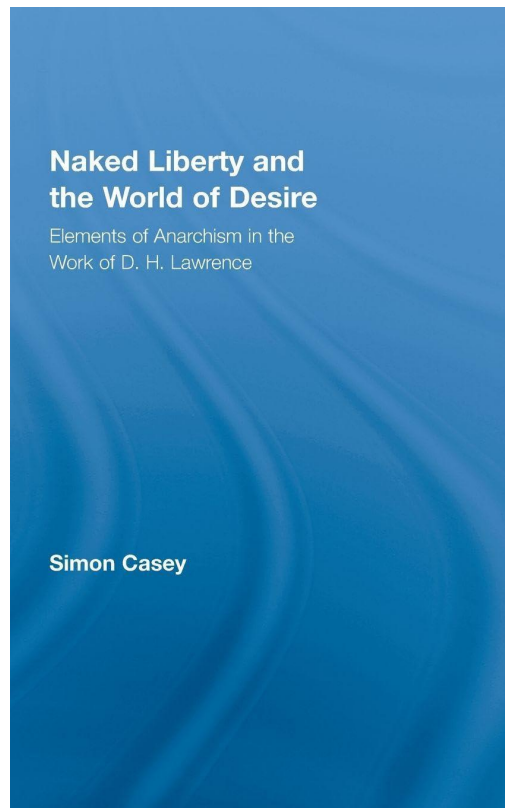


Naked Liberty and the World of Desire

Elements of Anarchism in the Work of D. H. Lawrence

Simon Casey



2011

Contents

Series Title Page	3
Other Books in This Series	3
Title Page	4
Copyright	4
Dedication	5
Acknowledgments	6
Abbreviations	6
Note	8
Introduction: Lawrence's Sympathy with Anarchism	9
Chapter One: The Radical Individualism of D.h.lawrence and Max Stirner	22
Chapter Two: The Presence of Compulsion	44
Chapter Three: The Constituents of Freedom	62
Chapter Four: Marriage and the Established Order	79
Chapter Five: Natural Aristocracy and Lawrence's Double Vision	96
Chapter Six: The Making of an Anarchist in Kangaroo	109
Conclusion	124
Quotations from Lawrence's Essays	127
Works Cited	131

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For Ann

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Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to editions published by Cambridge University Press.

A	<i>Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation</i> . Ed. Mara Kalnins, 1979.
AR	<i>Aaron's Rod</i> . Ed. Mara Kalnins, 1988.
FU	<i>Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious</i> . Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974.
Hardy	<i>Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays</i> . Ed. Bruce Steele, 1985.
K	<i>Kangaroo</i> . Ed. Bruce Steele, 1994.
1L	<i>The Letters of D.H.Lawrence: Volume I: September 1901– May 1913</i> . Ed. James T.Boulton, 1979.
2L	<i>The Letters of D.H.Lawrence: Volume II: June 1913– October 1916</i> . Ed. George J.Zytaruk and James T.Boulton, 1981.
3L	<i>The Letters of D.H.Lawrence: Volume III: October 1916– June 1921</i> . Ed. James T.Boulton and Andrew Robertson, 1984.
4L	<i>The Letters of D.H.Lawrence: Volume IV: June 1921– March 1924</i> . Ed. Warren Roberts, James T.Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield, 1987.
LCL	<i>Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of "Lady Chatterley's Lover."</i> Ed. Michael Squires, 1993.
MEH	<i>Movements in European History</i> . Ed. Philip Crumpton, 1989.
P	<i>Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H.Lawrence, 1936</i> . Ed. Edward D.McDonald. New York: Penguin, 1978.
2P	<i>Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D.H.Lawrence</i> . Ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T.Moore. New York: Penguin, 1978.
Poems	<i>The Complete Poems of D.H.Lawrence</i> . 2 vols. Ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts. London: Heineman, 1964.
PS	<i>The Plumed Serpent</i> . Ed. L.D.Clark, 1987.
R	<i>The Rainbow</i> . Ed. Mark Kinkead-Weeks, 1989.
RDP	<i>Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays</i> . Ed. Michael Herbert, 1988.
SCAL	<i>Studies in Classic American Literature</i> . New York: Viking, 1961.
SEP	<i>Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays</i> . Ed. Simonetta de Filippis, 1992.
SL	<i>Sons and Lovers</i> . Ed. Helen Barron and

Note

Key anarchist ideas are to be found at all stages of Lawrence's writing career and should not be considered as exclusive to any single phase that he may have gone through. To emphasize this point, which is crucial to my argument, a list has been included at the end of this study that gives the names and dates of the essays quoted. See pages 113–116.

Introduction: Lawrence's Sympathy with Anarchism

The old knight and I had a sincere half-mocking argument, he for security and bank-balance and power, I for naked liberty. (3L 417)

Anyone interested in understanding the central features of Lawrence's ideological concerns would do well to turn to an early scene in *Women in Love* in which Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich are arguing over the nature of "spontaneity" and its place in social life. The two characters voice fundamentally opposed ideas on the question, Birkin suggesting that "to act spontaneously on one's impulses" is "the only really gentlemanly thing to do," and Gerald insisting that the spontaneous behaviour of individuals can only lead to social disaster:

"And I," Gerald said grimly, "shouldn't like to be in a world of people who acted individually and spontaneously, as you call it.—We should have everybody cutting everybody else's throat in five minutes." (33)

The exchange is a brief one but its significance as a political debate should not be overlooked, for at stake here are two competing visions of what a society ought to be, both visions proceeding from very different assumptions about what exists at the core of human beings. Birkin's idea implies that human nature, even if not essentially "good," is at least social, and that true human society is realized only when human beings act according to their nature—that is, by impulse and in the absence of any form of outside coercion. Gerald, on the other hand, has a wholly pessimistic view of human nature, apparently believing that true society is realized only when human nature is restrained. In order to live together, this line of thought suggests, human beings must not act according to their natures but according to the rules that society constructs to keep their natures in check. For Birkin, true society begins with the complete freedom of the individual; for Gerald, who "stickles" for "convention" (142), it begins with collective forms of constraint. For Birkin, only the "gentleman" acts on his real instincts; for Gerald, only the barbarian does.

Of course, as every informed reader of *Women in Love* clearly understands, Birkin is very much a mouthpiece for the ideas of D.H. Lawrence. And if this particular idea about spontaneity and society really is Lawrence's idea—if he truly does prefer "naked liberty" to "power," as he claims in his letter to Cynthia Asquith, quoted at the head of

this introduction—it might be worthwhile for us to ask just what place such an idea has within the overall economy of Lawrence’s political thought and to consider how much substance and direction it gives to his verbal art. A crucial part of such an inquiry, I believe, must include an understanding of the intellectual tradition, particularly within the realm of political ideology, to which this emphasis on “impulse” and “liberty” belongs. I might point out in this regard that finding such a tradition for Gerald’s ideas would likely prove to be an impossible task, not because his ideas are original or intellectually arcane, but precisely because they are so commonplace. Gerald’s view of human nature might be profoundly pessimistic, that is to say, but pessimism of exactly this kind has served as the organizing principle for a vast range of ideological visions throughout the history of Western thought. To take an obvious example, the allpowerful State of Thomas Hobbes is justified on the basis that life governed by spontaneous impulses, or what he called “life in the state of nature,” would be “nasty, brutish and short,” a famous formulation which is clearly behind Gerald’s words that everyone will be “cutting everybody else’s throat in five minutes.” But Gerald’s type of pessimism is not restricted to authoritarian thinkers alone, and even Bertrand Russell tempers his otherwise libertarian ideas with the warning that although “too little liberty brings stagnation,” “too much brings chaos” (1949:47).

On the other hand, finding an intellectual tradition for Birkin’s ideas, however “new-fangled” they may appear to the likes of Will Brangwen (257), should prove to be a far less difficult and a far more rewarding task. Throughout *Women in Love* Birkin demonstrates an anti-authoritarian sensibility that is deep enough and systematic enough, I believe, to fall within the range of philosophical anarchism. In fact, his notion that spontaneous individuality, and not restraint, is the basis of civilized life strongly suggests a connection to what George Woodcock has identified as “The anarchist’s cult of the natural, the spontaneous, the individual [that] sets him against the whole highly organized structure of modern industrial and statist society” (1962:26). Indeed, Marshall Shatz’s observation that spontaneity “is one of the key words of anarchism” (xix) is well worth considering in connection to D.H. Lawrence, for spontaneity, as even a cursory glance at his novels, stories, poems and essays will confirm, is central to Lawrence’s thought as well; it is at least as important as (if not inseparable from) his much remarked upon opposition to the “organized structure” of modern industrial society.

I believe that the links between Lawrence and philosophical anarchism are deep and substantial and that reading Lawrence within the context of this tradition will significantly enhance our understanding of his work as a whole. A number of critics have in fact already drawn attention to the connection between Lawrence and anarchism, but they have all, without exception, stopped far short of exploring it. Richard Aldington, for instance, observes that Lawrence “is a true Anarchist,” but Aldington does very little to substantiate the claim, remarking only that Lawrence lived “outside human society, rejecting all its values, fiercely concentrated on his own values” (1931:14). Similarly, Raymond Williams draws attention to what he calls “a kind of romantic

anarchism” (209) in Lawrence, but goes no further. The connection that Martin Green makes between Lawrence and anarchism in his essay “Weber and Lawrence and Anarchism,” moreover, promises a great deal more than it actually delivers: the link here is only slight and focuses on Lawrence’s so-called “ambiguity about violence” (1999:77) in a way that makes the question of his anarchism more or less superfluous. In a similar sort of way, William Tiverton, in one of the first extended studies of Lawrence’s work, notes that Lawrence “had sympathy with anarchism” (57), but Tiverton makes little attempt to investigate this sympathy. Michael Bentley suggests, guardedly, that this “aperçu” of Tiverton’s is “worth developing,” but Bentley himself focuses instead on what he claims is the “anti-structural” nature of Lawrence’s political thought (78), leaving Tiverton’s insight for someone else to develop.¹

There are, indeed, a number of reasons why a critic might be discouraged from pursuing Lawrence’s sympathy with anarchism. First among these reasons would undoubtedly be the number of occasions on which Lawrence makes pronouncements of a distinctly anti-libertarian type. His ideas, for instance, that “the many” must “bow down to the few” and “with gratitude” (*P* 285), and that “the lower shall serve the higher, if there is to be any life among men” (*RDP* 375), are profoundly antithetical to the principles of anarchism, in any of its variations, and expressions of this type have seemed to justify the charges of thuggery and fascism leveled by some critics.² I take up the issue of this authoritarian side of Lawrence’s politics in Chapter Five, where I attempt to identify the place anarchism has within the overall scope of Lawrence’s political thought. For now, however, it will be enough to concede that Bentley is indeed essentially correct in claiming that Lawrence’s politics are “anti-structural.” Any attempt to define Lawrence as an authoritarian, or as a fascist, or as anything else—including as an anarchist—will have to face considerable textual evidence to the contrary. One must avoid looking for an absolute category for Lawrence’s political thought, therefore: identifying general tendencies and dominant trends in his work will have to suffice. It is for this reason that I choose to discuss what I call the “elements of anarchism” in Lawrence’s work rather than to discuss “Lawrence as an anarchist.” Given the somewhat amorphous nature of his politics overall, the label of “anarchist” simply cannot be applied to Lawrence in any precise way.

Another feature of Lawrence’s work that may have discouraged critics from pursuing his sympathy with anarchism is that even though Lawrence wrote a brief account of meeting with a group of anarchists during a trip through the Swiss Alps (*TI* 202), he seems at best to be only distantly aware of anarchism as a system of social thought. In Lawrence the term “anarchy” and its inflections are almost always employed pejor-

¹ Notably, Lawrence is the only novelist connected to anarchism—with the obvious exception of Tolstoy—in Horowitz’s standard account of the history and theory of anarchism (20).

² John Carey uses the word “thug” (134). Many accusations of fascism have been aimed at Lawrence, the most celebrated undoubtedly being Bertrand Russell’s claim that Lawrence’s “philosophy of ‘blood’...led straight to Auschwitz” (1968: 22). See also Anthony Burgess: “He would have been a very useful prophet to the Nazis” (10).

ratively, even on those rare occasions when he uses the term in direct connection to either the organized social movement or the ideological doctrine that stands behind it. Clifford Chatterley, for instance, refers to himself as a “conservative-anarchist” (*LCL* 180), but the title is an empty contradiction in terms, with each of the terms intended to point to Clifford’s daunting incapacities. Moreover, though anarchists appear in both *Aaron’s Rod* (284) and *Kangaroo* (320), they do so as bomb-throwers, a rather tired and misleading stereotype of the anarchist that both Conrad and James also employ, and which persists in popular thought to this day.³

Despite this apparently negative treatment of anarchism and anarchists, however, one should not be too quick to dismiss the contribution anarchism may have made, directly as well as indirectly, in shaping Lawrence’s ideological sensibilities. Frieda’s circle included a number of anarchists and through her Lawrence was almost certainly exposed to anarchistic ideas. Brenda Maddox notes in this regard that as late as 1912 Frieda was having an affair with “the Swiss anarchist Ernst Frick” (92).⁴ Martin Green makes an even more substantial connection between Frieda and anarchism when he suggests that the psychoanalyst Otto Gross, who had been “profoundly” influenced by the anarchism of Max Stirner, had, in turn, “a profound effect on both of the von Richthofen sisters, and indirectly on the men in their lives, notably Weber and Lawrence” (1974: 63, 32). The connection Green makes between Lawrence and Stirner, though somewhat indirect, is an important one. In Chapter One I discuss some of the conceptual parallels that exist between these two writers, parallels that are all the more remarkable given that Lawrence seems never to have read this arch exponent of what Peter Marshall calls “the most extreme form” of anarchism (1992:220).

Although Lawrence may never have read Stirner, he had read a number of anarchist writers and a number of works which, if not written by anarchists as such, have nevertheless become part of the anarchistic canon. He had read Shelley, for instance, who of course was an acolyte of William Godwin, author of the first book in modern anarchism. Indeed, Lawrence had been exposed to Godwin’s ideas in H.N.Brailsford’s *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*, a book that he highly admired (2*L* 315). Lawrence was also familiar with William Blake, who “stands,” according to Marshall, “as a great forerunner of British anarchism” (1994:11). Lawrence had read Oscar Wilde, who considered himself as “something of an Anarchist” (qtd. in Ellman 273n); he knew Thoreau’s works, which are often included in discussions of anarchism, and he knew William Morris’s *News*

³ See Conrad’s *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* and James’s *The Princess Casamassima*. For the origins of this stereotype see James Joll (128). Also see Woodcock: “malign chaos is clearly very far from the intent of men like Tolstoy and Godwin, Thoreau and Kropotkin.... There is an obvious discrepancy between the stereotype anarchist and the anarchist as we most often see him in reality” (1962:10).

⁴ For more on Frieda’s relationship with Ernst Frick see Martin Green’s *Mountain of Truth* (33–34, 36–37, 138–139, 204). See also Janet Byrne’s *A Genius for Living: The Life of Frieda Lawrence* (66).

from *Nowhere*, which is embraced by anarchists even if its author is not.⁵ Lawrence was also familiar with some of the work of Tolstoy, who despite rejecting the label of “anarchist” is nevertheless regarded as one of the towering figures of nineteenth-century anarchism.

It should be noted here, however, that although Lawrence is often highly critical of Tolstoy, his criticism is never aimed at Tolstoy’s libertarian views, but at what Lawrence perceived to be an authoritarian element in Tolstoy’s work. And Lawrence’s criticism of Tolstoy is important to consider, not so much for what it tells us about Tolstoy, but for what it reveals about Lawrence himself, particularly where his social and political views are concerned. According to Lawrence Tolstoy “hated instinctive pride or spontaneous passion” (*P* 246), and the results of this hatred are clear in the type of “modern tragedy” that Tolstoy writes, where “transgression against the social code is made to bring destruction, as though the social code worked our irrevocable fate” (*Hardy* 30). The conflict in Tolstoy, as it is in Hardy, is between “the dictates of the community” or “conventional morality” and the “forces in the Nature of Man”: “betwixt life and public opinion” (*Hardy* 50). And according to Lawrence, Tolstoy always stands with the “community” in its “condemnation” of the one who “must act in his own particular way to fulfil his own individual nature” (*Hardy* 49). “Imagine any great artist,” Lawrence writes, “making the vulgar social condemnation of Anna and Vronsky figure as divine punishment!” (*P* 246–247). Tolstoy’s way of thinking, we should infer from all of this, is far closer to Gerald’s than it is to Birkin’s: for Lawrence, at least, Tolstoy condemns “naked liberty” and sides with “power.”

There is more to be said about Lawrence’s criticism of Tolstoy and I will return to it shortly. For the moment, however, I must point out that if Lawrence simply had an anti-authoritarian “sensibility,” as I have called it, a case could not *necessarily* be made for connecting him to anarchism, which, despite some internal contradictions, is clearly a philosophical doctrine with a number of key concepts. I have already touched on spontaneity as one of these concepts, and as a way of framing the chapters that follow I want briefly to outline ways in which Lawrence’s thinking is consistent with some other key anarchistic ideas. Perhaps the most well known of these ideas is anarchism’s call for the abolition of State power. “All anarchists,” according to Peter Marshall, “reject the legitimacy of external government and of the State, and condemn imposed political authority, hierarchy and domination” (1992:3).

Lawrence’s own rejection of State power is unequivocal and can be found throughout his work. “I think the state is a vulgar institution,” Lawrence wrote at the beginning of 1915 (*2L* 254), and near the end of his life, in “A Propos of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*,” he asks, “Do we want to fall under the direct sway of the State, any State?” And he answers: “For my part, I don’t” (*LCL* 321). In his essay “Democracy,” moreover, he

⁵ For a list of Lawrence’s reading see Burwell (59–120). For Shelley’s anarchism see Scrivner’s *Radical Shelley*. For Thoreau’s relation to anarchism see Woodcock (1962:24), and Marshall (1992:184–188); for Morris’s see Woodcock (1962:454–455), and Marshall (1992:171–175).

pronounces that “The State is a dead ideal” (*RDP* 66), and elsewhere he criticizes “State educations” for their “ideals, [and] their armaments of aggression and defence” (*Hardy* 39). It is in fact this sense of the State as an essentially violent and dangerous institution that leads Birkin in *The First “Women in Love”* to suggest that “nine-tenths of the civil police” should be employed guarding civilians not from each other, but from their governments: “‘It isn’t the individual that wants watching,’” he tells Gerald, “‘it’s these great uncouth Bill Sykeses, the nations.... [Y]our life isn’t safe five minutes, in the hands of your nation’” (23–24). In *The Rainbow*, moreover, Lawrence implies that one of the clearest indications of Anton Skrebensky’s deficiency as a human being, a sure sign that “he had no soul” (447), is his willingness to forgo his own interests in the service of the State. “And so, every man must give himself to support the State,” Skrebensky says to himself. “One might make improvements in the State, perhaps, but always with a view to preserving it intact” (305). It is this kind of thinking that leads Ursula, giving voice to Lawrence’s own ideas, to say to Skrebensky, “‘It seems to me...as if you weren’t anybody—as if there weren’t anybody there, where you are’” (289). Indeed, for Lawrence, individuals who have a healthy or sane attitude toward the State do not work for its preservation or submit themselves to it in any way. “Let every man take his own, and go his own way, regardless of system and State,” he writes in his “Study of Thomas Hardy.” “Which is greater, the State or myself? Myself, unquestionably, since the State is only an arrangement made for my convenience. If it is not convenient for me, I must depart from it” (*Hardy* 38).

The idea that the state is “only an arrangement for my convenience” and that “I must depart from it” when it ceases to be a convenience for me might not sound like the strident call for the abolition of the state that anarchists are customarily expected to make. But as Marshall hints in the line I have quoted above, what anarchists reject more than the abstract notion of the State is its concrete manifestations of power and control. Thus a prevailing idea among many anarchists is not so much that the State should be immediately abolished, but that its primary function must be reconfigured so that it serves to support individuals rather than to dominate them. In this regard, Michael Bakunin, arguably the central figure in the history of anarchism, proclaims that “all the political and authoritarian States of today must scale down their functions to the simple administration of the public services” (Lehning 174).⁶ This idea is repeated by Rudolf Rocker, the anarcho-syndicalist, who claims that when statepower “vanishes” and gives place “to a higher order of things,” then “government over men must yield the field to the administration of economic and social affairs” (24). The communist-anarchist Alexander Berkman is also clear on the change from master to servant that must take place in the role of government: “in the larger life of society,” Berkman states, “the people are made to submit to the orders of those who were origi-

⁶ See David Saltman: Bakunin is “the true father of modern anarchism” (170).

nally meant to serve them—the government and its agents” (257).⁷ It is within this kind of conceptual context that we should understand Lawrence’s notion that “the state is only an arrangement for my convenience.” And Lawrence pushes this idea even further into anarchist terrain in his essay “Democracy.” In the same way that Bakunin sees the proper role of government as the “administration” of “public services,” so Lawrence proclaims that: “The proper adjustment of material means of existence: for this the State exists, but for nothing further.” And he continues:

But once more we have mistaken the means for the end: so that presidents, those representatives of the collected masses, instead of being accounted the chief machine-section of society, which they are, are revered as ideal beings. The thing to do is not to raise the idea of a Nation, or even of Internationalism, higher. The need is to take away every scrap of ideal drapery from nationalism and from internationalism, to show it all as a material contrivance for housing and feeding and conveying innumerable people. (RDP 66; emphasis added.)

Government, according to Lawrence, is a “collective activity” and people must understand that “their collective activities are only cook-housemaid to their sheer individual activities.” Hence, just as Berkman suggests that “government and its agents” are meant to “serve” the individual members of a society, so Lawrence claims that the “President” should be thought of only as a “superlative butler” (67). When people become “their own decent selves again,” Lawrence suggests, the term “public servant” will be restored to its literal meaning: “The Prime Minister of the future will be no more than a sort of steward, the Minister for Commerce will be the great housekeeper, the Minister of Transport the head-coachman: all just chief servants, no more: servants” (82). Only then, according to Lawrence, may we “actually see free men in the streets” (68). “I do esteem individual liberty above everything,” Lawrence writes elsewhere. “What is a nation for, but to secure the maximum of liberty to every individual” (2L 628–629).

Another, related, point at which Lawrence’s thinking clearly converges with anarchism concerns his idea of the size a society must maintain in order to keep from becoming authoritarian. According to Marshall, “Anarchism extolled the virtues of ‘Small is Beautiful’ before it became a popular slogan” (1992:653), and Woodcock explains why, in anarchistic terms, this preference for a small society must be so:

Instead of attempting to concentrate social functions on the largest possible scales, which progressively increases the distance between the individual and the source of responsibility even in modern democracies, we should begin again from the smallest practicable unit of social organization, so that face-to-face contacts can take the place of remote commands (1977:21).

⁷ Lawrence may have come across a similar idea in his reading of Oscar Wilde. In “The Soul of Man Under Socialism” Wilde writes that: “The State is to be a voluntary association that will organize Labour, and be the manufacturer and distributor of necessary commodities” (269).

For Godwin, Woodcock further observes, this “basic nuclear unit” was the “parish,” for Proudhon it was the “commune” and for the syndicalists it was the “workshop” (1977:22). But whatever form is chosen, this small “unit of organization” becomes, according to John Clark, part of a “decentralized system, in which federation from below increasingly displaces centralized authority” (131).

Lawrence’s own conviction that small societies are infinitely better than large ones is clearly an integral part of his social vision, and it stands behind his idea that that “in [a] collectivity, what is gained in bulk or number is lost in intrinsic being” (*RDP* 137). Indeed, Edward Garnett pointed out long ago that Lawrence shared with Tolstoy a “desire to change the world spiritually by founding small communities” (qtd. in Englehardt 11). W.H.Auden also recognizes Lawrence’s call for small communities, claiming that “D.H.Lawrence...treat[s] the modern State as if it were a tiny parish and politics as if it were an affair of personal relations” (404). Although Auden is highly critical of this approach to politics, his depiction is precise: as I hope to make clear, Lawrence, as Godwin did before him, really does conceive of the best society as being about the size of a “parish,” and like all anarchists he believes that politics ought to be “an affair of personal relations.” In fact, Lawrence’s plan for “Rananim,” which Paul Delany has identified as a “miniature anarchist community” (40), was intended to be “a little colony” of “about twenty souls” (*2L* 259). It was to be a “community,” moreover, in which, to adapt Woodcock’s terms, the “remote commands” of large scale societies would be removed, and where individuals would become their own “source of responsibility.” In this community, Lawrence wrote to a friend in 1919, “There shall be no laws: every man shall hold up his hand in token that he is self-responsible and answerable to his own soul” (*3L* 353).

It is also important to note here that Lawrence’s idea of Rananim, far more than being the escapist war-time fantasy that it is often taken to be, is only part of the larger, overarching social vision that Lawrence sustained long after the war, and that included the concept of what anarchist discourse calls a “decentralized” and “federated” system of communities. Lawrence spells out this overall vision in the poem “Future States,” a poem that brings together almost all the ideas that I have been outlining so far:

Once men touch one another, then the modern industrial
form of machine civilization will melt away
and universalism and cosmopolitanism will cease;
the great movement of centralizing into oneness will stop
and there will be a vivid recoil into separateness;
many vivid small states, like a kaleidoscope, all colours
and all the differences given expression.

(*Poems* 611)

Despite the fact that anarchists themselves would avoid using the word “State” here, this particular idea of what society ought to be lies at the heart of the anarchistic

vision. Here is Lawrence in the anarchist's role of setting himself against "the modern industrial form of machine civilization" and decrying its propensity for "centralizing into oneness"—its tendency, as Woodcock suggests, to "concentrate social functions on the largest possible scales." And just as Woodcock claims that "remote commands" should be replaced by the immediate experience of "face to face contacts," so Lawrence sees a society of personal relations based on the unmediated experience of "touch," a society that he elsewhere terms "a democracy of touch."⁸ Like the vision of anarchism generally, Lawrence opposes this "great movement of centralizing into oneness" with the idea of a decentralized system of "small states," the "tiny parish" that Auden points to: separate, like the colours of a kaleidoscope, but also federated: "all colours and all the differences given expression."⁹

Moreover, Lawrence's claim that he wants "no laws" in this "little colony," while true in a limited sense, nevertheless oversimplifies his real view of the role that law must play in a non-authoritarian society, his real view representing yet another way in which his thought is remarkably consistent with anarchism. I am referring here to Lawrence's notion that "Each man is to himself the Natural Law" (*Hardy* 124). It might be helpful to point out in this regard that neither Lawrence nor anarchism means to establish a society by abolishing all conceivable laws—which would undoubtedly create "anarchy" in the negative sense of the word. What they both ultimately aim at, however, is a society founded on what they both consider to be the "higher" laws of human nature, laws that are instinctual rather than cultural and that are expressed through individual impulses rather than through social decrees. The Spanish anarchist Anselmo Lorenzo, for instance, makes this point clear where anarchism is concerned when he suggests that: "Human law is inborn in man, unlimited and absolutely consistent with the natural laws and previous and superior to any law, either written or customary" (qtd. in Descallar 213). This distinction between "natural law" and "customary" or "written" law, along with its attendant ranking of superior to inferior, is also a key idea in Thoreau, who claimed, in words that Lawrence would have read, that a sane man will find himself "often enough 'in formal opposition' to what are deemed 'the most sacred laws of society,' through obedience to yet more sacred laws...through obedience to the laws of his being" (343). The need to obey laws is central to Thoreau, as it is to Anselmo Lorenzo, but the laws they mean to obey are not the lower, external laws of society, but the higher, internal laws that constitute the self.¹⁰

⁸ See "Future Relationships" (*Poems* 611). Connie Chatterley also uses the phrase in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (76).

