

‘D.H. Lawrence: Lawrentian Politics and Ideology’

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, October 2002.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to provide a critical re-evaluation of politics and ideology in the work of D.H. Lawrence. The thesis brings a number of authors (including the Marquis de Sade, Robert Louis Stevenson, H. G. Wells and Raymond Chandler) into dialogue with Lawrence - firstly in order to interrogate Lawrentian assumptions, but also to relocate a writer often seen as being eccentric to literary circles and to society generally.

My Introduction surveys two broad schools of Lawrence criticism: first, the 'Lawrentian' kind, which inspects Lawrence's fiction through an often uncritical appreciation of the non-fictional writings - his 'philosophy' - and consequently is often reduced to an echo of the primary material. While recognising, in the manner of my second, socialist school of criticism, Lawrence's philosophy as ideology, a challenge is also made to the conventional left-wing judgement that such ideology indicates Lawrence's political 'failure'.

Chapters One and Two provide extended analyses of, respectively, the novels *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo*: the first of these novels sees Lawrentian individuals attempting to 'solve' the problem of an oppressive industrial society by escaping it; the second shows the shortcomings of the 'freedom' won by such a supposed escape. Examining the contradictions of Lawrence's individualism, I argue the case that these texts present a rich commentary upon the economic and social contradictions of capitalism.

My third chapter takes a broader view of Lawrence's shorter, ironical and satirical works, and argues that an openly satirical mode allowed Lawrence to break free from his contradictory 'philosophy' and engage in a critical dialogue with his own work that is much more penetrating than any critique by his Lawrentian admirers.

Finally, the conclusion looks at the persisting problem of the 'Lawrentian' attitude in Lawrence studies, and at the enduring significance of Lawrence to our postmodern world.

INTRODUCTION

REPRESENTATIONS AND RE-APPROPRIATIONS: SANCTIONING

UNAUTHORISED VERSIONS OF LAWRENCE

The interests of a writer and the interests of his readers are never the same and if, on occasion, they happen to coincide, this is a lucky accident.

We often derive much profit from reading a book in a different way from that which its author intended but only (once childhood is over) if we know that we are doing so.

W.H. Auden^[1]

In an essay first published two weeks after Britain's entry into the Great War, Lawrence queries the prevailing mood of outwardly cocksure patriotism and offers a more subdued anticipation of what European war in the modern industrial age may actually involve. 'With the Guns' shows that Lawrence is already well aware of the deceit and illusions necessary to prosecute the war, as he describes reserve troops ('some of them drunk') boarding the train for London: 'When you see 'em *let* 'em have it', a woman urges her departing lover: 'Ay, no fear', he replies with bravado.^[2] Lawrence then draws upon his experience of the previous year, of German military manoeuvres in Bavaria, in order to confront 'what it would really be like, "when he saw 'em"' (81). People's unwillingness, as Lawrence perceives it, to face the potential horrors of the war is, he concludes, understandable: for the war 'is so unnatural as to be unthinkable. Yet we must think of it' (84). This closing exhortation reiterates the nub of the essay's argument: Lawrence sees it is a matter of huge importance that people think about and comprehend what they are doing in making and contributing to this war; and all the more so, because this type of warfare so readily vitiates any

consciousness of human responsibility. The activities of the Bavarian soldiers suggest to Lawrence how human individuality will be annihilated by a military organisation adapted to contemporary developments in the armaments industry: remembering seeing a group of soldiers taking cover from artillery-fire by the roadside, Lawrence perceives their degeneration into a 'mass':

If one of the shells that were supposed to be coming had dropped among them it would have burst a hole in the mass. Who would have been torn, killed, no one would have known. There would just have been a hole in the living shadowy mass; that was all. Who it was did not matter. There were no individuals, and every individual soldier knew it. He was a fragment of a mass, and as a fragment of a mass he must live or die or be torn. He had no rights, no self, no being. (82)

The war will be a war of machines, Lawrence conjectures, 'with men attached to the machines as the subordinate part thereof, as the butt is the part of a rifle' (81). The deindividuation and brutalisation which Lawrence anticipates are most strikingly represented in his account of the operation of the long-range field-guns. So far as the gunners' involvement goes, the enemy troops, invisible in the distance, cease to exist as human beings; and the gunners themselves, unable to tell whether or not they have killed people, are dehumanised also: removed from observing the consequences of their actions, they have nothing to feel responsible for. The arresting quality of the essay lies in this perception of what war, near the end of a European industrial revolution, may mean for the common soldier:

What work was there to do? - only mechanically to adjust the guns and fire the shot. What was there to feel? - only the unnatural suspense and suppression of serving a machine which, for ought we knew, was killing our fellow-men, whilst we stood there, blind, without knowledge or participation, subordinate to the cold machine. This was the glamour and the glory of the war: blue sky overhead and living green country

all around, but we, amid it all, a part in some iron insensate will, our flesh and blood, our soul and intelligence shed away, and all that remained of us a cold, metallic adherence to an iron machine. There was neither ferocity nor joy nor exultation nor exhilaration nor even quick fear: only a mechanical, expressionless movement.

And this is how the gunner would 'let 'em have it.' He would mechanically move a certain apparatus when he heard a certain shout. Of the result he would see and know nothing. He had nothing to do with it. (82)

Lawrence's consideration of the gunners' lack of emotional involvement with their work strangely echoes the socialist concerns of William Morris: as Morris recognised that capitalist mass-production meant increasingly dull work, tantamount to slavery,^[3] so does Lawrence similarly identify how soldiers, too, are reduced to another part of the machinery, unthinking and alienated from the repetitive work they 'produce', without any substantial appreciation of the purpose or results of their labours. It is true that, despite its general perceptiveness towards the nature of the approaching conflict, the essay does reveal some eccentric notions about the war - that it could be tolerable if not for its mechanisation: 'Let us see our enemy and go for him. But we cannot endure this taking death out of machines ... without any enemy to rise against' (83). Lawrence, in fact, readily acknowledges his bewilderment at the war: 'But what is it all about? I cannot understand' (83-4). And it may seem rather perverse to write of the 'work' of killing in the way that he does (although he is perhaps suggesting that if soldiers were more closely engaged in their 'work' they might not be so ready to kill in the first place: the gunners are 'blind' in a literal sense, blind to the damage they cause miles away, but also 'blind' in failing to comprehend the slaughter they are involved in).^[4] All the same, the overriding quality of the essay is its antipathy for the narrow, debilitating employment of human labour. Lawrence generally remained appalled by the war and, when threatened by the possibility of

conscription, reiterated his opposition to such compulsion: 'I will go to prison. *I will not be compelled*: that is the whole of my feeling.'^[5]

It is all the more striking, then, that when Lawrence asked 'what work was there to do' on the home front he could appear so at odds with the efforts of working people to improve their conditions of work. Seeming to forget the point that you have no choice about being '*compelled*', his description of the working class, compelled to subordination to the industrial machine as soldiers are subordinated to the guns, is, to a large degree unsympathetic, to some degree openly hostile. The apparently passive colliers in *The Rainbow*'s Wiggiston, for example, appear as 'spectres', 'Like creatures with no more hope';^[6] while the militant colliers in *Women in Love*, who force a lockout by refusing a wage-cut, loom in 'Seething mobs', driven by the 'passion of cupidity', before they too submit and 'even [get] a further satisfaction' out of the new management's severe conditions.^[7] It seems that workers are contemptible, or at best pitiable, while submissive, and horrifying when they rebel.

The strike featured in *Women in Love*, Macdonald Daly suggests, is mostly informed by the 1915 Welsh miners' strike, as digested by Lawrence through the right-wing *Morning Post*.^[8] Daly notes how, despite Lawrence's criticism of the war itself, he nevertheless 'displayed a demonstrable ideological affinity on certain crucial counts with those prosecuting the war'^[9] - the Welsh strike being one instance. This was no 'ordinary' strike: under the 1915 Munitions of War Act, strikers were now liable to pay large fines or face criminal prosecution; with 200,000 men 'out', here was a strike which directly tested the logistics of the new legislation and threatened to destroy the government's credibility in prosecuting the war generally; such being the case, the dispute was inextricably tied to the military campaign itself. Lawrence's

opinion of matters was in stark contrast, though, to his earlier understanding of the ‘suppression’ of the Bavarian soldiers. Writing to Bertrand Russell, he asks:

Can’t you see the whole state is collapsing? Look at the Welsh strike. This war is going to develop into the last great war between labour and capital. It will be a ghastly chaos of destruction, if it is left to labour to be constructive.

In the same letter he recommends government not by democracy but by patricians, headed by ‘an absolute *Dictator*, and an equivalent *Dictatrix*’.^[10] And yet the Welsh strike provides a clear example of labour’s ability to organise itself constructively (to defend wages and the closed shop). No less than the soldiers described by ‘With the Guns’, these workers could be seen as having been ordered against their interests into a ‘shadowy mass’ with few ‘rights, ... no being’ (82), but as now organising themselves as an active, autonomous collective: these people *are* thinking about and comprehending their situation in the way Lawrence calls on people to think about the war, and they are determined to improve it, instead of remaining ‘blind, without knowledge or participation’ (82). Such social conflict is about human beings taking control of the industrial machine they have been made subject to, as the soldiers are subjected to the machinery of war - yet here Lawrence flinches from it. Albeit fiercely opposed to the war in the field, he simultaneously favours authoritarian methods of prosecuting the wider war campaign. The empathy Lawrence shows in the case of the soldiers is almost entirely absent from his views of industrial labour. Lawrence himself would, in 1914, have little fear of ever being called up, but he nevertheless identifies more closely with the soldiers (‘we, amid it all’ [82]) than with the miners in an industry he had long since escaped. This personal victory (an early ticket to the ‘professional’ classes via a scholarship to Nottingham High school, which meant he

would never 'go down pit') would have left him with a rather elementary knowledge of what it meant to work as a collier; but whereas, in 'With the Guns', Lawrence is ready to acknowledge his perplexity at the war, he is often content to offer forthright opinions upon more narrowly domestic issues of which he patently has little comprehension.

Indeed, any study of Lawrence's political thought has to accept that, however vociferously he makes his exhortations, Lawrence often demonstrates a disregard for the realities of contemporary politics - as his call for patrician government, a '*Dictator*' and '*Dictatrix*', suggests. Why, then, should we pay much attention to his political statements? One answer would be that, even though the political attitudes frequently appear confused and confusing, they are important because, for Lawrence, literature is not merely an intellectual diversion, but a serious attempt to push society in the right direction. Writing in 1918 of his play, *Touch and Go* (another representation of industrial conflict, adapted from *Women in Love*), he remarks:

I believe the world yet might get a turn for the better, if it but had a little shove that way. And this is my attempt - I believe the last I am capable of - or the first, perhaps - at a shove.^[1]

It is this kinetic quality which politicises Lawrence's work, in a broader manner than its engagement with particular contemporary political theories and events. And while it is fair enough to pull apart the absurdities and contradictions apparent in his more directly political comments, we should bear in mind that, as regards Lawrence the imaginative writer, evidence of sound political reasoning is no sufficient criterion for judgment. Indeed, it often may be the case that logically coherent literary works prove less interesting than contradictory ones, the latter possibly providing larger windows

upon the usually complex and antagonised social conditions prevailing at any given time and place. This being the case, the interrogation of such works' contradictions constitutes an effort to appreciate their richness, rather than merely to expose their 'flaws'. We are moving here from the matter of Lawrence's attempted political proselytising to questions of his ideological context and the ideological kaleidoscope of his work: a move from what Lawrence patently wants to say to what his work is compelled actually to mean. It is hardly anything new to say that Lawrence's work is contradictory, indeed it is fast becoming a cliché; yet the work's articulation of the desperate paradoxes of early twentieth-century society is often underrated or obscured by the general opinion of a deterioration in Lawrence's art; a decline consequent upon his estrangement from his native milieu, originating somewhere between his holiday-cum-'elopement' with Frieda Weekley in May 1912 and their leaving England after the war. It is one of my contentions that Lawrence's work remained vivified by a persistent (albeit cantankerous) relation to English industrial society, by his deep awareness of its tragedies and his assimilation of its contradictions. He was, in a sense, an odd man in very odd times: the sum bizarreness is perhaps indicated by Lawrence's remarkable career as an imaginary secret agent: having been arrested in the German garrison town of Metz, in 1912, on suspicion of being an English spy, and subsequently portraying it in an account rejected by the *Westminster Gazette* as 'too violently anti-German',^[12] Lawrence attracted persecution throughout the war in England as a possible German sympathiser, and, in 1917, was forced to leave his home in Cornwall as a suspected spy for Germany.

This kind of excitement was probably not quite what Lawrence would have had in mind when beginning his literary career. However, writing many years after Lawrence's first introduction to London's literary scene, Jessie Chambers

suggests something of the exotic attraction that this new world held for an Eastwood provincial:

A new and immensely larger life was opening out before him. A kind of transfiguration from obscurity and uncertainty had taken place. Thanks to the kind offices of Ford Madox Hueffer his chance of a hearing was assured. And it had all come about so simply, almost without effort. There was a glamour about those days, even something of a glitter.^[13]

Lawrence's own retrospective accounts regarding the period tend to play down this strangeness, and certainly the 'glamour', assuming instead a breezy nonchalance, which may suggest Lawrence's subsequent disillusion with literary society, as well as the distance between the elder autobiographer and his younger self when he first confronted that world. What Lawrence's accounts do tend to share with that of Chambers, though, is an emphasis upon the *ease* with which someone from a working-class background, who has gained a job as an elementary schoolteacher, could make the transition to professional writer:

They ask me: 'Did you find it very hard to get on and to become a success?' And I have to admit that if I can be said to have got on, and if I can be called a success, then I *did not* find it hard.

I never starved in a garret, nor waited in anguish for the post to bring me an answer from editor or publisher^[14]

This somewhat jars with what we know of the many difficulties with which his origins presented him, economic and otherwise,^[15] but such retrospection's suave erasure of the problems with which Lawrence contended inevitably tempts any critical appreciation which must 'look back' at the life - and now from much further distance than Lawrence's own versions from the late 1920s or Jessie Chambers's in the 1930s. Lawrence's achievements as a writer - including, besides his artistic accomplishment,

the fact that (bar his most desperate period during the Great War) he did succeed in making his living from writing - have become so familiar as almost to breed contempt for the struggles necessarily involved in realising those achievements. In this respect, Raymond Williams's insistence upon the 'real importance' of Lawrence's early life provides an increasingly salutary guide to Lawrence studies:

the real importance of Lawrence's origins is not and cannot be a matter of retrospect from the adult life. It is, rather, that his first social responses were those, not of a man observing the processes of industrialism, but of one caught in them, at an exposed point, and destined, in the normal course, to be enlisted in their regiments. That he escaped enlistment is now so well known to us that it is difficult to realize the thing as it happened, in its living sequence. It is only by hard fighting, and, further, by the fortune of fighting on a favourable front, that anyone born into the industrial working class escapes his function of replacement. Lawrence could not be certain, at the time when his fundamental social responses were forming, that he could so escape.^[16]

I wish to incorporate this recognition of the uncertainty of Lawrence's life 'in its living sequence' in my own study, in order to avoid the retrospective fallacy of which Williams forewarns us, but also, hopefully, to show how such uncertainty informs Lawrence's work: for it is worth adding to Williams's observation that, once having become a professional writer, certainty was by no means a new condition of life for Lawrence. Despite Jessie Chambers's assessment above, the 'uncertainty' and 'effort' which had marked Lawrence's earlier life remained significant features of later years, because, just as his nascent 'genius' could provide no guarantee of his escape from the regiments of the industrial working class, so too his 'mature genius' could not assure him of unbroken success in a glittering literary world. Indeed, this 'new and immensely larger life' which Chambers saw to be on offer to Lawrence was not one that he felt himself easily able or willing to plunge into. It was an alien world

of publishers, agents and readers that he often found at odds with himself. Raymond Williams again, writing of Richard Jefferies, asserts: 'we must see also, as in Lawrence, the gifted young man who was writing his way out of [the insecurities of his lower-middle-class] situation, necessarily through readers who were placed socially above him, and on whom the complex pressures were severe and lasting'.^[17]

One such lasting pressure was Lawrence's continual need to revise his work in order to make it publishable for a 'genteel' public, and another was, once published, his work's relative lack of success in selling. Compared, for instance, to the commercial popularity of H.G. Wells (another 'serious' novelist with less-than-bourgeois origins), that of Lawrence was small indeed. At much the same time as Lawrence was on the threshold of the 'larger life' of a full-time writer (he resigned his teaching post on 28 February 1912), Wells described what the previous eighteen years as a professional writer had meant for himself:

The literary life is one of the modern forms of adventure. Success with a book, even such a commercially modest success as mine has been, means in the English-speaking world not merely a moderate financial independence, but the utmost freedom of movement and intercourse. One is lifted out of one's narrow circumstances into familiar and unrestrained intercourse with a great variety of people. One sees the world.^[18]

Naturally, Wells had had his own difficulties to overcome, but at the time of writing the above he had achieved a level of financial security and a degree of social status that Lawrence would never be rewarded with by his own career; and the comparative ease with which Wells moved from the lower classes into the literary world is reflected in the different manner in which each of the writers would subsequently see 'the world' at large: when Wells travelled the globe he consorted with statesmen such

as Lenin, F.D. Roosevelt and Stalin; Lawrence's journeying was more akin to the restless wanderings of a vagrant.

In saying this, I merely intend to give some acknowledgement of the excentric pressures upon Lawrence's writing, generated by his origins on the margin of 'Society' and by his succeeding displacement from England altogether: I do not present a preface to arguing that such conditions inevitably proved debilitating to his work. Indeed, it is puzzling why Terry Eagleton, in *Exiles and Emigrés*, perceives that Lawrence, being a kind of internal exile owing to his working-class experience, is therefore able to write the better about society in its totality, and yet regards Lawrence's actual emigration from England and subsequent 'isolation' as having such negative consequences for his art.^[19] Against Eagleton, I would argue that Lawrence's leaving England did not mean a corresponding disintegration of psychological ties to it, nor that Lawrence's understanding of the realities of industrial society atrophied because of 'his years of rootless exile';^[20] and it is worth asking why the actual émigré whom Lawrence later became was not the more advantageously equipped to depict Australian and Mexican society in their totality in *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) respectively (as Eagleton's thesis may suggest, but which the cursory mention of Lawrence's failure to 'find an adequate foreign alternative'^[21] would apparently deny).

Undoubtedly, Lawrence was at severe odds with English and industrial society for much of his adult life, and felt a similar antagonism for his potential reading public which only tended to harden as the years passed; but this should not be seen as a final rejection of society *per se* by an increasingly isolated individual. It is true that his letters, especially those of the 1920s, are punctuated with bitter recriminations against what he takes to be an unworthy, misunderstanding readership:

‘Why write books for the swine, unless one absolutely must[?]’; ‘I get such a distaste for committing myself any further into “solid print,” I am holding off. Let the public read what there is to read.’^[22] And yet Lawrence’s fundamental attitude appears to bear less outright contempt than it does incomprehension. Lawrence was never wilfully obscure, intending to perplex his readers *à la Finnegans Wake*, but rather the opposite occurred: it was often the public reaction to his work that left *him* at a loss: ‘the public is an ass I don’t understand’.^[23] But Lawrence persisted in trying to recruit the public conscience, and his frustration perhaps made him all the more determined to hammer home his message (as critics often charge him with doing in what they see as the violent didacticism of *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, a charge which seems implicit in Eagleton’s assumption of the ‘isolation’ that later spoiled Lawrence’s art).

Lawrence’s frequent expressions of vituperation also suggest how awkwardly placed he often felt in his chosen career: never entirely comfortable with the metropolitan literary world (‘from the outset a critical stranger in middle-class aesthetic society’ in Frank Swinnerton’s opinion)^[24] and neither ever genuinely popular with the public, it is perhaps only natural that Lawrence should occasionally prove offensive while on the defensive, as it were. Lawrence himself, in ‘Autobiographical Sketch’, asserts that the reason for his ‘breach’ with society ‘has something to do with class’, and concludes:

And now I know, more or less, why I cannot follow in the footsteps even of Barrie or of Wells, who both came from the common people also and are both such a success. Now I know why I cannot rise in the world and become even a little popular and rich.

I cannot make the transfer from my own class into the middle class. I cannot, not for anything in the world, forfeit my passional consciousness and my old blood-affinity with my

fellow-men and the animals and the land, for that other thin, spurious mental consciousness which is all that is left of the mental consciousness once it has made itself exclusive.^[25]

It is doubtful whether Wells ever saw his own success in such a manner, but we need not accept this retrospective account unquestioningly to allow that class did play a crucial rôle in the difficulties Lawrence faced as a professional writer. Rather than talking of Lawrence's more 'passional' attachment to the 'common people', though, it is surely more accurate simply to point out that Lawrence was more 'common' than Wells to begin with. Wells might not have come from a wealthy family, but being the son of shopkeepers living on the outskirts of London, whose father was also a professional cricketer, and whose mother became housekeeper at Uppark country house, provided a decidedly different formative environment to that of a collier's son in a provincial pit town. Wells's own retrospective biographical writing quite definitely asserts - despite Lawrence's view of Wells's origins - his early perception of his difference from the 'common people': 'So far as the masses went I was entirely of my mother's way of thinking; I was middle-class, - "petty bourgeois" as the Marxists have it.' And, furthermore, Wells goes on:

my conception of a scientifically organized class-less society is essentially of an expanded middle-class which has incorporated both the aristocrat and plutocrat above and the peasant, proletarian and pauper below.^[26]

Much of Wells's work is ingrained with this idea of a progressive middle class providing the solution to social contradictions; similarly, a characteristic of Lawrence's work is often a variation of the polarisation of class evident in 'Autobiographical Sketch' (the working class is 'still fairly deep and passionate' but 'narrow in outlook, in prejudice, and narrow in intelligence'; whereas the middle class

is 'charming and educated', but 'broad and shallow and passionless'.^[27] Wells sees his own class as the resolution to social conflict, whereas Lawrence's class-identity is itself fraught with such discord, giving on to a view of the irreconcilableness of social contradictions. This contrast perhaps partly explains why much of Wells's (particularly later) work lacks the ideological tensions and provisionality so readily found in Lawrence's writing, and suggests also the correspondingly fewer difficulties that Wells faced in securing a place among London's literary establishment. Indeed, middle-class Fabian socialism, becoming increasingly influential in contemporary literary and intellectual circles, had provided a natural connection for Wells to that society; it may also have attracted Lawrence himself, having previously partaken in 'discussing social problems'^[28] at the home of Eastwood socialist Willie Hopkin, and subsequently having entered the professional classes as a schoolteacher; but Fabianism would not necessarily have established solid foundations upon Lawrence's experience as one born into the working class and who, as Williams puts it, 'only by hard fighting' could escape 'his function of replacement'.^[29] Fabianism's belief in leadership by an educated ruling class as best serving the needs of the working class (which Wells maintained, despite breaking with the Fabian Society itself)^[30] may not have wholly convinced someone who had made his own social progress through Nottingham University College, professing little but disappointment with his middle-class educators.^[31] Lawrence's distrust of middle-class radicalism, however, deprived him of one of the few political affiliations with the Labour movement that was available to him as a full-time novelist. Thus the issue of class cut him off two ways: from the intelligentsia of both Eastwood and London, and from the interests of the 'common people'. In a sense, therefore, it could even be said that Lawrence's

working-class origins pulled him further away from working-class concerns once he had begun the 'larger life' of the professional writer.

But, as we know, it is far from the case that Lawrence's upbringing was straightforwardly working-class. His mother had *petit-bourgeois* aspirations and the social status of Lawrence's family was changing as he grew up: his elder brothers before him had escaped their father's lifetime of going down the mines - the eldest being apprenticed to a picture-framer, the other becoming a successful clerk in London; and Lawrence himself was encouraged by his mother through high school and college *en route* to a teaching post in Croydon. And yet such a transfer to the 'respectable' professions still did not attain the development personally sought by Lawrence, that of becoming a writer: it represented a step up the ladder of orthodox social discrimination valued by his mother, whereas the profession of novelist and poet rather amounted to stepping off it. Lawrence was not simply a working-class person who happily found his literary niche with no particular effort, as his later autobiographical writings would have us believe;^[32] and neither was he *simply* working-class, period. While faced with the very real obstructions to such a person who wants to make their living by writing, Lawrence also had to contend with the *petit-bourgeois* values inculcated in him by his mother and consider the option of a 'respectable' teaching career. Well before he took to writing full-time, his class-identity was considerably divided, and in becoming a professional writer and so side-stepping easily assignable working-class or middle-class social functions, he would find no final answer to the conflicting values of his early life: rather his writing would provide a forum in which to represent and refashion these values and class-identities in ways which, I will argue, both enriches his work and permeates it with the difficulties through which Lawrence had to live.

Therefore, to see Lawrence's art in the terms of F.R. Leavis, as an instance of 'classless truth' which conveys 'essential humanity ... pure and undeflected',^[33] is wholly inappropriate; it is a neat method with which a critic may purge explicit discussion of the real issues of class from his analysis, but misses altogether the impossibility of Lawrence - or of anyone who must exist within a stratified industrial society - ever so nicely purifying himself. However, Leavis's classless model has been challenged by what has now become another, alternative received wisdom which, if not rejecting outright, I wish to at least qualify: namely, the view that the younger Lawrence, sympathetic to his working-class origins and thereby enabled to produce an exceptionally rich depiction of his society, is superseded by a writer whose break with his own class, and subsequently with England itself, causes a critical deterioration in the later work. There are different ways as to how this break may be formulated: there is the reasonable observation that Lawrence did indeed become disillusioned with socialist politics and felt increasingly frustrated by English society, prompting his departure in November 1919 - although it is a matter for argument whether or not this lead to a significant deterioration in his writing; the more explicitly political appraisal of this decampment, favoured by critics broadly of the Left, is to view it as some form of betrayal of the working class, seeing it as an indication of Lawrence's indifference to working-class interests, and in conjunction with the right-wing sentiments that Lawrence expressed during the war and throughout the 1920s: and thus, in consequence, from the ideological perspective of these critics, Lawrence's work suffers.^[34] Although approaching Lawrence from a left-wing position myself, and acknowledging the increasingly right-wing drift of Lawrence's thought from the war years onward, I do not see this as necessarily spoiling Lawrence's work - it merely presents us with a different set of ideological values with which to engage, that may

be, after all, more fruitful in what it tells us about its historical moment, and in its significance for us today, than any ossified left-wing polemic.

And furthermore, there is no systematic, or systemic, replacement of left-wing attitudes with ones from the Right: as Michael Bentley comments upon the political agenda of Rawdon Lilly in *Aaron's Rod* (1922):

It is a square circle, a dictatorship which is not only libertarian but which forces the individual to be free without using force. In this respect, Tiverton's observation that Lawrence has a streak of anarchism is an *aperçu* worth developing. It has as much relevance to Lawrence's utopian visions as his supposed 'fascism' and adumbration of Auschwitz.^[35]

The fact that Lawrence's thought at most given moments incorporates such streaks of conflicting ideology tends to confuse notions of a final, decisive break with working-class interests; and a further complication arises when we consider that Lawrence's 'life was so patently a succession of crossed thresholds' (Bentley again, who goes on to reiterate such decisive moments as the 'arrival of Frieda' and the war).^[36] Faced with a succession of possible watersheds, the critic may either accept the continuing, complicated course of Lawrence's orientation towards the working class, or plump for what he considers to be the crucial turning point which occasions a deterioration in Lawrence's work. Certain critics have said, or implied, that the seeds of destruction were sown as early as Lawrence's leaving for Europe in May 1912, in the company of Frieda. Raymond Williams, for example, diagnosing Lawrence's critical problem as 'a crisis of separation',^[37] asserts that the difficulty begins in *Sons and Lovers* (which Lawrence rewrote in Europe in 1912), about halfway through, with the 'characterisation of Clara': it has 'a certain functional quality - she is a function in the growth of another rather than a person in herself - and this is a world away from

all the earlier people'.^[38] And 'the crucial problem in Lawrence's later fiction', writes Williams, is the extent to which the representation of primary human relationships 'can be affected by being isolated from a wider and continuing life, to say nothing of being abstracted in a more conscious way, or of being as it were theoretically composed'.^[39] Williams view of Clara may be very percipient (much of Clara's relationship with the hero Paul Morel probably *was* written, essentially as new, after Lawrence's first 'separation' from England);^[40] it is not difficult, however, to see Lawrence's incipient break with England in a different, more positive light. True enough, it foreshadowed his later, more enduring removal from England,^[41] but this does not necessarily indicate his isolation from Williams's 'wider and continuing life': it did mean, though, an opportunity to free himself from aspirations to the narrowly defined world of literary circles: for, despite Lawrence's dislike of London's middle-class literary cliques, his first two novels, *The White Peacock* (1911) and *The Trespasser* (1912), very consciously adopt an aesthetic style and ostentatious literariness typically identified with an 'artistic sensibility',^[42] and both novels suffer in consequence from the dead hand of increasingly stale conventions and a jejune pretentiousness.

Sons and Lovers (1913), in which Lawrence re-acknowledges the industrial world and working-class life that were for the most part omitted from the earlier novels, perhaps shows the effects of being rewritten at some remove from the English literary scene. Lawrence's third novel, rather than producing a world to the design of aesthetic ideology, places that aesthetic sensibility in the character of the developing artist, Paul Morel, rendering it especially through Paul's relationship with Miriam Leivers, and so contextualises both relationship and artistic creed within a 'wider and continuing life'. Therefore, while it is obviously the case that *Sons and*

Lovers was completed at a material distance from the English working class, it is surely more significant to point out its production outside of the bourgeois literary world. From the external view of an émigré from that world, Lawrence was able to confront and begin to deal with an element of England that had hitherto cramped his writing. Lawrence, after all, did not write from Germany that he hated England itself, but the 'lot that make up England today' - in particular, the more prim contingent among the reading public (see note 41). A short time later, not long before beginning the final version of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence again wrote from Icking of his revulsion at 'the idea of England':

Here, in this tiny savage little place, F[rieda] and I have got awfully wild. I loathe the idea of England, and its enervation and misty miserable modernness. I *don't* want to go back to town and civilisation. I want to rough it and scramble through, free, free. ... I feel I've got a mate and I'll fight tooth and claw to keep her. She says I'm reverting, but I'm not - I'm only coming out wholesome and myself. Say I'm right, and I ought to be always common.^[43]

During this period, Frieda received a volley of letters from her husband, Ernest Weekley, and his relatives in England, entreating her to leave Lawrence; the crisis arrived with Ernest's offer of more generous terms for settling their marriage, without divorce or her giving up her children, if she should return to England alone. Such circumstances would be reason enough for Lawrence's reluctance to think too much about his native country; but perhaps, besides the idea of England, Lawrence's letter also signifies his aversion to English ideas, specifically those which he saw as being central to England's artistic culture: it is perhaps not too much to construe England's 'miserable modernness' as suggesting, besides urban life, the urbane, 'modern' attitude expressed by, and satirised in, the upper-class characters of Oscar Wilde, Saki

et al.: the social elegance, fastidiousness and aristocratic insouciance of the best aesthetic sophisticates. In contrast to the ‘enervation’ and (over-)‘civilisation’ long-identified with such aesthetic types by their critics, Lawrence projects himself in an altogether more robust guise: he is ‘savage’ and ‘wild’, he will fight ‘tooth and claw’ for his ‘mate’, he is ‘wholesome’ and ‘common’. This may simply be another artistic pose, but circumstances were compelling him to live up to its professed independence and resoluteness, and it would feed into his work, enabling him to resist slavishly following the mores of what he now saw as a suffocating English literary culture: on one side, the stolid gentility of the middle-class readership, and, on the other, the writer’s equally effete, ‘modern’ (even if now old-fashioned) aesthetic sensibility. And even if this new independence was somewhat curtailed by Edward Garnett (reader for Lawrence’s publisher, Duckworth) subsequently cutting nearly one tenth of *Sons and Lovers* prior to publication, what remained was still a healthier animal than the books before: Paul Morel’s final, determined walk towards the community of the town illustrates the novel’s general determination to engage with the realities of life and decay (the town is ‘glowing’ but with a cold ‘phosphorescence’);^[44] this replaces *The White Peacock*’s Cyril Beardsall’s detached, aesthetic contemplation, and Siegmund’s choice of suicide and the rôle of the tragic artist in the death-obsessed *The Trespasser*.

A simultaneously more explicit and more crude notion as to the crucial development of 1912 is offered by David Craig, who perceives a deficiency in Lawrence’s representation of society; this ‘lack’, opines Craig, is a consequence of Lawrence’s relationship with Frieda: it ‘belongs with that childlessness, and that social functionlessness of Frieda, whose spoiling effect on his art Leavis defines with firm delicacy at one point but tends to forget in his particular critiques’.^[45] Besides the

familiar readiness of critics to blame the women in Lawrence's life for supposed failings in his work (recall Arnold Kettle upon the tragedy of Lawrence having a petty-bourgeois mother [note 34]) we may also note a recurring lament for Lawrence's failure to measure up to his critics' preferred social and political norms, or to deliver a programme for improved social organisation - as if such utilitarian considerations are what justifies the artist's business. Thus, quoting Lawrence's rejection of the social ideal of '*Fraternité*' for the personal ideals of '*Fierté, Inégalité, Hostilité*' (from a letter, after all, to the aristocratic Ottoline Morrell, whom Lawrence was about to meet for the first time and may have wished to gratify),^[46] Craig starchily asseverates: 'We should feel, I believe, sorry for the man who is so driven to repudiate human togetherness.'^[47] This reflects much of the condescending superiority which literary criticism often assumes in respect to texts that happen to be at odds with the ideological norms of the critic. Instead of seeing a 'lack' in Lawrence's view of the world, though, why not simply identify a difference, and, rather than summarily condemning it, attempt to analyse how and why his understanding of society differs from supposedly more legitimate formulations? It is surely more productive to see, in what Craig considers to be Lawrence's 'lack' of a normal family unit, a different relation to society which allows something different to be articulated about the individual's relation to society: something like this is attempted in my chapter upon *Women in Love*, below, which seeks to show how, notwithstanding Lawrence being childless with a 'functionless' wife, his novel repeatedly points up the dead end of an isolated individualism, even as it tries to make supportable the idea of such an alternative to social life.

But just as the romantic idea of Lawrence, the solitary rebel, holds fast in the popular imagination,^[48] so is the inverted image of an irremediably alienated, even

misanthropic, Lawrence writ deep in supposedly more acute critical perception. Generally remaining implicit, it is made emphatically explicit in W.H. Auden's account of Lawrence. Remarking that the status of a modern novelist or poet is 'something between that of a *rentier* and a gypsy', Auden suggests that 'Lawrence, who was self-employed after the age of twenty-six [that is to say, 1912, again], belonged to [the City] less than most'.^[49] But however accurate Auden's portrait of the artist in the twentieth century may prove as a self-assessment, it certainly appears inadequate as a general appraisal, and so too as concerns the specific case of Lawrence: 'He has no firsthand knowledge of all those involuntary relationships created by social, economic and political necessity. Very few artists can be *engagé* because life does not engage them'.^[50] Since Auden wrote this, of course, Cambridge University Press's publication of Lawrence's letters has underlined his 'firsthand knowledge' of frequently tortuous and torturous associations imposed by necessity - his relations with literary agents, editors, publishers and so on; and, similarly, the *Cambridge Edition* of his novels reminds us, by detailing the myriad revisions Lawrence made, or allowed to be made, to his work, often in order to ensure its commercial viability and thereby his livelihood, of Lawrence's place and function within the inevitably social and economic context of the market. It is to be hoped that, with such material now readily to hand, Lawrence will be reintegrated with the society that he has often been set apart from or left hovering metaphysically above, for, once the idea is instilled of an artist not properly belonging to his society, it requires little further effort to banish him entirely to the remote region of matters everlasting and numinous:

if, like Lawrence, the only aspects of human beings which you care for and value are states of being, timeless moments of

passionate intensity, then social and political life, which are essentially historical - without a past and a future, human society is inconceivable - must be, for you, the worthless aspects of human life. You cannot honestly say, 'This kind of society is preferable to that,' because, for you, society is wholly given over to Satan.^[51]

And so Auden follows a path well trod by critics since. To be fair, though, Auden is at least arguing the 'defect' of art that shows a complete disregard for social life, whereas the more pervasive critical procedure has been silently to accept Lawrence's own recurrent silences concerning politics, economics, class, and so on, as the natural consequence of a mind bent on more important, universal matters: hence the paucity of writing upon Lawrence's political and ideological significance in comparison to that upon his 'philosophy'.

We need only remind ourselves that Lawrence wrote a relatively successful history textbook for schools (*Movements in European History* [1921]) and, in *The Plumed Serpent*, an account of a revolutionary reconstruction of society, to see the inadequacy of such formulations as Auden's ahistorical, anti-societal Lawrence. It is true, nevertheless, that Lawrence's presentation of historical forces and his ideas of social organisation are often idiosyncratic, contradictory and confused, and this has hamstrung his critical reception by other commentators who *would* like Lawrence to be a political writer but do not like the politics he seems most readily to evince. This is most discernible in the disappointment felt by left-wing critics, such as Craig, at Lawrence's failure to follow or propagate a socialist programme. Thus, Craig asserts that Lawrence, once removed from his native mining town, 'could not conceive of there being anything else properly called "community" to take its place'.^[52] The keyword here is 'properly': it is not the case that Lawrence permanently abandons the idea of 'community', but that his conceptions of it simply fail to count. Here, Craig

expresses that normative criticism, so close to a priggish puritanism, which assumes possession of the 'correct' (although rarely explicated) standards of life, morality, and art, and can only shrink away from real critical engagement with such deviants as Lawrence.^[53] Craig's concluding words to his chapter on 'Lawrence and Democracy' expose the underlying nub of much that has preceded. The problem with Lawrence is his failure 'to ally [his] precious distinctiveness with anything collective', because: 'Unless the writer can do so, in the age of what has been called mass civilisation, his solidarity with his species will be impaired or broken, and his art will suffer.'^[54] Age of mass civilisation or not, this assertion simply does not ring true: there appears no necessary reason why a writer, in order to be successful, must demonstrate his unity and common feeling with the rest of humanity: Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* could be said to do just the opposite, but that is a source of its power, not a weakness. Craig's final judgment seems a rather mealy-mouthed way of saying that if a writer is not socialist then he will produce flawed art. He is again judging Lawrence by a normative process which implicitly assumes its legitimacy to prescribe its own conceptions of 'solidarity' and the 'species'. On the other hand, Swift, for instance, famously made his own definition of humankind, at odds with the '*animal rationale*' of his Enlightenment contemporaries, and no more agreeable with the humanist-Marxist model of a critic like Craig, and in so doing, believed, after all, to have established the better understanding of his species.^[55] In a not dissimilar manner, Lawrence frequently offers a vision of human beings and human society which is bound to upset anyone requiring a benign, humane account of human relationships or, in Craig's case, a recognition of the way people 'strive together to change an unbearable way of life'.^[56] The only option for such a reader is to dispose of the offending material directly, as Craig does with Lawrence's anti-collectivist position,

without apparently considering that evidence for Lawrence's 'solidarity with his species' may lie in his very disgust for the 'mass civilisation' (or, as Lawrence might have said, the 'mob-civilisation') of industrial-capitalist society. As for Auden, he can recognise Lawrence as 'the greatest master who ever lived' in his capacity as 'an analyst and portrayer of the forces of hatred and aggression', though only by adjudging him to be a misanthrope:

about human affection and human charity, for example, he knew absolutely nothing. The truth is that he detested nearly all human beings if he had to be in close contact with them; his ideas of what a human relationship, between man and man or man and woman, ought to be are pure daydreams because they are not based upon any experience of actual relationships which might be improved or corrected.^[57]

So it is that a writer, pitied by others for his intense but supposedly artistically detrimental relationships with his mother and wife, may also be confirmed as having no real relationships whatsoever - that is, relationships approved by Auden as assisting in our edification. It may be, for Auden's Lawrence, that 'society is wholly given over to Satan',^[58] but this is largely because, like Craig's, Auden's criticism is itself given over to normative judgments which tend to berate texts for what they are not, rather than appraise them for what they are: it discards what Lawrence does say about society and human relationships because this fails to match the critic's idea of society and is therefore rendered invalid. But a writer who may be deeply pessimistic as to what society potentially offers, and who may even try to keep it at a distance, nevertheless still belongs to society in some way, and recognising that relation may help to explain the way that the world is represented in his work. And while much of Lawrence's work is non-socialist, even anti-societal, in its various advocacy of libertarianism, neo-aristocracy, and separatist colonies in a period of

oppressive monopoly capitalism, it offers much that should be of interest to any criticism interested in the interrelationship of art and wider society, not least socialist criticism. If we accept Lawrence's writings for what they are, in their own historical moment, as well as asking what we can make of them that is meaningful to us today, then we may go some way towards extricating Lawrence criticism from the impasse of a left-wing criticism which baulks at Lawrence's attitude to society and a liberal humanism (unlike Auden's) that is usually happiest to gut Lawrence of his frequently illiberal, inhumane moments.

Although Craig and Auden are by no means considered major authorities on Lawrence, they are representative of a broad consensus that has cast Lawrence in the rôle of societal alien, whether in the form of heroic rebel or embittered pariah. Paul Delany's vivid biographical account of Lawrence during 1914-18 draws upon both of these elements, the latter progressively prevailing over the former until, at the end of the war, 'those who four years before had acclaimed Lawrence as a genius now dismissed him ... as a gull and a crank. Lawrence, for his part, would willingly have dismissed all his countrymen.'^[59] In Delany's opinion, Lawrence's debilitating division with English society ('his deracination after 1912')^[60] is critically exacerbated by the savagery of the war:

As the level of violence and ruthlessness at the front increased from month to month, so did Lawrence's expressions of hatred for mankind, and even for many of his acquaintances, rise to a higher and higher pitch.^[61]

Delany's recounting of this period of Lawrence's life serves to outline his many shifts in perspective during this time, particularly illuminating the 'radical break between *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*';^[62] but there is also the suggestion of an even more

significant break between the general quality of Lawrence's earlier work and that of the post-war writer:

[Lawrence] had already begun to slough off his English origins before the war; but what started as a positive project of sexual and cultural emancipation degenerated, in the bitterness of the war years, into a savage hacking at his own roots. I disagree with much of F.R. Leavis's interpretation of Lawrence, but share his regret that Lawrence's quarrel with England should have led him to a posture of contemptuous dismissal; and I cannot help feeling that Lawrence's artistic achievement might have been greater, and more useful to his successors, if that dismissal had been less harsh and complete.^[63]

Just as I am unconvinced by the view of Lawrence's general forsaking of society, I disagree too as to the conclusiveness of this break with England - it is never so simple to eliminate entirely one's social and cultural origins (as Lawrence wrote in 1922, 'I feel England has insulted me, and I stomach that feeling badly. *Però, son' sempre inglese* [But, I am always English]');^[64] and just how 'harsh and complete' a rejection is it which involves Lawrence returning to England (if infrequently in real life) habitually in his work? It is a plain fact that many of the essays and articles, together with a significant proportion of the characters and, to a lesser extent, the settings of the fiction after 1918, are drawn from and relate to England. Presumably, if Lawrence had written more about English people living in England, he would now be disparaged for having too narrow a scope. It must be said, though, that the common complaint about Lawrence's later work is not so much with the quantity of its 'English' material, as with the quality of its representations of England and of society generally (although, similarly common, critical antipathy rarely elaborates beyond bare statements as to the work's right-wing drift, or to its increasingly attenuated view of social life). Yet, while acerbically condemning certain elements of Englishness, it

seems evident to me that, for example, such poems as 'The English are so Nice!' and 'Innocent England' (both written in 1929) equally suggest Lawrence's lasting connection to wider society, his inevitable commitment to it as a professional artist who needs a market for his work. During this time, the social authorities were busier than ever in preventing the transmission of this work due to their deeming it to be neither 'nice' nor 'innocent' (in 1928 there were several attempts to seize the supposedly indecent *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; in 1929 the typescript of the poetry collection, *Pansies*, was impounded and an exhibition of his paintings was raided by the police). Lawrence's immediate riposte through yet more work surely points to it being the case that society, as represented by the 'beastly bourgeois',^[65] was turning its back on Lawrence, rather than it being he who was abandoning society. And if Lawrence had been more 'loyal' to his English roots, we may again presume, he might now be condemned all the more as obnoxiously right-wing. It is Delany and other critics who presume the most, however, shooting in the dark as to Lawrence's unfulfilled potential, what his 'artistic achievement might have been', if only he had not quarrelled with England, socialism, or any number of factors through which and against which his thought was after all shaped.

The truth of the matter is that the Lawrence which we do have is, in the first instance, the writer of *The Plumed Serpent* just as much as he is the author of *Sons and Lovers*, and, second, through criticism, 'Lawrence' becomes what we choose to make of this material - and criticism which tends to see it largely as a corruption of an ideal Lawrence that never existed is unlikely to make much of it whatsoever. The period covered by Delany's account precludes any detailed consideration of the late work, but his implication that an increasingly deracinated Lawrence fell short of his earlier promise seems to me problematical. Lawrence's very

expression of his most profound social pessimism, *Women in Love*, is, as Delany acknowledges, 'probably his greatest novel';^[66] and while it is true that Lawrence's ambivalent feelings for England and humanity in general posed real difficulties for his later work, such problems often create tensional energies which those dead retreads of English literariness, *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*, almost entirely lack. Anyone wishing to complain of the representation of politics in *Kangaroo*, for instance, should glance beforehand at the use of socialism and conservatism in Lawrence's first novel. In *The White Peacock*, with George Saxton's flirtation with socialist activism and the desultorily recorded progress of Leslie Tempest becoming a Tory MP, political loyalties function little more than to characterise and polarise the rival suitors of the heroine, Lettie Beardsall. George's and Leslie's political opposition is incidental to their more fundamental contest for Lettie's attentions. In agreement with her own judgment, the novel suggests that Lettie is 'the only real thing' and politics are merely 'frivolous'.^[67] Such marginalisation of overt politics may seem attractive to a reader appalled by *Kangaroo*'s sympathies with the fascistic 'Diggers', and George and Leslie may appear no more crude approximations of political beings than *Kangaroo*'s Willie Struthers, into whose otherwise vacuous character the novel's socialist alternative is somewhat shoehorned. Yet, in contrast to *The White Peacock*, *Kangaroo* shows rival political creeds themselves (or, at least, Lawrence's understanding of them), through the nominal characters of Benjamin Cooley and Struthers, competing for the allegiance of the hero, Somers; rather than, and indeed at the expense of, the actual characters, the novel's protagonist is the ideological black hole which engulfs Somers, its antagonists the political and spiritual ideologies that futilely attempt to fill the void. Lawrence is prepared to deal with politics of a disturbing content and, complementarily, presents them in an unsettling

form: political ideologies appear, despite all the entreaties to be ‘mates’, stripped of the typical humanising packaging with which they usually facilitate their consumption, their more problematic features not enveloped and obscured in the construction of ‘well-rounded’ characters: in this much, *Kangaroo* does just the opposite of *The White Peacock*, in which conservatism and socialism are merely tagged on to Leslie and George - politics themselves reduced to ornaments of characterisation, as superficial as Lettie’s ‘Woman’s League’ badge, which may be worn or discarded at her convenience.^[68] Similarly, any critic who, attesting to the superiority of the earlier Lawrence, complains of the various forms of oppression at work within *The Plumed Serpent*, should be reminded of *The Trespasser*’s preoccupation with death: whereas the later novel’s underlying threat of violence exists in tandem with the impulse to create a new and more vigorous society, oppression in the earlier novel merely takes the form of the hero’s morbid self-obsession and gradual self-corrosion.

Delany’s suggestion of a crucial break in the quality of Lawrence’s work reproduces a long-standing and pervasive attitude in Lawrence criticism, whose commendation of certain texts coincides with an attempt to bury others: a process which, in effect, seeks to distinguish the ‘good’ Lawrence whom we should revere from the ‘bad’ Lawrence whom we should revile or, more to the purposes of ‘favourable’ critics, conveniently forget. (I should stress that my own censure of elements in Lawrence’s first two novels, above, by no means indicates my assent to their critical neglect.) While I hope to show that such critical bifurcations of Lawrence’s work tend to miss its rich complexities (besides often shaping a startlingly reduced Lawrentian canon), the predilection for a simplifying division is readily understandable. One reason why Lawrence appeals to such a diverse readership seems

to be his endless contradictions and the multifarious responses his work is able to elicit; but individually we feel a need to impose some order upon this hotchpotch, to 'make sense' of it, to render its mutability satisfyingly stable and personally coherent. Katherine Mansfield felt such was necessary when formulating the man himself, describing, during a rapprochement with Lawrence, how:

For me, at least, the dove brooded over him too. I loved him: He was just his old merry, rich self, laughing, ... -We simply did not talk about people. We kept to things like nuts and cowslips & fires in woods, and his black self *was* not.^[69]

As for criticism though, or, at least, for criticism which aspires beyond the limitations of assessing Lawrence's work by how closely it approximates the qualities of a personable companion, such contrary qualities are too intricately connected for their extrication to be practical or useful. The antagonism to the industrial-capitalist world, for example, which sees Paul and Clara lamenting the ugliness of Nottingham in *Sons and Lovers*, and which has Ursula vociferating against the brutality of the collieries in *The Rainbow*, remains an essential factor in *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, albeit delivered at a pitch which has antagonised many a reader too. Put crudely, the 'bad' Lawrence is the necessary price paid for the 'good' Lawrence; and this is nowhere more apparent than in *Women in Love*, where, I will argue later, its alienated and occasionally misanthropic ideology allows a radical criticism of society's mean destructiveness and a debunking of those ideologies implicated in the murder on the Western Front.

We have seen this type of paradox above, in the discrepancy between Lawrence's empathy with the Bavarian soldiers in 'With the Guns', and his hostility to British industrial labour during the war; and it is again apparent in his attitude to

the ending of the war. As Delany summarises: 'Lawrence, characteristically, refused either to celebrate with the victors or to commiserate with the vanquished.'^[70] Here, it would seem, is ample testimony to Lawrence's detachment from society, his complete aloofness to the emotional and psychological impact of the Armistice, whether upon his countrymen or his German wife. And yet, this lack of sympathy belies a penetrative understanding of how society can dupe itself - or, put in non-Lawrentian terms, how dominant ideologies control national behaviour. Like many opponents of the war, Lawrence saw little reason for celebration after a pointless slaughter, and, unlike H.G. Wells and many others, he had never believed this was '*The War That Will End War*':^[71] by the end of October 1918 he could write, 'I feel as if *this* war were [near?]ly over',^[72] but he had determined long before that, whoever were the victors, 'I don't care either way, now. It is when this affair is over we must do something.'^[73] Of course, it is the perceived omission of Lawrence to do this 'something' which has above all contributed to the notion of his giving up on a society 'wholly given over to Satan';^[74] but such a suggestion of Lawrence's active wish to sever social connections is discounted when seen as a misleading simplification of the very circumstances identified and *problematised* by *Kangaroo*. This novel, although expressing the desire to escape society, nonetheless shows the self-destructive futility of attempting to do so. After Somers is finally extricated from the Diggers' fascism and Australian socialism, he finds there is nothing to do but to say 'farewell'^[75] to Australia and, potentially, to all future social congress: for although Somers sails for America, we are forewarned of his status as a perpetual vagabond, who, without spiritual or ideological commitment to the world outside his marriage, will be cast ashore as human jetsam: 'To America - the United States, a country that did not attract him at all, but which seemed to lie next in his line of

destiny. ... People mattered so little. People hardly mattered at all.'^[76] This promises no resolution to Somers's crisis, however - on the contrary, it is such reluctance to commit himself, either to place or people, that has blighted Somers's inchoate friendships, plagued his marriage, and left him at sea politically throughout the novel.

It is certainly true that Lawrence's own entrenched individualism, and later scepticism of overtly political revolutionary ideologies, restricted his participation in organisations which sought to remedy the social malaise he diagnosed. Even so, it is one of my contentions that his articulation of the only ideology which seemed available to him, namely right-wing libertarianism, in fact provides for a much more rigorous interrogation of industrial-capitalist society than might be supposed of an ideology which was itself a formative element of that world. This will not, though, mean the passive and wholesale consumption of such ideology, nor entail crediting Lawrence's explicit politics with a shrewdness they rarely possess; rather, my interest in this study is less with Lawrence, the man we no longer have, as with 'Lawrence', the textual body which we do, and with subjecting it to a critical reprocessing that may, besides establishing its historical significance, avoid slipping into mere antiquarianism by ascertaining the interest and importance of 'Lawrence' for us today.

Indeed, a concern with Lawrence as our contemporary is made all the more compelling by the weight of previous cultural and political reprocessings: the texts are hardly knowable 'as themselves', but arrive before us marinated in earlier interpretations. Any sense of a 'real', 'original' Lawrence is lost amongst a frequently bewildering inheritance of derivatives. John Middleton Murry's arraignment of Lawrence as 'the outlaw of modern English Literature'^[77] supplies an apt appellation for the persona that emerges from many subsequent assessments. These have, on one

hand, denounced Lawrence according to the orthodoxy of the time: thus, in 1929, Wyndham Lewis could give no better expression of his distaste for Lawrence than in designating him as a 'natural communist and a born feminist',^[78] while, by 1948, Lawrence's one-time friend (and one-time fascist), Cecil Gray, found it more appropriate to condemn him as a 'potential Hitler';^[79] on the other hand, Lawrence's outlaw status was precisely the reason for his popular celebration by the dropout culture of the 1960s, raising a toast to 'ole D.H. Lawrence' along with Jack Nicholson's lawbreaking lawyer in the film, *Easy Rider*;^[80] and the most prevalent academic defence of Lawrence, that of Leavis's construction of an essentially liberal writer of the moral mainstream, in fact only defends the favourable front of Lawrence as a critic of oppressive industrialism, and has largely to banish Lawrence's sexism and authoritarian impulses from the field of critical engagement.

Arguments as to whether or not Lawrence is a social outsider, or whether that outsider-status is indicative of his social degeneracy or of some romantic adventure, suggest the final recalcitrance of the Lawrence corpus for much conservative and liberal criticism; they perhaps point to the very contradictoriness which, presumably, might be handled with least qualms by Marxist critics, who recognise the fundamental contradictions of the industrial-capitalist society which produced Lawrence. However, materialist criticism, along with the insights it has provided into the conflicting impulses within Lawrence's work, has often followed the crude but expedient splitting of Lawrence into 'good' and 'bad' categories. Terry Eagleton has remarked how, in Leavis, 'extreme right-wing features which Lawrence shared with Eliot and Pound - a raging contempt for liberal and democratic values, a slavish submission to impersonal authority - were more or less edited out';^[81] yet Eagleton himself is not beyond suasive selectivity when constructing a

complementarily reductive, rightist Lawrence, as in *Criticism and Ideology*, where his proto-fascist writer proves a fiasco at least equal to that of Leavis's liberal version.^[82]

In fact, materialist criticism has frequently edited Lawrence as severely as Leavis did, developing two contrasting Lawrentian canons. Generally, texts of the 1920s, after *Women in Love*, have predominantly formed the corpus for critics who adjudge Lawrence a political failure, whether or not an outright fascist. Not entirely uncompelled by the unavailability of sundry earlier texts, leftist critics of the 1930s particularly emphasise the later work.^[83] One of the less grotesque summations of Lawrence advanced from this quarter provides an early example of the notion of a crucial break in Lawrence's work, discussed previously:

after the brilliant beginning of 'Sons and Lovers' and 'The Rainbow,' he abandoned novel writing altogether for those strange, beautiful and mystical poems in prose which are the bulk of his stories and tales. Here are no men and women of flesh and blood, but simply moods. Compare, for example, 'The Rainbow' with its deplorable sequel 'Women in Love.' Who would ever believe that the abstractions of the latter novel had any relation at all to the passionate sisters in the first book? ... Something happened to Lawrence after writing 'The Rainbow' which completely destroyed his creative ability.^[84]

This formulation has been essentially repeated by much leftist criticism since, which has tended to invert the canon favoured by many critics of the 1930s in an attempt to reclaim a Lawrence more conducive to working-class interests (or, perhaps, to the interests of left-wing literary critics): predominantly focusing upon earlier texts, up to and including *Women in Love*, later novels, such as *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*, tend merely to be mentioned when summary condemnations of Lawrence's supposedly sinister side are required.^[85] The consequence, though, is a reduction both of 'Lawrence' and of the potential of socialist criticism.

Central to such criticism in Great Britain is Raymond Williams, whose writing upon Lawrence largely predates his conversion to Marxism, marked by *Marxism and Literature* (1977).^[86] Much of the earlier work remains constrained by a Leavisite heritage of humanist ideology and the notion of Lawrence, if not as ‘a recorder of essential English history’,^[87] then still as an essentially ‘English novelist’;^[88] thus *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* remain canonical centrepieces, which Williams then sandwiches between *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Graham Holderness’s valuable book-length study, *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*, roughly follows the Leavis-Williams template in concentrating upon ‘the essential novels’ ‘which directly address [Lawrence’s] native society’^[89] - what amounts to another essentially English Lawrence. To his credit, Holderness provides uncommonly substantial and illuminating accounts of *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*, before his subsequent trajectory pursues that of Williams’s *The English Novel*, dealing with *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*, and finding in *Women in Love*, as Williams puts it, ‘a kind of conclusion’^[90] (although not the actual ‘conclusion’, Holderness’s analysis of *Women in Love* forms his book’s last extensive section, which contextualises the novel in light of the war that precipitated Lawrence’s departure from England). After this, neither Williams nor Holderness discusses the other works, bar *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. In this novel, Williams sees Lawrence resuming what ‘he never quite finished in *Women in Love*’,^[91] a sort of postscript to Lawrence’s social philosophy and, so too, to Williams’s account; Holderness similarly uses *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* as a brief epilogue. Of the intervening novels, Williams’s essay makes only the general comment that they are ‘willed and abstract’;^[92] Holderness only explicitly (and briefly) refers to *The Lost Girl*, remarking on its Forster-like detachment.^[93] Much the same sequence operates in

Eagleton's chapter on Lawrence in *Exiles and Emigrés*: the recognition of the achievements of *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* is followed by acknowledgement of the significance of *Women in Love*, notwithstanding its 'often wild disproportion between event and response, public culture and private experience'.^[94] (Compare Williams on *Women in Love* as 'a radical *simplification* of the novel' in its 'concentration on isolated relationships [and] the dropping of other people and of the texture of ordinary life as irrelevant';^[95] and Holderness's view that, instead of focusing 'on a tragic struggle between working class and bourgeoisie ... the novel opts for the simpler ... tragedy of entrepreneurial capitalism'.)^[96] And again, with no room to discuss what we are told is the 'frustrated exploration' of the years in between, Eagleton deals with the fag end that is *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.^[97] It is intriguing as to why a study of 'émigrés' so completely ignores *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*, all of which were written by an expatriate and feature central characters in similar circumstances. The suggestion that, like Holderness, Eagleton is concerned with those works 'which directly address [Lawrence's] native society', is as unsatisfactory as it is in accounting for Holderness's omissions, considering that *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod*, and *Kangaroo* all contain, however obliquely or fragmentarily, commentary upon England which is surely significant in itself, besides possibly better illuminating the development of Lawrence's responses to England in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

An explanation for these lacunae can be found, perhaps, in Williams's and Holderness's tendency to favour socially realist forms: *Sons and Lovers* is a strong favourite for its 'reality of community' (Williams),^[98] and 'the realist method [in which] Lawrence reaches an understanding of that ideology of individualism which becomes dominant (and damaging) in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*'

(Holderness);^[99] hence, possibly, their disinclination for more ‘experimental’ adumbrations of society, such as those found in *Kangaroo* or *The Plumed Serpent*. As for Eagleton, although he professes that it ‘is not a question of “social realism” against “symbolism”’, he rather imitates Williams and Holderness when he disfavours *Women in Love* for its ‘pervasive thinness of social texture’; complains that it represents ‘society’ only in ‘the vague, abstracted, flippant or earnest philosophising of a self-consciously lost generation’; and remarks, ‘the sense of an objective world existing in its own substantial terms, is now almost entirely lacking’.^[100] This seems a somewhat pro-realist argument for adjudging the novel ‘decidedly inferior to both *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*’.^[101] And it is a very surprising judgment, because Eagleton’s thesis is that the war years and sense of imminent social disintegration spurred writers such as Lawrence to capture that decay, and *Women in Love* seems so much more about that breakdown, and a product of it, than either *The Rainbow* or *Sons and Lovers* (written before the war, anyway).^[102] Eagleton’s antipathy for *Women in Love*’s ‘abstracted’ quality corresponds with Williams’s dismissal of the succeeding novels as ‘willed and abstract’, and with Holderness’s attenuated interest in the native society of *The Lost Girl*, described from the viewpoint, ‘not ... of a participant, but of an observer.’^[103] The fact that similar preferences are at work in the above assessment from the 1930s, expressing distaste at *Women in Love*’s substitution of ‘abstractions’ for *The Rainbow*’s ‘passionate sisters’, suggests how long-standing are the difficulties which leftist critics have had with Lawrence’s cooler, socially splintered works.^[104] Replacing Leavis’s canonisation of those works which supposedly manifest his arbitrary concept of ‘Life’, these critics canonise Lawrence’s works according to an arbitrarily realist representation of ‘society’, and marginalise the more oblique societal presences and insouciant social observation.

