control. This idea recurs in a *The General* where the general, in control of the orchestra he captures at the beginning, faces defeat himself at the end. In his essay "Alan Sillitoe's Jungle", James Gindin envisages Sillitoe's early fiction as a depiction of a jungle world where images of the jungle are often directly used. He gives examples of the various references to the jungle in Sillitoe's longest published poem "The Rats", where "rats" refers to all institutions of governmental society who devour the individual in the bicycle factory where Arthur works, in the fairground amusement park in the short story "Noah's Ark" where young Colin is maliciously pitched off the merry-go-round, in the amusement parks where Arthur finds no relief and has to run from the swaddies, as "an image for an institutionalised jungle", and Gindin writes that "The organised society becomes, in Sillitoe's world, the framework in which man's predatory instincts operate".(15) Gindin interprets the fishing scene at the end of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* as Sillitoe's imposition of the jungle code on his protagonist, for although fishing, for Arthur, is a peaceful escape from factory work and urban society, and the fish is a symbol of peace, Sillitoe's concept of the Twentieth Century as a jungle necessitates the involvement of his protagonist in this jungle for he is a Twentieth-Century man. Consequently, the fish becomes a part of this jungle; it is caught by a man who is caught by other forces. There is much truth in Gindin's understanding and analysis of Sillitoe's work as representing a jungle world, for this image recurs later in Brian Seaton's entry into the Malayan jungle in *Key to the Door* and in Frank Dawley's entry into the Algerian desert in the first two novels of the William Posters trilogy.

Arthur's perception of his world as a jungle is motivated by his exploitation as a factory worker and understanding of governmental policies, institutions and individuals as oppressive of the individual. Like some of Sillitoe's other characters, Arthur Seaton is a worker to the core in the sense that he sometimes feels his work to be part of himself. He is a lathe-operator, and the concept of wage-work is implied in the novel's title. His factory work is envisaged as creating

a prison-like system pleasant enough because he could be happy in knowing that by this work he never had to worry where the next meal, pint, smoke, or suit of clothes was coming from.(16)

The future does not mean much to Arthur because his life is punctuated by his weekly wages. We do not hear in the novel of any financial plans or even social ones. Future and safety are reduced to the immediate and the momentary, and assurance comes with " a full wage-packet safely installed in his overall pocket... ." (17) Nonetheless, the de-humanising effect of monotonous factory work is strongly felt both physically and psychologically. Arthur is described as "His tall frame was slightly round-shouldered from stooping day in and day out at his lathe," (18) and hard working conditions are manifest in the constant noise and

the factory smell of oil-suds, machinery, and shaved steel that surrounded you with an air in which pimples grew and prospered on your face and shoulders, that would have turned you into one pimple ... a smell all day that turns your guts. (19)

Work becomes mechanical and purely physical as he "went on serving a life's penance at the lathe." (20) There are frequent references to Arthur as a "machine" in spite of his attempt to activate his mind with "Violent dialogues" while working. With the loneliness and loss of the sense of time,

only a calendar gave any real indication of passing time, for it was difficult to follow the changing seasons. As spring merged into summer or autumn became winter Arthur glimpsed the transitional mechanism of each season only at the weekend, on Saturday or Sunday, when he straddled his bike and rode along the canal bank into the country to fish. (21)

Even fishing, as the previous analysis of the fishing scene suggests, becomes involvement and confrontation. There is a great amount of sympathy in Sillitoe's portrayal of Arthur's character. Sillitoe himself had a personal experience of factory work, limited though to sporadic periods during four years at Raleigh Bicycles from 1942 to 1946, and has possibly felt the hardship and alienation he expresses in the novel. Despite his portrayal of his protagonist as individualist and aggressive, Sillitoe offers reasons for Arthur's mannerism. His indulgence in drinking and womanising is partly seen as an escape, for "To be alone seemed a continuation of his drugged life at the lathe. He wanted noise, to drink and make love." (22) If the portrayal of Arthur is disturbing, the conditions of producing such a character are certainly present in the novel itself.

The mental state of being at war with social and political forces is central to the novel, and runs through the Nottingham fiction. Arthur identifies the forces repressing him and voices overt antipathy towards them. His mind is constantly occupied with identifying and naming his enemies; the "'big fat Tory bastards in parliament'",(23) "The bastards that put the gun into my hands ... the snot-gobbling gett that teks my income tax, the swived-eyed swine that collects our rent", (24) and those "crawling like ants over the Capital letter G of Government... ." (25) This perception of the hostile world of 'them' motivates both Arthur's aggressive mannerism and anarchistic tendencies. He envisages "cunning" as the only option left to him, for

Every man was his own enemy, and only on these conditions of fighting could you come to terms with yourself, and the only tolerable rule that would serve as a weapon was cunning... the broad-fisted exuberant cunning of a man who worked all day in a factory and was left with fourteen quid a week to squander as best as he could at the weekend, caught up in his isolation and these half-conscious clamped-in policies for living that cried for exit.(26)

Although individualistic and in opposition to his own society, Arthur still sees himself one of many others caught in the same way. "I know I'm not the only one,"(27) he thinks, and when he fantasises about rebellion he includes others; when at the top of the Helter Skelter in the amusement fair he "was wondering how many columns of soldiers could be gathered from these crowds for use in a rebellion."(28) Although he conceives of himself as a "rebel", Arthur's rebellion is muted and reduced into anarchistic feelings. He frequently meditates on blowing up factories and the "'Ouses of .: Parliament", in the army he liked shooting because "It gave him satisfaction to destroy"(29) for there is nothing "you can do about it unless you start making dynamite to blow their four-eyed clocks to death", (30) and upon hearing the sound of breaking glass in the drunken man's episode,

Arthur was stirred by the sound of breaking glass; it synthesised all the anarchism within him, was the most perfect and suitable noise to accompany the end of the world and himself.(31)

Arthur's anarchistic feelings and angry expressions of revolt are directed inward. Though politically futile, their significance lies in their metaphorical power. An analysis of the way Arthur releases his anger and revolt shows a disturbing and dark mannerism, one which

has initiated much controversy and which has been attacked by Sillitoe's critics.

The novel is dark and ugly in the way it excludes any tragic feelings. Arthur is presented as cut off from his community and society in his attempt to assert his individuality. To identify himself as an individual, Arthur has to empty himself and negate his personal traits, which inevitably produces a paradox. Unlike Arthur Machin in Storey's *This Sporting Life*, Seaton keeps us at a distance. The reader is not invited to look into Arthur's mind or share his experience, for "He was only real inside himself." (32) With Machin the reader feels a closeness, a personal experience of working-class views and feelings, and the meanings of being working class where the realism of the situation (although the narrative is eloquent) characterises the book and influences our reception of the narrator's story. Seaton's aggression and exclusiveness of both the reader and other characters in the novel invite no identification or sympathy, although they might be perceived as an aspect of his defiance. Arthur describes himself as

A six-foot pit-prop that wants a pint of ale...
I'm me and nobody else; and whatever people
think I am or say I am, that's what I'm not,
because they don't know a bloody thing about
me. (33)

His satisfaction in daily life is reduced to sticking "'to the White Hoss, fishin' an' screwin'.'" (34) Nigel Gray vehemently criticises Sillitoe for his inability to puncture the surface of this idealised characterisation of this 'bastard' individualism in the portrait of Arthur, and writes:

Sillitoe is too much taken with the working-class hero cult. Arthur... [is] a big fellow. A tough guy. He likes a good fuck and he likes a pint... fishing is harmless-unless you're a fish. Screwing is all right-unless you're the girl and may be left in the club. Drinking is fine-unless you're the one that gets spewed on, or beaten up, or run over. (35)

Arthur's 'bastard' image is revealed in his egoistic demeanour, his aggressive individualism directed against his own community, and his uncondemned alternative notions of liberty and revolt. His behaviour at the drinking competition, in the novel's first chapter, and his aggressive treatment of his fellow workers at the factory are one aspect of this anti-social attitude. On the other hand, Arthur's offensive behaviour is coupled with an offensive language. He sees

women as "tarts", all women became prostitutes in his conception; they have one function, to whore. When his girlfriend Brenda, his friend's wife, tells him that she's pregnant, he refuses to feel any guilt for "It was an act of God, like a pit disaster."(36) The same night she has an abortion Arthur goes to bed with Winnie, her sister, for "he couldn't have cared less ... if he had made twenty thousand women pregnant and all their husbands were at his back... ." (37) He gives up seeing Doreen for a while because "the pleasure and danger of hying^a two married women had been too sweet to resist." (38)

Arthur is an anti-hero who has no conventional qualities of a hero, a hero exhibiting anti-heroic heroism. The portrayal of a hero involves achievement, giving oneself to something bigger than himself or herself, sacrificing oneself for an ideal, cause or collective interests to redeem societal experiences. Above all, it involves compassion and commitment to an issue, or to certain issues. Arthur is contrary to all heroic values in his aggressive individualism and anti-social attitudes. This sort of individualist portrayal is a flaw which runs through almost the whole body of Sillitoe's fiction. The figure of Arthur Seaton seems to recur in all of Sillitoe's subsequent protagonists to follow. They all seem to contain elements of Arthur's personality perhaps because the image of the worker as a young tough is elemental to Sillitoe's personal background. To differing degrees, the same character traits are shared by typical Sillitoe working-class protagonists as Frank Dawley in the first two novels of the William Posters trilogy, and the picaresque bastard adventurer Michael Cullen in *A Start in Life* (1970). This follows, in away, the traditions of the Elizabethan Romance and the Picaresque novel (kitchen boy as a hero). Even in a semi-autobiographical book about his family, Sillitoe included a description of his Grandfather Burton, towards whom he admits he felt a deep sense of attraction and identification, which again enhances the exaggerated working-class hero image:

In his prime an hey-day he was over six feet tall and extremely strong. There was no fat on him and not much muscle either, but he could twist an iron bar and shape steel... he was irascible and violent, and as rigid with others as he was vigorous with himself... He also smoked, drank, filled himself with fat, and died at nearly eighty. (39)

The majority of Sillitoe's male protagonists reproduce all the sexist attitudes of the working-class hero image (Arthur's ideas of women, for instance). The abandonment of commitment on a personal level

often corresponds to a pronounced individualist and anarchist streak in the political consciousness of many of Sillitoe's working-class characters. Nonetheless, Brian Seaton, in *Key to the Door*, provides a turning-point in the rejection of this individualist anarchism for a collective and rather socialist principle when he, at the critical moment, abstains from firing his machine-gun. In the case of Arthur Seaton, Sillitoe's admixture in the delineation of an ordinary young worker firmly placed in a working-class setting, yet who exhibits a number of highly egoistic and even anti-social character traits, has given rise to a great deal of critical discussion and evaluation of the typicality of Arthur. David Craig sees a definite connection between what is specifically individual and that which is characteristically working class in Sillitoe's portrayal of Arthur Seaton;

Sillitoe surely does not mean Arthur to stand as in many ways a typical working man. The title of the novel plants it firmly in the life, the routine, of the wage (and not the salary) earner. Passage after passage, especially those which establish Arthur's sense of where he belongs in England and his view of other groups and ways of life, present him as a type worker from an old centre of manufacture, hard-drinking, free-spending, instinctively against the boss. A type, especially in literature, need not mean an average, or one in a majority; it need mean only that enough traits have been picked and rendered to bring out the factors common to many members of a group whatever their other differences. (40)

Ronald Dee Vaverka also sees in Arthur a particular individual within a working-class environment, "who is also a particular type, namely that of a rebel." (41) Both Craig and Dee Vaverka are right in conceiving of Arthur's portrayal as both an individual and a type of some sort. Sillitoe strongly rejects the idea of Arthur as representative of a group or a class, and points out the elements used in constructing his protagonist's character; "imagination... lots of bits and pieces, some of them from myself... but a lot of them from memory, other people..." (42) One feature of Sillitoe's work is its lack of didacticism, and he tends to create metaphors to express rebellion and revolt. And although Arthur is not portrayed to represent the typical working man in his mannerism and tendencies, his conditions and anger voice working-class grievances and defiance. Atherton suggests that Sillitoe was working within a well-defined tradition of working-class heroes, one that runs from the works of the

industrial novelists to James Hanley.(43) Sillitoe's portrayal of his working-class protagonists is not that simple and traditional to lead to an assumption like Atherton's for it is informed by more complex issues both personal and artistic. The character of Stephen Blackpool in Dickens's *Hard Times* is perhaps, as O'Flinn suggests,(44) one of the first anti-heroes to appear in the English novel (a brief ragged life, a violent accidental death, and a man robbed of his rights without being able to identify the enemy), and some post-war writers made use of such a presentation in their control of anti-heroic novels of working-class youth-like Jack Common and Brendan Behan. However, Sillitoe's portrayal involves more complex issues than depicting or developing this tradition, for - as we will see later - it was an artistically disguised expression of his own feelings about his class and background.