⁹ According to Peter Osofsky, "Anarchists insisted on the decentralization of life and the simplification of social relations" (62). As Osofsky also points out, this emphasis on decentralization is one of the key differences between anarchism and marxism, respectively the libertarian and authoritarian branches of socialism.

¹⁰ The distinction between the "higher" law of the self and the lower law of the outside world clearly demonstrates that "contrast between the mechanical and the organic" which Northrop Frye claims is "deeply rooted in Romantic thinking": "The mechanical being characteristic of ordinary experience," Frye observes, "is found particularly in the world 'outside'; the superior or organic world is consequently

This notion of “natural law” is an idea that, according to Woodcock, “anarchists have in general applied to their arguments for a nonauthoritarian society” (1962:12). It suggests, among other things, that while obedience to external law is a form of compelled behaviour, and is therefore a form of slavery, obedience to the “laws” of our own nature is impelled behaviour and is therefore the essence of freedom. Bakunin speaks for many anarchists in this regard when he defines freedom as:

that freedom which recognizes only those restrictions which are laid down for us by the laws of our own nature; so, properly speaking, there are no restrictions, since these laws are not imposed by some outside legislator situated maybe beside us or maybe above us, they are immanent in us and inherent in us and constitute the very basis of all our being, as much material as intellectual and moral. Thus, instead of trying to find a limit for them, we should consider them as the real conditions of and the real reason for our freedom. (Lehning 196)

“Yes, we are absolutely the slaves of these laws,” Bakunin says elsewhere. “But in such slavery there is no humiliation. For slavery supposes an external master, a legislator outside of him whom he commands, while these laws are not outside us; they are inherent in us” (1893:16).¹¹ Thus freedom, according to Bakunin, is clearly the outcome of necessity, and spontaneity is the product of obedience. This stress on “obedience” and “law” is one of the key features of anarchism—given, of course, its reapplication of the terms—and it lends a great deal of support to G.D.H.Cole’s remark that “The Anarchists...were anarchists because they did not believe in an anarchical world” (360).

Lawrence, we have to understand, did not believe in an anarchical world either, and behind his emphasis on “spontaneity” is an idea of natural law that is clearly consistent with anarchistic doctrine. One does not have to look far into Lawrence before finding the idea, for instance, that “a man’s self is a law unto itself” (*RDP* 77), or that “For me there is only one law: *I am I*” (*FU* 25), both of these being variations on Birkin’s theme that “Each has a single, separate being, with its own laws” (*WL* 201). And just as Michael Bakunin claims that individuals are free only when they are enslaved by the laws that are “inherent” in them, the laws that “constitute the very basis of our being,” so Lawrence claims that true freedom and true obedience are ultimately indistinguishable:

‘inside,’ and although it is still called superior or higher, the natural metaphorical direction of the inside world is downward into the profounder depths of consciousness” (204–205).

¹¹ See also Emma Goldman: “A natural law is that factor in man which asserts itself freely and spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature.... To obey such laws, if we may call it obedience, requires only spontaneity and free opportunity” (58). Max Stirner expresses a similar idea when he writes: “If it is said that even God proceeds according to eternal laws, that too fits me, since I too cannot get out of my skin, but have my law in my whole nature, i.e., in myself” (146).

Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within.... We are not the marvelous choosers and deciders we think we are. IT [the deepest whole self of man] chooses for us, and decides for us. Unless, of course, we are just escaped slaves, vulgarly cocksure of our ready-made destiny. But if we are living people, in touch with the source, IT drives us and decides for us. We are free only so long as we obey. (SCAL 12–13)¹²

Lawrence's rhetoric is highly significant here, for in referring to these "inward" laws as the voice of *religious* belief, he is not only suggesting, in the manner of Anselmo Lorenzo, that the laws of our being are "superior" to customary or social laws, but that—in the manner of Thoreau—they are "yet more sacred" than these written laws. Underlying Lawrence's rather playful suggestion, made elsewhere, that there should be "a parliament of men and women for the careful and gradual unmaking of laws" (*Hardy* 14), therefore, is the very serious notion that the law, being a "very clumsy and mechanical instrument," serves not to express the "voice of religious belief," but to stifle it. Indeed, to obey the externally imposed laws of a legislator rather than the "inward" and sacred laws of the self is clearly an act of sacrilege for Lawrence: such obedience entails submission to the *wrong* source of power and amounts to the worship of a false idol. It is for this reason that Lawrence "insist[s]" that "no law shall have immediate power over me." "There is no need to break laws," Lawrence proclaims: "The only need is to be a law unto one's self" (*Hardy* 38).¹³

Or to look at the matter from a slightly different perspective, Lawrence's attitude toward the law might also be understood as confirmation of the idea, essential to anarchism, that if individuals are naturally capable of living in a free society, then "those who attempt to impose man-made laws... [become] the real enemies of society" (Woodcock 1962:23). To understand Lawrence in this way, moreover, should help us to see more clearly into his criticism of Tolstoy and Tolstoy's "perverse" hatred of "spontaneous passion." By portraying "vulgar social condemnation" as "divine punishment," Tolstoy, Lawrence suggests, is more or less overthrowing the organic and sacred laws that govern the self and replacing them with the fixed and comparatively profane "dictates of the community": he is forsaking the higher order of a libertarian society for

¹² The idea that human beings are directed by enormous, underlying forces often surfaces in Lawrence's work and is present in some of his earliest extant writings. See, for instance, his 1908 essay "Art and the Individual": "I believe, we are ourselves almost unconscious agents in a great inscrutable purpose, and it gives us relief and pleasure to consciously recognize that power working out in things beyond and apart from us" (*Hardy* 225). This sense that individuals are "agents" of some greater power that is both beyond and within them forms what Stephen J. Miko identifies as "the paradox... [that] is central to an understanding of his metaphysics: the triumph of infinity is somehow also the triumph of individuation" (170).

¹³ In connection to the idea of not needing to "break laws" in order to be free, see Lawrence's novella "The Ladybird," where Count Dionys says to Lady Daphne: "'If I were free! If I were outside the law. Ah, Lady Daphne, how does one get outside the law?'" To which she answers: "'By going inside oneself... not outside'" (Cambridge 176).

its debased, authoritarian form. In this sense Tolstoy—for Lawrence, at least—is writing as one of the “real enemies of society”: he covers “naked liberty” with the shroud of “conventional morality,” confirming and reinforcing the misguided idea—Gerald’s idea—that society must be governed by legislators and the so-called “rule of law.” In a word, Tolstoy is promoting that inferior kind of society in which the unholy trinity of “bank-balance and security and power” reign supreme: a hellish kind of society in which, as Lawrence describes it elsewhere, “the worms are our angels” (*RDP* 286).

Lawrence’s concept of natural law, his vision of small, decentralized societies and his rejection of State power represent but three ways in which he clearly demonstrates a sympathy with anarchism, a sympathy, as I have shown, that finds direct expression from at least 1914, with his “Study of Thomas Hardy,” to *More Pansies* (1928–1929) and some of his last written works. In the chapters that follow I want to explore other dimensions of this sympathy, not only as they appear in his “metaphysic,” but also, and perhaps more importantly, as they appear in his art, particularly his novels. In this regard I will be concerned with anarchism in the broadest sense of the term, often going beyond its resistance to State government, as it is sometimes narrowly defined, to deal with what Gerald Runkle identifies as its resistance to “the other, more subtle forms of domination of the individual spirit...from whatever aspect of society they derive” (6). I believe that Lawrence’s sensitivity to these “subtle forms of domination”—and of course his resistance to them—is the integrating and defining force for his entire artistic vision, as it provides, I hope to show, much of the raw materials for the themes of his books and the construction of his characters.

To this end, the chapters of this study can be divided into two general groups, according to whether they emphasize Lawrence’s “philosophy” or his art. The chapters that focus on Lawrence’s philosophy—chapters One and Five—deal in much greater detail with some of the concepts raised in this introduction, primarily Lawrence’s emphasis on spontaneous individuality as a social force, and the relationship that his libertarian views have to his authoritarian pronouncements. The other chapters of this study focus on how anarchistic principles find expression in Lawrence’s fiction. Chapter Two considers the way in which Lawrence portrays violent and anti-social acts in such fictions as *Sons and Lovers* and “The Prussian Officer,” taking as its point of departure the anarchistic idea that the “laws which are made to restrain our vices” only serve to “irritate and multiply them” (Godwin 763). Chapter Three looks at *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* and considers how Lawrence illustrates the anarchistic principle that freedom for any single member of a society is dependent upon the freedom of all members. Chapter Four focuses on *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and looks at how Lawrence employs the subject of marriage to explore what an individual’s relationship to the State or the “established order” should be. And finally, Chapter Six focuses exclusively on *Kangaroo* and argues, against the grain of most critical commentary, that this novel conveys an unconditional rejection of political authority, and does so, I argue, along distinctly anarchistic lines.

Before I begin, however, I must emphasize that in all these chapters I remain in full agreement with Frank Kermode's *caveat* that any attempt to define Lawrence's "relationship to the history of ideas in his time" is "to engage in very delicate and also very speculative excavations" (26). I think it will be clear from the start, however, that the method of this study is analytical rather than speculative: its focus is directed not by the question of possible influence, but by the principle of analogy. I am interested, that is to say, not in what materials Lawrence may have borrowed from the anarchists, but in what ground he shares with them.

Chapter One: The Radical Individualism of D.h.lawrence and Max Stirner

I wanted a real community, not built out of abstinence or equality, but out of many fulfilled individualities seeking greater fulfilment. (2L 266)

The extent to which Lawrence believed that a “real community” could be built out of fulfilled individuals “seeking greater fulfilment” has long been a subject of discussion for critics, who generally seem to agree that Lawrence never thought the matter through to either a satisfactory or a responsible conclusion. Comments on this aspect of Lawrence’s thought have ranged from Rick Rylance’s measured observation that Lawrence “cannot reconcile his opposed ideals of social harmony *and* spontaneous individuality” (168), to John R. Harrison’s impatient claim that “Society becomes impossible if the moral code of each individual is to fulfill his spontaneous desires, and Lawrence should have realised it” (186).¹ Yet Lawrence’s position cannot be so easily dismissed, and Harrison’s remark in particular is loaded with unintended irony. Lawrence, it should go without saying, was clearly convinced that the society of his own time had in fact become “impossible,” and he often pointed to the carnage of the Great War to prove it. But for Lawrence the transformation of society into a nightmare was plainly the result of something quite different from individuals fulfilling their own spontaneous desires: “It is not the will of the overweening individual we have to fear to-day,” he wrote as the war raged on, “but the consenting together of a vast host of null ones” (*RDP* 43). Whatever Lawrence “should have realized,” his reasoning here is hard to refute: the slaughter in France and Flanders was clearly not the sustained expression of spontaneous individuality but, as with all modern wars, the orchestrated movement of a controlled population.

But what is the connection that Lawrence makes between the spontaneous desires of individuals and the creation of a “real community”? And what would be the best way

¹ For other comments along this line see, for example, Michael Bentley: “Seen from the point of view of ‘a single, sheer being’ all this may be desirable; but the question arises, is it possible or desirable when placed in a social context? What happens when the plasm becomes plasma?” (77); see also Peter Scheckner: “The societal instinct battled Lawrence’s heroic illusion—the desire to be his own man, free from society—in all of his major works” (19). Terry Eagleton similarly claims that: “What Lawrence’s work dramatises, in fact, is a contradiction within the Romantic humanist tradition itself, between its corporate and individualist components” (158). See also Paul Eggart, who claims that Lawrence had “conflicting impulses for isolation and social involvement” (140).

to go about understanding this connection? An important first step toward answering both of these questions was taken over thirty years ago when Baruch Hochman identified Lawrence as a “radical individualist” and attempted to outline what Lawrence’s particular kind of individualism actually entails.² And yet, although Hochman does well to point out that “human community” for Lawrence “is a direct outgrowth of the body’s life and needs,” and that “there is no necessary contradiction between the impulsive, passionate life of the body and the life of the human community” (2–3), his sympathetic study of “The Radical Individualist” is nevertheless limited and, indeed, somewhat undermined by two central deficiencies. The first of these is Hochman’s belief that at some point in his writing career “Lawrence moves from a radical individualism to what I term a radical (if qualified) communalism” (xi). While Hochman’s account of this “move” is an extended one, the exact nature of Lawrence’s “changing view” nevertheless remains obscure. More important, however, is that by making a distinction between “radical individualism” and “radical communalism,” Hochman is essentially assuming, just as Rylance and Harrison do, that “fulfilled individuality” and “real community” are in fact ultimately irreconcilable goals and that Lawrence could not possibly have both. Thus for Hochman Lawrence is not really a radical individualist after all: radical individualism is only a stage that Lawrence goes through, and “moves from,” on his way to a supposedly more enlightened consideration of how people can best live together.

The second underlying deficiency of Hochman’s study, related to the first, involves his rather superficial use of the term “radical individualist.” In fact, “radical individualist” often seems to be little more than a label that Hochman hangs on Lawrence, leaving Lawrence’s individualism inadequately defined. At no point does Hochman recognize radical individualism as an intellectual tradition that exists beyond D.H. Lawrence, and he makes no attempt, as a result, to understand Lawrence within the context that this tradition provides. Questions that would lead to a more coherent and comprehensive understanding of Lawrence’s individualism therefore remain to be answered. How, for instance, are Lawrence’s ideas consistent with those of other thinkers within the radical individualist tradition? What is Lawrence’s place within the conceptual field that radical individualism represents? And perhaps most importantly, what ideas does radical individualism uphold that might help to account for Lawrence’s belief that a “real community” must be built out of “fulfilled individualities seeking greater fulfilment”?

Although little evidence exists to suggest that Lawrence had any direct knowledge of the ideas of Max Stirner, I believe that reading Lawrence and Stirner together will go far to build upon and to expand, even to correct, Hochman’s research.³ Stirner

² David J. Gordon made a brief comment on this aspect of Lawrence’s work a few years before Hochman: “Lawrence does seem to be the last Romantic, the last of those radical individualists who set themselves against an entire culture and still stood for something meaningful” (151).

³ I agree with Anne Fernihough’s observation that “Lawrence cannot be fully understood apart from the specifically *German* philosophical tradition in which he was already immersed before meeting Frieda; contact with the von Richthofen circle served to familiarize Lawrence with some of its most

stands at the absolute centre of radical individualism, epitomizing the tradition, and his vehement, often ferocious defence of the “exclusive” and “unique” self is presented in the form of a dense but highly systematic argument, translated into English in 1907 and published under the title *The Ego and Its Own*. Lawrence’s equally ardent defence of the “distinct” and “unique” self (*RDP* 74), on the other hand, is presented in an almost flagrantly nonsystematic way, existing in a state that is more or less scattered throughout his many essays, novels, stories, poems and letters. And so from the outset critics are faced with tactical differences in the way that they have to approach these two writers: Stirner demands an intensive reading; Lawrence, more than anything else, requires an extensive one. But as I hope to make clear, what both these authors share in their defence of the individual self—a defence that is largely composed of an attack on everything that would restrict the freedom of the self—is an essential concern to create a better kind of society. The anarchist Emma Goldman observes in this regard that “Stirner’s individualism contains the greatest social possibilities” (44); Bertrand Russell notes with approval that for Lawrence “politics could not be divorced from individual psychology” (1968:20).⁴ Understanding this particularly strong connection between the individual and the social, the psychological and the political, is crucial to understanding the very nature of radical individualism, and is crucial, I argue, to understanding Lawrence.

Perhaps the best way to begin looking at the conceptual similarities that bring Lawrence and Stirner together is to look at the one element of their work that would seem at first glance to drive them apart. That is, Lawrence and Stirner appear to take directly opposite attitudes toward two particular terms that they both employ to a considerable extent: namely, the “egoist” and the “ego.” Stirner’s argument is in fact a protracted defence of the “ego,” which he sees as the source of spontaneity and selfdetermination and as the essence of what makes one “unique” (131). According to Stirner, only the purely individual human being is a fully authentic human being, and “the individual,” Stirner proclaims, “is always an egoist” (90). He enjoins his readers, therefore, to “become egoists,” and to “become each of you an *almighty ego*” (149).

For Lawrence, however, the “egoist” is not a self-determined and spontaneous individual but is rather “he who has no more spontaneous feelings” and who therefore “derives all his life henceforth at second hand” (*P* 200). The “ego” is not the locus of

recent developments” (1993:10). Fernihough, moreover, makes a strong connection between Lawrence and Stirner in her introduction to the most recent Penguin edition of *The Rainbow*, claiming that this novel owes a “debt” to “the philosophy of Stirner,” and observing that as a young man Lawrence was a “keen reader” of *The New Age*, a journal in which Stirner “figured prominently” (1995:xix). The only other critic to make a direct connection between Lawrence and Stirner that I am aware of is David Hoibrook, who remarks that Rawdon Lilly’s view of the self and society in *Aaron’s Rod* is “that which Max Stirner pronounced” (281).

⁴ Many commentator’s on Stirner’s work agree with Goldman to one degree or another. See, for instance, John Carroll’s analysis of Stirner in *Break-out from the Crystal Palace*, particularly pages 15–87. For an opposite view of Stirner, however, see R.W.K.Patterson’s *The Nihilistic Egoist*. See also Holbrook, who refers to Stirner as a “sinister figure” and a “nihilist” (244).

authenticity but of inauthenticity, or what Lawrence calls “the false I” (*RDP* 279): it is not a “self” but “a sort of second self” (*RDP* 75). Thus, far from being the natural source of an individual’s “uniqueness,” it is an intellectual construct that is more or less culturally shared: “the ego,” Lawrence writes, “is merely the sum total of what we *conceive* ourselves to be” (*FU* 227).

One easy way to understand the differences that exist between Lawrence and Stirner where the “ego” is concerned is simply to recognize that Stirner uses this term in a way that most post-Freudian readers (which includes Lawrence) will find unusual, but that he nevertheless means by it precisely what Lawrence means by the term “self” or “soul” or, in the language of his psychology books, the “primal consciousness.”⁵ There is, however, at least one instance in which Lawrence assigns a positive and distinctly Stirnerian meaning to the term “ego,” an instance which can serve as a bridge between these two writers. It appears in the famous letter to Edward Garnett, written in April 1914, in which he sets out what he was trying to accomplish in the penultimate version of *The Rainbow*. The passage has often been quoted by Lawrence’s critics, but the context I want to create for it requires yet another look. Thus Lawrence writes:

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.

(2L 183; emphasis added)

More than describing his attempt to establish a special mode of characterization here, Lawrence is ultimately trying to convey something that he sees in the very structure of the self—not just the fictional but the actual self. The “stable ego” he refers to is clearly that “secondary self” which he usually identifies as the “ego,” and which he always seems to condemn. But that other, “unrecognisable,” element of the self is identified as an “ego” as well, at least in the context of this letter, and it is clearly not to be condemned, nor is it to be considered “old” or “stable” or even, it seems, knowable. And it is here, with this brief account of “another ego,” that the psychological (and ontological) interests of Lawrence and Stirner can be seen to combine. Just as Lawrence’s “other” ego is “unrecognisable,” and, elsewhere, “indescribable and unstateable” (*RDP* 137), so Stirner’s ego is “unutterable” (275). Lawrence’s ego is unstable in the sense that it “passes” through different “allotropic states” (though remaining

⁵ Technically speaking, “ego” is not a term that Stirner himself uses, “ego” being his translator’s word for the German “*einzig*,” meaning “the one” or “the unique individual.” In his introduction to the Cambridge edition of *The Ego and Its Own*, David Leopold remarks that the German title of the book “might have been rendered *The Unique Individual and Its Property*.” Such a translation, Leopold further observes, “is both more literal and avoids the potentially distracting psychoanalytical connotations of the...alternative” (xl).

“radically-unchanged”); Stirner’s ego is “transitory” (163) in the sense that it is, as I discuss in detail below, at “every moment just positing or creating” itself (135). Lawrence suggests that this other ego exists in a realm beyond “what we *conceive* ourselves to be”; Stirner similarly claims that “I am not an idea, but more than idea” (314), and that “no *concept* expresses me, nothing that is designated as my essence exhausts me” (324). In short, what Stirner points to with “ego” and Lawrence points to with “another ego” is the very essence of individual being, what Lawrence calls “my integrity, my individuality, my me” (*Hardy* 197). To overcome the surface distraction presented by Lawrence’s customarily negative use of the term “ego,” therefore, is to understand that what both Lawrence and Stirner mean to convey, above all else, is the idea that the source of our individuality is to be found far beyond whoever or whatever it is that we *think* we are. Nietzsche, who can be seen as a kind of intermediary between these two writers, clearly speaks for both of them in this regard when he claims that “Your true nature lies...above that which you usually take yourself to be” (qtd. in Fernihough 1995:xxii).

The distinction that Lawrence and Stirner draw between the self and selfconcept is worth exploring further, not only because it is central to their thinking about human psychology but because it stands at the threshold of their social critique. Indeed the distinction between a “stable” and an “unrecognisable” ego, as many of Lawrence’s other pronouncements on the nature of the self begin to make clear, is really a distinction between the self as a finished and knowable product and the self as an ongoing and ungraspable process. Thus the “unrecognisable” ego is unrecognisable because it is essentially a “power” (*RDP* 327) and a “*continuum*” (*P* 761) rather than a spatial object or a static thing. Lawrence variously describes this self as a “flow” (e.g. *P* 192, 380), and a “life-energy” (*RDP* 310), which is why he so often conveys the sense of this self through highly specialized kinds of metaphors—through rivers, for instance, and through fountains and flames: phenomena that are found in nature and grounded in time; figures that suggest continuous motion and a perpetual expense of energy.⁶

The “stable” ego, on the other hand, is the mental bi-product of this underlying and essentially physical process. The “stable ego” is a concept of the self, necessarily connected to the “unrecognisable” ego—the “primal, spontaneous self” (*RDP* 73)—but “secondary” to it. Just as the “unrecognisable” ego is associated with the body, so the “stable ego” is associated with the mind. It is fixed rather than fluid, as the word “stable” suggests, and far more closely aligned with space than with time, as static objects always are. In a word, it is a bloodless reproduction of the real self, which it follows, or ought to follow, like a shadow.

Understanding what distinguishes these two egos—what distinguishes the “primal” from the “mental” consciousness, to employ Lawrence’s more customary terminology—is an important first step toward understanding the kind of psychological model that

⁶ For an account of how Lawrence embodies this self in language see Michael Bell’s book* *D.H.Lawrence: Language and Being*.

Lawrence constructs (though Lawrence himself would probably reject both “model” and “construct” as descriptive terms for what he is doing). The next step is to understand the relationship that these two forms of consciousness bear to one another. To do this, we have to dispense with at least two ideas about Lawrence which for decades have received wide (but by no means unanimous) acceptance among his critics. The first of these is that Lawrence considered the mind to be “dangerous” (Aldington 1976:xv) and that he therefore “disclaimed thought” (Carey 122). There are, of course, many instances in Lawrence’s writing where he appears to be highly suspicious of the mind, and obviously one does not want to ignore the place that this critique has within the general framework of his ideas. But it is also important to notice that Lawrence often expressed a profound sense of the mind’s importance in human affairs, claiming, as he does, for instance, in the essay “Introduction to These Paintings,” that the “real works” of science and art are made only when “instinct, intuition, mind, intellect [are] all fused into one complete consciousness” (*P* 574). For Lawrence this “complete” or “whole consciousness” (*P* 573) is greater than mental consciousness, but only because it includes mental consciousness. And recognizing this inclusion is crucial to understanding Lawrence’s attitude toward the mind.⁷ Indeed, to take a closer look at Lawrence’s critique of the mind is to find that what Lawrence ultimately opposes is not the mind in itself, but some of the ways in which it is used. It might be helpful in this regard to turn to Lawrence’s poem “Thought,” where he makes a very careful and important distinction between two types of thought, one that he clearly approves of, and one that he clearly does not. I quote the poem in full:

Thought, I love thought.
 But not the jiggling and twisting of already existent ideas
 I despise that self-important game.
 Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,
 Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of the conscience,
 Thought is gazing on to the face of life, and reading what can be read,
 Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to a conclusion.
 Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,
 Thought is a man in his wholeness wholly attending.

(*Poems* 673)

⁷ For other examples of Lawrence’s confirmation of the importance of the mind see, for instance: “Emotions themselves become just a nuisance. The mind by itself becomes just a sterile thing, making everything sterile. So what’s to be done? You’ve got to marry the pair of them” (*RDP* 204–205). And: “We don’t find fault with the mental consciousness, the day light consciousness of mankind. Not at all. We only find fault with the One-and- Allness which is attributed to it” (*RDP* 136). See also: “bringing life into human consciousness is...a necessary condition of the progress of life itself” (*Hardy* 41). For an analysis of the importance of consciousness in Lawrence’s work, see, for instance, Homer O. Brown’s article “The Passionate Struggle into Conscious Being.”

We should infer from this that the difference between the kind of thought that Lawrence “despises” and the kind that he “loves” is the difference between thought as a product of (largely formal) learning and thought as a process of intuition. The former kind is characterized by synthesis, the latter by insight. The one merely manipulates “already existent ideas,” which, the poem suggests, an individual will more or less passively receive from the outside world; the other is a much more engaging and creative process, the individual’s raw materials, so to speak, originating not from outside the self, but “welling up” from within it. True thought, as the final line of the poem clearly suggests, is therefore not something that an individual *does*, but something that an individual actually *is*: it is not an exercise of the mind, but an experience of “wholeness”: an experience where instinct and mind, intellect and intuition, have all become “fused into one complete consciousness.”

What Lawrence truly considered “dangerous” is not “ideas” in themselves, therefore, but “already existent” or what he more often refers to as “fixed” ideas. Understanding this distinction is crucial to understanding Lawrence’s psychological interests, furthermore, because what proceeds from it is, among other things, his conviction that the problem with the individual in the modern world is not that he (or she) has an *idea* of himself, but that he insists on “persisting in some *fixed* idea of himself” (*K* 263; emphasis added). Such persistence is part of what Lawrence criticizes as our habitual “insistence on the known, [on] that which lies static and external” (*P* 673), and its worst consequence is to bring living human beings down to the ontological level of blocks and stones:

If I say of myself: I am this, I am that!—then, if I stick to it, I turn into a stupid fixed thing like a lamp-post. I shall never know wherein lies my integrity, my individuality, my me. I can never know it. It is useless to talk about my ego. That only means that I have made up an idea of myself, and that I am trying to cut myself out to a pattern. Which is no good. (Hardy 197)

A careful look at this passage will begin to reveal how complex and paradoxical Lawrence can be when writing about the self. If I insist on what I know about myself, he suggests, I will never know who I actually am, because my “individuality” and “my me” lie elsewhere. Thus if I focus on what I know about myself—my “already existent idea” of myself—I forgo any possibility of knowing myself at all. Knowledge of the self is gained not through cognition (and therefore not through re-cognition), but through immediate experience: “We cannot analyse it,” Lawrence says of the self, “We can only know it is there” (*RDP* 73).