This is not to say that my own study aims to make a contrasting claim as to the superior value of such 'modernist' works. Rather, I wish to reintegrate the alternative 'good' and 'bad' Lawrences, and attempt to show how the 'bad', socially dislocated works may be seen to produce meaningful commentary upon their historical world and ours today, and this involves taking into account their different conditions of production to that of the more accepted work. However, while acknowledging the difficulties posed to Lawrence's work by his geographical and ideological displacement from Eastwood, I hope to challenge the implication of much materialist criticism that, as Lawrence's removal from an immediate English working-class milieu is consolidated, the texts decline in quality. At the same time, I wish to retrieve a version of Lawrence distinct from liberal-humanist 'Lawrentian' constructions, and this will inevitably entail building upon the valuable foundations provided by Williams, Eagleton and Holderness. I am also keen to follow on from politically-minded criticism which has previously sought to reassess much of the conventionally disregarded material, such as, for example, Rick Rylance's reading of *Kangaroo* as 'a self-interrogating work, exploring the limits of its own argument even as it advances it'.^[105] My own approach to emphasising Lawrence's self-interrogations, as well as to exposing the works' self-deceptions, attempts to combine a decidedly non-Lawrentian ideological standpoint - one which is of a piece with the broad range of socialist, materialist criticism - with a procedure of close reading which keeps the explicit object of criticism firmly under the critical gaze. (It may be ventured that, for instance, in his, nevertheless illuminating, historical account of *Women in Love*, Holderness does in fact lose his critical object beyond bits of one chapter, 'The Industrial Magnate'.^[106]) It is hoped that a formalist concern with deconstructing the literary devices and functions of Lawrence's texts, complemented

by the texts' reconstruction with reference to their historical context and comparable texts by others, will respectively help avoid critical *culs-de-sac* such as asserting Lawrence's fascism, or reiterating Lawrence's own view of the world as a supposed exegesis of his work.

The poverty of the debate concerning Lawrence's fascist tendencies is evident in the way critics resort to suggesting Lawrence's *potential* fascism - he is Eagleton's quasi-fascist, or a 'proto-fascist'^[107] - instead of straightforwardly accepting that, finally, Lawrence was *not* a fascist. Another critic, who still more cautiously suggests that elements of *The Plumed Serpent* 'seem commensurate with certain manifestations of fascism',^[108] indirectly illustrates the non-productivity of much of the concern with Lawrence's 'fascism'. Peter Scheckner outlines the orthodox case against Lawrence that, in the so-called 'leadership' novels, characters such as Rawdon Lilly (*Aaron's Rod*), Benjamin Cooley (*Kangaroo*), and Don Ramón and Cipriano (*The Plumed Serpent*), who are accorded some measure of respect and sympathy, are in some ways fascistic - in their distrust of freedom for the masses, their averring the need for *Il-Duce*-style social control, and so on. We are also presented with the now conventional defence, that this line of thought is challenged within the text, particularly by other characters:

Aaron is not convinced by Lilly's insistence that most men must submit to 'some greater soul than theirs.' Somers recoils from submitting to Kangaroo, and Kate Leslie ... is very cautious about her marriage to Cipriano; she is equally tentative about her association to Cipriano's nationalist movement. ... Except for Kate Leslie, who stays for the time being in Mexico, the protagonists of *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo* find themselves torn between the desire to belong and the desire to be free from social commitment. Like many of Lawrence's heroes, they have little choice but to move on. The leadership novels reveal a strong attraction for and a deep

mistrust of 'the leader who is a star of the new, natural Noblesse.' (92)^[109]

However, while this effectively detects a source of the texts' richness in their ideological tensions, it seems to miss anything of great import: it is fine in so far as it goes, but then it does not go very far. The main question should not be whether the leaders are accepted, or whether the texts are delivered from fascism by the scepticism of their protagonists; because, in fact, the texts' resistance to fascism is itself symptomatic of their greatest political crux: they only shy away from fascism in the same way they seem to do, generally, from socio-political forms of most kinds. The issue of Lawrence and fascism is a paltry affix to the more substantial matter of this political impasse. It is a sense of social and political breakdown, and the extent to which something may be retrieved from this, that is of essential concern to these works, with the notion of leadership offering one way of exploring the problem. The justification of these novels on the grounds that they are not fascist, and are therefore unobjectionable, is not dissimilar to today's political posturing which, keen to make capital of the continued spectre of fascism, declares something or somebody not fascist, or better still *anti-Nazi/fascist*, as if at once declaring the essential political health of the subject, and so discouraging closer inspection. In a similar way, if less intentionally and cynically, Scheckner's type of argument avoids either getting to the marrow of Lawrence's politics or exposing any political hollowness.

The impenetrability, for much criticism, of Lawrence's politics and ideology has been further preserved by a second critical befogging, again illustrated by Scheckner. Approaching Lawrence's fiction through an often uncritical appreciation of the non-fictional writings, or his 'philosophy', writing about Lawrence may easily fall into a Lawrentian echo of the original. It must be pointed out that

Scheckner's *Class, Politics, and the Individual* is a generally commendable attempt to stress the importance for Lawrence's work of his attitudes to the working class, and to examine the nature of the work's involvement with, and disengagement from, politics, which previously had been so overlooked. Scheckner is by no means a categorical Lawrentian, and certainly is not averse to pointing out Lawrence's somewhat skewed representation of historical events, as, for example, in the depiction of the colliers in *Women in Love* and their satisfaction in their submission to industrial capitalism; yet neither does he succumb to crudely condemning Lawrence for 'failing' to portray historical reality. As Scheckner explains:

The point is not the historical accuracy of the [colliers' submission] - it is almost the opposite of what actually occurred in England during the composition of the novel, particularly among the mining unions - but that it was an inevitable outgrowth of Lawrence's social outlook at the time.
(65)

Indeed, to be entirely fair to Scheckner, it also must be said that he more or less explicitly acknowledges his work as primarily descriptive; it is an account which purportedly 'traces the presence and development of class in Lawrence' (13) - an exploratory exercise rather than a fully analytical exegesis, and as such, perhaps, it will inevitably repeat Lawrence on occasion, rather than reproduce him in a new context that interrogates his self-representation.

However, even allowing for all this, Scheckner's account still too often appears to become enveloped in Lawrence's view of the world. When, for example, Scheckner writes of Lawrence's 'desire to escape the ... mindlessness of his own class' (76), there is very little way of ascertaining whether this reflects Scheckner's own opinion of the psychology of the English working class or, in fact, refers to

Lawrence's later ideas about it. Admittedly, it might be awkward for Scheckner, if not exasperating for the reader, to tag every such statement with an 'as Lawrence saw it' or an 'according to Lawrence'. But the reason why this ambiguity arises so frequently is the lack of a sustained critical perspective detached from Lawrentian discourse, be it supplied by an examination of the historical or biographical contexts of that discourse, by comparative readings of contiguous texts, ideological difference, or whatever; without some such critical foothold it is all too easy to slip into a quasi-Lawrentian position where Lawrence becomes the presiding authority on issues of class, society, politics and everything, by virtue of the absence of any other authority. So, for example, to explicate Lawrence's depiction of the mining community in *Sons and Lovers*, Scheckner enlists another account by Lawrence of the 'same' community from the essay, 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' (written in 1929):

Both in the essay and in the novel, Nottinghamshire is 'a queer jumble of old England and the new. ... Life was a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England of Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and George Eliot.'
(27)^[110]

There is no suggestion of any problems involved in substituting the words of an essayist and long-standing emigrant from the place he describes for the account of a novelist who is still relatively familiar with it. Neither does Scheckner venture to expand upon what Lawrence might mean by the 'England of Shakespeare' or that of George Eliot. In fact, both Lawrence and Scheckner presume historical continuities and harmonies, here, which are highly questionable. Besides the matter of whether an 'England of Shakespeare' has ever existed outside of Shakespeare, there is Lawrence's dubious conflation of this late-feudal world with Eliot's rural community

after the agricultural and industrial revolutions. Similarly, Scheckner neglects crucial changes and developments in Lawrence's life between the writing of *Sons and Lovers* and 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside', not least ideological transformations stemming from his protracted dissociation from his native colliery community; and these changes are evident in the more abstracted, idealised account of the colliers, for example, in the later essay - serving to undermine assertions of all but the most superficial similarities between the two texts.

But even if, as Scheckner supposes, there are fundamental symmetries with *Sons and Lovers*, then what added significance to the novel is supplied by a reading of 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside'? 'In this essay,' writes Scheckner, 'Lawrence proves the superficiality of separating out the book's multiple personal conflicts from the turn-of-the-century mining world in which the Morel family is a virtual prisoner' (27). It may be remarked, firstly, that we do not need the essay in order to establish the evident connection of personal and social contexts in the novel; and secondly, that it is more obviously the case that Scheckner 'proves' the critical persistence of blurring distinctions between the literary category of non-fiction and the epistemological notion of 'fact'. This is not to say that Scheckner simply takes the essay to be 'true' history - on the contrary, he does his best to signal its subjective nature and to distinguish it from his own discourse by the method of using 'according to Lawrence', mentioned above.^[11] However, because Scheckner does not often directly challenge Lawrence, but rather allows him generous quotations to speak for himself, Lawrence's non-fiction nevertheless attains a somewhat privileged status by default, as the nearest thing to a touchstone for validating the fiction. Consequently, Scheckner's own discourse cannot, after all, avoid becoming beholden to that of Lawrence. When, for example, Scheckner quotes from 'Nottingham and the Mining

Countryside' upon the perceived differences between, on the one hand, the colliers' spontaneous physicality and natural instinct and, on the other hand, their wives' 'nagging materialism' and concern with social etiquette (28, 29),^[112] he sums up thus: 'As industrialism began to pull their lives apart, the men clung to what they knew best and what, for them, had some sort of passion' (29) - that is, Scheckner goes on to say, they clung to work. This assimilation of Lawrentian social theory and 'passional' vocabulary may seem innocuous enough, here, as a brief paraphrase. But then, after quoting the description of Walter Morel's contentment in performing small tasks of repair at home,^[113] Scheckner declares: 'The women could share in none of this, and the result is that every male-female relationship in *Sons and Lovers* is marked by this disjointedness' (29). The first clause carries the assured conclusiveness of a statement of fact, and, sure enough, the 'women' referred to, who may initially be thought to be those in the novel, would seem to be those of mining communities in 'reality'. But just how has this apparent social fact been established? Its authority actually rests upon nothing more than similarities between essay and novel. The essay is presented as a tool for understanding society in the novel, while, reciprocally, society in the novel appears to confirm the truth of what is said in the essay. Scheckner, consequently, is caught between these two texts, constrained to follow their symmetries. The result is both to overstate the homogeneity of Lawrence's works and to confuse texts which contest history with texts that have actually been contested by the criteria of historical discourse. Whether or not the texts are, in fact, historically 'accurate' in their depictions of industrial society and gender differences is another matter; but my point here is the unquestioning way in which eminently questionable ideas become established through their repeated citation.

Indeed, having accepted such typically binary Lawrentian schemata of male/female, natural physicality/societal consciousness, the critic's guard is dropped to propositions even more contentious. We are told soon afterwards, for instance, that a 'mind-body dichotomy becomes an appropriate metaphor to show class contradictions between the major characters [in *Sons and Lovers*]' (34). The familiar Lawrentian distinction between middle-class mental consciousness and working-class physicality may well be an 'appropriate', simplifying palliative for a writer faced with the uncertainties of breaking from his industrial working-class origins while less than entirely at ease in the middle-class social world; but Scheckner begs the question as to its appropriateness *per se*: it is proper that Lawrence deals with class in this way, Scheckner argues, simply because it is similar to the way he represents differences between the sexes. Such binary representations are, of course, liable to be fraught with prejudices, though the point here is not to 'blame' Lawrence for ideological constructs determined by his circumstances, but to note how Scheckner silently assumes their veracity and passively replicates their prejudices in the form of authoritative social comment. Having accepted the notion of the colliers' semi-conscious physicality, for example, Scheckner has prepared his ground for that old cliché concerning the peculiar social problem of working-class violence:

The occasional gratuitous brutality of men like Morel and Dawes, which Gertrude's snobbery or Paul's elitism inevitably draws out, is never romanticized. Such bullying represents an aspect of working-class life that Lawrence detested, one that he portrayed repeatedly, especially in his wartime and immediate postwar novels. (36)

We may feel a need ironically to emphasise the words, 'that he portrayed', for Scheckner once more implicitly grants historical authority to Lawrence's depiction of

society, without subjecting that depiction to analysis by historical discourse. Instead, Scheckner calls upon further representations by Lawrence, with the implication that, because Lawrence ‘repeatedly’ portrayed this ‘gratuitous brutality’, it must be a more or less typical predisposition of the working-class male.

Thus, having quoted Lawrence suggesting the ‘England of Shakespeare’, Scheckner himself goes on to offer us the world of Lawrence; but neither region is presented merely as an imaginative landscape or ideological creation, for they are laid before us as spontaneously recognisable approximations, if not perfect replications, of an implied ‘real’ world. This substitution of artistic representations of history for history itself is natural enough in a creative writer such as Lawrence (although not so acceptable, perhaps, in a biographical history such as ‘Nottingham and the Mining Countryside’), but, more objectionably, it also occurs frequently in Lawrence criticism. A major reason why Lawrence’s world (which certainly is a ‘queer jumble’) slips so readily and unopposed into critical exegeses is apparent in Scheckner’s account. Although Scheckner allows for the many contradictions in Lawrence’s work, he fails to appreciate just how ‘jumbled’ it is. This is because, under the persistent weight of Lawrence’s essentially unmediated expositions, Scheckner’s remaining commentary cannot help but be imprinted with the superficial coherence of Lawrence’s ‘philosophy’. This pervasive misnomer for Lawrence’s abstract thought grants it an organisation and intellectual rigour that it might otherwise often appear to lack. And, as this implied ‘system’ is so often applied in explicating Lawrence’s ‘art’, then so too is the fiction liable to be glossed into a similar simplified unity. The effect is a perpetual begging the question, as critics *assume* the value of Lawrence (in the non-fiction and abstract commentaries within the fiction) in the very process of supposedly *establishing* the value of Lawrence (as the artist). So Lawrence is judged

in the light of more Lawrence, with the critic's text reduced to a passive reflection of those of his subject. Here, for example, is Scheckner discussing *The Plumed Serpent's* distinctions between Mexican Indians and Westerners:

the opposite of the Indians 'who have never been able to win a soul for themselves, never been able to win themselves a nucleus, an individual integrity out of the chaos of passions and potencies and death,' are the Europeans and North Americans with whom Kate unhappily identifies. For the white man, 'let him bluster as he may, is hollow with misgivings about his own supremacy. Full speed ahead, then, for the débâcle'.... Either the body crushes the spirit beneath it, like the Indian, or the spirit rises out of the body, as in the case of the white man. This is the great tragedy of our times. In the American continent, the narrator says, 'If a man arrives with a soul, the maleficent elements gradually break it, gradually, till he decomposes into ideas and mechanistic activities, in a body full of mechanical energy, but with his blood-soul dead and putrescent'.... Lawrence's lifetime objective was to find a way to put these pieces back together. (129-30)^[114]

This is a patchwork of quoted Lawrence and what amounts to little more than paraphrased Lawrence. When we read 'This is the great tragedy of our times', we may well feel a need for clarification as to whose voice this is, Scheckner's or Lawrence's; but, after all, it is of little consequence because any hard distinction between the two has melted away, leaving a criticism which loses any critical angle on its object. What, for example, does Lawrence mean by 'individual integrity', or the death of a man's 'blood-soul'? It is simply assumed that such terms are self-explanatory and that Lawrence's 'lifetime objective' is legitimate or meaningful. Scheckner omits to ask if a real problem to be solved is diagnosed in the first place. The recurring Lawrentian division of 'soul' and 'ideas', the divorce of emotion from intellect, could be seen, not merely as a common-sense observation of the world, but as a production of a world which serves particular interests. It may be argued, for instance, that under this

scheme of things, to have genuine physical vitality and 'blood-soul' - that is, to be non-Western, or, in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, to be working class - you must renounce claims to intelligence; and, reciprocally, to be conventionally educated and 'individual' entails being irrevocably removed from the experiences of, and identified against the interests of, these people deprived of their rights and power. All of this clearly has significant political ramifications, not least concerning the nature and possibility of revolution, as the potential collective agents of political change are divided from the possibility of educational and intellectual means of breaking capitalist hegemony. Similarly, 'individual integrity' could be seen as a spiriting away of Western middle-class material advantages, an individualism resulting from less exposure to 'the chaos of passions and potencies and death', rather than from benefits of wealth, technology, rights and education. Whatever the case, the point is that Lawrence's philosophy forms leading questions whose answers present the world in ways readily compatible with, and limited to, certain political theories and practices; that is to say, Lawrence's philosophy is ideology. This epithet is not particularly intended to disparage Lawrence's abstract thought, but simply aims to acknowledge it for what it is.

While maybe not a Lawrentian in the first instance, Scheckner's work is all the more indicative of the irrepressibly ideological nature of Lawrence's philosophy and of Lawrence studies as a consequence. We see how critics are drawn into using Lawrence to expound Lawrence, and how their ostensible descriptive objectivity/ideological neutrality often results in conceding to, or replicating, the tangled weave of Lawrence's philosophy. And it is a very deadening exercise, not least because such criticism also has a tendency to present this miscellany as a coherent, logical body of thought - as a philosophy, in fact - or at least to problematise

its contradictions as in need of resolution. In my view, this approach is deeply mistaken, for, as a philosophy *per se*, a systematic description of 'reality', much of it remains feeble and muddled; on the other hand, it is as an evidently suasive, contentious, ideologically manufactured 'reality' that its energy and richness is to be found; and no less so for being fractured by internal contradictions and shot through with ambiguity as a consequence of Lawrence's peculiarly mutable relations to contemporary ideologies. The recalcitrance of Lawrence's texts to being reproduced as a philosophy is perhaps apparent in Scheckner's omission to relate 'Lawrence's world view' (13) to much in the world other than more Lawrence; and it is certainly manifest in commentaries more insistent upon the philosophic nature of Lawrence's thought, such as Michael Black's *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works*, for example, which connects and contextualises its extensive quotations with little beyond the assumption of Lawrence's philosophic genius.^[115]

The inclination amongst liberal humanist critics, such as Black, for preferring 'philosophy' to ideology is not to be wondered at. Firstly, it immediately depoliticises Lawrence's work, suggesting, indeed, that its nature transcends politics, and hence, by implication, defends the Leavisite consensus of a broadly liberal, politically impartial Lawrence. And, as might be inferred, this neutralising effect of the 'philosophy' provides a method for elevating Lawrence not simply above 'mere' politics, but to a level of the greatest import: a writer concerned with eternal verities rather than whingeing in a cause. One of the characteristics of this type of criticism is the way that it blandly dismisses Lawrence's more provocative or disturbing ideas - as being either 'misunderstood' or simply too obviously bizarre to warrant further mention; but it also wafts away the slightest whiff of politics whatsoever. As concerns Lawrence's early socialism, for example, the most comprehensive recent biography

briefly mentions it as nothing more than a developmental plaything to be discarded on the inevitable thrust towards maturity: it is 'a useful intellectual staging post'.^[116] We are given a notion of this maturity as being necessarily beyond socialism, because, in effect, it is a maturity to which this early life is biographically 'predestined'. In other words, this amounts to a mere assertion that the early political involvement is of little interest because it is the incidental experience of a pupal Lawrence, one passively assimilating his socialism, we might say, rather than actively pursuing an interest of his own accord; it does not belong to the 'genuine article' of later years. This rather presumptuous concern with the 'fully developed' writer, as it were, is perhaps reflected in the views of the editors of the *Cambridge Edition* of Lawrence's works concerning textual 'development' which generally seem to suggest Lawrence's later revisions to be the improvements of a more considered outlook. Incidentally, such appeal to the perceived wisdom of experience is less likely to be granted by Lawrentians to the 'mature' accounts by, for example, Bertrand Russell or Cecil Gray of their relationships with, and opinions of Lawrence. The self-serving revisionism and ideological mutations that may rightly be ascribed to Lawrence's erstwhile associates are apparently not characteristic of the man himself. The idea of a progressive intellectual maturity goes hand in glove with the philosophic Lawrence whose texts represent a cumulative process of greater learning which deals with ever more comprehensive issues, in contrast to an irretrievably tendentious Lawrence whose texts are ideologically textured and warped products, 'reduced' to serving particular, even partisan, interests.

As suggested above, I do not think this political neutralisation does Lawrence's work any favours: it effects a condensation of Lawrence's thought into a relatively unified body of generally unexceptionable views (unexceptionable, that is,

for the tenets of contemporary liberal humanism); whereas, if the postmodern ‘explosion’ of Lawrence criticism is of any worth - and I believe it is - the value of Lawrence’s texts surely lies in their multifarious significations, the anarchy of their ‘thought’. It is this which the ‘philosophic’ approach would seem intent upon resisting because, perhaps, its most important effect is to buttress a fundamental convention of bourgeois literary theory, namely the ultimate ‘explanation’ of a text by ascertaining authorial intentions. The implicit assumption of authorial sovereignty (previous to Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, *et al.*) established the author as the proprietor of both text and textual signification, with the reader appointed as a passive consumer of a pre-established meaning, and with criticism rendered an inherently conservative practice, seeking to reiterate that which has already been said by the author.^[117] This is the state of affairs when Lawrence’s work is granted the status of philosophy, for the logocentric belief is called into play which asserts that words, if employed with precision, have determinate meaning, and so works upon a traditional prejudicial esteem for philosophy (at the expense of mere literature) as a vehicle for truth. When confronted with Lawrence’s ‘philosophy’ we are being told to contemplate a given object and appreciate its predetermined truth-value. To replace ‘philosophy’ by ‘ideology’, however, is to superannuate the proprietary rôle of the author and to challenge the presumption of a stable, privileged meaning residing within the text. In contrast to a sole originator (and ‘controller’) of the text - whose meaning is the author’s private possession - a reading of the text as ideology recognises it as social discourse, made possible by a specific social formation and produced to have certain effects within and upon that social formation; and to acknowledge this is at once to become actively engaged with the social discourse rather than subject to it - a first step to being able to challenge it and to shape it, and so, potentially, to transform its

societal effects. In this way, the text's process of signification and its significance for society can become subjects of genuinely public contention. To insist upon the reader as a producer of the text rather than passively consuming it is to allow the text's full proliferation of meaning. And the eminently 'philosophical'/brazenly ideological character of Lawrence's work means that it is especially conducive to this approach, for the simple reason that its frequent provocativeness provokes us to respond, its contentiousness demands that we contend with it. Consequently, Lawrence's œuvre is vivified by the question of what we may make of it and, hence, so too is Lawrence criticism revealed as, at least in part, a struggle between competing ideologies to appropriate a version of Lawrence that is amenable to, and utilisable by, their respective ideas about human nature and the organisation of society. That is to say, criticism becomes an openly political practice. Of course, this is only making explicit what has implicitly been the case all along; it is not that liberal humanist criticism generally - and so too the majority of Lawrence criticism - is not political, just that it is not openly so, as suggested by the conventional transfiguration of ideology into philosophy.

I would by no means disagree with the notion that Lawrence himself was often uninterested in politics. Expressions of contempt for political thought and action in his writing are too numerous and emphatic to deny this. 'I don't really care about politics', says Somers, for example, in *Kangaroo*: 'Politics is no more than your country's housekeeping.'^[118] A similar disdain is shown by Gudrun in *Women in Love*: 'Ah, what a farce it was! She thought of Parnell and Katherine O'Shea. Parnell! After all, who can take the nationalisation of Ireland seriously? Who can take political Ireland really seriously, whatever it does? And who can take political England seriously?'^[119] Although this is not necessarily Lawrence's attitude here, but that of

his characters, this is an attitude to be found repeatedly in his work. Political life is seen as absurd, and essentially nothing more than a large-scale domestic tragicomedy, to be mocked by detached individuals and finally left behind altogether. However, to acknowledge Lawrence's frequent lack of interest in politics is certainly not to concede to a Lawrence who, hence, is of no interest to a political criticism. No one would deny *Kangaroo*'s eminent concern with contemporary (quasi-)radical politics; and, as I hope to show in my chapter on *Women in Love*, below, this novel too fails to match the glib disregard for politics that is shown by some of its characters and at times by its author.^[120] Indeed, perhaps the particular interest to Lawrence's work lies in this uneasy relationship with the political world. It is not that Lawrence rises above political dogmatism, so much as that he finds it problematical to fit clearly ideological statements and attitudes into a coherent political framework. The result is a body of work which pitches the reader head-on into the contradictions, perplexities and hostilities of modern political history. Indeed, Lawrence is, in a very significant way, our contemporary, in that an apparent obviation of politics belies unresolved fundamental conflicts at the heart of both Lawrence's writing and Western society today. Perhaps a more telling example of Lawrence's relation to politics is to be found in his essay, 'The State of Funk' (1930): 'The great social change interests me and troubles me, but it is not my field. I know a change is coming - and I know we must have a more generous, more human system based on the life values and not on the money values. That I know. But what steps to take I don't know. Other men know better.'^[121] Here we see a deep concern for the way society is organised, together with supreme confidence in impending revolutionary social change and in the urgent necessity of such change; simultaneously, an extremely tentative theorising of the situation, amounting to liberal tokens of 'human' and 'life values', might seem to

suggest a conservative relinquishing of the political field of action to one's 'betters'. Yet, when Lawrence says, 'Other men know better', he is not so much conceding to political quietism as he is indicating his own - and a considerable proportion of European society's - political confusion. Lawrence is not expressing faith in the political strategies of others, but just the opposite: his lack of faith in any political alternative means the frustration of his own potential participation in politics - a frustration perhaps evident elsewhere in his, and in his characters', exasperated dismissal of politics altogether.

So even though Lawrence's texts may often seek to set aside the 'problem' of politics, they often do so by working through a kaleidoscope of political perspectives and political problems. Perhaps most interestingly, because of Lawrence's peculiar ideological repertoire, which both easily assimilates and vehemently rejects important beliefs and practices of dominant ideologies, his texts are readily apt to expose the aporias, flaws and contradictions in them. For much of his life he remained uneasily bound to the principal tenets of liberal capitalist ideology, despite being acutely aware of capitalism's illiberality - its enslaving industrialism and militarism. Consequently, the contradictions of capitalist ideology become starkly illuminated within the contradictions of Lawrence's work (no more so than in *Women in Love*, for example, whose middle-class heroes affirm their liberty and decency in the process of blithely consigning the rest of the world to industrial subjection).^[122] In order to reveal these contradictions most completely, though, we must keep in mind the ideological nature of Lawrence's works and read against the grain of the works' rhetorical strategies. For, amongst other things, these strategies exist to gloss over ideological weak points, to shore up a work's integrity as ideological discourse, and thereby bestow it with an ease and fluidity of style which

may altogether conceal the work's ideological nature beneath a surface betokening the plain and simple truth. The fact that art which most adeptly achieves this suave regimentation of its internal components is often that which is held in most esteem is a ready indication that one of the functions of art is to reproduce certain ideologies as 'reality'. Hence, when critics measure the formal integrity of a text as art-object, it often amounts to measuring the extent to which the inevitably flawed, incomplete ideological facet is cosmetically hidden or reconstituted. Concepts of the 'style' and 'form' with which a work is 'put together' are invoked in the interests of ascertaining artistic success, as gauges of the art-object's internal unity and coherence; but, under such criteria a superficial unity and coherence are also demanded of, and therefore frequently bestowed upon, the ultimate referent of this internal logic - namely, the 'real' (capitalist) world 'outside'. Thus, the aesthetic and ideological are inseparable, and so, when examining either, we must be aware that we are dealing with both.

When I write of 'rhetorical strategies', I simply mean those means by which the text suggests, manifestly or latently, how it 'should' be read - what it should be taken to mean. What is not always apparent is that the outcome of these strategies depends, ultimately, upon the reader; as argued above, the reader is potentially dominant as a producer of the text, not necessarily submissive as a consumer. This relationship between author, text and reader becomes more apparent when the author himself is manifestly uncertain of his control of the language he uses. In a letter to Bertrand Russell, for example, following his sketchy and simplistic quasi-socialist vision of social change, Lawrence pleads: 'You must have patience with me and understand me when my language is not clear.'^[123] Some might say this would make an apt epigraph for much of Lawrence's work where obscure language apparently demands to be accepted 'as it is', somehow, rather than admit to reflection

and interrogation by the reader. However, whether pleading or demanding, the final decision to accept or reject the authorised version is left to the reader. It could be said, on one hand, that much criticism - of the broadly 'Lawrentian' kind - has chosen the 'patient' and 'understanding' approach, to follow the path set for it by the text - the sterility of which I point out, above. But, on the other hand, to grasp something's meaning usually entails, to some extent, newly fashioning it in relation to the perceiver's intellectual and experiential context. Every reading is a rewriting, and it is difficult to see how even the most Lawrentian explication of Lawrence could fail to be anything other than a re-encoding of Lawrence, presenting the work through an inevitably different ideological perspective. Indeed, in one sense, this school of criticism which may have seemed to deal with Lawrence's texts most 'loyally' is perhaps that which most frequently 'betrays' them. Broadly adhering to a conventional Anglo-American aesthetic which measures the success of a work of art by the extent to which its different parts form a unified coherent whole, such traditional literary criticism, both of the Lawrentian kind and of Lawrence's detractors, has grievous difficulties when faced with Lawrence's innovative experiments with aesthetic form and with his more unconscious articulations of a contradictory world. Stephen Gill's criticism of the rigid scheme of polarities in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, for example, fails to acknowledge the novel as the product of, and a comment upon, a world which reifies human experience into apparently immutable opposites - of body and mind, industry and Nature, and so on.^[124] In effect, Gill criticises a formal preoccupation with fixed contradictions when the 'problem' lies with the *world's* ideologically fixed contradictions, subsequently incorporated in the novel's design - not so much an explication of the work as flinching from it.^[125] The

Marxist critic Pierre Macherey has called this flaw in traditional criticism ‘the normative fallacy’:

Because it is powerless to examine the work on its own terms, unable to exert an influence on it, criticism resorts to a corroding resentment. In this sense, all criticism can be summed up as a value judgment in the margin of the book: ‘could do better’.^[126]

For Macherey, a text is always ‘incomplete’ because besides what it actually says there is another dimension to be accounted for - what the text does not say, what its ideology will not allow. Furthermore:

the silence of the book is not a lack to be remedied, an inadequacy to be made up for. It is not a temporary silence that could be finally abolished. We must distinguish the necessity of this silence.^[127]

In other words, it is not the critic’s task to amend the text or censure its lack of unity, but instead to explore this alternative discourse of omissions and absences which most palpably demarcates the ideology within which the text is produced. For Macherey, then, the text’s full significance lies not in its existence as a unified totality but in the conflict between its explicit and implicit meanings; it is the work’s contradictory nature that is of interest to the critic.

This attempt to deal with the work on its own terms, in place of the doctrinaire assumption that all art should aspire to unity, should appeal to anyone seeking to break the narrowness of traditional bourgeois aesthetics; and it should be particularly attractive to those of us wishing to engage productively with Lawrence’s aesthetics that appear to have broken with those conventions so often before. Lawrence’s frustration with what he believed to be the limited way that many people

see the world and the art it produces, is evident on those occasions when he felt compelled to defend his own work. Thus, for example, in the oft-quoted letter to Edward Garnett, in which Lawrence justifies his method of characterisation in what was to become *The Rainbow*, comes the admonition:

I have a different attitude to my characters, and that necessitates a different attitude in you, which you are not as yet prepared to give. ... You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element.^[128]

Sixteen years later, Lawrence would defend *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in a similar vein:

How different they are, mental feelings and real feelings. ... Our education from the start has *taught* us a certain range of emotions, what to feel and what not to feel, and how to feel the feelings we allow ourselves to feel. All the rest is just non-existent. The vulgar criticism of any new good book is: Of course nobody ever felt like that!—People allow themselves to feel a certain number of limited feelings. ... And these notes, which I write now almost two years after the novel was finished, are not intended to explain or expound anything: only to give the emotional beliefs which perhaps are necessary as a background to the book. It is so obviously a book written in defiance of convention^[129]

Such discernment of the necessity of thinking and feeling independently of a prescribed norm is a laudable characteristic of Lawrence's work. But these points about people's miseducation and the need for a different attitude implicitly bear an epistemological difficulty relevant to any critique of Lawrence's art, and not least to a Machereyan reappraisal of Lawrence's decentred art-form; for, essentially, Lawrence is telling his critics, 'you have the wrong attitude, the wrong beliefs', which raises the question of just how are we meant to ascertain the true belief? If we substitute

‘ideology’ for ‘belief’ then perhaps the implication for Macherey’s theory of the text becomes more clear, for it would be reasonable for opponents to protest that a Marxist like Macherey, who sees the capitalist world as conflictual and contradictory, will inevitably see art produced by that world as contradictory too. Indeed, the extent to which Macherey’s view of literature is plainly founded upon his Marxist ideology leaves little easy way of establishing its supremacy as regards, say, the account of a politically conservative critic, who holds an essentially functionalist view of a stable, harmonious world, and who thereby sees no reason why art should be contradictory, nor any value in art which clearly lacks a corresponding harmony of its own constituent parts. And, of course, there is much the same problem of theoretical justification concerning the materialist critical practice of locating texts within their historical context. This methodological preference is itself an instance of literary criticism, an interpretation of what literature ‘is’, with no more secure foundation upon objective ‘Truth’ than, for example, the more received interpretation of literary texts as independent aesthetic objects, whose value may be appraised by the close inquiry of a suitably ‘sensitive’ mind.

I raise this problem of theoretical justification not as a prelude to offering a solution - as yet none exists, or there would no longer be any point to theorists continuing to argue their theories; but merely to acknowledge the inevitable subjective tendentiousness of my own critical practice - a tendentiousness, nevertheless, which I believe needs affirming in all social practices if we are ever to forge a situation where common universal values (whatever they may be) simultaneously realise and render redundant ‘True Theory’ (the possibility of such a situation ever existing, I understand, again being a tendentious point of view). I wish, at least, to avoid the blindness to theoretical problems of an old-fashioned Marxism which points to its

‘scientific’ understanding of history when claiming the ‘truth’ of its view of the world and, likewise, the ‘objectivity’ of its method of historically contextualising literary texts. But in rejecting a ‘vulgar’ criticism grounded upon a naïve assumption of the objective tendencies of history, neither do I wish to embrace the wholesale scepticism of that sort of post-structuralism which baulks at the idea of determinate meaning and therefore puts notions of ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ into a state of suspended animation: if such notions are the products of discourse, subject to the fundamentally unstable signified, then how can we know a transcendental determinate world beyond this discourse? This attitude seems to herald a dead end to both politics and academic criticism, since, for practical purposes, both depend upon some degree of consensus, whereas here any truth-claim, let alone agreement between individuals upon it, is adjudged unknowable because it is a truth eternally relativised by the perpetual shifting of signified meaning. Participation in both politics and literary criticism becomes, therefore, eminently ridiculous, beyond asserting the benefits of a ‘pluralist’ society - whatever post-structuralists choose ‘pluralist’ to mean - and ironically contesting literature’s ability to address a determinate ‘real’ world in any meaningful way.

This impasse between the traditional notion of a transcendental referent, such as history, serving as a final adjudicator between competing propositional statements, and a post-structuralist interminable relativism, is tackled by Tony Bennett in *Outside Literature*. Subscribing to a ‘post-Marxist’ position, Bennett rejects the concept of an extra-discursive referent, while perceiving the post-structuralist fallacy which maintains that the implausibility of absolute, positivistic ‘Truth’ renders meaningless *all* conceptions of truth:

It by no means follows, because we cannot establish certain propositions as absolutely true, that we have no means of establishing their provisional truth - of determining that they meet conditions which justify our regarding them as true and so as capable of serving as a basis for both further thought and action. Nor does it follow, if we accept that there can be no escaping the constraints of language and narrative, that anything goes - that all possible narrative systems or language games are to be ranked equally with regard to their propositional content.^[130]

Bennett then applies this recognition of a still-practicable degree of indeterminacy to his conception of history not as a fixed object awaiting discovery, but as a provisionally fixable 'institutionalised form for the social regulation of statements about the past'.^[131] Bennett formulates the past as a 'complexly laminated social zone of representation', and sees part of history's function as 'subjecting representations of the past to a disciplined regulation, [and the] elaboration of rules and procedures for the disciplined interrogation of evidences which allow new knowledges to emerge and transform the face of the past'.^[132] It is a similar disciplined provisionality that I intend to achieve in my reading of Lawrence, and where I subject his own (predominantly literary) representations of the past to historical regulation I do so primarily with the hope of allowing a new Lawrence to emerge; it is my intention neither to berate a writer of fiction and poetry for lacking historical objectivity, nor to claim such absolute objectivity for my own work. Literature may be anchored in history, but what is history itself founded upon? Bennett's conception of history as an 'institutionalised form' readily points up its socio-political relativity - history is what people of varying opinions in such places as university history departments make it to be; but it also suggests the inevitable 'reality' of how we ascertain what is real, for it is only within the context of ongoing debate which finally refers back to society that academic questions about knowledge, truth and so on, become meaningful. We need certain

regulations and protocols in order to achieve some consensus in what we accept as valid, but necessary too is some degree of indeterminacy/contention in our matter if there is to be any point at all to academic disciplines.^[133] As Bennett writes of history: 'it is [historiographical] disputes which *constitute* the discipline rather than being its accidental by-products';^[134] and just as the study called 'History' is born of historical contention, so too is 'Literary Studies' the product of similar contests.

It should be clear that my approach to Lawrence refuses any simplistic historicism, and it likewise rejects the corresponding notion of 'textual realism' - that the 'true' meaning of Lawrence is held unchangeable within the texts themselves; my purpose is not to discover or theorise *the* meaning of Lawrence's texts, but simply to create an interpretation produced between those texts and my anti-Lawrentian reading. And in doing this I reject, also, a 'readerly' realism, an approach that replaces the 'objectivity' of the text's sovereign autonomy of meaning with the putative objectivity provided by the concept of the 'ideal', or 'intended', reader - the type of reader the text was 'meant' for, who can elicit the reading experience the author wished - a sort of textual realism by proxy. My own reading makes no claim to 'ideality', because what it principally aims to do is only that which literary criticism is able to do - engage with the text as discourse, as part of a continuing debate involving multifarious topics which contribute to our understanding of the world; an understanding, furthermore, informed and complicated by the same aspect of contentiousness which Lawrence's work thrives on, and having to allow for that degree of tenable heterodoxy evinced in Lawrence's defence of his writing.

It is within this general context of debate and relative indeterminacy that all texts exist within Literary Studies; but, put another way, in any specific context, any particular reading, all texts exist with relatively determinate meaning. Just as

there cannot be always absolute determinacy of meaning, so too can there neither be always absolute indeterminacy of meaning: the meaning of Lawrence may well change radically when read from different perspectives, but from within a given approach it remains practicably determinate for the explicatory purposes of literary criticism. Such being the case, rather than trying to make my approach theoretically secure, it seems more useful simply to spell it out: it is one which is sceptical of Lawrence's self-representations and self-conceptualising 'philosophy'; one which accepts that successful art need not manifest internal unity and coherence; and one which locates and interrogates Lawrence within the 'history' of capitalist contradiction and in light of contiguous texts similarly engaged with social contradiction. The 'meaningfulness' of this approach may be challenged 'internally', that is, as to how it articulates itself within these given parameters, as a discursive subjectivity purporting to maintain the disciplined regulation of Literary Studies - a practical question of *how* it speaks itself; it may still, of course, also be 'externally' objected to, rejected wholesale from a perspective outside its basic assumptions, but where such criticism is of ideological matters rather than simply methodological ones - a criticism of *what* it says - it cannot finally be secured against because ideological discourse cannot be transcended. Obviously, the problem remains that there is, actually, no pure and simple sphere of methodology, either, which is beyond ideology; but, as argued by Bennett, by exercising, and by being judged by, clear regulatory criteria, this particular 'language game' should attain a provisional determinacy sufficient for the practical purposes of literary criticism.

My view of history and capitalist reality as being contradictory provides no objective foundation for my exegesis of Lawrence, merely a prospective trajectory. No less ideological than Macherey or anyone else, in discussing Lawrence's politics

and ideology I inevitably involve my own; and not to do so, I would argue, besides not being feasible, could neither produce anything serviceable to the purposes of Literary Studies. This is to say, my point is not that other critics misrepresent some 'essential' Lawrence - none exists other than what we make of him/his work - but that such representations have a function in serving particular cultural interests which are perhaps very different from those which Lawrence might have originally had in mind; and, furthermore, that this sort of appropriation and rewriting of Lawrence is no bad thing in itself, but is, in fact, the essence of criticism, as Macherey suggests:

For there to be a critical discourse which is more than a superficial and futile *reprise* of the work, the speech stored in the book must be incomplete; because it has not said everything, there remains the possibility of saying something else, *after another fashion*.^[135]

But where, I hope, my own literary analysis differs from more traditional rewritings of Lawrence's texts is in there being no special attempt, on the one hand, to champion Lawrence's excellence because he reveals 'truths' about the world (which usually means he upholds certain cultural values that are agreeable to the critic), and neither, on the other hand, is there any wish to condemn his art for inaccuracy in its depiction of society (a charge often resulting from the text's display of cultural values which the critic finds disagreeable).^[136] Instead, my broadly Machereyan approach takes for granted the literary work's 'incompleteness', but, rather than berating an artistic failure, it aims to show just why the text is inevitably ideologically limited in the way it is - in Macherey's words, it seeks to 'distinguish the necessity of [the text's] silence',^[137] and, in so doing, to distinguish likewise the literary text as something relatable to, yet not to be confused with, objective historical discourse. The ideological limits of my own work are a matter for each reader, but this subjectivity is

tempered, I hope, with a traditional commitment to the detail of Lawrence's texts ('the words on the page') and with an equal concern with the wider picture of the text's historical context: the 'fact' of history and the 'fact' of the text, even if far from establishing indubitable truths, at least provide identifiable and testable data upon which to base an understanding of the formation and function of Lawrence's texts within a social and (therefore) ideological world. My work is, finally, no less 'objective' than the avowedly scientific approach of, say, Russian Formalism, and no more partisan than the liberal-Lawrentians' (spurious) eschewal of ideology in favour of 'common-sense' values and interpretations; it may be, after all, just another set of cultural values and political presumptions, but if it comes down to politics then the only thing left to do is argue - and it is best to do so openly, which formalists and humanists often have not. It is this continual process of argumentation which underpins Literary Studies, the same process of interpretation, reinterpretation and counter-interpretation that is at work in our understanding of the world at large. As Lawrence recognises in his defences of *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, certain ways of representing and thinking about the world are institutionalised, and are conducive to a certain conception of human nature while preventing alternatives: 'Our education from the start has *taught* us a certain range of emotions All the rest is just non-existent.'^[138] Yet by recognising the tendentiousness of such teaching, Lawrence is at least able to retaliate with 'a different attitude', and work 'in defiance of convention'.^[139] And in this instance, what is good for the production of Lawrence's work also holds good for the production of Lawrence criticism: after allowing for the interestedness of all accounts of literature, all that remains is to argue our own particular case.

Indeed, it is only by being overtly tendentious in our criticism that we may open up to the critical gaze the political tendencies buried in Lawrence's work. This is not least because Lawrence's rhetorical strategies often work towards silencing potential political issues, amounting to an implicit protest of: 'what steps to take I don't know. Other men know better.'^[140] This sense of confusion is evident in the contradictions and disjunctions which riddle Lawrence's work. The outcome is often a language whose forms and devices gravitate towards silence. Language is used to construct a political reticence where even as it ostensibly talks up an issue, it circumscribes that issue in such a diminished aspect that it simultaneously collapses. This is nowhere more apparent than in Lawrence's use of 'yet' and 'but', not simply to introduce a qualifying clause, but to contradict, or cast a fog upon, that which has immediately preceded. So, for example, we see in *The Plumed Serpent* the avowedly non-political Don Ramón who, using language typical of Lawrence's own 'non-political', 'philosophical' pronouncements, outlines to his friend, Cipriano, an agenda that would be distinctly political if it were not for its bewildering obscurity:

One must have aristocrats, that we know. But natural ones, not artificial. And in some way the world must be organically united: the world of man. But in the concrete, not in the abstract. Leagues and Covenants and International Programmes: Ah! Cipriano! it's like an international pestilence.^[141]

We may think we have a reasonable grasp of concepts of aristocracy and a united world of mankind, but then we are confronted by the awkward, not to say impossible, consideration of apparently having to reject any aristocracy produced by human culture (and therefore 'artificial'); it must be 'natural' (presumably *not* in the same way that all other aristocracies have justified their culturally produced privilege on the

grounds of being a 'natural' state of affairs); and we face a similarly perplexing task in imagining a united world whose anathema is the 'abstract' and malignant system of international organisation (equally absurd, we subsequently hear that Ramón's notion of a world united in 'concrete' terms is the world where 'the First Lords of the West met the First Lords of South and East, in the Valley of the Soul').^[142] The apparently solid ground provided here, by aristocracy and internationalism, for a political engagement with the text, disintegrates before our eyes in a chaos of contrariety. Such stifling of eminently political speech is often maintained by liberal humanist criticism's own muted political voice and slender appreciation of ideology - resulting in the text and critic becoming tacitly involved in a conspiracy of silence as regards ideological matters. In order to expose the ideological fissures which texts may attempt to conceal, and to determine the nature of their political silences, we need a manifestly ideological criticism, and one which must be openly sceptical of the way Lawrence's texts are constructed to be read.

It would appear, in fact, that Lawrence's work is tailor-made for a critical approach such as this, not least because, besides its didactic element, it often invites the reader's challenge to such didacticism. If we are still to pay obeisance to Lawrence's authorial authority then why not do so by accepting this invitation to scepticism? A very explicit example of the challenge which Lawrence lays before his readers occurs in *Aaron's Rod* (1922). During a typical, even self-parodic, account of Lawrentian self-realisation, we are given an extensive excursus upon how Aaron Sisson realises 'that his very being pivoted on the fact of his isolate self-responsibility, aloneness. His intrinsic and central aloneness was the very centre of his being.'^[143] Perhaps conscious of a rather po-faced pretentiousness, the narrator abruptly sums up:

Don't grumble at me then, gentle reader, and swear at me that this damned fellow wasn't half clever enough to think all these smart things, and realise all these fine-drawn-out subtleties. You are quite right, he wasn't, yet it all resolved itself in him as I say, and it is for you to prove that it didn't. (164)

The affected playfulness does not conceal the bold emphasis with which the narrator reminds us that the fiction is 'made up', while simultaneously asserting authorial authority over this creation. Positing the notion of a grumbling, swearing, 'gentle reader', the narrator acknowledges the collapse of the nineteenth-century tradition of an assumed consensus between author and reader. Such ironic employment of the conventional address to the reader also serves as security against readerly dissent. Uncertain about how his fiction is to be received,^[144] the author predicts the reader's dissatisfaction and so gains some semblance of control over it: by effecting a symbolic recapture of the malcontent reader within the text, an impression of authorial authority may be maintained. However, there still remains the physical reader 'outside' the text, and, in the very act of asserting authorial sovereignty, the narratorial device implicitly concedes to the reader's crucial impact upon the 'production' of the text: firstly during the writing itself, as a hypothetical construct of the author which will partly determine the material which he selects and how it is presented so as to be 'consumed' in a certain way; and secondly, as a real person, generating meaning by a reading which may or may not follow the way the text has been constructed to be read. And the effect, perhaps, of such petulant interpolations by the narrator is not only to draw attention to the potential conflict between author and narrator, but also to provide sufficient incitement for that conflict to be realised. In the final chapter of *Aaron's Rod*, the laconically entitled, 'Words', the nature of the relationship between author and reader is further illuminated during Aaron's

discussion with Rawdon Lilly. Lilly is lecturing Aaron upon the truth, as he believes, of the final isolated singleness of the individual: 'You are your own Tree of Life,' he tells him (296). Aaron's objection to this alienated individualism is not only critical of *what* Lilly says but also suggests a fault with *how* he says it:

'But you talk,' he said, 'as if we were like trees, alone by ourselves in the world. We aren't. If we love, it needs another person than ourselves. And if we hate, and even if we talk.'
(297)

And this other necessary person is not necessarily one who will accept all that he is told. This becomes evident from Lilly's anxious persistence in *dictating* the 'truth' about the world and from his frustrated misanthropy as a consequence of people's unresponsiveness to it, and, so too, from Lawrence's own haranguing of the reader, motivated by the perception of a less than tractable readership. Lilly's didacticism is much like a velvet glove in search of an iron fist, readily denouncing all forms of '*bullying*' (282), but, one suspects, mainly because Lilly himself is divorced from the material power required to effect a more coercive implementation of his own ideas.

This is most strongly suggested in the penultimate chapter. Lilly declares, 'I think there is only one thing I hate to the verge of madness, and that is *bullying*. To see any living creature *bullied*, in *any* way, almost makes a murderer of me' (282). Here, and throughout the novel, '*bullying*' is the derogatory label attached to all manifestations of that social power which the alienated Lilly (as well as Aaron) lacks. It could, therefore, be seen as a term borne by envy, for, if granted such power himself, Lilly would immediately and forcefully put it into effect: after outlining his idea of the necessity of 'inferior' beings making a voluntarily submission to their betters, Lilly adds: 'once made it must be held fast by genuine power. Oh yes - no

playing and fooling about with it. Permanent and very efficacious power.' 'You mean military power?', asks a companion, whereupon Lilly confirms: 'I do, of course' (282). It may be pointed out that this outburst is framed by two apparent disclaimers, renouncing its authenticity as a statement of intent. When first asked to provide his alternative to the idealism that he rejects, Lilly protests: 'My alternative ... is an alternative for no one but myself, so I'll keep my mouth shut about it' (281); and then, having propounded his idea of a voluntary slavery, Lilly meets its cool reception with the challenge: 'Do you take this as my gospel? ... I should say the blank opposite with just as much fervour' (282). However, Lilly's preludial qualification of his proposed reorganisation of society, which may appear contrastingly, even contradictorily, liberal in acknowledging the freedom of others to think differently, is nothing of the sort. It concedes nothing to others because Lilly is in no position to make concessions; it is rather an admission of his powerlessness to effect his 'alternative', disguised as magnanimity. Lilly's closing dismissal of his 'gospel' demonstrates a similarly subtle attempt to sidestep anticipated criticism. By casting the haze of irony upon his words, Lilly effectively withdraws them from further discussion - just what are his companions, or the reader, meant to respond to: a serious proposal of social reorganisation or teasing mockery of such political earnestness? Lilly's advocacy of slavery is hermetically sealed from criticism by his own protestations of its triviality. Within the text, its most direct critic, Levison, is branded a 'fool' (282) for failing to perceive its playful nature, and, one feels, this serves to warn the reader against adopting a similar attitude. Prepared to condemn the lunacy of such an attitude as Lilly's, the reader himself risks being charged with idiocy. A consequence of this trammelling of critical judgment is that if dubious, not to say repugnant, ideas are not openly affirmed, then neither are they directly dismissed. And it is significant that this

playful, ironic mode is not only an attribute of Lilly, but of the narrator, too. Indeed, the manner in which Lilly brackets his pronouncements, here, between protesting their lack of significance to anybody but himself and dismissing them as said on a whim, presents a microcosm of the novel as a whole. The utterances of all the characters, of the narrator (of Lawrence?), are placed in a context which similarly appears to depreciate their significance, and, perhaps, the significance of *all* that can be said or written, with arch chapter titles such as 'Talk' and 'Words'; and the overt impertinence of the narrator's interlocutions, in marked contrast to the bland confidences which we might normally expect, further suggests that we take anything said in the text as considerably less than 'gospel'. Hence, any political ideas expressed within the book are immediately cast into a limbo. This is not to say they must necessarily remain there, but it is often the case that such ideas are left hovering above critical interrogation. An example is provided by Mara Kalnins in her introduction to the *Cambridge Edition* of the novel. Kalnins asserts: 'Lilly's idea of power transcends any notion of mere authoritarianism. Lawrence's vision of man is not political but spiritual' (xxvi). We may first note the identification of Lilly's ideas with Lawrence's vision - indeed, Lilly's opinions present a 'problem' precisely because, as Kalnins observes in passing, Lilly 'often articulates Lawrence's beliefs' (xxvi).^[145] The anxiousness of liberal critics to defend such illiberal characters as Lilly would seem to be a corollary of their desire to maintain the notion of a broadly liberal Lawrence and to preserve the generally depoliticised nature of Lawrence studies. One suspects that if no record existed of the resemblance between such characters' attitudes and those of Lawrence then Lilly and his kind would simply be dismissed as patent absurdities. For, if Lilly does not amount to 'mere authoritarianism', it is not because he 'transcends' it, but just the opposite: Lilly embodies a mealy-mouthed vision of

domineering tyranny which falls short of authoritarianism only because he lacks entirely the authority necessary to it.

In his powerlessness, Lilly somewhat reflects the insecurities and frustrations of his author when faced with unpleasant political realities, and echoes him in the way organised politics is often repudiated *in toto*, while his own apparently political statements are transmuted into things immaterial or psychological. It is in this evasion that we have the 'spiritual' Lawrence that is called into play by Kalnins (another example of how critics readily take up Lawrence's self-representation in his defence). Kalnins goes on to argue that Lawrence's spiritual vision is 'not a denial of man's freedom and individuality but a confirmation of it because it is based on a recognition of the innate and inexplicable differences between each unique human being' (xxvi). This idea of individual difference is a tenet commonly found in Lawrence's work and frequently invoked by critics wishing to stress his liberal credentials; thus Kalnins quotes Lilly telling Aaron, 'your soul inside you is your only Godhead' (296). Such talk may be all very well when given as advice upon an individual's personal life, but it is wholly inadequate in providing a meaningful social perspective; and, in the absence of any other political framework which may appreciate the collective nature of society, this impoverishing translation of the social into the personal occurs all too often in Lawrence for it to be ignored. In an early critique of Lawrentian ideology, W.H. Auden finds fascist tendencies in the way *The Plumed Serpent* presents 'politics as if it were an affair of personal relations'.^[146] The potential illiberality of such an apparently liberal and individualistic attitude is also evident in *Aaron's Rod* where, notably, ideas of spiritual freedom and difference seem by no means incompatible with physical slavery; indeed, having accepted the idea of innate spiritual differences, the next step frequently is to use this 'spiritual' quality to

justify material and economic 'differences' and to condemn others to a wretchedly different life. Thus Lilly, reflecting upon the peoples of Asia and black Africa (and, with less emphasis, those of Europe), sees a problem not of poverty but of their innate predisposition to overpopulation - 'flea-bitten Asiatics' are 'vermin', whereas 'Higher types breed slower' (97). In the light of Nazi propaganda concerning verminous Jewry, not to mention current Western projects for Third-World population control, refraining from acknowledging the significance of such remarks, on the grounds that Lawrence's vision is not essentially political, seems remarkably obtuse. Such, however, is often the consequence of this spiritualised version of Lawrence which risks spiriting his work away from the material world to which the work has great relevance. It is vital to recognise this is a thoroughly political enterprise, after all: Lawrence, professing more interest in the profundities of the soul than in mere politics, adopts a tactic deployed throughout the centuries by religious movements and institutions eager to acquire and maintain power; and critics who proliferate this ostensibly non-political Lawrence are nonetheless engaged in a political act. Lawrence's spiritual vision is just one more instance of tendentious politics assuming the cloak of universal truth.^[147]

I point this out not to rebuke Lawrence for being dishonest, but rather to suggest the rhetorical richness - and elusiveness - of much of his writing. All texts establish protocols, whether explicitly or implicitly, as to how they are to be consumed by the reader, which the reader may either follow or decide to challenge. Lawrence's rhetorical strategies are particularly intricate and densely compacted, in my view, because they are an attempt to pull together a hopelessly fractured ideology and present a screen of 'philosophical' integrity and unity where, in fact, it is confusion and uncertainty which predominate. The extent to which the texts have

acquired a large number of less than critical critics, all too happy to read exercises in ideological propagation as searches for philosophical truths, is a measure of the success of Lawrence's rhetoric; but perhaps it also indicates the peculiarly self-defeating way the texts have contributed to their own narrow exegeses in much Leavisite and post-Leavisite criticism. Both the text's screening of its contradictions and critical readings which assume the value of artistic unity and coherence need to be resisted if the plethoric significance and value of Lawrence's work is to be displayed.

The aforementioned use of irony in *Aaron's Rod* provides an example of the self-defeating way the texts often work upon the reader, for it helps to claim the narrator's/author's authority in determining what the text is, or is not, to say, but only at the cost of challenging the idea of a body of words having a single prescribed meaning which proscribes alternative meanings. The ironic mode, as used by Lilly in dismissing his 'gospel' (282), for example, is one that asks all the questions of the reader: is the reader capable of grasping all the insinuated complexities of the discourse, or is he, like Lilly's earnest critic, Levison, a misconceiving 'fool'? And where does the irony end, if at all? Are we to see Lawrence as 'an apocalyptic ironist who says, in effect, a plague on all your houses'?^[148] Or is it the case that relatively rare acknowledgements of irony, by characters such as Lilly, and occasional sarcastic narratorial interjections merely aim to suggest a wider ironic potential through the work, which may be activated as an escape clause by the author and his defenders when called to account for such dubious statements as those about 'flea-bitten Asiatics'? Certainly, the speaker/writer is freed from the burden of defending such statements, and instead has a free hand to polemicise without surrendering his words to the circumspection of debate; potential appeals to irony threaten to blast aside all criticism (it is fitting, therefore, that the discussion upon Lilly's benign slavery is

ended with the disapproving Levison interrupted by an exploding bomb). This would seem a strikingly attractive proposition to a politically alienated malcontent such as Lilly, and no less so to an author such as Lawrence, having to commit his words to the judgment of a public he often felt removed from and frequently at odds with - a means of reasserting his artistic freedom.^[149] Such rhetorical tactics are to be expected and accepted, then, as an integral part of the texts' formation, rather than censured for being manipulative. But it is helpful to the reader to realise that if he is manipulated into awkward positions concerning the actualities of textual significance then it is only because of the difficulties faced by the writer and the ideological imbroglio which his texts have to deal with; for this realisation helps the reader to maintain his rôle as producer of the text's meaning. The problem of deciphering exactly what, if anything, constitutes the 'authoritative' authorial message becomes a key to unlocking the text's imprisonment of the reader, as the freedom of the author to write as he pleases is bought at the cost of indicating the reader's freedom to interpret: such forthright manipulation of the reader as in *Aaron's Rod* actually draws attention to the very same weaknesses it seeks to shore up and gloss over; and this self-contradictory quality emerges in full in the demands which the text makes of the reader. Texts which ask all the questions of the reader in this way, whose meanings have to be 'worked out', inevitably pass creative power and jurisdiction of significance to the reader, pointing up the reader as producer. This quality, what Roland Barthes would designate as belonging to a 'writerly' text,^[150] is generally more evident in Lawrence's later texts, after the break with Eastwood became entrenched, after the fiasco of *The Rainbow's* prosecution for obscenity, and after the personal and social degradation inflicted by the Great War; and it would seem, in Lawrence, to be a quality generated by such ruptures and their consequent ideological mutations, as much as by any

independent aesthetic consideration. The fact that these texts are products of a capitalist society recognised by Lawrence as increasingly debilitated and debilitating, and describe the struggle to find alternatives to it, as well as illustrating the tenacity and dexterity with which capitalism preserves itself in various ideological guises, should make them appeal to a progressive criticism. Indeed, these later texts should be of as much interest as earlier ones which may seem more 'genuinely' affiliated with working-class interests and socialism (such as the short stories 'Her Turn' and 'Strike-Pay', for example, and, to a lesser extent, *Sons and Lovers*); for in their political ambivalence, a radical 'openness' derived not least from a detached, ironic perspective, many of these later texts not only suggest the arbitrarily restrictive critical practice of trying to establish a work's unified coherence, but also, perhaps, point up the arbitrariness of the narrow political and social realities dictated to people represented by the characters in the earlier texts. Mrs Radford's endeavours against the male hegemony in her household in 'Her Turn',^[151] for example, can be seen as complemented in the way that *Aaron's Rod* implicitly questions the authority of its dominant conservative ideology.