Like Arthur Seaton, most of the characters in the stories of *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* exhibit anti-social anarchistic tendencies. The narrator of "On Saturday Afternoon" is glad that the man hanged himself "because he'd proved to the coppers and everybody whether it was his life or not all right."(45) Once again, defiance is metaphorically expressed in self-destructive action. In the central story, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner", we encounter the same mentality and terminology characterising *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Smith is an anti-hero, like Arthur, because of his aggressive individualism and little sense of communal identity. Like Arthur, he does not represent anybody but himself. He may be representative of a class, but not politically representative in an organised form. Smith perceives of the world divided between 'us' and 'them', the 'in-laws' and the 'out-laws', and adopts "cunning" as a weapon in the battlefield he is born. He convinces himself of the injustice at being incarcerated for stealing money from a baker's shop, and decides that he was already "in a war of my own, that I was born into one... Government wars aren't my wars' they've got nowt to do with me, because my own war's all that I'll ever be bothered about."(46) As Arthur perceives of his lathe as a weapon 'they' put in his hands because it keeps him thinking, Smith envisages the Essex Borstal he is sent to as a "knife" he is shown by those who sent him there. Nominated as a runner for the Borstal in a competition, running itself becomes a means of escape for Smith, and his defiance in losing the race is an assertion of himself and a symbol for transcending the jungle. His refusal to compete for a better position

is a rejection of the jungle code, for "I'm not a race horse at all."(13) The moment of defiance and symbolic achievement is when Smith, ahead in the race, decides to lose it. His moment of revenge comes when;

I could hear the lords and ladies now from the grandstand, and could see them standing up to wave me in: 'Run!' they were shouting in their posh voices. 'Run!' But I was deaf, daft and blind, and stood where I was, still tasting the bark in my mouth and still blubbing like a baby, blubbing now out of gladness that I'd got them beat at last.(48)

Sillitoe's dramatisation of this battle is highly symbolic and powerful.

Unlike *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner" is a first-person narrative. The second part of the story is a flashback providing an account of Smith's life prior to his imprisonment; his work on a milling machine, the death of his father of throat cancer caused by his work in a factory, and his cunning activities of theft with Mike. The first-person narrative technique of the story puts the realism of the narrative in question while it heightens its symbolic tone. Smith is a seventeen-year-old working-class boy at the time of the narrative. Although the language of the narrative is relatively simple, the ideas of the narrator are too sophisticated for his age. This major flaw puts the reality of Smith as a character to question. Many of Sillitoe's reviewers and critics conceived of the sophistication of Smith's portrayal as an authorial intrusion. Sillitoe seems to be giving his character a sense of logic and intellectual grasp well beyond his years and experience. One thinks of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) where an adolescent is articulating sophisticated ideas and perception of reality in his first-person narrative. In spite of the colloquialism of Smith's narrative language, it is charged with maturity and insight. Sentences like, "Everything's dead, but good, because it's dead before coming alive, not dead after being alive"(49) and "Maybe as soon as you get the whip-hand over somebody you do go dead. By God, to say that last sentence has needed a few hundred miles of long-distance running"(50) have a figurative power beyond the mind and expression of a young working-class boy.

According to the *Times Literary Supplement*, Sillitoe realised that "'the rejection of society by a sixteen year old [sic] is not sufficiently convincing when amplified in his colloquial prose'" and

that he tried to "'jazz it up'" with a language unsuitable to his protagonist. The result, the reviewer argues, is that when Smith "scrawls an especially eloquent phrase with the stub of the pencil he purports to be holding we can hear Mr Sillitoe breathing down his neck." (51) It seems that Sillitoe's anxiety to voice ideas of defiance and rebellion transcends the limitations of his protagonist's narrative ability; consequently Smith comes out on the page as a mouthpiece. Smith's character and his metaphorical language and articulateness are developed in the narrative in order to match the symbolic impact of his defiance, for a subtle kind of defiance like that of Smith requires a subtle and sophisticated perception of the self and the others. Although the narrative language tends at times to be metaphorical and poetic in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (especially in the fishing scene, perhaps because the scene was originally written as a poem and later transformed into prose), Arthur is cut off from this language completely. His language is made to be offensive and characterised by everyday working-class speech. In the case of Smith, the symbolic metaphorical language overcomes the realistic expression of the first-person narrative.

In both *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* Sillitoe's working-class characters remain incipient revolutionaries, politically aware and expressive of the injustice of their society's social order but unable to commit themselves in a productive way of taking any action to change this order. Their anger is released in simplistic theorising and fantasies of revolt. The conflict is shaped in individualised terms of personal revolt, of 'me' against 'them'. This anarchistic tendencies and complete distrust of the Establishment are psychological expressions of incipient individual revolt. In spite of this failure to materialise their revolt, Arthur Seaton's and Smith's protest against an oppressive social system is a dignified action in the sense that it is an expressive endeavour for the preservation of their personal integrity. This incipient revolt becomes interesting if perceived in the context of Sillitoe's conception of revolutionary activity in Britain. It is significant to notice that apart from short stories like "The Good Women" and "Pit Strike" in *The Ragman's Daughter and Men, Women and Children* (1973), Sillitoe has only incorporated overtly political collective class expressions of struggle in connection with foreign countries rather than in an English working-class milieu. Although there is a strong expression of socialist sympathy in many of

Sillitoe's novels, it is one that gains meaning only in the context of developing countries; Malaya in *Key to the Door* and Algeria in the first two novels of the William Posters trilogy. Within Britain, as David Smith writes,

his characters flounder helplessly, their zeal for revolution capable of expression only in talk and at times comic fantasy, while if any political parties are mentioned, they are mentioned with contempt.(52)

Sillitoe's artistic expression of revolt and his implementation of this revolt in alien lands almost follows a tradition among various English progressive writers. One thinks of Lord Byron's quest for revolutionary activity in Greece, and Orwell's - and many other English artists - in the Spanish Civil War.

While Sillitoe's working-class protagonists are hindered from action in the confines of their working-class milieu in the early fiction, *Key to the Door* starts a novel trend of expression where the protagonist is taken out of his milieu and immersed in military or revolutionary activities in foreign lands and different environments. Sillitoe conceived of this novel as a penetrating development of his writing. In an interview he gave in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s Sillitoe pointed to the differences between Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and his brother, Brian Seaton, in *Key to the Door*;

In my novel *Key to the Door* the hero realises this lack of something highly essential in life far earlier than did... the hero of my first book. He has a more conscious attitude to the society in which he lives.(53)

And in an interview with John Barrows, he stated:

I hope that it shows an advance on anything I've done... As one gets older the tendency is to try and get a bit deeper, and I think *Key to the Door* reflects this.(54)

Sillitoe's effort to clarify the character-class demarcation in which the psychological conflict is merged with an identifiable class response is apparent in the detailed and compassionate unfolding of the first twenty-one years in the life of the novel's protagonist, Brian Seaton. He uses a traditional prologue to dramatically introduce most of the main characters in Brian's early childhood and to set the novel's family scene. During the 1930s' depression years, Brian's childhood is characterised by a physical and spiritual struggle against a harsh reality of poverty and unemployment. Brian

finds himself, from an early age, forced to supplement his family's and his own needs, an endeavour ironically corresponding to his Grandfather's nickname of him as 'Nimrod', the biblical hunter. He is shown as an inquisitive and curious person who, at an early age, is intrigued and fascinated at the mere mention of foreign places. This interest manifests itself in Brian's study of maps and interest in geography at school. Learning and reading become a bridge to other cultures which he continues to establish despite the discouragement of his parents and school. Episodes like the conversation between Brian and Bert about 'them', millionaires and Conservatives, establish the psychological basis of the social fabric of the novel, and provide the political structure which motivates Brian's maturation towards consciousness. He experiences the physical freedom, like Billy Casper in Hines's *A Kestrel for a Knave*, in the countryside where he finds "his refuge from the punctuating black gulfs at school year and home life that didn't bear thinking about at times like these." (55) Such physical and mental affinities with nature recur throughout the novel and eventually culminate in the more complex symbolism of the jungle. Once again the jungle-image functions in this novel to symbolise the deprivation of the slum-life in Nottingham and lead to the association with the jungle as an escape from the suffocating atmosphere of urban Nottingham;

He went into the wood... He knew the land of Nottingham and a few miles beyond, but all was unexplored after that, and his consciousness of it slid over to the rim of the world like the sailors in olden days who had no maps... I wish I could go somewhere, a long way off to jungles and mountains and islands. I'll draw a map when I get home. (56)

The two sections, "The Ropewalk" and "The Jungle", make the largest part of the novel and account for Brian's service in Malaya as an airforce radio operator just after the Second World War. From this point onward, Sillitoe continuously interrupts the narrative of the novel with Brian's mental flashbacks to Nottingham, his political orientation with the outbreak of the War (where antipathy is directed towards the Germans, and "The very name Russia Russia Russia touched Brian like a rootword... and gave him an understanding of its invincibility... the Red Army, the returning Lordes of the working man washing in like broad rivers of retribution making for the bigshot nazi rats of Germany." (57)), and his work in a factory at a lathe and courting of Pauline, a young factory girl. These flashbacks show

Brian's introduction, by Albert, to a local club run by the Co-op and Labour party, his involvement in political conversations with other workers, and his introduction to papers like the Communist Party's *Daily Worker* and the magazine *Soviet Weekly* which were passed around and read in the club. After his marriage with the pregnant Pauline, which makes him miss the fighting in the War, Brian enlists for Malaya as a sign of the establishment of his political views. Upon arriving in Malaya, he imagines his personal file the military authorities might have one him:

Politics: socialist; used to read Soviet weekly...
 Patriotism: nil. Wants watching...
 Discipline: none. Even wears civvies on duty.(58)

Although Brian thinks of himself as a Communist, it is only in Malaya that he begins to understand what it means to be a Communist, through contact with others and the relationship he has with a local girl, Mimi. It is this relationship that initiates his sympathetic view of Malayan resistance against British colonialism.

Key to the Door incorporates Sillitoe's personal experiences more than any other work. His close encounter with the oppression and struggle of the Malayan masses functioned - as Orwell's days in Burma had done - as a productive spring of intellectual and literary inspiration. Sillitoe had found himself caught up in the middle of a fight for national liberation, waged during the Second World War against Japanese imperialism and which, after 1945, was re-directed against the British colonial presence. Brian identifies himself with the resistance rather than with the British army. When Mimi warns him of his position as a British soldier, he retorts: "'I'm a communist, so maybe I'll be all right'", and explains his motivations and position:

'I came from a scruffy old house in Nottingham, and before the War I remember seeing my old man crying - in tears - because he was out o' work and unemployed... The kids were better off... they had to make sure we'd be fit for the War and to fight communists, the sly bastards... Why should I be against the Communists?... I've got a mind of my own.'(59)

Brian's identification with communism in Malaya finds a different expression in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, for although Arthur is anarchistic and distrustful of political parties and ^{of} institutions, he still expresses an almost sympathetic attitude towards communism when

he tells Jack: "'I ain't a communist, I tell you. I like 'em though, because they're different from these big fat Tory bastards in parliament. And them Labour bleeders too.'"(60) Brian later takes the role of political agitator in the camp, and although he knows where he stands much of this understanding remains limited to the level of ideological abstraction. The physical attraction of the jungle has a great influence on Brian, and motivates his organisation of a small expedition to climb the Gunong Barat overlooking the camp, as

it meant the jungle, a luring and mysterious word that has taunted him all his life from books and comics and cinema, an unknown flimsy world meaning something else, so that it would teach him perhaps whether or not he wanted to enter the world it sometimes appeared to be screening. Without the expedition there would be no future.(61)

Sillitoe interpreted the Gunong Barat venture in these terms:

I meant the mountain-climb to represent useless striving, the emptiness in ideas like patriotism.(62)

The futility of the experience both demystifies the jungle for Brian and helps change his consciousness of himself in a foreign country, distanced from his roots. For he "saw the jungle for what it was, a dull place because no one of flesh - and blood - lived there", (63) and conceiving of him self as "pole-axed" he longs for Nottingham where "it's cool and my brain will clear so's I can start to think, pick up the bones of my scattered thoughts".(64) Brian's maturation is both political and personal. His experience and political orientation in Malaya (where the Canadian Knotman - a volunteer professional and a convinced communist, is one of the most important formative influences on Brian) lead to the identification of the unprivileged in Malaya with his own working-class background. On the other hand, he is faced with the choice of staying in Malaya and strengthening his relationship with Mimi, or going back to his working-class Nottingham and Pauline and his child. Brian's decision to go back is coupled with a sense of collective socialism. When a group of Chinese guerillas falls into his hands, he refuses to kill them. He lets Odgeson go "because he was a comrade! I didn't kill him because he was a man."(65) And Malaya "wasn't life to him anymore, and he had to get away... ." (66) His journey back home re-establishes his

connections with his class, and initiates a new consciousness of what is to be done in England;

I ain't let the bastards grind me down in the Air Force, and I wain't let them get a look in at grinding me down outside.(67)

Brian's experiences in Malaya serve as an awakening to the political realities of his own situation, a coming-to-terms with his own consciousness, a key-to-the-door realisation of personal and political perception.