It is essential to point out, moreover, that although this passage may at first glance appear to be disclaiming the mind and ideas, it is actually championing their cause. The object of Lawrence’s attack here is not thoughts but thoughtlessness—not the mind, but mindlessness—for to “stick to” an idea, he suggests, is to become “stupid,” “Which

is no good.” Lawrence’s central implication in all of this is that too much abstraction makes a thinker all-too-concrete, “like a lamp-post,” because at its extreme limit mental consciousness turns into a non-thinking and wholly material kind of substance. “All ideals,” Lawrence claims in this regard, “work down to the sheer materialism which is their intrinsic reality at last” (*RDP* 82). Stirner, who defines a “fixed idea” as “An idea that has subjected the man to itself” (43), makes essentially the same point: “should mind, or the conception, the idea, be allowed to determine us, to become fixed and inviolable or ‘sacred’?” he asks. And he answers: “Then it would end in the *dissolution of mind*, the dissolution of all thoughts, of all conceptions” (59).⁸

The second widely accepted notion we must dispense with when approaching Lawrence’s psychology is that, as one critic puts it, “Lawrence’s vision had always been dualistic, based on a perception of balanced contraries in all creation” (Nixon 3). Lawrence does much to encourage this kind of approach to his work, of course, but this dualistic model, where “each opposite [is] kept in stable equilibrium by the opposition of the other” (*RDP* 253), is singularly unhelpful as a guide to understanding his psychological concerns.⁹ That is, the relationship of the mind and body in Lawrence’s psychological model is neither equal nor balanced nor stable: it is clearly hierarchical and fundamentally dynamic. Lawrence’s “unrecognisable” ego is “primal” to the “secondary” self that the “stable ego” represents; just as the “unrecognisable” ego is the “highest reality” (*RDP* 138)—“highest” in terms of its *value*; we must be careful not to take the spatial metaphor literally here—so the “stable ego” is clearly its lower, subordinate form. And the only way to maintain the correct order of rank within this hierarchy is for the energies of body to engage in a constant process of dissolving or breaking those images of the self that are contained in the mind. “The great lesson,” Lawrence writes, “is to learn to break all the fixed ideals, to allow the soul’s own deep desires to come direct, spontaneous into consciousness” (*RDP* 78). The narrator of *Kangaroo* expresses exactly the same idea in a slightly different way:

Yet, being an animal saddled with a mental consciousness, which means ideas, a man must have some idea of himself. He just must, and those that deny it have got a more fixed idea than anybody.... But the idea is perishable. Say what you like, every idea is perishable. (263)

⁸ For a writer who was unfamiliar with Stirner’s book, Lawrence’s way of expressing an idea can sometimes bear an uncanny similarity to Stirner’s, nowhere more so than in his description of the relationship that the body has to the mind. Compare, for instance, the following passages:

Lawrence: “men must...listen only to the living life that is a rising tide in their own being, and listen, listen, listen for the injunctions” (*K* 154).

Stirner: “it is only when a man hears his flesh along with the rest of him that he hears himself wholly, and it is only when he wholly hears himself that he is a hearing or rational being” (60).

⁹ I want to emphasize that I am confining my rejection of the “balanced contraries” paradigm to a discussion of the mind-body relationship. In other areas of Lawrence’s thought this paradigm does have some relevance. H.M.Daleski, for instance, makes a reasonably good case that “the duality of Male and Female is central to Lawrence’s dualism” (24).

The continual process of going beyond and breaking the fixed image one has of one's self—the “ideal” of the self—is absolutely necessary to maintaining “my individuality, my integrity, my me.” It is a dynamic process that ensures that the “unrecognisable” self remains “unshakable and indomitable” (*2P* 236) and that the individual does not become a “fixed, stupid thing.” Stirner has precisely the same idea in mind when he claims that an individual “exists only in not remaining what he is; otherwise he would be done, dead” (163). Indeed, just as Lawrence claims that “One has oneself a fixed conscious entity, a self, which one has to smash” and that “We are all like tortoises who have to smash their shells and creep forth tender and overvulnerable, but alive” (*2L* 426), so Stirner claims that “I, therefore, am the kernel that is to be delivered from all wrappings and—freed from all cramping shells. What is left when I have been freed from everything that is not I? Only I, and nothing but I” (148).

In fact, the parallels between Lawrence and Stirner begin to proliferate and intensify where the mind-body hierarchy is concerned. Just as Lawrence describes the self as a “flow” and claims that “All the time I must be dissolved from my old being” (*RDP* 36–37), so Stirner also repeatedly refers to the self as “flow” and claims that I must not be “hindered in my flow and my dissolution” (175). Just as Lawrence sees the “unrecognisable” ego as a greater reality than the “stable ego,” which it has continuously to destroy, so Stirner sees the self undergoing a dynamic and continuous process of creation, destruction and recreation, where the “creator”—Lawrence’s “unrecognisable” ego—must maintain strict superiority over what it creates:

over each minute of your existence a fresh minute of the future beckons to you, and, developing yourself, you get away “from yourself”, that is, from the self that was at that moment. As you are at each instant, you are your own creature, and in this very “creature” you do not wish to lose yourself, the creator. You are yourself a higher being than you are, and surpass yourself.... [Y]ou are the one who is higher than you, that is, that you are not only creature, but likewise your creator. (38)

Where Stirner warns of losing yourself “to your own creature,” Lawrence warns of arriving “at the static finality of a thing created” (*RDP* 15). And for both of these writers the central feature of a created “thing” is that it has no animating source of spontaneity and therefore no powers of selfdetermination: it is completely at the mercy of external circumstances. Thus for both Lawrence and Stirner the great danger of inverting the natural order of body over mind, of failing to “dissolve” and “get away from” the “old being” or “old stable ego,” is the inevitable metamorphosis of the self from a creative “force” into a “thing created”—the transformation from a highly individualized and self-determining creator to a distinctly de-individualized and externally determined creature. Such a transformed individual no longer lives as a creator lives, “direct from the spontaneous, vital centre of oneself” (*RDP* 105), but lives instead like Roderick Usher, who has “lost his self, his living soul” according to Lawrence, and who

has become, as a result, “a sensitized instrument of the external influences” (*SCAL* 83). He is no longer a subject, but an object.

This difference between internal and external forces is central to the individualism of both Lawrence and Stirner, and it marks the point at which their psychological theories take a distinctly social turn. For both Lawrence and Stirner the image or idea that an individual has of himself may become “external” when he “sticks” to it, but this is not the only reason why ideas are considered to be “external.” As Lawrence makes clear, the idea one has of oneself is often not a self-construction at all, but, at an even further remove from the self, a social construction, which the mind embraces ready-made. This idea serves to underpin his review of Trigant Burrow’s *The Social Basis of Consciousness*, in which the problem that Lawrence identifies does not simply belong to the psychological domain, where “the moment man became aware of himself he made a picture of himself, and began to live from the picture,” but belongs to the social domain as well:

All our education is but an elaborating of the picture. “A good little girl”—“a brave boy”—“a noble woman”—“a strong man”—“a productive society”—“a progressive humanity”—it is all the picture. It is all living from the outside to the inside. It is all the death of spontaneity. It is all, strictly, automatic. (P 380)

Society’s collective ideals, which Stirner calls our “object[s] of longing” (289) and our “essences” (34), serve to control individuals from the “outside” when individuals should be living “from within outwards”: they serve, Lawrence suggests, to automate individuals rather than to animate them. Even worse than the mere existence of these social forms, however, is the fact that society actively promotes them: according to Lawrence, “All our education” is an ongoing campaign to convince individuals, starting with children, that static external forms represent a higher reality than “the organic necessity of the human being,” an idea that Lawrence elsewhere suggests has its origins in Plato, and which he claims in this particular review “is truly the reversal of life.”¹⁰ Indeed our “education” for Lawrence is little more than a collective process of self-alienation because it attempts to substitute a model of what we ought to be for what we actually are: “we are *not* the picture,” he insists, “and the picture is not what we are” (380). “Can we put up with this,” Stirner asks in the same vein, “that ‘Our Essence’ is brought into opposition to us, that we are split into an essential and un-essential self? Do we not with that go back into the dreary misery of seeing ourselves banished

¹⁰ In order to “reestablish” our connection with life itself, Lawrence claims, “We have to go back, along way, before the idealist conceptions began, before Plato, before the tragic idea of life arose....” Hence: “Now we have to reestablish the great relationships which the grand idealists, with their underlying pessimism, their belief that life is nothing but futile conflict, to be avoided even unto death, destroyed for us. Buddha, Plato, Jesus, they were all three utter pessimists as regards life, teaching that the only happiness lay in abstracting oneself from life” (*LCL* 330).

out of ourselves?” (33–34). “To be a man,” Stirner writes, “is not to realize the ideal of *man*, but to present *oneself* the individual” (163). So Lawrence, rejecting all the socially contrived essences and the de-individualizing ideals of what we ought to be, claims that: “No man can be anything more than just himself” (*FU* 47).

With these abstract notions of “man” and “humanity” before them, Lawrence and Stirner launch into a remarkably similar attack on the very essence of what they both saw as the prevailing ideology of their day: namely, liberal humanism. For Stirner the central humanist concepts of “Man” and “Humanity” are terms of oppression rather than of liberation: they may have replaced “God” as the highest category in the modern world, he suggests, but they serve to dominate and control individuals as much as the God-concept ever did. Thus according to Stirner, “liberalism is a religion because it separates my essence from me and sets it above me, because it exalts ‘man’ to the same extent that any other religion does its God or idol” (158). The concept of “man,” Stirner claims, is an “unreal thing” and a “spook” (156), and all the more oppressive to the individual for being so. At a time in Western history when we should strive to “bring” ourselves “to revelation”— “turn to yourselves rather than to your gods or idols” (146)—we instead “slay our own selves as sacrifices for ‘the human essence’, the ‘idea of mankind’, ‘humanity’, and whatever the idols or gods are called besides” (285). “Who is this God?” Stirner asks of the “humane liberal.” And he answers: “Man with a great M! What is the divine? The human!” (55). In a community so governed by the worship of this idol, the individual is lost: “the single one has nothing at all, humanity everything.... [M]an or humanity is the individual’s end, for which he labours, thinks, lives, and for whose glorification he must become ‘man’” (123).

Lawrence also sees humanism as a kind of idol-worshipping cult that serves an essentially (and literally) self-defeating purpose, and his terms for describing this situation are almost identical to Stirner’s. In his review of Burrow’s book he claims that the picture of “Mankind,” which “every man [has] to conform to,” is “the great image or idol which dominates our civilization and which we worship with mad blindness” (*P* 379). This “picture of humanity,” Lawrence claims, “is just a huge idol” and “is not real,” even though it acts as “a horrible compulsion set over us” (380). And just as Stirner does before him, Lawrence traces this “mad worship” directly back to Christianity: “And this is the Christian truth,” Lawrence writes in “Twilight in Italy,” “God is that which is Not-Me. In realising the Not-Me I am consummated, I become infinite.” This “Christian truth” still forms the essence of the modern humanist world, according to Lawrence, for however much the modern world may have changed the name of what it worships, the individual, as Stirner suggested, still counts for nothing at all:

a man is [now] consummated in his knowledge of that which is not himself, the abstract Man.... Everything that is, is consciousness. And in every man’s consciousness, Man is great and illimitable, whilst the individual is small and fragmentary. Therefore the individual must sink himself in the great whole of Mankind. (TI 120)

Examples of word-play are relatively infrequent in Lawrence, but his pun on the word “whole” in the last line of this passage is as significant as it is hard to overlook. The individual, Lawrence suggests, sinks himself into the “whole of Mankind” just as he sinks himself into the “hole” of Mankind. He lowers himself into a great cultural vacancy—the concept of “Man”—just as a dead body would be lowered into a grave, which is the last triumph of a tradition that demands the sacrifice of Self for its existence.¹¹ This “abysmal insanity” (*P* 381) therefore amounts to nothing short of a collective worship of death, for the concept of “Man,” as this passage suggests, is as much of a “spook” for Lawrence as it is for Stirner. Indeed just as Stirner claims that liberalism “exalts ‘man’” as other religions exalt God, so Lawrence claims that “We have exalted Man far above the man who is in each one of us.” Just as Stirner claims that “the intention to realize humanity altogether in oneself...is of such ruinous kind,” so Lawrence claims that our “aim” to create a “perfect humanity” can only be obtained through “the subjection, reduction, analysis and destruction of the Self” (*TI* 125). Both of these writers are thus profoundly and equally convinced that liberal humanism is founded on a central and radiating absurdity, as it upholds the abyss as its highest reality. It is forever overlooking the crucial fact that, as Stirner claims, “humanity too is as such only a thought...; the individuals are its reality” (221). For Lawrence humanism represents an “old system of valuation” that one can reject simply by recognizing that “One is one, and as such, always more than an aggregation” (*RDP* 137), an idea that he has Birkin express in *Women in Love* when he claims that “Humanity is less, far less than the individual” (126). “It is believed that one cannot be more than man,” Stirner similarly suggests. “Rather, one cannot be less!” (120).

As a systematic attack on individuality, humanism, according to both Lawrence and Stirner, also undermines the possibility of a moral society, despite all its apparent intentions to the contrary. Stirner is particularly clear in this regard, claiming that although the concept of “man” contains all the “intentions to become good, noble, loving, and so forth” (69), these high moral aspirations are completely meaningless if “persons [are] left out of account” (72): “Intercourse resting on essence is an intercourse with a spook, not with anything real,” he warns. “[I]f I hold intercourse with the essence of man, I am not holding intercourse with men” (257). Hence the “humane liberal”:

sees in you, not you, but the species; not Hans or Thomas, but man; not the real or unique one, but your essence or your concept; not the bodily man, but the spirit.... [H]e loves in you not Hans, of whom he knows nothing and wants to know nothing, but man. (155)

The love of man or humanity, therefore, is quite literally the love of no one at all. Stirner takes this thought even further to compare what he ironically calls “pure

¹¹ Skrebensky’s belief in this tradition is yet another indication of his lack of being: “What did a man matter personally?” he asks. “He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity.... The Whole mattered—but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole” (*R* 304).

warm-heartedness” with genuine “kindliness,” and he suggests that a “theoretical” love for general humanity leads not simply to an indifference toward individuals, but to an active hatred of them:

To have a liking for the corporeal man with hide and hair, why, that would no longer be a “spiritual” warm-heartedness, it would be treason against “pure” warm-heartedness, the “theoretical regard”. For pure warm heartedness is by no means to be conceived as like that kindliness that gives everybody a friendly handshake; on the contrary, pure warm-heartedness is warmhearted toward nobody, it is only a theoretical interest, concern for man as man, not as a person. The person is repulsive to it because of being “egoistic”, because of not being that abstraction, man. But it is only for the abstraction that one can have a theoretical regard. To pure warm-heartedness or pure theory men exist only to be criticized, scoffed at, and thoroughly despised. (28)

This connection between the theoretical regard for Man and the lack of regard for men, central to Stirner’s critique of humanism, forms a significant part of Lawrence’s critique as well. Indeed, Stirner’s pejorative terms “theoretical” and “pure warm-heartedness” immediately call to mind Lawrence’s remark on the character of Clifford Chatterley, whose primary deficiency, according to Lawrence, is that “He is kind by *rule*, but he does not know what *warm sympathy* means” (*LCL* 333; emphasis added). Given his belief that “The individual hardly matters” (*LCL* 183), Clifford would necessarily seem to be incapable of understanding “what warm sympathy means,” for such an attitude would confine whatever kindness he has to the realm of rules and “theoretical regard.” This is certainly the case in his marriage, where he considers Connie to be “the great I-am” (111) as long as she submits to the rules of wedlock—her “duties and responsibilities,” as he calls them (293)—and wishes her “wiped off the face of the earth” (296) when she breaks through those rules and shows herself to be a self-determining and, in Stirner’s terms, a “corporeal” individual.

While Clifford Chatterley is perhaps not quite what Stirner would call a “humane liberal,” Ben Cooley in the novel *Kangaroo* very clearly is, and through this character Lawrence graphically illustrates the nature of what it is to have a high regard for “man” and a low regard for “men.” Cooley (Kangaroo) devotes his life to a “theoretical regard” for man, promoting what he calls “The faithful, fearless love of man for man” (325), but he clearly leaves individuals “out of account.” Thus Richard Somers, Lawrence’s spokesman in the novel, observes that Kangaroo’s kind of love might be “massive and genuine,” but he also feels that it “missed his own particular self completely” (208): “‘He doesn’t love *me*,’ he thought to himself. ‘He just turns a great general emotion on me, like a tap’” (208).

The similarity between Lawrence and Stirner in this regard extends still further into *Kangaroo*, for just as Stirner claims that the inevitable outcome of the love for “man”

is an attitude of scoffing and despising toward the “person,” so Kangaroo becomes “arrogant, insolent [and] righteous” (210) toward Somers when Somers shows himself in an argument to be not an abstract “man,” but an independent and individual being. Thus, when the argument comes to an end, Kangaroo’s “love” for the abstract man quickly reveals itself to be an utter intolerance of the individual man, the “corporeal man with hide and hair,” that Richard Somers actually is:

For a moment Somers was afraid of him, as of some great ugly idol that might strike. He felt the intense hatred of the man coming at him in cold waves. He stood up in a kind of horror, in front of the great, close-eyed, horrible thing that was now Kangaroo. Yes, a thing, not a whole man, A great Thing, a horror. (210–211)

A deep substratum of “hatred” emerges as the benevolent face of humanism, the “love of man for man,” confronts the individual man. Indeed, Kangaroo’s murderous approach to Somers at the end of their argument goes far to recall Stirner’s claim that it was only because they “served *man*” that the leaders of the French Revolution were able to “cut off the heads of *men*” (74), words that are relevant to other situations in the novel as well. Jack, for instance, who is a high ranking member of Kangaroo’s revolutionary party, crushes the skull of a political opponent with an iron bar, leading Somers to reflect on the ghastly irony that “Jack was a killer in the name of Love” (328). “Insist on loving humanity,” Lawrence wrote near the end of his life, “and sure as fate you’ll come to hate everybody” (*P* 206).¹²

The fact that the text describes Kangaroo in his “righteous” and frustrated rage as “A great Thing”— “a thing, not a whole man”— suggests another key criticism of humanism and humanists that both Lawrence and Stirner share: namely, that humanists do not merely attempt to de-individualize the persons around them, but that they also attempt to de-individualize themselves, something at which they invariably succeed. Humanism, that is to say, represents a moral system, and moral systems belong for both Lawrence and Stirner to the realm of ideals. And ideals, as Lawrence repeatedly claims, turn men and women “into abstracted, functioning me-chanical units” (*RDP* 69). Thus submitting to a moral system, according to Lawrence, transforms people into “things,” “mechanical units,” because by submitting to a system they surrender their powers of self-determination: their actions will no longer be governed by genuine, internal desire, but by an external set of abstract principles. To be “moral,” Stirner suggests in this regard, is to engage in the fundamentally self-alienating process of looking “only for the right ‘how’, the right way to be so” (68). For Lawrence, even “love and benevolence” constitute a “barren, sanctified compulsion” (*FU* 80–81) if they are looked to as rules to be obeyed rather than understood as spontaneous impulses to be lived through and experienced. In fact, according to Lawrence, to look outward for moral

¹² For a similar expression, see Lawrence’s “Retort to Jesus”: “And whoever forces himself to love anybody begets a murderer in his own body” (*Poems* 653).

guidance is to embrace the morality of a “slave” (*Hardy* 210), because a search outside the self for guidance signals a willingness to abandon all powers of self-determination: as with all forms of idealism, conventional morality encourages individuals to “cut” themselves “out to a pattern” and turn themselves into “a stupid, fixed thing”—in this case, a moral “thing,” like Kangaroo. Not a “whole man,” but a “horror.”

The attack that Lawrence and Stirner make on the humanist moral system, and on moral systems generally, is a logical progression from their certainty that in all matters the individual is more significant than the collective, and that the internal sources of the self are superior to any external and institutional structures of society. It is also essential to recognize that in making their case against moral systems, which Lawrence calls the “roofed-in erection of right and wrong” (*Poems* 289), neither Lawrence nor Stirner is arguing against morality as such; what they are looking for is a more human, a more humane and indeed a more sociable basis for morality than any external system of principles and rules is likely to provide. And what they both attempt to convey, typical of the Romantic tradition that they are both part of, is that the path to a superior morality is not upward and outward into social convention and legal restraint, but downward and inward to the natural springs of instinct and desire.¹³

It is important to point out here that we make very little progress in understanding this crucial aspect of radical individualist thought if we accept Hochman’s idea that as a radical individualist Lawrence “identified” the “green world of nature...with the natural, presocial, nonmoral man” (4). As a radical individualist Lawrence saw no such tension between the “natural man” and the “social” and “moral” domains of human behaviour. In fact, for Lawrence the “natural man” is not “presocial” and “nonmoral” but far more social and far more moral than his “civilized” counterpart could ever hope to be, and not despite his naturalness, but because of it. Thus Lawrence claims that the “pure spontaneous morality” (*RDP* 12) of the purely instinctual or “natural” individual is a “finer” kind of morality (*Hardy* 167); it allows for the expression of a self which is “at the very root moral” (*FU* 227). This self, according to Lawrence, is our “untrespassing self” (*PS* 195) and our truly “decent” self (*RDP* 82). It both contains and constitutes our “sense of essential truth, essential honour, essential justice” (*K* 212). It also contains that “deep instinct of kinship” which “joins men together” (*P* 556). Indeed, Lawrence’s certainty that the human being is “a moral animal” (*SCAL* 22), and therefore a social animal as well, stands at the core of his radically individualistic conviction that “The real way of living is to answer to one’s wants” (*1L* 504), for what the individual instinctively and impulsively “wants” is nothing less than “honour” and “kinship.”¹⁴ “The deep instincts,” Lawrence writes in this regard, “when left alone, are

¹³ In this regard their thinking is completely consistent with the main idea behind William Blake’s declaration that “Jesus was all virtue” because he “acted from impulse, not from rules” (121). For the relation of this idea to Romantic thought generally, see note 12 of my Introduction.

¹⁴ The Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta makes precisely the same point in his book *Anarchy*: “We proclaim the maxim: DO WHAT YOU WANT. This almost sums up our programme because...we

quite moral,/and clear intuition is more than moral,/it really makes us men" (*Poems* 529).

Stirner's notion that "there is no right *outside* me," but that "If it is right for me, it is right" (170), derives from the same kind of faith in human instincts and impulses that Lawrence upholds. According to Stirner, we are customarily "terrified at *ourselves* in our nakedness and naturalness," considering ourselves to be "An abyss of lawless and unregulated impulses, desires, wishes, passions, a chaos without light or guiding star!" Each one of us is led to believe from an early age that "My passion would advise me to do the most senseless thing possible," and that only "God's commandments or...the duties which morality prescribes" prevent us from becoming as depraved as "beasts" (146–147). As a corrective to what he sees as this profoundly mistaken view of human nature, however, Stirner suggests that:

if, so far as [a man] is unconcerned about religion, he only deemed himself a beast, he would easily find that the beast, which does follow only its impulse (as it were, its advice), does not advise and impel itself to do the "most senseless" things, but takes very correct steps. (146–147)

By comparing "impulse" to "advice" and by making the impulsive "beast" the general standard for the "correct" approach to living, Stirner is suggesting something very similar to what Lawrence means by calling the human being a fundamentally "moral animal." The idea that both these writers are attempting to convey is that the self has a moral structure of its own, so that controlled, well-regulated behavior will inevitably result when any external limitations on the individual are removed: spontaneity, they both suggest, is the cornerstone of self-control. Thus just as Stirner suggests that impulses will lead the individual to take "very correct steps," so Lawrence claims that the impulsive and spontaneous self, which he sometimes calls our "Holy Ghost," directs us "not to push our cravings too far" (*SCAL* 79). It will be unnecessary to *consciously* impose abstinence in a real community, Lawrence suggests, because the true self will always naturally know *when* to abstain, when not to go "too far".

It is also important to note here that however "extreme and peculiar" their means might seem to be, the moral ends that both Lawrence and Stirner seek to achieve are of a distinctly "normative" kind, as the terms "correct" and "not too far" begin to suggest.¹⁵

maintain that in a harmonious society, a society without government and private property, everybody will WANT TO DO WHAT HE MUST DO" (1988:36).

¹⁵ The terms "extreme and peculiar" and "normative" come from Kingsley Widmer: "A recent survey of scholarly criticism of Lawrence notes a division into those who consider him and his views "normative" and those fewer who do not, who instead consider him extreme and peculiar. Obviously I belong with the latter" (1992: 2–3). I think the truth about Lawrence is somewhere in between the "extreme" and the "normative." A critic like F.R. Leavis, who is clearly in the "normative" camp, shows very little sensitivity, I believe, to how radical—"extreme"—Lawrence's politics truly are. On the other hand, however, there is very little "extreme and peculiar" about a writer whose highest social values, as I will argue, are "decency" and "respect."

Both Stirner and Lawrence agree, for instance, that greed is an unfortunate human quality, but they also suggest that greed does not result from too much selfcenteredness but from a lack of it—or in words that Lawrence in particular might prefer, from a lack of “self-centrality.” An “avaricious man,” Stirner claims, is determined not by the “flow” of his instincts but by his fixation on lucre: he is therefore “not a self-owned” man, but a “servant” (266). Lawrence similarly suggests that an “individualist” cannot be a “selfish or greedy person anxious to satisfy appetites” because “A selfish person... wants that which is not himself.” “And what can any man want for,” Lawrence asks rhetorically, “except that which is his own, if he be himself?” (*Hardy* 49, 43).

Indeed to desire something outside the self, to “insist on that which lies static and external,” is to be controlled by something outside the self, and appetites, when taken to extremes, have the same automating and deindividualizing effects on the self as any ideals or fixed ideas. Thus according to Stirner the individual who is “carried away” with a passion has “let his passion grow up into a despot against whom he abandons all power of dissolution: he has given himself up, because he cannot *dissolve* himself, and consequently cannot absolve himself from the passion: he is possessed” (258). Stirner is particularly clear on this point with regard to sensuality:

Am I in my own senses when I am given up to sensuality? Do I follow myself, my own determination, when I follow that? I am my own only when I am master of myself, instead of being mastered either by sensuality or by anything else (God, man, authority, law, state, church). (153)

Lawrence also condemns individuals who have given themselves up to “sensuality,” and he similarly sees in such individuals not an overabundance of impulse and desire but an absence of it. As the narrative of *Women in Love* clearly suggests, for instance, Gerald’s promiscuity is far more a result of his fear of the “void” (337–338) than it is of following any real desire.¹⁶ As we similarly learn in *The Rainbow*, Skrebensky was “not man enough to satisfy one woman,” so “he hung around others” (462), which is the same observation Lawrence makes when commenting on the frenzied sexual activity of Don Juan:

Don Juan was only Don Juan because he had no real desire. He had broken his own integrity, and was a mess to start with. No stream of desire, with a course of its own, flowed from him.... [He] desired no woman, so he ran after every one of them, with an itch instead of a flame.... It’s Don Juanery, sex-in-the head, no real desire, which leads to profligacy or squalid promiscuity. (RDP 342)

¹⁶ Lawrence dramatizes this point by having Gerald go to Gudrun in the crisis he experiences after his father’s death: “Whatever he thought of...it all showed him only the same bottomless void, in which his heart swung perishing.... A dangerous resolve formed in his heart, like a fixed idea. There was Gudrun.—She would be safe in her home” (337–339).