It might be objected that there is considerable testimony to many of these later texts being something quite other than radically 'open', and evidence of the spectacular *ineffectiveness* of irony in complicating matters, in the frequency with which Lawrence is accused of fascism. Those critics who give undue weight to Lawrence's flirtations with fascism, however, appear to be only the other side of the same coin as Lawrence's liberal/Lawrentian defenders: the latter point out, rightly, Lawrence's qualifying devices against effusions of authoritarianism - irony, alternative points of view and such - but then overvalue them and exaggerate their effects to the point of virtually erasing the significance of the authoritarian politics (as

Scheckner tends to do, above); on the other hand, those who accuse Lawrence of fascism tend to set aside the significance of these qualifying devices, not interrogating them but simply dismissing them as palliatives to a central fascistic message. While such casuistry clearly seems part of their function, there is inevitably more to these qualifications: it is difficult to see how, rather than purely the instruments of an authoritarian ideology or merely incidental to it, they do not form an integral part of the text's complex and contradictory ideology. The amount of arguing among characters, unresolved differences of viewpoint, the strained and cryptic language of the narrators' 'philosophies' are all more indicative of an ideological miscellany which refuses to coalesce its own incongruous elements, than they are of texts which smoothly supply a totalitarian agenda for society. As for the authoritarian attitudes undeniably present within Lawrence's work, along with the host of other racial, sexual and social ideas that we may find unpleasant, they cannot be banished away, but remain a source of ideological conflict within the text and, thereby, a factor of its richness and interest to us. My intention, then, is not to condemn Lawrence for any fascistic tendencies, which is often much the same thing as condemning him for being a product of his time and milieu (the same society which could produce such an indisputable progressive as H.G. Wells who, nonetheless, expressed, at times, what may now seem rather 'fascistic' ideas concerning the reorganisation of society and human nature).^[152] It should be equally clear that I do not seek to 'rehabilitate' a 'Lawrence' of largely unexceptionable views. What I do intend is to read Lawrence's texts as representative of contemporary political and ideological fissures (a capitalist world whose complacency is torn to shreds by war and revolution, as viewed by a writer shot apart from his working-class origins), and as attempts to conjure a remedy

whose perceptible flaws frequently allow and incite readings which transcend an often superficial manifest vision of society and politics.

Indeed, the openness of Lawrence's texts to reworkings by the reader often reflects the political tensions and social contradictions of the capitalist society of which the texts are born. And just as that society requires the consent of the dominated classes for it to function the way it does, so too do Lawrence's fictions require the reader's collaboration in supplying their meaning; but, just as the dominated can struggle to change the design which dominant classes may wish for society, so too may readers work to furnish a different meaning from that which Lawrence might have consciously intended for his texts. As suggested by Auden in my epigraph, the interests of writer and reader may well be at odds, and it may be useful to look for alternative readings which challenge apparent authorial intentions. This need not mean corrosively negative criticism of the sort Auden himself supplies upon Lawrence's supposed misanthropy, but may, on the contrary, help to go beyond the given, reductive personalising of politics which Auden also diagnoses, to uncover socially and politically meaningful reasons for the works' political disintegration. In fact, we may, after all, take our cue from Lawrence: in *Aaron's Rod*, for example, Lilly's only power is suasive and, as such, it is set to work upon Aaron in a manner similar to that in which a text works upon its reader (or the way the ideological state apparatus dominates society) - attempting to gain a voluntary submission to the 'reality' which it presents; Aaron, on the other hand may prefigure a reader, who, if not out-rightly subversive, at least remains somewhat independent of any didactic control. 'And whom shall I submit to?', asks Aaron at the end of the novel, in response to Lilly's reiteration of the need to submit to a greater man: 'Your soul will tell you', answers Lilly (299). These concluding words prove remarkably

inconclusive, considering that one of the most recent things his soul has impressed upon Aaron is the necessity of maintaining a vigilant independence:

‘Sleeping or waking, man or woman, God or the devil, keep your guard over yourself. Keep your guard over yourself, lest worse befall you. ...’

Thus thinking, not in his mind but in his soul, his active living soul, he gathered his equanimity once more, and accepted the fact. (230)

In this way, the ending ensures that the dialectic between established, or dominant, ideologies and emergent ideologies is seen as open and ongoing, allowing for the possibility of an improved synthesis issuing from, on the one hand, the capitulation of the individual to the ‘greater’ collective impulse, and, on the other hand, virulent individualism. Contrariwise, it seems that the ‘soul’ of Lawrentians all too often tells them to submit to the leadership figure of Lilly’s creator, when it would seem more productive, perhaps even more in keeping with Lawrence’s own spirit, to ‘grumble’ and prove him, not ‘wrong’, but ideological. Indeed, to finish this exhortation against taking Lawrence at his own self-explaining word, there is nothing more audaciously apt than to enlist the support of Lawrence himself:

stress is laid on the fact [of what] the author or artist *intended* It is the old vexed question of intention, become so dull today, when we know how strong and influential our unconscious intentions are. And why a man should be held guilty of his conscious intentions, and innocent of his unconscious intentions, I don’t know, since every man is more made up of unconscious intentions than of conscious ones. I am what I am, not merely what I think I am.^[153]

NOTES

- [1] W.H. Auden, 'Reading', in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (1962; London, Faber and Faber, 1963), pp. 3, 4.
- [2] D.H. Lawrence, 'With the Guns' (1914), in *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, ed. Paul Eggert, Introduction and notes by Stefania Michelucci (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1997), p. 81. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [3] Morris argues how, for example, under capitalist compulsion, man 'has long passed the stage at which machines are only used for doing work repulsive to an average man, or for doing what could be as well done by a machine as a man, and he instinctively expects a machine to be invented whenever any product of industry becomes sought after. He is the slave to machinery; the new machine *must* be invented, and when invented he *must* - I will not say use it; but be used by it, whether he likes it or not' (William Morris, *Signs of Change* [1888], extract in *Selections from the Prose Works of William Morris*, ed. A.H.R. Ball [London, Cambridge University Press, 1931], pp. 122-3).
- [4] A similar use of the word is apparent in Lawrence's dedication of 'Eden' (wr. 1916) - an early version of the poem, 'Elysium' (1917) - to 'the Soldiers and Sailors who were made blind' (Quoted in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 1 November 1998, p. 7).
- [5] D.H. Lawrence, letter to S.S. Koteliensky, 1 April 1917, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol III: October 1916-June 1921*, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 108.
- [6] D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (1915), ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Introduction and notes by Anne Fernihough (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), pp. 320, 321.
- [7] D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (1920), ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), pp. 225, 230.
- [8] Macdonald Daly, 'D.H. Lawrence and Labour in the Great War', *Modern Language Review* 89 (January 1994), pp. 19-38.
- [9] Daly, 'D.H. Lawrence and Labour in the Great War', p. 32.
- [10] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Bertrand Russell, 15 July 1915, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol II: June 1913-October 1916*, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 366, 365.
- [11] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith, 28 October 1918, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 293.
- [12] See John Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years, 1885-1912* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 400, 568. For the essay, 'How a Spy is Arrested' (wr. 1912), see Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, pp. 11-15.
- [13] Jessie Chambers, *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, by 'E.T.' (London, Jonathan Cape, 1935), p. 179.
- [14] D.H. Lawrence, 'Autobiographical Sketch' (1929), in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London, Heinemann, 1968), p. 592.
- [15] As to Lawrence's implications of his long-standing complacency regarding matters of finance and publication, we may quote numerous corrective examples from the letters, such as the following to his agent, J.B. Pinker, on

- 13 November 1916: 'I *do* hope, now, we can begin to make a little money, on stories etc. in America. I am sure, if your American agent pushed them a little, he could place the stories. I am so tired of being always pinched and penniless Oh, and do send me a little more money. I am at the end of all I have' (Lawrence, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 29).
- [16] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1958), p. 202.
- [17] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1973), p.194.
- [18] H.G. Wells, 'Mr Wells Explains Himself', *TP's Magazine*, December 1911, quoted in Rosslyn D. Haynes, *H.G. Wells: Discoverer of the Future* (New York, New York University Press, 1980), p. 137.
- [19] Terry Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1970); see pp. 17, 191, 218.
- [20] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, p. 216.
- [21] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, p. 214.
- [22] D.H. Lawrence, letters to S.S. Koteliensky, 28 June 1926, and Edward McDonald, 16 July 1926, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol V: March 1924-March 1927*, ed. James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 483, 496.
- [23] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Martin Secker, 6 June 1927, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol VI: March 1927-November 1928*, ed. James T. Boulton and Margaret H. Boulton with Gerald M. Lacy (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 77.
- [24] Frank Swinnerton, *The Georgian Literary Scene* (London, J.M. Dent, 1938), p. 299.
- [25] Lawrence, *Phoenix II*, pp. 595-6.
- [26] H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Vol I* (London, Gollancz and the Cresset Press, 1934), p. 94.
- [27] Lawrence, *Phoenix II*, p. 595.
- [28] D.H. Lawrence, 'Art and the Individual', presented to the 'Eastwood Debating Society' on 19 March 1908, in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 223.
- [29] Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 202.
- [30] See H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography: Vol II* (London, Gollancz and the Cresset Press, 1934), pp. 656-63.
- [31] For example, two months before completing his university examinations, Lawrence wrote: 'College gave me nothing, even nothing to do - I had a damnable time there, bitten so deep with disappointment that I have lost forever my sincere boyish reverence for men in position' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Blanche Jennings, 4 May 1908, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol I: September 1901-May 1913*, ed. James T. Boulton [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979], p. 49).
- [32] 'It all happened by itself and without any groans from me' (Lawrence, 'Autobiographical Sketch', in *Phoenix II*, p. 592).
- [33] F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, (1955; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994), pp. 87, 101. Leavis is referring specifically to 'Daughters of the Vicar' (1914).

- [34] Since the Second World War, the set tone for the Left's studies of Lawrence has tended to suggest his career as a cautionary tale of unrealised potential, varying between Christopher Caudwell's bald condemnation: 'it is Lawrence's final tragedy that his solution was ultimately Fascist and not Communist'; and Arnold Kettle's more sympathetic lament: 'It was ultimately the tragedy of his life that, owing partly to his deeply emotional relationship with his mother who was a petty-bourgeois woman, bitterly unsympathetic to and contemptuous of the working-class life into which her marriage pitched her, he failed to develop the possibility of achieving the freedom he sought through a more full participation in the aspirations and struggles of the people among whom he was born.' The 'tragedy', of course, is not actually Lawrence's, but that of critics who, seeking a socialist writer, are inevitably disappointed. See Christopher Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture* (London, Bodley Head, 1938), p. 56; and Arnold Kettle, *An Introduction to the English Novel: Vol II* (1953; 2nd edn, rpt. London, Hutchinson, 1974), p. 108.
- [35] Michael Bentley, 'Lawrence's Political Thought: Some English Contexts, 1906-19', in Christopher Heywood (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence: New Studies* (London, Macmillan, 1987), p. 78. Bentley refers to Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, by 'William Tiverton' (London, Rockliff, 1951), p. 57.
- [36] Bentley, pp. 59-60.
- [37] Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 176.
- [38] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 175.
- [39] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 174.
- [40] Worthen, *The Early Years*, pp. 573-4, n. 2.
- [41] 'Curse the blasted, jelly-boned swines, the slimy, the belly-wriggling invertebrates, the miserable sodding rotters, the flaming sods, the snivelling, dribbling, dithering palsied pulse-less lot that make up England today', he wrote from Icking, Germany (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 3 July 1912, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 422). Lawrence's fury was essentially due to receiving the rejection of 'Paul Morel' (an early version of *Sons and Lovers*) from the publisher William Heinemann, who explained: 'its want of reticence makes it unfit, I fear, altogether for publication in England as things are' (Heinemann, letter to Lawrence, 1 July 1912, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 421, n. 4).
- [42] For Lawrence and aestheticism, see Graham Holderness, *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1982), especially 'Organic and Mechanical', pp. 95-115, 'Aestheticism', pp. 116-29, and 'Appendix', pp. 229-34.
- [43] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 22 July 1912, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 427.
- [44] D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, ed. Helen and Carl Baron (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994), p. 464.
- [45] David Craig, *The Real Foundations: Literature and Social Change* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1973), p. 164. See Leavis's opinion: '[Frieda] has, as Lawrence's wife, no home, and, having abandoned her children, no maternal function. ... she had no place in any community, no social function', and therefore Lawrence's relationship with her 'was hardly one that provided

- representative experience for pronouncing normatively about marriage' (Leavis, p. 55).
- [46] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Ottoline Morrell, 3 January 1915, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 254.
- [47] Craig, p. 165.
- [48] See, for example, *Nottingham's Millennium* on the 'troubled genius of Eastwood', 'who did not really belong in the harsh world of a mining community', and who 'was born in 1885 into a life of conflict', and 'could not understand ... why everyone was against him' (John Brunton *et al.*, *Nottingham's Millennium: A Nottingham Evening Post Special Publication* [23 August 1999], p. 17).
- [49] W.H. Auden, 'D.H. Lawrence' (1962), in *The Dyer's Hand*, pp. 292-3.
- [50] Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 293.
- [51] Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 293.
- [52] Craig, pp. 166-7.
- [53] A welcome contrast is to be found in the survey and analysis of Lawrence's various and conflicting models of society in Holderness, pp. 25-40.
- [54] Craig, p. 167.
- [55] Jonathan Swift, letter to Alexander Pope, 29 September 1725, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift: Vol III: 1724-1731*, ed. Harold Williams (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 103. I will return to Swift on this point in Chapter 3, below, pp. 255-7.
- [56] Craig, p. 166.
- [57] Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 288.
- [58] Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 293.
- [59] Paul Delany, *D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War* (Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1979), p. 386.
- [60] Delany, p. 210.
- [61] Delany, p. 211.
- [62] Delany, p. x.
- [63] Delany, p. x.
- [64] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 29 September 1922, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol IV: June 1921-March 1924*, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 314.
- [65] See Lawrence's poem, 'How Beastly the Bourgeois Is' (1929), in *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Vol I*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts (1964; London, Heinemann, 1967), pp. 430-31.
- [66] Delany, p. xi.
- [67] D.H. Lawrence, *The White Peacock*, ed. Andrew Robertson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 297.
- [68] Lawrence, *The White Peacock*, pp. 296-7.
- [69] Katherine Mansfield, letter to Dorothy Brett, 27 October 1918, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield: Vol II: 1918-1919*, ed. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 284.
- [70] Delany, p. 386.
- [71] H.G. Wells, *The War That Will End War* (London, Frank and Cecil Palmer, 1914).
- [72] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Stanley Hocking, 30 October 1918, *Letters: Vol III*,

- p. 294.
- [73] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Barbara Low, 11 December 1916, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 51.
 - [74] Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, p. 293.
 - [75] D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 358.
 - [76] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, pp. 342, 345.
 - [77] John Middleton Murry, review of *Women in Love*, *Nation and Athenaeum* 29 (13 August 1921), p. 713.
 - [78] Wyndham Lewis, *Paleface: The Philosophy of the 'Melting-Pot'* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1929), p. 184.
 - [79] Cecil Gray, *Musical Chairs: Or, Between Two Stools* (London, Home and Van Thal, 1948), p. 131.
 - [80] Dennis Hopper (dir.), *Easy Rider* (USA, Pando Company, 1969).
 - [81] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983; 2nd edn, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996), pp. 36-7.
 - [82] Eagleton refers to Lawrence's work during and after the war, when he dubs him 'a major precursor of fascism', having quoted from 'Blessed are the Powerful' (1925); a text less conducive to Eagleton's assessment might have been that which we have come to know as *The First Lady Chatterley* (wr. 1926), whose hero, Oliver Parkin, becomes a communist. But, in any case, Eagleton's struggle to support his charge makes clear its weakness: he first qualifies his initially bold statement ('which is not to say that he himself [Lawrence] unqualifiedly accepted fascist ideology'), before committing an apparent volte-face: 'He unequivocally condemned Mussolini, and correctly identified fascism as a spuriously "radical" response to the crisis of capitalism.' Then, as if to leave one straw at which to catch, a footnote hopefully suggests: 'Lawrence was not a fascist rather perhaps in the sense that he was not a homosexual. He thought both fascism and homosexuality immoral, but was subconsciously fascinated by both' (Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* [1976; London, Verso, 1978], p. 158). Such a line of argument might even manage to impugn Marx for an unconscious obsession with the future well-being of industrial capitalism.
 - [83] See Macdonald Daly, 'Lawrence, Leavis and the Left', *Durham University Journal* 87 (July 1995), pp. 343-56.
 - [84] Ralph Fox, *The Novel and the People* (1937), quoted by Daly, 'Lawrence, Leavis and the Left', p. 348.
 - [85] As, for example, with the textually unsubstantiated claim that: 'the hysterical male chauvinism of the post-war novels (*Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent*) represents a strident rejection of sexual love for the male cult of power and impersonality' (Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, pp. 159-60).
 - [86] See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977).
 - [87] Leavis, p. 126.
 - [88] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 170.
 - [89] Holderness, p. 2.
 - [90] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 179.

- [91] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 183.
- [92] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 181.
- [93] Holderness, pp. 88-9, 136-7.
- [94] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, p. 214.
- [95] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 179.
- [96] Holderness, p. 214.
- [97] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, p. 214.
- [98] Williams, *The English Novel*, p. 174.
- [99] Holderness, p. 150.
- [100] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, pp. 213, 214.
- [101] Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, p. 213.
- [102] There is further confusion when Eagleton asserts that 'the high point of literary creativity in the twentieth century' was reached between 1916 and 1924, a period when 'futility and disintegration strike at the heart of conventional English society' (Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés*, pp. 14-15). During this time, Lawrence wrote and published *Women in Love*, *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo* (not to mention significant work outside the novel, such as the poetry collection, *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*), yet, when listing Lawrence's achievements, Eagleton names only *Women in Love*, together with *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and *The Rainbow* (1915). Accompanying cited works by Eliot, Joyce, Pound and Yeats, all of which fall within the designated period, these last two novels are conspicuously anomalous. It could be that Lawrence himself does not properly belong to Eagleton's scheme of major exilic writers, though it is, perhaps, rather that Eagleton is hidebound by received ideas as to Lawrence's masterpieces and failures, to the point of virtually obliterating the considerable amount of work he produced at this critical juncture.
- [103] Holderness, p. 89.
- [104] It is peculiar that, while neither Eagleton nor Holderness are categorically pro-realist, they incline that way in the particular case of Lawrence. Eagleton judges *Women in Love* more favourably in *Criticism and Ideology*, perceiving a 'fissuring of organic form' which 'enforces a "progressive" discontinuity with a realist lineage'; and yet he finds the still more 'fissured' novels all the worse because of this quality: '*Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo* are signally incapable of evolving a narrative, ripped between fragmentary plot, spiritual autobiography and febrile didacticism' (Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, pp. 160-61). For Holderness, see below, p. 147, note 10.
- [105] Rick Rylance, 'Lawrence's Politics', in Keith Brown (ed.), *Rethinking Lawrence* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1990), p. 170.
- [106] See 'Ideology and the War', Holderness, pp. 190-219.
- [107] Graham Martin, 'D.H. Lawrence and Class', in Douglas Jefferson and Graham Martin (eds.), *The Uses of Fiction: Essays on the Modern Novel in Honour of Arnold Kettle* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1982), p. 92.
- [108] Peter Scheckner, *Class, Politics, and the Individual* (London, Associated University Presses, 1985), p. 94. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [109] For Scheckner's quotations, see D.H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod* (1922), ed. Mara Kalnins (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 299; and

- D.H. Lawrence, 'Epilogue' (wr. 1924), in *Movements in European History* (1921), ed. Philip Crumpton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 266.
- [110] For Scheckner's quotation, see D.H. Lawrence, 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald (New York, Viking Press, 1936), p. 135.
- [111] See Scheckner, p. 28, for example.
- [112] See Lawrence, *Phoenix*, pp. 135-6.
- [113] Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, p. 88.
- [114] For Scheckner's quotations, see D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, ed. L.D. Clark, Introduction and notes by L.D. Clark and Virginia Hyde (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), pp. 135, 148.
- [115] Michael Black, *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works* (London, Macmillan, 1991).
- [116] Worthen, *The Early Years*, p. 184.
- [117] In the words of Michel Foucault: 'One can say that the author is an ideological product, since we represent him as the opposite of his historically real function The author is ... the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning' (Foucault, 'What is an Author?' [1969], trans. Joseph V. Harari, reprinted in David Lodge [ed.], *Modern Criticism and Theory* [London, Longman, 1988], p. 209).
- [118] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 63.
- [119] Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 419.
- [120] As regards Lawrence's own trivialisation of politics, see his remarkable response to the threat of Fascism, in his essay, 'Insouciance' (1928, originally entitled 'Over-Earnest Ladies'), in *Phoenix II*, pp. 532-4.
- [121] D.H. Lawrence, 'The State of Funk', in *Phoenix II*, p. 567.
- [122] Lawrence's resistance to making the connection of liberal values of liberty and gentlemanly 'decency' with capitalist violence and oppression also becomes evident in his attitude to the change of prime minister in 1916. So much was he now identifying with an old-school liberal posture that Lawrence could interpret the replacement of Asquith by the more authoritarian Lloyd George as the greatest sign of impending national cataclysm. The 'great smash-up', wrote Lawrence to Mark Gertler, 'will never take place while Asquith holds the Premiership. He is too much the old, stable, measured, *decent* England.' Never mind that the Asquith administration had presided over Britain's entry into the Great War, the implementation of conscription and, most recently, the slaughter of the Somme battlefields. Under Lloyd George (whose self-importance, as Lawrence saw it, is derided by the sisters in *Women in Love*, pp. 263-4), Lawrence contended that the old England would 'collapse and be trodden under the feet of swine and dogs'. With a final perverseness, though, which perhaps attests to the inevitably contradictory nature of liberal capitalism's 'decency', Lawrence professed to be looking forward to the 'great smash-up' as 'the decree of inalterable fate' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Mark Gertler, 5 December 1916, *Letters: Vol III*, pp. 46-7).
- [123] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Bertrand Russell, 12 February 1915, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 286.
- [124] As Lawrence wrote in defence of his novel: 'And it is obvious, there is no

- balance and no harmony now' (D.H. Lawrence, *A Propos of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'* [1930], in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* [1928], ed. Michael Squires and [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994], p. 310).
- [125] Stephen Gill, 'The Composite World: Two Versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', *Essays in Criticism* 21 (1971), pp. 347-64.
- [126] Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966), trans. Geoffrey Wall (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 16.
- [127] Macherey, p. 84.
- [128] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Edward Garnett, 5 June 1914, *Letters: Vol II*, pp. 182, 183.
- [129] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 311, 333-4.
- [130] Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature* (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 55.
- [131] Bennett, p. 58.
- [132] Bennett, p. 77.
- [133] In fact, it does appear that Bennett proposes his own transcendental referent, after all, in the form of academia. As to why universities should be especially privileged in the adjudication of 'the social zone of representation' that is the past, Bennett offers no convincing reason. Bennett's discourse upon what constitutes history (for academia) readily suggests one argument: 'regulation of statements', 'elaboration of rules and procedures' - academia has a firm grasp of methodology. But this by no means provides academia with any claim to be the final court of appeal in deciding what constitutes history. An emphasis upon method, indeed, may often serve to bestow 'normality' upon what are, after all, very tendentious theses; as, for instance, when Bennett defines history as an 'institutionalised form for the social regulation of statements about the past' (Bennett, p. 58): it seems that the institutional function of 'history' is accorded priority-status, while the notion of history as the production of a social entity, whose totality extends beyond the institutional, is disregarded. His 'post-Marxism' follows rather closely the postmodern penchant for assigning equal importance to the writing and rewriting of literature and history as to historical social change itself. Thus Bennett writes: "'Society" and "history" can no longer be thought of as the locus of literature's external determinations. What is "outside literature", in this [Bennet's] view, is merely what does not fall within it - not because it belongs to another plane of existence but because it happens to fall elsewhere, within some other institutionally regulated zone of practice' (Bennett, p. 283). But it would be ludicrous to suggest, for example, that D.H. Lawrence's representations of socialism belong to the same plane as the Russian Revolution - the latter, naturally, having a determining influence on the former, but hardly *vice versa*. And, unlike Bennett's notion of society, the Revolution was radical enough to understand that not everything in society exists simply to be regulated by institutions, or, at best, to modify those institutions, but that it may be found necessary, by people 'outside', to transform entirely (or destroy) such institutions. Bennett, of course, is very pessimistic in respect to social change upon such a grand scale: because it no longer appears possible, in the immediate future, at least, we should forget about it and, instead, concentrate our energies upon smaller changes within existing institutions (Bennett, pp. 284-7). But this seems just the type of statement that could use more of Bennett's 'disciplined interrogation'. It is

surely worth considering that such a 'post-Marxist' view merely acquiesces with those post-structural, pluralised 'realities' which Fredric Jameson contends post-modern capitalism *wants* people to accept: because, 'without a conception of the social totality (and the possibility of transforming a whole social system) no properly socialist politics is possible' (Fredric Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg [eds.], *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* [Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1988], p. 355). This would seem to account for the final conservatism of Bennett's would-be radicalism in *Outside Literature*, which all too readily substitutes the social institutions of academe for society *per se*; and thus, while his defence of practicable indeterminacy offers liberation from monolithic absolute truths or uncertainties, such liberty to argue and sanction what constitutes 'reality' seems to be limited to rather restrictive sites.

[134] Bennett, p. 57.

[135] Macherey, p. 82.

[136] See, for example, F.R. Leavis's assertion that *Women in Love* is a 'presentation of twentieth-century England - of modern civilisation - so first-hand and searching in its comprehensiveness as to be beyond the powers of any other novelist he knows of' (Leavis, p. 178). David Craig's rebuttal claims that the novel 'offers an opinion of how things were going for the industrial workers - the majority of English people - which on the face of it is not to me convincing' and creates a 'sneaking sense that Lawrence has here given in to prejudice' (Craig, p. 143).

[137] Macherey, p. 84.

[138] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 311.

[139] Lawrence, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 182, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 334.

[140] Lawrence, 'The State of Funk', in *Phoenix II*, p. 567.

[141] Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, p. 248.

[142] Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, p. 249.

[143] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 162. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.

[144] The genesis of *Aaron's Rod* (1917-22) covered a period when Lawrence was trying to salvage his position as a novelist. Following the banning of *The Rainbow* in 1915, *Women in Love*, first 'completed' in 1916, lay unpublished for four years: writing to Amy Lowell on 11 September 1918, he complains: 'I am slowly working at another novel: though I feel it's not much use. No publisher will risk my last, and none will risk this, I expect. ... Humanity as it stands, and myself as I stand, we just seem mutually impossible to one another' (*Letters: Vol III*, p. 280). Before completing *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence faced the further irritation of having to make cuts to both *The Lost Girl* and *Women in Love* in order to avoid possibly offending the most genteel of the reading public; and *Mr Noon* (wr. 1920-1), the novel which most markedly takes revenge upon the 'gentle reader' whom he felt was imposing upon his creative freedom, became unpublishable due to its own ungenteel sexual explicitness. Writing to his publisher, Martin Secker, on 27 May 1921, Lawrence remarked of the near-finished *Aaron's Rod*: 'I've no idea what you or anybody will think of it'; but on the same day, in a more open acknowledgement of his estrangement from a general readership, he told his

- friend S.S. Koteliansky, 'it won't be popular' (Lawrence, *Letters: Vol III*, pp. 729, 728).
- [145] See, for example, 'Education of the People' (wr. 1920), which Lawrence finished shortly before recommencing work on *Aaron's Rod*: 'When it is a question of the human soul, the direction must be a culmination upwards: upwards from the very roots, in the vast Demos, up to the very summit of the supreme judge and utterer, the first of men. There is a first of men: and there is the vast, basic Demos: always, at every age in every continent. ... There *must* be classes of men; there *must* be differentiation: either that, or amorphous nothingness' (D.H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988], pp. 110-11). And after completing the novel, bar revisions, at the end of May 1921, Lawrence wrote to Evelyn Scott on 3 June 1921: 'In short, why not have done with Jesus and with love, and have a shot at conscious, proud power. Why not soldiers, instead of lovers? ... Kick the posterior of creeping love, and laugh when it whimpers. Pah, it is a disease, love Give me henceforth Mars, and a free fight' (Lawrence, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 734).
- [146] W.H. Auden, 'The Prolific and the Devourer' (wr. 1939), in *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London, Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 404.
- [147] Many of Lawrence's essays expose the ideological nature of his spiritual vision, not least, for example, 'Blessed are the Powerful'. This essay contains an illustration of Kalnins's point concerning Lawrence's interest in the 'inexplicable differences between each unique human being'; it is, however, strikingly contradictory to Kalnins's assertion of his non-political vision. Lawrence could be writing a manifesto for divine monarchy when he declares: 'power is given differently, in varying degrees and varying kind to different people. It always was so, it always will be so. There will never be equality in power. There will always be unending inequality' (Lawrence, *Reflections*, p. 326).
- [148] Daniel O'Hara, 'The Power of Nothing in *Women in Love*' (1983), reprinted in Peter Widdowson (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence* (London, Longman, 1992), p. 152. O'Hara is referring specifically to *Women in Love*.
- [149] A similar desire for the pre-emptive blasting aside of unfavourable criticism appears in Lawrence's suggestion to his publisher as to the best way of handling the English publication of *Women in Love*, *Aaron's Rod's* predecessor: after reading disagreeable reviews of *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence wrote to Martin Secker, on 12 December 1920, advising him: 'refrain from sending out review copies It will give reviewers a chance to say nothing, which is best' (Lawrence, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 638).
- [150] See Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (1970), trans. Richard Miller (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1975).
- [151] D.H. Lawrence, 'Her Turn' (1913), in *Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*, ed. John Worthen (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 128-33.
- [152] For example, in *Anticipations* (1901), Wells freely writes of 'inferior races' and the possibility of having to eradicate people who do not conform to an elite - naturally, an elite to which Wells sees himself as potentially belonging

(H.G. Wells, *Anticipations* [London, Chapman and Hall, 1901]; see, especially, Chapter IX). Later, in response to a reviewer's discussion of this work, Wells wrote: 'He gives a fancy sketch of my "Anticipations" ... & attributes to me the conception that "rapid transport & Eugenics were to be the pillars of the State". As a matter of fact there is a chapter in Mankind in the Making (1903) devoted to a careful destructive criticism of Eugenic proposals, a chapter I would endorse without a word of alteration today' (H.G. Wells, letter to the Editor, *The Nation*, c. early June 1912, *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells: Vol II: 1904-1918*, ed. David C. Smith [London, Pickering and Chatto, 1998], p. 328). I would suggest that Lawrence exhibits a similar tendency to explore salient contemporary ideas from similarly changing approaches (for example, in his ideas upon the nature of work, above, pp. 2-6).

- [153] D.H. Lawrence, *Pornography and Obscenity* (1929), in *Phoenix*, p. 173.

CHAPTER ONE

IRRESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE: THE BLINDNESS OF INDIVIDUALISM IN WOMEN IN LOVE

To see someone who does not see is the best way to be intensely aware of *what* he does not see.

Roland Barthes^[1]

D.H. Lawrence's correspondence with Bertrand Russell between 1915 and 1916 marks his stormy passage from an intensely optimistic, if rather naïve, anticipation of socialist change to a disgusted, even misanthropic, frustration at the world's reluctance to follow his lead:

So a vision of a better life must include a revolution of society. And the drama shall be between individual men and women, not between nations and classes. (24 February 1915)

One must be an outlaw these days, not a teacher or a preacher. One must retire out of the herd and then fire bombs into it. (19 February 1916)^[2]

Women in Love was written at a time when the world 'drama' was still very much one between nations and, as the war drew to an end, between classes too. Nevertheless, despite the non-materialisation of his revolution, the drama of Lawrence's new work would be explicitly focused on the lives of individual men and women. However, these are individuals who only maintain their claim to individuality by condemning everybody else to the herd.

Ursula Brangwen's and Rupert Birkin's rejection of the conventional life is neatly encapsulated in Chapter XXVI, 'A Chair'. As they move closer to marriage

the couple visit the town market to find if there is any furniture worth buying. The eponymous chair that they purchase is initially admired for its formal beauty. However, as a possession, a piece of property contributing to the marital home, it becomes sickening to them. The chair comes to signify what Birkin calls the 'detestable society of man' that tyrannises the individual with its 'possessions, possessions, bullying you and turning you into into a generalisation'.^[3] Ursula and Birkin want to live as free individuals, unhampered by the habits of society. Perceived as substance and symbol of corrupting social custom, the chair is given away to a working-class couple who are about to be married themselves - doubtlessly compelled to because of the woman's pregnancy. Superficially, the gift is a quite innocent, indeed beneficent gesture. There is, though, a strong hint that Ursula's and Birkin's emancipation from domestic impediments is bought by leaving others encumbered. Thus Birkin's initial refusal to offer the chair to the couple 'getting a home together': 'I won't aid and abet them in it' (357). His reservations are eventually overcome by Ursula, who indirectly attests to the working couple being condemned to a domestic prison anyway: 'It's right for them - there's nothing else, for them' (357). Again, on the surface, this is simply good-natured sympathy; but there is a suggestion of the text dodging free of its own hindrances, delicately omitting the issue of exactly *why* there is nothing else for these people; just why it is that Ursula and Birkin may liberate themselves but the working-class couple may not. Rather than explain the basis for the couples' different prospects, however, the text instead makes an apology for it. The working-class couple, Ursula and Birkin agree, are of the 'meek' and multitudinous 'Children of men' who 'shall inherit the earth' (361). Ursula and Birkin, by implied contrast, are of the proud and unique who, by natural right, will inherit their liberty. While it is true that any novel which foregrounds main

protagonists will inevitably background unnamed characters as identityless anonymities, *Women in Love* turns a practical necessity into an ideological issue. It *explicitly* collectivises the unnamed characters so that, rather than simply provide Ursula's and Birkin's societal background, they depict society as something markedly apart from Ursula and Birkin. The novel refuses to represent society as anything but a reified object to be contrasted with, and eventually cast aside by, the individuated heroes. For them, and for the reader who is locked within their perspective here, the other couple and townsfolk in general are the embodiment of a degenerate social enterprise:

The people who moved about seemed stumpy and sordid, the air seemed to smell rather dirty, there was a sense of many mean streets ramifying off into warrens of meanness. (354)

This mythopoeic distinguishing of Ursula and Birkin from the common lot illuminates much of the text's ideological scheme: it allows the condemnation of society and the rehabilitation of the free individual; it allows criticism of the industrial form of society but not its class-based, capitalist nature; and, of course, it clears Ursula and Birkin from any past or future responsibility for society as they take their leave of it.

The exile of Ursula and Birkin corresponds to the text's wider effort to sever visible links connecting its ideology to the society it criticises. Both attempts to dissociate from the world are fraught with difficulty. For Ursula and Birkin the immediate question is where are they to go in a world pervaded by the children of men? 'We've got to live in the chinks they leave us' is Birkin's answer (361). The prospective narrowness of this new life brings further problems, with the recognition that it means leaving behind not just inanimate objects but people too. It is this final isolation which Birkin himself baulks at when confessing to 'hankering after a sort of

further fellowship', specifically with Gerald Crich (362). Ursula agrees as to the desirability of sharing their new world with others but dismisses what she sees as Birkin's wish to force people to his way of thinking, telling him:

You must learn to be alone. ... And yet you want to force other people to love you You do try to bully them to love you. - And even then, you don't want their love. (363)

Evident here, perhaps, is a tension between the positions adopted in the two letters quoted above; an indecision between still trying to save the world with a 'revolution of society', or determining to have done with it and 'fire bombs into it'. The necessity of the latter is clearly insisted upon here and throughout the text, but there is a residual nostalgia for what might be being relinquished. Suggestive of the precariousness of the text's ideological coherence is Birkin - to a large degree Lawrence's spokesperson - asking himself whether or not he wants that further relationship beyond marriage and having to admit: 'It's the one problem I can't solve' (363). Yet this is the crucial problem which the text's isolating ideology of individualism has to solve, and, in one way, it does so with the death of Gerald. However, the text's less than complete courage in its own convictions, which Birkin voices in 'A Chair', cannot be entirely erased: indeed, it persists implicitly to question and undermine the text's ideological integrity.

In July 1916, as Lawrence began to type the fifth version of what was to become *Women in Love*, he affirmed his adherence to individualism thus:

I do esteem individual liberty above everything. What is a nation for, but to secure the maximum of liberty to every individual[?] ... let every man move according to his conscience - and the government which compels a man against his conscience is a dastardly cowardly concern. (12 July 1916)^[4]

Recently subjected to his first examination for conscription, Lawrence knew well enough how his own government could compel a man against his conscience. His opposition to the erosion of individual liberty is carried over to *Women in Love*, but only with the result of demonstrating its inadequacy. The division of individual conscience and national government recur in the novel in the form of Ursula's and Birkin's complete separation from society. But their lack of any relation whatsoever to society prevents any meaningful opposition to it, allowing the substitution of simple abjuration for protest. Ursula and Birkin make their 'final transit out of life', 'the peace and bliss in their hearts' transcending 'the superficial unreal world of fact' (388, 389). It is one thing to call governmental oppression a 'cowardly concern' and another thing to do something about it, and Lawrence's isolating individualism would seem to deny just that. He was certainly hamstrung by his rejection of political alternatives to the industrial capitalism he hated. For Lawrence, an alternative such as socialism, for instance, was now seen as part of the problem - just another way of managing industrialism. And it was his antipathy for the deindividuating effects of industrialism, rather than for capitalism *per se*, which was the prime mover of his desire for change.^[5]

Unfortunately, as Graham Holderness has pointed out, such prioritisation of the individual all too easily ends up adumbrating the original ethos of capitalism itself.^[6] In summing up his own account of *Women in Love*, Holderness asserts that any critique of industrial-capitalist ideology that the novel may offer is inevitably compromised because the text remains 'bound within an ideology of individualism which is actually the obverse side of the entrepreneurial system'.^[7] For Holderness the result is nothing less than a buttress to capitalism:

Attempting to be the conscience of capitalism, the novel proves to be its shadow. Attempting to preside over the funeral obsequies of capitalism ... the novel becomes an instrument in its regeneration and historical persistence.^[8]

While agreeing as to the contradictory nature of the text, and that its ideology of individualism largely removes the teeth of any attack it may make on capitalism, I do not think there is as complete a reversal as Holderness suggests. As another commentator has remarked, '*Women in Love* is not merely a novel that accommodates contradictory readings, it positively invites and even compels them.'^[9] This capacity for antithetical readings checks the text from necessarily being 'an instrument' for conservative purposes. What it is an instrument for depends particularly upon how it is read. Holderness's reading of *Women in Love* is limited by two points, the first being its rather crude pro-realism. Holderness values realism more highly than other forms, contending that it is the most faithful representation of historical truth - a privilege that would appear to be denied *Women in Love* on account of its prevailing modernism. This preference for realism, though, seems difficult to justify. Ultimately, the raw material of art is always, and only can be, drawn from the 'real' world, and all art finally refers to that world in some way. There is no reason why realism should have any inherent superiority in this, for, additionally, it is impossible for any art to figure some pure objective truth; 'historical reality' will always be changed and transformed by the artist's ideological assumptions about reality, even in realism.^[10]

A second limitation of Holderness's reading of *Women in Love* is his own omission of most of the novel other than one chapter, 'The Industrial Magnate'. Holderness calls 'The Industrial Magnate' a 'central chapter of the novel' because it

explores the relationship between industrial capitalism and war ideology.^[11] This could, though, be little more than saying that this chapter is important because it deals with subjects which Holderness considers to be particularly important, rather than of central importance to the text as a whole. Indeed, the relation of a single chapter to the novel in its entirety is more problematical than Holderness's account would suggest. The chapters do not so much amalgamate into one structure as remain essentially discrete vignettes of a world experienced in dislocated fragments. In claiming centrality for 'The Industrial Magnate' Holderness ignores the decentered nature of *Women in Love*, whereby it is possible to move from the end of Chapter XVI, 'Man to Man', immediately to Chapter XVIII, 'Rabbit', without any obvious disturbance to the narrative in missing out the 'central' Chapter XVII, 'The Industrial Magnate'. Holderness's method of extrapolating from that one chapter contradicts his own acknowledgement of the text's non-realist nature, implicitly working, as it does, on the realist assumption of a shared objective world existing between different characters and different chapters. True enough, 'The Industrial Magnate' draws the development of the Crich family's mines in a way that may be reducible to an examination of industrial capitalism and war ideology, but this is very much marginalised throughout the rest of the novel. And, of course, *Women in Love* directly challenges any notion of an objective world that can be described consistently, notably in such scenes as by the railway-crossing in 'Coal-Dust', for example, where events are related through characters' radically different perspectives. It is such interplay of characters' conflicting viewpoints which is obscured by Holderness's focus upon 'The Industrial Magnate'. This chapter, and thus Holderness's account of *Women in Love*, makes little room for anything other than Gerald, his father, his work, and the industrial system created in his own image.^[12]

Such prioritisation of Gerald contradicts our intuitive response to a text in which, after all, it is Birkin (in tandem with Ursula, at any rate) who appears to be the intended focus of our sympathies. For Holderness, though, Birkin and Ursula are entirely subsidiary and, having made their 'transit out of life' (388), become redundant: 'the two characters have no further significant function in the novel Once outside that perfect, sealed system which is Gerald's society, they fall outside the novel's significant pattern.'^[13] Birkin is nothing more than 'Gerald's shadow':^[14] he represents an ideology of individualism borne by the entrepreneurial system that is represented by Gerald. Holderness's foregrounding of Gerald fits his view of the novel as primarily being about capitalism itself, and 'Attempting to preside over the funeral obsequies of capitalism'^[15] (figured in the death of Gerald), but inadvertently perpetuating that system in Birkin's individualism. But surely the reverse of this formulation is more accurate: the text's predominant concern is to preserve liberal individualism (Birkin), and its mistake is to believe that it can achieve this at the same time as, and even by virtue of, its disposal of industrial-capitalist society (Gerald). It is certainly true that there can be no such easy divorce of ideology and socio-economic system, but, instead of Birkin being Gerald's shadow, the reverse is true: industrial capitalism (Gerald) is the unshakeable, ominous shadow cast by liberal-individualist ideology (Birkin). And this inevitable failure to assert the independence of Birkin's individualism allows the text to succeed in a different way. It is one contention of this chapter that, through the impossibility of the task it sets itself, *Women in Love* functions in a similar way to the films of Chaplin, as seen by Roland Barthes. In showing the proletarian who is oblivious to revolution, Chaplin, Barthes argues, 'shows the public its blindness by presenting at the same time a man who is blind and what is in front of him'.^[16] In our case it is the novel's/Birkin's individualist ideology

which is blind to the industrial capitalism lurking behind it, concealing its coercive nature behind the individualist rhetoric of freedom. The text's blindness to its own contradiction serves to intensify our awareness of it, and thus 'positively invites and even compels'^[17] a reading of its ideology contradicting that which is explicitly intended; a reading which confirms the ideology's symbiosis with industrial capitalism, rather than its independence from, and opposition to it. In this way the text allows a wider view of capitalism's duplicities than if it focused on Gerald's enslaving industrial system alone.

The text exposes its ideological flaws through its blindness to them, but also through its desperate remedies to the inadequacies of which it is conscious. A pertinent example occurs at the beginning of Chapter XVI, 'Man to Man'. Here the text reveals its ideological origins in nineteenth-century entrepreneurial capitalism in its reproduction of that system's emphatic division of the sexes (generally the text adheres to the same advocacy of a free-individualism whereby woman is not quite so free nor individual as man). As Birkin lies in his sickbed he revolts against the idea of a conventional, married, domestic life with Ursula as being too narrow, intimate and insular, and contemplates what he sees as Hermione's feminine tyranny, Ursula's possessiveness, and himself as their 'everlasting prisoner' (200). This is clearly a response to contemporary female challenges to male hegemony, but, rather than directly explore the issues, the text is compelled to obscure them and their relationship to capitalist history. Thus Birkin, who insists upon the necessity of freedom, posits woman as the great threat to freedom and thereby masks capitalism's own illiberality and justifies its continued subjection of women. Similarly, emerging changes in gender roles are represented as outrageous feminine arrogance, enabling the text to sidestep more troubling real things such as female suffrage and labour

rights.^[18] Nevertheless, these omissions allow the text to do more positive things, for although the text here attempts an emphatic disposal of such a debate, its very insistence obstructs it. The reader becomes conscious of the peculiar effort being expended to shore up the text's ideological weak points. I have mentioned that Birkin, to a considerable extent, is Lawrence's spokesperson. Elsewhere, however, there is usually a qualifying frame placed around his proclamations by the responses of other characters to his sermonising. (This is not to agree with critics who see Birkin as essentially reduced by this method to just another voice within a text of many voices. It rather seems to me that the other perspectives serve to smooth the more strident edges to Birkin's dominant voice, assisting its general acceptance via localised objection. It appears difficult *not* to accommodate other viewpoints into a novel, unless the aim is a monologue, which, in fact, is more or less what occurs at the start of 'Man to Man'.) Here the text's 'message' is laid before the reader uninterrupted and unopposed.

The first nine paragraphs of the chapter carefully intertwine misogynistic stereotypes and sweeping declarations against women with Birkin's personal experiences. The consequence of this is double-edged. On one side, the text is enabled to deny authority to such opinions in what, after all, amounts to a similar pseudo-qualification to that mentioned above: it is only Birkin's subjective voice. But, once again, that voice is not significantly challenged and its prejudices remain. Indeed, the other effect of tying these views to the character of Birkin is that they are shielded from criticism. Because they are ground in Birkin's experience there is no logic to question, no analysis to analyse, only Birkin's observations of what he 'knows' about the women in his life:

She was on a very high horse again, was woman, the Great Mother. Did he not know it in Hermione. ... And Ursula, Ursula was the same He saw the yellow flare in her eyes, he knew the unthinkable overweening assumption of primacy in her. She was unconscious of it herself. (200)

Such appeals to his own private world are somewhat tricky to refute (although they do risk simply being dismissed) due to their remove from contestable, verifiable argument: Birkin knows these people better than they know themselves, and hence knows better than the reader, who has nothing more to go on than Birkin's appraisal of things. In the succeeding paragraphs there is a subtle but distinct shift in the narrative focus, moving from references specific to Birkin to a more general, all-inclusive 'we' which insists upon the identity of the reader's situation with that which the text goes on to describe. Having compelled the idea of its common interest with the reader, the narrative voice, carrying a certainty hardly matched elsewhere, then forces through the apparently authorised history of male-female relationships:

Why should we consider ourselves, men and women, as broken fragments of one whole[?] It is not true. We are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed. (200-01)

It seems this voice encompasses knowledge of prehistory: 'In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture'; and of the future too: 'There is now to come the new day, where we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference' (201). Such is the passage's self-assurance that logical argument is entirely dispensed with in what becomes akin to a religious sermon; and, as befits a sermon, the answer to our problems on earth drops from the sky, ready-made: there simply *will be* 'pure man' and 'pure woman', each 'with its own laws' and forming a perfectly counterpoised

arrangement: 'Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarised sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in the other' (201). And that is that (a 'polarised sex-circuit' which, as it happens, conveniently replicates dominant ideas of separate public and private spheres for separate sexes).

After this metaphysical excursus we are brought back to earth with a bump by the revelation:

So Birkin meditated whilst he was ill. He liked sometimes to be ill enough to take to his bed. For then he got better very quickly, and things came to him clear and sure. (201)

This tardy avowal that what appeared to be the intervention of an omniscient narrator is, after all, still the reflections of Birkin comes as no little surprise. The text is again trying to have it both ways: on one hand, the disclosure of the passage's 'author' may help to bolster faith in Birkin as a site of potential resolution of the text's tensions; on the other, by ostensibly reconsigning (a still authoritatively privileged) Birkin to the hubbub of other competing voices, the text attempts to palliate the passage's rather raw didacticism in attributing it to a character in a bout of sickness. But all this is at risk of being sabotaged by the sheer strangeness of the implied, yet unacknowledged changes of viewpoint. This strangeness is the inevitable outcome of the text simultaneously having to accommodate both its dominant ideology and its lack of confidence in it. The resultant anti-feminism, which appears somewhat jammed into the narrative here, together with the coy refusal conclusively to sanction it, ends up threatening to explode the text's superficial cohesion: the narrative, which at first glance moves with a smooth assuredness, reveals on closer inspection its laboured mechanics.

The same overworked quality is detectable in the interior monologue's principal diatribe against what is seen as a narrow, domesticated society which amounts to 'a whole community of mistrustful couples' (199). When this attack upon the 'community' shifts to a more protracted vilification of the 'merging ... clutching ... mingling' (200) nature of male-female relationships themselves, we glimpse something of the ideology at work within the writing. Chiefly notable is the move from a problem of distinctly societal proportions to the downscaled vagaries of personal relations. It is this which flags a vision of society as being formed by autonomous individuals, their private concerns and their intimate relationships. Any sense of some determining social formation, on the other hand, imposing itself upon these individuals and shaping their lives, is erased. This process of reasoning from society to the individual incorporates a method of limiting social problems to a personal locale - which in turn also limits the possible source for any solution. Formulating a question which it feels comfortable answering, the text distorts and straitens a recognition of social disintegration and isolation, redefining it in terms of individual men and women - with any more comprehensive social reality conveniently obscured. And thus, once defining the essential problem as the 'mingling' and 'merging' of a couple, then the answer is self-evident: they must be made 'single and clear and cool', fulfilling the 'process of singling into individuality' (200, 201). It would seem that the text believes there is nothing wrong with individualism that more individualism cannot fix. But of course, this polarised singleness has one obvious drawback: it potentially leads to a world even more fragmented and insular than the 'community of mistrustful couples'. This remains an intractable problem, and the text's scathing attack upon the constraints of modern society and the narrowness of its

privatised worlds is compromised by its inability to advance an alternative which does not collapse back into the same individualistic scheme.

In an article Lawrence wrote in 1927, posthumously entitled 'Germans and English', it is worth noting the important difference in a similar exposition of the atomised society. 'The Englishman', the essay argues,

is proud of the fact that he belongs to a nation of isolated individuals. He is proud of being one island in the great archipelago of his nation. ... He wants no one to touch him, and he wants not to touch anybody. Hence the endless little private houses of England, and the fierce preservation of the privacy.^[19]

There is a change of angle in this account due to the logical concurrence of the individualistic Englishman with the community of private houses. *Women in Love*, by contrast, sets such individualism, represented in Birkin, in opposition to an atomised society, without any basis for doing so, other than to protect the ideology of liberal individualism, while firing bombs at the world that is its material counterpart. Thus we have the private houses assailed as 'disjoined, separatist, meaningless entities' by Birkin, who yet desires to be 'single in himself' (199). In short, Birkin's charismatic individualism is set against the anonymous mass of individuals that is capitalist society, as produced by liberal individualism *à la* Birkin.

Indeed, this circularity is emphasised when, later in 'Man to Man', we find Birkin proposing his own version of a relationship insulated from the wider world, telling Gerald: 'Instead of chopping yourself down to fit the world, chop the world down to fit yourself. - As a matter of fact, two exceptional people make another world' (205). This apparently hypocritical domestication of the world might, though, initially appear rather more progressive. Birkin could be seen as proposing that,

instead of constricting yourself to the rigours of the modern world, that world should be changed to accomodate the needs of its people. If so, he would be echoing the feelings expressed by Ursula in *The Rainbow* as she tours the colliery town of Wiggiston with her uncle Tom, the colliery manager. Tom coolly outlines what Ursula perceives to be the worst of the place: the miners, he says, 'believe they must alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter the pits and the place to fit themselves'.^[20] Ursula's opposition to her uncle's detached acquiescence and the entire industrial environment is unequivocal. She tells him: 'You think like they do - that living human beings must be taken and adapted to all kinds of horrors. We could easily do without the pits.'^[21] Although somewhat callow, this at least urges the need for real material change to make the world a place fit for people to live in. And it is this commitment which in fact marks the extremely different sentiments of the two novels rather than any similarity. Birkin's chopping down of the world does not demand actual social change so much as a change in attitude. Whereas Ursula saw Wiggiston and imagined a bigger, better world, Birkin wants to reduce the world to the cropped horizons of his personal life. The contrast becomes even more apparent when the Ursula of the second novel observes the 'repulsiveness' of Beldover and virtually replicates uncle Tom's attitude to Wiggiston, claiming: 'It doesn't concern me' (361). Ursula agrees to Birkin's prescription for a better life: 'One needn't see. One goes one's way. In my world it is sunny and spacious' (361). The facile strategy of turning a blind eye to the world is substituted for the more arduous task of changing it. The exclusion of the world lying beyond the prerogative of the self marks the collapse of faith in any collective social reform, and discloses the paltry response of the text to the world that it rejects. It spurns a society consisting of private couples but suggests instead a relationship of 'two exceptional people' (205); it perceives

social degradation and at once washes its hands of it. All of which fails to bring it beyond the industrial capitalist milieu that it purportedly opposes. The tackling of repugnant social realities is replaced with a solipsistic 'liberation' of personal wish-fulfilment, the material fact of the world not mattering so much as how it is perceived by the individual.

So when Graham Holderness says that *Women in Love* works by 'focusing on the social system',^[22] he is stretching a point which barely applies even to the examination of the mining industry in 'The Industrial Magnate'. The 'focus' of the novel is resolutely upon individuals - individuals whose individuality is measured only to the extent of their removal from society. Birkin and Ursula are the apotheosis of this type of individuality, and so it is logical for the text to conclude with their completed trajectory outside of society. Holderness though, having pronounced the novel's 'significant pattern'^[23] as that which follows Gerald/society, is left to dismiss the text here for not doing what he says it does. Raymond Williams identifies *Women in Love*'s concern with the individual in an earlier essay which notes how Lawrence classifies his characters, *a priori*, as either 'quick' or 'dead', as privileged with individuality or automatically condemned to 'society'.^[24] Both Holderness and Williams recognise that Birkin's individualism can only lead to a dead end, but, whereas Holderness sees Birkin and Ursula as merely 'pressed into insignificance',^[25] Williams detects the destructiveness which they signify. Commenting upon the 'perfection of the polarised sex-circuit' (201), Williams notes how it involves the rejection of all extra-generational relationships, and particularly proscribes having children: 'Anything that can be described as creation would break it, for there would be a new living fact which is more than "proud singleness".'^[26] Certainly, Birkin's recommendation to 'chop the world down to fit yourself' (205) would appear not to

leave anything recognisable as a 'world' at all. Birkin's metaphor is simply a continuation of the prevailing process of appropriation and destruction apparent, for example, in Hermione's feminine tyranny (22, 300), and Gerald's enslavement of nature and the colliers (223-4). Birkin's response to the destructiveness of society is to will the consummation of that destruction, to negate the entire world. Thus Williams perceives *Women in Love* as breaking from society 'in the deeper sense that Lawrence will not even oppose what he opposes, will not enter that dimension at all'.^[27] But if it does not tackle society head-on, it does so indirectly by manifesting the same contradictions of the world it seeks to chop away. Birkin's world-chopping metaphor, in particular, vividly summarises liberal individualism's rhetoric of self-emancipation, simultaneously with the destructiveness and alienation which it actually produces. And the tearing apart of life's personal and social dimensions exposes the hopelessly schizoid nature of the novel's dominant ideology, promising a 'world' which does not go beyond the self, while refusing to face the wretchedness of a society built upon that paradox.

Not that *Women in Love* is blindly optimistic. On the contrary, it parades its pessimism, particularly via the discourses of Birkin. Throughout the novel he regularly attests to the necessity and desirability of the complete annihilation of humanity:

After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away - time it did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be there. Humanity doesn't embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible. (59)

Birkin correctly perceives humanity's relative position in the universe: we are not made in God's image as the apotheosis of creation, but are just one created form on which the universe does not in the least depend. But this recognition of our post-Darwinian humbleness only serves to illustrate the *possibility* of mankind's eradication; the key reason for actually calling for it lies in the suggestion of humanity's complete exhaustion of its creativity. The denial of man as a creator necessarily denies the possibility of a human-built system that could replace the enslavement of industrial capitalism. At the same time, the text consistently reaffirms the depravity of the present social system and the need to be free of it. Thus, the painfully logical solution is to condemn both man and his machine, abolishing humanity itself along with its corrupt social formation. So there can be no *Rainbow*-like vision for Birkin or *Women in Love*. The closest parallel in the final chapter resolutely posits the new germination beyond humanity:

God can do without man. God could do without the ichthyosauri and the mastodon. These monsters failed creatively to develop, so God, the creative mystery, dispensed with them. In the same way the mystery could dispense with man, should he too fail creatively to change and develop. The eternal creative mystery could dispose of man, and replace him with a finer created being: just as the horse has taken the place of the mastodon.

It was very consoling to Birkin, to think this. (478-9)

It might not be so consoling for the rest of us, however. The fundamental inadequacy of this vision is exposed earlier, in Chapter XI, 'An Island', where Birkin propounds to Ursula his idea of a better world being a human-less one. His ideal is doubly negative for, besides the theoretical negation of human life, there is the lack of any purpose or possibility of conceiving it. This is pointed out by Ursula, but is implicit in Birkin's own words. When he tries to think of the 'lovely things' that would populate

the new world he can only vaguely surmise 'things straight out of the fire' (128). The absurdity of this as a response to the world is self-evident. Yet although Ursula dismisses it as a 'phantasy' (128), admitting to its entire impracticability, the text does not dispute its allure. Ursula does at one point protest against Birkin's condemnation of the entire species, insisting that 'there are good people' (126); but this is merely an example of how her criticisms can actually serve to bestow his views with an aura of credibility, here inviting him to elaborate upon how there might be people 'Good enough for the life of today' but who will be redundant in the future (126). Confirmation for the authority of Birkin's view is then given by Ursula's remarkable assessment that, although it is only a fantasy, the dream of eradicating the whole of humankind is nevertheless a 'pleasant' one (128). Ursula finds Birkin's vision unsatisfactory because it is wishful thinking, not because it is unattractive.

Such enthusiasm for the extinction of humanity appears little short of sadistic. Indeed, the description is peculiarly appropriate because the text's railing against humanity bears much resemblance to that of the Marquis de Sade. Compare, for instance, Sade's own minimisation of our evolutionary importance with that of Birkin, above:

new constructions wrought by [Nature's] hand, were our species to be destroyed absolutely, would become again primordial intentions whose accomplishments would be far more flattering to her pride and to her power Why! what difference would it make to her were the race of men entirely to be extinguished upon earth, annihilated! She laughs at our pride when we persuade ourselves all would be over and done with were this misfortune to occur! Why, she would simply fail to notice it. Do you fancy races have not already become extinct? Buffon counts several of them perished, and Nature, struck dumb by a so precious loss, doesn't so much as murmur! The entire species might be wiped out and the air would not be the less pure for it, nor the Star less brilliant, nor the universe's march less exact.^[28]

Besides a similar contempt for humanity, there is also evident the same Romantic reverence, as in Birkin, for a Nature which comprises complementary creative and destructive forces - creation continues even as it is destroyed. In *Women in Love*, Ursula may occasionally represent an oasis of hope for a human future, but that perspective is very much marginalised by the 'dark river of dissolution' (172) running through the text via Birkin, Gudrun and Gerald, and even Ursula herself. And as with Sade, the merit conferred upon destruction threatens to overwhelm all other values. Sade, for example, can argue that murder fulfils a Natural law:

'Tis our pride prompts us to elevate murder into crime. ... we have believed Nature would perish should our marvellous species chance to be blotted out of existence, while the whole extirpation of the breed would, by returning to Nature the creative faculty she has entrusted to us, reinvigorate her^[29]

But no less perverse appears Birkin's own observation on murder:

No man ... cuts another man's throat unless he wants to cut it, and unless the other man wants it cutting. This is a complete truth. It takes two people to make a murder: a murderer and a murderee. And a murderee is a man who is murderable. And a man who is murderable is a man who in a profound if hidden lust desires to be murdered. (33)^[30]

Both views are so far beyond human values and so serenely accepting of human annihilation that they provoke instinctive objection. The reader automatically inclines to agree with Gerald's opinion of Birkin's theory of murder: 'pure nonsense' (33).

Undeniably, as a means of rectifying problems in the human world these inhumane perspectives are non-starters. But if useless and perverse as agents of a prospective better world, these views are still perhaps rather useful and sane

expressions of their own contemporary worlds. We will return to Sade later, but as for Birkin's idea of the 'murderer' who seeks to be murdered, it becomes eminently more reasonable if understood within the context of the Great War. What perhaps is most astonishing about that débâcle is not simply its slaughter of millions, but the apparent complicity of millions of people in that slaughter. In Britain alone, by the time voluntary recruitment ended in March 1916, a total of two and a half million men had volunteered for the regular forces and Territorials.^[31] If *Women in Love's* Romantic dialectic is skewed towards destruction rather than creation, so was the world that produced it. Holderness has examined how the war is an absent presence in the text, implicitly represented in 'the violence emanating from society in the novel'.^[32] This violence pertains to the 'absent subject' of the war which, in turn, draws revealing parallels with the 'present subject' of peacetime society,^[33] highlighting the chaotic violence underlying the civilised order of industrialism and bourgeois society. Voicing the destructive energies of peacetime society which capitalist ideology attempts to silence, the text turns that destruction against the world perpetrating it. This might only amount to firing bombs at society but, Lawrence would argue, metaphorical bombs, as well as very real ones, are all that this world deserves.

The destructive impulses in the world of the novel, then, can be read as those of the war, but also of pre-war society and even the society emerging after the war. In order to incorporate all of this simultaneously, the text effects a strange telescoping of temporal context. Less than two pages into the novel we are told that Ursula is twenty-six (8). Taken with internal dating from *The Rainbow* (Ursula has just turned sixteen at the beginning of the Boer War, October 1899) and the fact that it is spring, this strongly suggests the year 1910.^[34] However, two pages from the end of the novel Ursula is reminded of the Kaiser's statement of 1915, regarding the Great

War: '*Ich habe es nicht gewollt*' (479 ['I didn't want it']). Given this, and given that the characters are able to move freely around Europe, the date at which the novel closes must be post-war. From start to finish, however, the narrative is contained within one year, not nine or ten. But this need not and should not be seen as an attempt to escape history, for the text still pays obeisance to it, albeit in a form that resists conventional histories. It is superfluous to ask whether the novel's world is pre-war or post-war because it simply does not take the war as a pivotal moment in history. Rather than an exclusively pre-war world or post-war world, the novel displays a world in which warlike brutality is endemic.^[35] In this way, *Women in Love* can be read (in part) as being, not a retreat from history, but a valuable corrective to histories which present the war as an enigmatic cataclysm which threw an essentially peaceful, harmonious world into violent disorder.^[36] Lawrence's text, exposing the misnomer of 'peacetime', shows that barbarity and oppression do not merely arrive with war, but are part and parcel of the persisting social formation.