Jack Mitchell, in his study of Tressell's work, perceives of Sillitoe's novel as a turning point in English fiction for giving expression to the universality of class struggle, and regards this achievement as

one of the artistic qualities or abilities which differentiates the new socialist realism (under capitalist conditions) from the older critical realism. This means that socialist realism... must... show the vast and manifold richness of working-class life as a way of life, must show in terms of proletarian life and character the kind of life we are fighting to free. This rich grasp of working-class life *in toto* has seldom been achieved since Tressell.(68)

Sillitoe's fictional depiction of the first twenty years in the life of Brian Seaton is distinguished both by a rather documentary realism and by the absence of the flawed portrayals that mar many of his other novels. In *Key to the Door*, he has created the primary experiences in working-class life that lead to revolutionary consciousness. This approach is further enhanced and developed in the William Posters trilogy.

The anti-heroic qualities of Sillitoe's early protagonists seem to be reduced to a minimum level in *Key to the Door* and the William Posters trilogy. Yet, although Liza Atkin, Brian Seaton and Frank Dawley differ from Arthur Seaton and Smith in their political involvement, it is significant to notice that all these characters have something in common. They have similar identified social backgrounds, and they feel strongly about themselves being exploited by repressive forces. Dee Vaverka regards as positive Sillitoe's individualisation of his working-class characters, and writes that

It is to Sillitoe's credit that he does not lump everyone within the working class into a gray mass. This he achieves by rendering members of the working class as individual personalities while at the same time depicting them in terms of their class identification.(69)

It is not difficult to detect a strain of continuity in Sillitoe's portrayal of his working-class protagonists. For although Brian Seaton and Frank Dawley seem rather heroic in their perception of reality and their identification with their communities and various political causes, they still stand as individuals trying to express their anger and defiance in ways and places alien to the limited worlds of Arthur and Smith. It seems to me that the characters of Brian Seaton and Frank Dawley are not very dissimilar to those of Arthur and Smith. The causes are similar, and so is the anger and defiance which mark all of them. The direct political involvement of the later protagonists, motivated by a growing political consciousness, marks their characters as a development and continuation of the earlier protagonists rather than differentiates them from the earlier anti-heroes of Sillitoe's early fiction. It is of vital significance to register the shifts in Sillitoe's narrative language and his treatment of his characters in *The Death of William Posters* and *A Tree on Fire*, and his construction of the setting in *The Flame of Life*. The removal of the protagonist from his Nottingham slum into a bigger world with wider physical and spiritual horizons determines a new kind of experience in addition to a new mode of narrative expression.

In spite of these shifts, some basic assumptions and attitudes - inherent in Arthur's and Smith's defiance - run strong in the trilogy. The 'them-us' dichotomy is basic to the characters' awareness and defiance. Frank Dawley speaks of the "bastards" who "'wank peoples brains off every night with telly advertisements'", (70) and the artist Albert Handley expresses his hostility towards "'The toff-nosed posh papers'" (71) and the art critics whom he "'would stand... up against a wall and shoot... like dogs... .'" (72) Like Arthur's and Smith's, Frank's language is class conscious and reveals his realisation of the war he is born into;

'I saw much injustice to accept that. I knew which side of the fence I stood on, and still do. I made others see it as well.' (73)

On the other hand, anarchistic expressions are still part of the characters' defiance. Shelley Jones, the American gun runner who introduces Frank to revolutionary activities in Algeria, has "one unalterable dream... to see Madison Avenue and its thousand commerces erupt into smoke and flame." (74) It is almost ironical that Sillitoe should choose to show the most radical political influence practised

on his working-class protagonists by individuals from capitalist countries. The Canadian Knottman has a major influence on the development of Brian Seaton's political consciousness (and at a point in the novel he gives him a book, presumably Tressell's novel which Brian had seen him read before), and American Shelley Jones introduces Frank Dawley to subversive activities against the French in the Algerian desert.

Frank's involvement in Algeria is shown as the result of his awareness of the conditions of his own class, the identification of the French who colonise Algeria with the category of 'them', and his growing political awareness through learning. The connection with Nottingham and what it signifies is still strong in the novels. When in Algeria, Frank sees in the desert his native working-class environment;

The slaghills of Nottinghamshire multiplied a thousand times as far as the eye could see, humps and pyramids of grey dust and shale covering the plain... .(75)

And he strongly identifies with the working-class people of Nottingham in his fight for the Algerians. He tells his wife at the end of *A Tree on Fire*:

'I had to go out there for the sake of people like us, as well as to do what I could for the Algerians - all equally... I couldn't have kept us that sort of life for long if I hadn't thought about certain people... .' (76)

Sillitoe is intent on establishing this link between Frank's identification with his working class and his involvement in Algeria to stress, once again, the universality of class struggle, and show that revolutionary activity is part of being working class. The fight against the French colonisers is a metaphor for the struggle against the British capitalist system. When smuggling arms with Shelley Jones and Moroccan men, Frank thinks, "I'm waiting in case the French show up, when I'd give a lot for it to be the British... ." (77) While earlier protagonists are content in expressing the grievances of the working class, Frank Dawley speaks and fights for another suppressed people, and at the same time finds in their war his own. Frank's feelings of the repressive limitations of England, that is "'too little for me... a bit of eagle-crap dropped out of the sky'", his work in the factory and his family motivate him to seek expression for his anger to implement his defiance.

One of the tendencies the first two novels of the trilogy have is to construct metaphors and symbols to reflect the world of the narrative. In *The Death of William Posters* the mythical figure of William Posters, referred to at times as Billy Posters, is a metaphorical personification of the English working class. The image provides a link between the history of this class and the present fictional experience of the protagonist. Frank both identifies with this image and attempts to transcend its limitations by rebelling against the historical conditions that have created it. Tramping around England, Frank feels

as if 'Bill Posters will be persecuted' were written on every blade of grass and white sea wave and he was William himself on the run even beyond cities.(79)

This quantity of being persecuted is coupled with rebellion and cunning, for

Bill Posters has been infamous in these streets for generations, bandit Posters, as well known or maybe scorned and scuffed as Robin Hood, justly celebrated in that hundred verse 'Ballad of Bill Posters' recited for generations in Nottingham street and pubs.(80)

The identification of Frank himself and previous English revolutionaries (General Ludd) with William Posters is a way of presenting the rebellious trend in working-class history as continuous. William Posters is the image of both the persecuted and rebellious English working class. The destruction of the image of William Posters takes place, ironically, in Algeria rather than in England giving way to a more conscious and active figure. This metamorphosis is expressed in the metaphor of trees on fire, which symbolises destruction and rebirth. Images of fire, flames and burning recur in *A Tree on Fire* and, like that of Bill Posters, give the novel a metaphorical dimension and a poetic mode alien to the earlier works. These images expand the prosaic mode of the narrative giving way to a metaphorical questioning of the self. After his involvement with the FLN, Frank sees the fighting in the Algerian desert as an objective correlative of his own mind and motivations;

There were too many burning trees for it not to lift up from the pool of his mind. Why was he in Algeria? Was it not destiny, that he rationalised and decided on before taking the deliberate step?(81)

Like the Malayan jungle in *Key to the Door*, the Algerian desert becomes a platform for personal quest and discovery of the self and its relation to its world. Frank feels that

the desert was the only place where he would find something... Only in the desert did one learn. He had learned all that there was to learn outside the desert. Something in him was going to be reconstituted, and he... had put himself into the position to achieve it. His life had to be filled from the fountain of his own desert, the cruel ash of his own heart...

The desert was the unknown that was being made known again. His empty soul was explaining itself, beginning to feel once more.(82)

This poetic language is almost alien to earlier novels, and the protagonist is presented here as rather romantic and passionate. Frank is allowed to show feelings and emotions which Arthur is completely cut off from. It is significant to note that the narrative strategy of the William Posters trilogy determines its attitude to and relationship with working-class readership. Although metaphor and figurative language are suppressed in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the novel establishes a solid ground on which a close relationship between the novel and working-class readers is grounded. This is achieved in the prosaic, everyday jargon employed in the novel's narrative and dialogue. Sillitoe attributes the success of his first novel among the working class to the fact that the novel appeared to them

to have been written from right in the middle of them. It wasn't anything they distrusted automatically, simply because someone wrote it who'd lived among them for the first twenty years of his life.(83)

As a matter of fact, the novel's popularity among the post-war working class was a result of what Sillitoe conceives of as the social affinity between authorship and readership, but most importantly it was the realistic style of the novel and the language it expressed itself in that most contributed to the its popularity. The novels of the William Posters trilogy adopt a different approach to language and mode of narrative. Its use of metaphor could be seen as a means of distancing itself from its working-class readers. In the same way as black people and writers distrust English language as racist for using metaphors of darkness and blackness to express evil, the average working-class person does not usually tend to trust metaphors and metaphorical language, not because they are too complicated to

understand but due to the association of these literary devices with middle-class expression. While the novels of the trilogy make use of metaphors and eloquent expressions, they at the same time mock this use and parody it. One of the remarkable shifts in Sillitoe's literary expression in the trilogy is its mocking, parody-orientated narratives. I intend to explore this tendency in relation to the novel's Quixotic and parodic treatment of characters and language, their parody of the male quest (central to the first two novels, and to a lesser degree the third), and finally to Sillitoe's concept of revolutionary activities inside British society.

Language in the novels plays on images and parodies. The angry artist Albert Handley is described as "'a sort of primitive surrealist realist... .'"(84) By placing the words "primitive", "surrealist" and "realist" as adjacent, Sillitoe renders the phrase meaningless, and the effect is both comic and parodic in the phrase's ridicule of critical terminology. On the other hand, the narrative is filled with the fantastic. Albert's brother John, a mentally-ill ex-prisoner of war, spends years in the confines of his room trying to make contact, through his wireless, with some imaginary people. He is convinced he will achieve this contact one day, and

'when my signals and those signals meet in the ether and the great love of the universe illuminates every face, when I ask the only question and an answer comes at last, as it is bound to do.'(85)

This sense of the fantastic is mocked through the events to come in the novel. Feeling he has a duty to go to Algeria and look for Frank, who is "'helping in some unrewarding, idealistic, mystical way to bring about the unification of the world'",(86) John leaves the house after setting it on fire to return later and commit suicide. It is ironic that Albert tells John "'We're all part of you'", for John's insanity reflects the Quixotic actions of the others. Towards the end of the novel, Albert announces that their community will be established "'as a memorial to my brother John, and to his life... .'"(88) Art is celebrated in the trilogy as an ideological weapon, and at the same time mocked and parodied. Albert proposes a toast to "'art... And to the war that goes on till the bitter end.'"(89) And Myra, subjected to domestic work by her husband George and later deserted by Frank,

thanked God for the voting labour masses that still seemed to inhabit the north: cloth-capped, hardworking, generous and bruto, or that was the impression she got from reading a book (or was it books?) called *Hurry on Jim* by Kingsley Wain that started by someone with eighteen pints and fifteen whiskies in him falling downstairs on his way to the top.(90)

Sillitoe is parodying here the works regarded as the strongest expression of the angry voices of the 1950s; *Hurry on Down*, *Lucky Jim*, *Room at the Top* and his own *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. It is significant to point out that this parody is achieved through the perception of the female, as the strongest parody of the Quixotic male quest is implied in the female narratives. In the above-quoted passage, Sillitoe seems to ridicule the image of the adventurous, tough, and masculine-orientated world the above novels have created.

Apart from David Storey's *Flight into Camden*, all the works discussed in this study are concerned with the male quest where the feminine world is either marginalised or seen through masculine conceptions. In the first two novels of Sillitoe's trilogy the male quest is parodied in the establishment of a feminine world completely in contrast with its counterpart. The novels are male narratives deconstructed by female narratives. Consequently, the narrative constructs and deconstructs itself at the same time. The first immediate knot Frank has to untie is his family relationships because

'A family kills you; it kills everybody, I think, the way it drags your spirit down unnecessarily.'(91)

To set on his quest, he leaves his wife and two children behind. When he feels his relationship with Pat, a middle-class village midwife he lives with during his tramping in England, is dragging him down, he walks away for it was "exactly the sort he was trying to escape."(92) And when he falls in love with Myra, an unhappy young woman suppressed by her husband, he feels that the wall he broke down by leaving his wife gave way to another wall "of equal height and thickness."(93) Later on, he leaves Myra pregnant in Morocco to smuggle arms for the Algerians. Alone and deserted, she returns to a loneliness similar to that when, with George, she

bottled, smoked, salted, pickled, baked and pre-packed; collected cook books and recipes... a super householder driven into the ground by it. Her ideal had once been to work in some newly relinquished colony, teaching economics or social relations, helping to form a new nation

form the top-heavy powergrid of exploitation...
 But George's dream drew her in, engulfed hers
 because its bricks and slate reared up around
 her... .(94)

Her experience gives way to the notion of the subversion of the male quest for the assertion of the feminine world;

 Solitude had taught her to mistrust men's
 ideals, especially those realised at her own
 desolation of spirit.(95)

Another example of the domination of the male quest and its suppression of the feminine world is the way Enid, Albert's wife, has to be subjected to her husband's eccentric life-style. She thinks of their married life as "low" and "ignoble". The subjection of the female to the conditions and effects of the male quest is both parodied and satirised in the novels' narratives.