Don Juan, as Stirner would say, is “possessed” rather than “selfpossessed”: being “carried away” with sexual passion, his actions, like those of Skrebensky and Gerald, are not determined by desire, but by the object of desire. Thus Don Juan, like anyone who goes “too far” in his or her cravings, exists in that condition, as Lawrence describes it, of “living from the outside to the inside,” a condition which signifies “the death of spontaneity.”

The subject of sensuality is particularly relevant to D.H. Lawrence, whose reputation as the “poet [of] sexual freedom” (Mensch 1) and as the “Priest of Love” (Moore) tends to obscure how abstemious Lawrence believed the true self actually is with regard to sex and sensuality. Indeed, Stirner’s claim that a truly individualized self will not “give himself up” to sensuality provides a good basis for understanding Lawrence’s notion, expressed in *The Plumed Serpent*, that to the true self “nakedness is neither shame nor excitement” (195). Lawrence illustrates the point by having the narrator of the novel observe that the native men, who clearly represent “natural man” for Lawrence, take “absolutely no notice” of the bathing native women: “They didn’t even look the other way. It was the women bathing, that was all. As if it were, like the *charales* swimming, just a natural part of the lake life” (161–162). A similar situation occurs in the story “The Woman Who Rode Away,” where the elder Indians are remarkably unmoved by the naked Woman before them: “The elder men were all dark and tense with some other deep, gloomy, incomprehensible emotion” (55).

In fact, a great many, if not all, of Lawrence’s fictional characters who achieve some higher degree of individuation and selfhood, those who live “from within outwards,” show a peculiar kind of restraint toward sex, and often a distinct kind of revulsion toward sensuality. In *Sons and Lovers*, for instance, Paul Morel may be convinced of the link between sexuality and adulthood, but he still becomes irritated by Clara’s “unrestrained passion” and wants to put strict limits on “the kissing sort of love” (399). A similar sort of attitude can be found in “St. Mawr,” where Lou Carrington, the protagonist of the story, tells her mother that “‘cheap sex kills me’” (154), and says to herself: “‘Sex, mere sex, is repellant to me’” (138). Birkin in *Women in Love* embraces precisely the same kind of attitude: as the narrative discloses, “he hated sex,” and considered it “such a limitation”¹⁷ “He wanted sex to revert to the level of the other appetites, to be regarded as a functional process, not as a fulfilment” (199), which is an idea that does much to confirm Lawrence’s warning that “Sex as an end in itself is a disaster: a vice” (*FU* 187). Sex simply cannot be “an end in itself” for people who maintain their integrity and individuality, for only those who have lost the ability to “take correct steps,” who have lost the impulse not to go “too far,” find themselves wandering in the soulless regions of “disaster” and “vice.”

It is primarily because they conceive of the self as having its own moral core that both Lawrence and Stirner see individual liberty as the basis for a truly moral soci-

¹⁷ See also Richard Somers’s declaration in the cancelled conclusion to the MS version of *Kangaroo*: “I don’t like sex” (qtd. in Ellis 47).

ety.¹⁸ This faith in an essentially moral self also stands behind their shared but rather paradoxical conviction that the key to creating a truly cohesive society is not the high ideal of oneness and equality, but the fundamental reality of otherness and opposition. In this way Stirner claims that individuals “hold together so much the more firmly” when they “exclude each other *wholly*” (162), a notion that he explains in some detail:

The last and most decided opposition, that of unique against unique, is at bottom beyond what is called opposition, but without having sunk back into “unity” and unison. As unique you have nothing in common with the other any longer, and therefore nothing divisive or hostile either.... The opposition vanishes in complete—severance or singleness. (186)¹⁹

What Stirner envisions as the highest form of society is a union of individuals who “prefer to follow their real interests rather than the commands of morality” (74). The operative term here, of course, is “real” interests, because individuals who follow those interests will find no social need for following “moral commands.” Hence, Stirner suggests, such a union will contain far greater social possibilities than any social structure which requires that those interests be sacrificed:

And yet only individuals can enter into union with one another, and all alliances and leagues of peoples are and remain mechanical compoundings, because those who come together, at least so far as the “peoples” are regarded as the ones who have come together, are destitute of will. Only with the last separation does separation itself end and change to unification. (205)

The idea of finding “unification” through “separation” plays a key part in Lawrence’s social vision as well. In *Kangaroo*, for instance, Richard Somers gives his full approval to the idea that individuals who are held “separate” will be “sustained in accord” (199), which is why he suggests to the all-embracing Kangaroo that instead of “loving” each other they should try to be “hard, separate men” (209). Similarly, the narrator in *Aaron’s Rod* considers that the “first” step toward any “future unisons” must be “clean and pure division”: “perfect singleness. That is the only way to final living unison: through sheer finished singleness” (123). Indeed, just as Stirner warns of “alliances and leagues of peoples,” so Lawrence openly declares that “I am afraid of concourses and clans and societies and cliques” (2L 300), a fear that translates directly into his recoil from any political vision that sees society as a “mass of homogeneity” instead of a

¹⁸ This is a standard idea in anarchism. See, for instance, Michael Bakunin: “liberty...is the *sine qua non* of genuine morality” (Lehning 83).

¹⁹ Ulrike Heider’s claim that Stirner’s vision of society “realizes itself in the anarchy of the war of each against all” (3) completely ignores this aspect of Stirner’s thought, but is typical of the claims made by Stirner’s detractors.

“fathomless multiplicity” (*RDP* 135).²⁰ And just as Stirner emphasizes the necessity of separating oneself from “mechanical compoundings,” so that one “will have nothing in common with the other,” so Lawrence insists that individuals “must work themselves free and pure from the compound,” so that “the individual [becomes] so thorough that he should have nothing in common with any other individual” (*Hardy* 42). This process of individuation is not only “one of the conditions of life” for Lawrence, it is also one of the conditions of social life:

How one craves that his life should be more individual, that I and you and my neighbour should be distinct in clarity from each other, perfectly distinct from the general mass. Then it would be a melody if I walked down the road, if I stood with my neighbour it would be a pure harmony. (*Hardy* 43)

The idea that social harmony is the product of differentiation, that melody rises from having “nothing in common” with anyone else, begins to explain what Connie Chatterley means when she suggests that “Perhaps only people who are capable of real togetherness have that look of being alone in the universe” (*LCL* 271).

By breaking down the conventional oppositions of togetherness and aloneness, of separation and unification, both Stirner and Lawrence aim to establish nothing more and nothing less than a society that allows for the full flourishing of common decency and mutual respect, for they both find such decency and respect to be missing from the prevailing political ideologies of their day. Thus Lawrence claims that “the finer, more distinct the individual, the more finely and distinctly he is aware of all other individuality” (*Hardy* 43), a quality he finds, for example, in Hardy’s character Tess. It is only because Tess “is herself utterly,” Lawrence claims, that she “respects utterly the other’s right to be” (*Hardy* 95). Stirner conveys the same idea when he claims:

Our weakness consists not in this, that we are in opposition to others, but in this, that we are not completely so; that we are not entirely severed from them, or that we seek a “communion”, a “bond”, that in communion we have an ideal. One faith, one God, one idea, one hat for all! If all were brought under one hat, certainly no one would any longer need to take off his hat before another. (186)

What Stirner is suggesting in this rather playful manner is that the push toward an ever expanding and abstract sense of oneness— “one faith, one God, one idea, one

²⁰ Lawrence’s hatred of associating with groups surfaces regularly in his fiction. In *Aaron’s Rod*, for instance, Rawdon Lilly claims: “Damn all leagues. Damn all masses and groups anyhow” (92). In *The Plumed Serpent* Don Ramon says, “Leagues and Covenants and International Programmes. Ah! Cipriano! it’s like an international pestilence” (248). In *Kangaroo* it is a sign of Somers’s superiority as a man that he “tiresomely belonged to no group” (236). Birkin’s distaste for what he calls “trouping off in a gang” (97) is also connected with this idea.

hat for all!”—undermines the respect (taking “off his hat”) that individuals will extend toward one another, for if we are all “one” we cease to be aware of anyone else.²¹ Lawrence also has a playful way of putting this idea: it is “owing to the oneness of mankind,” he writes, “that we are always falling foul of one another, and chewing each other’s fur” (*FU* 25). But Lawrence expresses the idea in a far more serious way as well, seeing the ideal of “oneness” as the basis for the worst kinds of social pathologies. Indeed, the idea that, as Birkin claims, people are not dangerous “Except in herds” (*WL* 66) resonates throughout Lawrence’s work, from the notion that “Oneness makes war, and the obsession of oneness” (*Poems* 612), to the observation in *Aaron’s Rod* that “It’s only when the ghastly mob-sleep, the dream helplessness of the mass-psyche overcomes [the individual], that he becomes completely base and obscene” (145).²² For Lawrence this peculiar kind of hatred and violence is inseparable from the ideal of “oneness,” which is one of the main quarrels he has with the customary conception of democracy. The kind of democracy that Lawrence opposes is the democracy that aims for the ideal of “One Identity” and that achieves this goal through “Merging! And Death!”—death being, according to Lawrence, “the final merge.” Hence for Lawrence, “American Democracy was a form of self-murder, always. Or of murdering somebody else” (*SCAL* 178, 59).²³

In place of this destructive (and self-destructive) conception of democracy, both Lawrence and Stirner propose an outline of what they believe will be a more moral type of society, a society where the interests of the self are not opposed to the interests of the community, but are identical with them.²⁴ Stirner proposes a community of “egoists,” which he calls a “Union of Egoists,” and to which, he suggests, “I sacrifice

²¹ Respect has a place of high importance in the social vision of anarchists. See, for instance, Bakunin: “All human morality, every collective and individual morality, rests basically on *human respect*” (Maximov 147). See also Thoreau: “The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual” (103).

²² In September 1914, shortly after the war began, Lawrence wrote to Edward Marsh: “If people would see things more from an individual point of view and *be* more individual then they could not have a war” (*2L* 215).

²³ For both Lawrence and Stirner one of the key instruments for creating “oneness” in a democratic system is the concept of equality, which they both reject for similar reasons. According to Stirner, “We are equal *only in thoughts*, only when we are *thought*, not as we really and bodily are.... I am man, and you are man: but man is only a thought, a generality; neither you nor I are speakable, we are *unutterable*, because only thoughts are speakable and consist in speaking” (275). According to Lawrence, “Where each thing is unique in itself, there can be no comparison made.... When I stand with another man, who is himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of Otherness.... Comparison only enters when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material-mechanical world” (*RDP* 80).

²⁴ Malatesta observes that “egoism” is the “exclusive consideration of one’s own interests” and that it therefore “pushes man and society in the direction of solidarity.” Hence, “egoism and altruism (*concern for the interests of others*) fuse together in one single sentiment, just as the interests of the individual and of society coincide” (1988:24). See also Proudhon: “when individual and collective interests are identical...it is evident that we will be in a state of total liberty or anarchy. Society’s laws will operate by themselves through universal spontaneity, and they will not have to be ordered or controlled” (92).

nothing" (161). Lawrence proposes a community of "fulfilled individualities," which he sometimes calls a "new Democracy" (*RDP* 73), and in which self-sacrifice is considered to be "perhaps the vilest deed a man can do" (*Poems* 679). The organizing principle for Stirner's community is the idea that "nothing is more to me than myself" (7); for Lawrence's it is to "realise at last that the highest reality for every living creature is in its purity of singleness and its perfect solitary integrity, and that everything else should be but a means to this end" (*RDP* 138). For Stirner, the necessity for each individual to "realize" his or her own "unutterable" self also necessitates the recognition of the Other, for exclusion is the basis of appreciation and respect. For Lawrence, similarly, self-fulfillment necessitates the recognition of the "inscrutable" and "untranslatable" Other, which, he claims, is "the fact upon which any great scheme of social life must be based" (*RDP* 78). And it is here, with these words, that we find ourselves at the heart of Lawrence's radical individualism, because for Lawrence what exists at the end of that downward and inward path to the "bottom" of oneself—the path to self-fulfilment—is not the termination of social life but the very seed of its existence. True community, for Lawrence, is the outcome of contacts between individuals whose own fulfillment has made them so "finely" and "distinctly" themselves that they are at last "finely" and "distinctly" aware of each other. And so he declares:

The stark, loveless, wordless unison of two men who have come to the bottom of themselves. This is the new nucleus of a new society, the clue to a new world-epoch. (SCAL 59–60)

Chapter Two: The Presence of Compulsion

“It is always so, with compulsion. The recoil kills the advance.” (“The Escaped Cock” 570)

If Lawrence truly believed that the self is “at the very root moral,” how are we to interpret the numerous acts of violence that appear in his novels? And if, as Lawrence suggests, the individual has a “deep instinct for kinship,” how do we account for his fictional characters who act in obviously anti-social ways, characters whose seemingly impulsive behaviour clearly serves to prevent rather than to advance the likelihood of kinship? If one accepts the idea, for instance, that Walter Morel in *Sons and Lovers* is a totally instinctual being—as so many readers have done—one is inevitably brought to the conclusion that instincts are to blame for the more aberrant forms of his domestic behaviour—for striking his children, for instance, and for beating his wife. And to arrive at such a conclusion is inevitably to call into question much of what Lawrence wrote about the essentially moral and social nature of the instincts. Indeed, to suggest that unrestrained impulse is to answer for Morel’s violent behaviour is to imply that Lawrence’s fiction, far from dramatizing Birkin’s libertarian idea that acting on one’s impulses is “the only gentlemanly thing to do,” instead more or less reinforces Gerald’s authoritarian warning that individual spontaneity will quickly lead to social chaos—for in *Sons and Lovers*, at least, impulse often seems to lead Morel to threaten the safety of everyone around him.

While one line of critical inquiry might at this point embark on a detailed analysis of this apparent contradiction between what Lawrence declares about the impulses and what his art actually illustrates (or might illustrate), I believe that a different approach to Lawrence is required. Given the enormous extent to which Lawrence’s critique of existing society and his vision of a better one are both informed by his certainty in the moral integrity of the self, the appropriate question to ask here, I suggest, is not: Does Lawrence ultimately, and perhaps despite himself, share the authoritarian’s suspicion of human impulses? It is rather: How can violence in Lawrence’s fiction be understood within the scope of his clearly libertarian views? I frame the problem in this particular manner not so much to avoid the question of Lawrence’s possible inconsistency, but to get more directly at what I think is the role that violence has in Lawrence’s work. To explore the sources and the significance of anti-social behaviour in Lawrence’s fiction

is to find that Lawrence employs violence not as a means of demonstrating the need for external authority, but as a means of justifying its complete elimination.

As a way to begin this exploration we should consider for a moment more of the implications behind that brief exchange between Birkin and Gerald early in *Women in Love*. That Gerald should imply here that strict external constraints are necessary for preventing individuals from arbitrarily attacking one another is both fitting for his character and, given the context of the novel as a whole, profoundly ironic. It is fitting because Gerald himself is subjected to many external and institutional forms of constraint. He is always looking, for instance, for “the right conventional attitude” because, as the narrative relates, “he believed in the conventions” (337). Similarly, Gerald insists that “education through subjection and torment” is “necessary” because “‘It brought me into line a bit’”: “‘you can’t live’” he claims, “‘unless you do come into line somewhere’” an idea that clearly conveys his need to conform to external codes and conventional patterns of behaviour. The “always-civil Birkin” (2P 94), however, characteristically disagrees: “‘I begin to think that you can’t live unless you keep entirely out of the line,’” he tells Gerald. And he adds: “‘Instead of chopping yourself down to fit the world, chop the world down to fit yourself’” (205).

The irony, moreover, of having Gerald argue for and subject himself to such ostensibly civilizing forms of constraint is that Gerald is in fact one of the most violent and uncivilized characters that Lawrence ever created. Gerald’s first significant act in life, for instance, was to kill his brother—and his last act is to kill himself. In the intervening time we are told of his youthful desire to shoot at striking miners, we are shown his brutal treatment of an Arab mare, we witness his violent attempt on Loerke’s life, and we see the full extent of his murderous rages against Gudrun. Even Gerald’s amiable suggestion that he and Birkin make their respective weddings “a double-barrelled affair” (350) contains a telling reference to gun-fire—in the dead language of a cliché—and it suggests, among other things, that violence is as much a part of Gerald’s life as submitting himself to those constraints that are intended to contain and to civilize anti-social impulses in the first place. Birkin may well ask “‘Who for the second shot?’” but Lawrence’s readers, I suggest, should be entertaining another question: namely, could the external constraints that Gerald imposes upon his own natural impulses be responsible for making Gerald the brutal character that he is? Or to put the question more broadly, could Lawrence’s point in all of this be that the constraints that are instituted to make individuals moral and civilized and orderly actually compel them to act in ways that are immoral and uncivilized and disorderly?

If it is, one has to proceed with caution in understanding this idea within the purview of Lawrence’s libertarian thought, for the notion that repressed instinct leads to anti-social behaviour is obviously not exclusive to the antiauthoritarian sensibility alone. In Lawrence’s day the most conspicuous proponent of this idea was none other than Sigmund Freud, and in social and political matters, of course, Freud was a deeply conservative thinker. In fact, a notable convergence between Lawrence and Freud’s idea of repression has been made by Paul Poplawski, who observes that “For Lawrence,

as for Freud...the energy of repressed desire is diverted toward the maintenance of the repressive social order itself, and acts as fuel for reactions of hate and anger toward others and self whenever the mask of convention slips" (11). Thus as Poplawski suggests, whatever other functions it may have, repression, according to both Lawrence and Freud, generates at least some of the attitudes and some of the behaviour that repression itself is meant to contain.

What Poplawski does not touch on, however, is the fundamental difference that exists between Freud and Lawrence with regard to their conceptions of human nature, a difference that translates into profoundly different views about the role of repressive authority in a functioning and cohesive society. Freud, that is to say, may have thought that repression fuels reactions of "hate and anger," but he also held that such repression serves to prevent even greater social ills, for the unrestrained individual, Freud claims in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, is "a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien" (59). Indeed, if a reader of *Women in Love* wanted to know more about the kind of misgivings that underpin Gerald's fear of acting "spontaneously on one's impulses," Freud would be the authority to consult:

The element of truth...is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. (58)

It is his certainty in the natural inclination of individuals to "humiliate" and to "torture" and to "kill" each other that leads Freud to claim that "human community" is possible only through "a renunciation of instinctual satisfactions" (74). And this "instinctual renunciation," according to Freud, is possible only when individuals live in "fear of aggression by [an] external authority" (75), a fear that in "advanced" societies is "internalized" and takes the form of a repressive sense of "guilt" (74–75).¹ Thus much

¹ Freud outlines the "formation of conscience" in the following way:

First comes renunciation of instinct owing to fear of aggression by the external authority.... After that comes the erection of an internal authority, and renunciation of instinct owing to fear of it—owing to fear of conscience. In this second situation bad intentions are equated with bad actions, and hence come a sense of guilt and a need for punishment. The aggressiveness of conscience keeps up the aggressiveness of the authority. (75)

Conscience, according to Freud, is therefore a "continuation of the severity of the external authority, to which it has succeeded and which it has in part replaced" (74). One can presume that it is because this replacement by conscience is not yet complete ("in *part* replaced"), that the presence of external authorities—police, judges, soldiers, social workers etc.—is still required.

like Hobbes before him, Freud assumes that the greatest threat to civilized life is individual liberty. Human beings will not act in a social or a moral manner unless they are compelled to do so, either externally or internally, either by force or by the fear of force.

Lawrence, on the other hand, takes an opposite view of the relation between individual liberty and social cohesion and, as a result, he also takes an opposite view of the social consequences of living in fear of a repressive authority. Whereas Freud stresses that the individual's basic "urge for freedom" is necessarily "directed...against civilization" (43), Lawrence claims that "Men are not bad, when they are free" because it is "Prison," among other things, that "makes men bad" (*Poems* 488). Indeed, in his essay "The State of Funk" Lawrence clearly states his expectation that individuals will experience a discernible improvement in their moral and social conduct once they are liberated from the fears and the forces—that is, from the "Prison"—of external coercion:

I am convinced that the majority of people today have good, generous feelings which they can never know, never experience, because of some fear, some repression. I do not believe that people would be villains, thieves, murderers and sexual criminals if they were freed from legal restraint. On the contrary, I think the vast majority would be more generous, good-hearted and decent if they felt they dared be. (2P 567)

Written a year before the publication of *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), this passage nevertheless reads like a direct and conscious rebuttal of it. Whereas Freud explicitly states that individuals are naturally disposed toward sexual crimes, thievery and murder, Lawrence just as explicitly denies it, claiming that human nature is "good" rather than murderous, and "generous" rather than exploitative.² For Freud, any demonstration of moral and social qualities in the behaviour of individuals is assumed to be the result of "fear" and "repression," whereas for Lawrence "fear" and "repression" clearly obstruct such qualities: "the vast majority" of individuals, he claims, would not only be "generous, good-hearted and decent" in the absence of such restraints, they would be *more* generous, *more* good-hearted and *more* decent if these restraints were removed. According to Freud, moreover, a coercive authority (internal or external)

² Lawrence made the same claim about human nature a year before, in 1928, in the essay "The 'Jeune Fille' Wants to Know": "Every man has to struggle for himself, true. But most people are willing to give a bit of help where they can. The world may really be a bogey. But that isn't because individuals are wicked villains. At least ninety-nine per cent of individuals in this country, and in any other country as far as we have ever seen, are perfectly decent people who have a certain amount of struggle to get along, but who don't want to do anybody any harm, if they can help it" (2P 521). He makes a similar claim about the natural goodness of human beings in January, 1915, when outlining his plan for Ranim is a letter to his friend Willie Hopkin: "It is to be a colony built up on the real decency which is in each member of the community. A community which is established upon the assumption of goodness in the members, instead of the assumption of [...] badness" (2L 259).

serves to make society secure; for Lawrence, as his attitude toward the demands of “legal restraint” plainly suggests, the presence of a compulsory authority threatens to undermine society altogether. Indeed, Lawrence clearly implies here that far from preventing the existence of “villains, thieves, murderers and sexual criminals,” institutional forms of compulsion are largely responsible for producing them, an idea which goes far to reinforce his notion that the “recoil” of compulsion “kills the advance.”

It is also worth observing at this point that just as Freud’s support for a strong social authority to repress human instincts clearly finds a context with Hobbes and the tradition of political authoritarianism, so Lawrence’s ideas about the *dangers* of a repressive authority and the decency of human instincts find an equally clear context within anarchism and the tradition of libertarian thought. Thus the idea that immorality is due not to liberty but to external restriction—the idea that “Prison makes men bad”—is a basic idea, for instance, in Bakunin, who claimed that “morality has no other source, no other object, no other stimulant than freedom,” and that as a consequence “all restrictions of liberty in order to protect morality have always been to the detriment of the latter” (Dolgoff 80).

This principled criticism of external authority, the idea that restriction is “always” a “detriment” to morality, is a fundamental part of anarchistic doctrine and is expressed in one way or another by many libertarian writers, from the earliest to the most recent: from Lao Tzu’s observation that “The more rules and regulations/The more thieves and robbers” (57), to Noam Chomsky’s warning that “structures of authority and control limit and distort intrinsic human capacities and needs” (qtd. in Marshall 579). Also included in this tradition is Thoreau’s celebrated observation that a “respect” for the law will often make “even the well-disposed” the “agents of injustice” (86), a remark which does much, in its own way, to anticipate Emma Goldman’s assertion that “Crime is naught but misdirected energy” (59).³ Goldman’s expression, moreover, nicely brings out what all these libertarians (and all others) more or less imply: namely, that anti-social behaviour is not the product of natural energies, but of cultural barriers that are imposed upon those energies.⁴ Lawrence’s idea that “Prison makes men bad” represents one way in which he articulates the same notion, but he conveys the idea in a far more imperative way as well, suggesting that individuals will ultimately reach “a pitch of dehumanized recklessness” when they are put “under the presence of *compulsion*” (*K* 262).⁵ For Lawrence, as for all anarchistic thinkers, antisocial behaviour is not the

³ See also Herbert Read: “Crime is a symptom of social illness—of poverty, inequality, and restriction” (50).

⁴ See Peter Marshall: “A fundamental assumption of anarchism is that nature flourishes best if left to itself.... It is only when they try to work against the grain, to block the natural flow of energy, that trouble emerges in society.... All anarchists thus believe that...without the coercion of imposed authority, a harmony of interests amongst individuals emerges in society (1992:14–16).

⁵ Alexander Berkman summarizes anarchism’s general view of compulsion in this way:

In the fewest words, Anarchism teaches that we can live in a society where there is no compulsion of any kind.

“instinctual endowment” of individuals, but the outcome of some authoritarian force, either physical or conceptual, in their surrounding environment.

This idea plays a key role in much of Lawrence’s fiction, where the behaviour of characters who act violently is invariably depicted as compelled behaviour, and where, as a result, the blame for such violence is consistently assigned not to the violent individual, but to the structures of authority which are meant to contain and control that individual. The violent behaviour of Walter Morel, already touched on, offers a clear illustration of this point. While no reader of *Sons and Lovers* can fail to notice that Morel is “alternately brutal and tender toward his family” (Sheckner 31), what has not been so clearly understood about this character is that his tenderness and brutality are shaped by two very different sources. On the one hand, the source of Morel’s tenderness, indeed of all his truly sociable qualities (and he has many of them), is clearly his unrestrained and instinctual self. Tenderness and warmth are in fact the central characteristics of Morel as a free and natural man, a man whose “flame of life,” as Gertrude first notices, was not “*baffled* and *gripped* into incandescence,” but “*flowed* from off his flesh like the flame from a candle” (18, emphasis added). This is the Walter Morel who, as a “sensuous” young man, is “so ready and so pleasant with everybody” (17), and who as an older man is “jolly” (88) and “lavish of endearments” (89) toward his children. While the brutal and anti-social Morel is always an “outsider” to his own family, the tender Morel is clearly an integral part of it:

The only times when he entered again into the life of his own people was when he worked, and was happy at work. Sometimes, in the evening, he cobbled the boots or mended the kettle or his pit-bottle. Then he always wanted several attendants, and the children enjoyed it. They united with him in the work, in the actual doing of something, when he was his real self again. (88)

Instances in the novel where Morel is actually “united” with his family are extremely rare, and he often remains alienated from “his own people” even when he is gentle with them. Nevertheless, this explicitly causal connection between Morel’s “real self” and a state of domestic harmony clearly suggests that Morel’s “real self” is a fundamentally social self: the scene illustrates and confirms Lawrence’s (later) formulation that an essential quality of the impulsive (or “real”) self is its “deep instinct for kinship.” The scene also goes far to confirm Lawrence’s even more encompassing idea that unrestrained instincts are the source for all higher modes and more civilized forms of human behavior, the idea that acting on one’s impulses, as he claims through Birkin,

A life without compulsion naturally means liberty; it means freedom from being forced or coerced, a chance to lead the life that suits you best.