Still, for all the condemnation of modern society, it may be said that the actual social existence of the main characters, within that industrial-capitalist structure, barely impinges upon the novel. The working lives of Birkin, Ursula, and Gudrun hardly figure at all and that of Gerald is compacted into 'The Industrial Magnate'. We are told that Birkin is a school-inspector, based in Nottingham (53), but this detail is raised only to be immediately forgotten. Birkin's job does not seem to encroach upon his life at all - far from it, we find it allows him a good deal of freedom to move around the country (53). Apart from this rather unusual perk of a regionally-based job, we learn and see nothing of his work. He does visit Ursula's classroom during a botany lesson; but any sense of their working lives conveniently melts away to allow a typically abstract and obscure discussion, on catkins and

consciousness (38-45), which becomes increasingly remote from the realities of quotidian life. All this risks the sort of portrayal of society suggested above: one seemingly formed by individuals and their personal relationships. But while this is indeed the conclusion to which the text readily concedes, it does not entirely evade the social level of life. The emphasis on personal life is mitigated by an awareness of its interaction with society. Admittedly, much of this concerns an exploration of how the personal life might be completely extricated from society; however, in the process, the text does point up the difference between an essentially unchanging human nature and the identity constructed for us and assigned to us by the social system in which we live.

What emerges is a perception of the relationship between culture and nature which elicits how culture appropriates the natural as a means to pass off its partisan interests as innocent and neutral: in other words, it demonstrates ideology at work. A particularly good example of this occurs in Chapter V, 'In the Train'. Gerald, asked by Birkin as to his purpose in life, answers: 'I suppose I live to work, to produce something' (56). Birkin has just previously mocked Gerald's empty mathematical value of productivity, telling him:

That is why you work so hard at the mines. If you can produce coal to cook five thousand dinners a day, you are five thousand times more important than if you cooked only your own dinner.
(55)

But Gerald accepts this in good spirit, and his relative social importance too. He sees himself at the forefront of a collective effort to improve the material quality of life for all. When Birkin mocks his regard for material things and asks to what purpose he intends to put them, Gerald replies magnanimously: 'We haven't got there yet A

good many people are still waiting for [them]’ (56). Gerald thus sees himself not only as productive but also as progressive - the same identity that his capitalism chooses for itself. Birkin, though, allows us another view of Gerald:

Birkin watched him narrowly. He saw the perfect good-humoured callousness, even strange, glistening malice, in Gerald, glistening through the plausible ethics of productivity.
(56)

Now, it would not be impossible to take both views of Gerald to be ‘true’, in that Gerald’s version relates to his visible, external life, while that of Birkin perceives the deeper, more covert ‘psychology’ (a surprising reversal of what might be expected). This characterisation bears some resemblance to Freud’s psychoanalytical composite of an animalistic and potentially destructive ‘id’, reined in and repressed by the need to work and create.^[37] But unlike the ostensible political neutrality of Freud’s model, Lawrence’s depiction of Gerald is more clearly a vehicle for political contention. This becomes evident in the assessment borne out by the text as a whole that, in this instance at least, Birkin is in the right and Gerald is wrong. This is not to say Gerald is not a hardworking industrialist who successfully modernises his father’s business and makes it more profitable; but the ‘spin’ that he puts on it is misleading.

Gerald’s self-image as a productive, progressive businessman, associating private wealth with public welfare, is shown to be a cloak to a more destructive and brutalising essence. Thus in the account of Gerald’s undertaking of the collieries, in ‘The Industrial Magnate’, the mirage of productivity is replaced by a view of the driving motive of profit.^[38] And the reader is left in no doubt whence Gerald’s profits are derived:

In a thousand ways he cut down the expenditure, in ways so fine as to be hardly noticeable to the men. The miners must pay for the cartage of their coals, heavy cartage too; they must pay for their tools, for the sharpening, for the care of lamps, for many trifling things that made the bill of charges against every man mount up to a shilling or so in the week. It was not grasped very definitely by the miners, though they were sore enough. But it saved hundreds of pounds every week for the firm. (230)

Gerald, thinking of the former Hindu tradition of suttee, also considers the merits of burning colliers' widows on their husbands' funeral pyres to save giving them free coal (230). This palpably gives the lie to the idea of Gerald as some kind of social benefactor, increasing his wealth at the same time as enabling the colliers to gratify their own 'desire for something higher' (55). What, today, would be called 'wealth creation', is shown to be nothing more than a powerful individual exploiting the many.

But Gerald is not simply portrayed as a devious 'fat cat': although it may form part of the picture, moral censure of Gerald is merely incidental to a more insightful social critique. This critique, centring on the reprehensibility of the entire industrial-capitalist system, locates Gerald firmly within that system, not only in terms of his actions as an industrial magnate but, just as significantly, in terms of his internalised values. He is shown to be both proponent of, and subject to, the system's self-justifying strategies. And while Gerald may deceive the colliers over their additional expenses, he is revealed as deceiving himself as to the system's worth. In other words, that which Gerald takes for reality the text allows us to see as ideology.

Lawrence's 'psychological' characterisation of Gerald, then, besides describing his 'inner being', shows the often complicated relationship between what are elsewhere discussed as 'private self' and 'social being' (103). Indeed, the text's

handling of psychology in general is shaped not so much by an interest in personal idiosyncrasies *per se*, as to reveal their greater significance within the broader framework of society. The private self of Gerald is shown to be bound up with his social milieu. The inner workings of the individual are closely identified with the workings of his mining industry and, reciprocally, the 'spirit' of the industrial world in general is adumbrated in the figure of Gerald.

I use the word 'adumbrated' to suggest how industrialism is represented in Gerald while also being obscured, 'overshadowed' by its representation in this way. An illustration of this can be provided by Chapter IX, 'Coal-Dust', in which Gerald battles to check the protests of his mare in the presence of the oncoming train at the railway crossing. The scene, juxtaposing two modes of transport, readily suggests the conflict between the modern industrial world and the remnants of an earlier age: the horse, echoing the world of the stagecoach, is confronted with the railway, the classic symbol of man's industrial triumph over nature. The opposing forces are nicely expressed: 'The mare rebounded like a drop of water from hot iron' (110). As for Gerald himself, though seated on the horse, he is unmistakably associated with the unremitting power of the locomotive. His very face appears metallic: 'glistening', 'shining', 'sharpened'; and he controls the horse 'magnetically', 'with an almost mechanical relentlessness' (110-11). More than the train itself, Gerald exemplifies the idea of industrialism's immense power, remorselessly annexing all that comes into contact with it. The horse too eventually submits to behaving 'mechanically', having become 'encompassed' by Gerald (111-12). It is this pervasive, all-encompassing quality, however, which is problematic for the text's representation of industrialism. Industry is presented as remorselessly destructive and as conquering all before it: whether materially, in terms of the colliers; aesthetically, as regards the colliery

towns; or ideologically, as with the capitalist, Gerald. The fearsome invincibility of this monster would appear to allow only two feasible positions to be adopted towards it: submission or flight. Gerald takes the first option and, in a different manner, so does Gudrun, while Ursula and Birkin choose the latter, deciding to escape their jobs and live on Birkin's private income. The problem here is that, while neither Gerald's wholehearted embrace of modern capitalist values nor Gudrun's similar enchantment with modern aesthetic ideas^[39] provide any detailed perspective on that modern industrial world to which they are supposed to be responding, the flight of Ursula and Birkin supplies just as little illumination. One position is immersed in a crude apology for industrialism, blandly dismissing any reservations about it, such as those expressed by Birkin in 'In the Train'; and the other rejects wholesale 'the dying organic form of social mankind' (132), and seeks to cut free from it altogether. In fact, both positions involve Birkin's maxim: 'chop the world down to fit yourself' (205). Such a truncated view of an unresponsive world may well aid the sense of ontological security of an individual within it, but it also cuts short any account of just how this supposed breach between man and his world has come about.

Both Birkin's strategy of chopping down the world and the author's technique of representing it as the individual writ large leave a society whose workings are as obscure and enigmatic as the minds of the characters. Thus, in Chapter XVII, 'The Industrial Magnate', the development of the mining industry is presented in terms of the passage from the 'mournful, sympathetic' paternalism of Thomas Crich, whose 'mines were nothing but the clumsy efforts of impure minds' (217, 223), to the 'destructive demon' of his son who, with 'no emotional qualms', establishes 'a new order, ... satisfying in its very destructiveness' (229, 231). The miners themselves, 'reduced to mere mechanical instruments' by Gerald (230), are

similarly reduced by the text to a barely sentient organism, blindly awaiting somebody to give it direction. We may begin to see how the representation of society in terms of the individual, while suggesting the private self as a social phenomenon, also allows for a countermovement in which potential social analysis is abridged to the arbitrary idiosyncrasies of a particular character. Hence, while able to enrich the depiction of society, as with the striking interplay of Birkin and Gerald in 'In the Train', this method of characterisation can just as easily impoverish it, as in 'The Industrial Magnate'. Indeed, much (though not all) of *Women in Love* represents an attempt to blot out society altogether, either by dissolving it into the individual (most notably Gerald), or attenuating it as the vague background to the self-exile of Ursula and Birkin. This means that society's organisation and value-system, which the text avowedly opposes, are somewhat obscured: the text, in effect, shields its own targets. Criticism of the social formation is curtailed by the text's refusal to incorporate society in any other way than as something to be set in opposition to, and to be abandoned by, the free individual.

Regarding 'The Industrial Magnate', although drawn from historical events and outwardly concerning the collieries, it seems clear that Lawrence, in fact, is not really interested in the actualities of the mining industry (details, for example, of how the miners work and of the issues causing industrial dispute are minimal and vague), and certainly not concerned to produce a blow-by-blow history of the industry. In fact, the ultimate concern of the novel in general necessitates a privation of society and of history.^[40] The text's ideology is grounded on an assumption of the primacy of the individual; that in a chaotic world it is still the individual human being who can provide the best model for an integrated, coherent world, and that society is (or should be) merely the aggregate term for independent individuals pursuing their own

interests. The text's own historical moment, however, would appear to deny such individualism. At the time of *Women in Love*'s composition the idea of the sovereign perfection of the human individual was becoming increasingly untenable: Darwinian theory was gaining widespread acceptance, Freud's writing on the unconscious revealed a divided and contradictory self; society was assuming an increasingly collectivised existence (and self-destruction) with the emergence of monopolistic, mass industries, the first 'total war', and revolutionary class-action. Of course, much of this is detectable in *Women in Love* - in the quasi-Freudian indeterminacy of the characters, for instance, and the intensification of the labour process in 'The Industrial Magnate'. Even so, the text incorporates all this in a way that does not threaten the sovereignty of the individual.

A striking example of the perceived threat to this individuality occurs near the end of 'The Industrial Magnate'. Gerald, having perfected the profitability of the mines, effectively renders himself redundant. Dispossessed of a job, he is bereft of a sense of his own identity:

once or twice lately, when he was alone in the evening and had nothing to do, he had suddenly stood up in terror, not knowing what he was. ... He had to keep himself in reckoning with the world of work and material life. And it became more and more difficult, such a strange pressure was upon him, as if the very middle of him were a vacuum, and outside were an awful tension. (232-3)

This would seem to be an acknowledgement that we are what we are, to some extent at least, because of what society makes us or allows us to be. Indeed, here the 'outside' world is all-powerful and the separate individual reduced to an empty shell. This attestation to Gerald's lack of autonomy is, however, only incidental to an attempt to preserve the possibility and exemplariness of the autonomous individual.

To this purpose the text's ambiguous conflation of society and individual comes into play. The nullity felt by Gerald can be seen simply as the inevitable effect of the spiritual emptiness of the industrial system that has engulfed him. But, on the other hand, that system's previous absorption within the character of Gerald consequently denies its nature as something preter-personal. Its historicity, as something which initially accentuated, but which now restricts, human individuality, is obliterated by the figure of the individual itself. Furthermore, conspicuously external to this tangled nexus of Gerald and industrial society is the mercurial Birkin. Amid Gerald's crisis we are told that only Birkin can keep 'the fear definitely off him', but that even then, 'Gerald must always come away from Birkin, as from a church service, back to the outside real world of work and life' (232). Whereas Gerald defines himself in terms of his *connection with* society, Birkin is defined in *contrast to* society. He inhabits a place that is spiritually apart from 'ordinary' life. This juxtaposition of the destructiveness of being within society with the possibility of existing peacefully outside it allows the relationship of individual and society to be presented not as a matter of fact, but as a problem. The idea of individuality as something determined by the choices and opportunities that we do or do not take, offered to us on the basis of our position in society, and from a complex network of such choices and opportunities allowed and limited by the society we live in, is superannuated by a more rudimentary individualism: one that is to be expressed through the single, apparently simple choice of extricating yourself from the dangerous web of society altogether.

Birkin's and Ursula's decision to give up their jobs and depart from society is, with all its unlikeliness, an example of this godlike self-sufficiency which reduces questions of human identity to a facile principle of just being oneself.^[41] The

circularity of this axiom is indicative of the text's rather desperate effort to maintain the myth of the self-governing, self-fulfilling individual. It is doubly necessary, though, for a text which has completely given up on its society and any better form of 'social mankind' (132) emerging from it. The only hope, beyond willing absolute human destruction, is to conjure individuals who are pre-primed with a nature that transcends their society's parameters. Significantly, Lawrence himself, with Frieda, would subsequently pursue a similar course to Ursula and Birkin, in flitting around the world; but, whereas his fictional couple are self-dependent thanks to Birkin's convenient private income, Lawrence remained clearly bound to society by a need to earn money in order to live; and that he chose to do this through writing doubly affirmed his position within an eminently social world, against which he was shaped and 'made' individual.^[42] In contrast, Ursula and Birkin must live in freedom from all such connections and their spontaneous individuality is constructed to allow them to do so.

However, the problem the text faces here is that in removing the 'background' of society you remove the very thing that makes an individual 'individual'. Far from being a bold assertion of personal identity, such a rupture between individual and society only threatens to obliterate identity altogether. The fact that this is apparent in the newly redundant Gerald, for example, attests to the text's Janus-faced nature - perpetuating a myth of spontaneously generated individuality while conceding its insufficiencies. It is as though Lawrence, writing in a condition of antipathy to society, creates an account of individuality as a means of fortifying himself, only for that account to risk buckling under the pressure of circumstances that he remained inevitably within, and of the world to which he continued to exist in relation. The text is imbued with this contradictory drive that

seeks to marginalise the wider social world but which merely succeeds in drawing attention to it. This is nowhere more apparent than at the novel's close, with Birkin and Ursula, having already shed their jobs, now shorn of their only friends, Gudrun and Gerald. The release from these ties brings no corresponding sense of freedom, only an impression of emptiness. This feeling of having missed out, rather than of finding a successful way out, is displayed in Birkin's grief at the death of Gerald; and it is more than one man that has been lost: the loss of Gerald figures for the loss of society which permeates the final scene. Here we are given the lovers' 'world', buried away in Birkin's cottage, simply as a dialogue between the couple, devoid of any physical detail. The resultant effect of bickering, disembodied voices is curiously appropriate to two lives set aimlessly adrift from everything except an acute and acutely confused sense of self. Thus the immanence of the social world is felt in its palpable absence. And yet, self-destructive modern society has been marked all along as the very thing that must be escaped if fulfilment is to be found; so the mood of the text's conclusion, which implicitly yearns for a more concretely social world, appears rather contradictory; and Birkin, who explicitly defends the principle of a union with Gerald, would seem to justify Ursula's censure of his 'perversity' (481).

This point has been taken up by, among others, Peter Widdowson, and I broadly agree with his perceptive analysis of the novel's ending:

just at the moment of the novel's closure, Birkin, it would seem, 'recognises' the flaw in the ideology of liberal individualism: that it is both impossible and futile to live *without* - in both senses of the word - social being. What the novel points up, by thus running so close to the extremity of its own ideology, is the latter's ultimate inadequacy. ... He *cannot* have a relationship with 'Society' *and* be a free individual, and in any event Society is doomed by the terms of its own definition in the novel - its inherent deathliness. Ursula, of course, is right: it is 'a theory, a perversity, false, impossible'

in respect of the 'world' the novel has proposed; but the novel at that moment recognises its own awesome negative logic, and flinches. When Birkin says 'I don't believe that', he (Lawrence? the novel?) is rejecting the entire fiction that has preceded the statement.^[43]

I would qualify this only by saying that it is not quite the 'entire fiction' that is denied: throughout the text there runs an underlying sceptical attitude towards (its own) suggested notions of the divisibility of the personal and the social, and the possibility of free individuals leaving society behind. Earlier, for example, Birkin himself meets Gerald's convenient pigeonholing of women's private and social selves with the admonition: 'Don't you laugh so pleasantly till you're out of the wood' (103). This guarded maxim suggests the complexity of the nexus of individual and society, and the text's difficulty in formulating a credible and coherent response to its own questioning of the implications of modern society for the individual. Birkin's final 'I don't believe that' echoes this in that it resists Ursula's claim that a union with Gerald/society is necessarily 'false, impossible', while pointedly *not* saying just how Birkin *does* believe such a union might be brought about (481). His statement, then, is less a rejection of all that has preceded than it is a reaffirmation of the text's paradoxical vision: one that pleads the necessity of an escape from society and yet simultaneously harbours suspicions as to its desirability, and even to its possibility. It is also worth adding that although Ursula is largely 'right', 'in respect of the "world" the novel has proposed', to dismiss Birkin's hankering after a further union, her alternative is equally unsatisfactory. What she offers is a romantic relationship with Birkin in which they are hermetically sealed from any need or desire for contact with the outside world. Thus she demands of him: 'Why aren't I enough? ... You are enough for me. I don't want anybody else but you' (481). This kind of seclusion is

exactly what the text has previously railed against, or at any rate, what Birkin has, with the narrative voice in tacit agreement. We might be reminded of his aversion to a world seen as 'a whole community of mistrustful couples':

The way they shut their doors, these married people, and shut themselves in to their own exclusive alliance with each other, even in love, disgusted him. ... insulated in private houses or private rooms, always in couples, and no further life, no further immediate, no disinterested relationship admitted (199)

The prospective life envisaged by Ursula differs only in that, by the end of the novel, any sense of community is so remote that there only remain themselves to mistrust.

Of course, this vastly reduced horizon of human experience is all that the text as a whole seems able to offer too, as a direct consequence of its reaction against the same perceived narrowness of the 'community'. Thus, from several directions, the text runs itself into a *cul-de-sac*. Ursula and Birkin make their escape from society, but what is left for them now? Earlier, Birkin has declared: 'we will wander about on the face of the earth, ... and we'll look at the world beyond just this bit' (362). This appears still to be their intention, according to the note of temporariness struck by the introduction to the final scene: 'Ursula stayed at the Mill with Birkin for a week or two' (481). However, this closing glimpse of the couple, shut away at the mill-house, retrospectively casts an unconvincing light on the previous rhetoric of liberation; and, more detached from the world than Lawrence himself ever was upon his own travels, it is hard to see them gaining anything like the same self-liberating experience, given that such experience necessitates some relation to the world that they have disposed of as an irrelevance. In this, the text markedly differs from a long tradition of stories, from that of Moses to *Star Wars*, in which individual flight from an unjust society is only the prelude to an inevitable return to try to create a better one.^[44] Such stories

recognise the final insufficiency of a life 'outside' society and that individual fulfilment requires the framework provided by a wider social milieu. As suggested above, *Women in Love* also cannot help hinting at these same things; but, even so, it cannot explicitly countenance contact with the social world it envisages, still less contemplate its rehabilitation. This results in the text having to turn a temporary expedient (exiting society) into a fudged solution, for which the myth of the self-sufficient individual is necessary to dodge the full negative implications of such isolation. But, of course, it is the same idea of individual sovereignty that has helped drive the text towards this dead end in the first place. The vicious circle of proposing the problem as its own answer is only challenged by the text's lack of faith in itself. The lonely figures at the end of the novel, exuding an air of defeat and patent loss of direction, appear as travesties of what the text may otherwise wish to claim for the capabilities of the individual.

But, in one way, it is very apt that Ursula and Birkin end the novel in the place which they do. The converted mill-house, originally a place of work and production, has become a domestic residence. It is, therefore, a fitting symbol for a novel that either omits the need to produce or, as with Gerald, represents it as something to be escaped from. This evasion of labour is apparent when Birkin begins furnishing the mill in Chapter XII, 'Carpeting'. A sharp distinction is made between the value of 'doing' and that of simply 'being'. Hermione, who measures the rooms, and Mrs Salmon, who prepares tea, are presented as possessed of a paltry nervous energy in their 'gaiety' at having 'something to do' (136). For Hermione, it 'was a great joy to her to *do* things, and to have the ordering of the job' (137). Ursula, by contrast, 'hated the palaver Hermione made, she wanted to drink tea, she wanted anything but this fuss and business' (138). The pejorative context given to words such

as 'job' and 'business' indicates just how completely the novel rejects the world of work and production. Ursula's and Birkin's highest purpose is simply to 'be', which is just as well, considering that withdrawing from society leaves them nothing at all to do.

One of the most striking things about the text's notion of individuality is its proposal that some people are more individual than others. 'We are all different and unequal in spirit', Birkin tells Hermione at Breadalby (103), adding that this principle, as opposed to democracy, should form the foundation of a new state. This suggests a non-cooperative, wholly alienated anarchism which, reflecting the alienation already diagnosed in society, and not altering its economic relations beyond a desultory redistribution of the 'world's goods' (104), would presumably result in reproducing much the same social formation. The origin and nature of our spiritual differences are left undefined. But there is a definite value judgement within the text, working upon these supposed differences, and the outcome is a division between those good few spirits possessed of a distinct individuality - who include, in different ways, the four central characters - and the crass multitude of others, characterised as skulking together in groups, amorphous and half-mindless, who - like the 'common' couple in 'A Chair' - are present mainly as objects of the former set's perceptions. Although no clear reason is given as to how this division has come about, its form is readily identifiable with the class divide in capitalist society, given a Romantic/liberal gloss: a select band of 'enlightened' (and generally middle-class) individuals are the only hope of regenerating a world and its insensible populace (who, just coincidentally, are poor) from an oppression and decay essentially spiritual in character. But even this faint hint of a Fabian-type of social reform is overwhelmed by the novel's unbending anti-collective ethos, with Ursula and Birkin seeking their own better life and

abandoning the *canaille* to a policy of everybody for themselves. It is also the case that the absence of any real explanation for the present social formation corresponds to capitalism's own silence, which implies 'things are as they are and that is that', and suggests the vagaries of chance as an apology for the necessary fact of the majority's deprivation.

But if Lawrence's philosophy works as a defence of hierarchical social formations, it is far from uncritical of contemporary capitalism. In his well-known letter to Russell of 15 July 1915, Lawrence, recognising the malaise of capitalist society, recommended a good dose of aristocracy:

The idea of giving power to the hands of the working class is *wrong*. ... There must be a body of chosen patricians. ... The whole must culminate in an absolute *Dictator*, and an equivalent *Dictatrix*.^[45]

This is, perhaps, not so much outright reaction as it is misconceived radicalism. It resembles Ursula's call in *The Rainbow* for an 'aristocracy of birth' to replace the current 'aristocracy of money'.^[46] And the aristocracy that Ursula envisages and sees herself as belonging to is not so much of the feudal variety as of a Nietzschean type, whereby, supposedly, society benefits from exceptional individuals shattering the petty prejudices of the 'herd'.^[47] Lawrence, then, is not merely yearning nostalgically for the old aristocracy, but he is, I think, searching for an image of individual freedom once offered but now rescinded by capitalism. Hence *The Rainbow*'s contrast of the essentially servile 'children of men' and the free and aristocratic 'Sons of God'.^[48]

In *Women in Love* this scheme of things persists in a much more pessimistic form - unsurprisingly, perhaps, when it has to take into account a real world where the masses volunteer for their own destruction before the leaders

conscript them for the same purpose. However, in Ursula's harsh treatment of Skrebensky in the earlier novel and Gerald's suppression of the colliers, for instance, there is a comparable self-justified licence and lack of compunction. Qualities such as these point up some remarkable similarities with another radical aristocracy, that of the Marquis de Sade. Whereas Sade's 'Unique Beings'^[49] are emblematic of the energies of liberation (and oppression) unleashed by the bourgeois revolution of eighteenth-century France, Lawrence's 'Sons of God' can be seen as a call to revive the same forces in early twentieth-century England. Both systems divorce their heroes from an anthropomorphic God and ally them instead to a more pantheistic vision that abrogates any feeling of responsibility to the 'unenlightened masses' - expressed in Sade as an apology for terrorism and in Lawrence in Birkin's and Ursula's removal from society. Again, both subscribe to a view of the world as being driven by a dialectical process of destruction and creation, whereby that which destroys is held useful and necessary in order to allow Nature to create again, in new and better forms: for Sade this justifies murder, and in 'The Industrial Magnate' it perhaps explains some of the fervour in the account of Gerald's perfection of a deathly industrial world.^[50]

The underlying resemblance between the aristocrats of Sade and Lawrence is perceptible from an essay by Maurice Blanchot. Blanchot is writing of the tyrannical nature of the Unique Being, but he might easily be describing Ursula's self-asserting obliteration of the spiritually dead Skrebensky or Gerald's conquest of the submissive colliers:

For the Unique Person, all men are equal in their nothingness, and the Unique One, by reducing them to nothing, simply clarifies and demonstrates this nothingness. ... the creatures he encounters ... are less than things, less than shades. And when

he torments and destroys them he is not wresting away their lives but verifying their nothingness, establishing his authority over their non-existence, and from this he derives his greatest satisfaction.^[51]

But after all, such delirious negation could never alone satisfy the world of *Women in Love*. Indeed, 'great man' ('Magnate') though he is, Gerald's rule must strictly be temporary, as he himself is part of the deadly machine world that inevitably destroys itself; and Ursula's youthful violence is largely absent from her characterisation in the second novel. It is of course this quite different Ursula and, perhaps especially, Birkin, who are the real aristocrats of *Women in Love*. Nevertheless, the contrast to their Sadean counterparts is just as revealing as any similarity. The older standard-bearers of individualism and liberty may inspire fear and abhorrence, but they also represent an awareness of limitless potential and the power to realise it. Ursula and Birkin, on the other hand, far from authoritatively establishing their own world, are dispossessed - having to 'live in the chinks' left to them by others (361). The reason for this retreat surely lies in the differences between the two writers' historical moments: Sade is writing in a time and place of revolutionary energy, during a vigorous declaration of bourgeois individualism; Lawrence's novel emerges from a world in which a stagnating economy has propelled its country into a war of mass destruction, and where the Defence of the Realm Act and the Military Service Act confirm the current expendability of basic individual freedoms.

Hardly surprising, then, that the figure of the free individual subject is no longer looked upon with awe, but instead with something closer to pity. That this is detectable in the text's individualistic ideology is testimony to the fact that, although running against the grain of a reality which rejects such individualism as unworkable, it is not so naïve or fanciful as to ignore it entirely. There is actually a good deal of

worldliness apparent in one tacit criterion for Lawrence's individuals: that of possessing money. It is easier to live as a free, self-sufficient person when you have financial independence, either through owning a string of coal-mines or having a private income. In 1914, Lawrence had written more openly of the connection between individuality and economic security in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, in which he also suggested society could be altered to enable drastic cuts to the working day, thus allowing people time for self-actualisation.^[52] The less optimistic period of *Women in Love*, however, sees hopes of social change largely discarded, and a perceived need for the case to be made for the desirability, even possibility, of the free individual itself.

Unable to commit himself to any political alternative, Lawrence is forced into tortuous ideological manoeuvres which seek to show a clear division of individual from society and, likewise, a 'natural' individualism (in fact a capitalist ideological construction) as an escape from a corrupt modern world (capitalist reality itself). To add to the difficulties, then, in performing this magic trick, is the flat contradiction between the text's insistence on the independence of the individual from society and its compulsion to acknowledge the financial and therefore social situation of its characters. Birkin, for instance, on first telling Ursula of his desire to get clear of society, reveals to her that he has a private income of £400 per year (132). This information is required for the purpose of persuading the reader as to the feasibility of Birkin's and Ursula's escape; but to admit to economic necessity is to draw the pair back into a social context, the very thing being revoked. The resulting compromise is an ensuing silence regarding Birkin's money, the effect of which, however, is only to intensify the impression of its fairy-tale unreality, appearing out of nowhere and disappearing again as is convenient. Of course, the text's handling of Birkin's £400

does closely resemble the appearance of the private income in capitalist 'reality': it seems to exist of its own 'natural' volition, the product of nobody's labour, recipient's or otherwise. It is far removed from the more sordid aspects of commerce. This is why, for instance, in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* (1910), the Schlegels, whose private incomes buy them time to be cultured and to indulge the lower classes, can afford a moral superiority to the Wilcoxes' hard-headed businessmen. So too in *Women in Love*, Gerald's collieries firmly associate him with capitalist society, while Birkin's private income is his ticket out of it. But such distinctions are spurious: it is precisely because of businessmen such as Gerald, extracting profits from the exploitation of others, that private incomes can be generated at all.^[53] It might be said, then, that it is the 'deathliness' endured by the masses (such as Gerald's colliers) which provides the material for Birkin's and Ursula's new life. But instead of addressing this apparent confederacy with an industrial world that the text professes to oppose, the text chooses to obscure it. In the end, *Women in Love's* allegiance to (what was once, at least) a major ideological selling point of capitalism - the free individual subject - cannot help but draw the novel, however 'unwillingly', into defending the capitalist system itself. Thus we get what is, more or less, a complete reversal of the philosophy in the *Study*: whereas that work at least suggested that, amongst other things, it is because of possessing money, which obviates the need to work, that some people can achieve self-realisation, *Women in Love* - in glossing over the same factor while emphasising Birkin's essential spiritual difference - can leave the impression that, because he is to a degree already self-realised, he is more deserving of £400 per year than the unconscious majority, who presumably could not put it to such advantage. Plainly, Lawrence's filtering of capitalist ideology through

the second ideological screen of his individualistic philosophy does nothing to remove so typical an apology for the inequalities necessary to capitalism.

I should make clear, here, that I am not simply saying that a commitment, from Lawrence, to socialism would automatically 'rescue' a text otherwise 'doomed' to conservatism. What I am saying is that *Women in Love*'s critique of society is contradictory because of its adherence to individualism, and is severely restricted in some ways as a result. In other ways, however, this contradiction allows for a more perceptive critique than in the first place, and it is this which gives the text its particular appeal. In drawing forth some of the pluses and minuses of this contradictory critique, it is worth looking at another text whose criticism of society succeeds where *Women in Love*'s does not, but which also works in a manner similar to the successes of Lawrence's critique.

Bel-Ami (1885), by Guy de Maupassant, shows, not individuals establishing their individualism outside of society, but a society dominated by individualism, where almost anybody has a chance to make the most of himself (although this involves accruing wealth and social status rather than Ursula's and Birkin's relinquishing of social contact). In one sense, *Bel-Ami* depicts the liberal-individualist dream of a radically 'open' society of social mobility, as Georges Duroy, an ignorant, provincial ex-N.C.O., makes his way to become the rich, sophisticated Baron Du Roy de Cantel. But it is this dream which Maupassant attacks, for, no matter how brutish, talentless and contemptible a person is (and Duroy is all these in great measure), with ambition he may still prosper; on the other hand, hard work and ability guarantee nothing.

One of the most interesting points about *Bel-Ami* is that Maupassant does not simply concentrate on his anti-hero's villainy, but pays rather more attention to

emphasising his success. At the end of the novel, when we might anticipate Duroy to suffer some form of conventional judgement, he achieves his greatest triumph. The magnitude of his success is stressed all the more by what seems a deliberate attempt by Maupassant to increase our expectation of Duroy getting his deserts. Immediately before the concluding scene, we witness one of Duroy's most reprehensible episodes when he savagely beats up his mistress, Clotilde. Far from punishment, however, Duroy meets with the realisation of the fantasy of his earlier, poverty-stricken period: he does indeed marry a wealthy banker's daughter in a coup 'which would realise all his hopes at once'.^[54] This, together with his new status as cynosure of all Paris, and even the promise of a continued affair with the forgiving Clotilde, impresses upon the reader how wonderfully society's anarchic individualism can be made to work for the right (or wrong) person, and, as a consequence, exposes just how terrible is that society. *Bel-Ami*, in fact, works in a manner similar to that identified by Barthes. By focusing on society as it is, with absolutely no suggestion of an alternative to it, the text makes all the stronger a case for needing an alternative in reality. Seeing a world that refuses to see its own rapaciousness makes the reader intensely aware of the need to change it.

Maupassant shows, not only how human relationships are reduced to the mechanics of commercial exchange - what for example, Duroy can gain from marriage to Madame Forestier and *vice versa* - but *emphatically* identifies the indissolubly social nature of personal relations. Duroy's personal life (like that of every character) is clearly intertwined with the social nexus; his (non-)working and societal careers can be plotted directly via his encountering his erstwhile army comrade, Forestier; his subsequent marriage to, and then divorce of, Forestier's widow; and his final wedding to Mademoiselle Walter. Taking the opposite line to

Lawrence, Maupassant illustrates that there can be no purely personal relationship between two people, mediated outside of society, but that all relationships are tainted with society. And we see that individualism, even of the most alienated kind, is something that occurs within society, and is only meaningful within that context: it cannot be, as advocated by *Women in Love*, a possible alternative to society, because it is a defining feature of this society itself.

The impossibility of such an escape beyond society is impressed all the more by *Bel-Ami*'s realisation of society's omnipresence. In Duroy's rise from squalid workers' lodgings, through the sleaze of political journalism, to the dominating corruption of high finance, we gain a real sense of the extent of society's duplicities, its hidden poverty, sham morality, and superficial respectability. Lawrence's representation of society, on the other hand, in the psychology of Gerald, involves an immediate circumscription of society. To the extent that they are not Gerald, Ursula and Birkin are outside of society from the start, and, hence, breaking with society is presented as not only desirable, but also as the easiest thing to do. As a consequence, *Women in Love* lacks the explicit intensity of *Bel-Ami*'s sense of the great need for social change - which is generated precisely because Maupassant makes no attempt to suggest there could be an alternative to social life: society, in some form or another, is where individuals must live. Thus, in a reverse of Ursula's and Birkin's trajectory, Duroy's personal dissatisfaction with the world, early on in the novel, when he is unemployed and penniless, is ended by his further immersion within society and by his social success. In *Women in Love* this is the route taken by Gerald, who is a success in terms of his job, social status and wealth. But, for Lawrence, such worldly achievements are rated at less than zero. Gerald's social success only signifies his lack of independent being, and dooms him as just another of society's automata. Unlike

Women in Love, *Bel-Ami* acknowledges the value of the material life, that material ease and the obtaining of pleasure are worthwhile things to strive for. The problem is that these things are often not merited by the people who have them most, and *Bel-Ami* depicts the irrational way in which wealth and pleasure are apportioned. Most importantly, it shows that at the heart of this irrationality lies the philosophy of liberal individualism. Describing a world in which everybody must look out for themselves, *Bel-Ami* shows how this philosophy of freedom, which Lawrence so cherishes, works through oppression and coercion to support those people in positions of power and those who are ready to exploit others.

Maupassant shows clearly what it means to be on either side of this division of power. Near the novel's beginning, we find the penniless Duroy observing the café-dwellers of Paris with resentment:

he looked at the men sitting drinking at the tables, all of them able to quench their thirst as and when they pleased. He walked briskly on past the cafés with a jaunty air, summing up at a glance, by their appearance or their dress, the amount of money each of them was likely to have in his pockets. And he was seized by a feeling of anger against all those people sitting there so contentedly.^[55]

We again see this gaze of the marginalised at the end of the novel, only this time reversed, as the rich and successful 'Du Roy' steps out of the church on his wedding day: 'The people of Paris were watching him and envying him.'^[56] This reversal of the envious gaze and object of envy marks the comprehensiveness with which *Bel-Ami* displays society's basic contradiction, as we move from life in the invisible, unacknowledged abyss of poverty, to the ostentatious display of society's success.

In *Women in Love*, although we see both these sides to society, the novel's main protagonists, Ursula and Birkin, are never located firmly in relation to either.

Ursula and Birkin wash their hands of the poverty which they see around them, but they also feel no attraction for, and do not properly fit in with, the more ostentatiously affluent milieu in the novel. As the Brangwens arrive at Willey Water, for instance, in Chapter XIV, for the Crich family's 'Water-Party', we are told: 'on the highroad, some of the common people were standing along the hedge, looking at the festivity beyond, enviously, like souls not admitted to paradise' (157-8). This is the same gaze as in *Bel-Ami*, of those who lack, and want to have. It is never a part of Ursula's or Birkin's nature, not particularly because they are admitted to this wealthier world, but because they have as much scorn for it as is implied for 'the common people' who are taken in by what is evidently a fools' 'paradise'. Ursula and Birkin neither gaze enviously upon bourgeois society, nor comfortably reside as cynosures within it. Ursula is always happiest away from this world of upper-middle-class self-celebration, alone, 'peaceful and sufficient unto herself ... at the centre of her own universe' (165); Birkin can play along with displays of middle-class charm and civility, but he is never entirely at ease, 'with his affected social grace, that somehow was never *quite* right' (158). The only thing which does seem '*quite* right' for Birkin and Ursula is the final limbo which they inhabit at the mill. The final absence of the world beyond Ursula and Birkin only makes explicit the social dislocation that is implicit all along.

But because of this total remove from society and that which it *can* offer, *Women in Love* is impeded in criticising what present society cannot offer and how it fails. Maupassant shows Duroy, the individualist, thriving *within* a world of rampant individualism, and shows that this liberal individualism is synonymous with capitalist social destructiveness. Although this kinship of destruction and individualism is apparent in *Women in Love*, in Gerald's deathly entrepreneurialism, the text refuses to

acknowledge it. Instead, Gerald, who would appear to fit the liberal individualist ideology perfectly, is represented as opposed to it. Lawrence's escape route, here, is the prioritisation of 'being' over 'doing': Gerald's inner essence (or lack of one), as a mere appendage to industrial society, is deemed predominant over his existence as an entrepreneurial businessman, revolutionising his mining business, and remaking it in his own image. The text thus uses the deadening social phenomenon of Gerald's enterprise to emphasise in contrast the vital individualism of Birkin and Ursula; an individualism which is beyond social processes, outside the realm of economic production. This is the text's defining contradiction: it can only rescue liberal individualism in a form that entirely empties it of its purpose. And, paradoxically, this *cul-de-sac* after all provides a potential route beyond current social values, although in a different way than originally intended. The very implausibility of *Women in Love*'s alternative to society reduces that alternative to as much of an absence as the actually absent alternative in *Bel-Ami*; and, as with Maupassant's novel, this palpable absence of any real opposition to such a destructive society insists on the need for it in reality.

So, if an apology for capitalist hierarchies is suggested by the text's own hierarchies, then the apology is contradicted by what the text reveals: a pair of middle-class dropouts with little to show for their money. This divergence of what is claimed for the individual and what is actually shown is a major contributor to the text's openness; it is, then, an openness resulting in part from the attempt to enclose the individual from society. The paradoxical effect of this drive towards closure is evident in the text's many intellectual discussions - if 'discussion' is an accurate term for what, instead of an exchange of ideas, more usually amounts to egoistic self-projection and unshakeable opinion-airing which simply disregard any opposing argument. In Chapter II, 'Shortlands', for example, there is a debate about nationality

and patriotism. Hermione argues that these things are reducible to commercial rivalries that may lead to further antagonism; Gerald maintains such rivalries are 'necessary incentives to production and improvement', and introduces an analogy in defence of the importance of private property:

If I go and take a man's hat from off his head, that hat becomes a symbol of that man's liberty. When he fights me for his hat, he is fighting me for his liberty. (29)

Birkin, who has been steering his own course between these two characters, then takes up the analogy to argue that the opposite is true - that property and liberty are quite different things:

surely it is open to me to decide, which is a greater loss to me, my hat, or my liberty as a free and indifferent man. If I am compelled to offer fight, I lose the latter. It is a question which is worth more to me, my pleasant liberty of conduct, or my hat. (29)

The discussion peters out with frivolous jokes about 'old hat' and the like, which is, after all, more in keeping with the occasion, a wedding reception; but the way that significant topics are raised (national rivalry in the time of an imperialist war, property during a period of social unrest) and contrary positions drawn, only for little subsequent development and an abrupt end, is typical of the characters' succeeding discussions. Also relevant here, to the novel's disputatious dialogue in general, is an objection Hermione makes to the metaphorical style of argument, asking Gerald of his 'hat': 'But that way of arguing by imaginary instances is not supposed to be genuine, is it?' (29). Hermione has a point: analogies may provide persuasive illustrations but they do not really prove anything without a sound argument to establish a fact in the first place. Yet, remarkably, arguments in *Women in Love* (particularly those of

Birkin) often hang upon analogies alone. There is little concrete reasoning to be developed even if attendant characters were conducive to doing so. This lack of synthesis conforms to the schema of the isolated, independent individual and, in particular, as we are drawn into his interior deliberations, helps to set Birkin apart from the world he is to leave behind. I suggested earlier how some of Birkin's observations, based upon personal experience which we are not always privy to, are made rather difficult to refute; but, for the same reason, it is rather easy to repudiate them: closed off from the dialectic of social exchange, Birkin's vision remains largely insulated from the critical probing of other characters, at the cost of also being cut off from the opportunity of directly answering these criticisms. Consequently, the text does not, indeed cannot, convince the reader to accept Birkin's philosophy unhesitatingly. And it is this chasm between different viewpoints which questions the authority of Birkin's more than any opposing view itself. The same applies to the other characters, as the lack of a real interaction of ideas (between the protagonists, not in the reader's response) leaves a plurality of competing perspectives.

If we return to Chapter IX, 'Coal-Dust', and Gerald reining in his horse, we find another example rendered not only in dialogue but also from a more strikingly dramatic tableau. The scene's power and the scene itself is generated by the three different perspectives of its audience; the most significant, ostensibly, being those of Ursula and Gudrun. Ursula, acutely aware of the mare's terror and its physical suffering from Gerald's spurs, spontaneously adopts a position of humane outrage at the perceived brutality: "“And she's bleeding! - She's bleeding!” cried Ursula, frantic with opposition and hatred of Gerald' (112). She goes on to tell the crossing's gatekeeper: 'He's a fool, and a bully. Does he think it's manly, to torture a horse? It's a living thing, why should he bully it and torture it?' (113). This perhaps most closely

resembles the reader's own intuitive moral response, a response further encouraged by apparently authorial comments on the episode's ugliness: 'It was a repulsive sight' (111). A problem arises, however, in that for Gudrun the same ugliness is a source of strange attraction. What Gudrun experiences here is less immediately transparent than in her sister; it is a more unthinking, passionate reaction (which in Lawrence often signifies a deeper, fundamental truth). The sight of the horse, we are told, twirling around from the counterpoised forces of its own fear and Gerald's constraint, 'made Gudrun faint with poignant dizziness, which seemed to penetrate to her heart' (111). After Gerald rides away and the sisters continue their walk home, the impression left upon Gudrun becomes more definite:

Gudrun was as if numbed in her mind by the sense of indomitable soft weight of the man, bearing down into the living body of the horse: the strong, indomitable thighs of the blond man clenching the palpitating body of the mare into pure control; a sort of soft white magnetic domination from the loins and thighs and calves, enclosing and encompassing the mare heavily into unutterable subordination, soft blood-subordination, terrible. (113)

Gerald's demonstration of power is both terrible and alluring, with the language clearly suggesting the sexual nature of the attraction. Bearing in mind Gudrun's general feistiness, this cannot simply be awe of the dominant male; it rather appears that she identifies with the use of that dominating power in a case of vicarious sadistic pleasure. This corresponds with the fascination subsequently expressed for the 'foul kind of beauty' of the colliery town (115), and its inhabitants who all possess 'a secret sense of power, and of inexpressible destructiveness' (118). Furthermore, it is consistent with the text's recurring sadistic suggestion of the necessity of perfect destruction, whether in Birkin's vision of a humanless future or in Gerald's flawlessly

oppressive industrialism. In short, it is not so easy as it might first appear to decide which of these two quite separate, discordant perspectives is authoritative - or, in fact, whether either is.

There is one more viewpoint which, although easy to neglect because of its sparseness, is significant in its contrast with its more contentious counterparts. The gatekeeper's account is without any moral or emotional dimension and carefully refuses to join in Ursula's conjecture as to Gerald's psychological motives for treating the horse so harshly. After some thought he replies to her prompts:

I expect he's got to train the mare to stand to anything A pure-bred Harab - not the sort of breed as is used to round here - different sort from our sort altogether. They say as he got her from Constantinople. (113)

Superficially, this seems no more than tactful chit-chat. But, in the midst of Ursula's and Gudrun's metaphysical transports, it is worth being reminded of more mundane considerations. What the unpretentious gatekeeper does is to refocus the episode (seen by the artistic Gudrun as 'like a vision isolated in eternity' [112]) within a social context. The horse is not just the natural 'sensitive creature' that Ursula takes it for - it is also a cultural object, inextricably bound to the human world, bred for commercial reasons and purchased as a status symbol. Neither is Gerald's behaviour *necessarily* the manifestation of his own 'indomitable' will, as Gudrun instinctively feels it to be. As the gatekeeper points out, a new horse has to be broken in; and this is the general rule for all inhabitants of the modern world. To borrow Birkin's metaphor, it is a world which ruthlessly chops things down to fit it, including Gerald himself. In their perception of events by the railway-crossing, Ursula and Gudrun present a version of Birkin's somewhat solipsistic solution to this problem by chopping down the world to

fit themselves; and, as with Birkin's prescription, I think it is intended that the reader find an authoritative reading of the scene within these two viewpoints. Yet, for all that they dominate the passage, both views cannot help but implicitly suggest the same unsatisfactory narrowness of perspective as Birkin's philosophy. Indeed, these intensely personal reactions may well have threatened to tilt the scene into melodrama if not for the restraining check of the gatekeeper's view. It seems to me that this is the main intended purpose of the third account - to provide the sisters' flights of fancy with a degree of prosaic ballast - but which is, however, only fulfilled at the expense of unintentionally destabilising the cynosure of Ursula and Gudrun. Wider social realities, which the sisters' viewpoints close out, to the point of creating an isolated experience of one man and his horse, are allowed back in through the gatekeeper's resolutely non-personalised review of events. This in turn allows a 'subversive' reading of Ursula and Gudrun as not constituting *the* choice to be made (as the text would have it) between humane values and the fulfilment of destruction respectively, but merely two equally fallible attitudes within a much broader field of contention. In effect, the text's individualistic ideology, here expressed in the sisters' separate, isolated perspectives, creates a potential formal weakness in risking an excess of sensationalism. The counterbalance found in the matter-of-fact gatekeeper, however, only raises further difficulties for the ideology itself, threatening to explode the polarised finitude of the sisters' views against the societal backdrop of a vaster, more complex array of possibilities. And thus the spurious 'open-endedness' of Ursula and Gudrun becomes truly open in spite of itself.

One of the sharpest illustrations of the way the text inadvertently throws open divergent readings and re-shackles 'free' spontaneous individualism to an irrepressible social reality occurs soon afterwards in the same chapter. Further on their

walk home the sisters are watched by two workmen mending a road. The fact that the perspective shifts here to accommodate the men's point of view suggests that we should indulge their 'sinister' (114) appraisal of the sisters somewhat more than the women themselves reasonably might. Their brief discussion concerns their valuation of the sisters' (especially Gudrun's) sexual attractiveness. The elder man looks lustfully at Gudrun and declares he would give a week's wages in exchange for five minutes with her; but the younger man sees and thinks differently, looking at the sisters 'objectively, as if he wished to calculate what there might be, that was worth his week's wages', before deciding he would rather keep his money (115). It is probable that in the contrasting attitudes Lawrence is making a point about the atrophy of sensual passion in newer generations and, in so doing, suggesting the pervading degeneracy of the modern world. A similar argument is made in Lawrence's later, unreliably nostalgic essay, '[Return to Bestwood]': Lawrence laments how, in his youth, the miners were possessed of 'a strange power of life', and filled with 'the zest and the wildness of life'; but the miners of his own generation, he contends, are piteous ghostlike creatures, filled only 'with a sort of hopelessness'.^[57] There appears to be a corresponding lack of aspiration in the younger road-mender, who clings timidly to the idea of the wages allotted him, an acquiescent cog in the deadening industrial machine. Similarly, the elder man is suggestive of a better world where 'the zest and the wildness of life' are accorded some worth. In his tacit rejection of wage-slavery for a more highly-valued experience of physical passion he forms part of the text's criticism of modern (in)sensibility. However, comparatively attractive though his virility may be, his attitude remains as enmeshed within the confines of capitalism as that of his apathetic workmate. Once again the pressure of society forces itself in through the back door, with the same gesture that promises to

transcend the value-system of the market simultaneously entangling him up in it: he can only assign Gudrun (or five minutes with her) a value in monetary terms - this measure is, after all, the socially recognised standard. The man's attitude might be meant to be seen as laudable, but it remains cast entirely within the realities it supposedly rebels against: they cannot be got away from or changed simply through a different state of mind. And here once more, the text's frustrated drive to assert the transcendence of individuals' passions over the mechanical social system results in contradictory readings. Yes, we can view the elder road-mender as representative of a liberating, self-assured sensuality, but, on the other hand, his scope for expressing it is 'naturally' confined to the market conventions that reduce human relationships to mere exchanges of commodities (after all, he does begin by asking his workmate of Gudrun, 'What price that, eh?' [114]). In this vacillation the elder road-mender provides an appropriate emblem for a text attempting to escape its own milieu and unavoidably failing to do so.

Women in Love's attempted escape from society lies in its essentially idealist and individualistic critique of it. This still allows some genuinely perceptive criticisms of capitalist ideologies, but elsewhere prevents the text from properly engaging with the social realities it opposes. Its implied notion of individuality as something opposed to society, rather than as something produced in society, allows its heroes to turn their backs on society as a ready-made panacea to its corruption. It attempts safely to enclose a new world within the individual; or, at least, within the relationship of Ursula and Birkin. However, all that it can show in the couple's diminished, directionless finale irrevocably shatters this vision. The gulf between what the text claims for the individual and what it shows of it, together with the sheer impossibility of its vision of social destruction, are finally the very failures that enable

it to succeed in a different way. It is its vain struggle against society that makes *Women in Love* such an interesting, pivotal moment in Lawrence's writing. Whereas afterwards, authoritarianism or esoteric mysticism would increasingly shroud this impasse between individual and society, here, the crux of Lawrence's individualism is at its most exposed, and no less so for the text's strategies of shoring it up. By drawing attention to the chinks in the novel's own ideological screen, the novel obliquely reveals the deficiencies of the capitalist framework of which that ideology remains an issue, and so adds an unintentional auxiliary to the text's intentional rejection of industrial capitalism. Instead of accepting Holderness's judgement of the post-societal Ursula and Birkin as 'insignificant',^[58] we should see that their significance derives from demonstrating the very futility of their exit from society. The unseeing tenacity with which they and the text as a whole adhere to individualism, as an oppositional code to the capitalist world, is what finally points up the need to challenge capitalist ideology, besides the material fact of capitalism itself.

NOTES

- [1] Roland Barthes, 'The Poor and the Proletariat' (1957), in *Mythologies* (1957), trans. Annette Lavers (London, Vintage, 1993), p. 40.
- [2] D.H. Lawrence, letters to Bertrand Russell, 24 February 1915 and 19 February 1916, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol II: June 1913-October 1916*, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 294, 546.
- [3] D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 356. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [4] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Thomas Dunlop, 12 July 1916, *Letters: Vol II*, pp. 628-9.
- [5] See Lawrence's essay 'Democracy' (wr. 1919): '[Men have] become automatic units, determined entirely by mechanical law. This is horribly true of modern democracy - socialism, conservatism, bolshevism, liberalism,

republicanism, communism: all alike' (D.H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 81).

- [6] Graham Holderness, *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1982), p. 195.
- [7] Holderness, p. 218.
- [8] Holderness, p. 219.
- [9] Gãmini Salgãdo, 'Taking a Nail for a Walk: on Reading *Women in Love*' (1976), reprinted in Peter Widdowson (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence* (London, Longman, 1992), p. 137.
- [10] In his introduction, Holderness would appear to discount any preference for realism, stating: 'There is no attempt to suggest, however, that realism can claim a monopoly over the artistic representation of reality Realism is as much a literary convention, and as much an ideological representation of reality as any other technique. ... there can be no infallible general laws' (Holderness, pp. 18-19). However, a realist attitude quickly emerges with an immediate assertion of such a general law, in relation to Lawrence's work: 'In the case of Lawrence's fiction, when his novels are located into a specific historical context, it can be seen that realism is always the form of his effort to come to terms with that history; myth, symbol and other non-realist techniques are usually methods of evading, transcending or escaping from it' (Holderness, p. 19). So, it is implied, Lawrence is, at his best, a realist (when he makes the 'effort') and when he disavows realism his work suffers (suggested by the negative implications of 'evading' and 'escaping' history, which are hardly balanced by the equivocal 'transcending'). This dubious pro-realism by proxy - Holderness avowing he is no partisan realist himself, but that Lawrence's work itself suggests a pro-realist argument - is carried through into discussions of specific texts. Here, Holderness seems to contradict entirely his introductory assertion that realism is 'an ideological representation of reality', when he informs us that 'the next stage [after *Sons and Lovers*] (that of *The Rainbow*) represents the most decisive shift away from realism, from tragedy, and from the concrete fictionalisation of history enabled by those forms' (Holderness, p. 174). And when he is called to adjudge what exactly constitutes a 'concrete' representation of history in fiction, it becomes clear that Holderness is begging the question, because he can give little answer beyond 'realism': thus Holderness praises *Sons and Lovers* for being 'dramatised in a realist mode which acknowledges the truly historical character of the tragic conflict [in capitalist society]'; and yet this is 'truly historical' realism, he has previously disclosed, which works through its entire 'omission of the bourgeoisie'! (Holderness, pp. 216, 215.) Furthermore: 'This absence does not call into question the novel's claim to dramatise a comprehensive social totality by the techniques of realism' (Holderness, p. 146). Predictably, perhaps, Holderness denies this social totality to non-realist works, not least when they are guilty of omitting the *working-class*, as with the case of *Women in Love* itself, whose miners are not 'an active agent [or] a participating dramatic presence' (Holderness, p. 212). So it is, that Holderness detracts from his many penetrating insights into Lawrence's work with unnecessary and unconvincing assumptions about

the possibility and importance of 'social totality' in fiction, and about realism's greater potential than other forms to display this.

[11] Holderness, p. 203.

[12] In fact, Holderness spotlights Gerald even more closely than does 'The Industrial Magnate'. 'The chapter opens,' he writes, 'in the account of the sisters' visit to Gerald's former nurse' (Holderness, p. 204), thereby implying that the sisters' presence here is primarily a device for revealing more about Gerald. However, the chapter actually begins by telling of the sisters' 'interval' away from Gerald and Birkin (211). In particular, it tells of Gudrun, who considers her work, her finances and foreign travel. The chapter here establishes a world independent of Gerald, and sets up a contrast of Gudrun's relative creative autonomy and freedom of movement as an artist, with the mechanistic, exploited labour of Gerald's colliers and their confinement to the mines under his industrial system.

[13] Holderness, p. 215.

[14] Holderness, p. 218.

[15] Holderness, p. 219.

[16] Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 40.

[17] See note 9.

[18] Elsewhere in the novel, Hermione and Ursula are used to represent aspects of the 'woman question', but only so as to dispose of it in a similar summary way. With Hermione, the figure of a modern, emancipated woman is articulated only for it to be immediately vilified. Hermione's freedom is entirely spurious and, in agreement with Birkin's reverie, she is able to restore the 'deficiency of being within her' only through dominating a 'neutralised' male (16, 22). Ursula has engaged in 'The Man's World' of work, in *The Rainbow*, but this world is generally omitted in *Women in Love*. Instead, Ursula represents a dubious version of female liberty that is often the complete opposite of contemporary campaigns for political and social rights. In Chapter IV, 'Diver', for example, Gudrun, envious of Gerald's freedom at being able to strip off and swim in the lake, exclaims: 'God, what it is to be a man!' (47). This, together with a subsequent protest at the social restrictions placed upon women, meets with Ursula's 'surprise'; 'she could not understand'; she is 'puzzled' (47, 48). The exchange ends with Ursula's bafflement, having once more presented female aspirations to equality as odd, even perverse. Later, though, in Chapter XIV, 'Water-Party', there is a parallel to Gudrun's cry, 'what it is to be a man!', in Ursula's own exclamation, 'How lovely it is to be free' (165). This time it is the sisters who are swimming in the lake, naked, having rowed in Gerald's canoe beyond the other bathers. Ursula's notion of freedom here is quite different from the freedoms sought by early feminism. It is nothing to do with freedom to work, to vote, and such like, for it is not about exercising the rights of a responsible adult: instead, it involves escaping such responsibilities: 'one of the perfect moments of freedom and delight, such as children alone know' (165). In 'Diver', Gerald's freedom exists, as any meaningful freedom must, in a public context: 'From his separate element he saw them He could see the girls watching him a way off, outside, and that pleased him' (47). In their own bathing, by contrast, the sisters are only so free in so far as they are hidden away from the others: 'Nobody could notice them, or could come up

in time to see them' (164). In this way they anticipate Ursula's and Birkin's 'freedom' from society at the novel's end: one of isolation rather than independence, where they are unrestricted but without anything purposeful to do.

- [19] D.H. Lawrence, '[Germans and English]', in *Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays*, ed. Simonetta de Filippis (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 251.
- [20] D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Introduction and notes by Anne Fernihough (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 322.
- [21] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 322.
- [22] Holderness, p. 203.
- [23] Holderness, p. 215.
- [24] Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1966), pp. 126-7.
- [25] Holderness, p. 215.
- [26] Williams, *Modern Tragedy*, p. 135.
- [27] Williams, *Modern Tragedy*, p. 138.
- [28] Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom* (1795), in *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom and Other Writings*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse, ed. Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (1965; London, Arrow Books, 1991), pp. 230, 276.
- [29] Sade, p. 238.
- [30] These Sadean sentiments are echoed in *Aaron's Rod* (begun in 1917, published in 1922), as Aaron ponders the theft of his purse: 'It is a blasphemy against life, is absolute trust. Has a wild creature ever absolute trust? It minds itself. ... No man is robbed unless he incites a robber. No man is murdered unless he attracts a murderer. Then be not robbed: it lies within your power. And be not murdered. Or if you are, you deserve it' (D.H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, ed. Mara Kalnins [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 230).
- [31] A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 20.
- [32] Holderness, pp. 208-9.
- [33] Holderness, p. 207.
- [34] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, pp. 267, 303. Of course, the matter of continuity between the vast panorama of *The Rainbow* and the telescoped temporal sequence of *Women in Love* is a vexed question. It becomes so, however, only after having read the entire second novel, or at least a good part of it. At a mere two pages into *Women in Love*, the information about Ursula's age would certainly suggest to readers of the first novel that they can assume a continuity, establishing the setting as pre-war. The radical differences between the texts may later question such assumptions of continuity, but the impression is created before it is challenged.
- [35] *Women in Love's* curious chronology is discussed by Holderness, pp. 201-3. Holderness explains apparent chronological inconsistencies in terms of the novel's exposure of liberal-imperialist war ideology. I think, however, this misses the point of the novel collapsing distinctions of pre-war/wartime/post-war society; that point being the exposure of ideology

- which defends the *comprehensive* brutality of industrial-capitalist society, including, but going far beyond, the brutality of war.
- [36] For a recent example of this view, see John Keegan, *The First World War* (London, Hutchinson, 1998). Keegan sees the war as ending a period of 'European Harmony' (the title of a subsection in his opening chapter) and, as the book's blurb puts it, as having 'unleashed the demons of the twentieth century'. Perhaps most interesting is Keegan's concluding puzzlement at 'the ultimate mystery of the First World War': 'How did the anonymous millions, indistinguishably drab, undifferentially deprived of any scrap of the glories that by tradition made the life of the man-at-arms tolerable, find the resolution to sustain the struggle and to believe in its purpose?' (Keegan, p. 456.) One answer would be because of capitalist hegemony and the mass compulsion of labour, which were the ordinary conditions of life, not simply those of war. As Holderness writes, of the anonymous, obedient colliers in 'The Industrial Magnate': 'The miners who accepted the industrial and bureaucratic modernisation of their industry, and the soldiers who voluntarily enlisted and marched willingly to the living death of the Western Front, became almost indistinguishable' (Holderness, p. 208).
- [37] See Sigmund Freud, *Metapsychology - The Theory of Psychoanalysis: Pelican Freud Library: Vol XI*, trans. James Strachey, ed. Angela Richards (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984).
- [38] It may be suggested that Gerald is driven by something other than profit. Indeed, the text informs us that his motivation for taking over the mines is not money, but 'the pure fulfilment of his own will in the struggle with the natural conditions. His will was now, to take the coal out of the earth, profitably. The profit was merely the condition of victory, but the victory itself lay in the feat achieved' (223-4). What this seems to boil down to, though, is that Gerald is motivated by power over others itself - for which money/profit is the medium. The chapter begins with an implicit discourse on the power generated by the possession of money, with details of Gudrun's economic situation linked to the freedom of movement it gives her.
- [39] See her involvement with the sculptor, Loerke. She also departs for Dresden at the end of the novel, a city to be associated with modern and deathly ideas in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. See D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994), pp. 6-9.
- [40] This is not to say it casts off its own historical moment, as argued above, and by Holderness, with particular regard to 'The Industrial Magnate'.
- [41] As Ursula says, to a sympathetic Birkin: 'Why should you always be *doing*? ... It is so plebeian. I think it is much better to be really patrician, and to do nothing but just be oneself, like a walking flower' (125). This simile itself suggests the novel's contradictory notion of individualism: a flower that walks would most certainly not 'be itself' - it would be cut off from the source of its nutriment and would wither and die.
- [42] Even at his most alienated - living in a country he wished to leave, uncertain of a readership after the banning of *The Rainbow* - Lawrence still attested to the inevitably social practice of writing: 'one goes on writing, to the unseen witnesses' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Barbara Low, 1 May 1916, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 602).
- [43] Peter Widdowson, 'Introduction' to Widdowson, p. 23.