One major element of parody in the novels is the way language is used to express revolutionary ideas, and the form subversive activities in Britain are reduced to. There is a strong tendency in English culture to regard revolutions as primitive and destructive, and view revolutionaries as mad and idiotic. John's character, his mental state and the language and concepts he identifies with are a metaphorical representation of Sillitoe's concept of revolution and revolutionaries in England. John's mind is shown to be occupied by a simple Manichean attitude as there is a massive reduction of the world to simple concepts. He talks of the

 'great hundred years war against imperialism and
 the established order, class war, civil war,
 dark and light war, the external conflict of
 them against us and us against them... .(96)

This is made to sound as the expression of a mad maniac whose mind is obsessed with conflict, and who conceives of every aspect of life as a war. Similarly, Shelley Jones conceives of the life he wants to see as a "'guerilla war, not the old artificial war that the world's lived with up to now.'"(97) In the same mocking tone, Albert's sons, Richard and Adam, are described as immersed in "subversive tasks" by distributing leaflets they printed themselves about the American intervention in Vietnam. Moreover, Frank's revolutionary activities in the Algerian desert are reduced to the level of what looks like a child's play after his return to England. After Albert's house which

was "'the middle of the spider's web of revolution'"(98), is burned down by the mad John, they all move into Myra's house, in the south of England taking it as "'base zone'" for their subversive activities. Frank joins this "'literate community... a hotbed of books and conspiracy.'"(90) The mocking tone of the narrative is complete when Frank, in spite of the uncomfortable feeling of being a member of society once again, consoles himself with the thought that "perhaps he had only exchanged one form of guerilla band for another... ." (91) This parody characterises almost all of the final novel of the trilogy, *The Flame of Life*. The principal characters of the earlier two novels, including Frank and Albert, work with others in an attempt to build a meaningful existence in the utopian, rather Quixotic, community set up at the close of *A Tree on Fire*. The parodic tone achieves its highest level when the characters' theorisation on ways to disrupt what they conceive of as the corrupt nature of contemporary English society is reduced to the level of involvement in continual arguments and quarrels over domestic arrangement, sexual and marital rights and the question of sibling rivalry.(92) The novel is burdened with too much theorising existing in a vacuum, and too many dull passages carrying a didactic tone especially in the speeches of the main characters. Although Sillitoe's working-class protagonists can be active and successful in translating their anger and defiance into revolutionary activity outside the confines of the British society, once they are back in it their defiance against 'them' is reduced once again to the personal and individualistic level that characterises both Arthur's and Smith's revolt. As a result, his characters' revolt in the context of British society remains limited to the sphere of metaphorical expressions of rebellion. However, the political significance of Sillitoe's Nottingham fiction lies in its radical grasp and apprehension of the prevailing social forces in the British system.

David Storey interprets rebellion against 'them' in Sillitoe's early fiction in personal terms. In his review of *The Ragman's Daughter*, he writes:

In Sillitoe's work there is an ambiguity which is never resolved: the feeling that the revolution he would set up in society is in fact a revolution inside himself, and one which he has not yet acknowledged. Society - 'Them: The Rats' - is his externalising of something inside; a black and subtle aggression directed not against society but more truly against his own experience; his attempt to exercise some

incredible pain there rather than within himself.(93)

There is a lot of truth in Storey's interpretation. A close analysis of Sillitoe's portrayal of his protagonists in the early fiction, and an examination of the way he has sought to implement his protagonists' revolt in connection with foreign countries, would suggest that Sillitoe's fiction adopts various modes of expressing his own discontent and rejection of his own circumstances. In *Saturday and Sunday Morning*, *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* and *A Start in Life*, the aggressive tone of the narratives is revealed in a voiced expression of hostility against the world of 'them' where 'us' against 'them' is reduced to 'me' against 'them', and in the aggressive anti-social character traits of his protagonists. In *Key to the Door*, the protagonist's identification with a communal experience is rendered in the end in terms of discovery of the self and its relation to others (Brain's expedition to the jungle in Malaya and its effect on him). And in *Frank Dawley*, we encounter an eccentric individual cut off from his community but attempts to identify with it in his involvement in a foreign war. It is significant to trace both Sillitoe's representation of his working-class Nottingham and the shift in his political convictions as a person.

Like other post-war, working-class novelists, Sillitoe drew on the life and place he was born and grew up in. In spite of his rejection of the notion that he was drawing on a life and a people known to him, he states that his early fiction was "sort of against the backdrop of what was my reality in life." (94) Sillitoe left his class geographically at an early age when he moved from Nottingham after giving up factory work. His physical ties with the working class were therefore founded upon the eighteen years of his childhood and youth in the backstreets of industrial Nottingham. This is probably one of the major reasons Sillitoe dedicated a large part of the subject-matter of his early fiction to the portrayal of working-class youth. The impact of these years can be felt in all of his fiction. Once he wrote: "every author is the chief hero of his own novels." (95) Sillitoe is more concerned with ordinary urban ways of life than any other contemporary working-class writer, and he turns against it more bitterly. David Craig writes:

Revulsion from the squalor and harshness of the old place [Nottingham] - a deep - laid sense of its normality and homeliness and vigour: these two clusters of feelings are forever surfacing

and going under again in Sillitoe's imagination, heating to boiling-point and dying away again. Working-class Nottingham comprises the gamut of human nature. It is what a free spirit is driven to flee from. Both these 'incompatible' attitudes lie at the root of his vision.(96)

In Sillitoe's early fiction, there are detailed descriptions of the day-to-day existence of the inhabitants of working-class districts in Nottingham, their play and work, which provided a clear comment on the post-war 'affluence'. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* updates the portrayal in Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* (1933) of life in the poor streets surrounding industrial centres. Like Stan Barstow, Sillitoe is aware of the social renewal and affluence which radically altered the conditions which Greenwood's novel depicted. Sillitoe uses familiar locale, urban sites, atmospheres and patterns of activities in homes, streets and factories in order to create a fictional world deeply rooted in a recognisable reality. Like Lawrence, a very strong sense of place pervades his fiction, and, like him, he extensively transcribes the thoughts of his characters. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* relies heavily on the colloquial inner voice of its hero. The vivid domestic detail in which Sillitoe presents Arthur's Christmas celebrations with his Aunt's big family strongly recalls Lawrence, as much as the almost religious release Arthur experiences with his girlfriend, "as if the weight of the world had in this minute been lifted from them both... they broke through to the opened furrows of the earth."(97) Sillitoe's characters usually act out the drama of their lives in the limits of these areas with their distinctive

two up and two down, with digital chimneys like pig's tits on the rooftops sending up heat and smoke into the cold trough of a windy sky.(98)

They are particularly used to the rhythms of urban life, where their environment becomes part of their daily lives. Going back home one night, Arthur and his brother Fred feel that

The maze of streets sleeping between tobacco factory and bicycle factory drew them into the enormous spreads of its suburban bosom and embraced them in sympathetic darkness.(99)

Sillitoe's fascination with the industrial urban streets is unique to his work in the fiction of the period, and this is perhaps why he turns against this environment more bitterly than any of the other

writers. Streets are more attractive and inviting than open country.

Arthur is aware in winter how

each dark street patted his shoulder and became
a friend... Houses lay in rows and ranks, a
measure of safety in such numbers... .(100)

His character are defined by this urban setting, which determines their actions and daily routines and relationships. This setting is also characterised by industrial noise and crowding which leave no room for privacy or quiet. Once out of doors, Arthur and his father

were more aware of the factory rumbling a
hundred yards away... Generators whined all
night, and during the day giant milling-macines
working away on cranks and pedals... gave to the
terrace a sensation of living within breathing
distance of some monstrous being that suffered
from a disease of the stomach.(101)

This setting and reality echo Dickens's envisaged atmosphere of the noise of the machine in *Hard Times*, and give continuation to the urban industrial society established by the advent of industrialism. In Sillitoe's early fiction, characters escape from this noise and pressure by indulging in pubbing and gatherings where the 'local' becomes an escape, though noisy and crowded, and an identification with others. It is these limitations that Sillitoe's working-class protagonists shun in the later fiction. Brian Seaton gives up his factory work and life in urban Nottingham, in *Key to the Door*, to enlist for Malaya in order to seek a broader world where his growing consciousness can be nurtured. Frank Dawley identifies the limitations of his Nottingham district with those of England, where he feels compelled "'to crash this rotten barrier... to look at my life, from the outside'",(102) and Albert Handley conceives of England, again through his feelings of being locked up in his local environment, as lacking "'the imagination or energy to be revolutionary.'"(103) These feelings, often implied in the early works and more openly in the later fiction, are central to Sillitoe.

Sillitoe's later development has exhibited the weakness of his ties with his region and class and his own ideological estrangement. This estrangement found expression in Sillitoe's views on his work and class, and in developed right-wing political convictions. After 1970, Sillitoe started marginalising the issue of class especially in his interviews and articles. In spite of his former insistence on the 'them-us' social mainspring, he started to speak equivocally about the

issue of class and nature of his fiction. In an interview given in 1970, he states:

I don't believe in working class; any class...
To think if an individual in terms of class is
irrelevant. I've never thought of anything like
that when I'm writing; it's anathema to me...
. (104)

Sillitoe's continual insistence after 1970 on his belief "in individuals from A to Zed", "in merit, in intelligence, in making your own way" (105) can only be interpreted in terms of his personal and financial success as a writer in a way similar to Braine's. This lends more credibility to Storey's interpretation of Sillitoe's revolt against 'them', in his early fiction' in personal terms of rebellion against his own class and its limitations, or more accurately perhaps, against what he experienced as working-class life in his childhood and youth in Nottingham. Nigel Gray, who strongly attacks Sillitoe's attitude, attributes his marginalisation of the class issue to the fact that he is "now a long way from his roots." (106) Since his rejection of the notion of class as a base to his early fiction, Sillitoe has associated himself with a corresponding political shift to the Right in his voiced anti-soviet and pro-zionist views. S. Atherton writes:

In 1974 Sillitoe visited Israel and the United States, both for the first time. By now he had become strongly and vocally pro-Zionist in his views. In a letter to *The Times* the previous October, for example, he argued for the continued Israeli occupation of Sinai, the Golan Heights and the east bank of the Jordan... (107)

In spite of this later development, Sillitoe's Nottingham fiction remains a remarkable expression of the grievances and dissent of the post-war English working-class, and a penetrative comment on the class-divided British society. And whether the revolt against 'them' is personal and individualistic or not, it remains a rejection of the social, economic and political structures of post-war British system, for a rejection of the limitations of one's own class is in the end a rejection of the conditions that establish and perpetuate these limitations.

In my assessment of the politics of working-class 'bias' and rebellion in Sillitoe's Nottingham fiction, I have manifested the nature of his characters' revolts and indicated that these revolts are mostly conceived in individual terms in the individual's attempt to preserve his/her integrity in the process of self-realisation. I have

also pointed out that when the incipient rebellions of his working-class protagonists transcend the barriers of self-realisation and aspire for a collective expression, they are either terminated by a resentful conformism or caricatured through their self-mocking 'Quixoticism'. In the next section, I will be evaluating the ways in which Barry Hines' work reflects his conception of class society, and assessing the means through which it attempts to rupture the ideology of 'affluence' in its emphasis on the educational system and its relationship to the working class.

Section V : Barry Hines: Education and the Working Class

One of the most positive aspects of change in post-war British society, as perceived in the 1950s, was the opening up of increasing educational opportunities to 'bright', working-class children. The 1944 Education Act ideologically redefined the education system as an open and achievement-orientated process, thus transforming secondary education provision from its previous income-determined base, in a class-divided society, to a provisional position determined by the abilities of the individual. Consequently the responsibility for educational failure was transformed from class-based terms to the individual. This section is concerned with the evaluation of this change through an analysis of the fictional works which tackled the question of education in the context of the social differences which still persisted in the structure of the British Society. The connection I intend to establish here between these works and the sociological studies of education in the context of class disparities is both intentional and vital to the understanding and evaluation of the ideological dimensions of this change, as both fields of work carried identical and complementary, ideological perspectives of the question of education in the light of this significant change.

The sociological research of the 1950s and 1960s and the later period reveals that this opening up of educational opportunities was "partly a myth", (1) and shows that the proportion of working-class children who went on to higher education was far less than that of middle-class children of similar measured intelligence. In *A Ragged Schooling*, Robert Roberts shows that few could go to school and then onto colleges and universities. (2) Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden centre their book *Education and the Working Class* on the question: Why is it that relatively few working-class children complete the total grammar school course? Their research shows that between 1949 and 1952 in Huddersfield, of the pupils passing HSC or GCE 'A' level: 36% had working-class fathers while 64% had middle-class fathers. Their visits to working-class homes led them to conclude that those who belonged to the minority of working-class parents whose children successfully completed the grammar school course "came from the most prosperous, house-owning reaches of the working-class" (3), and that "children from the relatively poorer homes do not usually complete the full course, even if they manage to gain admission." (4) They relate this to parents' education and occupation, family size, income, etc.