You cannot lead such a life unless you do away with the institutions that curtail your liberty and interfere with your life, the condition that compels you to act differently from the way you would like to. (qtd. in Berman 30)

“is the only gentlemanly thing to do.” When he is allowed to act impulsively, Morel is a model of civility —“pleasant” with others, and “always very gentle if someone were ill” (91).

On the other hand, to attend closely to the scenes in which Morel acts brutally is to find that violence is purely a response to some form of compulsion that has been imposed upon him: his “flame of life” does indeed become incandescent, but only when it has been “baffled” and “gripped” by some external force. A significant clue to understanding this aspect of Morel’s behaviour occurs early in the narrative, in the context of his relationship with his supervisors at the pit. By pointing out that “Authority was hateful to him, therefore he could only abuse the pitmanagers” (25), the narrator is suggesting something that more or less encapsulates the trouble he experiences at home, and it serves to suggest a great deal about the origins of the reckless and abusive behaviour he shows toward his family, particularly his wife. Morel’s naturally “warm” nature does not simply change under the presence of the pit manager’s authority, that is to say, but becomes distorted. Authority has the effect of twisting his social nature into hatred, which in turn finds expression in some form of “abuse.”

Of course, one has to be careful about reading too much into such a line, and I do not mean to give even the word “hatred” more weight than it deserves here. But it should be noticed that just as the pit-managers assume authority over Morel at work, so his wife assumes authority over Morel at home, where his abusiveness intensifies and becomes not only verbal, as it is with the pit-managers, but physical as well. An early episode in the married life of the Morels serves to illustrate both Mrs Morel’s authoritarian approach to her husband, and her husband’s violent response to it:

She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it —it drove him out of his mind.

While the baby was still tiny, the father’s temper had become so irritable that it was not to be trusted. The child had only to give a little trouble, when the man began to bully. A little more, and the hard hands of the collier hit the baby. (22–23)

Far from demonstrating the idea that, as one critic suggests, Morel “threatens” his children because of his “lack” of “containment” (Campbell 27), this passage clearly shows how thoroughly contained Morel actually is: the threat that he poses to his children is a response to his wife’s fighting and striving and forcing him to conform to her own expectations of what he should be. In this way the passage carries a relentlessly logical progression from its first clause to its last—from the slightly ironic: “She fought to make him undertake his responsibilities,” to the brutally factual: “the hard hands of the collier

hit the baby”—and it suggests, among other things, that by restricting Morel’s liberty in order to “protect morality” (in Bakunin’s phrase) Gertrude has compelled Morel to abandon morality altogether (as Bakunin might have predicted). Morel unites with his family only when he is his “real self,” and he attacks his family only when he is “out of his mind”—alienated from his free, instinctive self, and removed, as a consequence, from moral agency.

If the conflict between Walter and Gertrude dramatizes Bakunin’s idea that restriction is always a “detriment” to morality, it also does much to illustrate Godwin’s rather similar claim that the “laws which are made to restrain our vices” only serve to “irritate and multiply them” (763), for although a great deal of Morel’s domestic violence is related to his drunkenness, his drunkenness is often presented as a response to the authoritarian behaviour of his wife. As the narrative discloses, it is only after Gertrude begins “destroying her husband’s authority” that Morel deliberately sets out to make her life difficult, and he uses drunkenness as a means to this end: “And by giving her as little money as possible, *by drinking much* and going out with men who brutalized him and his idea of women, *he paid her back*” (49; emphasis added).

That Morel is seeking revenge through drunkenness is also key to the events that lead up to the celebrated scene in which he throws a table drawer at his wife, a fact that is far more evident in the original, uncut version of *Sons and Lovers* than it is in the shortened, censored and far more widely read version. Indeed, it is because he is reading from the shortened version of the novel that Philip Hobsbaum, for instance, is inevitably led to remark that this particular conflict begins after Morel has been “discouraged from the society of his wife,” and “stops off at a local public house on his way home from the pit, and eventually arrives home tipsy and hungry” (47). In the restored version of the novel, however, added details allow for a significantly different understanding of the origins of this conflict. I quote from the point where Morel has just been shouting at the children for opening the door while he was washing in the scullery:

“Goodness me, man,” said Mrs Morel at last. “There isn’t a bit of peace while you’re in the house.”

“No, I know that. I know you’re niver right till I’m out o’ your sight.”

“True,” she said calmly to herself.

“Oh I know—I know what yer chunterin’ ‘s about. You’re niver satisfied till I’m down pit, none on yer. They ought ter keep me theer, like one o’ th’ ‘osses.”

“True,” said Mrs Morel again, under her breath, as she turned with a tight-shut mouth.

He hurried to escape from the house, thrusting his head forward in a determined rage.

“I’ll pay the b—out!” he said to himself, meaning his wife. (52)

As the restored text makes clear, far more than simply being “discouraged” from his wife’s “society,” Morel leaves the house because he finds the atmosphere in it so intensely oppressive; it has become a prison from which he has to “escape.” Moreover, it is crucial to note that Morel does not go to the public house on his way home from the pit, as the shortened version (and Hobsbaum) suggests. Rather, he goes to the public house directly *from* his home and immediately *after* this argument—in a “determined rage,” and with the explicit intention to “pay the b—out!” And it is only within the context of Morel’s “rage” and determination to get revenge on his wife that can we fully appreciate the significance of the line, which appears in both versions of the novel, describing Morel’s return home: “He, taking his revenge, was nearly drunk” (Cambridge 52; Penguin 52). Thus as Lawrence had clearly intended to convey, Morel’s drunkenness is to be understood as a response to his external circumstances, however much drinking might be his routine: it is at least as much the consequence as the cause of his wife’s attempt to “make him moral.”

In fact, the conflict that ensues between Morel and his wife once he arrives home provides a fine illustration of the effect that restriction has on his behaviour, and is useful for understanding Lawrence’s general ideas about the effects of compulsion. At the moment that Morel throws the drawer at his wife, that is to say, he is under intense restrictions. Not only must he endure continued scorn and resistance from his wife, but even the household furniture seems to conspire together to put limits on his movement: the dresser blocks his way to the coat hook so that “he lurched against it,” and the consequent “rattling” of pots and tins announces the drunkenness that he is so obviously trying to hide. The table drawer, moreover, refuses his efforts to pull it out—and then, once out, resists his efforts to push it back in, biting into his leg when it falls toward the floor. The combination of all these elements turns Morel’s home into something of a torture chamber, at least for Morel, and it is under these intensely restrictive conditions that he blindly and drunkenly strikes out:

He was trying to fit in the drawer. At her last speech, he turned round. His face was crimson, his eyes bloodshot. He stared at her one silent second, in threat.

“P-h!” she went quickly, in contempt.

He jerked at the drawer in his excitement. It fell, cut sharply on his shin, and on the reflex, he flung it at her.

One of the corners caught her brow as the shallow drawer crashed into the fireplace. She swayed, almost fell stunned from her chair. (53)

Immediately after this act of recklessness the barriers around Morel temporarily seem to drop: his wife, though still remote, has at least “softened” (55), and the table

drawer finally slides “back into its cavity.” Now, beyond the constraints that led to his rage, Morel is contrite and concerned and even interested in helping to repair the damage that he has caused, returning to the drawer to find a bandage this time instead of, significantly, a knife: “Again he rummaged and fumbled in the drawer, returning presently with a red, narrow scarf.... ‘Let me tie it for thee,’ he said humbly.” This is Morel’s “real self”—“gentle if someone were ill” and showing an “instinct for kinship”—clearly emerging now that the morally distorting pressures of external restraint have been removed.

The idea that violence is a product of the restrictions imposed upon human instincts—and not a manifestation the instincts themselves— provides a key theme for a number of Lawrence’s other works. In “The Prussian Officer,” for instance, the young soldier’s brutal murder of an officer is very clearly an act of “dehumanized recklessness,” but it is just as clearly committed “under the presence of compulsion.” In fact, one of the great ironies of the story, of which there are several, is that just as the young soldier’s most conspicuous act is to commit murder, so his most salient characteristic is his thoroughly instinctual nature. In much the same way that Walter Morel is described as a “purely sensuous” man who “often did the right thing, by instinct” (18), so the soldier, Schöner, is depicted as a man who “received life direct through his senses” (3), and who demonstrates “the blind, instinctive sureness of movement of an unhampered young animal” (3). Just as Morel, when young, had “a certain subtle exultation like glamour in his movement” (18), so Schöner shows a “free movement [in his] handsome limbs, which no military discipline could make stiff” (5). And just as the young Morel was “warm” and “full of colour and animation” and “pleasant with everybody”—as opposed to Gertrude’s father, who “drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul” (18)—so Schöner is also “warm” (2) and is “by nature... active, and had many friends” (5). Thus in both of these characters, instinct, freedom of movement and sociability are inextricably combined.

Also like Morel, however, Schöner becomes distinctly anti-social when his instinctive nature is restrained. As the narrative tracks the events that lead to Schöner’s act of murder, it focuses on the increasingly narrow and restrictive world within which Schöner is forced to live. His early feeling of “constraint in the captain’s presence” (3) becomes progressively more intense and oppressive as the demands the officer makes upon him become increasingly more difficult for him to fulfill and as the beatings the officer administers to him become more vicious and more frequent. Burdened with the feeling of having been “damned” (2) by the officer, Schöner is, in a very real sense, *dammed up* by the officer, who acts as a barrier to the soldier by quite literally preventing him from “going out”:

“Are you in a hurry?”

“Yes, Sir,” came the answer, that sent a flash through the listener.

“For what?”

"I was going out, Sir."

"I want you this evening."

There was a moment's hesitation. The officer had a curious stiffness of countenance.

"Yes, Sir," replied the servant, in his throat.

"I want you tomorrow evening also—in fact you may consider your evenings occupied, unless I give you leave." (6)

More than representing a simple restriction of his time, this occupation of the soldier's "evenings" also represents a restriction of his space, a restriction which not only imposes social isolation on the soldier ("without knowing it, he was alone" (5)), but which also serves to suggest a prohibition on the "free movement" (4) that more than anything else epitomizes his instinctual self.

Indeed the fact that the soldier must live within an ever narrowing enclosure is symbolized throughout the story by his almost constant sense of suffocating ("he panted" (9), "he breathed with difficulty" (13), "There seemed no air when he breathed" (1)), and even more so by the increasing difficulty he has walking. As his physical movements become more limited and more painful he becomes, as he feared he would become, "like a wild thing caught" (4). Thus although Schöner may display the "instinctive sureness" of an "unhampered animal" when he is outside the officer's restrictive sphere, within that sphere, the narrative observes, he starts to walk "heavily" (8), he moves "slowly and clumsily" (9), he "crawled about disfigured" (9), and finally, as if his instincts have been completely destroyed, he has to "force every one of his movements from behind, with his will" (9–10). In fact, on the eve of his crime Schöner has become so hobbled by the mistreatment he receives from the officer that he undergoes a kind of metamorphosis, changing from a "free" and "wild" animal to a penned-in and broken kind of domestic beast:

The orderly had gone about in a stupor all the evening.... He was much too done even to want to cry. His mouth hung slightly open, like an idiot's. He felt vacant and wasted. So he wandered at his work, painfully, and very slowly and clumsily, fumbling blindly with the brushes, and finding it difficult, when he sat down, to summon the energy to move again. His limbs, his jaw, were slack and nerveless. (9)

Limbs that were earlier described as "strong" are now "slack," and actions that once came "straight from instinct" are now painful and slow and "fumbling" and "difficult."

As the narrative closes in on the moment of his crime, however, Schöner appears not so much as a heavy beast but, at an even further remove from his instinctive self, as a remote-controlled machine: his voice becomes "crackling" and "unrecognizable," his throat at one point giving off a discernible "Click!" (8); his head begins to "revolve slowly,

rhythmically” (11); he begins to “twist his features unknowingly” (13). The energy he found difficult to “summon” in the officer’s apartment, moreover, now returns in the form of a “curious mass” (13)—“compact and concentrated”—so that at the moment when he springs upon the officer his earlier “sureness of movement” is little more than a series of convulsive “jerks”:

He jumped, feeling as if he were rent in two by a strong flame.... And in a second the orderly, with serious, earnest young face, and underlip between his teeth, had got his knee in the officer’s chest and was pressing the chin backward over the farther edge of the tree-stump, pressing, with all his heart behind in a passion of relief, the tension of his wrists exquisite with relief. And with the base of his palms he shoved at the chin, with all his might.... He did not relax one hair’s breadth, but, all the force of all his blood exulting in his thrust, he shoved back the head of the other man, till there was a little “cluck” and a crunching sensation. (14–15)

The process of Schöner’s physical disfigurement has also been the process of his instinctual disfigurement, for the sense of hatred that drives this act is clearly unnatural to him. Thus the narrator observes that “All his instinct was to avoid personal contact, even definite hate,” and it is therefore “in spite of himself” that “the hate grew”—that is, grew unnaturally, not as an expression of his freedom, but only as a response “to the officer’s passion” (5).⁶ Like Morel, therefore, Schöner’s flame of life becomes a purely destructive incandescence, a “strong flame,” only when it has been “baffled” and “gripped” by an external force. By assuming the role of such a force, the officer compels Schöner to behave in the way that he ultimately does: through the restrictions that he imposes, the officer creates the conditions of his own death.

But if Schöner’s violence is a direct response to the officer’s brutality, what causes the officer to be brutal toward Schöner in the first place—to strap his face with the end of a belt (6) and to kick him down a staircase (7)? While most critical commentary seems to recognize that the conflict between the officer and the orderly stems from a deeper and prior conflict within the officer himself, the general tendency of critics to see suppressed homosexuality as the cause of his violent behaviour seems to me to overlook the real significance of the story. That is, the basis of the conflict seems to be far more general, its social implications far broader, than the somewhat narrow question of sexual desire could possibly admit.⁷ I want to suggest, in this regard, that the conflict within the officer is much better understood as a contest between his self

⁶ Two short sentences from “The Crown” serve as a useful gloss on the misdirected nature of Schöner’s energies: “The chicken does not break the shell out of animosity against the shell. It bursts out in its blind desire to move under a greater heavens” (*RDP* 305). Schöner’s act is clearly based on an animosity toward the shell.

⁷ I agree here with Michael Black’s remark that “to present the case as merely one of jealousy, or even to ‘psychologize’ the situation and present it as suppressed homosexuality, is to simplify” (1986:215).

as an organic matrix of impulse and instinct, and his self as a social construction—or to use the terms of the text, the conflict is between his “innate self” and his cultural conception of what it is to be an “officer” and a “gentleman.”⁸ Thus by looking outward at the almost purely instinctual soldier, the officer is actually looking inward at that vital aspect of himself which as a “gentleman” he must struggle to restrain. This is surely the controlling idea behind the following passage, and others like it, where the officer becomes aware of both his “innate self” and the “being” of the young soldier at the same time:

But the influence of the young soldier’s being had penetrated through the officer’s stiffened discipline, and perturbed the man in him. He, however, was a gentleman, with long fine hands and cultivated movements, and was not going to allow such a thing as the stirring of his innate self. He was a man of passionate temper, who had always kept himself suppressed. Occasionally there had been a duel, an outburst before the soldiers. He knew himself to be always on the point of breaking out. But he kept himself hard to the idea of Service. (4)

As the officer’s perception of the difference between internal and external reality is briefly suspended, the states of “Breaking out” and being “penetrated” share the same sort of meaning, as they both suggest a world without (instead of within) that conceptual armor which he deploys when he “fights with life” (2). Schöner, even though a soldier, represents to him what he is without such armor: the visible fact of Schöner’s instinctual freedom suggests to the officer that he is not keeping himself “hard” enough “to the idea of Service.”

At its most abstract level, then, the officer’s central struggle is to maintain a rigid distinction between the “outer” and “inner” levels of his own experience, for it is only through this distinction that he can separate the “cultivated” from the “wild,” the “refined” from the “primitive,” the “disciplined” from the “free.” In a word, only by means of this separation can he distinguish the cultured military gentleman that he wants to be from the instinctual man that he fundamentally is—and which, in the presence of the soldier, he more or less perceives himself to be. His suppression of Schöner is thus part of his ongoing effort to maintain a clear boundary between his

⁸ This difference between the instinctual self and the self as a social construction plays an essential role in Lawrence’s metaphysic generally, but his essay “John Galsworthy” is particularly clear on the matter. Here Lawrence distinguishes the “social being” from the “human being”: the human being has “a pure nuclear spark” and is “still free”; social beings, however, have “lost caste, as human beings” and they have taken “the place, in our civilization, of the slave in the old civilizations.” The social being is a slave, Lawrence suggests, because he is a servant to social conventions: “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” (*Hardy* 210–214).

natural and his refined self, which he makes in compliance with the codes that define what it means to be a military officer and an aristocratic gentleman.

A very curious feature of the officer's character, however, is that he seems to protect and to support his identity as a "gentleman" only through the most severe expressions of brutality, that his refinement is maintained primarily by his viciousness. One way that the narrative makes sense of this peculiar link between cultivation and brutality is to suggest that by attempting to suppress his instincts—presumably in the name of a moral and particularly a civilized life—the officer is essentially obstructing the very source from which all moral and social life proceeds.⁹ It is for this reason that the officer's acts of brutality always seem to be followed by a struggle with his own decent impulses, where, for instance, after one of his first attacks on the soldier, his initial "thrill of deep pleasure" is overwhelmed by a more fundamental sense of "shame" (5). This struggle with himself takes place again when he is left alone after kicking the soldier down the staircase:

The officer, left alone, held himself rigid, to prevent himself from thinking. His instinct warned him that he must not think. Deep inside him was the intense gratification of his passion, still working powerfully. Then there was a counteraction, a horrible breaking down of something inside him, a whole agony of reaction. He stood there for an hour motionless, a chaos of sensations, but rigid with a will to keep blank his consciousness, to prevent his mind grasping. And he held himself so until the worst of the stress had passed, when he began to drink, drank himself to intoxication, till he slept obliterated. When he woke in the morning he was shaken to the base of his nature. But he had fought off the realization of what he had done. He had prevented his mind from taking it in, had suppressed it along with his instincts, and the conscious man had nothing to do with it. (8)

Just as a sense of "shame" for the previous beating had followed an initial "thrill," so the officer's "gratification" is now undermined by a "counter action," an instinctual moral and social sense asserting itself from the "base of his nature," his "innate self." Thus morality, as the passage suggests, is aligned with human instinct, with the "primitive" and the "wild" and the "free," for only when he stops suppressing his instinct

⁹ Lawrence always saw conventional morality as an attempt to remove oneself from one's own instincts. See, for instance, his remarks in the essay "Introduction to these Paintings":

That is the real pivot of all bourgeois consciousness in all countries: fear and hate of the instinctive, intuitional, procreative body in man or woman. But of course this fear and hate had to take on a righteous appearance, so it became moral, said that the instincts, intuitions and all the activities of the procreative body were evil, and promised a reward for their suppression.... The very pivot of [modern civilization], let us never forget, being fear and hate, the most intimate fear and hate, fear and hate of one's own instinctive, intuitive body, and fear and hate of every other man's and every other woman's warm, procreative body and imagination. (P 559)

The officer may be an aristocrat, but his morality, as Lawrence defines it, is distinctly bourgeois.

does the officer admit, with remorse, what he has done to the soldier. Conversely, and within the larger scope of the story, it is only when he suppresses these impulses, when he submits to the external restrictions of “military discipline” (which make him “tense” and “rigid” and “fixed” (3)) that the officer loses control of himself, in every sense of the term. Only when he surrenders himself to the constraints of a moral and social ideal is he compelled to act in the debased way that his unrestrained impulses would naturally forbid.

As I hope this analysis of “The Prussian Officer” has begun to suggest, compulsion makes its presence felt in Lawrence’s work in not just one but in two distinct ways. The most flagrant of these ways is an immediate type of compulsion; it is expressed through brute force and is administered by an authoritarian human presence. The soldier in “The Prussian Officer” is subjected to compulsion of this type, and his violent and murderous outburst is a direct result of it. Another example of this kind of compulsion can be found in “St. Mawr,” where it is clear that St. Mawr—“Lawrence’s symbol of the passions” (Widmer 1962:66)—becomes a public menace only when he is forced to act in ways that go against his instincts. In a particularly gruesome scene, for instance, he takes fright from a dead snake and in a “spasmodic convulsion” kicks a young man in the face. But as Lou observes, the true villain in this episode is ultimately not St. Mawr at all but Rico, his rider, who insists on restraining the horse even after he has fallen:

...she heard the crash of the falling horse. Then she saw a pale gold belly, and hoofs that worked and flashed in the air, and St. Mawr writhing, straining his head terrifically upwards, his great eyes starting from the naked lines of his nose. With a great neck arching cruelly from the ground, he was pulling frantically at the reins, which Rico still held tight.—Yes, Rico, lying strangely sideways, his eyes also starting from his yellow-white face, among the heather, still clutched the reins. (75)

Mrs Witt also reinforces the idea that St Mawr’s violent behaviour is the result of too much rather than too little restraint. In response to Dean Vyner’s suggestion that “the author of the mischief is St. Mawr himself,” she absolves the horse from all responsibility, claiming that “My son-inlaw pulled that horse over backwards and pinned him down with the reins” (90).¹⁰

¹⁰ The proto-anarchist Chuang Tzu makes an analogy between the horse and the human being where the nature of restraint is concerned, one that is entirely appropriate to a discussion of Rico’s treatment of St. Mawr:

Horses live on dry land, eat grass and drink water. When pleased, they rub their necks together. When angry, they turn round and kick up their heels at each other. Thus far only do their natural dispositions carry them. But bridled and bitted, with a plate of metal on their foreheads, they learn to cast vicious looks, to turn the head to bite, to resist, to get the bit out of the mouth or the bridle into it. And thus their natures become deprived, (qtd. in Marshall 1992:14)

The second type of compulsion to be found in Lawrence's work is a far more remote and insidious form than the first, for the control that it exerts comes from abstract ideas rather than from a physical authority, and actions under its influence have all the appearance of being voluntary deeds—which they are not. If, in the terms of popular political jargon, the first type of compulsion can be classified as “the big stick,” this second type can be classified as “the big lie,” for it depends not upon physical force but upon indoctrination—upon an individual's willing conformity to a given mode of social behaviour, a submission to an external system of rules, values or beliefs. And for Lawrence this second type of compulsion is at least as effective as the first in usurping the moral impulses and creating violent and anti-social individuals out of naturally social beings. The brutality of the officer in “The Prussian Officer,” for instance—as I hope I have shown—is clearly depicted as the outcome of his adherence to established military and social codes. If we turn back to *Sons and Lovers*, moreover, we find that Walter Morel, like the soldier in “The Prussian Officer,” is subjected to compulsion by force, at least insofar as he is under the harsh authority of his wife. But what we also find is that Mrs Morel, much like the Prussian officer himself, is also subjected to a form of compulsion, for she clearly submits to the restraints of social and religious codes—codes which override her moral impulses and answer for that distinctly anti-social side to her character. Thus, imposed upon that “passion” which once allowed her to get “real joy and satisfaction” from Morel, and which “bound” her to him (at least according to her son Paul (361)), is that “moral sense”—a system of values that she “inherited from generations of Puritans”—which compels her to “torture” her husband and to wield “the lash unmercifully” when he did not act “nobler than he was” (25). The language of the text is highly figurative here, of course, but its underlying message is unmistakable: when led by her impulses Gertrude formed a bond with Morel; when compelled by the restrictions of her moral code, “she destroyed him” (25).

In a similar way, when Will Brangwen in *Women in Love* physically attacks his own daughter for her decision to marry immediately and at the registrar's office instead of in the church, he is not acting as an instinctual man but as that “roomful of old echoes” (257) that Birkin takes him to be. At the moment when he approaches Ursula with his “strange, tense movements, and a clenched fist, and the face of a murderer” (366), he is demonstrating his ability, however ironically, to “think and do according to the religion I was brought up in” (257). In a word, he is being compelled by his religion rather than being guided by his impulses, and his behaviour, as a result, becomes dehumanized—“strange,” “tense,” “clenched”—and reckless: “his hand had caught her smack at the side of the face and she was sent up against the door” (365).

Nowhere in Lawrence's work, however, is the dehumanizing and fundamentally anti-social nature of compulsion by a code, by submitting oneself to the authority of an external system of rules or ideas, more explicitly illustrated than in *The Rainbow*, where Ursula must “subjugate” herself to the “will” of the school system (357) in order to become a competent “Standard Five” teacher. Indeed, as Ursula herself begins to realize, her progress as a teacher is entirely dependent upon her ability to forgo her

own “feelings” and “generosity,” so that she can function within a system where “neither generosity nor emotion were wanted” (347). Thus as long as she holds on to her natural desire to be “personal,” and to use “no compulsion” against her students, her teaching is “in a very deep mess” (356). Once she resolves to “exclude” herself from her own work, however, this tension between her naturally social self and the essentially anti-social demands of her profession simply disappears, her profession having clearly won out:

She must, during the next week, watch over her books, and punish any fault. Her soul decided it coldly. Her personal desire was dead for that day at least. She must have nothing more of herself in school. She was to be Standard Five teacher only. That was her duty. In school, she was nothing but Standard Five teacher. Ursula Brangwen must be excluded.

So that, pale, shut, at last distant and impersonal, she saw no longer the child, how his eyes danced, or how he had a queer little soul that could not be bothered with shaping handwriting so long as he dashed down what he thought. She saw no children, only the task that was to be done. And keeping her eyes there, on the task, and not on the child, she was impersonal enough to punish where she could otherwise only have sympathized, understood and condoned. (365)

Sympathy, understanding and forgiveness, all aspects of her “personal desire,” must be contained or “shut in prison” (357), as her original desire to “make the little, ugly children love her” (341) transforms into the horrid “duty” of impersonal tasks and relentless punishments. And as she feels “the invincible iron” of the school system “closing upon her” (356), the “open” and “warm” “young girl” is transformed into a “hard, insentient thing that worked mechanically according to a system imposed” (367). At this point in her career Ursula has, in Birkin’s terms, “chopped [herself] down to fit the world.”

It is under these conditions, in which an “unclean system of authority” (353) has become “a dark weight, controlling her movement” (357), that Ursula mercilessly beats a child, one of her students. Having “excluded” herself from her teaching, having divested herself of all “feeling,” her aggression toward the boy is at the farthest possible remove from an instinctual act, for as a teacher she has now put herself “in the hands of some bigger, stronger, coarser will” (473):

“Come in front,” she repeated, definite now.