- [44] See Exodus i-iii. In *Star Wars*, the aptly-named Han Solo, having quit service to the Empire and anyone but himself, is called back to social participation by the Rebel Alliance's efforts to deliver everyone from imperial oppression (George Lucas, Irvin Kershner and Richard Marquand (dirs.). *Star Wars* Episodes IV-VI (USA, Twentieth Century Fox, 1977-83).
- [45] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Bertrand Russell, 15 July 1915, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 365.
- [46] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 427.
- [47] See, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), pp. 51-2.
- [48] The distinction is made by Ursula, who outlines the differences in her (albeit mistaken) appreciation of Skrebensky's 'nature of an aristocrat': 'Here was one such as those Sons of God who saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. He was no son of Adam. Adam was servile. Had not Adam been driven cringing out of his native place, had not the human race been a beggar ever since, seeking its own being. But Anton Skrebensky could not beg. He was in possession of himself, of that, and no more. Other people could not really give him anything nor take anything from him. His soul stood alone' (Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 271).
- [49] See Maurice Blanchot, 'Sade' (1949), in *Sade*, pp. 37-72.
- [50] For examples of arguments as to the necessity of destruction in either writer see *Sade*, pp. 231, 238, 304, and Lawrence, *Women in Love*, pp. 128, 172-3. The dialectic of creation/destruction - briefly outlined in the 'Prologue' (wr. 1916) to *Women in Love* (505-6) - is also discussed in two contemporaneous essays, 'The Crown' (originally written in 1915, revised in 1925), and 'The Reality of Peace' (1917); see, respectively, *Reflections*, pp. 253-306 (469-79 for the 1915 variants) and 27-52.
- [51] *Sade*, p. 55.
- [52] On why Hardy and 'every imaginative human being' has a 'prédilection' for aristocrats, Lawrence comments: 'And this because the aristocrat alone has occupied a position where he could afford to *be*, to be himself, to create himself, to live as himself. That is his eternal fascination' (D.H. Lawrence, *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. Bruce Steele [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985], p. 46).
- [53] A point emphasised by George Bernard Shaw in his play, *Widowers' Houses* (wr. 1892), with the concluding rapprochement of slum landlord, Sartorius, and the previously scornful Harry Trench. Trench's image of middle-class decency and respectability is shattered by the revelation that his private income is derived from a mortgage on Sartorius's property and by his subsequent refusal to risk his supposed economic independence by withdrawing from Sartorius's business schemes. Trench's complicity in the social degradation that he denounces is bluntly explained to him by Sartorius, in Act II: 'When I, to use your own words, screw, and bully, and drive these people to pay ... I cannot touch one penny of the money they give me until I have first paid you your seven hundred a year out of it. ... It is because of the risks I run through the poverty of my tenants that you exact interest from me at the monstrous and exorbitant rate of seven per cent, forcing me to exact the uttermost farthing in my turn from the tenants'

- (George Bernard Shaw, *Plays Unpleasant* [1898], ed. Dan H. Laurence [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 2000], p. 72).
- [54] Guy de Maupassant, *Bel-Ami*, trans. Douglas Parmée (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975), p. 63.
 - [55] Maupassant, pp. 27-8.
 - [56] Maupassant, p. 416.
 - [57] D.H. Lawrence, '[Return to Bestwood]', in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London, Heinemann, 1968), pp. 263-4.
 - [58] Holderness, p. 215.

CHAPTER TWO

‘WHERE NOW? WHO NOW? ... UNBELIEVING’: KANGAROO’S PURSUIT OF THE UNKNOWN AND THE UNNAMEABLE⁽¹⁾

My sometime friend Belaqua enlivened the last phase of his solipsism ... with the belief that the best thing he had to do was to move constantly from place to place. He did not know how this conclusion had been gained, but that it was not thanks to his preferring one place to another he felt sure. ... one was as good as another, because they all disappeared as soon as he came to rest in them. The mere act of rising and going, irrespective of whence and whither, did him good.

Samuel Beckett⁽²⁾

If *Women in Love* points up the need to challenge capitalist ideology, besides the material fact of capitalism, then it is a useful primer to *Kangaroo* (1923). In *Kangaroo*, the material world recedes even further beyond the horizon of its principal character. Richard Lovatt Somers, a writer, who, like Birkin and Ursula, has given up society and (at least for the time being) work, arrives in Australia with his wife, Harriett. Bruce Steele notes: ‘Hugh Kingsmill suggested, in *D.H. Lawrence* (1938), p. 174, that the initials R.L.S. were an allusion to Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), who had visited Sydney and the South Coast near Thirroul in 1890.’^[3] A comparison between *Kangaroo* and one of Stevenson’s adventure stories certainly proves revealing. For, although Somers is offered actual adventure by the rival political groups he encounters, his story is a ‘thought-adventure’ (279), one of ideological clashes; and, with little material bearing, it might be said that the text and its protagonist remain at sea.

In Stevenson's *The Beach of Falesá* (1892), John Wiltshire arrives at a 'South Seas' island to re-establish his firm's trading post. Tricked by his competitor, Case, into 'marrying' an out-islander who is tabooed by the natives (again through Case's deceptions), Wiltshire finds that he has no customers, and no labour to harvest the copra that his company requires in the first place. Compelled to fall back upon his own means, Wiltshire makes the copra himself and thereby actually profits (the natives have been watering the copra, making it weigh heavier, so as to inflate the price).^[4] Though it is *Kangaroo*'s hero who avers, 'Seems to me you may as well sink or swim on your own resources' (63), Somers is floating along on a private income and the interest thereon^[5] - resources produced by *other* workers and traders. Whereas Wiltshire produces, Somers decidedly does not: he fails, indeed, to produce even literature during his stay. So it is that Wiltshire's situation, even and especially when tabooed, demands proper negotiation of societal life; whereas, whatever predicament society poses for Somers, he can remain as marginal and transitory as a tourist to all the settlements he passes through. Despite being courted by political leaders, Somers attends just one rally, where Willie Struthers, a Labour leader, calls for greater equality of remuneration. From this, Somers concludes that the working classes 'are conscious of nothing save that they are workers' (324). There is more to life than work, argues Somers, and of course he is right: but, in the present world, any life requires a monetary income to support it. Somers belongs to the lucky few who have money without work; others have to get that money through work;^[6] and, in demanding their fair reward, it is surely the workers who are actively seeking to change those circumscribed conditions that make the majority of people so cash-conscious. Somers/*Kangaroo*/Lawrence, meanwhile, who reject these politics,

on the basis that even broaching the issue of material oppression proves self-limiting, would rather sail free of such concerns.

Somers offers a sharp contrast to Ursula Brangwen's battles, in *The Rainbow* (1915), with the social world of the workplace. Her job as a schoolteacher establishes a relationship with the outer world, and a beneficial dialectic: 'It was always a prison to her, the school. But it was a prison where her wild, chaotic soul became hard and independent.'^[7] The problem with which many of Lawrence's later characters have to contend is: what becomes of independent individuality when the individual has escaped this 'prison' of society? *Kangaroo* suggests one outcome when Somers is visited by his new neighbour, Jack Callcott. As he talks, Somers appears not unlike the flickering image of an actor on an early cinema screen: 'Perhaps it was difficult to locate any definite *Somers*, any one individual in all this ripple of animation and communication. The man himself seemed lost in the bright aura of his rapid consciousness' (38). The impression that his social interaction is a showy performance that is somehow false is sustained by Jack's suspicion that Somers is a 'mountebank' (38).

It is questionable whether Somers's identity, his individuality within a social context, ever does materialise, and this is because he remains so wilfully abstracted from society. In particular, when faced with the contest for his political allegiance, between Australian Labour and the nationalist Digger clubs of ex-soldiers, he finds that the only resolution is, effectively, to do nothing, to confirm his distance from both parties. There is a parallel here, with Stevenson's Wiltshire, who is caught between Falesá's European and European-influenced trading community, towards which he is instinctively drawn but which proves a debased mockery of civilisation, and the native islanders, who generally remain subject to Wiltshire's personal

apartheid to the end, but upon whom, nevertheless, his economic venture depends. This last consideration proves a crucial difference from Somers's situation: Wiltshire has a material connection with his milieu which necessitates the negotiation of its various social groups and values. Indeed, this connection provides the route to resolving his dilemma. The only real threat to Wiltshire's trading success is, likewise, the only danger to the peaceful well-being of Falesá: the trading-post of Case, the corrupting and destructive influence of which is suggested by the contraband alcohol and guns from which Case is most likely to profit.^[8] This identity of interests means that Wiltshire has to consider alliances, such as with the Catholic priest, Father Galuchet, or with the old chief, Faiaso, that fall well short of his ideals.^[9] Such compromise would appal Somers, who, for example, fastidiously rejects Australian socialism for its appropriation of the 'spiritual love of Christ' instead of the dark God's 'sensual passion of love' (202).

Wiltshire eventually establishes trade with Maea, a young chief who has his own grievance against Case because of their rivalry for the same woman. Accepting that his life is threatened by his own rivalry with the murderous Case, Wiltshire knows that his economic commitment to Maea engenders a commitment to destroying Case, and thus is set the course of the remaining narrative. In contrast to *Kangaroo*, however, the cardinally important thing for Stevenson's story is not that its hero's choices are morally and philosophically justified (Wiltshire's readiness to exploit the natives and to use physical violence remain shrouded in the same dubiety that prompts Somers's rejection of all social codes and political arguments); but it is that Wiltshire, more simply, is faced by a material realm with which to grapple, besides a metaphysical one, and therefore a sphere in which he is compelled to act

effectively. Somers, on the other hand, concerned little by material necessity, need do nothing.

For Wiltshire, the bridge between individual and society is further facilitated by his internalisation of (Western) social values. He sees that part of his commission in the South Seas is to bring the natives 'civilisation': 'They haven't any real government or any real law, that's what you've got to knock into their heads'.^[10] But in the nineteen-twenties, Somers finds that: 'In Australia authority was a dead letter. There was no giving of orders here; or, if orders were given, they would not be received as such' (22). Whereas English imperialism had previously 'kept the world steady', it is now itself tottering from a world that is 'sick of being bossed' (63). Somers is disarmed ideologically from that self-assured imposition of a new world order to which Wiltshire is party. The only way that Somers can conceptualise his relation to the world is in a form of libertarian individualism, the debilitated nature of which may be best summed up by his abortive self-affirmation: 'I have done no wrong, whatever I have done. That is, no wrong that society has to do with. Whatever wrongs I have done are my own, and private between myself and the other person. - One may be wrong, yes, one is often wrong. But not for *them* to judge' (250). This last determination appears, after all, to be in tune with what Somers sees as the anti-authoritarian spirit of Australia; but it is, in fact, merely a derivative of Wiltshire's much more vigorous libertarian ideology ('It would be a strange thing if we [white men] came all this way [to the South Seas] and couldn't do what we pleased')^[11] - an ideology that in the first place is materially founded upon commercial power and, secondly, is underpinned by the values of Empire. Bereft of such supports, Somers's version is in no position to exploit the situation that he finds in Australia:

rather, his position as an isolate individual is threatened with exploitation by the collectivist ideologies of the Diggers and Labour.

It is largely because Somers is so reluctant to accept the expiration of libertarian freedom, that the principal struggle within *Kangaroo* concerns philosophical and political *ideas* and the threat of Australia imposing itself upon Somers. In *The Beach of Falesá*, by contrast, whose main characters are materially and ideologically impelled actually to live up to the free individual ethic, the emphasis is upon a struggle to negotiate human relationships and to impose oneself and one's laws upon the world. Wiltshire's wry assessment that Case 'had the brains to run a parliament'^[12] not only comments upon his rival's management of Falesá's native political institutions, but, moreover, points up the fact that, despite such a capability, his primary concerns are commercial: action to secure material interests precedes argument about it. Contrastingly, Somers is primarily concerned with philosophical speculation, and, divorced from action, his life is tantamount to a talking shop.

Kangaroo offers its own brief account of the different experiences of nineteenth-century adventurer and twentieth century 'thought-adventurer' when it refers to the God of Exodus, 'Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children' (284). The Victorians' colonial project has plundered the world and bequeathed the gutted remains to its descendants: 'They cooked the tit-bits, we are left with the carrion' (284). Especially sickening to Somers is the conviction that the imperialists have discounted the possibility of there being anything alien which might not be explained and assimilated by their own culture:

the wondrous Victorian Age managed to fasten the door so tight, and light up the compound so brilliantly with electric light, that really, there *was* no outside, it was all in. The Unknown became a joke: is still a joke. (285)

But not for Somers. Leaving a Europe that has been shattered by war and crippled economically, it is reasonable that Somers should be alert to an alternative social ethos which could offer a new direction. The problem Somers faces, however, is that those people who can find no place for themselves in Britain now have more difficulty than their predecessors, such as Wiltshire, in discovering anything much different in the former outposts of the British Empire. Thomas Carlyle's panacea for social conflict in nineteenth-century Britain, namely emigration in order to create 'sure markets ... among new Colonies of Englishmen in all quarters of the Globe',^[13] has been to a great extent administered.

The profoundly different circumstances faced by Wiltshire and Somers is made evident by a comparison of two confrontations with fear. Wiltshire's first experience of the taboo is when a group of natives gather around his house one morning, silent and motionless, staring at him. He is scared because 'what scares [a man] worst is to be right in the midst of a crowd, and have no guess of what they're driving at'.^[14] For Wiltshire, the 'Unknown' is certainly not a 'joke'. Yet Wiltshire's fear of the native crowd outside his door is not a bad illustration of the Victorian attitude as depicted in *Kangaroo*: the horror of the unfamiliar and the attendant desire to render it 'known' and under control. So it is that Wiltshire sets upon what he archly calls a 'voyage of discovery',^[15] to find and subsequently destroy the devil-shrine by which Case exploits the native's superstitions. Of course, Wiltshire is quite prepared to exploit the natives in his own way, and his actions perhaps support *Kangaroo's* postulation that European emigration has merely spread the original conflict. When Somers breaks with the Diggers' leader, Ben Cooley (Kangaroo), he is consumed by a terror that he first sees as being endemic to Australia (211). Having recalled his

wartime experiences in England, though, he surmises that ‘since the year 1918 ... deep in his unconsciousness had lain this accumulation of black fury and fear’; fear and fury which erupt in Australia, most likely because of his ‘contact with Kangaroo and Struthers, contact with the accumulating forces of social violence’ and ‘feeling again that queer revulsion from the English form of democracy’ (260). Somers’s fears, contrary to those of Wiltshire, are of the known world; not of potential violence, but of violence that is all too familiar. And while Wiltshire’s circumstances compel him to try to change them by making known the unknown, Somers’s fearfully known European culture, spreading itself around the globe, only seems to prompt continual flight.

The fruitlessness of this flight is perhaps indicated by how *Kangaroo* summarises its own barren progress: ‘Chapter follows chapter, and nothing doing’ (284). But this is immediately followed by the self-justification that *Kangaroo*’s subject, after all, is a ‘thought-adventurer’.^[16] David Lodge has taken a similar line in likening *Women in Love* to a ‘philosophical adventure story whose chief characters are questing, with religious fervour, for some new, ultimately satisfying way of life, at a moment of crisis for civilization’.^[17] We may readily assent to this as an analogy, and as one which holds for *Kangaroo*. But it is only an analogy, and although these novels are similar in certain respects to an adventure story, they remain very different in others. It is useful to recall, here, the necessary scepticism when faced with Lawrence’s self-conceptualisations. So, for example, while, Steele surmises that ‘When, just before beginning *Kangaroo*, DHL referred to the “South Seas” and described his projected novel as a “romance”, he could have had Stevenson in mind’ (361 n. 10:8), it is perhaps more helpful if we bear in mind Stevenson’s perceptions of an English distaste for romance literature.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all^[18]

Despite *Kangaroo* being a New World away from England, and although Somers rails at the idea of 'being back in an English farm-house in the Midlands, at Sunday tea', this is, nonetheless, what he finds in Australia, 'with hardly a change' (36). And (notwithstanding the belated riot between Diggers and Labour supporters) *Kangaroo* finds little incident to disturb its accent upon Somers's theosophical sanctimony.

I do not wish to suggest that, beneath a cunning disguise, *Kangaroo* is actually a 'conventional' English novel (whatever that may be). Rather, it appears to be a curious hybrid whose classification depends upon what criteria are applied: from one point of view, it is quite possible to find that '*Kangaroo* readily falls into the category of American romance';^[19] but, at the very least, I would add that it brings a complicated Englishness into the bargain. Lawrence may have told his agent that he intended to write a romance,^[20] but his text suggests to the reader a different literary realm. Paradoxically, to fortify ourselves against Lawrentian question-begging, we need only pursue one stage further the Lawrentian method of using Lawrence's ideas about art to interpret his art: that is to say, employ the even more incestuous procedure of considering *Kangaroo* via *Kangaroo*'s view of literature. 'I don't wonder they can't read English books', says Somers, upon acquaintance with the literary tastes of his fellow users of the Mullumbimby Arts Library: 'All the scruples and the emotions and the regrets in English novels do seem waste of time out here.' This is because, Harriett muses, if (as they believe of the Australians) 'you don't have any inside life of your own it must seem a waste of time' (190). *Kangaroo*, of course, conspicuously

‘wastes’ *its* time with the internal life of Somers; and, while its geographical setting is primarily ‘out here’ in Australia, its metaphysical territory remains overwhelmingly ‘back there’, among the perceived Englishness of scruples, emotions and regrets, which frequently pertain to the country of Somers’s birth.

Although Somers claims to have been ‘broken off from the England he had belonged to’ before arriving in Australia (259), he only lays to rest the ghost of England at the novel’s very end, as he is about to leave. It is when Somers is filled with longing for the country that he has newly decided to quit that he can relinquish his yearning for the country and continent he left previously. A genuine attachment to Australia does not replace an attachment to England and Europe, but, rather, nostalgia for the recent past (endemic to *Kangaroo*)^[21] supersedes nostalgia for the more distant past. This contrasts with *The Beach of Falesá*’s Wiltshire, who admits to having looked *forward* to setting up business in England once again, but censures such an attitude for neglecting the very real grounds for staying in the South Seas.^[22] Wiltshire exchanges settlements, but Somers entirely lacks such a sense of rootedness: he only exchanges one set of regrets for another. And this overscrupulousness is particularly self-deprecatory because his regrets primarily concern moving on - the only course of action that he seems able to pursue.

Like Beckett’s Belacqua in my epigraph, Somers neurotically propels himself from place to place. In this respect he also reflects Stevenson, as regarded by Lawrence: ‘Idiot to go to Samoa just to dream and get thrilled about Scotch bogs and mosses. No wonder he died.’^[23] But Lawrence shared Stevenson’s belief in travel as an end in itself, regardless of where or how one ends up: the crucial difference concerns how they construed that purpose. Notwithstanding Lawrence’s critique, Stevenson’s opinions of travel carry the vigour of an optimist. Explaining that ‘It is in

virtue of his own desires and curiosities that any man continues to exist with even patience, that he is charmed by the look of things and people, and that he wakens every morning with a renewed appetite for work and pleasure', Stevenson asserts that travel manifests, satisfies and whets this appetite which is essential to human life: 'for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour'.^[24] Stevenson writes at a time when heroic deeds are possible on the fringes of the 'civilised' world (at least in the imagination), but, during the next forty-five years, those fringes appear to have been pushed ever further back, and the plausibility of such purposive action in the nineteen-twenties has diminished with them. So, whereas Stevenson accentuates travelling 'hopefully', Lawrence maintains: 'Travel seems to me a splendid lesson in disillusion'.^[25] His pessimism can reach such a Beckettian pitch that he perceives the purpose - if it may be so called - of travel to be the destruction of hope and aspiration: 'to cure me of the illusion of other places'.^[26] In a world which has become inordinately known and domesticated, there seems little place for Stevenson's 'desires and curiosities'.

Yet, before we accept such world-weariness as an accurate world-view, we should remember that Lawrence was, to different degrees throughout his writing life, ideologically distanced, and socially and materially removed from the very real struggles of most of the people in that world - the working classes. This is still more the case with many of the leading characters in the works under discussion, few of whom are much pressed by the need for labour and its attendant rigours. It could be said that they are denied another of the grand purposes which Stevenson saw to be fulfilled by travel: 'to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly; to come down off this feather-bed of civilisation, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints'.^[27] Birkin and Somers 'feel the needs and hitches' of life

not nearly so much, for example, as the ‘hunger marchers’ who marched upon London throughout the twenties and thirties, and who decidedly felt *their* journeys to be of purpose (protesting at unemployment and penurious benefits).^[28] And, back in the literary life, H.G. Wells published, in the same year as *Kangaroo*, *Men Like Gods*.^[29] In this novel the depressed, politically frustrated Mr Barnstaple sets out upon what is initially intended as a holiday, with no greater end than to get away from his regular, wretched life. After a vision of what humanity might achieve in a socialist future, he returns from his trip with renewed purpose. Mr Barnstaple becomes, like Wells himself, a committed socialist; likewise, Somers inherits his own creator’s far less distinct socio-political sentiments, together with less assurance in the concerted efforts of collective humanity. Somers, declaring that he wants ‘to send out a new shoot in the life of mankind’, is forewarned by Harriett of the likely outcome of his involvement with Australian political activists: ‘getting yourself mixed up with these impudent little people won’t send any shoots, don’t you think it. They’ll nip you in the bud again, as they always do’ (69). The arrested nature of *Kangaroo*’s narrative would appear to substantiate this admonition. Whereas Stevenson finds travel invigorating, and Mr Barnstaple discovers new vistas of human potential, Somers’s self-realisation seems directly under attack from the new worlds offered to him.

Kangaroo depicts a world plunged into an ideological abyss, bluntly presenting post-war humanity’s meagre faith in the purposefulness of its own existence. Whether in the form of the Labour Party or the fascistic Digger movement, conscious, collective efforts to improve society appear, if not potentially pernicious, then hopelessly fantastical for want of cohering, convincing convictions. Jaz Trewhella (himself affiliated to *both* political sides) tells Somers: ‘seems to me we live from hand to mouth, as far as beliefs go’ (129). Struthers touches upon the origin

of this epistemological crisis (probably unintentionally) when comparing it to economic disaster arising from the war:

What they call knowledge is like any other currency, it's liable to depreciate. Sound valuable knowledge today may not be worth the paper it's printed on tomorrow - like the Austrian Krone. (194)

It is in 'The Nightmare' chapter that Somers will come to acknowledge that the cause of his current malaise is his suffering as a non-combatant at the hands of the British authorities during the war. In ascertaining merely this much, he is well ahead of many who fought in the conflict, such as Digger 'Master' Jack Callcott, who can only offer Somers the type of circular obfuscation which would not be out of place in Beckett:

'You think Labour is a menace to society?' [Somers] returned.

'Well,' Jack hedged. 'I won't say that Labour is the menace, exactly. Perhaps the state of affairs forces Labour to be the menace.'

'Oh quite. But what's the state of affairs?'

'That's what nobody seems to know.'

'So it's quite safe to lay the blame on,' laughed Somers.

(41-2)

Such bewilderment is accompanied by confused or failed action as Labour, 'frightened to death' by the idea of revolution (159), Ben Cooley, similarly wanting to 'blow the house up without breaking the windows' (160), and then Somers himself, warned by Struthers not to 'funk at the last minute' from the offer to contribute to a '*constructive* Socialist paper' (202, 200), are all seen as shrinking from their opportunities to influence how society is organised.

On the other hand, Somers is distinctly opportunistic in his 'philosophical' twists and turns. He finds these necessary to maintain a semblance of credibility for a liberal individualism whose inadequacy he seems to suspect himself: he realises that

he is 'isolated', but, simultaneously, loathes the bonds of 'affection', 'love', 'comradeship', being 'mates' and 'mingling', which loom within the collectivist and corporatist ethics of Labour and the Diggers (107). A favourite way of evading this impasse is a professed yearning for the 'mystery of lordship'. This 'other mystic relationship between men, which democracy and equality try to deny and obliterate' (107), provides an expedient refuge from the political groups threatening to impinge upon his insular autonomy. Positing mystic lordship as a possible socio-political alternative enables Somers to justify to himself his aversion to being a Digger 'mate' or socialist 'comrade', and, so too, speciously exonerates his maintained isolation; at the same time, this lordship is so mystically beyond rational conception, so distant from present reality, as to pose no real threat to Somers's independence from all non-libertarian ideology.

Such opportunism, after all, is appropriate to an ideology of entrepreneurial capitalism, itself anarchic, unstable and torn with contradiction. There is, however, a further, and critical, contradiction of libertarian individualism in *Kangaroo* (and in Lawrence's work, more generally): despite the novel's inability to *directly* acknowledge this affinity of textual ideology and social reality (the 'whole gay course' that it wishes consigned 'to hell' is Western capitalist-industrialism) the connection is nevertheless recurrently exposed. It is perceptible even in the motivation for Somers's entire Australian venture. Like a businessman seeking to invest in a new market, Somers speculates upon 'young' Australia. He has arrived in order to 'start a new life and flutter with a new hope' (19): not to 'settle', but 'flutter', which suggests both restless confusion and gambling. As to any precise reasons for his arrival there, he tells Jaz, 'maybe it was just a whim' (62),^[30] and, sure enough, he has landed in Sydney on 'the fanciful notion that if he was really to get to know anything at all

about a country, he must live for a time in the principal city' (20). He rejects the capitalist enterprise in its social realisation, but its often capricious and nebulous *modus operandi* remains lodged in his personal behaviour.^[31]

It is remarkable, then, that while such flimsy notions guide Somers's life, he yet sees himself as drawn from the 'responsible' class of European society, as opposed to the 'irresponsible' (21). Besides questioning Somers's self-knowledge, this also asks questions of the social system of Europe - which Somers regards as 'established on the instinct of authority' (22). What legitimises the rule of the ruling classes if they are not 'responsible'? For Somers, it seems that 'a strong boss at the head [of society]' is to a great extent justified simply for *being* masterful, before any consideration is taken of what the boss commands and why (22). The contrasting type of social responsibility which Somers senses in Australia, one divorced from overt demonstrations of power, characterised by 'gentleness', only makes 'his spirits sink' (276): 'You've got to have an awakening of the old recognition of the aristocratic principle, the *innate* difference between people' (277). The bedrock of his social thinking is not so much a concern with justifying social authority, still less a concern with social justice based on equality and equitableness, but instead appears to be a desire for emphatic authority *per se* (though, one suspects, one that does not impose on himself too much). Neither is this desire for authority disdained by the text as a whole - indeed it is a desire for that *authoritativeness* which the text itself cannot confer: the question, for instance, of the extent to which the general narrative genuinely *supports* Somers's view is somewhat problematical because, while on the one hand, the narratorial voice does envisage society in terms of 'great individuals' who are innately qualified leaders, and a 'vast, prostrate mass' who require firm rule (302), it cannot, on the other hand, account for such a division in any way other than

Somers's own style of mystification, and merely asserts the necessity of balancing the 'two great telepathic vibrations which rule all the vertebrates', consisting of a 'cold exultance in power, isolate kingship' and 'enveloping vibration of possessive and protective love' (300). This rather echoes the drift of Somers's and Cooley's thoughts upon 'benevolent tyranny' (112); but, crucially, there is in neither instance substantial justification for such leadership, only insistence. It is a rare example of a text's omniscient narrator concurring with a character's viewpoint, only to have the effect of withholding any impression of its authoritativeness. Somers's opinions may be reiterated with the conventionally accepted authority of the narrator, but the repetition only shows upon what meagre foundations rest both his postulations and that conventional 'authority'.

When Somers resolves to remain withdrawn from human affairs, he resorts to eulogising the emptiness of the Australian wilderness in an attempt to make his own solitude more plausible: 'It's wonderful to feel this blue globe of emptiness of the Australian air. It shuts everything out' (204). Such are his final circumstances (and, it could be argued, these change little from the novel's beginning), relating to the empty space of Australia rather than to its people, a vacant space himself: "'I'll go empty,'" said Richard. ... "It's wonderful to be empty"'(204). Despite Cooley's and Struthers' flagrant failings, they, at least, wish to give purposive control to human society, wishing to engage in transforming the vacant liberty of Australian democracy, whereas Somers cannot. While complicity in the existing state of affairs is evident in Labour's social democratic reformism and in the Diggers' ultimately conservative agenda for keeping Australia safe from either socialist revolution or capitalist financial disaster, both parties are sufficiently committed to alternative ideological ground in order to try to move society in different directions; Somers, by contrast,

only *moves away from society* as he turns from all ideological commitment, with the one possible exception of a lasting reliance upon an anti-societal libertarian individualism.

This libertarian attitude has remarkable affinities with the anarchic social disorder that Somers fears at the start of the novel, and which both Struthers (195) and Cooley (207) see as the growing menace to human society. But to make the resemblance explicit would be to acknowledge the destructive circularity of Somers's individualism. So, although Somers readily affirms the association between an increasingly deadening, imprisoning society and the 'exploded ideal' of 'democratic liberty' (90), and thus indicts the *political system* of liberal democracy, capitalist society's formative *ideological* component of libertarian individualism remains beyond reproach. Nevertheless, the futility of Somers's efforts to remain clear of 'society', to any progressive end, is borne out by the passage of the narrative. The death of 'free' England (we could say, of 'free' market entrepreneurial capitalism and the 'free' individual, though *Kangaroo* does not), the death of the England which Somers 'had belonged to' (258, 259), is signalled by the war; in peacetime, Somers leaves, arriving in the New World of 'free Australia' (again, we could add, the world of a younger, smaller scale, entrepreneurial capitalism), but only to find that it holds the same fears for him as does latter-day England's 'mob-like authorities' (259). That this is so, Somers is able to surmise, is perhaps because of his 'queer revulsion from the English form of democracy' that is similarly to be found in Australia (260); and, again, Somers comes to perceive that the only challenge to 'the ultra-freedom that frightened him', manifested by Struthers and Cooley, is a 'social violence' corresponding to that which he suffered during the death of 'free' England (260); this resemblance is confirmed by his subsequently dubbing both radical parties the

‘vengeful mob’ (265). Instead of admitting to the condition of libertarian individualism as something superseded, as something that has either evolved or degenerated into the social form of liberal democracy, and something which collectivist political forces seek to transform altogether, Somers holds faith in his libertarian creed by (and with ironic appropriateness, single-handedly) *reverting* to its most socially-hostile form. A salient metaphor in *Kangaroo* figures human society and the human condition as a ship at sea; we are told that, during the war, this ship becomes

submerged. Then out swarm the rats and the Bottomleys and crew, and the ship of human adventure is a horrible piratic affair, a dirty sort of freebooting.

Richard Lovatt had nothing to hang on to but his own soul. So he hung on to it, and tried to keep his wits. If no man was with him, he was hardly aware of it, he had to grip on so desperately, like a man on a plank in a shipwreck. The plank was his own individual self. (222)

It is, of course, open to question whether society actually *is* shipwrecked, or if, more realistically, Somers, in disgust at the ‘crew’, has rather jumped ship. In fact, it is quite evident that Somers’s society is still managing to stay afloat, like *Kangaroo* itself, which follows *its* course despite the narrator’s assertion that ‘Chapter follows chapter, and nothing doing’ (284). It is merely the case that society is not sailing in the direction that Somers (or Lawrence) would wish for - even though its repugnant mercenary nature, described as ‘a horrible piratic affair’, is, after all, in keeping with old-style libertarian individualist philosophy, as demonstrated by the ruthless exploitation of free markets by nineteenth-century ‘robber barons’.

Contemplating the sea following an interview with Cooley, Somers wishes himself still further removed from current human affairs, only to expose his own

ruthlessly predatory nature. He imagines a life like that of a bird of prey or a gannet, a life spent in 'cold separation', and only returning to humanity as a gannet dives for fish, 'in a swift rapacious parabola and away again, back away into isolation' (138). What emerges in all this, is that same circularity as found elsewhere. It is significant that Somers's hopes, here, of 'a real new way to take' beyond industrial capitalism ('the mechanical earth', 'a world of slaves' [138]), only find expression in atavistic images. It is implied that Australia is a land belonging to a time outside European development, but the only opportunities it apparently provides are for reversion pure and simple, or for dragging it into the European scheme of things. Somers finds it dispiriting that the New World is socially, economically and politically, merely developing along the old lines of Europe; but a similar state of affairs exists on Somers's spiritual plane, where he too is inspired along those same old lines. It is remarkable, for example, that Somers's alternative to the 'mad struggle' of modern Australians with 'material necessities and conveniences' (131) should be articulated in such predatory and grasping metaphors. This 'new way' of the gannet is, actually, libertarian individualism on a life-support machine. The artifice of the language is a decrepit ideology's artificial respiration, maintaining its ethos in a mystifying temporal chaos: the past, posited as a future possibility, by a man overwhelmed by the present - it is difficult to see exactly how this relates to the existing world. But then that is the point: this libertarian individualism's metaphorical distance from actuality is necessary to strip it of its real human context and social significance - namely, as something outmoded and finished, and, more importantly, conducive to the current social corruption. Yet, inevitably, however indirectly, the affinity with the present world of depredation is betrayed:

Beneath every gannet that jumps from the water ten thousand fish are swimming still. But they are swimming in a shudder of silver fear. That is the magic of the ocean. Let them shudder the huge ocean aglimmer. (138)

The dislocation of Somers's libertarian individualism (and Lawrence's, for that matter) from its material manifestation, in capitalist exploitation and mass oppression, does not regenerate it as a variant ideology which may be exculpated from complicity in the same social degradation with which Lawrence's work takes issue. Rather, the bourgeois romance that posits libertarian individualism as the purest, most absolute freedom is reaffirmed: it is a freedom available to an exclusive few - the 'true man', as *Kangaroo* chooses to put it, who stays faithful to his 'individual integrity', having the 'courage ... to face his own isolated soul, and abide by its decision' (213). What does not seem to occur to either Lawrence or Somers, as they reflect here upon the war that they courageously decided not to become involved in, is that those who did volunteer for the front would largely have done so believing that *they* were 'true men', courageously preserving their own sense of 'individual integrity'. There is nothing in *Kangaroo* to justify the assertion of Somers's greater integrity; the fact of the matter is simply that he is set against the majority, both for good reasons (recognising the prosecution of the war as 'a reign of Terror' [213]), and for bad ones (failing to recognise the existence of unemployment and poverty as quite sound motives for the 'ghastly masses' of volunteers [214]). But Somers's isolation becomes its own warranty: working upon the code of the market that assumes something's potential value is in direct proportion to its suggested scarcity, a conspicuous, yet finally rather unproductive, singularity is turned into a matchless superiority. In a not dissimilar way, entrepreneurial capitalists rationalise their economic elevation above the majority. Thus it is that, in such a manner, Lawrence

has the mine-owning Clifford Chatterley, in the first version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (written in 1926), defend the material inequalities evident in a comparison of his Wragby estate and the colliery towns:

‘Wragby is a ship that still sails on in the voyage of discovery of new human possibilities. It sails ahead, and the miners’ dwellings wash along like dirty little craft, in the wake. ...’

... There would never be more than a few, comparatively few leaders and onward seekers. And these would always be ‘gentry’. And they must always have ultimate control over property. Must! Otherwise there would be no proud ships to dare the unknown seas, all would be a flat-bottomed squalor of nowhere-goers.^[32]

While Lawrence leaves little doubt as to the bogus nature of Clifford’s rhetoric, Somers’s opinions of the masses are very much in key with those of his creator. Yet the convictions of both characters appear specious in similar ways. The withdrawn Somers offers as little hope for the ‘discovery of new human possibilities’ as does Clifford; indeed, he would be aptly summed up by Constance Chatterley’s description of her soon-to-be abandoned husband: ‘[he] knows how to draw into his own shell, and feel virtuous and noble and injured.’^[33] Spoken by someone who possesses sufficient means to take economic chances without hazarding total ruin, Clifford’s spiel upon the valour of risk-taking, pioneering capitalists is somewhat inflated - especially when considered against the fortitude required for a life of working-class labour and ‘squalor’; and, likewise, the distinction between the volunteers’ ‘courage to face death’ and Somers’s allegedly much rarer ‘courage ... to face his own isolated soul’ (213) seems a transparent attempt to hide an obvious lack of dynamism in Somers’s conduct (although not purely his own fault), in comparison with those who fought on the Western Front. Another characteristic shared by Somers and Clifford is that the few of the capitalist elite and those of Somers’s spiritual elite are *necessarily*

exclusive: Clifford's lordly material existence is only bought at the price of poverty for the many; and the nobility of Somers's 'independent' soul can only be maintained negatively, as a contrast to the postulated 'foulest feelings of a mob' (225). And so, regardless of Somers's (and Lawrence's) express disdain for private property and industrial-capitalism (46), his conceptions of and hopes for life customarily reproduce the inequitable, predatory hierarchies of the current social system; and, in the metaphor of gannets and fish, they do so while bestowing the reputed legitimacy of a natural order which guarantees the survival of the (supposedly) fittest.

Somers's vision belongs, after all, to the capitalist ethos that produced the war - the philosophy of free competition between initially relatively small concerns, which developed the realities of international monopoly that manifested themselves in the 'war for the division of the world', as Lenin put it in 1920: 'a war for the purpose of deciding whether the British or German group of financial marauders is to receive the lion's share'.^[34] Or 'gannet's' share, we could add, because, although Lawrence would readily agree as to the mercantile origins of the war,^[35] his own libertarian individualism was actually *catalysed* by his aversion to the mob-mentality of the war,^[36] and so too, in *Kangaroo*, Somers similarly opposes the spirit of the war by resolving to keep true to his 'isolated soul'. Consequently, the novel can only acknowledge the war as assaulting the liberty of the individual in the capacity of a phenomenon entirely *independent* of individual liberty, and not as a *product* of capitalist transition beyond free markets and the free individual altogether.^[37] It cannot recognise the relation of individualist ideology to the military conflict. Rather, the text affirms the virtue of Somers's continued belief in 'the freedom of the individual' (227), and instead condemns the corresponding political structure of liberal democracy: 'No man who has really consciously lived through this [war] can believe

again absolutely in democracy' (216); 'English liberalism had proved a slobbery affair, all sad sympathy with everybody, and no iron backbone, these years' (226). So Somers blames the public for not choosing the right leaders, the method of choosing them, and the political leaders themselves for not guiding the nation with the right methods or in the right direction; but he is far less inclined to question the fundamental business itself - that of prosecuting wars *somehow*. It is quite the contrary: 'He knew that men *must* fight, some time in some way or other' (213). And, in some respects, this acquiescence appears to extend to the affairs of capitalist society generally, because it is as though Somers baulks most at the people who are managing the 'business concern' that forms the nation and less at the business itself (compare Lawrence, note 35). Even so, he still detests 'the industrialism and commercialism of England, with which patriotism and democracy became identified' (214); it is just that his aversion *both* to the present political leadership and to possible change from the public 'below' does not leave much scope for forging an alternative.

Consequently, Somers adopts his 'anomalous call: "Listen to me, and be alone"' (282). A call that proclaims a leader, only to immediately renounce leadership, sums up the paralysing contradiction that is Somers, and *Kangaroo* itself. This ensnarement between individualist belief in 'every man [being] by himself', alone 'with the dark God' (282), and conviction in the necessity of a 'supreme responsibility', a 'communion in power', offering 'Sacrifice ... to the men in whom the dark God is manifest' (283), is parallel to contemporary capitalism, which has seen the necessary supplementation of free-market libertarianism with the overarching absolutism of monopolistic power. And, as Lenin identified:

Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition; but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before

our very eyes, creating large-scale industry and eliminating small industry ... manipulating thousands of millions. At the same time monopoly, which has grown out of free competition, does not abolish the latter, but exists over it and alongside of it, and thereby gives rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts.^[38]

Such conflicts abound in *Kangaroo*, one of the most remarkable being the glaring contradiction of Somers's condemnation of the passive opposition to the war of the 'well-bred, really cultured classes':

They shirked their duty. It is the business of people who really know better to fight tooth and nail to keep up a standard, to hold control of authority. Laisser-aller is as guilty as the actual, stinking mongrelism it gives place to. (217)

Disregarding the fact that minimal interference in social and economic affairs is a long-established convention of the superannuated 'free' England to which Somers elsewhere professes his attachment (258), he suggests that it is an obligation of the fully individualised to fully exert their power; that they move, as it were, from their small-scale private spheres to establishing their order in the large-scale public world, holding control of the 'squirring millions' (257). And such criticism of the old liberal elite appears increasingly hypocritical when it is considered that Somers (himself of the individuated, cultured class) finds that he is unable to define or pledge himself to a serviceable ideology of socio-political authority, precisely because of his individualism, and, furthermore, resolves to adopt the same 'laisser-aller' attitude as a direct consequence of reckoning with *his own* experiences during the war: 'Humanity could do as it liked: he did not care'; 'damn his own interfering, nosy self' (265, 272). So it is that, by dint of Somers's own social criticism, this new life of determinedly detached disinterest is shown to remain intimately connected and implicated in the

‘stinking mongrelism’ which it allows to thrive. The discrete purity of Somers’s libertarian individualism, secluded from the corruption of society, is fundamentally thrown into question.

The fact that Somers is often criticised by the narrator may suggest a divergence between the standpoints of Lawrence and his character, and that Lawrence is quite conscious of the unavailing circularity of Somers’s quest for a new, socially disengaged individuality. However, any distinction becomes less clear if we bear in mind that Lawrence himself frequently felt the compulsion to try to lead a similar life.^[39] It could be the case that *Kangaroo* is a self-parody, but, despite the instances of narratorial disparagement, it seems to this reader that Somers is still the focus for our sympathies (besides his wife, Harriett, who would actually be at least as happy as her husband, withdrawn from the world, ‘knowing nobody’ but each other [67]). Perhaps the reason *why* any sympathy remains with Somers is precisely that there is as little in the world of *Kangaroo* for us as there is for him which could convincingly plug the ideological hole opened up in his crisis. So, in effect, he wins our sympathy by default: there is nothing particularly appealing in Somers himself, but then there is neither much of appeal in the people and politics about him.

A more constructive appraisal of this situation is suggested by Macdonald Daly’s contention that ‘Richard Lovatt Somers is a prototype of the nomadic, restless, rootless postmodernist subject’:^[40] the text’s ideological wilderness prefigures our own age of, supposedly, collapsed faith in those belief-systems, or ‘metanarratives’, which purport to give the ‘True’ meaning of human life and legitimate its direction; belief-systems such as socialism and nationalism, for example. There is certainly a strong *prima facie* case for considering *Kangaroo* as our contemporary; and it is worth adding, indeed, that it offers a number of parallels with postmodernity which

may be seen not merely as an evidential foreshadowing of our present prescribed condition, but as suggesting the dubious nature of the diagnosis itself. So, for instance, we may consider the fact that Somers's scepticism exists within a society where many people (Labour, the Diggers) clearly *do* feel that there are worthwhile things in which to believe and struggle for: this is not dissimilar to the current scepticism shown by narrow political elites of the West for such a concept as nationalism, for example.^[41]

The novel sketches in another contradiction of postmodernity with the contrast of Somers's indulgent, *laissez-aller* view of the political crisis, which holds that the opposing parties are not fighting over anything that is really worthwhile stirring oneself about, with his repeated *protest* at the violence in society that repeatedly assaults such libertarian principles; and this contrast is strengthened with direct evidence, too, of the quite uncompromising brutality of the political contention itself, as depicted in the fight in Canberra Hall between Labour supporters and Diggers, in which Somers himself is momentarily consumed by a desire to kill the ex-soldiers (314). We may find in postmodernity that, not dissimilarly, rhetorical libertarianism is circumscribed in actuality: it may be quite acceptable, for example, to use Lenin as an authority in an academic essay, but the slightest hint of leaning towards him as an authority for organising social life is likely to prompt a starkly illiberal response from the dominant powers (thus with the USA's 'destabilisation' of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, for example). Both our world and that of *Kangaroo* show a disjunction between a refined 'laissez-aller' pose and hard political reality. Additionally, because of Somers's disengaged pluralism, condescending to accept the existence of variant political ideologies (albeit as symptoms of an 'old ideal' [265]) while never once committing himself to contribute to political change,

his philosophical soul-searching remains just that - a pitiable self-regarding, fruitlessly abstract meandering; and one which appears to be paid for, after all, by a private income - revenues from his own literal investment in the capitalist system that he reviles. In this much again, we may see that he is cut from the same template as postmodernism, if we regard the latter as an ideology which, on one hand, demands difference, a generous pluralism, the shattering of oppressively imperialist 'universal' values, while, on the other hand, doing so from conspicuously limited sites (Western universities and culture industries, for example) and within the *unchallenged* meta-narrative and 'universal' values of Western capitalism. Both Somers and postmodernism stress the importance of the relative, conceiving a decentred hybrid world, but they do so to the extent that this view itself becomes an unquestionable absolute: thus, just as postmodernism often seems to propound the relativity of everything but itself (which remains *the* world view),^[42] the fragmented, relativistic individualism of Somers finally asserts: 'the self is absolute. It may be relative to everything else in the universe. But to itself it is an absolute' (280). Both Somers and postmodernism strive towards monopoly even as they call for plurality and micro-politics ('Listen to me, and be alone' [282]): they can both be seen as cultural products that reflect capitalism's contradictory development into a monolithic imperialism at odds with the residual free enterprise that is its essence. And, apparently remorselessly reproducing itself as it endlessly deconstructs and re-deconstructs 'illusorily' unified subjects, postmodernism, so it may be suggested, in sympathy with the processes of capitalist decay,^[43] nevertheless does so with a tendency for falling intellectual profitability - as does *Kangaroo*, 'extending itself gratuitously, prolonging its own nothingness *ad nauseam*'.^[44]

The textual effect, therefore, is to point up the mortification of the ideal of the proud, single, individual, in that, far from playing the inspirational creature who is self-liberated from shipwrecked society, Somers only achieves the passivity of driftwood. In fact, it could be argued that postmodernism itself has yet to move beyond such passivity, 'drifting the face of the sea' (259) of a broad but empty academicism, so to speak. For instance, *Kangaroo* once more prefigures postmodernism in that, despite its (inadvertent) debunking of independent individuality, it remains unable or unwilling to finally move beyond an individualist ethos. Terry Eagleton has remarked thus upon the work of the feminist post-structuralist, Julia Kristeva, who proposes a 'semiotic force which disrupts all stable meanings and institutions':

the dismantling of the unified subject [is not] a revolutionary gesture in itself. Kristeva rightly perceives that bourgeois individualism thrives on such a fetish, but her work tends to halt at the point where the subject has been fractured and thrown into contradiction. For Brecht, by contrast, the dismantling of our given identities through art is inseparable from the practice of producing a new kind of human subject altogether, which would need to know not only internal fragmentation but social solidarity^[45]

Such a point of arrest seems to be arrived at already in *Kangaroo*, although, to be fair, the novel does posit the necessity of social integration, at the same time as it tries to salvage a credible heroic individualism: 'It is the individual alone who can save humanity alive. But the greatest of great individuals must have deep, throbbing roots down in the dark red soil of the living flesh of humanity' (302). The fact remains, however, that neither project can be sustained, with the vain attempt to fasten together individual integrity matched by a pessimism as to establishing social communion, in the present world, at least. What occurs, instead, is a postmodernist repeated

‘dismantling’ of ‘illusory’ unifieds, as Somers seeks a solid basis for social order, only to find it melting into air. So Jack Callcott, for instance, who, as a leading proponent of the Diggers, would appear to represent a new order, social unity and the hope of purposive action, ends up causing only disorder through his blind bloodlust of the ‘atavistic white’ (321), as he disrupts the Labour meeting at Canberra Hall. The extent of his divided self has already been pointedly revealed by his wife’s reflection that the ‘stalwart’ Jack is nonetheless ‘like a piece of driftwood drifting on the strange unknown currents in an unexplored nowhere, without any place to arrive at’ (75). Significantly, it is, of course, precisely this desultory image which characterises - for all his bluster about the condition of the world - Somers’s identical lack of agency in changing it (222, 259).

If no new hope is found in the new people whom Somers meets, then some inspiration seems to be offered by new locations, not least the cottage that he and Harriett borrow from the Callcotts at Mullumbimby. The house supplies a ‘cool and fresh and detached’ ambience which corresponds with Somers’s ideal of the discrete, independent subject (147). However, even the edge of the Pacific Ocean provides nowhere for a unified individual to remain aloof from the pressing concerns of the world. There is an early suggestion of the place’s own independent unity being dismantled when one of the house’s veranda doors is opened and ‘the noise of the sea’ enters, ‘frightening, like guns’ (81); and, sure enough, it is by this sea that Jack propounds the values he learned in the army as an exemplary guide for reshaping society (89). The values of the war which nearly destroyed Somers and sent him half way round the globe persist; that which broke Somers’s belief in collective human enterprise now returns to shatter the illusion of his isolate integrity.

So it is that, when Somers does contemplate his problems concerning society, social negotiation is supplanted by the suggestion of a *battle against* humankind: 'I *must* fight out something with mankind yet. I haven't finished with my fellow-men. I've got a struggle with them yet' (68). The noticeable focus, here, upon his own being, is maintained even as he problematises his social alienation - it is regarded in wholly personal terms:

I want to do something with living people, somewhere, somehow, while I live on the earth. I write, but I write alone. And I live alone. Without any connection whatever with the rest of men. (69)

The relentless first-person pronoun, countered only by an awareness (tantamount to a dismissal) of the world beyond him as 'the rest', further points up Somers's detachment, even as he supposedly begins to address the problem. That all this is, in fact, rather self-indulgent introversion is nailed home by his wife, who reminds him of the one connection which he does have: 'Don't swank, you don't live alone. You've got *me* there safe enough, to support you' (69). His marriage is the only thing that supplies Somers's existence with worldly significance, and Harriett is the only person willing to underpin his spiritual aspirations with a necessary consideration of practicalities. But the only effect of Somers's attempts to envision better relations with others is to risk the severance of this last meaningful association.

The reason why the Somerses' marriage does not end up on the rocks, though, becomes evident in the chapter entitled 'Harriett and Lovatt at Sea in Marriage', in the recapitulation of the very strife which their relationship endures. It seems that Somers's belief in his prevailing, absolute individualism can only be maintained, paradoxically, by establishing his 'ascendency' over another - Harriett:

‘so that he could refute her, deny her, and imagine himself a unique male’ (175). Indeed, everything else beyond Somers’s own person must be thus subjected, or, if this is not possible, rejected. The resultantly contracted sphere which Somers’s individualism must inhabit is suggested in his sophistical retrieval of a last reassuring ‘universal’ value: ‘the self is absolute. It may be relative to everything else in the universe. But to itself it is an absolute’ (280). It is striking that this ‘absolute’ is expressed as a relation (‘to itself’), and *all* such self-relations, after all, are absolutes - there is nothing special about the self; but it is, of course, somewhat easier to maintain universal values when you thus circumscribe your universe. Indeed, the formula for this absolute is a prescription for rejecting ‘everything else’, because, while he just may be able to persuade himself of the possibility of subjecting Harriett (though she remains far from convinced), the rest of the world proves more refractory.

In accordance with his societal relativism, Somers’s response to the practical problems caused by social coercion during the war is simply to deny their critical importance to the course of his ‘inward fate’ (222); and, having established this pseudo-sovereignty, he is primed to dismiss the concomitant psychological hazard by inverting his initial intuitive response to his victimisation, and so regains a sense of individual integrity:

‘Even if I commit what they call a crime, why should I accept *their* condemnation or verdict. Whatever I do, I do of my own responsible self. I refuse their imputations. ...’

So, when ever the feeling of terror came over him, the feeling of being marked-out, branded, a criminal marked out by society, marked-out for annihilation, he pulled himself together, saying to himself:

‘.... let me never admit for one single moment that *they* may be *my* judges. That, never. I have judged them: they are *canaille*. I am a man, and I abide by my own soul. Never shall they have a chance of judging me.’ (250)

Viewed from this slant, it is as if the antipathy between society and Somers is a reciprocal struggle between equals in power, while the putative authority of the narrative voice suggests the pre-eminent legitimacy of Somers's interior domain, with the dictum that one has to 'fear one's own inward soul, and never to fear the outside world, nay, not even one single person, nor even fifty million persons' (250). My issue with this is not that such argument so obviously flies in the face of reality (it is a quite understandable tactic in such conditions), but that it is regarded as *sufficient* in itself for coping with a world which so easily countermands individual autonomy, and, moreover, that it is considered serviceable in circumstances *generally*. Although this attitude emerges during the war, it is remembered and consolidated by Somers (and by the author himself, after very similar wartime experiences) years afterwards; and what proved expedient during that earlier crisis is held to be valid and vital to his current well-being in Australia.

But there is a greater crisis affecting *Kangaroo's* post-war society in general: it, too, has yet to find a way of sufficiently extricating itself from the war. Rather than building, in Somers's words, 'a way for the afterwards' (68), society would appear only to hold faith with attitudes, principles and institutions which bear semblance to those of the recent conflict. The Diggers want to maintain militaristic values in civil society, and, while Labour's rhetoric speaks of revolution, its belief in future social change goes no further than the hope that someday people may 'feel the same [spunk] again' which they felt during the war (195). The war, which destroyed so much, now remains as the most inspiring example of a socially uniting experience.

This situation is fraught with problems, not least because the status of the war as a catalyst and marker of the disintegration of socially uniting ideas is repeatedly asserted throughout Lawrence's work. In the 'Epilogue' (written in 1924)

to *Movements in European History*, he summarised the new world thus: ‘Our great idea, during the last hundred years, has been the idea of Progress. ... We none of us believe in our ideals any more. Our ideal, our leading ideas, our growing tip were shot away in the Great War.’^[46] So it is, that, in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928):

All the great words, it seemed to Connie, were cancelled for her generation: love, joy, happiness, home, mother, father, husband, all these great dynamic words were half-dead now, and dying from day to day.^[47]

And, in Tuscany, Lawrence reflects:

though it is bad enough to have been of the war generation, it must be worse to have grown up just after the war. One can’t blame the young, that they don’t find that anything amounts to anything. The war cancelled most meanings for them.^[48]

However, to suggest in this way that his own view of the war is the universal view is somewhat to exaggerate. One thing, for example, to emerge from the war was Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution - a ‘leading idea’ of ‘Progress’ for many people, not least for the younger generation (whose ideals, though, are customarily disregarded as reprehensibly naïve).^[49] In his ‘Epilogue’ to *Movements in European History*, Lawrence dismisses the Revolution as no significant development itself, merely the consequence of Tsarist Russia having yet to rise from its ‘temporary grave’.^[50] But it could be said with greater credibility that it is Lawrence who still tends the grave of the Whiggishly high-minded England that was, if not buried, then served with the last rites by the war’s demolition of H.H. Asquith’s Liberals. *Kangaroo* certainly seems haunted by the faded dream of a more decent, gentlemanly, governing class; of the ‘right’ kind of aristocracy, but an aristocracy, nonetheless:

some sort of a new show: a new recognition of the life-mystery, a departure from the dreariness of money-making, money-having, and money-spending. It meant a new recognition of difference, of highness and of lowness, of one man meet for service and another man clean with glory, having majesty in himself, the innate majesty of the purest *being*, not the strongest instrument, like Napoleon. (303)

Such grand phraseology tends to disclose that which it is usually designed to conceal: the woolly thinking behind a 'new show' that can never be realised beyond rhetoric. It is grandiloquence that leaves, untouched, the world of irresolution and depressingly modest ambitions against which it seeks to rebel. But, if one is unhappy with the current state of affairs, and yet spurns comparatively well-developed ideologies and political movements which profess to the aspiration of procuring great change, then this is the world that one must inhabit.

Lawrence, though, remains torn between accepting reduced human circumstances, and railing against such acquiescence by means of big, but empty, gestures. This tension seems to run through Lawrence's post-war novels, but it is especially strong in *Kangaroo*: it is apparent in the pointed contrast between the little, cosily-named cottages in which *Kangaroo's* Australians live and the text's disquisitions upon the vast empty space of the Australian wilderness; and it is epitomised in Somers's trademark call: 'Listen to me and be alone' - a call for solidarity in the idea that it is best to break with all such human communion.

It is in recognising his need to detach himself from society that Somers comes up with his antithetical interpretation of the expression 'fly in the ointment':

'I am a fool,' said Richard to himself, 'to be floundering round in this easy, cosy, all-so-friendly world. I feel like a fly in the ointment. For heaven's sake let me get out. I suffocate.' (279)

However, this proposed break for freedom immediately suggests its own inconsequentiality when Somers allows that 'If you're going to get out you must have something to get out on to': the only 'something' that he can supply is his 'own self' (279). The metaphor proposes the sort of improbable gymnastics which perfectly accord with the endless intellectual somersaults required to uphold this self-supporting individuality. It suggests that denial of the outside world which is identified by Beckett in my epigraph: as the feckless Belacqua attempts to evade a sense of impending punishment from the 'Furies', his 'solipsism' renders each prospective new place 'as good as another, because they all disappeared as soon as he came to rest in them'. The entire world exists only as an object of the individual's consciousness, its separate independence obliterated by a delusively rampant ego, in much the same way as, in my previous chapter, we saw Birkin console himself, at the end of *Women in Love*, with a vision of the obliteration of humanity. In contrast to this prospective genocide, however, 'getting away' perhaps represents, if not actually a source of hope, a *pis aller* in the face of an inimical world that, otherwise, allows little space for individual freedom.

'Disillusion' is, however, what Lawrence often found with each peregrination: no more so than upon his own return to London, at the start of December 1923. Lawrence was only all the more conscious of his distaste for urban England when he wrote to a friend in New York: 'Here I am back in London. It seems very dark, and one seems to creep under a paving-stone of a sky, like some insect in the damp.'^[51] His reaction to the metropolis may provide a fitting description of life in polluted, wintry London, but it is also of a piece with the abhorrence that commentators over the past century had expressed at increasing urbanisation and in perceiving a more fundamental process of social decline.^[52] And in Lawrence's

attitude at this time, the decline had reached the point of pitching English culture in its entirety into the abyss. While staying in Hampstead, he wrote: 'London - gloom - yellow air - bad cold - bed - old house - Morris wall-paper - visitors - English voices - tea in old cups - poor D.H.L. perfectly miserable, as if he was in his tomb.'^[53] Quintessential markers of Englishness, not least William Morris's attempts to restore England's beauty, are, simultaneously, markers of decay.

Lawrence was not alone in thinking this. In Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay*, London is similarly seen as a haven for 'darkness, disorder and dirt'.^[54] The efforts of the previous generation to beautify England are ridiculed: 'Poor Aunt Aggie with her Arts and Crafts, and her old English furniture. And to think she had taken them so seriously!'^[55] And the contemporary architectural critic, A. Trystan Edwards, similarly cites among the chief agents of degradation those nineteenth-century designers who most wished to change society for the better: the Arts and Crafts movement is dismissed as a 'costly vulgarity', and a Ruskin-designed, red-brick, gabled house, set amid a row of stuccoed, more classical buildings, is likened to 'a pointed and discoloured tooth in the midst of a pearly white row having the normal square-shaped tops'.^[56] It seems that part of the very 'tradition' of protest at the squalor of England's cities, to which Lawrence, Huxley and Edwards could be seen to be contributing, is now being repudiated as part of the gloominess that it set out to dispell. This in itself raises no problem for the social critic, providing his criticism can find another platform upon which to establish itself. Edwards founds his case upon a sure assertion that our cities would benefit from rediscovering the

sedate and comely forms of the 18th century houses [which] are a perfect embodiment of the social spirit. They belong to the community, they are born of the discovery that in domestic

architecture individuality is most securely established when houses defer to a common cultural standard.^[57]

In *Antic Hay*, the lack of such a standard produces a milieu of chaotic absurdity; nevertheless, there *are* standards from which individuals seek to improve their lives. It is just that, whether it be Theodore Gumbriel's wish for the influence and material successes of 'the Complete Man', his father's grand dream of building Wren's London, or Casimir Lypiatt's imitation of a Renaissance man, all such efforts have a paltry outcome and fail to connect with wider society.^[58] In *Kangaroo*, by contrast, all ideals and objectives are inherently dubious, and, without any model for changing the present world, there exists the real risk that social criticism will mutate into a denunciation of sociality itself.