They classify as myths the notions that English education since 1944 has received lavish financing in the Welfare State, and that the achieved education of the working-class child has greatly improved, and conclude that "any form of *nominally academic* selection will, in effect, be a form of *social selection*."(5) The connection made by Jackson and Marsden between education and the social system is expressed in stronger political terms in Raymond Williams' *The Long Revolution* as education is directly linked to culture and democracy. In a brief survey of the development of the education system in English society, Williams concludes that there is an

essential continuity, despite changes in the economy, of a pattern of thinking from a rigid class society, with its grading by birth leading to occupation, and then assimilated to a changing society, with a new system of grading.(6)

He states that after the 1944 Education Act,

Instead of the effort to reinterpret contemporary culture, and to define a general education for our society as a whole, the emphasis, both in the organisation of institutions, and in the thinking of educators, has been on the process of sorting and grading.(7)

These studies, among many others, strongly refute the notion that education is an independent sphere of activity *per se*, and assess it within its dialectic relationship with social, economic and cultural domains; i.e., relating it to politics and ideology. This relationship is strongly expressed and established in Barry Hines's works considered in this section where the education system is directly related to the entire political structure of society.

The other aspect of change, which the changes in educational policy led to, was individual mobility and its social and psychological impact on the individuals who had the opportunity to break out of their communities and class through higher education and its social and professional demands. At its best, formal state education

has offered to a small minority of working-class children an opportunity to explore the richness and variety of the world. But this has only been possible at the expense of deep emotional estrangement... .(8)

As working-class families invested their hopes in their children's performances in education as a means to success through the opportunities they themselves never had, the tensions and

contradictions between roots and aspirations proved to be a long-term social and emotional problem of those individuals who moved out of their class leaving their families behind. For the 'Scholarship Boys' who profited by educational opportunities, personal pressures were often as great as public achievements. These pressures are nowhere as clearly expressed as they are in Richard Hoggart's "Unbent Springs: A Note on the Uprooted and the Anxious" in his book *The Uses of Literacy*. He writes that with the 'Scholarship Boys' - who are "'declassified'", "at the fiction-point of two cultures"(9), and "uncertain, dissatisfied and gnawed by self-doubt"(10),

the sense of loss is increased precisely because they are emotionally uprooted from their class, often under the stimulus of a stronger critical intelligence or imagination, qualities which can lead them into an unusual self-consciousness before their own situation... Involved with this may be a physical uprooting from their own class through the medium of the scholarship system. A great many seem to me to be affected in this way, though a very small proportion badly; at one boundary the group includes psychotics; at the other, people leading apparently normal lives but never without an underlying sense of some unease.(11)

These emotional tensions and uncertainties emerge out of factors like the individual's involvement in two life-styles; community and emotions against individualism and intellect. Both David Storey's *Pasmore* (1972) and Raymond Williams's *Border Country* (1960) deal with the problems of relating to one's family and class after having left them. What is interesting is that these two novels deal with individuals falling into Hoggart's two categories of the "'anxious and the uprooted.'" While Williams's novel centres upon the experience of an individual whose normal life is underlied with anxiety and unease, Storey's portrays its hero as a psychotic in search of his lost identity.

There is a strong link between Hines's art and his life. His experiences in mining, soccer, and teaching are transformed into the artistic material of his literary practice to reflect the social and economic conditions of his working-class region and to express his understanding of the ideological factors perpetuating these conditions of living. He was born in the small Yorkshire mining village of Hoyland Common, between Barnsley and Rotherham, where his father was a miner, and he was one of the few local boys who made it to Ecclesfield

Grammar School. He showed considerable skills in sports and played for a few years on the fringes of professional soccer. After working in the administrative and technical fields of the mining industry, he later qualified as a Physical Education teacher. Hines's ties with the North of England run deep through his life and work. After two years of teaching in a London comprehensive school, he returned to Yorkshire and he has lived and worked there ever since. Northern rural life and the problems of its working-class communities have always formed the material and subject-matter of his art. His soccer experience found expression in his first novel *The Blinder* (1966) which centres on a rebellious, young, working-class footballer and can be placed within the tradition of Sillitoe's working-class heroes. Miners and mining communities are hardly absent from his works, and form the social and economic background of his characters and settings. *Billy's Last Stand* (1965), his first work, was a play about a local man who slept in allotment sheds and helped local people "get their coals in". *The Price of Coal* (1979) incorporated an overtly political standpoint, and *Looks and Smiles* (1981) portrays working-class youth in Sheffield trapped by economic recession, governmental cut-backs and a prospect of permanent unemployment.

It was, however, Hines's teaching that opened his eyes to the way in which class society perpetuates its divisions through the ideological role and functioning of the school system. His major concern was the "criminal... waste of talent amongst the working class" as educators, through a biased selective education system, tell "the majority of kids that they are failures and then effectively condition them into believing it." (12) This led him to believe that the first job in teaching was "to awaken the conscience of the working class... and educate the kids to say no." (13) However, his perception of teachers in the modern British education system as "the paid instruments of the system" taught him the futility of the reforming potentialities of formal education, and led to the political conclusion that

education is not an instrument of change now...
education reflects the class-system, and the
system has to change before education can. (14)

This conclusion is implicitly expressed both in *A Kestrel for a Knave* (1968), which he called his fictional "criticism of education", (15) and the television play *Speech Day* (1977), and overtly voiced in *First Signs* (1972). It is in this regional and social context that Hines's

work amalgamates politics and art. He conceives of himself as "politically involved", though not in any organisational sense, and of his art as "committed", and perceives radical change through "some kind of revolution... an educated workers' revolution..."(16) Basic to his commitment as a writer is Hines's almost Marxist conviction that

The real instrument of change is where the workers take over their own factories, take over means of production.(17)

Commenting on *A Kestrel for a Knave* (1968), Hines stated that he wanted to write

a small book about what it was like being an ordinary kid in a Secondary Modern School ... a quiet, unsensational book, showing that secondary-modern lads have talents, that most kids are good at something if only they are given the chance.(18)

Billy Casper is a working-class boy soon to be a school leaver. He is an outcast, a knave in modern social hierarchy, for neither his family nor his school and his society have anything to offer him. Forced into alienation both at home and at school, and rejected and terrorised by adults, his identification with a kestrel hawk he keeps and trains it in his sole means to assert himself in a repressive social environment, and a symbolic one of indignation and defiance.

Billy's repression and limited revolt are placed within a specific correlation of domestic and social structures. Through the repressive roles of his family and school, Hines manages to express Billy's social deprivation and render the political undertones of his criticism subtle and oblique. His family's poverty and this brutal treatment of him (after his father leaves home upon learning of his wife's affair with his brother) are of primary significance to Billy's deprivation both at home and at school. To his promiscuous, careless mother, Billy is useless until he starts making money like Jud, his brother. His education means nothing to her. She makes him work for a newsagent in the mornings before school, and when he turns for her sympathy and help when Jud kills the hawk, she is as indifferent and aggressive as Jud is. Jud, on the other hand, is an embodiment of the domestic violence inflicted on Billy, and represents an element of the selfish bullying males Billy's world is peopled by. Ironically, it is Jud who is the nearest thing that Billy has to a father. Billy's half-brother, Jud is immature, big and strong, and his main pleasure is in having a drink and a woman on Saturday nights after a week's

work in the mines. He stands in front of the mirror knotting his tie and "'hopin' I'll be laid watching a bird'"(19) who is "'goin' to be lucky tonight'"(20) established his egotistic character and his main concern. He terrorises Billy and ridicules him as a "'Wildman of the woods.'"(21) Physical violence is most evident in his killing of the hawk when Billy fails to deliver his betting money on a horse which eventually happens to win. Jud's character is significant because of its contrast with Billy, the underdog. Hines clearly aims at undermining the overpowering 'heroics' of characters like Jud's in the novel. Jud's character is, in a way, a parody of working-class masculinity most notably portrayed in Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton. Like Seaton, Jud aspires to the young working-class 'tough' who likes his Saturday night pint with a 'bird' to follow. It is in his aggression towards Billy that the hollow egocentric individualism of this type of working-class hero image is exposed and criticised. In this respect Hines, unlike Sillitoe

has been able to negotiate this artistic pitfall and overcome the limitation of distortive, working-class images.(22)

Hines's condemnation of Jud's character is implied in the general message of the book; strength and brutality are the means of survival in a harsh world. The novel suggests, through the living conditions of Billy's family, that despite the improvements in the standard of working-class living in the post-war period, real material want still exists in the midst of the economic boom.

The education system is criticised as a whole in the novel. Billy is a few weeks away from leaving school. His years of education have left him almost illiterate (notice his spelling in "Tall Story", for instance). He has not been told how to join the local library (and this is why he is forced to steal a falconry book from a local bookshop), he knows nothing about National Insurance, current events, or his right in law, and has no positive thoughts of a possible future career. He is on the fringe of the affluent society, enjoying few of the benefits. The interview with the careers officer demonstrates his disinterest in any future job and the failure of social institutions to recognise any talents individuals like Billy might have. This is summed up in the officer's offer of a mining job, and Billy's "'I shall have to take what they've got... I'll get paid for not liking it... .'"(23) Although he is a natural gymnast (visible in his agility in the woods, and in his balance on the goal bar), Billy's

sport training consists of standing in the cold on a wet soccer field. He has an immense skill and a natural ability with wild animals, but the nearest he comes to this at school is his animal-like fight with MacDowall. Society and the education system have made a victim of him.

To Billy, school differs little from home, except that at school the correspondingly repressive regime is formalised by the official status of his repressors. Hines personifies this repression in a series of teacher portraits; Crossley, Sugden and Headmaster Gryce, all of whom share an unredeeming contempt for their pupils in general and Billy in particular. In his portrayal of the school's tyrannical atmosphere, Hines does so with a sense of humour that often characterises his writings. Crossley is mockingly shown to grab a boy by the arms and "yank him in the open"(24), for coughing in the presence of headmaster Gryce, to compensate for his weakness and fear of the headmaster. Sugden is portrayed as a tyrant in the football match he organises with his pupils, his violent threats of Billy, and in punishing him in the cold shower after the match for failing to keep the goal successfully. His tyrannical treatment of Billy is both condemned and ridiculed. Shouting at Billy for not having sportswear, Sugden starts:

'you've skyved and scrounged and borrowed
and...'

He tried this lot on one breath, and his ruddy complexion heightened and glowed like a red balloon as he held his breath and fought for another verb.

'... and... BEG...'. The balloon burst and the pronunciation of the verb disintegrated.(25)

Gryce, on the other hand, is portrayed as one who terrorises both his pupils and teachers alike. His weapon is his stick. Hines does not intend to caricature him as a petty tyrant as Dickens does with the headmaster in *Hard Times*. It is clear from the realistic tone of the novel that he is, too, aware of the infected climate of fear that this type of arbitrary administration of penalties tends to produce. His policy and helplessness express the 'generation gap' between the younger and older generations in the community. The lack of understanding is seen in the novel in Gryce, as well as in Mr Porter, the newsagent Billy works for. This adds to the loneliness and

aspiration of Billy. Gryce's helplessness and inability to communicate with his pupils, and teachers, are most clearly evident in his cruel punishment of the messengerboy hastily mistaken to be one of the smokers queuing for punishment. Nonetheless, his monologue-like speech in front of these boys reflects his despair and inability to understand their problems;

'I'm sick of you boys, you'll be the death of me. Not a day goes without me having to deal with a line of boys... and the school's no better now than it was on the day it opened. I can't understand it... there is something happening today that's frightening, that makes me feel it's all been a waste of time... I can understand why we had to use it [the stick] back in the 'twenties and 'thirties. Those were hard times; they bred hard people, and it needed hard measures to deal with them... So for want of a better solution I continue using the cane, knowing full well that you'll be back time and time again for some more.'(26)

Gryce is shown to be unable to adjust himself and his means of discipline to the modern school pupils. There is, ironically, a similarity between his and Billy's positions: both are forced to live in a world they cannot understand or influence, and which can cause them intense pain. The difference is that Gryce can inflict some of this pain on his pupils and teachers, while Billy cannot. It is in Mr Farthing that Hines depicts the kind of teacher he admires; one who makes an effort to understand his pupils and their social problems, and is basically in solidarity with his working-class pupils, and who rejects the idea of teachers functioning as a sort of academic police force in schools. His interest in his pupils is revealed in the genuine interest he shows in Billy's training of the hawk, as he asks him to demonstrate in class the way he trains it, and later visits him in the field while he is flying the kestrel. He gives an attentive ear to Billy's complaints about the school and the teachers' treatment of pupils as "'muck'", and "'idiots'", "'numbskulls'" and "'cretins'".(27)