“I shan’t,” he cried, snarling, rat-like, grinning. Something went click in Ursula’s soul. Her face and eyes set, she went through the class straight. The boy cowered before her glowering, fixed eyes. But she advanced on him, seized him by the arm, and dragged him from his seat.... So she snatched her cane from the desk, and brought it down on him. He was writhing and kicking. She saw his face beneath her, white, with eyes like the eyes of a fish,

stony, yet full of hate and horrible fear. And she loathed him, the hideous writhing thing that was nearly too much for her. In horror lest he should overcome her, and yet at the heart quite calm, she brought the cane down again and again, whilst he struggled....(370)

All of Lawrence's customary signals for dehumanized behaviour are present in this act of recklessness: the mechanical "click" that Schöner also gives off; the inability to see the other as anything but a "thing"; movements that are "set" and "fixed," a repetitive motion ("again and again") conducted with an odd sense of abstraction, as if the acting body were not her own—which, in a way, it is not, for she has now become, like her colleagues, a mere "instrument" for the "application of a system of laws" (356).

After the beating, however, Ursula seems to have been shocked into an awareness of what she has done, which she admits in a way that few of Lawrence's compelled characters ever do—those characters, at least, who are compelled by a system of ideas:

She was afraid, and strange. It was to her quite strange and ugly, like some dream where she was degraded. She would have died rather than admit it to anybody. She could not look at her swollen hand. Something had broken in her; she had passed a crisis. Williams was beaten, but at a cost. (372)

As the "tighter hand" she was advised to use over her class (352) becomes the "swollen hand" of her authoritarian victory, Ursula realizes that the "cost" of her triumph as a teacher is the utter defeat of her humanity. Thus, when she was living outside of the restrictive conventions that govern what it is to be a good teacher, her dream was to "give and give and give" to her students (341). When she is acting within these conventions, however, she brings the cane down "again and again" in a kind of "degraded" version of this dream, clearly demonstrating that a "respect for the law," as Thoreau claimed, can make "even the well-disposed" the "agents of injustice." "She did not want to do it," the narrative observes, "Yet she had to" (377).

Indeed, these few final words regarding Ursula's beating of a child—that she *had* to do it, but that she did not *want* to—serve to summarize just about everything that Lawrence has to say about the presence of compulsion. They bring together his faith in the natural decency of individuals with his certainty that obedience to anything but that decency is a decisive step toward disaster. They suggest, furthermore, that aggression is not a manifestation of human instinct but a product of external necessity, and that individual liberty, as a result, can be the only possible basis for a real community. True human community, that is to say, is the direct expression of true human desire, and all restrictions of that desire, all "structures of authority and control," are doomed in advance to self-defeat.

Chapter Three: The Constituents of Freedom

In the great business of love, or friendship, or living human intercourse one meets and communes with another free individual, there is no service. (RDP 150)

Understanding how Lawrence illustrates social and political ideas in his fiction involves the reader in an almost constant process of contextualizing the actions of his characters within a broad framework of ideological principles. This may at first sound like a particularly incongruent approach to take to the work of an author who never tired of expressing his deep distrust of abstractions, and who always placed an enormous importance on the immediacy of human experience. It may also seem to be conceptually out of joint with a writer who at one point near the end of his life attempted to disclaim any connection between his novels and his political concerns: “The great social change interests me and troubles me,” Lawrence wrote in 1929, “but it is not my field.” “As a novelist,” he claimed, “I feel it is the change inside the individual which is my real concern” (*2P* 567). But any novelist who also declared, as Lawrence did, that “each individual is a term of the Infinite” (*RDP* 136) is clearly inviting his readers to find far reaching implications in the actions of his fictional characters. Indeed, given Lawrence’s bold claim that “what holds true cosmologically holds much more true psychologically” (*RDP* 136), the process of identifying his ideas about the nature of the individual with his concerns about the plight of society would appear to be a rather modest step. It was Lawrence, after all, who declared that the “sickness in the body politic...lies in the heart of man, not in the conditions” (*Hardy* 15), a notion which clearly suggests his sense, as Russell noted (1968:20), of an immediate relationship between individual psychology and social circumstances. As a general rule for reading Lawrence’s fiction, therefore, one can rather safely say that the “change inside the individual” is not a separate issue from social change, but is inextricably linked to it. For Lawrence, what holds true for the individual holds just as true for society.

I make these remarks—the relevance of which will become evident shortly—as a kind of preface to examining how Lawrence’s ideas about the nature of freedom are consistent with another main current of anarchistic thought: namely, the idea that, in Marshall’s words, “the liberty of one must involve the liberty of all: I am truly free only when all human beings, men and women, are equally free” (1992:292). I have

already touched directly on the subject of individual freedom, of course, observing in my introductory chapter that for Lawrence, as for anarchism in general, freedom is essentially derived from obedience to natural laws—laws which, according to Bakunin, “constitute the very basis of our being,” and which, according to Lawrence, form the core of our “inward voice of religious belief.” It is important to point out now, however, that while Lawrence sees such obedience as an absolutely necessary condition for individual freedom, he does not—as anarchists do not—see it as a completely sufficient condition. That is, for Lawrence, as for anarchists generally, individual liberty, which includes the freedom to submit to natural laws in the first place, is clearly contingent upon the extent to which other individuals in a community are also free. This is the idea expressed, for instance, by the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, who argued for “freedom for everybody and in everything, with the only limit of the equal freedom of others” (1965:53). It is also an informing idea of the early American anarchist Josiah Warren, who claimed that “society can have no peace until every member is really free” (qtd. in Rexroth 236). As is so often the case with anarchism, however, it is Bakunin who gives the idea its clearest and most substantial definition:

To be free signifies that man shall be recognized and treated as such by another man, by all men who surround him. Liberty then is not a fact springing from isolation but from reciprocal action, a fact not of exclusion, but, on the contrary, of social interaction.... I am free only when all human beings surrounding me—men and women alike—are equally free. The freedom of others, far from limiting or negating my liberty, is on the contrary its necessary condition and confirmation. I become free in the true sense only by virtue of the liberty of others....

(Maximov 266–267)

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a thinker outside of the anarchistic tradition who agrees with Bakunin’s idea that freedom is a “reciprocal action,” and that “the freedom of others” is therefore the “necessary condition” of “my liberty.”¹ Freud and Hobbes, of course, would utterly deny it. But even adherents to certain forms of liberalism, those who embrace an ideology that is probably closer to anarchism than any other, contend that the liberty of others tends to threaten rather than to “confirm” one’s own freedom—an idea which leads them to suggest that at least some restrictions of freedom in the form of political authority are necessary to protect the supposedly more important freedoms of the collective.² Thus according to the liberal thinker L.T.Hobhouse (a contemporary of Lawrence’s), “The function of

¹ Elsewhere Bakunin similarly claims that the freedom of the individual, “far from halting as at a boundary before the liberty of others, finds there its confirmation and its extension into infinity; the illimitable liberty of each through the liberty of all.” (qtd. in Marshall 1992:292–293).

² For a brief explanation of the difference between anarchism and liberalism, see Paul Goodman’s article “Is Anarchism Distinct from Liberalism?” in Krimerman and Perry 53–56.

state coercion is to override individual coercion,” and only in this way can the State maintain “liberty of expression, security of person and property, genuine freedom of contract [and] the rights of public meeting and association” (78). For Bakunin, however, sacrificing individual for the sake of collective freedoms is a patent absurdity, since “the greater number of free people surrounding me and the deeper and greater and more extensive their liberty, the deeper and larger becomes my liberty.” For this reason, Bakunin claims, it is not the freedom but “the slavery of men”—the limitations on their freedom— which “sets up a barrier to my liberty” (Maximov 267).

Lawrence’s own view of the essentially social and interactive nature of individual freedom bears a remarkable similarity to Bakunin’s. Indeed, Bakunin’s suggestion that the “slavery” of others is a “barrier” to his own freedom is clearly reflected in Lawrence’s claim that “A servant moving about me, or even anybody moving about me, doing things for me, is a horrible drag on my freedom.” It is for this reason, therefore, that Lawrence declares: “No man is free who depends on servants” (*RDP* 150, 149). Moreover, just as Bakunin stresses the “reciprocal” nature of liberty, the idea that freedom springs not from isolation but from “social interaction,” so Lawrence claims in his essay “We Need One Another” that “We have our very individuality in relationship,” and that “Apart from our connexions with other people...we amount, all of us, to next to nothing.” Thus, much like Bakunin, Lawrence suggests that our freedom is confirmed by our interaction with other free individuals: “It is the relationship to woman, and to my fellow-men,” Lawrence writes in this regard, “which makes me myself a river of life” (*P* 190, 192).

In fact, Bakunin’s idea that the “freedom of others” is the “necessary condition and confirmation” of “my liberty” is completely consistent with what Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love* conceives of as the underlying principle of all true relationships. Whereas “The old way of love,” according to Birkin, is merely a “process of subservience” (153) and “a dreadful bondage” (199), a true relationship between a man and a woman, he claims, must involve “balancing each other” in such a way that “each [is] constituting the freedom of the other” (199). And this kind of relationship, Birkin believes, is not to be confined to the sexual relationship alone. As he tries rather unsuccessfully to explain to Ursula, it serves as the basis for all relationships within a community:

“To be free,” he said. “To be free, in a free place, with a few other people!”

“Yes,” she said wistfully. Those “few other people” depressed her.

“It isn’t really a locality, though,” he said. “It’s a perfected relation between you and me, and others—the perfection relation—so that we are free together.” (316)

I should point out that what Birkin means by “constituting” each other’s freedom is not always clear in the text of *Women in Love*, partly because his thoughts on the matter are scattered throughout the narrative as portions of dialogue, and partly

because his attempts at explanation only succeed in stirring up hostility and ridicule in other characters, particularly in Ursula (see, for example, 145–154). But the idea of being “free to gether” is one that Lawrence himself elaborates upon elsewhere, and for a more comprehensive understanding of what he means by it we should turn to the poem “Manifesto,” where the kind of principles that underlie Lawrence’s critique of the “old way of love”—as well as his vision of a new and better way—are set out in some detail. The section of the poem that I quote from begins with the failure of the “old way”:

She touches me as if I were herself, her own.
She has not realised yet, that fearful thing, that I am the other,
she thinks we are all of one piece.
It is painfully untrue.
I want her to touch me at last, ah, on the root and quick of my darkness
and perish on me, as I have perished on her.
Then, we shall be two and distinct, we shall have each our separate being.
And that will be pure existence, real liberty.

.....

when she passes away as I have passed away,
being pressed up against the *other*,
then I shall be glad, I shall not be confused with her,
I shall be cleared, distinct, single as if burnished in silver,
having no adherence, no adhesion anywhere,
one clear, burnished, isolated being, unique,
and she also, pure, isolated, complete,
two of us, unutterably distinguished, and in unutterable conjunction.
Then we shall be free, freer than the angels, ah, perfect.

(*Poems* 266–267)

Notice that the “I” of the poem—clearly Lawrence himself—cannot achieve “real liberty” until the “she” of the poem is also free, which she cannot be until she escapes from the imprisoning notion that “we are all of one piece,” an attitude toward the other that constitutes what Birkin calls the “old way of love,” and which is based, once again, on the idea of bondage. Freedom, the poem suggests, is necessarily derived from an awareness of the “other,” and such awareness is possible only after both individuals have broken away from that “adherence” and “adhesion” to each other which, however paradoxically, prevents the possibility of any true interaction. The desired state of being “separate” and “isolated” which Lawrence describes here, therefore, is not that vacant and utterly solitary type of isolation that Bakunin sees as the negation of freedom. It is rather a highly rarefied isolation that serves as the foundation for living “in unutterable conjunction” with the other. Thus in much the same way that Bakunin

suggests that the freedom of others is the “necessary condition and confirmation of my liberty,” so Lawrence suggests that the “real liberty” of one individual acquires definition and substance only through interaction with another free individual: each individual is truly free only by virtue of the other’s freedom.

It is equally important to observe in this poem, however, that although the act of being touched “on the root and quick of my darkness” has an obviously sexual, as well as an intensely individual quality about it, this relationship of mutually dependent or “reciprocal” freedom is not confined to the lovers alone. In the lines that immediately follow his declaration of an achieved state of “perfect” freedom, Lawrence’s focus shifts from the freedom of the couple to a vision of an entire society established on the same basic and interrelated principles of “separation,” “conjunction” and “real liberty.” Immediately “After” the lovers have constituted each other’s freedom, therefore, Lawrence suggests that:

...there will only remain that all men detach themselves and become unique,
that we are all detached, moving in freedom more than the angels,
conditioned only by our own pure single being,
having no laws but the laws of our own being.
Every human being will then be like a flower, untrammelled.
Every movement will be direct.

(Poems 267)

The phrase “will only remain” in the first line of this passage is rich with implications about the state of being, as Birkin says, “free in a place, with a few other people.” It conveys the idea, for instance, that the freedom to be derived from the sexual relationship, however “perfect,” is not quite sufficient for the freedom of either individual: to be a fully flowing “river of life” the poet must go beyond his relationship with the woman (and she beyond her relationship with him) to include his “fellow-men.” Thus in much the same way that Bakunin claims that his own freedom will become “deeper and larger” in direct proportion to the “number of free people surrounding me,” so Lawrence suggests here that his freedom will truly become “perfect” only when “Every human being” is “untrammelled,” when “we are *all* detached” and “moving in freedom.”

The phrase “will only remain” also conveys the idea that once the lovers have achieved their own freedom, the subsequent goal of attaining “a surpassing singleness of mankind” will be a comparatively simple task: the truly difficult and important work of establishing freedom for all of society, the poem suggests, is in appreciating “otherness” in a given (malefemale) relationship. This, I believe, is what Lawrence essentially means when he writes that “otherness”—to return to a line I quoted earlier—is “the fact upon which any great scheme of social life must be based.” If Lawrence often appears to privilege the sexual relationship over the broader range of relationships in society as a whole, he does so only because the sexual relationship serves as a kind of template for those further, social relationships. Thus, as I will discuss in some detail

below, when the sexual relationship functions to prevent reciprocal freedom, it serves as a microcosm for society as it actually is; when the sexual relationship functions to promote reciprocal freedom, however, it serves as a microcosm for society as it could and should be. A sexual relationship in which both partners are equally free therefore acts as a kind of foundation for a true community, which is why Birkin, after learning that Gerald has gone to “that length” with Gudrun (an expression that they each understand in a very different way), remarks that: “‘There remains to put [your relationship] on a broad social basis, and to achieve a high moral purpose’” (350).

The idea that individuals cannot truly be free until the individuals surrounding them are equally free is extensively illustrated in Lawrence’s fiction, particularly through his portraits of male-female relationships.³ Lawrence’s typical method of conveying this idea is to bring two characters together who are not quite equally free (just as the “I” and the “she” in “Manifesto” are not initially equal in their freedom), and then to demonstrate how the limitations on the freedom of one character affects the freedom of the other. This is certainly the pattern he employs in the relationship between Anna and Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, for instance, where Anna comes to her marriage ontologically “less hampered” (140) than her husband, and soon finds that his relative “slavery,” to use Bakunin’s terms, is a barrier to her own liberty. This feature of their relationship is apparent from the very beginning of their married life, where only a few days after their wedding Anna shows a readiness to “return to the outside world,” making Will “frightened and furious and miserable” (140) at the idea of being alone:

He ground his soul in uneasiness and fear. But she rose to a real outburst of house-work, turning him away as she shoved the furniture aside to her broom. He stood hanging miserably near. He wanted her back. Dread and desire for her to stay with him and shame at his own dependence on her drove him to anger. He began to lose his head. The wonder was going to pass away again.... Driven by fear of her departure into a state of helplessness, almost imbecility, he wandered about the house.

And she, with her skirts kilted up, flew round at her work, absorbed. “Shake the rug then, if you must hang round,” she said.

³ My primary interest in this chapter is to understand what Lawrence suggests about freedom in society as a whole through his depiction of the sexual relationship. In a broader context, however, the reciprocal nature of freedom is clearly an important theme in “The Nightmare” chapter of *Kangaroo*. While Richard Lovat Somers may have kept himself “free” from serving in the war, the fact that almost everyone else around him has been “cowed” (228) into service has clearly left him with very little freedom indeed: he is spied on by his neighbours, persecuted by local authorities, bullied by military doctors. The State, moreover, orders him out of his home in Cornwall, even as it refuses him permission to leave his country. And it is under “this mass of poisonous condemnation” that even Somers begins to feel “guilty” (228) and “branded, [like] a criminal marked out by society, marked-out for annihilation” (250). Keeping his own soul “firm and integral” (221) amounts to very little in terms of his own freedom, therefore, when the society around him has devolved into a “criminal mob” (212), and its members are transformed from relatively free human beings into “things, obeying orders” (244). The “slavery” of those around Somers is obviously, in Bakunin’s sense, a “barrier” to his own liberty.

And fretting with resentment, he went to shake the rug. She was blithely unconscious of him. He came back, hanging near to her.

(140–141)

The central purpose of this scene is not simply to emphasize the fact that Anna is “less hampered” than her husband, that she flies when he can only “hang,” that she enjoys an “outburst” of work while he suffers “Dread” and “fear,” that she is “absorbed” by what she is doing and “unconscious of him,” whereas he is absorbed only by her. The scene also suggests, or begins to suggest, what a hindrance Will is to Anna’s free movement. Anna soon discovers that she simply cannot maintain her freedom in the face of Will’s “dependence,” and his habit of “hovering near her, wanting her to be with him,” soon intensifies from a source of mild annoyance to a “black” and “violent” form of oppression. His dependence, that is to say, becomes a form of compulsion, and Anna cannot for long push Will aside like the furniture that obstructs her broom: he very soon appears to her as “a dark, almost evil thing pursuing her, hanging on to her, burdening her” (141). As this early stage of their marriage progresses, Will’s relative lack of freedom takes a discernible toll on Anna’s free flight, and she “Gradually” realizes that “her life, her freedom, was sinking under the silent grip of his physical will” (172). Hence, just as Bakunin claimed that the “slavery of men” is a barrier to “my liberty,” so Anna sees that: “For her there was no final release, since [Will] could not be liberated from himself” (169).

It is important at this point to ask why Will should be so dependent upon Anna in the first place, why he is so obviously hampered in his freedom, and the answer, I suggest, leads us back to both the poem “Manifesto” and to Rupert Birkin’s remarks on the “old way of love.” Recall that in “Manifesto” the only obstruction to the couple’s “real liberty” was the insistence of one of the lovers on the idea that “we are all of one piece.” For Lawrence this is a “painfully untrue” idea about love, primarily because it mistakenly looks upon “separate being” as a sterile and absolute form of isolation, and not as the means to true “conjunction.” Individuals as individuals, according to this “old” view, are inadequate and incomplete beings who can be made whole only when the existential breach between self and other is closed—when self and other “adhere” to one another.⁴ This is precisely why Birkin calls the “old way of love” a “process of subservience,” and a “dreadful bondage,” for individuals who conform to the “old way” are expected to serve what is assumed to be the natural inadequacy of

⁴ Another reason why Lawrence has Birkin call the desire to “melt” and fuse (309) together the “old way” of love may be that it appears as early as Plato’s “Symposium,” where even here it is referred to as “this ancient need.” The story— particularly in Jowett’s translation (which Lawrence may have read)— is worth reading for clarifying the approach to love that Lawrence, throughout his life, so vehemently opposed. The teller of the tale in the dialogue is the character Aristophanes:

...primeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle; and he had four hands and the same number of feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely alike (521).... [I]n order to keep their insolence restrained Zeus decided to cut them in two.... [And love is therefore] the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, seeking

each other: they serve each other to make each other whole and complete. They must become locked together, in other words, if they are to become “all of one piece”—“flesh of my flesh,” as the saying goes—forming that “hot narrow intimacy” which Birkin finds so “abhorrent” (199). Thus “bondage,” it should be noted, is not for Lawrence the opposite of conjunction but a lower and debased form of it: it is not connection between individuals that Lawrence opposes but a particular kind of connection.

That Will Brangwen embraces this “old way of love,” that he believes that he and Anna are “all of one piece,” is clear from his continuous effort to make Anna “part of himself” (157), and to “have her fixed to him” (175). And as the narrative makes almost painfully explicit, this need to be bonded to Anna, to have her “come to him, to complete him” (166), is a direct result of his sense that as a separate and individual being he is a “fragment” and “defective” (174):

Did he not give her everything, was she not everything to him? And the shame was a bitter fire in him, that she was everything to him, that he had nothing but her. And then that she should taunt him with it, that he could not escape! The fire went black in his veins. For try as he might, he could not escape. She was everything to him, she was his life and his derivation. He depended on her. If she were taken away, he would collapse as a house from which the pillar is removed.

And she hated him, because he depended on her so utterly. He was horrible to her.... How he tortured himself, to be able to get away from her. But he could not. She was as the rock on which he stood, with deep, heaving

to make two one, and to heal the state of man. Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half (523).

And Aristophanes ends his story with the following words:

Suppose Hephaestus, with his instruments, to come to a pair who are lying side by side and say to them... “Do you desire to be wholly one...for if this is what you desire, I am ready to melt and fuse you together, so that being two you shall become one [?]... [T]here is not a man of them who when he heard the proposal would deny or would not acknowledge that this meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one instead of two, was the very expression of this ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one, and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love (523–524; emphasis added).

Birkin’s lament about the old way of love reads like a direct reply to this idea:

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. Rather the sex is that which remains in us of the mixed, the unresolved. And passion is the further separating of this mixture, that which is manly being taken into the being of the man, that which is womanly passing to the woman, till the two are clear and whole as angels, the admixture of sex in the highest sense surpassed, leaving two single beings constellated like two stars. (200–201)

And again:

Fusion, fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman and most men insist on, was it not nauseous and horrible anyhow, whether it was a fusion of the spirit or of the emotional body? (309)

water all round, and he unable to swim. He must take his stand on her, he must depend on her. (172–173)

Will sees separate being not as “pure existence”—I am using terms from “Manifesto” here—but as the negation of existence. Isolation is not “real liberty” but complete chaos, and the only way he sees fit to avoid such a primordial confusion is to be “confused” (again, from “Manifesto”) with the other, to “depend” upon her and to see her as “his life.”

This image of Will taking “his stand” on Anna conveys in a very precise and forceful way how indistinguishable the state of dependence is in Lawrence’s view from the act of oppression. Or to put the matter in a slightly different way, the image suggests how tyrannical the dependent individual can be toward those he or she depends upon, for this image of Will standing upon Anna in the midst of chaos is not only symbolic of his dependence upon her (his need for her support), but of his victory *over* her—as he is, rather distinctly, placing his feet upon the vanquished. His dependence on Anna, in other words, has destroyed her freedom: by making himself a slave to her (“she was everything to him”), he has, in turn, made her a slave to him.

Looking at this image of Will standing upon Anna, therefore, one can see a graphic illustration of Bakunin’s idea that the “slavery” of one individual (in this case, Will’s) can serve as an obstacle to the freedom of another individual. The image also captures some of the broader implications of Lawrence’s similar notion that the subservience of others is “a horrible drag on my freedom.” For Lawrence, subservience is clearly a form of domination, which explains why Will, even though a profoundly dependent man, is so often depicted as a predatory animal who wants to “drag” Anna “down” (172). In a scene shortly after he finds her dancing before the fire “in exultation beyond him,” for instance, Will is depicted as a “leopard” and as a “tiger,” hunting Anna as prey:

The dark, seething potency of him, the power of a creature that lies hidden and exerts its will to the destruction of the free-running creature, as the tiger lying in the darkness of the leaves steadily enforces the fall and the death of the light creatures that drink by the waterside in the morning, gradually began to take effect on her. Though he lay there in his darkness and did not move, yet she knew he lay waiting for her. She felt his will fastening on her and pulling her down, even whilst he was silent and obscure.

She found that, in all her outgoings and her incomings, he prevented her. Gradually she realized that she was being borne down by him, borne down by the clinging, heavy weight of him, that he was pulling her down as a leopard clings to a wild cow and exhausts her and pulls her down. (171–172)

It is important to recognize here that although Will’s desire to “have” Anna and “devour her at leisure” (172) may appear to be completely opposed to his earlier desire

to “pour out his heart’s blood to her” and to “offer himself to her, utterly” (144), it is in fact the same desire. Within the logic of this narrative, the desire to give blood and the desire to take blood, the need to sacrifice the Self and the need to kill the Other, have exactly the same sort of meaning: they are essentially the same need.

This point becomes much easier to see when we understand that what Lawrence is actually describing through this depiction of a leopard “fastening” onto a “free-running creature” and “pulling her down” is the very essence of the “old way of love,” the highly figurative rhetoric here being employed to emphasize the undercurrent of violence that informs the idea of love as a “process of subservience.” By acting like a leopard that “clings” to its victim, Will is acting as a lover who seeks “adherence” and “adhesion” with the other. By figuratively “fastening” on to Anna’s neck, he is establishing the kind of “bondage” that Lawrence (and Birkin) considers to be the central feature of the “old way of love,” where two individuals form “one piece” only through a process of bloody mutilation, and where the freedom of both, or even the possibility of their freedom, is “borne down” and utterly negated.

Will eventually does become free, however, but only after Anna finally succeeds in “pushing him off from her, pushing him away, breaking his fingers from their hold on her” (174). And only now that her husband has a “separate identity” with a “new, deeper freedom,” does she also become free: “He would insist no more, he would force her no more. He would force himself upon her no more. He would let go, relax, lapse, and what would be, should be.” Anna has her “final release” now that Will has finally developed a “free, separate, independent” self. She is free now that she is “free of him” (177).

The idea that freedom in a sexual relationship is reciprocal, that the freedom of one individual both determines and is determined by the freedom of the other individual, is also an important theme in *Women in Love*. But whereas in *The Rainbow* both the negative and the positive sides to this idea of reciprocity—that one can either constitute the freedom of the other with one’s own freedom, or destroy the other’s freedom with one’s own slavery—is illustrated through the one relationship of Will and Anna, in *Women in Love* the negative and positive aspects of reciprocity are split, respectively, between Birkin’s relationship with Hermione and his relationship with Ursula. Birkin cannot be free in his relationship with Hermione, for instance, because Hermione herself is never free: as the narrative discloses in some of the very first words used to describe her, she has a “strange mass of thoughts” from which “she was never allowed to escape” (15). And as we are soon to learn, the thoughts that imprison Hermione are precisely the same ideas about “old way of love” that so enslaved Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow*. Just as Will saw his separate and isolated self as “defective” and fragmentary, and just as he thought Anna would “complete him” by becoming “part of him,” so Hermione sees her own separate self as “deficient,” and thinks that Birkin will make her “whole.” This fundamental kind of dependence upon Birkin is perhaps the most salient feature of Hermione’s character and it is clearly conveyed through the

description of the terrible anxiety she experiences while waiting for Birkin to appear (ironically enough) at a wedding:

She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her.

And she wanted someone to close up this deficiency, to close it up for ever. She craved for Rupert Birkin. When he was there, she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole. For the rest of the time she was established on the sand, built over a chasm....