And so it is that Somers feels attracted to the random scatter of Australian bungalows, 'all loose from one another' (346). Whereas Edwards allows the civic value of having at least 'a few buildings expressing majesty and repose [so as to] give additional stability and self-confidence to the community ... and stimulate it to further architectural efforts',^[59] such a sense of social permanence and pattern appears, for *Kangaroo*, to be lost with the war. The strewn buildings to which Somers comes to feel attuned, look to him 'like packing-cases' at the end of the novel (344), suggesting his own life - and Lawrence's - spent alternately storing himself away and shipping out.

In considering the architecture of *Kangaroo*, it is worthwhile digressing in order to take into account Tony Pinkney's contrast of what he sees as *The Rainbow*'s articulation of gothic values and *Women in Love*'s classicism. Pinkney's allegiances are to what he sees as the all-inclusiveness of *The Rainbow*:

premising [those allegiances] centrally on the claim that though *The Rainbow* can indeed fruitfully 'contain' [the classical-modernist values of] *Women in Love*, *Women in Love* can only undialectically expunge *The Rainbow*, sloughing off both English-regional realism and Gothic modernism in the process.^[60]

Women in Love is adjudged the lesser novel for its encyclopaedic enumeration of modernist art forms, which amounts to a classicist 'drive towards totality';^[61] somewhat contradictorily, perhaps, Pinkney endorses *The Rainbow* precisely because of *its* comprehensiveness: its drive 'to concede [classicist modernism's] limited, merely relative validity within an over-arching Gothic modernism'.^[62] What these texts are purportedly trying to accomplish is interesting: to 'contain' the other, its opposite. It seems evident, to me, that both novels offer different reactions to the monopolistic impetus of contemporary capitalism: 'not [to] abolish' its 'opposite' - free competition - but to exist 'over it and alongside of it'^[63] (the 'opposites' being, for *The Rainbow*, classicist values, and, for *Women in Love*, Gothic modernism). It would seem merely the case that *The Rainbow* achieves this ideological imperialism, whereas *Women in Love* cannot. And, considering my previous chapter upon *Women in Love*, it becomes apparent why this must be so: *Women in Love*'s attempt to reclaim free individualism as the proper condition of human affairs must, by its very nature, simultaneously endeavour to escape from and abjure any overarching, monopolistic development.

I do not see, here, any clear justification for Pinkney's preference for *The Rainbow*. More simply, it can be pointed out that both novels seek to legitimise a particular idea of social hierarchy. After all, their architectural sympathies correspond to upper-class tastes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A recent study has found that the 'greatest Goths among Victorian millionaires turn out to be

representatives of old families'.^[64] Buildings in the gothic style could be seen as embodying the survival of the *ancien régime*, its display of the acquisition and expenditure of new wealth. Not dissimilarly, *The Rainbow*'s gothic sympathies are for the 'over-arching' old order of 'Truth' that has to be born anew, sweeping away the recent industrial 'corruption';^[65] and Ursula could be a spokeswoman for the old landed families when she objects to the corruption of the genuine 'aristocracy of birth' by the industrial revolution's *arrivistes*, merely 'ruling in the name of money'.^[66]

Women in Love's classicism involves a similar attempt to legitimise hierarchy. The problem for *Women in Love*, however, is its anticipation of *Kangaroo*'s assertion that 'in 1915 the old world ended' (216).^[67] *Women in Love* finds it more difficult to establish the precedence for its hierarchical vision, to root itself in the naturalising soil of the past. The 'history' of the world of *Women in Love* may ostensibly be contained in *The Rainbow*, but, with its narrow temporal context and segmented episodes, the 'sequel' seems conspicuously divorced from the evolving narrative thread of its precursor. *Women in Love* is analogous to those *nouveaux riches*, produced by the industrial revolution, who, at some remove from the traditional lineage of lordly families, felt compelled to ensconce themselves therein by the synthesis of upper-class accoutrements. Classical architecture, which 'has generally been the vernacular of the ruling classes', was the overwhelming choice of the *nouveaux riches* as 'new money played safe' in constructing its own mansions that were 'rooted in the imagery of power'.^[68] But, whereas the *nouveaux riches* possessed genuine power, too, from their industrialised business concerns - exactly the opposite of the author's interests - Lawrence's new elite appear bereft of real power. *Women in Love*'s new rootless aristocracy of Birkin and Ursula would wish to claim to be the best of the current world, opposing Gerald's industrialism; but they have nothing to

back their claim, exactly because they wish to claim nothing from a putatively inferior world. And they seem unable to give anything to it: even Gudrun remains aloof from the worldly world, her artefacts attracting favourable comment but not selling.^[69]

Even so, both *The Rainbow*'s and *Women in Love*'s architectural sympathies have a more direct relation to hegemony than may first appear. The structure of *Women in Love* is formed by a collection of events, depicted in vivid relief (Gerald diving into the lake in 'Diver', or reining his horse in 'Coal-Dust') which Pinkney perceives as belonging to a classical aesthetic that is divested of gothic's 'organic accretions'.^[70] I would add that this corresponds with the emphatic individuality of the *nouveaux riches*, and their capitalist accomplishments, deprived, as they are, of all but the most rudimentary window-dressing of aristocratic history and tradition. In contrast, *The Rainbow*'s womb-like Gothic, which Pinkney sees as 'enthusiastically swamping' individual events in the gestation of 'consequences beyond their own intensity',^[71] is rather like the immersion of old-style aristocrats in centuries of family legacy.^[72]

At odds with all this is *Kangaroo*'s deliberate eschewal of the architecture of the ruling classes. *Kangaroo*'s chapters, which succeed each other like the 'bits' of the *Sydney Bulletin*, paying scant regard to demonstrate a 'consecutive thread' (272), could be seen to scorn that aristocratic concern for legitimate lineal descent. The bungalows of its settlements have none of the 'upstairs importance' symptomatic of England's class-system (109); their form is determined by their function as a home, rather than functioning to effect submission, as with gothic's naturalising of dominance, or neo-classicism's legitimising of an elite. Furthermore, these bungalows, which Somers comes to like, are seen initially as 'close together and yet apart, like modern democracy' (11). So, there is possibly some recognition that demos

potentially offers a means to avoid the unpleasant choice between personal engulfment and societal alienation. But it can only be the most tentative hint, because, although *Kangaroo* attempts to break free from those monopolistic drives achieved in *The Rainbow* and expressed indirectly in *Women in Love*, without negotiating the relation of its own anarcho-authoritarian individualism to the monopoly that ensued from such individualism in history, it is unable to evolve a further principle that would serve to distinguish a different path to take: it establishes, in effect, a 'freedom' which cannot express itself because it has nowhere to go, nothing to say - a silence that testifies, after all, to the determining absent presence of monopoly.^[73]

Somers find that his freedom can only be expressed in the negative: 'You have to go *through* the mistakes', he concludes (347), and the extent to which *Kangaroo* tries to catalogue them is as comprehensive as any imperialistic impulse in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Thus, the novel's opening chapter finds Somers and his wife still adhering to, and working through, the old mistakes of Europe. Harriett regards Sydney's bungalows, with loathing, as 'little dog-kennels', while Somers mocks her longing for something preposterously grand by suggesting that she wants her new country to consist of 'old chateaus [*sic*] and Tudor manors' (13). Indeed, Harriett long harbours a dream of a New World made up, not of cities, but of 'beautiful, manorial farm-houses and dainty, perfect villages' (191); and neither, for that matter, is Somers beyond pining for Renaissance cathedrals and 'thatched cottages' (19). Such cottages, in their 'perfect villages', complete with lordly manor house, present a picture of the secure private unit that is yet connected to, and further protected by, the social significance of a thoroughly decent England. The war has exposed this picture as a travesty. In 'The Nightmare' chapter, we see the almost literally chocolate-boxy bliss of the Somerses' wartime Christmas, spent at their

cottage in Cornwall with two American friends, torn apart by the intrusion of a police-sergeant. The police-sergeant, 'decent' enough himself (217), is nevertheless acting under direction of the 'military canaille' who continue their harassment of Somers by interrogating and eventually deporting his American male friend (224-5). As the American woman makes fudge, against the backdrop of a black rainy night, a moment of snug domesticity is crushed by hostile outside forces:

Into the cosy cottage room, with the American girl at the fire,
her face flushed with the fudge-making, entered the big, burly,
ruddy police-sergeant, his black mackintosh-cape streaming
wet. (224)

But once the 'black walls of the war', which remorselessly 'come, in, in, in' and threaten to push Somers into the pit (257), are removed, the sheltered cosiness promised by England's cottages appears pointless anyway: the Oxfordshire cottage, to which the Somerses have moved in the meantime, becomes 'tame', a 'nowhere' (258). Pre-war ideological constructions have collapsed into a black-hole.^[74]

In Australia, the house to which the Somerses first move, with its accumulation of 'bits of old paper and tin cans' (26), is a 'cottage' altogether unlike those idealised creations which Somers recalls of Hampstead Garden Suburb, bedecked with 'geraniums and lobelias' (26). The ironically named 'Torestin' (the Somerses vacate it within days), proposes a different set of priorities to those English abodes, whose dainty perfection supposedly represents security and settlement more than any name. Even so, life in these Australian cottages is not immune from daintiness. When a visiting neighbour runs home eagerly at the prospect of chocolates, bought for her by her husband, Somers immediately thinks of a newspaper advertisement: 'Billyer's chocolates sweeten the home' (54). In conjunction with the

fudge-making scene in the Cornish cottage, this perhaps forms a rare instance of *Kangaroo* acknowledging the vitalising process of production, as compared with the mere consumption of that which is peddled to you. The typically saccharine, commercialised sentimentality of such advertisements makes 'chocolate-box' a perfectly appropriate attributive to what is now an abject, subjected domesticity. And it is, in part, the hope of escaping the proximity of a community of couples that encourages the Somerses to leave Sydney's 'Torestin' for 'Coo-ee', on the coast. If individual homes are no longer defended, but in fact threatened, by the social nexus, then it would seem imperative to find a home that is apart from society and represents a stand against it. But the name 'Coo-ee' (the call used to attract attention from a distance) does not suggest such a place; and, even more ominously, the new residence is introduced as being 'well built, solid, in the good English fashion' (81). So, sure enough, it is only a matter of time before 'Coo-ee' is blown apart by a cyclone, during a black, wet night which recalls those spent on the Cornish coast during the war. The connection is emphasised by the description of the couple: 'alone and silent in the shell of the house as if in a submarine' (350). In Cornwall, the Somerses had been suspected of sending messages to enemy submarines (227); but now it is they who can confirm that the 'good English' household has truly descended into the depths of treason and devastation.

One by one, domiciles and lodging places are revealed as offering no security against invasion. And this is only to be expected, because in Somers and Harriett, *Kangaroo* inherits the uprooted individualism of *Women in Love*'s Ursula and Birkin, an individualism based upon wandering free from social settlement. Following on from *Women in Love*'s attempt to rescue individualism from the clutches of a hostile society, though, *Kangaroo* shows deracinated individuals

searching for new values to live by. The obvious problem, here, is that, to have any practical value in a human world, such values have to be social values, which facilitate the individual's negotiation of the society in which he or she must live: and admission of this social connection is just the thing that Lawrence's individuals must prevent, in order to protect the desiccated purity of their ideas about individuality and freedom.

So it is that, when Somers becomes most attracted to the Australian landscape, he is most determined to leave (347). But, in any case, the virtues perceived in the countryside and its settlements, by Somers and Harriett, perfectly accord with the policy of endless removal. In the Somerses' view, the towns do not appear to be '*finished*' (273), and are 'temporary seeming' (346); they appear as forever emergent (without ever becoming anything definite), and fugitive - the very qualities of Somers himself. They are in proportion to Somers's post-war world, chopped down to more modest dimensions. Somers eventually recoils from 'the heavy established European way of life', with its 'enormous encumbrances of stone and steel and brick weighing on the surface of the earth' (346). The demolition of faith in old certainties, which was begun in *The Rainbow*, is completed in *Kangaroo*. As a substitute for his earlier reverential adoration of Lincoln Cathedral, Will Brangwen establishes a more aesthetic concern for his local church, undertaking to 'keep the church fabric and the church-ritual intact';^[75] Somers, though, rejects even these artistic pretensions: 'the mass of it made him sick, and the beauty was nauseous to him. ... He had now a horror of vast superincumbent buildings. They were a nightmare. Even the cathedrals. Huge, huge bulks that are called beauty. Beauty seemed to him like some turgid tumour.' The pared-down frame of Australia's

‘flimsy’ bungalows indicates the radical surgery that is deemed necessary to treat the corrupt tumidity of European culture (346).

Despite all of this, newly emerging influences from that world are clearly detectable in Somers’s thought; but where such ideas commonly have distinct social concerns, Somers cuts them away from all possible collective impulses and societal applications. Thus he expresses his attraction to the emptiness of the Australian landscape:

still so clear and clean, clean of all foggiess or confusion ... the frail, aloof, inconspicuous clarity of the landscape was like a sort of heaven, bungalows, shacks, corrugated iron and all. No wonder Australians love Australia. It is the land that as yet has made no great mistake, humanly. The horrible human mistake of Europe. And probably, the even worse human mistake of America. (347)

The ‘clear’, ‘clean’, ‘clarity’ which Somers identifies in the Australian landscape, smacks of the stark aesthetic of the Bauhaus,^[76] which offered a way clear of ‘foggiess’ and ‘confusion’ - but without finding it necessary to despatch humankind and its achievements. Throughout *Kangaroo*, reference is made to Australia’s freedom from massive edifices: at night, ‘the vast town of Sydney’ seems to be ‘sprinkled on the surface of a darkness into which it never penetrated’ (13); the coastal settlement at Wolloona mirrors Somers in being ‘not rooted in’ (273); the Australian bungalows look ‘as if they weighed nothing’ (343), and we are repeatedly informed as to their lack of foundations (273, 342, 346). Walter Gropius extols the New Architecture of the Bauhaus for producing a similar illusion of weightlessness: ‘Instead of anchoring buildings ponderously into the ground with massive foundations, it poises them lightly, yet firmly, upon the face of the earth’.^[77] It is perhaps the case that Somers would not like Gropius’s use of ‘firmly’; and this marks

the difference between Lawrence's emphasis upon humanity's corruption of Nature and Gropius's steadfast belief in human progress, over and above what is offered by the natural world. The fact that Gropius's position is the more coherent one, is borne out by the Bauhaus's potential to use the advances made possible by Lawrence's hated machine-age towards ends that appear quite Lawrentian.^[78] Somers's liking for the emptiness of Australia is matched by Gropius's approval of architecture's 'growing preponderance of voids over solids'; but this improvement is only feasible due to the industrial developments that *Kangaroo* abhors:

Our fresh technical resources have furthered the disintegration of solid masses of masonry into slender piers, with consequent far-reaching economies in bulk, space, weight, and haulage. New synthetic substances - steel, concrete, glass - are actively superseding the traditional raw materials of construction. Their rigidity and molecular density have made it possible to erect wide-spanned and all but transparent structures, for which the skill of previous ages was manifestly inadequate. This enormous saving in structural volume was an architectural revolution in itself.^[79]

There can be no corresponding revolution in *Kangaroo*, however: 'Revolutions - nothingnesses. Nothing could ever matter' (356). The novel is entirely antipathetic to that social sphere which something must affect if it is to merit being ascribed the sweeping, far-reaching properties that are connoted by the term 'revolution'. Indeed, Somers realises his great love of Australia only when he has perceived its people to be exactly like himself: 'Rudimentary individuals with no desire of communication'; his paradoxical love for people with whom he wishes to have no social intercourse can only find satisfaction in the 'disintegration of the social mankind back to its elements' (345).

Somers suggests elsewhere: 'It's much easier to point to a wrecked house, if you want to build something new, than to persuade people to pull the house down and build it up in a better style' (207). And so it is just possible, therefore, to see how his wished-for social disintegration need not be entirely negative. Indeed, we may be helped in this if we consider another contemporary movement in urban planning, that of the Garden City, which promoted the idea of greener, more spacious cityscapes, as opposed to the contemporary dark, crowded ones. At the forefront of the Garden City movement was Ebenezer Howard, of whom it can thus be said: 'In the name of progress he called for the dismantling of the very cities that sheltered the most advanced centres of art and science.'^[80] The broad aims of the Garden City may well seem appealing to someone who wishes to get rid of ponderous, massive, ugly superstructures. But, in fact, this comparison only points up Lawrence's resolute resistance to establishing any of *his* ideas of progress in anything like as clear and concrete a manner as did Howard demonstrate his own, at Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City (founded in 1904 and 1920, respectively). In *Kangaroo*, at least, it seems that Lawrence would simply leave society dismantled, rather than build towards anything else.

Kangaroo's own reference to Hampstead Garden Suburb makes this much obvious. Somers's recollection of its 'pretty' cottages forms a marked contrast to the 'weary and dreary' scene that he finds upon arrival in Australia (26). But Somers comes to like the Australian cottages precisely because of their disintegration of the *soi-disant* 'beauty' of England's towns: the latter is seen to be a sham, as counterfeit as the social conscience behind its aesthetic.^[81] And it may be alleged that Hampstead indeed was created from an ideal of community which appears rather quaint and glib: 'From the first, the suburb had high social purposes: as a contemporary put it, it

would be a place “where the poor shall teach the rich, and the rich, let us hope, shall help the poor to help themselves””.^[82]

Crucially, though, the counterpointing of Somers’s recollection of Hampstead to his perceptions of the Australian townscapes does not present a face-off merely between social idealism and individualistic cynicism. The casual reference to Hampstead supplies one more trigger for a deconstruction of what, in actual fact, is *Kangaroo*’s individualistic *idealism*: the same flimsy ineffectuality that we saw exposed against the materially-necessitated individualism of Wiltshire, in Stevenson’s *The Beach of Falesá*. Hampstead Garden Suburb (founded 1906) is generally considered to be a key turning point and one of the most successful projects of the Garden City movement, exactly because ‘it was self-confessedly not a garden city, but a garden suburb’. Even on a scale of eight thousand houses, it had no pretensions to be the kind of independent unity so admired by Lawrence: on the contrary, it was thoroughly and ‘openly dependent on commuting from an adjacent tube station, which opened just as it was being planned’.^[83] This necessary connection to a greater whole, and, more particularly, to an industrial centre, is just what *Kangaroo* does not want to accept. The only thing that Somers would replace it with, however, is quite literally ‘nothing’; and, if its pages are not to reflect the blankness of the Australian desert, the text is compelled to allude persistently to that connection, if only as the thing that must be broken from: it can never be erased entirely.

The sheer futility and negativism of Somers’s attempt to cleanse himself of society is most apparent, though, in its wholesale misanthropy. His reflection upon the ubiquity of trade, for instance, makes clear that Somers is fleeing humanity itself, rather than specific social forms.

Ah, a new country! The cabbage, for example, cost tenpence, in the normal course of things, and a cauliflower a shilling. And the tradesmen's carts flew round in the wilderness, delivering goods. There isn't much newness in *man*, whatever the country. (192)

Somers cannot abide trade, unsurprisingly, because it is a fundamental form of social exchange. Somers refuses such exchange throughout the novel, and perhaps this is why: for if he were to consider himself a '*man*', then his inherent lack of 'newness' would of course explode the rationale for his pursuit of the 'Unknown'. What we see instead, however, is that in his stubborn preoccupation with the 'Unknown' - which is to say, with the non-human - he ends up as one small parasite upon the behemoth of monopolistic capitalism.

A novel that depicts an individual's search for freedom from monopolistic capitalism, while trying to suppress the relationship to capitalism of its own idea of freedom, is eminently germane to the twenty-first century, when imperialism is becoming truly global, often in the name of defending the freedom of the individual. *Kangaroo* remains of a piece with a world that is as straitened as ever between the Scylla and Charybdis of the material reality of imperialism and the rhetorical seductiveness of individualism.

NOTES

- [1] See Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable* (1952), in *The Beckett Trilogy* (1959; London, Pan Books, 1979), p. 267.
- [2] Samuel Beckett, 'Ding-Dong', in *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934; London, John Calder, 1993), p. 39.
- [3] D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 361, n.10:8. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [4] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Beach of Falesá* (1892, originally entitled

- Uma*), in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, ed. Jenni Calder (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979), p. 142.
- [5] Somers is described as 'a man with an income of four hundred a year, a writer of poems and essays' (13). Nowhere does *Kangaroo* explicitly mention that Somers receives a private income: however, neither does it mention him doing any work in Australia. Earning the above amount purely as a sporadic poet and essayist would be quite an achievement - never mind stabilising such an income to a general annual rate. £400 per annum is the sum of Rupert Birkin's private income in *Women in Love*: a figure possibly derived from the £200 p.a. private income of Lawrence's friend Cecil Gray (who appears in *Kangaroo* as James Sharpe, 'a young Edinburgh man with a modest income of his own' [232]), doubled, in order to maintain a married couple. (Information on Gray's income from Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D.H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912-1922* [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 412.)
- [6] The contrasting situations are sardonically described by Struthers at the Labour rally: 'Supposing the worker *does* get his pound a day. It is enormous, isn't it! It is preposterous. Of course it is. But it isn't preposterous for a small bunch of owners or shareholders to get their *ten* pounds a day, *for doing nothing*' (308).
- [7] D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Introduction and notes by Anne Fernihough (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 378.
- [8] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 106.
- [9] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 141. Wiltshire has previously told an English missionary: 'I'm no missionary, nor missionary lover; I'm no Kanaka [native South Sea Islander], nor favourer of Kanakas - I'm just a trader' (pp. 132-3).
- [10] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 122.
- [11] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 122.
- [12] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 122.
- [13] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1843; London, J.M. Dent, 1912), p. 257.
- [14] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, pp. 113-14.
- [15] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 149.
- [16] This defence is typically withheld from the 'merely' intellectual London scene which Lawrence deserted and saw as being engrossed in 'talk for talk's sake, without the very faintest intention of a result in action' (D.H. Lawrence, 'Dull London' [1928], in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore [London, Heinemann, 1968], p. 561). For Lawrence's differentiation between an individual's 'thought' as a productive 'experience', and 'intellect' as a socialised practice, see 'On Being a Man' (1924), in *Phoenix II*, pp. 616-22.
- [17] David Lodge, 'Lawrence, Dostoevsky, Bakhtin: Lawrence and dialogic fiction', in Keith Brown (ed.), *Rethinking Lawrence* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1990), p. 97.
- [18] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882), in *Memories and Portraits* (1887; London, Chatto and Windus, 1911), p. 157.
- [19] L.D. Clark, 'Making the Classic Contemporary: Lawrence's Pilgrimage

- Novels and American Romance', in Peter Preston and Peter Hoare (eds.) *D.H. Lawrence in the Modern World* (London, Macmillan, 1989), p. 202.
- [20] See D.H. Lawrence, letter to Robert Mountsier, 26-30 May 1922, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol IV: June 1921-March 1924*, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 247.
- [21] Expelled from Cornwall, during the war, for example, Somers experiences in London the 'Torture of nostalgia' - despite having wanted to leave Cornwall for America during most of the time that he lived there (248).
- [22] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, p. 115.
- [23] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Compton Mackenzie, 11 June 1920, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol III: October 1916-June 1921*, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 549.
- [24] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'El Dorado' (1878), in *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Essays in Belles Lettres* (1881; London, Heinemann, 1924), pp. 82, 85.
- [25] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Mary Cannan, 31 August 1922, *Letters: Vol IV*, p. 286.
- [26] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Mary Cannan, 5 April 1922, *Letters: Vol IV*, p. 224.
- [27] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879; London, Chatto and Windus, 1895), p. 73.
- [28] See R. Croucher, *We Refuse to Starve in Silence: a history of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, 1920-46* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1987).
- [29] H.G. Wells, *Men Like Gods* (London and Glasgow, Collins, 1923).
- [30] It may be argued that such whimsy is Somers's protest at an overly rationalising world, one which, since the Enlightenment and age of Utility, has sought to understand human beings nomothetically, as generalisable, calculable units, and less as unique individuals. Such is the state of affairs which Dostoyevsky's man from underground protests against when he proclaims: 'this whim, may be for us, gentlemen, the greatest benefit on earth ... even when it does us obvious harm and contradicts our reason's soundest conclusions on the subject of what is beneficial - because it does at any rate preserve what is dear and extremely important to us, that is our personality and our individuality' (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes From Underground* [1864], in *Notes From Underground/The Double*, trans. Jessie Coulson [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972], p. 36). However, again like Dostoyevsky's narrator, it appears that Somers merely affirms his perversity rather than his personality, and only demonstrates the poverty of an individuality that is grounded upon little else but wilful eccentricity. Somers, after all, is another man who has gone underground, one of the 'men who think and therefore don't do anything' (Dostoyevsky, p. 20), usually to be found 'in one of those endless conversations with himself which were his chief delight' (Lawrence, *Kangaroo* p. 280), but who is virtually incapable of interacting with others.
- [31] The same could be said of Jack who, watching a game of football, is most concerned to see 'how would chance settle it' (180). The vagaries of chance, a defining feature of the capitalist system that the Diggers have set themselves against (46), are enjoyed as part of a universal natural order! The anarchy of Jack's thought is perhaps evident when he subsequently confuses random 'chance' with predetermined 'fate': 'Even the football field, with its

wildly scurrying blues and bits of red, was only a frenzied shuffling of fate, with men for the instruments' (180). The preparation, planning and skilled teamwork involved in the game - things which the Diggers, with their meticulously arranged organisation, would presumably pride themselves upon (92-3) - are not considered: these things, required for political change, are incidental; purposive human action is wholly to give way to impersonal forces when the reward of human labour is decided.

- [32] D.H. Lawrence, *The First and Second Lady Chatterley Novels*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 85-6.
- [33] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley Novels*, p. 193.
- [34] V.I. Lenin, 'Preface to the French and German Editions' (1920), in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), trans. Anon. (London, Pluto Press, 1996), pp. 4, 5.
- [35] See, for example, 'Democracy': 'the Kaiser sounded so foolish. He was really only the head of a very great business concern. ... It is only Ideal concerns which go to war, and slaughter indiscriminately with a feeling of exalted righteousness. But when a business concern masquerades as an ideal concern, and behaves in this fashion, it is really unbearable' (D.H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 67).
- [36] Thus, for example, after subjection to his military medical re-examination, described in *Kangaroo*'s 'The Nightmare' chapter, Lawrence wrote a missive that anticipates Somers's rejection of Struthers' socialists and Cooley's ex-soldiers: 'from this day I take a new line. I've done with society and humanity - Labour and Military can alike go to hell. Henceforth it is for myself, my own life, I live: a good jolly personal life, with a few people who are friends, and the rest can do what they like' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 26 September 1918, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 288).
- [37] For a brief summary of capital's transitional form at the time, see Norman Lewis and James Malone, 'Introduction' to Lenin, *Imperialism*, pp. xxvi-xxxii.
- [38] Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 89.
- [39] For example, the month after leaving Australia, having arrived in Taos, New Mexico, he wrote: 'I still haven't extricated all of me out of Australia. In one part of myself I came to love it - really to love it, Australia. But the restless "questing beast" part of me kicked me out, and here I am.' And, like Somers, who is sickened at the thought of 'feeling cosy and "homely"' (147), Lawrence also wrote from his new location: 'I feel a great stranger, but have got used to that feeling, and prefer it to feeling "homely"' (D.H. Lawrence, letters to Anna Jenkins and to E.M. Forster, 20 September 1922, *Letters: Vol IV*, pp. 303, 301).
- [40] Macdonald Daly, 'Introduction' to D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, ed. Bruce Steele (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1997), p. xxviii. (All subsequent references to '*Kangaroo*', unless stated otherwise, pertain to the edition by Cambridge University Press.)
- [41] So, for instance, in post-civil-war Bosnia, where the vast majority of the people still support their respective nationalist political parties, they are treated as suffering from mass delusion, 'the passive acceptance of

prejudices'. See: Monthly report (February 1997) of the Democratisation Branch of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (charged to implement the USA-imposed Dayton Accord), quoted by Dave Chandler, 'More Democratisers, Less Democracy', *Living Marxism* 103 (September 1997), p. 33.

- [42] So, for example, Jean-François Lyotard, in *The Postmodern Condition*, asserts the now wearily familiar postmodern truth-claim that: 'economic powers have reached the point of imperiling the stability of the State through new forms of the circulation of capital that go by the generic name of *multinational corporations*' (Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [1979], trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi [Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984], p. 5). Despite being a professed advocate of dissension, however, Lyotard fails to refer to any counter-argument in his references, which only cite various sources to support his view. One example that would challenge what Lyotard more usually argues is the 'terror' of such consensus is Lenin's *Imperialism* (see especially chapters 5 and 6) whose continuing relevance is explained by Lewis and Malone: 'at the very moment that theorists of globalisation play up the end of the sovereign state, the borderless world and the "tentacles of the Internet", the power of Western nation states has expanded enormously. Today, these states occupy Bosnia and "advise" Cambodia and Yasser Arafat. ... Indeed the West has so called into question the legitimacy and integrity of *Third World* nations that *their* existence as independent entities is seriously jeopardised' - my emphases (Lewis and Malone, 'Introduction' to Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. lv).
- [43] For a brief outline of the Marxist-Leninist concept of capitalist decay, see Lewis and Malone, 'Introduction' to Lenin, *Imperialism*, pp. xvi-xxvi.
- [44] Daly, 'Introduction', p. xxxiii.
- [45] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983; 2nd edn, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996), p. 165.
- [46] D.H. Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, ed. Philip Crumpton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 257-8.
- [47] D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994), p. 62.
- [48] D.H. Lawrence, *Sketches of Etruscan Places* (wr. 1927), in *Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays*, ed. Simonetta de Filippis (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 119.
- [49] In Lawrence's case, see, for example, the ridicule of the socialist youths' ideal of equality, in 'Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers' (1923): 'What rot, to see the cabbage and hibiscus-tree/As equals!/What rot, to say the louts along the Corso/In Sunday suits and yellow shoes/ Are my equals!' (*The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Vol I*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts [1964; London, Heinemann, 1967], p. 316.)
- [50] Lawrence, *Movements in European History*, p. 266.
- [51] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Robert Mountsier, 24 December 1923, *Letters: Vol IV*, p. 550.
- [52] Thus William Morris addressed University College, Oxford, on 14 November 1883: 'Not only are London and our other great commercial cities mere masses of sordidness, filth. and squalor, ... not only have whole

counties of England, and the heavens that hang over them, disappeared beneath a crust of unutterable grime, but the disease, which ... would seem to be a love of dirt and ugliness for its own sake, spreads all over the country, and every little market-town seizes the opportunity to imitate, as far as it can, the majesty of the hell of London and Manchester. ... in short, our civilization is passing like a blight, daily growing heavier and more poisonous, over the whole face of the country, so that every change is sure to be a change for the worse' (William Morris, lecture entitled 'Art and Democracy', published as 'Art under Plutocracy' [1884], extract in *Selections from the Prose Works of William Morris*, ed. A.H.R. Ball [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1931], pp. 109-10).

- [53] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Witter Bynner, 17 December 1923, *Letters: Vol IV*, p. 546.
- [54] Aldous Huxley, *Antic Hay* (1923; London, HarperCollins, 1994), p. 129.
- [55] Huxley, p. 94.
- [56] A. Trystan Edwards, *Good and Bad Manners in Architecture* (1924; 2nd edn, London, John Tiranti, 1946), pp. 158, 104.
- [57] Edwards, p. 122.
- [58] Gumbriel squanders his chance of romantic love and is left with nothing but his scheme for selling pneumatic trousers; his father's model for an improved London ends up as a museum piece; and Lypiatt's artistic mission produces only suicidal despair and paintings which resemble 'Italian vermouth advertisements' (Huxley, pp. 216-17, 237, 222, 81).
- [59] Edwards, p. 26.
- [60] Tony Pinkney, 'Northernness and Modernism' (1990), reprinted in Peter Widdowson (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence* (London, Longman, 1992), p. 194.
- [61] Tony Pinkney, 'Northernness and Modernism', p. 193.
- [62] Tony Pinkney, 'Northernness and Modernism', p. 188.
- [63] Lenin, *Imperialism*, p. 89.
- [64] J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches: Style and Status in Victorian and Edwardian Architecture* (London, John Murray, 1999), p. 40.
- [65] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 459.
- [66] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 427.
- [67] The old aristocracy is redundant, too. *Women in Love* caricatures Lady Ottoline Morrell, Lawrence's consequently erstwhile friend, as Hermione Roddice, one of 'the slack aristocracy that keeps touch with the arts', but who has 'a lack of robust self ... no natural sufficiency' (D.H. Lawrence *Women in Love* [1920], ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Mark Kinkead-Weekes [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995], p. 16). This is in sharp contrast with the robustly self-sufficient artist, Gudrun. Winifred Crich, preparing a presentation bouquet for Gudrun's return from London as her teacher, is teased by the family gardener: 'Who's coming then? - the Duchess of Portland?' (Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 279.) The Duchess was Ottoline's sister-in-law, but such a family is now superseded by a new elite.
- [68] Crook, pp. 45, 55, 47.
- [69] Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 281.
- [70] Tony Pinkney, 'Northernness and Modernism', p. 191.
- [71] Tony Pinkney, 'Northernness and Modernism', p. 192.

- [72] This is most obvious in the (carefully recorded) appellative refrain through the line of titular inheritors - in Ottoline Morrell's family, for example, in the succession of William Bentincks as Duke of Portland. See Miranda Seymour, *Ottoline Morrell: Life on a Grand Scale* (1992; 2nd edn, London, Hodder, 1998), p. 8.
- [73] In respect to this absent presence, it is worth remembering Somers's effort to establish his 'ascendancy' over everything beyond his own person, or, where this is not possible, to reject those things (above, pp. 182-3). The consequence of this is that he rejects everything and thus 'frees' himself of the world totally, in a kind of reverse monopoly.
- [74] Similarly, *Antic Hay* records how the English cottage has descended into self-parody: a shop called 'Ye Olde Farme House' sells 'sham cottage furniture'; and Gumbriel Junior, denying himself a summer in the country with the woman who embodies 'his one hope of happiness', envisions her waiting for him in 'a cottage altogether too cottagey': it is too good to be true for him (Huxley, pp. 94, 181, 152).
- [75] Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 193.
- [76] The connection between Lawrence and the Bauhaus is made by Tony Pinkney, *D.H. Lawrence* (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Press, 1990). Besides one or two superficial (although interesting) points of relation, however, I feel that these essentially incommensurable subjects form a misalliance.
- [77] Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, trans. P. Morton Shand (London, Faber and Faber, 1935), p. 32.
- [78] Most notable, in regard to Somers's distaste for man's 'mad struggle' with 'material necessities and conveniences' (131), is Gropius's declaration that, 'in the last resort mechanization can have only one object: to abolish the individual's physical toil of providing himself with the necessities of existence in order that hand and brain may be set free for some higher order of activity' (Gropius, p. 25).
- [79] Gropius, pp. 23, 21.
- [80] Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (Cambridge, MA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1982), pp. 87-8.
- [81] Subsequently, when Lawrence turned to the fiasco of urban England in his non-fiction, he could well have had Hampstead in mind: '[The English] don't know how to build a city, how to think of one, or how to live in one. They are all suburban, pseudo-cottagey, and not one of them knows how to be truly urban because we have frustrated that instinct of community which would make us unite in pride and dignity in the bigger gesture of the citizen, not the cottager' (D.H. Lawrence, 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside' [1930], in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald [New York, Viking Press, 1936], p. 139).
- [82] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (1988; 2nd edn, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996), p. 103.
- [83] Hall, p. 101.

CHAPTER THREE

***MEASURE US BY WHAT YOU WILL, WE'LL MEASURE YOU A MEASURE AND BE GONE: THE RETORT OF LAWRENTIAN SATIRE TO A WORLD THAT SEES ITSELF FAIR, NONE ELSE BEING BY*^[1]**

No writer ever wrote exactly what he wanted to write, because there was never anything inside himself, anything purely individual that he did want to write. It's all reaction of one sort or another.

Raymond Chandler^[2]

The end of my chapter on *Women in Love* observed that Lawrence's work is often caught in an impasse between individual and society, and that the later work frequently obfuscates the situation with mystical camouflage and the proposal of a benign authoritarianism. *Kangaroo's* deadlock between imperialism and individualism, together with its flirtation with the 'mystery of lordship',^[3] chiefly follows this pattern. But another avenue taken by Lawrence's writing, which promises to be less impeded by the problems of *Kangaroo*, is that of satire. Satire customarily works to demystify the ways that power is exerted and justified, to allow a potentially clearer view of how people, beliefs and institutions exist in relation to each other.

A neat example is provided by Lawrence's short story, 'The Lovely Lady' (1927), which assails two varieties of mystification: that of the ghost story, in which the governance of human life is overseen by supernatural forces, and, more specifically, the spellbinding power of an ageing mother over her son. Pauline Attenborough, the eponymous 'Lovely Lady', whose loveliness, of both physique and character, is dependent upon an array of deceptions, has already apparently terminated

the love affair of her eldest son, Henry, and consequently the life of Henry himself. She has since focused her manipulative forces upon her younger son, Robert, whose existence now threatens to become a living death: 'He was fascinated by her. Completely fascinated. And for the rest, paralysed in a lifelong confusion.'^[4] The 'rest' includes Cecilia, his cousin, who lives with them and believes that a relatively normal relationship with Robert is still possible, if it were not for Pauline's tyranny. Pauline's control is loosened after she thinks she hears the voice of Henry's spirit (actually Cecilia's imitation through a convenient drainpipe) condemning her as his murderer and warning her to let Robert marry before she kills him also. Consumed by her sense of guilt and, no less, her gullibility, Pauline withers away and dies.

We are told that Cecilia 'loathed the supernatural, ghosts and voices and rappings and all the rest' (345); and, on one level, 'The Lovely Lady' carefully inverts the conventional ghost story. In many ghost stories the material world is merely the medium for the workings of the supernatural: here, and particularly for Pauline, who is destined to make 'an exquisite skeleton' (339), and whose spirit survives death only in the form of the 'Pauline Attenborough Museum' (355), the material world is all there is. Indeed, Pauline's self-absorbed materialism proves an even better channel for the pseudo-supernatural fakery of Cecilia. The voice from 'beyond', rather than - as in supernatural stories - asserting the presence of some hidden 'order', affirms Cecilia's presence of mind in taking the opportunity to remove the obstacle to her future life with Robert. The human world is under human jurisdiction, and it is thus the affair of humans, and not supernatural forces, to change it. The potential problem within this recognition, for Lawrence, is precisely that faced by Somers in *Kangaroo*: for Somers, conceiving, never mind establishing, a just social order proves virtually impossible - hence his retreat into a private mysticism. It is telling, too, that in *The Plumed*

Serpent, Lawrence's novel which, outwardly, most directly broaches the subject of societal reform, the legitimacy of political revolution is maintained by its basis upon a religious renaissance.^[5] However, within the domestic scope of such stories as 'The Lovely Lady' the issue of the new order's justness and legitimacy need concern us no further beyond the clear impression that Pauline gets nothing more than she deserves: Cecilia, in effect, murders Pauline by means no more deceitful and manipulative than those used by Pauline herself.

Pauline's gullibility is engendered by her self-conceited complacency. She presents herself in the manner of a 'Mona Lisa who knew a thing or two. But Pauline knew more' (340); and, if one side of her narcissistic self-obsession is that she exhibits herself as enigmatic and endlessly interesting, the other side is that people around her are reduced to banalities: Robert is 'like a fish in a tank' and Cecilia is 'the cat fishing for [him]' (351). For Pauline there is no such fishing, because her world is readily within her grasp, both materially and cognitively. And so it is that her incipient guilt is enough to bestow Cecilia's sham with authenticity. The case is not simply that the ghostly voice corroborates Pauline's own fears, but that, reciprocally, because the ghostly judgement accords with her own misgivings, its verity is therefore established upon what are, for her, the most solid grounds. The supposedly supernatural origin of the voice is of little import in comparison to the crucial factor that it refers directly to Pauline - as is the normal order for all things, worldly or otherworldly. There can be no mysteries for Pauline because, as far as she is concerned, the hidden and inexplicable form the very essence of her own character, and that realm which others concede as the 'Unknown' 'naturally' renders itself to her as immediately knowable. But Pauline gets her deserts for such presumptuousness when her self-belief is

exploded by the 'hidden' world (only the despised Cecilia, concealed at the other end of the drainpipe) making known *her* most carefully shielded secret.

Indeed, that which Lawrence takes as his real target is seen as something of much wider importance than the conventions of ghost and murder-mystery stories which he also parodies here. 'The Lovely Lady', after all, is in tune with those ghost stories, such as Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), for example, which thrive upon the ambiguity of supernatural and natural phenomena, and thereby indicate the realm of the unknown, the limits that always encompass human knowledge and which determine human fallibility. The difference in 'The Lovely Lady' is that a pronounced *absence* of supernatural phenomena combines with Pauline's all-too-ready acceptance of the supernatural as a natural certainty to show the danger of disregarding those limits. The story attacks that facile solipsism which would deny any significance to others - that same quality which is detectable in *Kangaroo's* Somers and *Women in Love's* Birkin.^[6] Furthermore, as if to underline Somers's proximity to those he denounces, Pauline's culpability also corresponds with that Victorian imperialist disposition, identified in *Kangaroo*, to reduce everything possible within the confines of its own culture and to dismiss anything that is inconveniently strange: 'The Unknown became a joke: is still a joke' - but a joke which threatens to turn against its makers.^[7] So it is that Pauline, whose manipulative 'confusion' (342) of Cecilia and Robert fashions a mockery of mysterious otherness, is undone by the crudest travesty of otherworldliness.

In short, the story's teeth are set to work upon the conventional prey of satire: self-satisfied complacency, the vanity of human knowledge, and the attendant gullibility. It is perhaps not difficult to surmise why Lawrence turned to satire so frequently in the 1920s, in his fiction, poetry and essays. To someone ideologically at

sea, antithetical to dominant modes of theorising and constructing human life and society while bereft of faith in emergent alternatives, satire offers some attractive reassurances: it exposes belief as credulousness, knowledge as delusion, and authority as mere pretence.

These qualities perhaps suggest the potentially conservative bias of satire: if there is no sure way of knowing what action is for the best, if any given creed invites derision rather than assent, then how or why try to change anything? The contemporary satirist, Craig Brown, has contended that satire is the natural means of expression for a writer, such as himself, who is 'ambivalent about everything': 'Parody's good because it allows you to have your cake and eat it. It's a way of not making your mind up.'^[8] Such remarks as Brown's, however breezily self-deprecatory, would certainly provide an accurate description of that type of Lawrentian irony which was discussed in my Introduction and which is exemplified by Rawdon Lilly's disclaimer: 'Do you take this as my gospel? ... I should say the blank opposite with just as much fervour'.^[9] By shrouding his words in an ironic fog, Lilly effectively withdraws them from further interrogation: he gives himself a free hand to polemicise, and is free, too, from the burden of defending such statements. But the consequences of this luxurious freedom are self-negating: for, cut off from the dialectics that would seek to establish their sincerity, or otherwise, any ideas expressed within such a vacuum are immediately consigned to an epistemological limbo. The emphatic manner in which Lilly refuses publicly to 'make his mind up', and that of Lawrence at large, in *Aaron's Rod*, *Women in Love* and, particularly, *Kangaroo*, may seem designed to leave the recipients of their discourse floundering in semantic confusion. Alternatively, as I suggested earlier,^[10] it may be seen that the texts' ambivalence often supports a radical 'openness' of interpretation; that is to say,

they encourage the postmodern explosion of prescribed certainties and monolithic reality: their ambiguities point up not just the arbitrarily restrictive critical practice of trying to establish a work's unified coherence, but perhaps indicate, too, the arbitrariness of the narrow political and social realities dictated to people. Nevertheless, despite this anticipation of the postmodern ethos in its most progressive aspect, we *can* say with certainty, that, like much postmodern culture, such texts, after all, reside in a condition of paralysed antitheses which, in its refusal to look beyond the contradictory framework of the status quo - besides merely pointing it out - is barely less conservative than any putatively 'authoritative' imposition of stable meanings and institutions in the first place.

However, there is another side to Lawrence's deployment of ironic ambiguity: besides exploding authoritative readings of his texts (and of the 'world') in divergent, contradictory meanings, Lawrence also uses irony's multivocal potential to converge several different targets economically within an argument that not only seeks to disqualify their conventional authority but also tries to suggest what could possibly replace them. This is most apparent in those texts in which satire is the predominant mode, notably many of the short stories and poems. The poem, 'Oh Wonderful Machine!' (wr. 1929), for example, sardonically mimics the contemporary zeal for technology:

Oh wonderful machine, so self-sufficient, so sufficient unto
yourself!
You who have no feeling of the moon as she changes her
quarters!
You who don't hear the sea's uneasiness!
You to whom the sun is merely something that makes the
thermometer rise!

Oh wonderful machine, you who are man's idea of godliness,
you who feel nothing, who know nothing, who run on

absolved
 from any other connection!
 Oh you godly and smooth machine, spinning on in your own
 Nirvana,
 turning the blue wheels of your own heaven
 almighty machine
 how is it you have to be looked after by some knock-kneed
 wretch
 at two pounds a week?^[11]

The depiction of the machine, as a fetishised, individual unified subject, suggests that this enthusiasm has its source in a capitalist ethos; and the subsequent metaphysical superlatives not only convey the absurdity of this eulogy to mechanics but also, in their very frothiness, allow the development of a number of bubbles which are to be burst by the sting in the stanza's tail: capitalism as the ultimate self-perpetuating machine; capitalism as offering a new religion that promises to benefit spiritual life as it has material life; and the corresponding solipsism of the financially 'independent' middle-classes (to which belong both Birkin and Somers) who apparently spin on in their own way, having attained a higher consciousness than the labouring world left behind. (It is an attractive feature of much of Lawrence's satirical poetry and fiction that, pointedly eliminating anything akin to an exemplary hero, it appears to free him from maintaining the idea of a kind of individual who is superior to the 'masses' of society.) The hyperbolical abstractions extend just long enough to threaten to go on forever, in the manner that machines are supposed to do; then, literally, the question of material reality brings a sudden disruption in tone that reflects a machine being brought to an abrupt halt. Those voices which laud the mechanised industrial process are loath to acknowledge its ultimate dependence upon human labour, and still less disposed to explain how, under current conditions, industrialism is only made possible by the workers' disfigurement and poverty. The contradictory nature of this

machine-system, which either threatens to destroy those upon whom it is dependent, or risks being brought to a standstill by those same people whom it cripples, points up the absurdity of abstract notions of 'Progress'. The implied resolution - of a greater social awareness, seeing the industrial process as a human process, connecting the world of human labour to the wider environment - may well be vague, but then it is not satire's function to offer prescriptive remedies (more about which, below).

Indeed, it is one benefit of satire's ambivalences that Lawrence is divested of the frequently unpalatable and indigestible concoctions of his 'philosophical' non-fiction. *Apocalypse* (wr. 1929-30), for instance, takes close to one hundred pages before finally concurring with the burden of his fifteen line poem:

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.^[12]

There is little in the preceding material that elaborates on exactly what is supposed to 'happen', except for the familiar assertion of our need for 'lordship' and an authentic aristocracy that should replace existing, degraded social systems.^[13] Still, this prospect of an 'organic' nobility offers one interpretation of the concluding stanza of 'Oh Wonderful Machine':

Oh great god of the machine
what lousy archangels and angels you have to surround
yourself with!
And you can't possibly do without them!^[14]

The grubby hierarchy of mechanised industry, we may possibly infer, is no substitute for the genuine article. Yet, being satire, and in the business of mocking beliefs rather

than propounding them, these lines explicate no such determinate reading beyond their condemnation of the present situation. In fact, the stanza could permissibly be seen as calling into question all hierarchical societies, for necessarily abasing people in order to establish their false gods. It is, too, a nice irony that the poem's mock-hymnal idiom suggests the dubiousness of Lawrence's own vocabulary of adoration in *Apocalypse*. Holding forth on 'the reality of hierarchy', Lawrence declares that the souls of men will only be fulfilled if their 'country mounts up aristocratically to a zenith of splendour and power'.^[15] The poem's example of abstract eulogy, sabotaged by material fact, supports our immediate suspicions as regards such prose: namely, that its rhetorical extravagance hopes to supply enough suasive force to spare the risk of resorting to the perhaps recalcitrant services of reason.

The ironic destabilisation in 'Oh Wonderful Machine!' of monolithic 'truths', whether capitalism's (the synonymous advance of industrialism and the new Jerusalem) or Lawrence's own (the necessity of hierarchy), together with an indication of the underlying 'fact' (that society requires fundamental change) from which supposedly more secure statements can emerge, bears relation to Tony Bennett's concern for a practicable degree of indeterminacy.^[16] Naturally, Bennett's and Lawrence's very different positions as, respectively, a literary theoretician seeking to verify academic methodologies and technologies, and an imaginative writer sketching the failures and possibilities of human society, dispose them to allow for correspondingly different measures of indeterminacy. Even so, Lawrence's polemical and open-ended poem suggests the limitations of some of Bennett's assumptions. Above all, 'Oh Wonderful Machine!' offers a more radical and profound proposal as to where to find sources for 'allow[ing] new knowledges to emerge and transform the

face of the past', and thus, 'make a material difference to the present'.^[17] Lawrence's poem points to how new methods of material production, of changing our material world, lead to our view of the 'past' being transformed - as industrial capitalism changed our views of agrarian, feudal society, which became seen as either primitive and undemocratic, or rather, as perhaps suggested in the poem's references to sun, moon and hierarchy, as possessing standards acutely needed today; and so too, the poem intimates, the transformation of the contemporary labour process, into one free from human degradation, is likely to reveal new knowledges of the industrial world. Whereas Lawrence's poem readily suggests that history concerns human struggle with the material world, for Bennett's post-Marxism it seems that history is about intellectual interpretation: 'the past which is produced by the social labour of historians'.^[18] This idea of historical development is fine, so far as it goes, but it is secondary to direct social changes, such as industrial and political revolutions; and the proper relation of this form of 'social labour' to wider social concerns is threatened by another of Bennett's academic priorities. In the same way that he appears to demote material reality beneath academic interpretation, so too, he seeks to reduce the value of the 'ethical' dialectics at the heart of much 'traditional' criticism. He proposes

the development of ... the teacher/critic as a technical rather than, say, an ethical exemplar and involving the student/reader in the acquisition of particular technical competences rather than in an unending process of ethical self-correction. This may not, it is true, have the same ring of *bravura* about it as the development of a political aesthetics or a revolutionary criticism; it would, however, be likely to be a good deal more consequential.^[19]

Bennett neglects the point that ethical contention and interrogation is vital when considering representations of the world, for, as in Lawrence's poem, such contention

reflects, and reflects upon, the conflict within the material process of production. (That this may no longer be considered relevant has much to do with the 'post-industrial' world - replete with Bennett's academic 'labourers' - often conveniently forgetting that somebody, somewhere, still has to produce its goods.) Bennett's proposal for literary studies does not simply lack *bravura*, it loses, in its preoccupation with academic form, due regard for the social 'content', in the widest sense, of such studies. It sounds very close to a parody of revolutionary change, disconcertingly anticipating Tony Blair's call, during the 1997 UK general election, for 'radicalism not of doctrine but of achievement': it represents a replacement of political ethics that seek to change the world with an increasingly austere application of existing institutional practices. On the other hand, we may observe, in Lawrence's poem, satire's capacity as an instrument of radical protest: how a writer such as Lawrence, much of whose work resembles postmodernity in expressing scorn for systemic political revolution and calling for change in supposedly more 'useful' quarters, finds in satire a voice to challenge the fundamental characteristics of the social macrocosm.

For someone who is sceptical of putatively revolutionary ideologies which may advance a systematic examination of society and of how to change it, satire offers a welcome new angle of attack: from within anarchically seditious representations of current social mores as they would present themselves, rather than the full-on smash, as it were, of the express alternatives offered by a contending political framework. And it is a likely possibility that both Lawrence's liking for satire and the occasionally turgid prose of his non-satirical work are consequences of his wariness of propounding specific precepts. Indeed, for Lawrence, society's proclivity for doing precisely this is symptomatic of its malady. In his essay, 'John Galsworthy' (1928),

Lawrence summarises the condition of those people who are too ready to accept the societal ordinances dictated to them:

All they can do, having no individual life of their own, is out of fear to rake together property, and to feed upon the life that has been given by living men to mankind. They have no life, and so they live forever, in perpetual fear of death, accumulating property to ward off death. They can keep up conventions: but they cannot carry on a tradition. There is a tremendous difference between the two things. To carry on a tradition, you must add something to the tradition. But to keep up a convention needs only the monotonous persistency of a parasite, the endless endurance of the craven, those who fear life because they are not alive, and who cannot die because they cannot live. The social beings.^[20]

It may be said that it is in the 'tradition' of satire to mock 'convention'; or, as Lawrence puts it in 'John Galsworthy': 'Satire exists for the very purpose of killing the social being By ridiculing the social being, the satirist helps the true individual, the real human being, to rise to his feet again'.^[21] Leaving aside, for the moment, the recurring Lawrentian chimera that is 'true' individuality, we can see this program at work in 'The Lovely Lady'. The acquisitive Pauline, having endured through her 'Power to feed on other lives' (355), is literally killed; and although there remains the doubtful matter of how Cecilia and Robert are to fare in the wider life which they have opened up for themselves, that uncertainty presents an invigorating change from the secure but straitjacketed life that was determined for them by Pauline.

Craig Brown's 'way of not making your mind up', seems, for Lawrence, to be a way of showing that the mind is properly made up of multifarious attitudes, and that to deny this is to risk reducing one's life to a mechanically repetitive and narrow affair - a situation illustrated by Robert's habitual evenings spent examining

seventeenth-century Mexican legal documents (341-2). In a contemporary text to 'The Lovely Lady', Lawrence contends:

Always and invariably man insists that one meagre and exclusive aspect of the great dream is all the dream. Thus he casts his own prison within the mould of his own idea, inside his own soul, and tortures himself all his life.^[22]

In passing, we may recall Jonathan Swift's famous definition of satire: 'a sort of Glass wherein Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own',^[23] and later in this chapter, I intend to look at how satire allowed Lawrence's writing to escape from some of the prisons of his own ideas; in part, perhaps, because he was quite prepared, at times, to behold his own face in satire's glass. But it suffices to note here that Lawrence's work, in general, seems to be designed to break out of any monomaniacal gaol, always proposing other potentialities, and 'discovering' very different things to different people; and thus it would appear that satire, implying opposites of wisdom and virtue to the folly and vice actually depicted, is particularly suited for Lawrence to draw out the antitheses of his 'great dream', and to hatch a multiplicity of ideas.

If we consider this pluralised quality in Lawrence's texts, then, we see that their appropriation by a recently resurgent Bakhtinian criticism is clearly no mere fortuity.^[24] But the strength of what Bakhtin might have termed Lawrence's 'carnavalesque' disruption of monological authority is perhaps more immediately evinced in its being glimpsed by a contemporary reviewer of Lawrence's work, well before Bakhtin's theories were published, never mind made available to English criticism. Lawrence's inclination to dialogical multiplicity is made apparent in Evelyn Scott's review (1921) of *Women in Love* and *The Lost Girl*, in which she distinguishes

Lawrence's work from, what she terms, 'pure art'. The latter, deems Scott, being 'the purest expression of what it is, ... renounces the extensive expression of a desire to be otherwise'.^[25] It is precisely this desire, she says, though, which characterises Lawrence's texts; a desire which is possibly marked in my preceding chapters by Lawrence's representations of individuality, with Birkin and Somers, locked inside their own souls, in introspective self-torture, while longing for otherness. Scott herself suggests this dialogic potential of Lawrence's individualism when she writes of how Lawrence's art expresses a desire for the 'release of individuality in the confusion of sense'.^[26] Strictly speaking, Scott means, by this 'confusion', that sensual intoxication experienced by Gudrun in the Alps, and by Alvina in the Abruzzi, as they are confronted with awesome otherness; but it is perhaps not too great a distortion to see also suggested here the Lawrentian impulse to emancipate individuality through the confusion of the 'authoritatively' sensible and ordered world, and of its prescriptions for our lives. So it is that the women of *Women in Love* and *The Lost Girl* confound the restrictive courses which society might have expected them take: Gudrun rejects a married life with Gerald, and Alvina rejects any number of 'respectable' conventions. And, considering satire's analogous 'desire to be otherwise' (portraying one world as it hungers for its opposite), it would, indeed, seem highly probable that such confusion of authoritative 'sense' is displayed yet more vigorously in Lawrence's satire. Thus, in the same way that Voltaire's *Candide* throws into confusion the enlightenment commonsense 'that logic and reason can somehow explain away the chaotic wretchedness of existence by grandly and metaphysically ignoring the facts',^[27] so does Lawrence's 'Oh Wonderful Machine!' disrupt the twentieth-century decree that technology saves labour and puts an end to material want.

A not unreasonable objection to be raised at this point, would be that the above appeal to the suggestive pluralities of Lawrentian satire is no more than a very favourable gloss upon what, after all, propounds little in the form of definite fields of action; that the proposition of boundless possible alternatives to the debased subject of the satire constitutes, in fact, merely arrant 'spin' for what is the affirmation of nothing in particular that could aid human society. Such a view would contend that if satire preserves Lawrence's freedom from monomaniacal, dogmatic prisons, it nevertheless shows little promise of ideological rehabilitation; and, furthermore, that this is surely to be expected of satire, because it does not attempt to solve that problem of absent authoritativeness which we saw in *Kangaroo*, so much as, on the contrary, it appears to encourage that void by the sabotaging of supposed authorities. There returns the idea of the satirist as a fence-sitter, provided with a spuriously elevated position from which he declines to get down and try to fix the holes that he proclaims society has dug for itself.

Support for this persuasion emerges from a reading of Lawrence's 'The Last Laugh' (1924). This short story, unremarkable enough as a satire of John Middleton Murry, is interesting for what it suggests about the satirical attitude. During Lawrence's miserable return to England in 1923-4, Murry was among the circle of old friends who rejected his enduring plans to establish a new way of life in a New World artists' colony. The story begins with a Lawrence-figure, Lorenzo, wishing good-bye at his garden gate to Marchbanks, the counterpart to Murry, and the deaf James, a character closely modelled upon Dorothy Brett, the only one of Lawrence's group who retained any enthusiasm for his project. Surveying the new-fallen snow, Lorenzo remarks, 'ironically', 'Look at it! A new world!'; but Marchbanks is quick to dismiss even the faintest suggestion of such an idea: 'No Lorenzo! It's only whitewash!'^[28]

The story's dialogue is nearly entirely suffused by ironical colour such as this, as characters impress their pre-eminence upon others. For the rather ineffectual character of Marchbanks, this seems considerably more of a concerted endeavour than for James who, increasingly accepting that a new world is possible (and imminent), is more quietly assured: Marchbanks's face gleams with 'derisive triumph in all its lines' (125), while James's exultation is less dependent upon outward show, and instead is kept 'triumphantly, to herself' (126).

There are then, two apparently quite different kinds of 'superiority' being compared here: one that, as the story unfolds, we are clearly meant to see as petty and commonplace, and another that is vital and rare. The first is spelled out in the character of James's housekeeper: 'a rather sad-faced young woman of a superior sort - nearly all people in England are of the superior sort, superiority being an English ailment' (132). The same, essentially miserable, superiority is evident in Marchbanks, a 'slouching' figure who looks 'as if he wouldn't make his legs firm' (122, 123); and its association with conventional England is underlined in the character of the policeman whom James and Marchbanks meet on the way home: personable enough, he nonetheless provides, in the subsequent fear and meekness which he displays, a thumbnail sketch of the real lack of authoritativeness of socially-accepted authority. That which turns out to be the true authority is the liberating sentiment of mockery, conferred by the spirit of Pan, who has evidently 'come back' to have the 'last laugh' on those who would preclude the possibility of there being a better world beyond the English present (130). The policeman, who suffers a literal panic at the demonstration of Pan's power during a sudden storm, is appropriately rewarded with a similarly literal lameness when Pan gives him a club foot; Marchbanks, who neglects to follow Pan's voice in order to pursue a more immediate carnal affair, is only attracted to the

goatish side of Pan and is thus struck dead at the story's end, realising that 'he has made a final, and this time fatal, fool of himself' (137). Only James, who fully accepts Pan and actually sees him, is able to partake of this 'unaccustomed sense of power' (128); her true perception restored, she is cured of her deafness and of her dependency upon spurious relationships; she can therefore disencumber herself of her listening machine and of Marchbanks.