Billy is rejected by his society, and is looked at as a delinquent. His vices (lies, theft, rudeness, dirt, violence, etc.) are his means of fighting back. Although alienated, he is agile, defiant and ready to fight for what he wants. When he speaks to Kes, and about her, he does so with clarity and forcefulness that make a mockery of his school work, and when he writes his "Tall Story" something of great power emerges against the awkward grammar and

spelling. Billy's boredom with school, and society's rejection of him push him to escape to nature, which is still shown in its harshness (the thrush dragging the worm from the lawn, Kes tearing a sparrow to pieces, and the bark of the tree rubbing Billy's hands as sore as did Gryce's cane). Both nature and Kes are symbols of simplicity and certainty, purpose and independence; the very qualities denied to Billy in his life in the city. His sense of awareness and fulfilment is acutely stimulated only outside the estate, in the wildlife of the countryside. Flight imagery fill the book providing a contrast to Billy's home, school and society. To a certain extent, Billy is able to compensate for his material and spiritual deprivation by creating his own limited and enclosed world of security and emotional fulfilment around the hawk. The garden shed where he keeps the bird becomes a haven of tidiness and order. Within the symbolic structure of the novel, Billy and the kestrel are clearly envisaged as being kindered spirits - both trapped, perhaps, but sharing an unspoken resolve to resist total regimentation. He confides in Kes as his sole companion, and complains to her about his mother's indifference and Jud's brutality. Furthermore, Kes becomes his means to escape his troubles with other boys on the estate, she is his weapon to defend himself against their bullying. The incident when Billy frightens the boy on a tricycle by telling him the Kes feeds on small boys on bicycles, eyes first, is a humorous example of this. His admiration for the hawk comes not from her being "'beautifully proportioned'", as Farthing notices, but from the fact that

'It's fierce, an' it's wild, an' its not bothered about anybody, not even me right. And that's why it's great.' (28)

It is her pride and independence that make her beautiful. She can not be tamed like other birds, but can only be trained. Hines's choice of a kestrel hawk is intentional in the book. He states;

Falconry ... is a difficult, complex art; I wanted to show that when the motivation is there, a so-called "non-academic C-stream boy could master it. I thought I would like to show that these kids can do something which is in fact very skillful - not the old tale about them being cobblers and joiners... .(29)

The other reason is that according to the *Fifteenth-Century Boke of St. Albans*, the kestrel was allowed to belong to a knave because it was useless to be trained and worthless for hunting purposes. Billy succeeds in training the hawk after, ironically, stealing a book and

reading about falconry, and Kes becomes a symbol of a disalienating function. As Nigel Gray writes:

Billy of course is identified with Kes. He won't crawl. He doesn't attack. He attempts to withdraw. But ultimately he will fight back.(30)

As Billy is identified with Kes, Jud's assault on the bird's shed, towards the end of the novel, is an assertion of the violence inflicted on Billy. Kes's sudden death causes Billy, now alone, to act in an unusually aggressive fashion. For the first time in the novel, he openly attempts to strike back physically as his previous passive resistance turns into active revolt. Continuing the animal imagery, Billy is pictured clinging tenaciously at Jud's throat while lashing out with his feet "like a hare"(31) at his mother. He holds the dead hawk in their faces as a weapon. After this dramatic confrontation, Billy sets out on a symbolic, almost dream-like journey, towards the town centre. Forcing an entry into a derelict cinema, he sits in the darkness as the surrounding evokes mental pictures in his mind. His thoughts flashback to the time he was with his father in a warm cinema, eating ice-cream and sweets, and evoke the image of his mother and uncle making love on the couch and his father leaving home, while he and Jud quarrelled. Then there is a sudden shift to an imaginary projection of Billy himself, Jud and Kes on the cinema screen;

Billy as hero... Big Billy. Kes on his arm. Big Kes... Billy casting Kes off... Jud breaks from cover, running hard through the heather. Kes sees him and stoops, breath taking stoop, audience gasps... Back to Billy on the screen. Back to Kes on the screen. Billy proud in the audience. Casting her off again... Jud breaking.(32)

Billy's defiance is shown too ingrained to be quelled by the death of the hawk. The blow has only stimulated his determination to strike back again and again. Kes has served a prime purpose in helping him to deal with his own sense of inferiority and alienation in the process of overcoming them.

The events of the novel seem, at first, to span across a period of several months, from the summer of Billy's nesting discovery of a young kestrel hawk to the late winter of its dramatic death. In fact, the time-span is one single day as the beginning and end of the novel coincide with Billy getting up in the morning to do his paper round and later returning to bed after burying the dead bird in the evening.

During the intervening space of time, Hines inserts a series of flashbacks in between the events of Billy's school day in which Billy recalls episodes of how he first caught and began to train the kestrel hawk. These mental recollections occur mainly during the earlier part of the day when Billy, tired, drifts off on several occasions into snatches of surreptitious sleep. Partly through his tiredness, partly as a symptom of withdrawal, Billy continues even in the afternoon to opt out of the flow of life around him. However, as the novel develops the narrative is less frequently uninterrupted by this type of elucidating mental reversion. In this way, Hines achieves an interlocking compactness and economy of structure wherein both plot content and prose are joined in a balanced unity of background details and climatic tension. It is only at the end that the reader is allowed access to Billy's innermost thoughts.

What distinguishes the book is the clarity of detail and imagery. Hines depends on acute observation of detail to avoid any lack of subtlety and ability to express his characters' emotions. The approach is heavily visual. Another feature of the novel is the sense of the local and the regional. The novel is set in Barnsley (though the name is not mentioned) which was at the centre of the Industrial Revolution, and many of the features unique to life in this area are shown; the broad and strong dialect, drab and uniform buildings, the raw and hard climate and way of life, a town dominated by the mining industry and coal pits, yet it is a short walk for Billy from his home to farmland, typical of many Northern towns. This makes the novel a regional one describing a particular geographical area and a specific life-style. One of the main strengths of the novel is a disturbing feature common to Hines's works; in spite of new schools and the advent of a Welfare State, life for a child like Billy can be as hard and cruel as it has ever been. Hines's characters are working class, uneducated, and not naturally articulate and fluent: hence the absence of long speeches in the novel. The absence of middle or upper-class characters in the novel is the strongest pointer to a class-ridden society. Billy is completely cut off from this style of life, and knows of it only through brief glimpses through half-shut doors. Working-class society is presented as isolated.

The novel is characterised by honesty, compassion and realism. It is neither a moralistic nor a sensational tale emphasising the hero fighting the villains of adult society. Actually, Billy is very much an anti-hero as the reasons why society treats him like this are

detailed in the book (a thief, rude, violent, badly behaved), nor is it true that noone understands or helps him (Farthing). The realistic achievement of the novel is most evident in the fact that characters like Headmaster Gryce, Crossley and Mrs Casper are condemned, but treated with compassion for their failing are understood and shown by Hines. They are, in their turns, victims of society, just like Billy. The system as a whole is criticised as rotten affecting its members like Gryce who inflict pain on children like Billy. The novel in a way, pleads for society's recognition of the individual.

First Signs (1972) is structured on various interlocking thematic notions; the appreciation of where one truly belongs, clinging to one's original identity, re-establishing physical and emotional links with one's own community, and finding political expression in communal experience. Tom Renshaw is a young school teacher who, after a period of absence, re-establishes links with the people of the Yorkshire mining village where he was born. Upon his arrival home, Tom discovers that his community is breaking down in the wake of pit closures and the removal of families to the city flats. Through this involvement in local educational and political problems, Hines voices some of the unspoken conclusions of *A Kestrel for a Knave* which contained an explicit critique of the education system. In this sense, the novel can be looked at as a complementary statement to the earlier novel.

Tom's preoccupation with, and commitment to, his background and its values are revealed in his relationships with Helen - a rich English woman who lives in a luxury villa on an Italian island - and Zelda - a middle-class, fashion journalist he first meets in Italy and alter in London. His clashes with Helen, and fights with her rich friends, his "'natural enemies'", (33) reveal "'centuries of hatred for bastards'" (34) like these, and his refusal of Helen's offer of a job in Italy and his rejection of the luxuries of London show his complete attachment to his home community. Although he has self-confident womanising attributes, his sexual encounters with both women are void of any emotional commitment, and are described in a language that is purely sexual and lacking in any emotive touch. Tom's strong identification with the working-classes of his Northern region is symbolically expressed in the recurrent episodes of him crying his name inside derelict mines and fields, the places where his history has been made reflecting,

centuries of oppression, life-times of blighted expectations and scant rewards ... a long history of bitter struggle for their rightful share of the wealth which they had produced.(35)

These cries are signs of protest, anger, and identification.

As in his other works, Hines' identification with Northern rural life is strongly expressed here. Upon his arrival to the North, Tom's "country" is identified in terms of

Miles upon miles of woodland, meadow and crop, undulating and folding in on itself as it rose and merged into the moors, which formed the horizon in the far distance. Slotted about this pastoral landscape, as if to forestall any suggestion of prettiness, were villages with their attendant mines and muck-stacks. Each unit stood as compact as the property on a monopoly square and the lack of any development between them left the overall essentially rural.(36)

A symbol of this landscape is people's faces which looked "hard and raw... worn and rough... the faces of the industrial working class."(37) Hines's definition of 'his country' is similar to 'Lawrence's England'; rural and unspoilt by industry. As in *Kes*, the world Tom identifies with is the village with its green planes and countrylife. References to birds, animals and plants are ample, and the connection between local people and birds is symbolically expressed, for

Sometimes the birds were hours late. Sometimes they came back days, or even weeks late, when they had been given up for lost, and sometimes they never came back.(38)

The strongest symbolic identification with birds is made when Tom shows Zelda a blackbird's nest where the birds nested early that year, a "'first sign'"(39) symbolically referring to the successful teachers' strike in the town and the first skirmishes of a struggle which materialised in the solidarity between teachers, miners, parents and pupils. This identification with rural life is finally strengthened when Tom asks Zelda to leave London and live with him in the North, not in his village necessarily, but in a "'village somewhere.'"(40)

As in Raymond Williams's *Border Country* and David Storey's *Pasmore*, the strongest link Hines's hero has with his home community is his father. It is mostly in their relationship and conversations that political consciousness is expressed in the second half of the

novel. Sam Renshaw is a socialist miner whose politics are "born of necessity" rather than academic education. A union activist, his influence on Tom is great, and his belief that "'the only way to understand the problems is to be amongst them'"(41) reflects both Tom's commitment to his community and Hines's life and art. He is an autodidact, and among his books Tom finds Dickens, Hardy, Orwell, Lawrence and books on workers' rights. Hines is anxious in this novel to advance the notion that working-class, socialist politics naturally emerge from the workers' social and economic conditions. Tom's awareness of the miners' problems and conditions of work ("weary from the toil, their torn and dirty uniforms told an epic conflict fought in a private man's land away from the eyes of women and little boys."(42) lends strength and continuity to his political understanding of the education system as an integral part of the system as a whole. The strongest political statement about the education system is voiced not by Tom, but by his father;

'Education only reflects the society we live in, it doesn't change it. The whole system is geared to keep the power in the hands of the minority, where it's always been. Only when you've got a decent society will you get a decent education system... .(43)

This notion of a radical change in the structure of power is central to Hines's political thinking, and is voiced later in his television play *Speech Day* (1977) where Ronnie's grandfather states

we ain't interested in size of crumbs, or even slices of cake. We want bakery ... so that we can determine the sort of cake that's to be baked.(44)

Tom is portrayed as a teacher involved in the affairs of his community and pupils, one that Farthing in *Kes* might develop into. Upon his return home, he attempts to know the village, his students and their immediate problems. His interest in George Schofield, one of the "'wasted potential ... The talent that just withers away through boredom and lack of care'"(45), is indicative of Tom's interest in his working-class students and his awareness of the educational system's interest in the "'academic minority'" and negligence of the rest. His active role in the teachers' strike, and his speeches highlight Hines's criticism of the education system implicitly expressed in *Kes* and *Speech Day*. The strike is presented as a conscious protest not only against low wage-pay, but

about a festering discontent amongst vast numbers of teachers ... about equalities in the pay structure, ... about young teachers frustrated with a moribund system ... about equality and justice for all the children, and not just the same old privileged few ... about the whole future of equality of education....(46)

Hines perceives the problems of education as affecting and concerning teachers, students, parents and workers alike. As in both *Kes* and *Speech Day*, the attack on the education system is also accompanied with an attack on individual teachers. Both Headmaster Swinburne in *First Signs* and the headmaster in *Speech Day* are presented as conservative figures, more interested in formalities than the real process of education, and opposed to any radical change in the education system. Swinburne's attitude towards his teachers' strike illustrates his resentment of their action as "'degrading unprofessional... tactics... [demonstrating] the ultimate triumph of force over reason...'"(47) The success of the strike - as teachers, parents, workers and student get together - is seen as the 'first signs' of a constructive communal action for change;

on that Friday afternoon, a new consciousness was born at Firehill. For the first time many of the students saw that their teachers were not such a race apart, that their problems were their parents' problems. For the first time they realised the staggering potential of many of their students; those belligerent pathetic sloths who repeatedly balked at their diluted academic syllabuses were questions involved because these questions were relevant to their own lives, to the lives of their mates, and parents, and to the lives of all the people they knew on the estate.

For the first time there was unity in school, a feeling of common purpose between students and staff... Firehill would never be the same again. The spirit had stirred, and the struggle would now develop from the collective experience gained on that Friday afternoon.(48)

The anger and strong criticism of the education system implicitly expressed in *Kes* and *Speech Day* are openly voiced in this novel, and are given active expression in the communal action uniting teachers, parents and students alike in Firehill. The artistic restraint, on the other hand, of the other two works is loosened giving way to a more explicit political statement in *First Signs*.