If only Birkin would form a close and abiding connexion with her, she would be safe during this fretful voyage of life. He could make her sound and triumphant, triumphant over the very angels of heaven. If only he would do it! But she was tortured with fear, with misgivings. (16–17)

This desperate need for Birkin goes far to explain Hermione's "strange desire" to "subserve him" and to "be his slave" (294). But also registered in this expression of profound dependence is an unmistakable design to dominate Birkin and to make him understand that "she was, for him, the highest" (17), for Hermione is, as Birkin suggests, the "Mater Dolorosa" who "By her very suffering and humility...bound her son with chains... [and] held him her everlasting prisoner" (200).⁵ Thus Hermione's idea of becoming "complete" not only requires a "connexion" with Birkin, but it also requires that Birkin assume a subordinate and thoroughly subservient role in her life. She sees Birkin serving as a kind of plug for the "chink in her armour," as something to "close up" her internal "void," and to "stop up" her "terrible gap," images that are obviously intended to convey an element of frustrated sexual desire on Hermione's part, but they go much further. They suggest how much Hermione's dependence on Birkin threatens his freedom, for the image of Birkin fitted within Hermione's void is the image of Birkin completely enclosed and contained by Hermione, encompassed by her in much the same way as a bung is enclosed by its cask, contained while it serves to contain. Hermione's desire to become "whole" and "complete," therefore, is ultimately a desire to negate any possibility of her own freedom, a task that she can accomplish only when Birkin is buried within her grave "deficiency," when he too is contained by the "void," as if he were no longer living.

The deadening effect that Hermione's dependence has on Birkin's freedom is encapsulated in another crucial image—a kind of tableau—that appears at the end of the wedding. Having spent the entire service standing "subjected" and wanting to "touch" Birkin, Hermione's "flare of recognition" is finally received, with the result that they leave the wedding together in the following manner:

⁵ The theme of a suffering woman who binds her sons with chains is also, of course, one of the central concerns of *Sons and Lovers*.

Birkin came with Hermione. She had a rapt, triumphant look, like the fallen angels restored, yet still subtly demoniacal, now she held Birkin by the arm. And he was expressionless, neutralised, possessed by her as if it were his fate, without question. (22)

Notice that the text does not simply claim that Hermione “held Birkin’s arm,” but that she “held Birkin *by* the arm,” which is a far more restricting and inextricable form of holding, a holding of Birkin’s entire self rather than just a part of his body. In fact the image of Hermione holding on to Birkin here has much the same significance as the image of Will standing upon Anna in *The Rainbow*, not only because Hermione, like Will, is overcome with a feeling of “drowning,” but also, and more importantly, because the image captures the point at which dependence and dominance intersect, each one becoming entirely indistinguishable from the other. Hermione, that is to say, obtains Birkin’s protection at the moment that she vanquishes or “neutralizes” him, holding him by the arm in an act of adherence that both grasps at safety and commands possession, a “demoniacal” act because her “triumph” is a violation of the sanctity of otherness, her own as well as his.

If this image of Hermione holding on to a neutralized Birkin bears comparison to Will standing upon a vanquished Anna, the highly charged image of Will as a beast of prey “pulling down the free-running creature” surely finds a parallel in *Women in Love* in the scene where Hermione attempts to kill Birkin with a heavy jewel stone. While the act which uncovers the underlying brutality of the “old way of love” receives a purely figurative rendering in *The Rainbow*, in *Women in Love* the act, while still conveyed in a highly rhetorical way, is nevertheless dramatized in completely human terms. The scene is often cited by Lawrence’s critics, but it demands to be quoted again, and at length:

Terrible shocks ran over her body, like shocks of electricity, as if many volts of electricity suddenly struck her down. She was aware of him sitting silently there, an unthinkable evil obstruction. Only this blotted out her mind, pressed out her very breathing, his silent, stooping back, the back of his head.

A terrible voluptuous thrill ran down her arms—she was going to know her voluptuous consummation. Her arms quivered and were strong, immeasurably and irresistibly strong. What delight, what delight in strength, what delirium of pleasure! She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last. It was coming! In utmost terror and agony, she knew it was upon her now, in extremity of bliss. Her hand closed on a blue, beautiful ball of lapis lazuli that stood on her desk for a paper-weight. She rolled it round in her hand as she rose silently. Her heart was a pure flame in her breast, she was purely unconscious in ecstasy. She moved towards

him and stood behind him for a moment in ecstasy. He, closed within the spell [of reading], remained motionless and unconscious.

Then swiftly, in a flame that drenched down her body like fluid lightning and gave her a perfect, unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction, she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head. But her fingers were in the way, and deadened the blow. Nevertheless, down went his head on the table on which his book lay, the stone slid aside and over his ear, it was one convulsion of pure bliss for her, lit up by the crushed pain of her fingers. (105)

This description of Hermione's attempted murder combines the rhetorical style of crucial scenes in both "The Prussian Officer" and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—for Hermione here is at once both Schöner, lunging to kill his officer in an attempt to find release, and Connie Chatterley, in the ecstatic throes of orgasm. Moreover, this identification of sex and murder is entirely appropriate to the central concerns of the narrative because it conveys Birkin's (and Lawrence's) conviction that "the old way of love" is a form of death. Thus by smashing the stone down upon Birkin's skull "with all her force," Hermione is finally and quite literally making a "connexion" with Birkin, a connection that is intended to put an absolute end to his freedom, as any idea must that considers love as a form of "bondage."

It is also entirely appropriate to this particular theme that Hermione crushes her own fingers during her attack. As a novelist, of course, Lawrence had to find some way to avoid the early death of his story's hero, and making Hermione's own hand deaden the "blow" of the stone obviously has a certain tactical importance for the narrative as a whole. And yet the fact that Hermione crushes her own fingers in the act of clouting Birkin has a substantial symbolic value in the novel as well, for the injury that Hermione simultaneously causes to both herself and Birkin graphically illustrates Birkin's own idea that the old way of love depends on a "horrible merging," a violation of that state where "The man has his pure freedom, the woman hers" (201). In the same way, having Hermione and Birkin merged by injury serves to underscore Lawrence's notion that a man and a woman can become "all of one piece"—as he writes in "Manifesto"—only through a process of mutilation, which is clearly one of the reasons why he identifies the notion not simply as "untrue" but as "painfully untrue."

Indeed having both Hermione and Birkin injured in this violent connection not only serves to suggest, once again, that the destruction of the other is inseparable from the destruction of the self, but also that Hermione's lack of liberty is ultimately inseparable from the lack of liberty of those around her, that her own enslavement enslaves others. As Ursula will note much later in the narrative, Hermione has a "horrible desire to prostrate herself before a man," but only before a man who "worshipped her...and admitted her as the supreme thing" (295). This is clearly the "process of subservience" that Hermione tries to achieve by attacking Birkin in her boudoir, the mutual negation of their freedom being embodied by the mutual injury that she causes. Not surprisingly,

the final result of this violent connection is not the productive kind of separation and isolation that would lead them to a “mystic conjunction” (152), but a wholly negative separation that inevitably leads them to “a complete estrangement” (109).

To ask, moreover, why Birkin succeeds in being free with Ursula but fails with Hermione is to draw close to the point at which Lawrence’s social and sexual politics explicitly meet. On the surface of the story there appears to be little reason why Birkin and Ursula should succeed together, since for much of the narrative Ursula seems to uphold precisely the same ideas about love that Hermione does, believing that Birkin “must be quaffed to the dregs by her” and that “she in return would be his humble slave—whether he wanted it or not” (265). A great deal of the interaction between Birkin and Ursula, for at least the first half of the narrative, is taken up with arguing over this very idea, with Birkin, of course, trying to disabuse her of it.

In fact, verbal conflict—argumentation—plays a crucial role in *Women in Love*, particularly where Birkin’s relationships with women are concerned, and a very brief digression on the matter, I think, will help to shed some more light on Lawrence’s ideas about the reciprocal nature of freedom. One of the key indications that Birkin is at any time freer with Ursula than he is with Hermione is the different way in which he behaves in his respective conflicts with these women. In his arguments with Hermione, Birkin is often beside himself with anger, the terms “brutal,” “cruel,” “vindictive” and “violent” being consistently employed to describe his way of reacting to her. His response to Hermione’s idea of going to Florence, for instance, is typical of the “harsh” and “insistent” (104) pattern of behaviour he seems to fall into when he is in her presence:

“What takes you to Florence?”

“I don’t know,” said Hermione slowly. Then she looked at him with her slow, heavy gaze. “Barnes is starting his school of aesthetics, and Olandese is going to have a set of discourses on the Italian national policy—”

“Both rubbish,” he said.

“No, I don’t think so,” said Hermione.

“Which do you admire then?”

“I admire both. Barnes is a pioneer.—And then I am interested in Italy, in her coming to national consciousness.”

“I wish she’d come to something different from national consciousness, then,” said Birkin. “I hate Italy and her national rant. —And I think Barnes is an amateur.” (298)

What is important here is not so much what Birkin says (though his tempt for social reformers and social reform is completely consistent with Lawrence’s own), but the manner in which he says it. Birkin is clearly being unreasonable, and Ursula’s perception of him during this altercation “Birkin was white, his eye glowed as if he

were in a fever, he was far too overwrought” (299)—stresses the lack of control he has over himself while he is in this kind of a rage. Indeed, as long as Birkin stays in this state of hostility he is, in a way, connected to Hermione and under her control. Thus, directly after Birkin’s outburst over Hermione’s intended trip to Italy the narrative observes that:

Hermione was silent for some moments, in a state of hostility. But yet, she had got Birkin back again into her world! How subtle her influence was, she seemed to start his irritable attention into her direction exclusively, in one minute. He was her creature. (298)

Here is Hermione taking “possession” of and holding Birkin once again. She is united with him in a mutual state of hostility, adhering to him through a state of “irritable attention.” By arguing with Hermione, therefore, Birkin does not simply lose the power of self-determination, but he surrenders it, and he does so, ironically, at the very moment that he moves in to attack.

By contrast, Birkin’s manner of arguing with Ursula is consistently calm rather than feverish, and reasonable as opposed to “overwrought.” He remains distinctly himself in his arguments with Ursula, and his words are clearly intended to inform rather than to destroy. Take, for example, the argument Birkin and Ursula have in the “Mino” chapter over the relationship between love and freedom:

“But love is freedom,” [Ursula] declared.

“Don’t cant to me,” he replied. “Love is a direction which excludes all other directions. It’s a freedom together, if you like.

“No,” she said, “love includes everything.”

“Sentimental cant,” he replied. “You want the state of chaos, that’s all.... [I]f you enter into a pure unison, it is irrevocable, and it is never pure till it is irrevocable. And when it is irrevocable, it is one way, like the path of a star.”

“Ha!” she cried bitterly. “It is the old dead morality.”

“No,” he said, “it is the law of creation. One is committed. One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other—for ever. But it is not selfless—it is a maintaining of the self in the mystic balance and integrity— like a star balanced with another star.”

“I don’t trust you when you drag in the stars,” she said. “If you were quite true, it wouldn’t be necessary to be so far-fetched.”

“Don’t trust me then,” he said, angry. “It is enough that I trust myself.” (152)

Despite the fact that Birkin is “angry” with Ursula, he is clearly not feverish, and he is not locked into the contest for dominance that characterizes so much of his interaction with Hermione. Indeed, although Birkin calls Ursula’s idea “cant” in much the same way that he uses the word “rubbish” with Hermione, he is far less insistent with Ursula, and far more self-composed, his primary intention being to make his own position clear rather than to silence his opposition. His professed desire not to “hurt anybody or influence anybody” (257) is thus fulfilled with Ursula in a way that it certainly is not fulfilled with Hermione. In fact, this expressed indifference toward Ursula’s “trust”—by which is meant her willingness to believe in what he says—suggests a healthy degree of separation from Ursula, particularly as it follows after two instances in which he tells her directly, as he is never able to tell Hermione, to “leave me alone” (148).⁶

Nowhere, however, is the fact of Birkin and Ursula’s separation from each other more clearly demonstrated—demonstrated both to Birkin and Ursula themselves and to the reader—than in the “crisis of war” that arises between them in the chapter “Excuse.” This particular conflict bears some remarkable similarities to the crisis between Birkin and Hermione in Hermione’s boudoir, similarities that are worth noting, as they serve to highlight the essential differences between the two relationships. Jewel stones, for instance, play a prominent role in both conflicts, the lapis lazuli that Hermione “rolled...round in her hand” becoming the (“secondhand”) opal, sapphire and topaz rings that “remained...shut in [Ursula’s] hand.”

Fingers also play a prominent role in both scenes, particularly in their relation to stones. Ursula puts the jewel stones on her fingers (“her quivering, so sensitive fingers,” as Birkin notices), while Hermione, much to her misfortune, also puts a jewel stone on her fingers, crushing them in a symbolic display of the negation that her idea of love entails. Ursula, however, also pulls the rings from her fingers, and in an act that more or less parallels Hermione’s smashing of Birkin’s skull, she throws them at him:

an ugly, malevolent look came over her face, she pulled the rings from her fingers, and tossed them at him. One touched his face, the others hit his coat, and they scattered to the mud.... With which she walked away, desultorily, up the road. (309)

Whereas Hermione casts one large, heavy stone at Birkin, Ursula casts several light stones, one touching his face in a physically harmless replay of the lapis lazuli that crashes down upon the back of his head. Most significant here, however, is the fact that at the height of the conflict Ursula frees her fingers from the stones whereas Hermione does not, for the difference between crushed and freed fingers suggests the

⁶ See also page 146, where Birkin has just declared that “there is no love”:

Ursula was given over to this statement for some moments. Then she half rose from her chair, saying, in a final, repellant voice:

“Then let me go home—what am I doing here—!”

“There is the door,” he said. “You are a free agent.”

difference between the attempt to “merge” and fuse with Birkin and the attempt to separate from him. That is, Hermione uses the stone in an attempt to destroy the fact of Birkin’s otherness, to become “whole” and “complete” with him; Ursula, however, uses the stones not in an attempt to destroy Birkin’s otherness but to substantiate it—by tossing the rings at him she is punctuating her demand that: “you can go your way, and I’ll go mine” (308), a declaration of their mutual freedom that echoes Birkin’s previous call to “leave me alone.”

Ursula may walk “desultorily” away from Birkin at this point, but she soon “desultorily” returns to him (309), having proven, once and for all, that she wants neither to quaff Birkin nor to be his “slave.” And it is with her return as a fully independent being that both characters acquire a new kind of freedom, for Birkin now feels “the life [flow] through him as from some new fountain” (311), and Ursula, having become an “essential new being,” is “liberated into perfection” (319) and “left quite free...free in complete ease” (314). They are now free because they are equally free, acting, in Michael Bakunin’s words, as the “necessary condition and confirmation” of each other’s liberty. Or in the more highly specialized vocabulary of the novel itself, they can now “give each other this starequilibrium which alone is freedom” (319). This freedom, Birkin repeatedly claims, is a “freedom *together*”—which he calls a “mystic conjunction”—and it serves as the foundation, he suggests, for any true human society:

“I do think,” he said, “that the world is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people—a bond. And the immediate bond is between man and woman.” (152)

Chapter Four: Marriage and the Established Order

Is marriage a great help to the fulfilment of man and woman, or is it a frustration? It is a very important question indeed, and every man and woman must answer it. (LCL 322)

To align Lawrence with anarchism under the subject of marriage, as I propose to do, may seem at first glance to be a rather unlikely enterprise, doomed from the start for reasons far too significant to be overlooked or treated lightly. One of these reasons, a critic might suggest, is the fact that while marriage is obviously one of Lawrence's most urgent and central concerns—reaching, as it does, into almost every corner of his written work —marriage is at best of only marginal interest to anarchism, a subject infrequently mentioned by anarchists themselves and almost always ignored by the historians of libertarian ideas.¹ Moreover, my critic might continue, while marriage is obviously a political institution, Lawrence deals with the subject in what seems to be an utterly de-politicized way, at least in the sense that his concern with marriage is consistently fleshed-out in almost exclusively personal (as opposed to political) terms. Or to put the matter in a slightly different way, Lawrence's interest in what he calls the “whole of the relationship between man and woman” (*P* 194) appears to lie completely outside the ken of any anarchist concerns, particularly outside that critique of State government so central to everything that anarchism upholds.

My critic might also point out, perhaps with no less justification, that not only is Lawrence's interest in marriage overwhelmingly greater than any anarchist's, but that he often appears to praise this tradition which anarchism, when it deals with the subject at all, so clearly and consistently reviles. One finds an explicit defense of marriage, for instance, in Lawrence's essay “A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*” where Lawrence not only declares that marriage is “sacred and inviolable,” but states that it “has given man the best of his freedom” (*LCL* 321). Is this view of marriage not utterly at odds with Emma Goldman's claim that marriage is a “poor little State and Church-begotten weed” (236)? Is it not also a clear contradiction of Godwin's notion that the “institution of marriage” is a “system of fraud” in which “liberty and hope are equally strangers” (762, 764)? How can Lawrence, who claims that “Marriage is the

¹ Of all the introductions to and histories of anarchism that I am aware of, only Marshall (1992) attends to the question of marriage in any more than a superficial way.

clue to human life" (*LCL* 323), be connected in any positive way with a tradition that views the "system of marriage" as a social "evil" and argues for its "abolition" (Godwin 763, 764)?²

Let me begin answering these questions by suggesting that neither Lawrence's support for marriage nor anarchism's rejection of it are quite what they first appear to be, the real difference between them being far more a matter of rhetoric than of ideas. What Godwin opposes, for instance, is not marriage in itself but rather a particular kind of marriage: "that *species* of marriage," he writes, "in which there is no room for repentance" (764; emphasis added). It is not the idea of attachment that Godwin repudiates, therefore, but the "vow of eternal attachment" (762)—the legal and religious dictate that forces a couple to remain together even after they realize (if and when they do) that their "first crude opinion of each other" was a "delusion" (762). Thus for Godwin what keeps a couple together must not be, as it so often is, an ongoing act of submission to an external and impersonal law, but rather a personal choice, where "each man would select for himself a partner to whom he will adhere as long as that adherence shall continue to be the choice of both parties" (763). "Certainly no ties ought to be imposed upon either party," Godwin writes, "preventing them from quitting the attachment, whenever their judgment directs them to quit it" (764).

Bakunin also articulates a concept of marriage without external ties, calling for the "Abolition not of the natural but of the legal family, based on civil law and ownership." This "natural family," according to Bakunin, will evolve from a system of marriage in which:

Religious and civil marriage are replaced by free marriage. Two adult individuals of opposite sex have the right to unite and separate in accordance with their desires and mutual interests and the promptings of their hearts, nor does society have the right either to prevent their union or to hold them against their will. (Lehning 83)

Thus for Bakunin, just as for Godwin, the basis of a true marriage is individual rather than social, at least in the sense that a marriage should be constituted by the "promptings of the heart" rather than by the demands of the culture. This is still a belief in marriage, therefore, but in its deinstitutionalized form, "free" because removed from those restrictions of church and state which "tie" individuals and "hold them against their will." Thus "attachment" should not be the product of duty, but a function of natural "desire." A couple's obligations extend only to each other—or more precisely, to their "mutual interests"—and not, as established convention would have it, to the abstract and mediating principles of civil and religious law.

Lawrence's own view of marriage is remarkably consistent with the anarchistic view, despite his claim in "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*" that marriage is the Christian Church's "greatest contribution to the social life of man." Indeed, one has to be

² Oscar Wilde also sees marriage as a "legal restraint" and calls for its "abolition," claiming that "marriage in its present form must disappear" (266).

careful with regard to what Lawrence actually means by the term “Christianity” in this essay, for a close look at the text will show that he is not discussing anything that resembles the Church of his own day, but rather what he calls the “Old Church,” which he locates somewhere very near Christianity’s pagan roots. Correspondingly, the type of marriage that Lawrence advocates is not what is conventionally conceived of as marriage but is, as Lawrence himself observes, only “something like it” (322). In fact the entire basis for attachment in the type of marriage that Lawrence has in mind is what he calls a “correspondence” or a “conjunction” of “blood” (324), a couple being brought and kept together not by external ties—formulated and imposed by the Church—but by “blood-passion and blood-desire” (326). Hence true marriage, Lawrence declares, is a “communion of the two blood-streams, this, and nothing else” (325).

This notion of marriage very clearly rejects conventional marriage because it rejects the idea of negotiating a relationship through an external structure of rules and restrictions. Thus for Lawrence marriage should not be founded on cultural laws, but on what he calls the “greater laws,” by which he means “the cosmic rhythms which should sway life always.” And what these “greater laws” allow for, however paradoxically, is a more personal—or, given Lawrence’s frequent rejection of the “personal,” a more individualized—basis for marriage: they allow for an “immediate contact” (328) between a man and a woman, which for Lawrence, just as for Godwin and Bakunin, is the essence of marriage. Hence it is the “vital connection” between a man and a woman, Lawrence writes elsewhere, which is “the mystery of marriage” (*K* 163, 164).

There is more to be said about the anarchistic current in Lawrence’s “A Propos” essay and I will return to it shortly. For the moment, however, I want to point out that Lawrence’s sympathy with the concept of a “free marriage,” as well as his condemnation of marriage that is not free, can be found in many areas of his written work. Outlining his plan for a free community in a letter to Dr. David Eder, for instance, Lawrence’s “Second Law” (the “First Law” being that “There shall be no laws”) stipulated that all individuals will have “the right to mate freely” and that “every man and woman shall have this, irrespective of any other claim than that of lifeness” (*3L* 353). This, as Bakunin would say, is the right to unite according to the “promptings” of one’s heart, desire for both Lawrence and Bakunin having a claim to an individual’s actions that exists prior to conventional law, prior to what Lawrence, in his “Study of Thomas MARRIAGE AND THE ESTABLISHED ORDER 73 Hardy,” calls the “smaller system of morality”—“pathetic, almost ridiculous”—that is “grasped and formulated by the human consciousness” (*Hardy* 29).

The notion of a free marriage also surfaces in Lawrence’s fiction. In *Women in Love*, for instance, Birkin expresses the idea in a discussion about marriage with Will Brangwen. In response to Brangwen’s claim that he doesn’t want his daughter, Ursula, to be “in too big a hurry” to get married because “It’s no good looking round afterwards, when it’s too late,” Birkin replies that: “it need never be too late...as far as that goes’.” “If one repents being married,” Birkin claims, much to Brangwen’s annoyance, “the marriage is at an end” (256).

The idea that a marriage is “at an end” once the desire to be married is lost—once the inner attachment is broken—provides an underlying theme to Lawrence’s early novel *The Trespasser*, where the narrator’s sympathies are clearly with Siegmund as he departs from his passionless marriage (as well as from his family) in an attempt to find a vital connection elsewhere. Similarly, Connie Chatterley in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (a work which I discuss below) is depicted as acting correctly—acting, that is to say, in accordance with “the morality of life, the greater morality” (*Hardy* 30)—when she leaves her passionless marriage, severing the legal attachment she has with Sir Clifford in order to fulfill the natural and vital connection she has with Oliver Mellors. Aaron Sisson in *Aaron’s Rod* also walks out of his marriage, claiming, to the outrage of Sir William and Lady Franks (as well as to some of Lawrence’s critics),³ that breaking his legal ties to his wife and family was part of a “natural process”:

“Then upon what grounds did you abandon your family?...

“There were no grounds,” said Aaron. “No, there weren’t. I just left them.”

“Mere caprice?”

“If it’s a caprice to be begotten—and a caprice to be born—and a caprice to die—then that was a caprice, for it was the same.”

“Like birth or death?—I don’t follow.”

“It happened to me: as birth happened to me once—and death will happen. It was a sort of death too: or a sort of birth. But as undeniable as either. And without any more grounds.”

The old, tremulous man, and the young man, were watching one another.

“A natural event,” said Sir William.

“A natural event,” said Aaron. (145)

However “heartless” and “selfish” and “wicked” this behaviour appears to Lady Franks (145–146), Aaron’s abandonment of his wife and family clearly has Lawrence’s sanction: Aaron’s inability to find “reasons” for his departure, his denial that there were any “grounds” for it or that he was ever acting in accordance with some sort of scheme, all serve to suggest that Aaron’s behaviour is rooted in something quite different from

³ See Leavis on this episode in *Aaron’s Rod* (1955:38): “For to insist that the relation between a man and a woman is the supremely important one, to insist that the marriage for life is the relation necessary for the fulfilment of the “deeper desires,” and yet to be to this tune blank about the family—it is surely very odd.” This is, according to Leavis, “a significant default of imagination” in Lawrence. Yet Leavis seems to overlook how often this “default” appears in Lawrence’s fiction, nor does he take into account that the need to abandon one’s family when prompted by greater necessities played an important role in the circumstances of Lawrence’s own life. Frieda, of course, abandoned her family when she chose to marry Lawrence. The theme of abandonment was already present in Lawrence’s fiction before he met Frieda, of course, but it clearly takes root in the subsequent facts of his own life.

a conscious morality, from any kind of obedience to cultural decrees. By fitting his own departure within the context of birth and death, he is drawing attention, however unwittingly, to the fact that his life is governed by the “greater laws,” by “life-necessity.”⁴

Lady Franks’ condemnation of Aaron—aristocrats so often being the voice of the established order in Lawrence’s work—underscores just how much living in accordance with the “greater laws” will bring one into opposition to what Lawrence elsewhere calls “the established system of human government and morality” (*Hardy* 29). Lady Franks’ desire to “‘make [Aaron] very frightened indeed, so that you went back humbly to your wife and family’” (146), is the desire to de-naturalize Aaron, to make his behaviour conform to the narrow and rigid conventions of social acceptability. And a socialized Aaron is bound to be attached not just to his wife and family—humbly, and against his will—but attached also, and entirely by extension, to a system of “human government”—attached to that “established world” which Lawrence declared himself “hostile, hostile, hostile” to, and which he tried so desperately hard to “resist” (*2L* 328).⁵

What I hope is becoming clear at this point is that the subject of marriage is not irrelevant to Lawrence’s overall critique of “human government” but exists more or less at the centre of it. It is also important to note here that this particular connection Lawrence makes between conventional marriage and subservience to human government begins to suggest why he can be connected to anarchism in a way that many other people who believe in “free marriage” cannot be. Indeed, the relationship between marriage and the State—the “established order”—is a leading concern in the “A Propos” essay, where Lawrence explicitly claims that the “freedom” which marriage gives to individuals, far from being a generalized and abstract sort of freedom, is in fact a freedom from the intrusive power of the State: break the “marriage bond,” Lawrence warns, “and you will have to go back to the overwhelming dominance of the State.” Hence, according to Lawrence:

There are States where the family is the woman: or there have been. There are States where the family hardly exists, priest States where the priestly control is everything, even functioning as family control. Then there is the Soviet State, where again family is not supposed to exist, and the State

⁴ Stirner, as usual, gives the rejection of marriage its most extreme expression:

“the family” is a sacred idea, which the individual must never offend against.—And this family internalized and desensualized into a thought, a conception, now ranks as the “sacred”, whose despotism is tenfold more grievous because it makes a racket in my conscience. This despotism is broken when the conception, family, also becomes nothing to me...(81). [E]goism...is hostile to the family.... They [egoists] are not thrust out, but thrust themselves out, prizing their passion, their willfulness, higher than the bond of the family. (196)

Lawrence is less direct than this, of course, but his attitude toward the family is essentially the same.

⁵ The entire passage of Lawrence’s letter is worth quoting:

But you can’t imagine how it wears on one, having at every moment to resist this established world, and to know its unconscious hostility. For I am hostile, hostile, hostile to all that is, in our public and national life. I want to destroy it.

controls every individual direct, mechanically, as the great religious States, such as early Egypt, may have controlled every individual direct, through priestly surveillance and ritual.