However, although this scheme is neatly set up and played out, the reader who seeks to elicit anything significant from it will be disappointed. What it amounts to is a bald judgment that 'Life' is a matter of detached amusement, and that those such as Murry, who are bent upon 'taking life terribly seriously' (133), effectively choose death. There is no further detail as to the things being judged - that is to say, there is no development of ideological positions, and, therefore, neither is there any necessity, or any means, of justifying the text's definition of 'superiority': life is better than death - presumably there is nothing more to add. If we see, in the different fates of Marchbanks and James, satire's eschewal of authoritativeness in favour of arbitrary privilege, then the ideological hole which (hypothetically) it propagates, is manifest too, in the new world that is opened up to James. Despite a central message of the story being that one must keep faith in the approach of a better world, the only thing offered to sustain this belief is the hollow proposition that the better life will be different, somehow, from the present. Rather than laying the blame for this at satire's door, we could say that the ideological meagreness is simply due to the thinness of this particular story; but, although, undoubtedly, this latter consideration needs to be taken into account, the barrenness would appear to be very much an effect of the satirical impulse which James embraces to the utmost. She learns to behold the world as 'Absurd! Absurd! Absurd!'; and, most notably, she realises 'what fantastic

silliness' is the business of 'Saving anybody': 'How much more amusing and lively to let a man go to perdition in his own way' (133). There is unlikely to be a much fitter example in Lawrence of satire's disposition to mock not merely social ills, but, equally, any conscious attempt to seek a remedy. In a flawless reflection of our metaphor, the supremely satirical James refuses to get into the ideological hole and get her hands dirty in trying to fix it. After all, as she remarks of the world of human relationships: 'It's all *so* messy' (134).

It is the purpose of satire, of course, to point out holes in current theories and practices, and by way of such critique it can be said to contribute to a search for 'true' meaning and value; but here and elsewhere in Lawrence we find that the entire social edifice is apparently hurled into one big pit. The figure of Lawrence as 'an apocalyptic ironist who says, in effect, a plague on all your houses',^[29] looms particularly large in the satirical poems of *Nettles* (1930). 'Change of Government' is a typically brusque repudiation of contemporary politics. A dismissive comment on the general election of 1929, which had returned a minority Labour government, it belittles all the major domestic political parties, before turning, aghast, to the prospect of Communist rule. However, despite its wholesale condemnation of insipid politics and their trivial institutions, the text's inexorable satire effects a neat, if not decisive, riposte to the charge of ideological nihilism. The poem's opening lines may not seem to accommodate one jot of ideological succour: 'We've got a change of government/if you know what I mean',^[30] but the fact that we *do* know, at once, what the speaker means (perhaps better than Lawrence's original readership, whose morsel of Labour administration still tasted fresh) indicates a point of ideological corroboration: a change of government extends to little change in life generally; conventional British politics involves politicians but not the people whom the MPs are supposed to

represent. Crucially, however, for the poem's capacity as a contribution to political belief, this mere germ of an ideological position is subsequently cultivated in a way that challenges, rather than panders to, routinely-voiced prejudices. In short, the voice which disparages the political parties is itself subtly undermined in a satiric double play. The speaker's declamation against the parties backfires: in the very process of decrying contemporary politics the speaker is herself revealed as hopelessly petty; for why else, obsessively, but purposelessly, prate about their shortcomings, while pointedly refusing to consider any possible alternative? Characterising the different political groups as a succession of Aunts who are given the job of keeping house, for example, the speaker, presumably referring to the derelict Liberals, sneers that 'Aunt Libby's really a feeble lot'; but she immediately illustrates her own feeble-mindedness by then confessing: 'And I simply daren't think of [Communism's] Aunt Lou!'^[31] The speaker emerges as a shallow snob, conditioned by rumour and a prisoner to her own ignorance when faced with 'Aunt Lou's' unfamiliar system:

I've never seen her, but they say
 she's a holy terror: she takes your best frock
 and *all* your best things, and just gives them away
 to the char, who's as good as you are, any day.^[32]

The poem's satirising of this ironic voice amounts to nothing that approaches a proposal of Communism as an attractive alternative in itself (although there remains a faint hint of Communism's negative power as a possible expurgator of stale political and social forms);^[33] its point is to question whether the prospective arrival of Aunt Lou's 'horrible' hordes, 'stamping and swearing/and painting the wood-work red', is any worse than the over-refined speaker, appalled at the concept of being 'made to go to work, even if/you've got money of your own'.^[34] The second filter of irony rescues

none of the *objects* that the speaker dismisses (the conventional parties remain the paltry concerns that she draws them to be); but what it does retrieve is a disposition, unlike the speaker's, which still entertains the possibility, and urges the necessity of real ideological and social change.

Besides recognising the hollowness of contemporary politics, the poem shows, by means of the speaker, how such a recognition commonly leads to an empty cynicism that actually complements, rather than tackles, the situation. The garrulous idiot which we construe from the body of the poem is wholly different from the persona we imagine at the beginning. The opening two lines, 'We've got a change of government/if you know what I mean', succinctly mark the political stasis through a knowing attitude with which we may readily identify; in the remainder of the poem, however, the speaker assumes only the contemptible familiarity of a gossip whose further expatiation (thirty lines) adds nothing but speculation - speculation, moreover, which now frets *against* possible substantial change, in the form of Communism, and concludes with a whimper: 'Oh, Aunt Louie's the one *I* dread.'^[35] That emphatic '*I*' signifies the speaker's sense of self-importance, but it also registers the ideological contradiction, indeed disintegration, which has occurred. The contrast with the opening 'We' points up the self-inflicted isolation incurred through the speaker's complete skepticism, which only leaves her ideologically vulnerable to existing realities. Paradoxically, that skepticism finally serves not to undermine dominant ideologies and their institutions, but instead to support them, since, as if incapacitated by fear at finding herself snared in an ideological pitfall, the speaker concludes by revoking her initial discontent in exchange for a paralysed policy of 'better the devil you know'. 'Change of Government', with true satirical brio, holds up 'a sort of

Glass' in which is shown the unattractiveness both of present political forms and of empty-handed criticism.

But still, it may be demanded, beyond identifying this last futility, does satire itself bring any positive ideological construction to bear on the problem? It could be argued that all that this demonstrates is the overwhelmingly negative impulses of a literary form which can only operate by disdainfully dismissing its subject matter. Whether or not this charge is true, it is worth pointing out that, as regards Lawrence's writing about politics, at least, this limitation could not be deemed to be a distinguishing attribute of his satire. Lawrence's satire is no different from the rest of his work in displaying that contempt for politics (that I remarked upon in my Introduction)^[36] which conceives political life as a preposterously overblown domestic tragicomedy. Somers's contention in *Kangaroo*, for example, that 'Politics is no more than your country's housekeeping',^[37] perfectly encapsulates the sentiment of 'Change of Government'. And yet besides this, mirroring *Kangaroo*'s keen interest with Cooley's and Struthers's approaches to household management, the energy invested by the poem against its targets suggests a very real concern with the wider social fabric. Both novel and poem would seem to insist upon dispelling the notion that Lawrence's antipathy for conventional politics precludes any desire to see the world changed; but I would maintain a crucial difference between them is that whereas *Kangaroo*, in deference to his residual status as Lawrentian hero, excuses Somers's political ineffectuality with the opinion that revolutions constitute 'nothingnesses',^[38] the satire is licensed to expose much more clearly the nothingness of those who effectively disable themselves from genuine social involvement. Thus, it may be said that 'Change of Government' does not yield to political quietism so readily as do the

supposedly 'responsible' Somers and the poem's speaker, who passively accept government by a professional political elite.

Proposing the submissiveness and confused thinking behind much supposed political participation, 'Change of Government' implicitly indicates a revolutionary remedy: if the several supposed political alternatives, together with their electors, are only the separate heads of one hydra, then evidently the course is to reduce the whole thing to ashes and see it buried once and for all. On the other hand, considering the lack of any recommendation as to how this is to be effected, it is doubtful whether the slaying of such a monster emerges as anything other than a fabulously Herculean labour. And a further suspicion must remain regarding the possible oversimplification involved in equating British Conservatism and Soviet Communism. But the very fact that the poem raises such questions points to its engagement with, and contribution to, political debate. Indeed, just as Lawrence's detached individuals cannot escape society, Lawrence's poem, even in its ideological negation, inevitably partakes in ideological processes; and, in any case, diagnosis of the affliction must precede curative treatment. Above all, 'Change of Government' submits that the threat of circumstances being made worse presents a feeble excuse for refusing to try to emerge from an already unsatisfactory situation. The poem does not, in fact, attempt to obliterate society, but instead fires a broadside specifically at that class of people who consider themselves to be 'above' the rest of society and yet simultaneously to represent it, whether as politicians or as a self-appointed spokesperson. It is further testament to Lawrence's enduring relevance that today we may still recognise, as critical obstacles to social change, that class's narrowing of

politics to a specialist technical affair, and the culture of low expectations that develops in turn.

The accusation of over-simplification, however, is one which is difficult, and perhaps pointless, to deny. Lawrence's recurrent dismissal of politics is, to some extent, an effect of the vexation caused by a problem he cannot solve and which refuses to go away. As if in 'denial', he affects to rise above the fray of competing ideologies, when reality shows his inability to fashion his distinctly ideological statements into a coherent political framework. Needless to say, what may be regarded as a political failure by no means entails an artistic one. What it does mean, though, is that we meet with Lawrence's political thought as with a mineral in its raw state, a substance which may appear interesting in its variegation, but whose potential is not realised. Neither is it the aim of my criticism to bring about such a realisation, in the form of a left- or right-wing 'Lawrence', so much as it is to display and interrogate the texts' vein of political confabulation,^[39] to mine, as it were, the rich ideological seam that frequently lies beneath a deceptively barren surface of manifest politics. Put another way, in Lawrence we see a deeply-felt concern for the way that society is organised, and a profound desire for radical change, all of which, however, constitutes a radicalism which remains deeply buried in a hardened distrust of evolving a political 'ideology': as with a creature held in amber, it proves impossible to remove one without disfiguring or destroying both.

I certainly would not wish this metaphorical fossil to be taken as an intimation of Lawrence's obsolescence, although it does, obviously, concede that he is a crucially limited writer. Even then, this last admission has to be considered in a political context, which, particularly to an imaginative writer such as Lawrence, may quite reasonably have appeared to be of desperately limited scope and decidedly

lacking in inspiration. Leaders of the Left, while vowing to represent radical change, were proving to prefer a political pragmatism that tended to cultivate their own eminence before their revolutionary credentials: in 1926 the general council of the TUC had been prepared to compromise with capitalism to the extent of calling off the general strike, entirely without condition; and the variation in administration of 1929, which Lawrence's poem implies was not much change whatsoever, saw a Conservative government replaced by an ever more moderate Labour party, led by Ramsay Macdonald - a man who would soon betray socialism entirely to lead a National Government that was dominated by Tories. Further afield, an increasingly Stalinised Soviet Union presented a vision of social upheaval that was stifled and sanitised enough to make it safe from upsetting the political teacups of the British chattering classes.^[40] On the other side of the political divide, the general election of 1929 also witnessed the impotence of the traditional political forms of the British elite: despite a short-lived resurgence in votes received, the small number of returned Liberal MPs was sufficient testimony to the party being spent as a Parliamentary power; the Conservatives, meanwhile, inauspiciously for the transformative potential of British politics at large, had polled slightly more votes than the other parties on a 'Safety First' campaign, thinly veiling the fact that they were 'stuck for a positive programme'.^[41] If 'Change of Government' offers no clear direction forward, then it could simply be the case that this is because it presents such a penetratingly accurate picture of politics at that time.

It is a nice irony, nonetheless, that, to a great degree forfeiting his revolutionary optimism, as a price for rejecting the socialist thinking that he viewed as antithetical to his concept of spontaneous individualism, Lawrence's individuals are left bereft of anything approaching the free autonomous agency that is claimed for

them. Stripped of a positive ideology, with no new pathways open to them, and the way back blocked by the apparent collapse of past standards, they are cast into a precarious no man's land where the only course is to take cover. In the later work, certainly, society not only oppresses Lawrence's free individuals directly, through its conventions, but, equally pernicious, seems to do so through the very collapse of its conventions, which would appear to deprive personal life of any structure against which to respond and shape itself. So it is that, in *Kangaroo*, Somers is left bewildered by Australia's anarchic demolition of his notion of 'lordship';^[42] and this sense of the disintegration of old social forms becomes acute during Connie Chatterley's drive around Uthwaite, when the decay of the great country houses is lamented as the end of the old England. The mansions become symbolic of a lost social structure, of lost rule and authority: 'Look how our ancestors lorded it!', is the forlorn message.^[43]

Lawrence's difficulty in maintaining faith in the possibility of progressive change is suggested in contrasts between the first and final '*Lady Chatterley*' novels. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), we find that Lawrence is thrown back into a heightened yearning for past social structures. Connie and Mellors no longer look to suburbia and industrial work, as do their counterparts in the first version, but plan to farm the land. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie's drive through the 'Dukeries' of north Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire very much amplifies the sense of decay in version one. In the first version (written in 1926), Bolsover Castle is simply 'powerful-looking';^[44] in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (in which it becomes 'Warsop Castle') we are told more pointedly: 'The powerful old castle was a ruin'.^[45] The first version's 'great Elizabethan house, Hardwick, noble above its great park',^[46] becomes 'Chadwick Hall' of the final version, still noble, 'but out of date, passed over. It was

still kept up, but as a show place.'^[47] The old world may be doomed in the first version, but the final version emphasises a sense of desecration, of a world much diminished, with correspondingly attenuated hopes: the 'proud and lordly' erections of the county's great halls are to be exchanged for the 'proud' and 'lordly' erection of Mellors's penis: in such circumstances it is perhaps best that 'God alone knows where the future lies.'^[48]

The grand constructions of lordly times have lost their social significance. In some respects Connie could be said to be living with the consequences of a process of individuation whose beginnings are most strikingly rendered in *The Rainbow* (1915). In that novel, the imposing edifice of Lincoln Cathedral is introduced as a symbol of complex unity that potentially offers to connect the individual with wider mankind and the universe as a whole; but it is very quickly reduced to a defunct remnant of a previous social communion from which contemporary individuals are trying to extract themselves. Early in their marriage - already depicted in terms of a battle, from which Anna is to emerge the 'Victrix' - Will and Anna Brangwen visit the cathedral. Once inside, Will immediately gives himself up to ecstatic transports: for him, the cathedral is the 'consummation' of 'all' and 'everything'.^[49] Anna, on the other hand, while initially 'overcome', is 'silenced rather than tuned to the place', and 'would never consent to ... the ultimate confine' (188), but 'claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof' (189). It is as though Anna, refusing the attempt of dominant ideology to secure her consent to submission, perceives a reality behind the ideological screen, as it were, of the cathedral ceiling. She seizes upon the contradictions, the carvings of faces which seem to dispute the cathedral's preponderant allusions to Infinity and Eternity:

Apart from the lift and spring of the great impulse towards the altar, these little faces had separate wills, separate motions, separate knowledge, which rippled back in defiance of the tide, and laughed in triumph of their own very littleness. (189)

Interpreting one such face as being that of the wife of its carver, Anna takes it as a pointer to life outside the cathedral, beyond its dominating vision:

These sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew quite well, these little imps that retorted on man's own illusion, that the cathedral was not absolute. They winked and leered, giving suggestion of the many things that had been left out of the great concept of the church. 'However much there is inside here, there's a good deal they haven't got in,' the little faces mocked. (189)

Once Anna has dispelled the cathedral's 'illusion', Will, too, has to admit that there is 'life outside the church. There was much that the church did not include' (191). But the spiritual break, made by Anna, from the insular, self-contained domain of the cathedral is double-edged. Anna, who becomes 'absorbed in the child' (Ursula, with whom she is already pregnant when she visits Lincoln [191]) is enabled to establish the conditions for her daughter's more drastic break with the ideology and actualities of social settlement: Ursula completes the progress of human experience, from the communal aspiration that is embodied in the cathedral, through the familial satisfaction of her parents, towards an indomitable individuation. But, for Will, on the other hand, being thus removed from the confines of the cathedral's mystic abstractions leaves him only perplexed:

he was aware of some limit to himself, of something unformed in his very being, of some buds which were not ripe in him, some folded centres of darkness which would never develop and unfold whilst he was alive in the body. (195)

That which, for Anna, constitutes liberation from ideological constraint, entails only dejection for Will, as the old absolutes - his 'vital illusions' - are destroyed: 'Soon he would be stark, stark, without one place wherein to stand, without one belief in which to rest' (190). It being the case, though, that Anna's vein of emancipation is maintained through the remainder of *The Rainbow*, in the self-assertive Ursula, who, at the end, envisages the world as 'waiting in pain for the new liberation' (458), it seems clear that any distress at the destruction of the old order is to be regarded as worthwhile (and even Will discovers a new state of being, through a newfound intimacy with Anna, which frees him to turn with fresh interest to public life [220]).

However, it is important to bear in mind that Lawrence's next novel, *Women in Love*, finds grievous problems in ascertaining just what, exactly, supposedly socially-emancipated individuals are to do when those values which they have consigned to the past still endure, after all, for the rest of the world at large, and seem to deny them a clear prospective destination. Lilly, in *Aaron's Rod*, attempts to dismiss this issue: 'I'm rather sick of seekers. ... There is no goal. I loathe goals more than any other impertinence. Gaols, they are.' But Aaron knows full well that this gaol imprisons Lilly as much as any 'seeker', and points out: 'Wherever you go, you'll find people with their noses tied to some goal'.^[50] Aaron, has earlier begun *his* quest for a better life by first leaving his family, and then England. In thus forsaking both family and the broader commitment to the nation, he can be seen as spurning those values which were recently shown, in the war, to demand ultimate self-denial, submission and sacrifice. They are anaemically present in the socialist cipher, Jim Bricknell, who pronounces upon the importance of 'love and sacrifice' - those same banners which were so frequently used to justify compulsion and murder in wartime (although which now, for the trivial Jim, only serve to excuse a brief pummelling of Lilly).^[51] It is,

then, possible to view Aaron's abandonment of his family as a bitter parody of the millions of analogous separations that were a consequence of war. The striking difference between these cases is, of course, that Aaron leaves upon a search for self-fulfilment, while the soldiers faced the horrors of conflict and perhaps death; and yet Aaron's attempted liberation outrages convention ('I could kill him for it', Lawrence has Aaron's wife pointedly say),^[52] while what the soldiers endure is conventionally considered to be 'heroic'.^[53] Lawrence is here once more suggesting the brutally repressive nature of the current social ethos, more callous than Aaron's behaviour, and which Aaron perceives as 'Self-righteous bullying, like poison gas!'.^[54] But, crucially, because Lawrence lacks a positive programme for what Aaron is to do with his new life, the great irony is that Aaron finally appears no different to the most feckless first-world-war soldier - getting shipped to Europe, to be nearly killed by a bomb, and then apparently having to face his 'life-submission' to a greater force.^[55] As we have seen previously in Lawrence's work, it proves to be one thing to cut away from the social ethos, and quite another thing to determine where to go next if human society is an imprisoning nightmare. In *Kangaroo*, Somers believes both Labour and the Diggers to be persisting with a dying ideal,^[56] and the consequent state of being, 'at Sea', with nothing to do but to keep adrift from society, afflicts characters throughout Lawrence's later work. In his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, sympathetic characters once again seek recourse in enclosures from the outside world, but this time *private* and *explicit* enclosures (the wood at Wragby, the gamekeeper's hut) rather than a cathedral's suggestion of social communion and attempted illusion of all-encompassing space.

Given that it is the mocking, satiric spirit of Anna which brings the cathedral's pretensions to authority crashing down, how can satire help to build a new

social form? In keeping with satire, Anna perceives that there is a greater truth beyond that which the cathedral represents, but which must remain among the 'unknown realities' (191). The 'unknown' frequently recurs throughout Lawrence's later work and marks, if not always a crisis of faith, then, certainly what threatens to be a crisis for a writer - the fact that that in which he has faith remains largely inexpressible. At its worst, this problem of trying to communicate the incommunicable sees Lawrence resorting to the same religious bombast that *The Rainbow*'s 'The Cathedral' chapter sweeps aside, and his closest political representatives casting forth an indefatigable line of unenlightening, and finally risible, figures of speech. Of particular note, in this last respect, is *The Plumed Serpent*'s Don Ramón, who 'explains' his own aspirations for revolutionary change thus:

Politics, and all this *social* religion ... is like washing the outside of the egg, to make it look clean. But I, myself, I want to get inside the egg, right to the middle, to start it growing into a new bird....

We've got to open the oyster of the cosmos, and get our manhood out of it. Till we've got the pearl, we are only gnats on the surface of the ocean^[57]

A clear-cut manifesto, indeed. *The Rainbow*, however, by concerning itself with the transcending of categorical standards, and by letting the 'unknown reality' be precisely that, generally escapes this somewhat demanding project of turning gnats into pearl-divers. So too with satire, one of whose functions is to point out the discrepancy between ambitious declarations of intent and the deficient abilities and means of those who make them. Satire involves measuring the specimen against the standard and revealing the former's deviation. Thus, it may be said that satire works to scrutinise the negative; the positive, on the other hand, once expressed, immediately dies in the hands of the satirist. This is exactly what Lawrence says

happens to John Galsworthy in *The Forsyte Saga*. ‘Galsworthy had not quite enough of the superb courage of his satire. He faltered, and gave in to the Forsytes’, Lawrence alleges.^[58] That is to say, he breaks from the negative criticism of social convention in a failed attempt to offer his positive standard: ‘that series of Galsworthian “rebels” who are like all the rest of the modern middle-class rebels, not in rebellion at all’.^[59] In other words, the satire ‘soon fizzles out’,^[60] and worse, is seen by Lawrence to be vitiated by this misfired palliative: in effect, Galsworthy ‘put down the knife and laid on a soft sentimental poultice, and helped to make the corruption worse’.^[61] Whether or not we agree with Lawrence’s example, we would probably concur with the implication of his criticism: that, rather than describe preferable social forms, the satirist is best employed to clear the way for them, or perhaps, as it were, to dig their foundations (as opposed to a mere hole). A comparison, for instance, between H.G. Wells’s parodic excoriation of Victorian society and contemporary utopias in *The Time Machine*, together with the stern social prescriptions implied therein, and the rudely aborted satire of the tediously expository *Men Like Gods*, would be proof enough. Concrete proposals for improved social organisation are best supplied elsewhere, as, for example, in Wells’s speculative *Anticipations* and *A Modern Utopia*.^[62] The fact that Lawrence did not pursue this alternative line to any great extent is immaterial (and, if we allow *The Plumed Serpent* as evidence of one such positive programme, probably just as well): his satire maintains that sharp edge necessary to cut away present ideological ‘corruption’, and so allow greater possibility for those more rehabilitative agendas to be implemented, even if they belong to others.^[63]

Besides what may be termed this preparatory quality of satire, however, satire’s implication that better standards exist takes us a stage further towards their

fashioning. For, even if satire does not explicate such standards, it tends to provoke its audience to reconsider accepted truths and, so too, to contemplate what the actual truth may be. Lawrence himself demonstrates this in *John Galsworthy* when he asks: 'What was there *besides* Forsytes in all the wide human world? Mr Galsworthy looked, and found nothing.' But then, this is how satire works, after all (as Lawrence suggests when he points out that when Galsworthy 'came back with Irene and Bosinney, and offered us that', he ended the satire).^[64] And this is why Lawrence says: 'Reading Galsworthy ... one feels oneself in need of a standard, some conception of a real man and a real woman, by which to judge all these Forsytes'.^[65] It does not matter that Lawrence's subsequent definition of a real man is not especially well-defined (but which is, indeed, suggestive of his own negatory style: 'money does not touch him.... He is not divided nor cut off');^[66] the important thing is how this unspoken quality of satire proves to be so engaging. A similar power runs throughout Lawrence's work, which draws us into a response in the same way; as it draws my thesis itself, which has been spurred into explorations of the latent content of Lawrence's texts, and of the Machereyan significance of the conflict between the texts' explicit and implicit meanings. Depending upon one's point of view, the vastness of Lawrence's latent significance may be considered as further evidence of his limitations as a writer, or rather (as I would contend), as that which makes him all the more interesting, precisely because it remains for us to 'distinguish the necessity of this silence',^[67] and, in so doing, to explain and progressively explode those limitations.

It is a general characteristic of modernist texts, of course, for them to make such demands of the reader. Writing in 1940, David Worcester remarks, not altogether approvingly, upon how the reader is burdened with:

An ever-increasing responsibility to share the work of creation, to apply the satire and to perceive the irony for himself. Our most modern writers have succeeded in developing a kind of literature in which the reader does all the work.^[68]

It is at this point that Lawrence receives his only mention in the book (testimony to his long-standing small reputation as a satirist).^[69] Yet, in his brief discussion of Lawrence, it immediately becomes clear that Worcester is simply not thinking about the satirical works as such; *Twilight in Italy*,^[70] perhaps, seems a more likely text when he says: 'D.H. Lawrence's search for identity and his hatred of intellectuality met in his dark, diminutive, hairy peasants.... Thwarted, frustrated, incapable of thought'. Without specifying any texts, however, he goes on to declare that although 'Machinery for producing irony is present in these writings', it is not set in motion.^[71] Modern literature's supposed abhorring of the intellectual is what Worcester takes to be the prime cause of so much stillborn satire: 'Distrust of dogmatism has led to a horror of all theory, a shrinking from moral responsibility'.^[72] The remarks upon unfulfilled satire very closely reflect what I have said previously concerning *Kangaroo*, but Somers's persistent cogitation, however fruitless, and assured sense of belonging to the 'responsible' class appear directly to contradict Worcester's diagnosis. Indeed, it is because of the predominance of Somers's po-faced theorising that *Kangaroo*'s potential satire has no chance of emerging.

From what has been said so far in this chapter, we can see that a healthy distrust of all theory is exactly what best enables satire to operate; and we may gain a better idea of how effective this stance can be from the views of a theorist who knew the limits of theory. In discussing the responses of the Left to the Great War, Lenin

proposes that British socialists provide the clearest view of the failure of so many to oppose the conflict, and this because:

With their dislike of abstract theory and their pride in their practicality, the British often pose political issues *more directly*, thus helping the socialists of other countries to discover the actual content *beneath* the husk of wording of every kind (including the 'Marxist').^[73]

In particular, Lenin argues that Robert Blatchford's plain-speaking jingoism provides an open view of what hides behind the German 'Marxist', Karl Kautsky's theoretical 'sophistry'.^[74] I would argue that an analogous relationship exists, respectively, between Lawrence's short story, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' (1927) and *Kangaroo*. If *Kangaroo*'s fondness for frequently bewildering abstractions raises suspicions of a Kautsky-style attempt to gloss over the concrete conditions which its hero has effectively accepted, then 'The Man Who Loved Islands' allows the circumstances of the 'free' individual to be apprehended more directly. As the islander moves through a series of successively smaller, less populated islands in order to secure his vulnerable selfhood against a hostile world, he acts out the ultimately self-defeating philosophy of Somers. Although we are usually half-aware of Somers's similarly isolated position, his continual theoretical exchanges with himself mean that his withdrawn attitude is rarely very apparent. 'The Man Who Loved Islands', on the other hand, unhampered by the philosophising and philosophical temporising found in *Kangaroo*, presents a concise exposure of the destructiveness of alienated individualism.^[75]

The islander, Mr Cathcart, begins his adventures not wanting 'necessarily to be alone', but certainly desiring 'a world of his own'.^[76] To this purpose he buys an island and installs a dozen or so people whom he intends to rule benevolently under

his new persona, the 'Master'. From the beginning, however, we are aware of the improbability of such a scheme ever succeeding. Nowhere is the demonstrative nature of Lawrence's satire more evident than in the story's statement of intent: 'this story will show how tiny [a world] has to be, before you can presume to fill it with your own personality' (151). In an important respect, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' attends to the ideological hole opened up by other texts by Lawrence, because it satirises the same individualism which proves such an unavailing foundation for all other ideological constructions; and, ironically enough, satire's own nihilistic tendencies become implements for revealing the most trivial nihilism that lies at the heart of Cathcart's individualism.

Far from ostensibly nihilistic at the outset, though, Cathcart could seem to be a downright Utopian as he attempts to establish quasi-feudal harmony. The sprinkling of ironic asides from the narrator, however, pointedly propose Cathcart's utter misguidedness, and no more so than when informing us: 'He began, as we begin all our attempts to regain Paradise, by spending money' (153). Cathcart's recourse to gross materialism, establishing himself in the island's main dwelling-house and employing others (in strictly specific rôles) as fellow, though inferior, islanders, does nothing beyond produce a society as money-driven and class-divided as any seen on the mainland. And neither is he anymore in control of this 'world' than he could be of the world at large. Human society and the material circumstances of the island inevitably impinge upon his life as much as he can ever do upon theirs. When both of these perceived opponents push him to the verge of bankruptcy, Cathcart sells the island to a hotel company who want to develop it into a honeymoon and golf resort. It is worth noting that however 'bourgeois' and commercial this latter version of paradise appears, it does not impose upon other people what is to be their paradisa-

vision any more than Cathcart did. His dream of social harmony is every bit as counterfeit as that of the proposed resort, for both projects are wholly designed, after all, upon principles of naked self-interest.

This self-interest is shown in sharper focus when Cathcart removes, with a smaller retinue, to a smaller island. The corresponding diminution of his status and his outlook is plain: although still deferred to, he is called by his name and not 'Master'; and the island is 'no longer a "world"', but 'a sort of refuge' (162). This brings to mind Birkin's prognosis in *Women in Love*, of having to live in 'the chinks' unoccupied by the inferior masses of humankind;^[77] it is also telling that Cathcart's thoughts turn to cathedrals and echo Anna's perceptions in *The Rainbow* when he imagines that they 'howl with temporary resistance, knowing they must fall at last' (163). For Cathcart, as much as for Birkin and Somers, social ties are severed and communal values no longer stand up to scrutiny; but whereas the fates of these other characters are held in suspense at the end of their respective novels, the ramifications of Cathcart's isolating individualism are fully followed through. Birkin and Somers are allowed to maintain uneasy and notably non-progenitive marriages, but, for Cathcart, a sexual relationship with his housekeeper's daughter, Flora, turns the island into a 'prison' when he is faced with the birth of their child - who, not unsurprisingly, arrives like a 'millstone ... tied round his neck' (166).^[78] Consequently, Cathcart decamps once more, this time alone, to a previously uninhabited island.

In Cathcart's cold rejection of Flora there is something reminiscent of Aaron's abandonment of his family, although it could be said that, whereas the islander is intent on giving up the world, Aaron's departure marks his determination to properly experience it. This is certainly how *Aaron's Rod* regards its hero's travails, because, even while the novel occasionally undercuts Aaron's determined desire for

singleness, it overwhelmingly presents autonomous individuality as the one suitable basis for negotiating life. Contrariwise, it seems to me that 'The Man Who Loved Islands' gives the lie to *Aaron's Rod's* individualism. Aaron expresses his faith in individualism after an especially feckless re-encounter with his wife: 'To be alone, to be oneself, not to be driven or violated into something which is not oneself, surely it is better than anything.'^[79] Indeed, this possibly *is* best if one relates to people as does Aaron: briefly returning to the wife who still repels him, after becoming uneasy with the patronage of those whom he knows in London, the episode is typical of a man who can never 'yield'^[80] to human association. Despite the implication of Aaron's nobility and valour in his refusal to accept social realities, his philosophy seems not so different from the stupidly craven attitude of Cathcart upon his third island, where 'The tension of waiting for human approach was cruel' (167).

In this final, fatal location, Cathcart's story realises the full negativity of Aaron's asociality. There is, permissibly, a nascent awareness of this negativity in *Aaron's Rod* itself. Steven Vine argues thus:

In the pub scene in Chapter II, for instance, Aaron sits discontentedly in the bar and refuses to 'give in' (22:26) to the warmth of the atmosphere, holding himself in stiffened 'opposition to his surroundings' (22:22). The language that describes his 'opposition' hints that Aaron's very autonomy is a state of death, a cadaverous separation from surrounding life: 'Nothing would have pleased him better than to feel his senses melting and swimming into oneness with the dark. But impossible! Cold, with a white fury inside him, he floated wide-eyed and apart as a corpse' (23:15-18).^[81]

That the self is killed as a consequence of keeping apart from others is an idea frankly dealt with by 'The Man Who Loved Islands', which shows Cathcart's total isolation from humankind as depriving him of his individuality, and ultimately of life itself: 'he

no longer realised what he was doing', 'He ceased to register his own feelings' (169, 170). Things in *Aaron's Rod*, on the other hand, are never so straightforward. In the above passage analysis, for instance, Vine significantly omits another reference to the cadaverous Aaron that directly precedes his quotations:

Bah, the love game! And the whiskey that was to help in the game! He had drowned himself once too often in whiskey and in love. Now he floated like a corpse in both, with a cold, hostile eye.^[82]

Here, the suggestion is that Aaron's fatal mistake is to have allowed himself to become like Somers's 'fly in the ointment', 'floundering round in this easy, cosy, all-so-friendly world'.^[83] And, however corpse-like, it is precisely his floating apart from all this that is seen as necessary to his rebirth, which finds him 'moving almost violently away from everything' with the 'exhilarated feeling that he was fulfilling his own inward destiny'.^[84]

Aaron's Rod, like *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo*, clings to an individualist philosophy as though to a life-raft in empty ideological waters, despite its often obvious flimsiness. In more openly satirical mode, by contrast, Lawrence is less in need of an ideological platform of any kind, and, giving up the contorting exertions required to keep it afloat, can swim free. At the end of *Aaron's Rod*, for example, we are presented with an apparent contradiction when Lilly impresses upon Aaron that one's supreme responsibility is to fulfil one's individual self, spurning all external gods and goals, and yet, at the same time, affirms the need to submit oneself utterly to a greater man. In 'The Man Who Loved Islands' this confusion is nicely unravelled. We see, simply, that sheer individualism can only find fulfilment in submission before the world, because it leaves one so physically and psychologically vulnerable.

Thus, the ridiculous Cathcart is pleased that his third island entirely lacks trees, because 'They stood up like people, too assertive' (167). Here, surely, he may exercise his individuality, unafraid of opposition - and yet, to what purpose? He has succeeded in escaping humanity at the cost of rendering all plans, desires, and even thoughts, meaningless. There is nothing but a wasteland: 'Only space, damp, twilit, sea-washed space! This was the bread of his soul' (170). The story's greatest irony, as the external landscape is reflected within his inmost self, is to at last have Cathcart establish communion: a communion of desolation, though, which can only properly be completed by his death.

The impossibility of the self-supporting individuality that many of Lawrence's other protagonists would hope to live by is made evident early in the text:

[Cathcart] had reduced himself to a single point in space, and a point being that which has neither length nor breadth, he had to step off it into somewhere else. Just as you must step into the sea, if the waters wash your foothold away.... (153)

And so the rest of the story provides the perfect retort to Somers's acrobatic project to haul himself out of society and on to his separate self; and, similarly, Cathcart's predicament reveals in clearer light Birkin's recourse to chopping down the world to fit oneself and living in the 'chinks'.^[85] Through such proposed measures, these Lawrentian heroes only risk exposing themselves to the universe's petrifying infinity, the same that Cathcart must contemplate, deprived, as he is, of the intermediary screen of definite social circumstance. In chopping down the world, they only chop down their abilities to respond to the world, and, therefore, they really hack away at their own individuality.

Such self-defeating 'defences' of a precarious individual identity are familiar phenomena to psychiatrists, and, while not wishing to reduce literary creations to psychological case studies, it is worth quoting the existential psychologist R.D. Laing, whose work effectively provides a commentary upon the 'breakdown' of Lawrentian individuality. Of central interest to Laing is that same condition which appears to effect the crises of Lawrence's protagonists - namely, the reality and anxiety of human existence as 'being-in-the-world', as the inescapable experience of being a subject in a world of non-absorbable, and thus non-controllable, others. The ontologically insecure individual's response to this pressure is, says Laing, one of continual retreat:

If the whole of the individual's being cannot be defended, the individual retracts his lines of defence until he withdraws within a central citadel. He is prepared to write off everything he is, except his 'self'. But the tragic paradox is that the more the self is defended in this way, the more it is destroyed. The apparent eventual destruction and dissolution of the self in schizophrenic conditions is accomplished not by external attacks from the enemy (actual or supposed), from without, but by the devastation caused by the inner defensive manoeuvres themselves.^[86]

This scorched-earth policy is detectable in Ursula's and Birkin's resignations from their jobs, in Aaron's departure from his family, and Somers's rejection of social and political commitment; but it requires, in order to enable a genuine critique of his heroes' actions and motivations, the negative mechanics of satire, which release Lawrence from maintaining an explicit standard (invariably some kind of individualism), and allow him to show, however unintentionally, the spuriousness of such free individuality; or, at least, to show that one who fashions

himself to fit the 'chinks' left to him by others can be said to be neither individual nor free.^[87]

Above all, then, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' shows that someone may be imprisoned not so much by others as he is by his own philosophy. Lawrence was acutely conscious of such a danger:

Man is a creature of reason, and therefore gets drunk, says Byron. But the truth is, man thinks he is a creature of reason, and therefore he alone, of all creatures, must needs get drunk. Why? Because he has made for himself a prison of his own reason, and sometimes, in mad irrational frenzy, he must burst out of it, in one form of drunkenness or another. If man could once be reasonable enough to know that he is *not* a creature of reason, but only a reasoning creature, he might avoid making himself more prisons.^[88]

If the philosophical colloquies of *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo* find themselves similarly fettered in Lawrence's own ideological contradictions, then Lawrence appears to burst free through satire's predilection for displaying the foolishness and confusion that often lie behind ratiocination. That Lawrence was well aware of this quality, we should have no doubt, because, particularly when employed to such a purpose, satire was the favourite instrument of Jonathan Swift, whom the preceding quotation paraphrases. Consider Swift's view of the human condition:

I tell you after all that I do not hate Mankind, it is vous autres who hate them because you would have them reasonable Animals, and are Angry for being disappointed. I have always rejected that Definition and made another of my own.

I have got Materials Towards a Treatise proving the falsity of that Definition *animal rationale*; and to show it should be only *rationis capax*.^[89]

Swift's fascination with how rational arguments develop given assumptions into unacceptable positions is writ large across *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). His most famous work piles example upon example of human reason being used to justify patent absurdity.^[90] The remorseless logic with which Cathcart pursues his originally reasonable aim to shape his environment more closely to his own ideals can be seen in the same light.

But perhaps the most striking connection between these texts is how they both pour scorn on the idea of the adventuring, conquering hero. Indeed, we have already seen how, besides exploding the image of the rational human being, satire provides for a complementary assault upon Enlightenment/capitalist totems in its amenability to debunk the idea of the free individual. From the early days of the capitalist powers' empire-building to Thatcherism,^[91] satire has shown self-interested individualism's detrimental impact upon society and the wider environment,^[92] but probably its most important function in this respect has been to demonstrate the relativity of that individuality (and of the culture whence it springs) which would present itself as an absolute. European explorers of recent centuries, for instance, would take for granted the relative primitiveness of any 'new' land, while manifesting their own god-like authority by giving it a proper European name and maybe even attempting to transform the inhabitants into something closer to the paragon of the explorer himself. The ironic treatment of this convention by *Gulliver's Travels* has been neatly described:

The counterpart to the real explorer, the heroic traveller in mythological fiction, often commences his journey from a point that is not merely a geographical location, but a stronghold of culture and tradition. The journey embarked on is a movement away from this starting point towards experiences in situations deeply alien to the traveller's original

environment. In order for the journey to be heroic, the traveller must return home having seen and overcome the alien world he has passed through, with the precepts of his culture intact, his moral vision unaltered, and his personality strengthened and confirmed by its trials. Thus *Gulliver's Travels* ironically transforms the archetypal heroic voyage by making the hero return deeply altered in vision. *He* has become the alien, shunning his former companions, no longer able to tolerate even the smell of his own family. He has become an aberration; the voyage has overpowered him completely - it has robbed him of his *pays*.^[93]

Having glimpsed the 'genuine' absolute of the Houyhnhnm's society of pure reason, Gulliver's madness is to try to apply those absolute values to the human world. Even the supposedly most perfect among humanity can accommodate no such thing, as becomes apparent when Gulliver returns home to the hopeless task of civilising the English, Houyhnhnm-style.

It being the case that the typical Lawrentian traveller does not even return home, and, indeed, leaves England with little sense of it as 'home', the prospect emerges of a surprisingly subversive dimension to the hitherto apparently fruitless meanderings of Lawrence's characters. However, Lawrence wrote at a time when the imperial adventure seemed to be drawing to an end, and, rather than directly subvert the prevailing attitudes of imperialists in respect to this crisis, his non-purposive travellers, who lack a clear rationale, only reflect them. Consider the following:

The British colonial empire in the 1920s ... had no 'policy' in the French sense: 'In my day', a colonial servant of the era told an American enquirer, 'we had not all forgotten Aristotle. I was continually asking, "What is the end or object of this endeavour?"' But no one would or could give me an answer.'^[94]

At best, a work like *Kangaroo* could be said to expose the malaise at the heart of the British Empire by representing it more openly than the Empire's representatives

would. And yet Somers, doubtlessly like those same representatives, is nonetheless not discouraged whatsoever from perceiving his 'self' as an absolute which must be maintained above and beyond the *canaille* of the relative world in which he finds himself.

A crucial distinction exists between traditional imperial attitudes and those of Somers, of course, in that Somers shows even greater disdain for England than for the 'New World'. But then again, it should be remembered that 'colonies provided niches for misfits'^[95] - for people such as the explorer Richard Burton, whose lifestyle and beliefs did not reside comfortably within the orthodoxies of the mother country. Not dissimilarly, Lawrence's characters try to find abroad those 'chinks' in which they may escape the pettiness that they associate with conventional English and, more broadly, European life; it is just that those chinks have become increasingly straitened with the near-complete colonisation of the world, and Lawrentian individualism reacts in complementarily extreme fashion, vilifying the claims to superiority of the 'civilised' at the same time as patronising the 'uncivilised'. This is particularly noticeable in Lawrence's travel writing. Thus, for example, at an Italian performance of *Ghosts*, the peasant audience suggests a 'pathos ... of mental inadequacy', while Ibsen's work itself is *excessively* 'mental and perverted'.^[96] In much the same way, Lilly, in *Aaron's Rod*, can deplore the masses of Africans and Asians while berating European colonists for wiping out other races *en masse*.^[97]

As with Somers and Lilly, while Cathcart may not see England as a 'stronghold of culture and tradition', certain values are internalised - he spends much of his time upon the first and second islands writing a reference book on classical literature, using English translations. And even though his difference from those on the mainland is marked by his having 'dropped out of the race of progress' (163), this

is exactly what the more anxious patriots feared for Britain: Cathcart's story of declining fortune and status is also that of the mother country.^[98] Cathcart reflects the culture that has made him what he is; it is just that he does not like being part of a bigger picture: he refuses to be relative, and, believing he can establish his own absolutely individual version of a world, he attempts to break from aggregative, monopolistic society. But, testimony again to his inextricable ties to the 'home' country, the extremity of his individualism only has a monopolising effect, analogous to entrepreneurial capitalism's evolution into monopoly capitalism. By the third island, though, he is, like Somers,^[99] left with a monopoly of nothingness.

The story then, can be read as one of the debilitating loss of individualism to monopoly, and, furthermore, one of ebbing British imperial power. In these respects it is not so different from *Kangaroo*. Unlike *Kangaroo*, though, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' suggests that a conception of freedom which is centred upon individual liberty is complicit in the malady of both individual and society. The freedom that Cathcart seeks is that of a subject's independence of outside influence, of possible oppressions or restrictions, against which the freedom is negatively defined; this is a view that is less concerned with positive standards of *how to live freely*, and which reflects the value judgement made in *Women in Love*, depreciating mere 'doing' beneath 'being' oneself^[100] - an evaluation favoured among Lawrence's individuals in general.^[101] The deleterious consequences of Cathcart's non-purposive freedom is clear in regard to himself, but a similar effect on the social body is registered, besides. This is evident not only in the manifest problems which Cathcart encounters in his management of the people on the first two islands: in Cathcart's disastrous liberation from mainland Britain, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' proposes a crucial problem with the emergent process of national self-determination - also

largely driven by a freedom that is negatively defined (freedom from domination by Imperial powers). The islander can be interpreted as one of those countries seeking to break free of the imperial yoke; and his less than egalitarian attitude finds a ready counterpart in the specific example of South Africa. Upon returning from the 1926 Imperial Conference (see note 98), South African Prime Minister, Barry Hertzog, declared: 'The old British Empire, as it existed in the past, now exists no longer ... all that remains is a free society.'^[102] That is to say, a society in which the Boers were free to dominate, especially in regard to the majority black population. This is mirrored in the freedom that Cathcart establishes for himself in order to master the population of his first island: it is commensurate with both the liberalism and the elitism of capitalism, and, in keeping with that system, such freedom is not so easily obtained by those who cannot afford it.^[103] At the same time, lacking a purposive agenda (because it has nothing new to achieve, besides maintaining the status quo and the current elites), this freedom seeks its justification in the existence of the non-free: the rationale for South African 'free society' could be found in its opposition to and subjugation of the black majority who, 'naturally', were utterly incapable of being free individuals and who threatened decent society. In the same way, Lawrence's free individualism is usually defined and justified in the negative, against the subjected mass of people who, for the sake of his free individuals, are doomed to be just that: subjected masses. In 'The Man Who Loved Islands', however, satire's omission of positive fields of action leaves exposed all the more the limitations of this idea of freedom: as someone who breaks 'free' from Britain, only to incur a yet more trammled life, Cathcart does not merely end up 'altered in vision' - he can hardly be said to have any 'vision' at all.

Cathcart, in seeking utopia but finding only that his single-mindedness closes down the world, presents a parallel to satire's tension between its rigorous search for truth and the nihilism that it frequently demonstrates. In fact, this same tension runs through Lawrence's life and work, particularly after the war, which, as we saw in Chapter 1, found Lawrence at one time trying to rescue the world with a 'revolution of society' and at another time deciding it best to 'fire bombs into it'.^[104] While it would be fair to assume satire's preference for bombs, we must allow that Lawrence generally seems to throw his bombs at the present world in the hope of allowing something better to emerge, as in 'Change of Government' and 'Oh Wonderful Machine!'. He did not believe the universe to be meaningless so much as that the modern world, having driven itself into an ideological dead end, is shut off from its meaning and must blast a way through.^[105]

And besides, the satirical mode emphasises one truth that applies to all cultural production - the same which Raymond Chandler points out about writing in my epigraph: that it is, inescapably, a social practice. However negative, Lawrence's writing is a reaction to the social formation of which he and his work are incontrovertibly fused. Though he may parody the common phrases habitually used by others, as in 'Change of Government', the writer's very words are, in a literal sense, common property; though he may challenge the possible objections of his readers to his work, as in *Aaron's Rod*, this only attests to the social context in which his work must function; and though the world at large may be satirised, as in 'Oh Wonderful Machine!', such a text exists only by virtue of its antagonistic reaction to the world that it derides: thus Lawrence could write that 'even satire is a form of sympathy'. sympathy 'in recoil from things gone dead'.^[106]

All of this should be remembered when considering criticism of Lawrence's 'detachment' from the world he describes, such as that of Graham Holderness which I briefly mentioned in my Introduction (page 36). For Holderness, the opening of Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* (1920), which describes the mining town of Woodhouse, illustrates a view of community as given by an outsider and 'which derives from superficial observation or ignorance': 'the community itself is easily and lightly held in the ironical consciousness for curious contemplation'.^[107] This depiction of the narrator's satiric distance is accurate enough, but it fails to account for the possibility that it is precisely Lawrence's inside knowledge of small towns in the English Midlands which, in this instance, leads him to adopt a detached manner; for that manner anticipates the recoil of the novel's heroine, Alvina Houghton, from the town and from the social constraints that English provincial life would place upon her, and, perhaps more importantly, considering the less than obvious liberation she finds in married life with Ciccio in Italy, it serves to reinforce the sense that her departure from Woodhouse is, in spite of all which happens subsequently, the right decision.^[108] In any case, claims of ignorance often perhaps simply mean that the writer is uninterested in what the critic thinks should be written about and how. Socialist critics, for example, are rather less likely to complain of the 'superficial observation' and crude 'ignorance' that undoubtedly lie at the heart of a socialist novel like Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*.^[109]

Still, as I have just shown in my indictment of Tressell, satire's often aloof and polemical nature makes it a ready target for such criticism; and the accusation of an incapacitating detachment often involves charging the satirist with, not mere social ignorance, but a horrifying lack of humanity. Jonathan Swift has suffered this denouncement more than most, particularly in respect to *Gulliver's Travels*. A

typically vigorous defence was advanced by William Hazlitt, which could also be used to defend Lawrence's apparently more misanthropic statements. In short, Hazlitt contends that Swift's contempt is not for humanity *per se*, but for its false sense of its own accomplishments and achievements; he hates humanity for being the poor specimen it often is, and for failing to live up to what it could be. Bearing in mind the unfulfilled hopes expressed at the end of *The Rainbow*, that the industrial world will evolve into something better, it is possible to see Lawrence's subsequent vituperation of humanity, not as evidence of a lack of 'solidarity with his species',^[110] but, in Hazlitt's words upon Swift, as 'an obstinate, constitutional preference of the true to the agreeable'.^[111] There is an evident problem with this assertion, though, in that it merely begs the question as to the accuracy of the writer's statements about the world; and, in any case, considering that so many of the 'truths' which Lawrence relates about humankind - or, at least, about the massed majority - *are* so disagreeably venomous, and that such a defence could be stretched to vindicate the extremes of Sade, for example, it is a moot point as to whether this amounts to any defence whatsoever of the writer's 'solidarity', or rather to a concession of his remoteness from his 'species'.

If all this seems to take us no further forward in the knotty question of Lawrence's social detachment/engagement then it is no surprise to find that Hazlitt's essay is itself entangled in a corresponding issue which concerns the position of the satirist. At one point, Hazlitt likens Swift's viewpoint in *Gulliver's Travels* to that of 'a being of a higher sphere':

he has tried an experiment upon human life. ... he has measured it with a rule, has weighed it in a balance, and found it, for the most part, wanting and worthless - in substance and in shew.^[112]

This inhabitant of an exalted world, pointing out humanity's worthlessness, suggests that privileged fence-sitter whom we saw earlier as one possible incarnation of the satirist, magically elevated above the ideological desolation and not deigning to contribute to the reconstruction. But, soon after, Hazlitt draws an altogether more socially committed picture of Swift's satire:

His feverish impatience made him view the infirmities of that great baby the world, with the same scrutinizing glance and jealous irritability that a parent regards the failings of its offspring; but, as Rousseau has well observed, parents have not on this account been supposed to have more affection for other people's children than their own.^[113]

Perhaps these two positions of the satirist simply point up, once more, the inevitable conjuncture that is characteristic of all art, as it registers a connection to the world in the process of producing a quasi-external perspective upon it. However much by his fingertips, the writer remains connected to society even as he dismissively pushes it away.^[114]

It is the respect in which these two portraits conform, though, that conceivably offers more fruitful ground for discussing Lawrence's satire: 'measured' and 'weighed', as with the notion of parental scrutiny, indicate the presence of a corrective function. This brings us back to satire's implication of normative standards. Crucially, the way in which Hazlitt depicts Swift, which I take to be an accurate account of Swift's scrupulous gauging of humanity against the Enlightenment ideal, does not seem to me to signify how Lawrence's satire operates, after all. Swift's appeal, for example, to standards of 'Reason', 'Virtue, Honour, Truth and good Sense', 'Wit, Merit and Learning',^[115] howsoever abstract they may be, furnishes his

satire with the sort of mission statement which finds little correspondence with anything in Lawrence's work. It would be considerably more difficult to so succinctly state the principles being invoked in, say, 'Oh Wonderful Machine!': Lawrence's poem may imply the possibility of something better than the observed specimen, but this supplies little, if any, of the motive force of the writing, which is driven instead by an instinctual hostility to technology-fetishism. Swift's own hostility to debased elements of his world was supported by a relatively clear set of models, just as the neoclassical ethos in general was sustained by the standards of the classical past. Considering what we have discussed previously, concerning Lawrence's belief that the standards of the past have crumbled or become obsolete, it seems evident that Lawrence's satire is operating upon a fundamentally different basis.

In his essay, '[The Good Man]', which deals with what Lawrence saw as the fate of an eighteenth-century creation - the ideal of the supremely moral 'man of feeling' - Lawrence affirms once more that the ideals of the past are dead; and, with neither new ideas nor a 'new feeling-pattern' emerging, violent and chaotic social upheaval is imminent:

There is no choice about it. You can't keep the *status quo*, because the homunculus robot, the 'good man', is dead. We killed him rather hastily and with hideous brutality, in the great war that was to save democracy. He is dead, and you can't keep him from decaying. You can't keep him from decomposition. You cannot.

Neither can you expect a revolution, because there is no new baby in the womb of our society. Russia is a collapse, not a revolution.^[116]

Nevertheless, Lawrence does not see this as cause for despair, for there is still hope that new ideas will emerge. In the meantime: 'All that remains, since it's Louis XV's Deluge which is lousing, rather belated ... is to be a Noah, and build an ark.... for

there's one more river to cross'.^[117] Of course, the state of affairs pictured here is highly contentious, but then my point is that this argument determines Lawrence's employment of satire - that is to say, his satire is used to assist this argument, to advance the cataclysm.

For my part, I would argue that it is possible to see Lawrence's view of the state of affairs, as given in '[The Good Man]', as lending a rather radical aspect to his satire. This can be illustrated by a comparison with the work of Raymond Chandler. In significant respects, Chandler held beliefs about the world that were, in some respects, very close to those of Lawrence: he viewed capitalism as a fraudulent business concern,^[118] while seeing socialism as merely an alternative means to 'abuse the power of money';^[119] suspicious of much abstract theory, he affirmed his trust in instinct and intuition.^[120] The upshot of all this, personified in the private detective, Philip Marlowe, is a Romantic individualism that is 'in revolt against a corrupt society',^[121] - not so very different from the attitudes of Lawrence's questing individuals. And yet the impetus for these characters' rebellions would appear to lie in opposite directions: if Lawrence's protagonists look to a post-diluvial future, then Marlowe rather seems to be Chandler's attempt to keep the 'good man' very much alive.^[122]

Chandler's view of the past was far from idealised; he knew full well that what we conceive as the 'past' often appears generally superior to the generality of the present because 'The past after all has been sifted and strained. The present has not.' Yet because of this very selection process, the past, as represented by existing society, offers a yardstick with which to measure - and frequently to thrash - the present: 'The past is our university; it gives us our tastes and our habits of thought, and we are resentful when we cannot find a basis for them in the present.'^[123] Some of Chandler's

own resentment is expressed in his early satirical poem, 'Free Verse' (written in 1912). A parody of what Chandler perceives to be the lazy, meretricious vacuity of *vers libre*, the poem makes clear reference to those distinct standards which the newly popular form disregards. Thus, the mock 'modern' poet addresses his more conventional counterpart: 'You see, it's such a lot of trouble/To learn metre/And rhyming,/... What is it all worth?/You have something to say/To make it tell in that cut and dried form./And I haven't.'^[124] The satire is similar to that of neoclassicism in that it is employed to uphold a fairly specific kind of discourse as the authoritative literary voice whilst stigmatising others;^[125] it is therefore quite different from Lawrence's use of satire and poetry. Lawrence embraced free verse exactly because he saw the poet's job as one of breaking through established patterns of thought and feeling; as he wrote in '[The Good Man]': 'our true bondage' is that 'we can only feel things in conventional feeling-patterns'.^[126] In antithesis to this, Lawrence sought to discover alternatives which may not be patterns at all, and increasingly approved of the potential for 'chaos' in poetry, whereas, on the other hand: 'The poetry of a regulated cosmos is nothing but a wire bird-cage.'^[127] So too, we may venture, did Lawrence prefer a satirical chaos to the regulating satire of corrective norms. If normative standards exist for Lawrence's satire, then they cannot be stated as concretely as Chandler extolls his beliefs in rhyme and reason because they are never as securely known as Chandler's 'past'; instead, they remain prospective, to be constructed in a future that has escaped current ideological prisons, assisted by writers who 'might break through the blind end of the high-way, with the dynamite of satire, and help us out on to a new lap'.^[128]

We may begin to appreciate how satire of the normative type may lend itself to a cultural conservatism (without necessarily denying the originality of its

producers), and how the satire employed by Lawrence entertains a more progressive, or, at least, experimental cultural outlook. We would be mistaken to associate these forms, respectively, with *political* conservatism and radicalism, without regard to the ideological content that they are given in particular cases; but we can still say that the satire in Chandler's poem predominantly speaks with, or seeks to establish, the voice of authority, while the immediate business of Lawrence's satire more often lies in destabilising and disrupting authorities and their standard discourses - no better displayed than by 'Change of Government', with its simultaneous trivialisation of conventional political powers, and ridicule of the commonplace, virtually traditional, carping at them. This all-subversive quality should persuade us, once and for all, to drop the idea of Lawrence's satire as sitting on the fence. In the spirit of Lawrence's analogy at the end of '[The Good Man]', his satire does not simply present a case for reposing in the ark and weathering the storm, but for actively calling forth the deluge.

Daniel O'Hara's contention that Lawrence cries 'a plague on all your houses' proves an apt choice of deliberate misquotation in another way besides this, however. The curse emitted by the fatally wounded Mercutio reflects something of the scope of Lawrence's satiric invective, but it also captures the often damaged and desperate condition of Lawrence's leading characters. Chandler's Marlowe, in contrast, despite all the sickness and pain that the world gives him, never so warmly embraces that wholesale misanthropy to which Birkin and Somers are at times susceptible.^[129] And although there is usually no easy or wholly satisfactory solution to his problems, he is generally safely steered towards a solution by a distinct code of justice and morality: he is involved in 'the struggle of all fundamentally honest men to make a decent living in a corrupt society'.^[130] As 'Free Verse' polices the realm of poetic form through its reference to convention, so does Marlowe advance 'decent'

standards, that presumably originate from an uncorrupted past, in order to provide some firm ground upon which to negotiate and patrol a complex world. Indeed, however shabby and solitary he may be, his towering irony enables him to manage a shabbier, hostile world in a succession of tidy witticisms: Marlowe's culturally degenerate California, for instance, is a place that is better acquainted with (John Moses) Browning's automatic rifle than (Robert) Browning's poetry.^[131] Contemporary mechanised violence, this would have us believe, has supplanted an earlier concern with moral rigour and emotional honesty. Lawrence's heroes, in contrast, never so neatly summarise their world's degradation, and rarely rest so securely in their assessments. This is not because Lawrence's oeuvre lacks a tough, wisecracking detective, but it is due to the fact that his protagonists are so often preoccupied with the fundamental question of deciding what standards to live by in the first place. Marlowe, on the other hand, not mired in such existential basics, never spends long in determining what course of action to take; and Chandler, too, takes as little time to clarify Marlowe's specific rôle in life. On the first page of the first Marlowe novel, our hero arrives at the home of his client:

Over the entrance doors, ... there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armour rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying.^[132]

Marlowe is the new and improved knight errant of chivalric romance, and thus, in Chandler's novels, the problems of a debased, modern, 'real' world are dealt with by a hero who is several steps removed from it, as Chandler readily acknowledged:

‘[Marlowe] is, as detective, outside the story and above it, and always will be.... Obviously this kind of detective does not exist in real life’: ‘The private eye of fiction is pure fantasy and is meant to be.’^[133] Indeed, much of the sheer enjoyment to be derived from Chandler’s novels has its source in Marlowe’s ironic detachment and romantic remoteness from quotidian reality. Lawrence’s heroes, on the other hand, for all their social alienation, remain embedded, and implicated in the problems of the real, contemporary world. Unable to draw succour from the past, romantic or otherwise, they necessarily prevaricate and procrastinate rather than dynamically, heroically act; and this is because placing faith in normative values emerging in the future does not provide the means of resolving the difficulty of what to do in the present - Lawrence, after all, was not a prophet.

Nevertheless, the impasse between Lawrence’s idea of pure individuality and the necessity of further communal ties was occasionally disposed of with a panacean prophetic vision of the future;^[134] more frequently, he did, in fact, resort to his own version of a mythopoetic individuality which, while not as potent as Chandler’s, to some degree marks and supports most of the protagonists in his novels.^[135] There is, though, an alternative stream within Lawrence’s oeuvre which is concerned precisely with the explosion of such mythic constructions; this is to say, indeed, not merely that these texts expose what Lawrence sees as bogus ways of representing the individual and the world, but that they suggest Lawrence to be reassessing his own work and such representations found therein. Thus we have seen, for example, *Kangaroo*’s search for singleness reproduced and - with the insecurities perhaps already apparent in the novel confidently enlarged upon - subverted in ‘The Man Who Loved Islands’.