The propagandist-socialist character of the novel marks a shift in Hines's interest from a subtle artistic expression to emphasis on

political content reminiscent of Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* in the way didactic political statements overshadow artistic practice. This propagandist tone influences the novel's plot and its structure and renders it, in my opinion, one of Hines's weakest artistic achievements. The narrative structure shifts in the first part of the novel as Tom's flashback accounts for his experience in Italy to introduce, and prepare for, his involvement in the later part of the novel. The fragmentary flashbacks inserted between the narrative of events first in London and then subsequently in the North of England undermine the structural integration of the book. Hines acknowledges the shortcomings in the narrative;

The book didn't jell... if you start at page 96 when the lad gets off the train at Sheffield, and affection takes over.(49)

More serious shortcomings emerge from the accidental, romantic meeting and affair between Tom and Helen in Italy, instrumentally used to give way to Tom's political beliefs. In a similar manner, Tom's fights with the American industrialist over a cricket match, and Helen's rich Italian friend at her party are overpoliticised, and come out as immature and unconvincing rather than politically motivated. The achievement of the novel remains largely limited to its situation as a complement to Hines's criticism of the education system implied in *Kes* and *Speech Day*, and in the way it reflects the author's class-identification and his political standpoint.

Hines's art can be classified as 'literature engagee' in the sense that "What applies to the character of committed literature applies with even greater force to the committed artist himself."(50) His experiences in mining and teaching are fused with the artistic problematic of his writing, and the political standpoint expressed in his work is central to his own beliefs and life as a committed writer. His success as a writer has not distanced him from his class and region, and he still remains one of the working-class writers whom the literary establishment has not been able to ideologically contain. His emotional and physical involvement with his class, openly expressed in his work, has remained strong and firm, and his successful career as a writer forms an integral part of his connection with the North of England, its people and its countryside. His experience as a dissident young teacher is strongly expressed in his work, and his

political attitude is openly voiced in his art, and in his statement, "I certainly see no hope in Capitalism."(51)

Although most of Hines' work is preoccupied with the problems of working-class education in a capitalist society, the works considered in this section succeed in linking the question of education to other forms of social and individual deprivation. In *A Kestrel for a Knave* and *Speech Day*, the educational problems which his character face are not generated by the educational system only, but are presented as the result of social and economic forces which shape the mode of existence of the individual within the family and the society as a whole. Barry Hines is perhaps the only novelist, among those discussed here, who has made a serious attempt to reveal in his work the original causes for the deprivation of his working-class characters. In making us look into the root of the social, economic and political situations of the Northern working class, he has equipped us with the understanding which enables us as readers to contemplate the complexity and interrelatedness of these situations, a comprehension which is the prerequisite for changing these realities.

PART FIVE : Conclusion

Conclusion

The proliferation of working - class literature, mainly novels, in post-war Britain undermines P.J. Keating's hypothesis giving reasons for the appearance of working - class fiction:

It is only during moments of social crisis that any significant number of English novelists have attempted to write fiction centred upon working-class life.(1)

The period between the early 1950s and early 1960s, during which a flood of working-class literature emerged, was one of economic boom and 'affluence' when the majority of the working class were not haunted, perhaps for the first time in the history of industrial Britain, by the spectres of unemployment and abject poverty. The working class was undergoing fundamental changes that affected, at the time, its economic, social and cultural structures. Even the sociological studies that aimed at reconstructing the traditional working class in order to belie the ideology of 'affluence' and the 'Embourgeoisement' thesis did refer to various aspects of change in the working class. In addition to the blooming of working-class literature, most of the works that appeared between 1963 and 1964 received wide critical acclaim and reached a broad audience in different strata of society, whether as a printed material or through various forms of the media. In our evaluation of this literature, we will be examining the various factors which made both its appearance and success possible.

The great majority of post-war, working-class writers were either workers or sons of workers when they set out to write their books. This is by no means a wholly new phenomenon. Much of the working-class literature produced during the first three decades of this century had been written from within the working class. Authors like Tressell, Lawrence, Greenwood and Gibbon wrote about their experiences and life in the working class and depicted its social, economic and cultural conditions. The post-war writers, contrary to the situation of the nineteenth century, were able to write about their affairs and those of their class and produced such a large quantity of books mainly because of the educational opportunities opened up to the working class with the introduction of the 1944 Education Act. Moreover, full employment and shorter working hours after the war made it possible for these 'scholarship-boys' to risk giving up their jobs and commit themselves to literacy practice. Due to the ideology of

'affluence' and the transition British society was supposed to be undergoing, there was a universal interest in the working class and its affairs.

The war had proved that the work force was indispensable both in the army and the war-industry. The active role of the unions, on the other hand, and their success in gaining a share in the government furthered this process. Another factor was of great importance; with the establishment of the consumer society after the war, the working class, enjoying steady employment, was conceived of as a potential consumer and provided a huge market for the consumer industry. During this time, there was an urgent need to reconstruct the traditional working class that appeared to be rapidly disintegrating and changing. If the motivations behind the appearance of the sociological studies of working-class life were to some extent consciously political, the reconstruction of working-class life in the period's fiction stemmed from the novelists' own personal needs to do so. Most of these writers reflected in their fiction the experiences of a generation of working-class individuals who were removed from the living experiences of their class through state education. They accounted for this individual social mobility against what they envisaged as a still and unchanging working-class life. Their alienation from their origins was mainly responsible for their inability to realize that working-class life is constantly changing. They depicted working-class life as they themselves had known it as children and youths; close, warm, conventional, etc. Due to their alienation from this life and their inability to become part of the world they longed for, they nostalgically reconstructed this life in an attempt to achieve some kind of spiritual identification with their class. Many novels enact this nostalgia and the need to reestablish some kind of ties with the working class. David Storey's *Pasmore* and Raymond Williams' *Border Country* are prime examples.

On the other hand, to justify, at least for themselves, their desertion of their class, these writers presented working-class life as narrowminded, conventional, limiting, and sometimes philistine. The main objective, to my mind, was to exorcise the sense of guilt that tormented them for leaving their class and, at the same time for their inability to integrate into the middle-class world. This is true of John Braine and David Storey as much as it is the case with William Cooper and John Wain. Gilbert Phelps points out that one of the major shortcomings in the period's fiction was that these authors

were "often too emotionally committed to the negative values they sought to illustrate... ." (2) Blackwell and Seabrook attribute the emergence of these works to the changes in working-class life and their impact on these educated individuals. They argue that both the sociological studies and the fictional and dramatic work of the period had a common source;

the process of reconstituting the working class, which was already under way, and which ejected a whole group of individuals whose marginal, and sometimes tormented, relationship to these changes compelled them to express experiences in which they were both agents and victims (3).

This ambivalent attitude of nostalgia and rejection is perhaps the strongest characteristic feature of the period's fiction as a whole. Unable to integrate into their new environment or reestablish real ties with their class, these writers expressed their nostalgia to the life they left behind and turned bitterly against it to eradicate their sense of guilt.

These writers' experiences had a considerable impact on their portrayal of their fictional characters and their backgrounds. It is significant to bear in mind that most of these 'scholarship-boys' managed to pass easily through the education system, and were pushed and encouraged by their parents whose own educational ambitions had been thwarted. Due to this relatively easy passage, most of them ignored in their work the other sector of the working-class to whom educational opportunities meant little or nothing at all. Storey's, Barstow's, Braine's and Williams' protagonists are educated individuals who came from the 'respectable' working class. Barry Hines is one of the rare exceptions in this sense, and his novels *A Kestrel for a Knave* and *First Signs*, and his play *Speech Day* focus on this destitute layer of the working class where any real possibility for education is terminated by poverty and neglect on the part of families and educational institutions. On the other hand, since most of the period's works centre on the individual's break from class, either through education or financial means, the characters portrayed are almost outsiders to this class. John Holloway remarks that in the majority of cases the central characters in post-war fiction "are deeply untypical of working-class life, because they are peripheral to it or have escaped from it or are 'drop-outs' from it". (4) It is not a coincidence, for instance, that Colin Wilson described his hero as an "outsider". The majority of working-class protagonists in this

fiction are solely concerned with the search for individual modes of existence, a quest that inevitably removes them from their community and class and undermines any representational dimension they might have.

The flood of working-class publications in the post-war period (around fifty novels about working-class life were published between 1953 and 1964) corresponded to an overwhelmingly broad reception. Many novels, like Braines *Room at the Top* (1957), Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) and Barstow's *A King of Loving* (1960), after having enjoyed instant recognition on their first appearance, were made into highly successful, commercial films and were soon published by big paperback publishers most of which are conservative in outlook. It was probably the first time in English literacy history that working-class literary material, written by working-class authors, enjoyed such wide critical and public acclaim and reached all strata of British society. This phenomenon, mysterious as it may seem in the context of the history of working-class literature in a capitalist system, maybe accounted for both in the context of the general social situation of the working class at the time, and the ideological (both literary and political) character of the fiction itself. To make my analysis clear from the outset, I intend to relate these descriptive working-class novels (which concern us mainly in this thesis) to both the 1930s' working-class fiction, and the political novels that appeared contemporaneously with the working-class fiction of the post-war period.

Although the 1930s' working-class literary tradition seems to be cut in the 1950s' and 1960s' work, it is perhaps fallacious to assume that "there is hardly any evidence that the writers of our period had any knowledge of their predecessors... ." (5) Whether Rosenberg's statement implies that there is no such evidence in the identity of the texts themselves, or whether there is no evidence that these writers actually knew the works of their predecessors, does not render the statement less fallacious. Both Braine and Sillitoe, for instance, expressed the impact books like Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* had on them when they first read them. There are recurrent references in the period's fiction to the works of Lawrence and Tressell which are presented as major influences on the development of the characters' political consciousness. The influence of such works, on the other hand, is not very difficult to trace in the post-war fiction. There

are ample examples of the elements of this impact; realistic documentation of working-class life, presentation of regionality and work, use of local dialects and everyday speech.

The traditional elements that seem to be truly cut in this fiction are, to my mind, those related to the realms of class struggle, and collective political action. Whereas the 1930s' working-class writers exhibited in their writing an acute awareness of the class structure of British society and emphasized the necessity of class struggle for building a just society, the post-war, working-class novelists seemed almost indifferent to class struggle or collective political consciousness. Even any social or political criticism in their work seems, in most cases, unconscious and indirect. This does not suggest that the period's fiction was not critical of the social structure for, as it will become clear later on in our argument, such criticism was inherent in the very material of this fiction which documented the conditions and affairs of the working class. The reasons for the success of and widespread interest in this fiction may probably be more easily and convincingly evident if compared to the response with which the socialist political fiction of the same period was met. These novels were written mainly by Communist authors. Very few of these novels enjoyed any popularity or widespread acclaim as the descriptive novels did. With the exception of Jack Lindsay's books, all other novels were published only by the Communist publishing house Lawrence and Wishart which stopped publishing fiction altogether in 1964. Examples of these works are Jack Lindsay's series of nine novels collectively called 'novels of the British Way' published between 1953 and 1964, Margot Heinemann's *The Adventurers* (1960), Dave Willis' *A Tramstop by the Nile* (1958), Len Doherty's *A Miner's Sons* (1955), David Lambert's *He Must so Live* (1956), Herbert Smith's *A Field of Folk* (1957), and Robert Bonnar's *Stewartite* (1964). Most of these socialist novels had close affinities with the Communist Party's cultural policy which they consciously attempted to support. These writers regarded Soviet literature as the best model for socialist fiction, and socialist realism was adopted in their works to propagate class struggle and the need for radical political changes. Due to the Soviet experience (Stalinism, Cold War, etc.), and because of the appeasing effect of 'affluence' and the divisions within the British CP, these works - the true bearer of socialist working-class tradition - failed to achieve

any great success or survive the current economic and political changes.

What are the reasons behind the sweeping success and wide popularity and acclaim which the post-war, descriptive, social realist fiction enjoyed? In answering this question, we would throw the light on its major achievement and shortcomings, and account for our evaluation of the prominent features of its literary and ideological politics. The working-class fiction of the period is a complex phenomenon for the paradox it carries in its motivation, intention and material. In spite of all the influence of bourgeois culture on its artistic qualities and ideological orientation, its essential material (language, subject-matter, and so on) is the working-class itself. On the one hand, novelists aspired to win recognition from the same institutions as bourgeois literature, and at the same time they present a picture of working-class culture which is, by its very components, distinct from the dominant culture. While they seemed, at one point, to preserve working-class life in their reconstruction of its traditional elements, they participated at the same time in the dissolution of this life as a separate culture through their desertion of it and in their adjustment to the dominant literacy market which, in essence, is a reflection of bourgeois culture.