‘The Princess’ (1925) is another text which seems to me to interrogate aspects of its Lawrentian predecessors, but which, ultimately, is more significant for the way that it demonstrates the all-subversive features of Lawrence’s writing. The story of Dollie Urquhart, who has grown up to accept her Father’s romance that they are the last of a regal fairy lineage, and that other people are comparatively vulgar and not worth knowing or even acknowledging, may be seen as another parody of the kind of solipsism that is characteristic of Somers. ‘The Princess’ may even be read as a satirical attack upon fallacious notions of ‘phallic power’, and, *pace* Kate Millett, as an anticipation of feminist criticism of Lawrence’s work. Lawrence’s business, opines Millett, is ‘the transformation of masculine ascendancy into a mystical religion’;^[136] but ‘The Princess’ rather appears to this reader to travesty would-be male sexual power and to demystify masculine domination. During an overnight excursion to the Rocky Mountains, the princess is held prisoner and repeatedly raped by her Mexican guide, the dispossessed landowner, Domingo Romero. After an initial sexual encounter, following which the princess plainly expresses her distaste, Romero avenges himself upon her, for what he perceives as a deliberate humiliation, by determining to ‘make’ her like it. The raping is devoid of detail, and certainly lacks any mystical imagery that might have bestowed a religious significance, and perhaps Lawrence’s sanction, to the act: Lawrence baldly presents Romero’s action as one of desperate brutality, of ‘violent excess’.^[137] The princess is released from her incarceration when Romero is killed in a gun battle with two forest rangers. She emerges ‘not a little mad’ (196) from her ordeal, but, importantly, neither is she much changed by it. There is no significant development from her previous insane fantasy: instead, another romance is spun about her ‘accident in the mountains’ and she is able to remain as ‘the Princess and a virgin intact’ (196). Thus, in some respects, the story

works as both a de-romanticising and a debunking of the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty. The princess, unconscious of the world around her, due to the spell cast upon her by her father, awaits in bed for a prince to waken her, 'for someone [to] help her heart to beat' (188); her subsequent rape does no more than restore the fairy-tale prince's original device for achieving this, and so too uncovers, at the heart of the tale, the violent sexual politics that have been concealed latterly by a bowdlerising kiss.^[138] The significant difference here, of course, is that the princess does not 'wake up' - the only spell to be broken is that which accords the male member a magic of its own.^[139]

'The Princess', then, could be understood as working upon fairy-tale romance in a similar way to that which Simon Dentith proposes of the novel:

Romance is above all the genre of wish-fulfilment, ruled by coincidence and wonder - which are other names for the action of Providence. The novel, by contrast, is a more fully secular genre, inhabiting the world as it is and not as it might be, and consistently debunking the claims of romance by making them bump up against the harder, but also more ordinary, facts of existence.^[140]

So too does 'The Princess' employ the often bitterly comic spirit of Mercutio against the Romeo-like imaginative extravagances of its eponymous heroine, and thus allow a healthier view of an often unhealthy world. One could almost imagine that Dentith has in mind the princess and her 'mad' father when describing how, in the novel, 'parodied forms are seen ... as inhabiting the minds of characters', and how the novel exposes the 'delusive mentality to ridicule and correction'.^[141]

Significantly, though, while 'The Princess' may suggest to the reader that the romance spun by Colin and Dollie Urquhart is somehow 'incorrect', it does not actually cure father or daughter of their fantasies. This is to say that neither does the text provide a model of a 'correct' mental outlook, nor a correspondingly correct

literary mode of representation: there is no straightforward scheme in 'The Princess' that follows that which Dentith outlines, whereby a normative standard of realism offers the antidote to romance. There is, instead, a tangled mesh of competing discourses and modes of representation that is further complicated by such ironies as that suggested above, when the princess's immersion in her own romance denies the fairy-tale, restorative sex-magic of Romero. Rather than privileging any particular discourse, 'The Princess' seems to show Lawrence's perception that all discourse, satirical or otherwise, is inevitably at some remove from the world that it purports to represent, and, consequently, potentially inadequate or untrustworthy.

If the princess's endless romancing is not appropriate for perceiving and relating to the world, then neither, it appears, are more realist modes. The dubiousness of the princess's appreciation of non-fairy-like realities is not only a consequence of her enthrallment to romance: 'She could look at a lusty, sensual Roman cabman as if he were a sort of grotesque, to make her smile. She knew all about him, in Zola' (163). In stark contrast to romance's preternaturalism, naturalism's insistence upon a probing - but often superficial - investigation of a grossly material world is also characteristic of the princess; it is the only way that she can deal with those wild and deathly phenomena that refuse to be accommodated by her romantic wish-fulfilment: the dark mountains, feral animals, Romero himself - all are met, or rather missed, by an attitude of unsympathetic curiosity, fear and disgust. This apparently bizarre combination of preposterous romance and grim realities seems consciously to reflect the occasional absurdities of Zola: Lawrence's virginal fairy princess, raped by an impoverished prince in a shack bought from an impoverished miner, meets with the kind of Zola-esque fate that is suffered by *Germinal's* Catherine Maheu, who enjoys an ersatz 'wedding night', trapped at the bottom of a flooded coal mine, shortly before

dying.^[142] ‘The Princess’ suggests that the inevitable deficiencies of a monochromatic vision of the world, in whatever representational mode (in this instance, of romance), only invite a compensatory, antithetical counteraction. Thus it is that Zola’s strict naturalism so often develops a lurid sensationalism.^[143]

This scheme of thesis and antithesis is signalled in the story’s opening sentences: ‘To her father, she was The Princess. To her Boston aunts and uncles she was just *Dollie Urquhart, poor little thing*’ (159). Here, the realist counterbalance is altogether less sensationalist. However, it is precisely the Bostonians’ appreciation of decorum that leaves Dollie at the mercy of her father’s romances: ‘They debated having him certified unsuitable to be guardian of his own child. But that would have created a scandal’ (160). Effectively, their concern with mundane realities renders them powerless to handle the real consequences of flights of romance. In fact, if we see something of the same decorum in the princess’s over-refined sensibility which sees ‘the real affair [of her rape] hushed up’, beneath the invention of an improbable adventure story (196), then, once more, it appears that a realist attitude - this time more prosaically realist - courts the confections of romance. And if such New England propriety calls to mind the world of Henry James, then, I believe, this is hardly accidental. Dollie Urquhart is the effigy of Isabel Archer, the chaste but presumptuous heroine of James’s novel, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881).^[144] Isabel’s doting father has hidden reality from her and left her to be educated upon the bad things in life via literature. Also like Dollie, Isabel realises, too late, the less-than-gentlemanly ethics of the man whom she chooses to ‘go with’ - and, in her case, marries. Finally, Isabel’s rather implausible self-sacrifice in maintaining her marriage on a point of honour signifies a switch in James’s novel from an initial psychological realism towards a concluding world of romance, foreshadowing the

concomitance of romance and realism in Lawrence's story; and while Isabel's romantic turn condemns her to a miserable life, the princess's genteel realist heritage provides no defence against the consequences of her own damaging romantic flights.

If, though, we shift our attention from the princess herself, and her hotchpotch of romance and literary realism, it may occur to us that it is Romero, after all, with his 'spark of pride, of self-confidence, of dauntlessness', burning 'in the midst of the blackness of static despair' (168), who is the character to offer a more practicable fusion of the worlds of darkness and light, of the mundane and the magical. As if to encourage this supposition, the narrative voice, which has previously handled the princess's story with ironic deprecation, recounts her trek through the mountains with Romero with an eye for the transcendent complexities that she misses, but which seem inscribed in Romero himself. However, before we see Romero as emblematic of a more comprehensive mode of describing and understanding the world, we should bear in mind the lack of authority implied by his useless raping of, and impotent raging at the princess. No less significant is the manner in which his character is blithely surrendered to the type of clichéd melodrama that is so ripe for the debunking scourge of parody - and, as Romero meets his end in a shoot-out that would befit any Western, it is possible that this is precisely the treatment he gets: he does not exactly say, 'You'll never take me alive', but 'I ain't going to Pen I'm going to shoot' is close enough (194).

In fact, if any authority is conferred upon Romero's dealings with the world, it seems due to his resistance to any kind of utterance. His remote silence, like that of the Rocky Mountains, apparently signifies a force that is greater than mere words can express. But Romero's trait for 'saying nothing except what had to be said' (186) betrays the conundrum which lies at the heart of the text, for it merely begs the

question that any text must consider: what *does* need to be said, or even, what *can* be said? In Romero's profound silence, as with the mountains awesome inhumanity, we seem again to be facing that greater Lawrentian reality which exists beyond the capabilities of human language and thought - the 'Unknown'. Something of this transcendent otherness seems apparent in Romero's appreciation of the princess herself, who makes his mind go 'blank with wonder' (183); it is just such an unconditioned sense of the inexplicable which is impossible for the princess, and which keeps her from ever committing to a genuine human relationship.

Yet, crucially, the story does not stop at subverting all kinds of discourse, but undermines this negation of discourse, too. For, near the beginning of the text we are told that the princess herself has learned 'the first lesson, of absolute reticence': she will withhold from others, who may not properly understand, her understanding of true reality - that is to say, of her fairy-princess fantasy (161). The fact that the princess's wise silence signifies nothing but the concealment of inane absurdities must throw the significance of Romero's reticence into question - and surely, besides, inject an acute dubiety into Lawrence's positing of the portentous 'Unknown'.

If we appear, here, to be walking into another ideological hole, then we must ask if this text is any different from those postmodern texts that I judged above (pages 212-13) to consist of paralysed antitheses. And is not all this talk of 'subversiveness' merely a hopeful gilding of a story which, in the final analysis, has nothing positive to say? Considered in isolation, 'The Princess' might well be deemed to answer 'no' to the former proposition and 'yes' to the latter. I would, though, on the contrary, suggest that 'The Princess' tells us something positive, in a very real sense, about Lawrence's attitude to his work and, so too, to the only form of social commitment he knew. In this text's overturning of discourse upon discourse,

Lawrence is declaring he knows full well that neither character, author, speaker, nor writer can lay authoritative claim to the concrete meaning of their words. He is perfectly aware of the possibilities of his work being misunderstood, whether deliberately or not; but whereas, for example, his letter of 1915 to Bertrand Russell, asking for 'patience' and for Russell to understand him when his 'language is not clear',^[145] solicits an indulgent audience, Lawrence's later work flaunts its consciousness of the more likely reception and continues apace regardless.^[146] He continues to write just the same - not least, perhaps, because he recognised that words are *not* mere signifiers, to be analysed and deconstructed contemplatively, as I have done above, but do matter and have real substance in a sphere beyond the page where the rape of a woman and the killing of a man are more than a matter for aesthetic arrangement.

Above all, perhaps, neither 'blank wonder' nor 'absolute reticence' is practicable for a writer. Nor can they be maintained by anyone who would wish to live in relation to others, and this seems to be the message of 'The Princess' in form and content. Whatever the indeterminacy of language, one must pitch into the *melée* and test your vision against that of others: far from accepting that anything goes, this is the only way of ever attaining determinacy.

In a sense, the abbreviated forms of Lawrence's satirical stories and poems are made for a world of abbreviated aspirations: they are analogous to the 'spitefully humorous' 'bits' of the Sydney *Bulletin* with which Somers consoles himself in *Kangaroo*. Yet if something of the scale and ambition of the novels is sacrificed, a freedom is gained to comment upon that larger world; to point out the things the novels miss, and so, like the cathedral's carvings, exist 'in triumph of their own littleness'.

NOTES

- [1] See William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), ed. T.J.B. Spencer (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967), Liv.9-10 and I.ii.93, and commentary to the latter, p. 188.
- [2] Raymond Chandler, letter to Charles Morton, 28 October 1947, *The Raymond Chandler Papers: Selected Letters and Non-Fiction, 1909-1959*, ed. Tom Hiney and Frank MacShane (London, Hamish Hamilton, 2000), p. 82.
- [3] D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 107.
- [4] D.H. Lawrence, 'The Lovely Lady' (*The Black Cap* version), in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn, Introduction and notes by Neil Reeve (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1996), p. 343. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [5] The revolution's leader, Don Ramón, thus declares: 'Only religion will serve: not socialism, nor education, nor anything.' However, when Kate Leslie doubts whether to remain loyal to the cause or to leave Mexico, the dubiousness of religious rapture as a basis for directing political action is disconcertingly apparent in Ramón's counsel: 'How can one know? Something happens inside you, and all your decisions are smoke. - Let happen what will happen' (D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* [1926], ed. L.D. Clark, Introduction and notes by L.D. Clark and Virginia Hyde [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995], pp. 264, 313).
- [6] See above, p. 187.
- [7] For: 'the Unknown is a terribly jealous God, and vengeful' (Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 285). Also see above, pp. 158-9.
- [8] Quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 February 2001, p. 12.
- [9] D.H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod* (1922), ed. Mara Kalnins (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 282. See above, pp. 68-9, 71-2, 75-6.
- [10] Above, p. 77.
- [11] D.H. Lawrence, 'Oh Wonderful Machine!', in *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Vol II*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts (1964; London, Heinemann, 1967), p. 643.
- [12] D.H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, ed. Mara Kalnins (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 149.
- [13] Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, pp. 70-72.
- [14] Lawrence, *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 643.
- [15] Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, p. 147.
- [16] See above, pp. 61-2.
- [17] Tony Bennett, *Outside Literature* (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 77.
- [18] Bennett, p. 58.
- [19] Bennett, p. 190.

- [20] D.H. Lawrence, 'John Galsworthy', in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 213-14.
- [21] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 213.
- [22] D.H. Lawrence, [Version 2], in *The First and Second Lady Chatterley Novels*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 344.
- [23] Jonathan Swift, 'Preface' to *The Battle of the Books* (wr. 1697), in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift: Vol I: A Tale of A Tub With Other Early Works: 1696-1707*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, Blackwell, 1939), p. 140.
- [24] See, for example, Avrom Fleishman, who is keen to discriminate between pluralism and what he argues to be the more specific quality of Bakhtinian 'carnival'. Fleishman writes of *Women in Love*'s 'exhibitions of a divided mind', but observes how this text goes beyond the human mind to outline a future that is necessarily 'open' (at least so far as we are concerned) due to the fact that the universe is ultimately 'determined' by non-human 'mystery'; he concludes that this novel's expression of 'the openness of the future', 'as a principle', 'makes *Women in Love* ... subversive of our human norms and welcoming a larger evolutionary prospect' (Avrom Fleishman, 'Lawrence and Bakhtin: where pluralism ends and dialogism begins', in Keith Brown [ed.], *Rethinking Lawrence* [Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1990], pp. 114, 118). Fleishman's observation of Lawrence's subversive use of a 'negative principle' is, of course, germane to the operation of satire; but most pertinent to my following discussion is the implicit association of this negative principle with Birkin's 'evolutionary prospect' of total genocide - proposing, as it does, a possible affiliation of the satirical principle and nihilism.
- [25] Evelyn Scott, 'A Philosopher of the Erotic', *The Dial* 70 (January-June 1921; Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, 1966), p. 458.
- [26] Scott, p. 461.
- [27] Roger Pearson, 'Introduction' to Voltaire, *Candide and other stories*, trans. Roger Pearson (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. xxi.
- [28] D.H. Lawrence, 'The Last Laugh', in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, p.122. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [29] Daniel O'Hara, 'The Power of Nothing in *Women in Love*' (1983), reprinted in Peter Widdowson (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence* (London, Longman, 1992), p. 152.
- [30] D.H. Lawrence, 'Change of Government', in *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 571.
- [31] Lawrence, *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 571.
- [32] Lawrence, *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 572.
- [33] In the years that followed the Bolshevik revolution, Lawrence's enthusiasm for Communism's potential to effect such a clear-out progressively waned. The year previous to writing 'Change of Government', he had affirmed his belief that Soviet Communism was not appreciably different from Western capitalist democracy, while at the same time, nevertheless, insisting upon the necessity of genuine revolutionary change. 'The dead materialism of Marx socialism and soviets', he wrote, 'seems to me no better than what we've got'. He attached a poem, 'O! start a revolution!', whose first stanza runs:

- 'O! start a revolution, somebody!/not to get the money/but to lose it all for ever!' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Charles Wilson, 28 December 1928, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol VII: November 1928-February 1930*, ed. Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993], p. 99.)
- [34] Lawrence, *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 572.
- [35] Lawrence, *Complete Poems: Vol II*, p. 572.
- [36] See above, pp. 53-4.
- [37] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 63.
- [38] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 356.
- [39] I use the word both in the common sense of 'dialogue', and in the more specialist psychological sense: 'Making up details or filling gaps in memory. This may be a conscious act in which one adds to or elaborates upon partial memories or events, or an unconscious act, in which case the falsification serves as a defence mechanism.' Confabulation is a frequent feature of anosognosia: 'An unwillingness or failure to recognize and deal with a deficiency' (Arthur S. Reber and Emily Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* [1985; 3rd edn, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 2001], pp. 144, 38).
- [40] See, for example, Elizabeth Bowen's ridicule of 'progressive' middle class types who invite friends to their house in the country for 'pleasant' discussions 'on marriage under the Soviet' (Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Cat Jumps' [1929], in Anon. [ed.], *A Century of Creepy Stories* [London, Hutchinson, 1934], p. 203). Trotsky would later dub such 'partiality for sedative generalizations' as '*Bolshevism for the Cultured Bourgeoisie*, or more concisely, *Socialism for Radical Tourists*' (Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* [1937], trans. Max Eastman [New York, Pathfinder, 1972], pp. 2, 3).
- [41] A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 267. Information on the 1929 general election derived from Taylor and Andrew Thorpe, *Britain in the Era of the Two World Wars, 1914-1945* (Harlow, Longman, 1994).
- [42] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 22.
- [43] D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994), p. 155.
- [44] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley Novels*, p. 45.
- [45] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 154.
- [46] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley Novels*, p. 46.
- [47] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 155.
- [48] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 154, 210, 155.
- [49] D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Introduction and notes by Anne Fernihough (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 188. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [50] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 291.
- [51] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, pp. 77, 82.
- [52] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 43.
- [53] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 120.
- [54] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 25.
- [55] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 299.

- [56] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 265.
- [57] Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, pp. 191-2.
- [58] Lawrence, 'John Galsworthy', in *Thomas Hardy*, p. 213.
- [59] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 217.
- [60] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 217.
- [61] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 213.
- [62] See H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895), ed. John Lawton (London, J.M. Dent, 1995); H.G. Wells, *Men Like Gods* (London and Glasgow, Collins, 1923); H.G. Wells, *Anticipations* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1901); and H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (1905), ed. Krishan Kumar (London, J.M. Dent, 1994).
- [63] We may remember Somers's advice upon revolution to Cooley: 'It's much easier to point to a wrecked house, if you want to build something new, than to persuade people to pull the house down and build it up in a better style.' (Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 207.)
- [64] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 214.
- [65] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 210.
- [66] Lawrence, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 211.
- [67] Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966), trans. Geoffrey Wall (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 84.
- [68] David Worcester, *The Art of Satire* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1940), pp. 166-7.
- [69] An attempt to redress this situation is made by Paul Eggert and John Worthen (eds.), *Lawrence and Comedy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996). See, especially, Holly Laird, "'Homunculus stirs': Masculinity and the mock-heroic in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*", pp. 109-30; and Paul Poplawski, 'Lawrence's satiric style: Language and voice in *St Mawr*', pp. 158-79.
- [70] D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy* (1916), in *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, ed. Paul Eggert, Introduction and notes by Stefania Michelucci (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1997), pp. 91-226.
- [71] Worcester, pp. 167-8, 167.
- [72] Worcester, p. 167.
- [73] V.I. Lenin, 'British Pacifism and the British Dislike of Theory' (wr. 1915), in *Collected Works: Vol XXI: August 1914-December 1915*, trans. Julius Katzer (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 263.
- [74] Lenin, *Collected Works: Vol XXI*, p. 264.
- [75] This does not contradict Lawrence's protest that 'The Man who loved islands has a philosophy behind him, and a real significance.' My point is that his philosophy remains very much in the background, behind his conduct. We should, besides, remember that Lawrence's advocacy of the islander's philosophical significance has not a little to do, here, with his declaration of the insignificance of Compton Mackenzie (whose decision to buy an island prompted Lawrence's story, and who subsequently threatened legal action to prevent the story's publication in the British edition of *The Woman Who Rode Away* [1928]). Lawrence wrote: 'The Man Who Loved Islands is a much purer and finer character than the vain, shallow, theatrical, and somewhat ridiculous Mackenzie' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Martin Secker, 16 November 1927, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol VI: March*

- 1927-November 1928, ed. James T. Boulton and Margaret H. Boulton with Gerald M. Lacy [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991], p. 218).
- [76] D.H. Lawrence, 'The Man Who Loved Islands', in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, p.151. Hereafter in this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.
- [77] D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 361.
- [78] I say not unsurprisingly because we have seen Raymond Williams perceive a child as a 'new living fact which is more than "proud singleness"' and therefore something that would threaten Birkin's relationship with Ursula in *Women in Love* (Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* [London, Chatto and Windus, 1966], p. 135; see above, p. 107). In *Aaron's Rod*, on the other hand, the affront to Aaron's singleness seems essentially to originate from his wife; although his almost entire lack of consideration for his children, after leaving his family, hardly testifies to the Lawrentian individual's propensity for extra-generational relationships either. Even in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Mellors, writing to the pregnant Connie, refers to their prospective child as 'a side issue' (Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 300). See, also, Lawrence's view that 'children are not the future. ... they are only a disintegration of the past' (Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, in *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, p. 125).
- [79] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 128.
- [80] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 128.
- [81] Steven Vine, 'Introduction' to D.H. Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, ed. Mara Kalnins (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. xxiv. (All subsequent references to *Aaron's Rod*, unless stated otherwise, pertain to the edition by Cambridge University Press.)
- [82] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 23.
- [83] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 279.
- [84] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, pp. 178, 179.
- [85] See, respectively, Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 279, and Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 205.
- [86] R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (1959; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990), p. 77.
- [87] Of course, it could be argued that 'The Man Who Loved Islands' is no critique whatsoever of Somers *et al.*, but instead (despite all of Lawrence's later protests), a satire upon Compton Mackenzie. But, whatever Lawrence intended, his texts are what they are, and not merely what he thought them to be. In fact, Lawrence's early estimation of Mackenzie strikingly anticipates the cinematic 'ripple of animation and communication' which Jack Callcott perceives as so much trumpery in Somers (Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 38; see above, p. 155). Lawrence wrote of Mackenzie: 'one feels the generations of actors behind him, and can't be quite serious' (D.H. Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, 4 January 1920, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol III: October 1916-June 1921*, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984], p. 443). Cathcart himself, though, is not simply similar to Somers, but, more tellingly, provides something like his photographic negative. In place of the occasional ironic undercutting of a generally sympathetic hero, we are given, in Cathcart, a

failure with whom, nonetheless, we may occasionally sympathise, and thereby feel more keenly the satirical sting. (Lawrence himself may well have viewed Cathcart in this manner: shortly after beginning composing the story, Lawrence declared that it is 'best not to be too isolated', but also that he found it 'most refreshing to get outside the made world, if only for a day - like to Skye' (D.H. Lawrence, Letters to Dorothy Brett, 14 August 1926, and to Else Jaffe, 20 August 1926, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol V: March 1924-March 1927*, ed. James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], pp. 510, 513). This may raise a further objection, that Cathcart is the subject of a more fully-fledged satire than Somers and Lawrence's other protagonists simply because he takes his individualism too far. But this is answered by pointing out the purposeless, debilitated condition of the individualism of Somers *et al.*: for all the philosophical justification that these characters (and Lawrence) try to provide, they, too, have gone too far; it is just that 'The Man Who Loved Islands' finds *its* purpose in satirically exaggerating such behaviour to extremities, so as (to paraphrase Lenin) to pose the issue more directly and thus discover the actual content beneath the husk of words.

[88] D.H. Lawrence, [Version 2] (wr. 1927), in *Lady Chatterley Novels*, p. 344.

[89] Jonathan Swift, letters to Alexander Pope, 26 November 1725 and 29 September 1725, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift: Vol III: 1724-1731*, ed. Harold Williams (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 118, 103.

[90] See, for instance, Gulliver's interview by his Houyhnhnm master upon the subject of European international relations: 'Sometimes the Quarrel between two Princes is to decide which of them shall dispossess a Third of his Dominions, where neither of them pretend to any Right. Sometimes one Prince quarrelleth with another, for fear the other should quarrel with him. ... If a Prince sends Forces into a Nation, where the People are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to Death, and make Slaves of the rest, in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous Way of Living' (Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Robert DeMaria, Jr [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 2001], pp. 226-7).

[91] Concurrent with this latter development, for instance, was the emergence of the television character, Blackadder, who, with examples from throughout history, suggested that the new individualism was no more than the age-old exploitation of social divisions. This point is made no clearer than when Blackadder, about to gerrymander a forthcoming parliamentary election, describes his vision of society: 'Toffs at the top, plebs at the bottom, and me in the middle making a fat pile of cash out of both of them.' But the 'toffs' and 'plebs' do not always prove responsive to his enterprises, as in this particular episode, when the would-be manipulator has to submit to social forces greater than himself: 'it's the last time I dabble in politics', he concludes (Mandie Fletcher [dir.], *Blackadder The Third: Dish and Dishonesty* [UK, BBC, 1987]).

[92] See, for example, H.G. Wells's entrepreneur, Mr Bedford, who threatens the land of the selenites with destruction in his pursuit of their gold - surely a comment upon the British fortune hunters, or *uitlanders* (outlanders), who precipitated the Boer War with their claims to the goldfields of the Boer

- republics (H.G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon* [1901], ed. Arthur C. Clarke [London, J.M. Dent, 1993]).
- [93] Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1986), pp. 86-7. The fact that Cathcart, too, comes to detest the presence of 'evil-smelling men' (Lawrence, *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, p. 169) strongly suggests that Lawrence had the anti-heroism of Gulliver in mind when he wrote 'The Man Who Loved Islands'.
- [94] Correlli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972), p. 126.
- [95] Kabbani, p. 9.
- [96] Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, in *Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, pp. 134, 138.
- [97] Lawrence, *Aaron's Rod*, p. 97.
- [98] In 1926 the Empire Marketing Board was established to try to stimulate imperial trade, and so offset the increasing burden incurred by Britain in its defence of the Empire. Meanwhile, the Imperial Conference (19 October-23 November 1926) promulgated the Balfour Report, which declared of Britain and the Dominions: 'They are autonomous Countries within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations' (Quoted in Barnett, p. 200).
- [99] See above, p. 207, note 72.
- [100] See above, pp. 126-7.
- [101] The difference that I suggest here, between notions of freedom centred upon liberation from outside forces on one hand, and freedom as something established by the fulfilment of certain goals on the other hand, is of course not a hard and fast distinction. These two approaches to freedom are by no means incompatible and frequently appear as two sides of the same coin. However, as a rough guide, we may distinguish between the classic liberal version of individual freedom, as given by John Stuart Mill, and the more socially-grounded, Hegelian freedom of Karl Marx. For Mill, freedom is largely constituted in the negation of restrictive social pressures which have come to 'maim by compression, like a Chinese lady's foot, every part of human nature which stands out prominently, and tends to make the person markedly dissimilar in outline to commonplace humanity' (John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* [1859], in *On Liberty and Utilitarianism* [London, David Campbell, 1992], p. 67). Lawrence's writing is shot through with this struggle of the individual against society (and even replicates Mill's simile - see note 105). For Marx, by contrast, freedom is commensurate with the social majority's ability to be its own master, to shape history rather than be the object of history, which entails relatively specific procedures and objectives (see, for example, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* [1848], trans. Samuel Moore, Introduction by A.J.P. Taylor [Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967], pp. 104-5). It may be objected that for Mill too, freedom was not an end in itself, but a means for the pursuit of utilitarian objectives, namely the maximisation of happiness and the minimisation of pain; but definitions of these goals prove as vacuous as the Lawrentian pursuit of the 'Unknown'. 'Freedom', it seems, for both Mill and

- Lawrence, primarily means the preservation of the liberty of a select type of individual.
- [102] Quoted in Barnett, p. 207.
 - [103] Witness, for example, contemporary British measures for imprisoning destitute asylum seekers in privately run detention centres.
 - [104] D.H. Lawrence, letters to Bertrand Russell, 24 February 1915 and 19 February 1916, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol II: June 1913-October 1916*, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 294, 546.
 - [105] For instance: 'What's the matter with us, is that we are bound up like a China-girl's foot, that has got to cease developing and turn into a "lily". We are absolutely bound up tight in the bandages of a few ideas, and tight shoes are nothing to it' (D.H. Lawrence, '[The Good Man]' [wr. 1926], in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald [New York, Viking Press, 1936], p. 752).
 - [106] Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 101.
 - [107] Graham Holderness, *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1982), pp. 139, 137.
 - [108] I would, nonetheless, not disagree with feminist criticisms which see Alvina's original rebellion against social orthodoxies as being unpalatably quashed by her relationship with Ciccio (see, for example, Katherine Mansfield, '[Notes on *The Lost Girl*]' [wr. 1920], in R.P. Draper [ed.], *D.H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage* [London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970], pp. 144-5). It is just that, whatever Holderness's objections, the text's initial ironic detachment equips Lawrence with a complementary tone for considering the position of an independent-minded woman in a very conventional environment, and a tone which anticipates her own increasing detachment from Woodhouse.
 - [109] Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914; London, HarperCollins, 1997). I am thinking of the uncompromising and arbitrary choice which Tressell offers, between salvation through a 'high' culture of theatre and books, and the perdition that awaits enthusiasts of 'working-class' pursuits, such as discussing football and drinking in public houses.
 - [110] David Craig, *The Real Foundations: Literature and Social Change* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1973), p. 167. See above, pp. 23-5.
 - [111] William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt: Centenary Edition: Vol V: Lectures on the English Poets and A View of the English Stage*, ed. P.P. Howe (London, J.M. Dent, 1930), p. 111.
 - [112] Hazlitt, pp. 110-11.
 - [113] Hazlitt, p. 112.
 - [114] Thus Lawrence conceived that 'the individual is never purely a thing-by-himself. He cannot exist save in polarized relation to the external universe' (D.H. Lawrence, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* [1921], in *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* [1923; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971], p. 244).
 - [115] Jonathan Swift, 'A Letter from Capt. Gulliver, to his Cousin Sympson' (1735), in *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 6.

- [116] Lawrence, *Phoenix*, p. 754.
- [117] Lawrence, *Phoenix*, p. 754.
- [118] Raymond Chandler, letter to James Sandoe, 6 December 1948, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 98.
- [119] Raymond Chandler, letter to Jamie Hamilton, 27 February 1951, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 153.
- [120] 'Ideas are poison. The more you reason, the less you create' (Raymond Chandler, letter to Charles Morton, 28 October 1947, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 83).
- [121] Raymond Chandler, letter to Mr Inglis, [?] October 1951, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 171.
- [122] Marlowe is 'a more honorable man than you and I' (Raymond Chandler, letter to John Houseman, [?] October 1949, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 127).
- [123] Raymond Chandler, letter to H.F. Hose, [?] February 1951, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 150.
- [124] Raymond Chandler, 'Free Verse', in *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 8.
- [125] Compare, for example, Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* (1728; revised and expanded 1743), in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (1963; London, Routledge, 1989), pp. 709-805.
- [126] Lawrence, *Phoenix*, p. 753.
- [127] D.H. Lawrence, 'Chaos in Poetry' (1929), in *Phoenix*, p. 260.
- [128] Lawrence, 'John Galsworthy', in *Thomas Hardy*, p. 219.
- [129] When he does come close to this, he is careful to warn himself: 'Hold it, Marlowe, you're not human to-night' (Raymond Chandler, *The Little Sister* [1949; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1955], p. 79).
- [130] Raymond Chandler, letter to John Houseman, [?] October 1949, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 126.
- [131] Raymond Chandler, *The Little Sister*, p. 73.
- [132] Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (1939; Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1948), p. 9.
- [133] Raymond Chandler, letters to James Sandoe, 12 May 1949 and 4 February 1953, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, pp. 115, 188.
- [134] As, for example, in '[Autobiographical Fragment]' (wr. 1927), in *Phoenix*, pp. 817-36.
- [135] That sublimely capable individuality, which designates Philip Marlowe as a virtual superhero, is perhaps most fully apparent in Mellors. With a similar aplomb to that with which Marlowe negotiates the mean streets of Los Angeles, so does Mellors hurdle the hazards presented by the English class system, gender and politics. There is little surprise, then, when Connie likens him at one point to that contemporary exemplar of romanticised heroism, T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 281).
- [136] This is Millett's assessment of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in particular. She sums up 'The Princess' as 'a story done with infinite malice and sexual enmity' (Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* [1969; London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971], pp. 238, and 286, n. 176).
- [137] D.H. Lawrence, 'The Princess', in *St Mawr and Other Stories*, ed. Brian Finney (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 193. Hereafter in

this chapter, page references to this text will be given following each quotation.

- [138] See Jack Zipes (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 476.
- [139] The case being that the rape does not 'do' much at all, the story forestalls our modern 'new man's' version of mythicised phallic power, whereby rape is held to be the worst thing that may happen to a woman, and any 'victim' who challenges the convention that her life has been irrevocably damaged as a consequence is to be considered mentally ill (see, for instance, Sara Hinchcliffe, "'Aren't I allowed to be alright?": Why being raped did not destroy one woman's life', *Living Marxism* 103 [September 1997], pp. 22-3). Lawrence's later short story, 'None of That!' (1928), is much more in line with this orthodoxy. Ethel Cane, not unlike Dollie Urquhart, believes that to master a situation imaginatively is to control and deal with it in reality. However, when faced with having to accommodate in this way her subjection to a gang rape, she does the 'right' thing after finding that she cannot and kills herself. Ethel's demise, through her reliance upon her own imaginative powers to cope with a hostile outside world, could be seen as another corrective to the introspection favoured by characters like Somers; yet such a comparison only draws out the moral lesson in 'None of That!', which points up the erroneousness of a solipsistic attitude not so much as the mentally uncontainable power of male sexuality; Somers, for instance, confronted with otherness, suffers numerous painful encounters, but these are nothing as to the necessarily fatal confrontation of Ethel, the previously wilfully-independent female, with the all-powerful phallic other (D.H. Lawrence, 'None of That!', in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, pp. 211-29).
- [140] Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London, Routledge, 2000), p. 55.
- [141] Dentith, p. 58. This account is, as Dentith acknowledges, 'a one-sided history of the novel'. He goes on to look at the novel in another aspect - as a less normative and more generally subversive genre. It is this second viewpoint which I consider the best for appreciating 'The Princess'.
- [142] See Emile Zola, *Germinal* (1885), trans. Leonard Tancock (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1954), p. 486.
- [143] This assessment by 'The Princess' of a representational single-mindedness thus places the text as a companion piece to 'The Man Who Loved Islands', which critiques a philosophical monologic that sees the remorseless pursuit of singleness only succeeding in destroying individuality.
- [144] Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Geoffrey Moore (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984).
- [145] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Bertrand Russell, 12 February 1915, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 286. See above, p. 56.
- [146] A nice example in this self-conscious mode is the poem, 'What Ails Thee?' (1929) - which, depending on the reader, can be seen either as a trivial squib, or as an astute parody of the absurd dialogue and improbable relationship in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (*The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Vol I*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts [1964; London, Heinemann, 1967], p. 540).

CONCLUSION

‘THE END CRACKS OPEN WITH THE BEGINNING’: THE FRUITFUL SEEDS WITHIN THE FISSURE OF ‘LAWRENCE’ AND ‘SOCIETY’^[1]

Perhaps, as you say, you have wandered outside the world’s communion. But haven’t I as well? Have I not been ripped up by the roots, screaming like the mandrake, transplanted from country to country only to find the soil arid, or the sun unfriendly, the air tainted? Whom should you tell this terrible secret to if not to your brother?

Thomas Pynchon^[2]

Towards the end of the war, a poverty-stricken Lawrence, hounded by the military and police authorities, summed up his attitude to the world and to his work:

I go on working, because it is the one activity allowed to one, not because I care. I feel like a wild cat in a cage - I long to get out into some sort of free, lawless life - at any rate, a life where one can move about and take no notice of anything. I feel horribly mewed up. I don’t want to act in concert with any body of people. I want to go by myself - or with Frieda - something in the manner of a gypsy, and be houseless and placeless and homeless and landless, just move apart. I *hate* and *abhor* being stuck on to any form of society.^[3]

The depiction here, of an alienated individual who yearns for social detachment, is writ large across subsequent accounts of Lawrence, as I noted in my Introduction, particularly with regard to Auden, who uses the term ‘gypsy’ himself (above, page 22). Contrary to this picture, I have tried to show the extent to which Lawrence’s texts are inevitably embedded within their contemporary social formation and articulate its various ideologies. Besides, while Lawrence may not have been ‘*engagé*’ in the strictest sense, one does not ‘*hate* and *abhor*’ something with which one has no

concern. What I take to be a more accurate view of his prevailing postwar attitude can be found in another letter, where he writes: 'I don't care for politics. But I know there *must* and *should* be a deadly revolution very soon, and I would take part in it if I knew how.'^[4] Lawrence's work persistently resists the kind of political programme that is to be found in the writings of a 'committed' author, such as William Morris, for example; but it nonetheless continually expresses, however inchoately, the necessity of large-scale social change. Furthermore, that very rudimentary quality of Lawrence's radical political utterances is itself testimony to the extent to which his work is socially involved: Lawrence's express radicalism remains incipient simply because his discourse is so beholden to dominant ideologies of the present and the recent past. When he writes of individuality and freedom, or to depreciate the business of politics itself, his words are hedged, respectively, by the values of aristocratic hierarchy, laissez-faire libertarianism, and 'disinterested' patrician superciliousness. Not unlike *Kangaroo*'s Somers, he searches for a 'new show' while blinded by old perspectives. This does not mean that the wish to transform society is not genuine, but that any positive attempt on his part to devise how to do so is pre-empted by 'society' itself: the social formation of Western capitalism is the reality which he detests, while its prevailing ideologies frame his thinking. Rather than Lawrence being divorced from social issues or disregarding politics for 'higher purposes', then, it is possible to see the case is that he is a focal point for a complex arrangement of often opposing, contradictory social and ideological forces. Lawrence's consequential reticence upon, or impatience with political matters is, therefore, a politically induced silence that speaks of his connection to, and not detachment from, society.

A reasonable interjection at this point would be to declare that it is hardly a novel caveat to say that Lawrence must be considered as a social being: the images of Lawrence as a romantic outsider or hermitic oddball can surely now be consigned to the past. Nonetheless, the predilection for attempting to extricate the writer from his world remains powerfully active, most remarkably in the editorial policy of the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of D.H. Lawrence*. The Cambridge Edition, with its aim to ‘provide texts which are as close as can now be determined to those [Lawrence] would have wished to see printed’,^[5] follows the tendency of Lawrentian criticism, chopping away supposedly secondary, contemporary quotidian realities, to leave, immaculate, the amaranthine ‘Lawrence’. Writing and publication are social processes and, as suggested in my earlier chapters, provided a vital continuing connection between Lawrence and wider society; strikingly, with its mission to produce texts that only Lawrence ‘himself’ (*might* have)^[6] wished to see, the Cambridge Edition would seem to desire, if it were possible, to sever this link and ‘restore’ what we saw Raymond Chandler diagnose as the myth of ‘purely individual’ writing.^[7]

This criticism is not intended to detract from the very real achievements of the Cambridge Edition; on the contrary, the textual decontextualisation appears even more strange when we consider that the Cambridge Edition thoroughly contextualises Lawrence’s writing and the publication process in a series of careful, detailed introductions which recount as important factors in the texts’ production Lawrence’s social circumstances, financial situation, and dealings with publishers and agents. The general editors, however, rather than simply recognise these circumstances, cast the publishers et cetera as the villains of the piece, against Lawrence’s mistreated hero. Their ‘Preface’ notes how Lawrence ‘had to accept ... at all times the results of his

publishers' timidity' and that 'the fear of Grundyish disapproval, or actual legal action, led to bowdlerisation or censorship from the very beginning of his career'. Beneath this flurry of indignation lies the sober reality that all publishers have to take account of economic viability: legal action costs money and a banned book brings no money in. Furthermore, the fact that Lawrence earned his living through his writing meant that publisher and writer shared a common interest: hence, Martin Secker's obligation to alter the text of *The Lost Girl* immediately prior to publication. John Worthen ably gives the gist of the situation:

The three main circulating libraries in England - Boots, Mudies and Smiths - refused to take *The Lost Girl* if p. 256 (describing the heroine's first sexual encounter with the hero) remained in its current state. ... The book had been printed, and many copies already bound, but Secker urged Lawrence to rewrite the page; he had printed 4000 copies, a very large print order, and knew he would not sell anything like 4000 without the libraries buying the book. He asked Lawrence

whether it would not be possible for you to rewrite the passage in question in such a way as to remove their objections. After all these three libraries should account between them for some 2,000 copies, possibly more if the book should have the success I anticipate, and as well as this direct result there is the even greater indirect benefit of your work gaining the widest publicity which only the libraries can afford.

The arguments were persuasive, especially for an author trying to rebuild a career and make his books profitable....^[8]

Quite. And yet it is Worthen who, as editor of Cambridge University Press's *The Lost Girl*, and despite acknowledging Lawrence's agreement to 'modify *The Lost Girl* to satisfy the library demands',^[9] persists in substituting the passage that Lawrence wrote in the first place. Presumably the reasoning here is that, if he were free from external demands (such as a readership), this is the version that Lawrence would have wanted.

This is a rather one-sided view of how a novel comes into being. Indeed, it is surely more accurate to accept that, rather than the Cambridge Edition working the miracle of excluding the penumbræ of non-authorial, and therefore supposedly non-authoritative, social considerations that are inscribed within a published text, it is simply the case that those considerations change and that the Cambridge Edition is here changing the text to fit them. This is to say that today it is not commercially dangerous to incorporate explicit sexual matter into fiction, so therefore there is no obstacle to use the originally excised passage; and thus, besides, the Cambridge Edition responds to another contemporary consideration: the need to present itself as fresh goods on the market.

As might be expected, such a need becomes more apparent at the more popular end of the market, where, indeed, the sexual nature of *The Lost Girl*'s 'new' material is as much a boon to the publisher as is its authorial authority. We may, for instance, compare what, for a period, coexisted as variant editions in Penguin's 'Twentieth-Century Classics' series: its first version of *The Lost Girl*, which reproduces the original English edition of 1920, including the scene that was rewritten for the libraries, and the new version, published in 1995, which reproduces the Cambridge text, containing the more explicit material. The blurb to the original Penguin, giving the bare bones of the narrative, describes its text as 'the story of Alvina Houghton and the rebellion against ordinariness that drives her into an affair with a vaudeville actor and then away, to Italy'. The Cambridge Penguin, on the other hand, keen to make capital of the new sexual content, trumpets the 'Passionate and free-spirited' Alvina's rejection of 'stifling respectability' and 'restrictive social conventions' as the embodiment of Lawrence's 'belief in sexual expression'.^[10] It is quite evidently a new and different text for new and different times - and a different

market. This instance of the beginning (or not) of the main protagonists' sexual relationship, has much in common with the Cambridge project in general; it is not always the case that textual 'corruption' is simply being removed, but often besides, we see that a text is being *produced* from an editor's/publisher's response to a different context. In the end, it is never simply a matter of what writers 'want to write': 'It's all reaction of one sort or another.'^[11]

The texts of the Cambridge Edition are, if we ever forget, produced according to the logistical limitations of an academic press and the ideological standards and procedures of liberal-humanist scholarship; they are a late twentieth-century academic construction, besides being the work of an early twentieth-century novelist called D.H. Lawrence. The individualist ethos that operates within the Cambridge Edition's editorial policy may correspond with Lawrence's own attempts to elevate the individual above the merely social; but this confers no more authority upon the Cambridge Edition's version of Lawrence than is possessed by Lawrence's individualistic representation of the world. Still, all this is nothing more than that inevitable reprocessing through which are sifted all of the 'past' and its 'contents'. Such transformations cannot be prevented - they simply signify the 'Lawrence' that exists in a particular historical, cultural context. The same applies to critical treatments of Lawrence's oeuvre: while Lawrence himself may have been ideologically incapacitated from any sustained political involvement, this has not prevented his work from being recruited to the services of political and ideological interests that have alternately venerated and pilloried it, or, more often the case nowadays, as with my own account, conjured something in between. The man who died in 1930 has bestowed his name upon a textual body that is endlessly and multifariously resurrected by our readings and rereadings, by writings, films,

television and radio programmes about his life and work, and, indeed, by our responses to these secondary materials themselves. In this complex and continual processing of reprocessings, with so many ideological interests to be fought for, and, not least, perhaps, so much potential revenue at stake, we should always be cautious of any critical explication or edition that claims to deliver the 'authoritative' or 'authentic' Lawrence (as promises the Penguin Lawrence Edition).^[12]

On the other hand, in the same way that Lawrence's perception of the indeterminacy of discourse did not prevent him from committing himself to print, this does not mean that we should refrain from attempting to define a relatively determinate Lawrence. In fact, this is what inevitably happens anyway (witness, for instance, the preponderance of 'philosophical' or psychological constructions as opposed to political expositions). To dispute, then, whether prevailing notions of Lawrence wield legitimate authority or not (however it may be defined) is possibly immaterial: it is simply the case that all contention centres upon a dominant position, be the conflict cultural, political or otherwise. The point to make, perhaps, is that, when entering the fray, it is more expedient to the critical process to do so in the knowledge, and with the acknowledgment, that one is defending, moderating or subverting a dominant view of culture which relates in some way to our view of material reality.

My own version of Lawrence shares in some respects the indeterminate, provisory quality that is to be found in other recent exegeses marked by the impact of postmodernism (and which, collectively, thus proffer the paradox of an authoritative 'Lawrence' that is equivocal). I hope, however, to have resisted the neutrality - in both a political and wider sense - which seems to me to characterise other accounts of

Lawrence's ambivalency. I am in entire agreement with Paul Eggert, for example, when he dismisses the tendency of earlier criticism to either construct and condemn a 'bad' Lawrence, with reference to the fascistic traces and misogynistic elements in the oeuvre, or to present a 'good' Lawrence that supplies a 'health-giving philosophy of body and mind which assigns his extremist conclusions to a subsidiary place'.^[13] Eggert rather wishes to appreciate the 'more chameleon, mercurial,' Lawrence: a writer 'not casuistical in regard to what he espoused, but changeable in his address to it - and thus changeable about the very basis of "espousal"'.^[14] All of this provides a fine critical starting point, but I would add that, although it is necessary that Lawrence's changes of position be reckoned with, it is not sufficient to let those changes indefinitely suspend a reckoning of Lawrence's work on the whole. This is to say that it befits a critique to 'make its mind up' on certain points, and to render the supposed radical indeterminacy of Lawrence's texts tolerably determinate.

While it is true that much of Lawrence's work itself does not make up its mind, this provides no peremptory prescription for a critical reading that rather passively accepts such ambivalence as a 'natural' Lawrentian condition. The critic's job remains in examining the nature of such ambivalence and explaining why it exists and what its relevance - that is, its value - may be to us now, if there is to be a 'critical discourse which is more than a superficial and futile *reprise*'^[15] of the critical object. And besides, there exists an alternative prescription. We have seen, in the subversion of discourse in 'The Princess', for example, and in *Women in Love*'s scene of multiple perspectives at the railway crossing, support for Eggert's emphasis upon Lawrence's elusiveness, his postmodern relativity; but we have seen also how Lawrence's texts do not merely anticipate the postmodern condition, but work, or may be worked, to challenge it: a subversive reading of *Kangaroo* yields a sceptical account of

postmodernism's own political skepticism; and, more simply, although Lawrence demonstrates a ready perception of a political vacuum, and, as in 'The Princess', of the inadequacies of discourse, he pointedly does not let any of this prevent his espousal of forthright political judgments, such as those in the poems of *Nettles* (1930). Nonetheless embroiled in postmodernity's crises of ideological legitimation and semantic undecidability, he repeatedly insists upon cutting through its Gordian knots, determined to make determinate statements about a world in which, after all, words do count.

Lawrence's own ideological impasse did limit his writing in the respect that it often refuses to directly engage with, or even to recognise, the social dimension of human life. This limitation, however, has material and political causes whose explication grounds Lawrence's work once again within a social context, and allows his texts to comment upon their originating social formation in ways more indirect, and often more penetrating, than their author might have imagined. The Great War, which his work so frequently associates with the rescission of all former ideals, may fairly be viewed as the social crisis that precipitated his ideological crisis. Considering Lawrence's personal experiences during that period, it is unsurprising that the war especially seemed to signify a growing threat to individual liberty. The consequence, however, was an increasingly pugnacious defence of the notion of the free independent individual, which was effectively a vindication of a principal emblem of the entrepreneurial capitalism that, in its monopoly form, had helped lead to the international conflict in the first place. Lawrence became caught in a circularity that he found difficult to break: in fact, he was rather inclined to take the line that there was nothing wrong with individualism that more individualism could not fix - which

only tended to spiral towards an ever more fragmented world and increasingly alienated individuals.

But even relatively early in his career, before the full horror of the war became apparent, Lawrence's new 'natural' aristocracy is already feeling menaced, with Ursula constantly aware of 'the grudging power of the mob lying in wait for her, who was the exception'.^[16] If Lawrence's aristocrats appear to be as threatened as England's actual aristocracy had been for the past three centuries, then this should come as little surprise: because it is often rather difficult to tell the difference between Lawrence's aristocracy of birth and the conventional aristocracy of money, other than that it is precisely a lack of extreme wealth and feudal power that prevents Lawrence's individuals from properly lording it over their putative inferiors. Indeed, a critical obstacle for these beggarly aristocrats is the question of what they are to do, or are able to do, with their free individuality. While denouncing everyone and everything that would lay the least claim upon them, they continually flinch from determining what their purpose in the world is to be. But then again, we have our answer, or the evasion of the issue, in *Women in Love*, where we are informed by Ursula that to 'do' anything is 'plebeian', and that it is the object of the 'patrician' simply to 'be oneself'.^[17] Exactly as to what oneself may be in such reduced circumstances, we are never enlightened, but the utter fragility of such self-supporting individuals and this self-justifying individuality is clear. Their only sense of self seems dependent on the postulation of a loathsome mass of humanity, against which their individuality cannot fail to shine - in their own eyes. And their only succour is derived from imagining the destruction of everything else.

In truth, Lawrence's increasing stress upon an individuality that must remain free from society merely puts under stress, to breaking point, that individuality itself. In *Kangaroo*, for example, Somers fears that any attempt to involve himself in social life only risks his 'drowning in this merge of harmlessness, this sympathetic humanity', leaving him feeling like 'the fly in the ointment'.^[18] This metaphor perhaps recalls Lawrence's short story of that name, published in 1913. It is the story of a young schoolteacher and righteous prig, lodging in suburban London, who encounters a would-be thief, one night in the kitchen. His disgust with such a specimen of working-class depravity, compounded with his despair of ever inculcating upon this deviant some of his own petty-bourgeois values, culminates in his sending the intruder away and miserably going to bed. In the first extant version of the story, the schoolteacher experiences a waking 'nightmare' at this point, thinking himself to be 'a blot, just a blot of ink on a page, a black, heavy disfiguring blot, with no meaning.'^[19] The loss of the axiomatic sense of his own values, and of the sense of his efficacy as a teacher, spoil his earlier enjoyment gained in recollecting his life in the midlands and the girlfriend, waiting there, to whom he was writing. The easy eloquence upon the letter paper intended to be sent to his beloved is replaced in his mind by another ink-slinging projection of himself, as someone as ugly and inarticulate as he construed the intruder to be. Like Somers, the schoolteacher feels himself to be a fly in the ointment; and yet Somers's attitude appears fundamentally different. In the short story the schoolteacher's nightmare is of being rendered meaningless in respect to the society in which he must exist; in *Kangaroo*, Somers's 'nightmare', made explicit in the chapter of that name, is principally of the meaninglessness of society itself, which, if he cannot struggle out of, threatens his supposedly independent significance: he envisages himself as a contaminant only

while he pictures a society of 'pure' deindividuated enervation - Somers self-conceitedly characterises himself in the struggling activity of the fly crawling out of the ointment, which itself effects a de-characterisation, so to speak, of society as a non-living, amorphous mass.

If we were to associate the schoolteacher and Somers with Lawrence at the respective times of writing, an initial contrast of these texts may thus suggest a transition from an insecure sense of individual identity to a much more resolute self-assertion. It is nothing so straightforward, though. Such a process may, still, seem yet more apparent when one has considered the final version of 'The Fly in the Ointment', in which the schoolteacher's closing 'nightmare' is not of his own life's meaninglessness, but of the 'blot' that is, in this version, the intruder. Crucially, however, the schoolmaster's new self-assurance is gained by his successfully identifying himself with an idea of decent society which the intruder threatens; in the first version of the story, it is the insecurity of such identification which endangers the schoolmaster's sense of selfhood. When it is remembered that, in *Kangaroo*, Somers is actively trying to dissociate from any kind of society, we become aware of a distinct possibility that the security of his individuality is facing yet greater peril. Indeed, Somers's concern, here, is not for a world which he or another threatens to spoil (as in both versions of the short story), but with an engulfing world which threatens *him*. Both schoolteachers suffer angst in recognising their contingent relation to the often refractory world beyond them, but they do not, nevertheless, deny that relatedness. Thus the schoolteacher in the final version of the story admits of the intruder: 'I knew I could not understand him, that I had no fellow feeling with him. He was something beyond me. ... I thought he was a blot, like a blot fallen on my mind, something black and heavy out of which I could not extricate myself.'^[20] The schoolteacher has no

fellow feeling because he associates himself with society's betters; but he still acknowledges his connection, as a social being, to that social corruption to which the first schoolteacher feels himself a contributor. In *Kangaroo*, anxiety at worldly otherness expands into something that literally overwhelms Somers, to the point where his denial of the reality of social existence presents the only recourse. Whereas both versions of the early short story are still wrestling with the nature of individual identity as a social construction, *Kangaroo* would seem to attempt to do exactly what the schoolteacher realises is impossible: to 'extricate' the 'good' individual from the 'bad' society. And Somers, faced with the war's further trammelling of individuality, finds this venture no easier: from the stream of great ideas and grand social schemes that has been apparently dammed up by the war, he can only find a dribbling parody of aristocracy, that remains ineffably 'spiritual' - that is to say, within his own solipsism.

The flood which sweeps away Tom Brangwen, Senior, in *The Rainbow* and which seems to herald the beginning of a new life of free individuals was, in reality, supplanted by the cataclysm of the war, in whose aftermath Lawrence's subsequent characters are to be found floundering. To a great extent, though, Lawrence's novels seek to shelter his individuals from the deluge, and disconnect them from family connections, the world of work and social concerns: thus it is that *Women in Love* concludes with Ursula and Birkin ensconced in their converted mill-house. This is not to say that the novels do not indicate the impossibility of social extrication (they do, as when Somers and Harriett have *their* houses blown open by warlike winds);^[21] it is just that, in satire, Lawrence is discharged from depicting anything like a sympathetic hero who perseveres despite the odds, and so is enabled to engage more directly with the quotidian realities of humanity's political and industrial

subjection, as in the cases of 'Change of Government' and 'Oh Wonderful Machine!'. And if Lawrence's rudimentary radicalism is retarded by the origin of his individualism in capitalist ideology, then satire helps shed such standards anyway, as inexorably as it disposes of 'The Man Who Loved Islands'. The islander and the characters of the novels share a penchant for solipsistically chopping the world down to fit their own illusions and to exclude more obnoxious social realities. Ironically enough, on the other hand, it is the shorter satirical works like 'The Princess', with its cruel jokes at both Dollie Urquhart's self-perception as a virginal fairy princess and at Romero's fatal misperception of Dollie, which pitch barren introspection into an external 'world' that involves the most brutal confrontation with repugnant realities.

There is, of course, abundant evidence of irony in the novels, but I would contend that it is usually set to a contrasting purpose. Unlike their counterparts in the shorter works, the moments of novelistic irony tend to be far removed from the spirit of the carvings in Anna Brangwen's Lincoln Cathedral, which point out what the dominant ideology cannot compass. Many other commentators have argued just the opposite, including Eggert, who uses *Women in Love* as his exemplar in proposing how Lawrence employs two voices, 'one, let us say of the Birkin kind, which allows Lawrence to philosophise, speculate, even rant', and 'Ursula's sarcastic or affectionately ironic kind, which pricks the ballooning implications of Birkin's extremist intellectual positions'.^[22] I do not accept this for a moment, but rather see Ursula's retorts as functioning less to subvert, and more to shore up the novel's dominant thesis of individuality and Birkin as the dominant individual (see above, pages 101, 109-10). They actually seem to parody dialogism, making Birkin easier to swallow.

Despite all the foregoing, however, I would not wish to contribute to oversimplified divisions in Lawrence's oeuvre. I do not see that there is a necessary choice to be made between the novels and the shorter satirical works. Rather, I hope to have shown the contrasting qualities they have to offer. Their similarities and continuities should be more evident. Not least, both satire and novels demonstrate a characteristic Lawrentian tension between utopian aspirations and a skeptical appreciation of reality. The flux of thesis and antithesis in the generic subversion in 'The Princess', which offers no synthesis of a more 'genuine' mode of textuality, reflects the novels' resolve their own contradictions,; but then, in both cases, this is only a consequence of their literary synthesis of their world's contradictions - which must be resolved first.

If it seems that I have already made my 'choice' as to those texts of particular significance, in the selection that include in my thesis, then I must stress that, while one of my intentions has been to question the conventional Lawrentian canon, I have by no means attempted to construct an alternative. My choice of texts is a consequence of my aim to chart Lawrence's writing from what has been considered a crucial 'break' between Lawrence and England - the war - in the key canonical text in which he formulates his own thesis of escaping the world (*Women in Love*); then through the text where the crisis of what to do when one has 'left' society is most directly faced (*Kangaroo*); before trying to assess that mode which, to me, appears to represent Lawrence's most conscious attempt to breach the gap between self and society (the satire).

However 'deracinated' Lawrence is perceived to be, a final irony is that this may be exactly what continues to connect him to us, in our supposedly socially mobile, postmodern world of multiplex identities. But I would contend that the key

reason for his contemporary appeal is that, besides lending itself to the explosion, in postmodern fashion, of 'bourgeois' determinate prejudices, his work, unlike postmodernism, refuses to rest from searching for a further, unifying agent. Inhabiting the 'Unknown' as it does, this last can perhaps be said to posit a solidarity, which if not recognisably social, is at least preter-personal and beyond the endlessly pointless introspection of his proto-postmodern individuals.

NOTES

- [1] See D.H. Lawrence, 'Pomegranate' (1923), in *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Vol I*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts (1964; London, Heinemann, 1967), pp. 278-9.
- [2] Thomas Pynchon, *V* (1963; London, Vintage, 1995), p. 203.
- [3] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Mark Gertler, 16 March 1918, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vol III: October 1916-June 1921*, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 226.
- [4] D.H. Lawrence, letter to Eleanor Farjeon, 20 January 1921, *Letters: Vol III*, p. 649.
- [5] James T. Boulton and Warren Roberts, 'General Editors' Preface' to the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of D.H. Lawrence* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980-).
- [6] Employing nicely ambiguous wording, the general editors state that Lawrence 'overlooked the errors of typists or copyists': we simply do not know whether Lawrence failed to observe the differences from what he had written, excused them as being unimportant, or even preferred them - that is to say we do not really know whether they can be deemed errors at all (Boulton and Roberts, 'General Editors' Preface' to the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of D.H. Lawrence*).
- [7] Raymond Chandler, letter to Charles Morton, 28 October 1947, *The Raymond Chandler Papers: Selected Letters and Non-Fiction, 1909-1959*, ed. Tom Hiney and Frank MacShane (London, Hamish Hamilton, 2000), p. 82. The 'General Editors' Preface' to the Cambridge Edition goes so far as to admit that these texts were never even 'seen by the author himself' - confirmation, if it were needed, of what is evident in *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo*: the more you try to separate the individual from society, the more that individuality is denied.
- [8] John Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1989), pp. 96-7. Worthen's quotation is from Martin Secker, letter to D.H.

- Lawrence, 22 October 1920 - see John Worthen, 'Introduction' to D.H. Lawrence, *The Lost Girl* [1920], ed. John Worthen (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. xxxix. The passage that was cut from the first edition is restored in this edition, pp. 233:24-234:16.
- [9] A concession which contributes to the 'evidence of the extent to which [Lawrence] viewed *The Lost Girl* as a commercial enterprise' (Worthen, 'Introduction' to Lawrence, *The Lost Girl*, p. xxxix).
- [10] See respectively, D.H. Lawrence, *The Lost Girl* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1950; rpt. in 'Twentieth-Century Classics', n.d.); and D.H. Lawrence, *The Lost Girl*, ed. John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Carol Siegel (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995).
- [11] Raymond Chandler, letter to Charles Morton, 28 October 1947, *The Raymond Chandler Papers*, p. 82.
- [12] Anon., 'Note on the Penguin Lawrence Edition' to the Penguin Lawrence Edition (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1994-).
- [13] Paul Eggert, 'Comedy and provisionality: Lawrence's address to his audience and material in his Australian novels', in Paul Eggert and John Worthen (eds.), *Lawrence and Comedy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 134.
- [14] Eggert, pp. 134, 135.
- [15] Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966), trans. Geoffrey Wall (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 82. See above, p. 65.
- [16] D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (1915), ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Introduction and notes by Anne Fernihough (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 252.
- [17] D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (1920), ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Introduction and notes by Mark Kinkead-Weekes (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1995), p. 125. See above, p. 150, note 41.
- [18] D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo* (1923), ed. Bruce Steele (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 279.
- [19] D.H. Lawrence, 'A Blot' (wr. 1910), quoted in John Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years, 1885-1912* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 236.
- [20] D.H. Lawrence, 'The Fly in the Ointment', in *Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*, ed. John Worthen (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 53.
- [21] See Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, pp. 81, 350; and above, pp. 181, 195.
- [22] Eggert, p. 135.

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