First, let us consider the class elements in this fiction. The growing interest in the affairs of the working class after the war enabled writers to use dialect with a great confidence, usually the vernacular of their northern home districts. Most effectively used in dialogue, the use of dialect helped intensify the feeling of a certain atmosphere. This reflected the writers' adherence to their own culture and was a symptom of the bonds they were desperate to establish. As the market was prepared to accept this material, readers from various social classes found a great interest in it, and as it established a communication link with working-class readers, authors were certain of reaching a wide audience without jeopardizing the chances of publication and popularity. The mere use of working-class speech to account for human experience in literary material is, we stress once again, a political act in itself, particularly when it is produced from within the working class. The problems and affairs this language expressed were social issues that concerned all strata in British society. Like the novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these writers addressed subjects of common social interest. One of the distinguishing features of their fiction,

however, was the realist documentation of working-class life. With fresh observation and a great amount of authenticity, these writers transformed working-class life as they had known it first hand into the literary material of their fiction. There is an almost general consensus that such documentary social novels, no matter what their political perspective maybe, have a great value in the mere fact that they put working-class life at the centre of their interest. Raymond Williams points out that "The simplest descriptive novel about working-class life is already, by being written, a significant and positive cultural intervention." (6) Williams finds the value of such novels in the fact that the traditional, realist novel, originally concerned with the depiction of the middle-class and the aristocracy, is used to achieve a breakthrough in the cultural sphere. This "cultural intervention" is inherent in the material of such novels; working-class life, regionality, community, language, etc. By being written from within the working class, they are no more "'objective realist fiction', in the bourgeois mode, but subjectively descriptive, with the class community as subject." (7) Whether these novels portray working-class childhood and the move away from it, account for a past period of working-class life, describe the living experiences of the class, or concern themselves with working-class - middle class encounters (this is Williams' classification of the types of descriptive working-class novels), they manage to reflect the social, economic, cultural, or political aspects of working-class life.

Asserting the importance of the authors' own class background, Ingrid von Rosenberg remarks, similarly, that

it is a highly significant phenomenon if the bulk of working-class literature in a certain period is written by people from that class. Since they can be regarded as in some way the voice of self-representation of the class, these works form an interesting subject for literary-sociological research. (8)

So the evaluation of these novels on this basis attributes their significance to their forceful cultural impact and their sociological value. One major function of these novels which needs emphasis, however, is their indirect comment on the class structure of the society in which they are produced. How does this operate in the case of post-war working-class fiction.?

First, by merely putting the working class at their centre (this of course implies social, cultural, economic and political modes of existence), these novels highlight the distinctness and particularity

of this class, and by doing so unmask class divisions. More importantly these novelists' reconstruction of the working class, for the reasons we have considered above, produced an image of this class that served as an indirect commentary on 'affluence'. In spite of the fact that most of the period's working-class novelists did not intend their works to criticize the social structure of British society, for class-war was not a subject for most of them, their representation of working-class conditions of life belied the ideology of 'affluence'. To stress the fact that their work was not written to criticize or attack, some working-class novelists had to articulate this 'non-commitment' in their articles and interviews. This attitude was probably more emphasized and repeatedly stated by Sillitoe than any other writer of the period. It is ironic that Sillitoe, whose work came closer than that of any other writer in this group to advocating rebellion and class-struggle, should epitomize this attitude. Commenting on the question of class-war in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, he states: "I don't think the class war ever came into it. He [Arthur Seaton] was fighting people of his own class", and that "I didn't attack any values particularly... ." (9) Sillitoe started from the early 1970s onwards to reject the concept of class altogether. David Storey's attitude is more subtle, and his rejection of any ideological orientation in his work is implied in his approach to his literary material; writing with "the empirical view of letting the content shape its own form and the form finally declaring itself", and preferring, "a recital of facts rather than feelings or ideas and attitudes" (10) Perhaps the only conscious social criticism was strongly implied in Barry Hines' work *A Kestrel for a Knave*. Even John Braines' *Room at the Top* and its sequel *Life at the Top* contain a moral rejection of 'affluence' in spite of Lampton's and Braines' fascination with its glamour and richness.

Despite this implied, unintentional criticism of the morality of 'affluence', both the novelists and their work failed completely to break away from its dominant, bourgeois ideology. The interest in class changes in 1950s' Britain was hastily interpreted by some Communist critics, especially those writing in Eastern European countries, as a conscious movement towards socialist realism. In fact, any trace of socialist realism in the period's work is unconscious and of little significance, and there is a remarkable lack of political commitment, whether socialist or other, in these novels. The novelists' social realist style in providing a descriptive account

of working-class life terminated any possibility for expressing any socialist realist vision or political commitment. The fact that these authors did not intend to propagate any particular political creed and they were not writing from any specific political standpoint may explain, partly, the reason for the popularity and success of their novels. They were mainly concerned with accounting for everyday experience, and exploring the psychological problems caused by the fundamental changes affecting the working class at the time.

It was the quest for self-realization which these novels gave a prominent place in their narratives. While life in the traditional working class had offered psychological stability, although it meant the suppression of individual desires, the open prospect of the new world generated feelings of disorientation and loss amidst the pleasure of individual freedom and independence. It was this ambiguity that descriptive, working-class and 'angry' novels preoccupied themselves with. Most of these novels trace the fortunes of a single, young man in his journey towards self-realization, a characteristic of the bourgeois novel which the working-class fiction of the period adopted to explore various personal and social modes of existence.

In the case of the 'Angry Young Men', hardly any work goes beyond stating the problem. What characterizes their protagonists is a sense of despair and defeatism, and any anger is immediately terminated by the characters' entry into the middle-class world. This was true of both the characters and the authors, and the dynamic of 'anger' or 'dissentience' proved insignificant and beside the point, a fact evident in the later careers of many of these authors. In the case of Kingsley Amis and John Braine, for instance, personal success largely terminated 'anger', just as their characters' rebellions are quickly rendered unnecessary by the acquisition of a job and a place in the 'respectable' society. 'Rebels' settle for compromise and social acceptance, a disposition indicated by the titles of the later parts of William Cooper's trilogy; *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* and *Scenes from Married Life*. Most descriptive, working-class novels stress certain private virtues, like inner-strength and integrity in a hostile environment. In John Braine, rage against authority and the rich is a means to become part of them. And once middle-class values prove unfulfilling, the protagonist is trapped in them where there is no way out. The only alternative envisaged is functioning within the structure and principles of 'affluence' and individual competition.

The philosophy underlying *Room at the Top*, *Life at the Top* and *The Vodi* is the liberal ideology of personal success, and the success-failure nexus is conceived of in personal terms where inequality, social divisions and political reality are dismissed as irrelevant. This humanist ideology determines the outlook of almost the whole work of the period. Stan Barstow's fiction is mainly characterized by its human liberalism. Changes are individualistic and there is no concept of social, economic or political change. It is the individual's choice and his or her integrity and capacity that determine the mechanism of this change.

In this context, 'affluence' becomes the means, and only in escaping into the middle-class world that liberty is conceived of as possible. David Storey's major concern is to bring 'body' and 'soul' together, concepts which take on gender and class. 'Body' becomes masculine and working class, while 'soul' becomes feminine and middle class. The attempt to reconcile both is expressed in purely humanistic terms. Storey's concept of this tragic division does not go beyond the individual's world, and there is no reference to the concrete realities that historically create and perpetuate these schisms. And when both elements encounter each other, as in *Radcliffe*, the outcome is tragic and ends with the destruction of both.

In Alan Sillitoe, however, divisions are conceived in class terms, a clear-cut confrontation between 'US', the working class, and 'THEM', the middle class. The 'them-us' dictomy which characterizes his Nottingham fiction is largely limited to the confines of a cognitive knowledge of the self within society. The struggle is subsequently rendered not as between 'us' and 'them', but rather between 'me' against 'them', and 'them' can be either the working class or the middle class, or both. When there is any political involvement, the goal is an assertion of the individual self, and war against 'them' becomes a metaphor for individual rebellion rather than an expression of a collective struggle. Rebellion ends with a reluctant conformism and a return to the roots, as in *Key to the Door*. Collective action takes a Quixotic character and is rendered comic through mockery and caricature; the last novel in the William Posters Trilogy, *The Flame of Life*.

Finally, Barry Hines is consciously committed in his work to unmask the class structure of British Society, and the educational field is often used to reveal the injustices and bias of the ideology

of 'affluence'. While *A Kestral for a Knave* succeeds in belying this ideology, *First Signs* attempts to articulate what is unspoken in the first novel, only to fall into romanticism and direct political speech. On the whole, this fiction fails to challenge the dominant ideology in both its lack of political commitment, acceptance of 'affluence' and in its artistic form.

The often-used linear, first-person narrative technique, or at least the personal point of view, comes as a logical consequence of the central interest in individuality. The chronological, linear method of narration carries in it the notion of coherence and gradual development where the fictional reality depicted is envisaged as logical and coherent. Unlike the bourgeois novels, first-person narratives like Storey's *This Sporting Life*, Braine's *Room at the Top*, and Barstow's *A Kind of Loving* do not depend on the unveiling of the characters' subtle mental processes. The thoughts of Arthur Machin, Joe Lampton and Victor Brown are mostly determined by social experiences in the external world, a strategy that provides accounts of a social reality pictured from the inside. Sillitoe often opts to provide direct descriptions of the social world his characters inhabit. Most of the other novelists, however, draw on social facts in constructing the narration of their novels. In Storey's *This Sporting Life*, for instance, Machin's encounter with Mrs Hammond is made possible by the mere fact of her poverty and need to rent a room in her small house.

One major characteristic of this fiction, which is partly responsible for its success and popularity, is its dependence on love stories and sexual affairs, a quality inherent in the traditional bourgeois novel. In the novels, love and sex become the hero's only source of satisfaction and self-realization. Arthur Seaton is involved with three women, and most of his adventures are based on these simultaneous relationships. Arthur Machin's relationship with his middle-aged landlady forms the basis of the novel's plot, and his glamorous affairs with Mrs Weaver and Judith add to the hedonistic mode of his life as a rugby player. In Braine's and Barstow's novels, the encounter between a working-class, young man and middle-class, beautiful women, mainly actresses, gives the narratives a romantic character which distinguishes popular romance novels. In fact, Joe Lampton's sexual adventures in *Room at the Top* become the signs of his breakthrough into the wealthy world of Warley. The social reasons for the heroes' entanglement in love affairs are often made clear; boredom

at work, conventionality and puritanism of working-class family and community, etc. Once again, love itself turns out to be another experience to further the hero's mental stability rather than provide him with the self-realization he seeks to achieve.

In this process of seeking self-realization, working-class protagonists are depicted as self-contained individuals, anti-heroes, with little interest or identification with society. They no longer, for instance, adhere to one particular job and take pride in it, as is the case in traditional working-class novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but move from job to job. Work loses its social (class?) meaning, and becomes a source of money. Its importance derives solely from this fact, for money is regarded in this fiction as the key to gratification and self-assurance, to social respectability, and a hedonistic indulgence in drinking and having as many women as possible. The social significance of the work-site as a place for social identification with other workers, as is the case in Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* for instance, is annulled. It is no more the embryonic field for working-class solidarity and collective action, as it is in Gibbon's *Grey Granite* for example, but a source of money. Relations between workers are limited to the level of personal friendship, or even personal competition. Machin's relationship with young Arnie is purely competitive; keeping a place in the team, preserving a job, an income. Private life, far from work and communal identification, is the central focus of these novels. Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is the most illustrative example, and carries this meaning in its very title. Physical delights and private happiness and satisfaction are presented as the sole objectives of these novels' protagonists. And the more the privileges are unavailable to members of their class, the more attractive and satisfactory they become. The working-class writers of this period promoted what emerged as 'youth' culture in 'affluent' Britain, where youth acquire a separate social and cultural identity based on consumption, hedonism, money-spending, and particular sets of behaviour.

The acceptance of this fiction of bourgeois individualism and its emphasis on individual initiations is an implicit condoning of the ethics of capitalism. Blackwell and Seabrook argue that the significance of the 1950s lies in the fact that

it marked the beginnings of the process whereby capitalism succeeded in imposing through its version of prosperity what it had been unable to

impose through its version of poverty,
deprivation and want.(11)

In our final analysis, the inability of the post-war, working-class fiction to function, ideologically and artistically, outside the confines of the dominant ideology of 'affluence' and the bourgeois form of the traditional realist novel terminated any possibility for radical expression and political commitment. The period's authors, through their own ideological subordination to bourgeois values and alienation from the living experiences of their class, failed to unmask the process through which the British working class was being subordinated, a subordination that would be revealed as soon as the glamour of the consumer society had vanished. To go back where I started in this argument, the 1950s and after was a crisis, and one on a large scale that had it been grasped in this sense by the period's writers it would have produced a working-class literature of a totally different perspective. Keating's hypothesis would have been easier to approve of.

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PART FOUR : Section IV

1. This assumption does not imply that other post-war working-class novelists did not concern themselves with the class distinctions structuring the British social order (for their presentation of the working class in a class-divided society is in itself an expression of class divisions), but rather suggests that the issue of class struggle was not a question overtly expressed in their works. Barry Hines' *First Signs* (1972) is probably the only novel that comes close to depicting class solidarity and voicing expressions of class struggle.
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PART FOUR : Section V

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