Now the question is, do we want to go back, or forward, to any of these forms of State control? ...For my part, I have to say NO! every time. (LCL 321)

An “immediate contact” between individuals, Lawrence suggests, is the only effective way of avoiding a situation where “the State controls every individual direct.” In fact, what Lawrence is ultimately saying in this passage is that when no “vital connection” exists between individuals, then they have no alternative but to form a fundamentally dehumanizing connection with the prevailing political structure, whatever it happens to be. In the absence of an “immediate contact” with each other, that is to say, individuals, whatever else they might think they are doing, are not marrying each other so much as they are marrying the State. This, I suggest, is what Lawrence meant fourteen years earlier when he wrote (emphatically) to Bertrand Russell: “*Completeness is in marriage*. But state marriage is a *lie*” (*D.H. Lawrence’s Letters to Bertrand Russell* 90).

The distinction that Lawrence makes between the type of marriage that is a vital and immediate connection between two individuals and the type of marriage that is a connection between an individual and a social system underlies his distinction between a marriage that is a “fulfilment” and a marriage that is simply a “frustration.” A major and frequent theme in Lawrence’s fiction is that a successful marriage necessarily requires a rejection of the established order, just as frustration in a marriage involves an acceptance of it. In *Women in Love*, for example, it is immediately after Birkin and Ursula experience a conjunction of the blood—which the text calls their “intolerable accession into being” (314)—that they start to divorce themselves altogether from conventional society: they “drop” their “jobs,” they plan to “wander” (315) and they begin considering life in a new society “where we can be free” (316). They seek, in other words, to be completely “disinherited” from the established world, as they soon begin to discuss:

“And we will wander about on the face of the earth,” [Birkin] said, “and we’ll look at the world beyond just this bit.”

There was a long silence. Her face was radiant like gold as she sat thinking.

“I don’t want to inherit the earth,” she said. “I don’t want to inherit anything.”

He closed his hand over hers.

“Neither do I. I want to be disinherited.”

She clasped his fingers closely.

“We won’t care about anything,” she said.

He sat still and laughed.

“And we’ll be married, and have done with them,” she added.

—Again he laughed.

“It’s one way of getting rid of everything,” she said, “to get married.”

“And one way of accepting the whole world,” he added.

“A whole other world, yes,” she said happily. (362)

The idea that through marriage Birkin and Ursula will be able to “rid” themselves of the established world (and accept a “whole other” one), clearly conveys Lawrence’s notion that true marriage has a radical power to dissociate individuals from the “overwhelming dominance of the State.” It is a view of marriage, moreover, that stands in stark contrast to Gerald’s sense of what a marriage entails:

Marriage was like a doom to him.... —But he would not make any pure relationship with any other soul. He could not. Marriage was not the committing of himself into a relationship with Gudrun. It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world, he would accept the established order, in which he did not livingly believe, and then he would retreat to the underworld for his life. (353)

Lacking the ability to make a “pure relationship” with “any other soul,” Gerald must commit himself to the “established order.” His principle attachment will not be to Gudrun, therefore, but to the conventional world—an act of contemptibly meek proportions (viewed, at least, from Lawrence’s perspective) that will guarantee inheritance of that world which Birkin and Ursula are so eager to reject. By using marriage to rid themselves of the established order, Birkin and Ursula experience a certain, if qualified, “fulfilment” in marriage. By seeing marriage as a means to reinforcing his connection with the established order, Gerald finds only frustration in his relationship with Gudrun, and, in the end, disaster.

This distinction between marriage as a connection to the established order and marriage as a complete dissociation from it—marriage as a “frustration” and marriage as a “fulfilment”—plays an important role in *Sons and Lovers*, particularly in its portrait of the relationships that William and Paul have with women. That William’s marriage is destined to be a commitment to the “established world” rather than a “vital connection” to another human being is clear from the fact that he remains determined to marry Lily Western even after any vital connection he may have had with her is lost. Thus the word “hatred” is employed on a number of occasions to describe how he comes to feel about his betrothed (159, 161, 162, 163), just as the term “misery” is often used to describe his appearance when he is in her company. But even after realizing that his “first crude opinion” of Lily was a “delusion”—Godwin’s terms are entirely appropriate here—William nevertheless forces himself to stay with her, dutifully fulfilling his plan

to marry. This tension between William's natural desire to break the engagement and his sense of a social obligation to maintain it becomes clear in a conversation he has at home with his mother:

"You know, mother," he said, when he was alone with her at night, "she's no idea of money, and she's so wessel-brained.... And she wants to get married—And I think myself we might as well get married next year. But at this rate—!"

"A fine mess of a marriage it would be," replied his mother. "I should consider it again, my boy."

"Oh well—I've gone too far to break off now," he said. "And so I shall get married as soon as I can."

.....

He leaned with his back against the side of the chimney piece, his hands in his pockets. He was a big, raw-boned man, who looked as if he would go to the world's end, if he wanted to. But she saw the despair on his face.

"I couldn't give her up now," he said. (161–162)

The fact that during this conversation William repeats several times, " 'I can't give her up now,' " has led one critic to claim, correctly, I believe, that not only is William actually uttering "the language of sexuality, which was not allowed any other language then," but that William insists on remaining with Lily because "the code will not let him abandon a woman that he has 'ruined'" (Black 1992:52–53). In other words, by adhering to such a "code" William is submitting to the "smaller morality" of the established world, and marriage, as a result, becomes as much a doom for him as it is for Gerald Crich.

Perhaps a deeper insight into this aspect of *Sons and Lovers* can be gained by asking what might have attracted William to Lily in the first place. In this regard, Michael Black's observation that William "may have been seduced by her flagrant sexual display" (1992:52) will likely prove to be unhelpful, not simply because little textual evidence, if any, exists to support the claim, but because such an interpretation tends to gloss over the broader social pressures that clearly inform William's behaviour. Throughout his adult life, that is to say, William demonstrates a strong resolve to enter into and be accepted by the established order, to become "swanky" and a "great gun," and to "associate with men far above his Bestwood friends in station" (115). The letter William writes to his mother from London, for instance, plainly conveys how pleased he is with the fact that he is becoming a "gentleman":

Imagine your son seated on an ancient oak chair, with a latest pattern electric lamp in front of him, on the table, writing to you. He is wearing evening clothes, and the gold studs you gave him for his 21st, and he thinks

no end of himself. He only wishes you could see him. Solomon in all his glory must have felt dowdy in comparison. (115–116)

William's acknowledgement that he "thinks no end of himself" may suggest a kind of ironic distance from his own situation, but he is obviously proud of the surrounding signs of his social success: electricity, fine furniture, fancy dress, gold. Lawrence was later to vilify people who "derive" their nature from their own "accoutrements" (*RDP* 152), and William, taking stock of himself by looking to objects that he knows other people will admire, is clearly becoming such a person.⁶

William's relationship with Lily is an integral part of his plan to be accepted as a member of the established world, for his central attraction to her, as Mrs Morel notices, is the social impact made by her elegance and her "resplendent clothes" (142). It is not her "flagrant sexual display" that seduces William, therefore, so much as her flagrant social display, for her appearance as a "lady" ("quite young, and a lady" (116); "William arrived with a lady"; "William presented the lady" (143)) serves to confirm his own new-found status as a "gentleman." William is at times bitterly critical of Lily's "*blessed* airs" (146), her tendency to "show herself off" (163) and her empty-headed interest in "frocks and how people admire her" (161), but he exploits this interest to assuage his own, identical, need for public admiration and acceptance:

"if you saw her, mother, you would know how I feel. Tall, and elegant, with the clearest of clear transparent olive complexions, hair as black as jet, and such grey eyes, bright, mocking, like lights on water at night.... And she dresses as well as any woman in London. I tell you your son doesn't half put his head up, when he goes walking down Piccadilly with her." (116)

Wondering if he "did not go walking down Piccadilly with an elegant figure and fine clothes, rather than with a woman who was near to him" (116), Mrs Morel clearly recognizes William's proclivity to use his relationship not as a means to self-fulfillment, but simply as a symbol of his social status. That is, while his exhausting attempt to maintain his attachment to Lily— "All his strength and money went in keeping this girl" (148)— clearly leads to his physical debilitation and premature death, William's real commitment is not so much to Lily the person as it is to the "lady" that other people immediately (and rather incorrectly) perceive her to be. What marriage means to William, therefore, is not a "vital connection" to another human being, but the

⁶ "When is a man not a man?" Lawrence will ask in later years. And he will answer: "When he's a gentleman" (*Poems* 830). William's life is a tragic and extreme example of what Lawrence means by this. For a more strident expression of the idea, see the poem "Are You Pining?" (*Poems* 774):

Aren't you pining to be classy, superior, "upper"? Oh you mangy hound, go to hell!

The lines contain a theme that runs almost from the beginning of Lawrence's writing career to the very end of it: namely, that those who try to be more than what they are inevitably end up being less.

fulfilment of a role in the established order— going to the theatre, for instance, “like great swells” (142).

On the other hand, Paul Morel’s determination “not to marry unless he could feel strong in the joy of it” (322) indicates a very different approach to marriage from his older brother’s stubborn betrothal to a woman he no longer even likes. One idea (among many others) that Lawrence illustrates through Paul’s relationships with women is just how much the demand for “joy” in a marriage—I take “joy” to be an early formulation of “blood desire”—tends to put Paul outside the established order and often in conflict with it. Whereas William attempts to meet certain social expectations through marriage, and does so by putting duty before desire (“He stuck to what he had done” (162)), Paul’s search for “joy” in a relationship with a woman leads him instead to place desire over duty, with the established order becoming an obstacle, even a threat, to this search. The underlying tension between Paul and the established order clearly emerges in a conversation that he has with Clara about why he left Miriam:

Clara walked moodily beside him.

“Why,” she asked at length, in a rather jarring tone, “did you leave Miriam?”

“Because I wanted to leave her,” he said.

“Why?” “Because I didn’t want to go on with her. And I didn’t want to marry.”...

“But you have really been going with her for some time?”

“Yes”

“And now you don’t want any more of her?”

“No. I know it’s no good.” She pondered again.

“Don’t you think you’ve treated her rather badly?” she asked.

“Yes! I ought to have dropped it years back. But it would have been no good going on. Two wrongs don’t make a right.” (351–352)

Clara’s line of questioning here is far more accusatory than it is inquisitive: she is not so much asking Paul if he thinks he has treated Miriam “rather badly” so much as telling him that he has. And in doing so Clara fills a role very similar to Lady Franks’ in *Aaron’s Rod*, uttering the values of duty and obligation—the “little morality”—that support and sustain and essentially comprise the established world. Paul, however, is just as defiant as Aaron Sisson is, emphatically claiming that his own desires (“‘Because I *wanted* to leave her’”) take precedence over any question of social duty. Such defiance, in fact, is part of Paul’s refusal to “sacrifice himself in a marriage he did not want” (322), and it represents a complete reversal of William’s determination to go through with a marriage simply because “‘I’ve gone too far to break off now’” (161). Paul’s

commitment, in other words, is clearly not to society, but to the “promptings” of his heart.

Perhaps an even more explicit example of Paul’s rejection of that same established order which William so readily embraced is conveyed through the episode in which Paul and Clara—a married woman—walk together along the muddy banks of the Trent. The two characters laugh together about their amorous affair: about each feeling like a “criminal,” about being “sinners,” and about their “guiltiness.” But the true nature of Paul’s defiance of the established world comes sharply into focus only when he returns home and has to field questions from his fretting mother:

“You are late!” she said, looking at him.

His eyes were shining, his face seemed to glow. He smiled to her.

“Yes—I’ve been down Clifton Grove with Clara.”

His mother looked at him again.

“But won’t people talk?” she said.

“Why? They know she’s a suffragette and so on. And what if they do talk!”

“Of course there may be nothing wrong in it,” said his mother. “But you know what folk are, and if once she gets talked about—”

“Well, I can’t help it. Their jaw isn’t so almighty important, after all.” (358)

To understand the full force of what Paul is rejecting here one has to interpret his words “‘Their jaw isn’t so mighty important’” within the context, once again, that William’s behaviour provides. When William is out on the streets of London, “walking down Piccadilly,” he is so highly conscious of public opinion that even a trip to the theatre, complete with “resplendent” costume, takes on the contours of a public performance. Even when William is alone at his writing desk—as we have seen—he is acutely aware of an audience, of being looked upon and admired as he plays the essentially public role of a “gentleman.” It is this need for public validation, this commitment to purely social values, that Paul utterly discards when he claims that public opinion “isn’t so almighty important.” And his attitude is subtly reflected by the fact that he has just returned home from having walked off “the public path” (355) with Clara—in complete contrast to the city streets that William prefers and which he so conspicuously walks down with Lily. By committing himself to desire instead of to duty, Paul necessarily commits himself to a path other than the public one—the public path, that is to say, that commands him to “give life” in a relationship “by denying his own” (463).

If the established world is at the center of William’s relationship with Lily, the established world is pushed to the margins of Paul’s relationship with both Clara and Miriam, which explains why Paul can leave these women when his “vital connection” to

them is broken.⁷ It is also one reason, among others, why Paul is pictured outside the “faintly humming, glowing town” at the novel’s end: he is near despair over the death of his mother, but he is symbolically removed, auspiciously so, from the established world and the overwhelming dominance that it represents. The scene is hardly an uplifting one, that is to say, but Paul is at least alive, and although he still lacks a meaningful relationship with a woman, he is also uncompromised.⁸

The difference between marriage as a commitment to the established order and marriage as a dissociation from it also supplies a key theme to *The Rainbow*. In this novel, however, both the commitment to and the dissociation from the established order are illustrated not through the separate relationships of two central characters, as it is in *Sons and Lovers*, but through the single relationship of Anton and Ursula. That is, although the relationship of Anton and Ursula ultimately ends in frustration and failure, it also has its moments of fulfillment. And it is during these fulfilling moments that the text creates a very clear distinction between the couple and the established world that their vital connection inherently and necessarily opposes. In the period just after their first “superb consummation” (417), for instance, Ursula senses just how separate from the established world that she and Anton have become:

Her whole soul was implicated with Skrebensky—not the young man of the world, but the undifferentiated man he was. She was perfectly sure of herself, perfectly strong, stronger than all the world. The world existed only in a secondary sense:—she existed supremely.... They were both absolute and happy and calm. The fact of their own consummate being made everything else so entirely subordinate that they were free. The only thing they wanted,

⁷ Many critics, encouraged by Lawrence’s own lead (see *IL* 477), have claimed that Paul’s connection to his mother destroys the connection he has with the women in his life. But it is clear in his relationship with Clara that Clara is at least as much to blame for the failure of their connection. Thus the text reads:

As a rule, when he started love-making, the emotion was strong enough to carry with it everything, reason, soul, blood.... And Clara knew this held him to her, so she trusted altogether to the passion. It, however, failed her very often. They did not often reach again the height of that once when the peewits had called. Gradually, some mechanical effort spoilt their loving, or, when they had splendid moments, they had them separately, and not so satisfactorily.... Often, they realized it had been a failure, not what they had wanted. Their loving grew more mechanical, without the marvellous glamour. (408)

As this passage indicates, Mrs Morel’s hold on Paul is not the cause of Clara’s increasing indifference toward him. Rather, their connection seems to have completed its own course.

⁸ The final lines of the novel have received an enormous amount of attention over the years, with some critics claiming that the ending is pessimistic (see, for instance, Pritchard (43) and Mortland (305)), but with the vast majority claiming that the ending is hopeful (see Miko (105), Schneider (140), Black (1986:174), Ben Ephraim (122)). Obviously my own interpretation puts me in the latter category, but not in the sense that I see Paul’s start towards the town as a sign that he wants to, in the words of one critic, “live within and contribute to society” (Templeton 105). Such an understanding of the final line obscures the profoundly critical stance toward society that Lawrence has taken throughout the novel.

as the days went by, was more time to themselves. They wanted the time to be absolutely their own.

The Easter vacation was approaching. They agreed to go right away. It would not be a matter if they did not come back. They were indifferent to the actual facts. (418–419)

The idea that Ursula's "soul" is "implicated with Skrebensky" suggests that "pure relationship" with another "soul" which Gerald, among several other of Lawrence's fictional characters, forsakes for a commitment to the established world. What the narrative is describing here in fact is the kind of disjunction from the established world that inevitably follows from a "pure relationship": Anton and Ursula have shed their social categories, no longer being "of the world," but instead being their own "absolute" selves. The social world comes quickly to represent a perceptibly lower order of experience, "secondary" and "subordinate," from which their relationship sets them "free." Thus just as Birkin and Ursula remove themselves from all social duties and obligations immediately after their "accession into being," so Anton and Ursula, having experienced "their own consummate being," turn away from the demands and duties of the established world, with its "little morality," asserting their time to be "absolutely their own," becoming "indifferent to the actual facts," and planning to go away on vacation without caring if "they did not come back."

At this point in their relationship Anton and Ursula are, in every sense of the word that is meaningful to D.H. Lawrence, married: their contact is direct because it is unmediated by any social considerations—it is an "inner" and "vital" connection and not an institutionally or culturally imposed constraint. In *Women in Love* the narrative voice (obviously Lawrence's own) defines such a relationship as an "absolute mystic marriage," which is categorically distinguished from a "legal marriage" (353)—the very term "legal" suggesting a lower form of marriage, inherently connected to a system of "human government." It is Skrebensky who first broaches the question of making their marriage a "legal" one, and when he does so the text makes clear that the price of such an alliance will be nothing less than his own soul:

"I suppose we ought to get married," he said, rather wistfully. It was so magnificently free and in a deeper world, as it was. To make public their connection would be to put it in range with all the things which nullified him, and from which he was for the moment entirely dissociated. If he married he would have to assume his social self. And the thought of assuming his social self made him at once diffident and abstract. If she were his social wife, if she were part of that complication of dead reality, then what had his under-life to do with her? One's social wife was almost a material symbol. Whereas now she was something more vivid to him than anything in conventional life could be, she gave the complete lie to all conventional life,

he and she stood together, dark, fluid, infinitely potent, giving the living lie to the dead whole which contained them. (419)

The established order—"conventional life"—is a "complication of dead reality" and a "lie," and by turning their deeply private and "vivid" connection into something public—into a legal marriage—Skrebensky will become fully integrated with "all the things which nullified him." Through a legal marriage, in other words, the couple will more or less lose any substantial and "living" connection they have to each other and commit themselves instead to the "dead whole which contained them."

Of course, one may wonder why Anton, feeling this way about legal marriage, would ever suggest it to Ursula, much less insist on it, which he will do. But Anton's dissociation from the "conventional life," as the above passage points out, is only "for a moment," and indeed for most of the narrative his deepest sense of commitment is directed not toward his "personal connections" but to the "nation" and the to the "state" (304)— "His life," as the narrative observes, "lay in the established order of things" (304). Thus Frieda Lawrence—underscoring how deeply her husband's concept of real marriage involved a critique of existing political structures—is quite right to suggest that "In the end the man fails Ursula because he has no ideal beyond the old existing State" (211).

What is crucial to note in this regard, however, is not simply the fact that Skrebensky becomes eager to put his marriage "within the range of all the things that nullified him," but *when* he becomes eager to do so. At some point during a trip the couple takes to France the vital connection between them is ruptured. The narrative discloses neither what happened between the couple nor why it happened, but it is clear that their desire for each other—"dark, fluid, infinitely potent"—has been lost, a loss that leads Skrebensky to admit that "She did not want him" (422), and Ursula to admit that "You did not like me when we left Paris" (425). It is only after this complete loss of desire that Skrebensky begins to pressure Ursula for a legal marriage—to "insidiously...suggest himself as a husband to her" (439). In the absence of any real desire, that is to say, Skrebensky returns to the established world, forgoing a "mystic marriage" that would circumvent the power of the State, and opting for the kind of marriage that serves his souldestroying need for "preserving" the State "intact" (305). Thus Skrebensky, like Gerald, comes to see marriage as a way of inheriting the world, humbly replacing the "dark" desire of his "absolute" self with pure social conformity. Ursula, however, having rejected Skrebensky's proposal, awaits a man created not by the State, but "created by God" (457). She awaits a marriage—which she will find in the "sequel to *The Rainbow*" (3L 400)—that serves not as a means to inheriting the established world, but "a whole other world."

This distinction between "legal" and "mystic" marriage—between a marriage that serves to integrate individuals into the established order and a marriage that allows complete dissociation from it—receives its most sustained and perhaps its most explicit treatment in Lawrence's last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Indeed the distinction

between these two kinds of marriage—along with their attendant attitudes toward the established order—is so central to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* that it serves as a kind of structural principle for the novel as a whole, the narrative being supported by the opposite extremes that Clifford Chatterley and Oliver Mellors represent. Sir Clifford, in fact, is so much a part of the established order —“he belonged to the ruling class” (72)—that even his paralysis, which otherwise should have kept him marginalized from society (at least to some degree) has the effect of symbolically putting him at the center of it, for his paralysis, as Lawrence himself claimed, is “symbolic of...the deeper emotional or passionnal paralysis, of most men of his sort and class, today” (*LCL* 333).

Oliver Mellors' relation to the established world, on the other hand, seems to contrast with Clifford's in almost every possible way. Thus, whereas Clifford seeks to “capture...the world of literature and fame; the popular world” (116), Mellors, as Connie initially perceives him to be, is “like a soul that recoils away, away from all human contact” (89); whereas Clifford is a “business-man” who craves “for the prostitution with the bitch-goddess, Success” (72), Mellors claims that “I don't want to make money, or get on” (276), refusing, as Duncan Forbes notes, even “to creep up into the middle classes, when he had a chance” (264). And whereas Clifford demonstrates his connection to the established world through his status as an industrialist—the “very stale air of the colliery” being “better than oxygen to him” (108)—Mellors wants to “end the industrial epoch absolutely, like a black mistake” (220), condemning the “world of the mechanical greedy” for its readiness to “destroy whatever did not conform” (119).

These opposing attitudes toward the established order translate directly into two very different ideas about the degree to which society should be involved in their relationships with women. In this regard, marriage for Clifford is clearly a means of committing himself to and maintaining the established order. The kind of marriage he demands is founded on “duties and responsibilities” (307) and is meant to preserve “decency” and the “order of life” (293). It is also the means by which he can “keep up tradition”: “That's why having a son helps,” he tells Connie, much to her dismay: “One is only a link in a chain” (43).

For Mellors, however, the established world of Clifford Chatterley is an obstacle to marriage, not its justification, as is clear by his answer to Connie's question, late in the narrative, “Then why are you afraid of me?” : “It's the money, really, and the position,” he says to her. “It's the world in you” (277). For a marriage to be a true marriage, Mellors' reply suggests, a couple has to be purified of all mediating (and therefore obstructing) contacts with the existing social world. This is surely the significance behind the brief episode in which Mellors, having decorated Connie's naked body and his own with flowers, announces that: “This is John Thomas marryin' Lady Jane'.... ‘An' we mun let Constance an' Oliver go their ways” (228). “Constance” and “Oliver” are the couple's social names, symbols—just as their clothes are symbols—of their connections to the social world. By divesting themselves of their worldly names, along with divesting themselves of their clothing, they enable themselves to make that kind of “immediate contact” with each other which Lawrence calls a “true phallic

marriage" (*LCL* 328), marriage that is to say, which is stripped of all social and cultural concern—marriage that is brought out from under the "sway of the State" and linked to the "sway of the greater laws" (*LCL* 321, 328). This idea, in fact, is centrally connected to what Lawrence means by the phrase "naked liberty," and it underlies Birkin's notion that "'There's somewhere where we can be free—somewhere where one needn't wear much clothes—none even...where you can be yourself, without bothering'" (*WL* 316).⁹ This extremely modest ceremony between John Thomas and Lady Jane, moreover, will not betoken much of a marriage to conventional eyes, but this is entirely Lawrence's point: true marriage is beyond the grasp of convention: it is an intensely private affair, constituted—as the private names "John Thomas" and "Lady Jane" imply—by nothing more (or less) than a true desire for one another.

The extent to which marriage of this type allows for a dissociation from the established order is clearly conveyed through the change in social circumstances that the couple experiences. On the one hand, Connie's dissociation from society is rather obvious: she happily surrenders her social status as a "lady," something she doesn't "care about" (124), and she exchanges the deadening environment of Wragby Hall ("that great weary warren" (62)) for the promise of a small farm somewhere, possibly in the remote region of British Columbia. On the other hand, however, the dissociative power that this kind of marriage has for Mellors is comprehensible only when we clearly understand what connection he had with the established order that needed to be broken. Hence, although it may be true in a limited sense that Mellors' life in the "wood" represents, as the text claims, his "recoil away from the outer world" (88), in another sense, perhaps more consistent with the logic of the text as a whole, his life in the wood represents not a removal from the world but an unwanted immersion in it. The wood, it is crucial to note in this regard, is owned by Clifford Chatterley, and Mellors is permitted to live there only so long as he remains one of Clifford's "hirelings" (161), a servant who must wait "at attention" before Clifford even to be "dismissed" by him (48). Mellors' subservient relationship to Clifford (and thus to the established order generally) is made almost painfully obvious in a scene where he is called upon to look at Clifford's mechanical chair after it breaks down:

The man crouched solicitously by the wheel, and peered at the little engine.

"I'm afraid I know nothing at all about these mechanical things, Sir Clifford," he said calmly. "If she has enough petrol and oil—"

"Just look carefully and see if you can see anything broken," snapped Clifford.

The man laid his gun against a tree, took off his coat and threw it beside it. The brown dog sat guard. Then he sat down on his heels and peered under

⁹ Recall also that in *Sons and Lovers* William's desire to join the established order was centrally connected to his preoccupation with clothing, his own as well as Lily's.

the chair, poking with his finger at the greasy little engine, and resenting the grease-marks on his clean Sunday shirt....

“Have you looked at the rods underneath? asked Clifford. “See if they are all right!”

The man lay flat on his stomach on the floor, his neck pressed back, wriggling under the engine and poking with his finger. Connie thought what a pathetic sort of thing a man was, feeble and smalllooking, when he was lying on his belly on the big earth. (187–188)

This act of prostration before (or beneath) a broken man and his broken machine, soiling his clean shirt with grease, speaks volumes about Mellors’ position in the established order of the modern mechanized world, a broken world according to Lawrence’s own account of it. For all the appearance of having removed himself from it, Mellors is in fact subservient to this order, and he will necessarily remain subservient to it for as long as he maintains any form of connection to Wragby Hall.

It is the “marriage” of “John Thomas” to “Lady Jane” which finally and decisively frees Mellors from the established order, because only this connection has the power to have him banished from the wood—the power, in other words, to break the containing hold of Sir Clifford and the world for which he stands. This power is the power of desire, and nothing less than desire will suffice to bring the couple out from the isolating centre of society to a place where they can truly connect—that place being, to use Connie’s words, “the very middle of creation” (241).

Chapter Five: Natural Aristocracy and Lawrence's Double Vision

Michal: "And what happens? Do Israel and the Philistine sing songs to one another?" (David, scene vi)

In what follows I want to look at Lawrence's concept of the "natural aristocrat," and I do so with two purposes in mind. The first purpose, consistent with the general approach of this study, is to discuss what I believe is yet another way in which Lawrence's social and political thought corresponds to ideas that have been traditionally upheld by philosophical anarchism. Of course, the very idea of "aristocracy" may at first seem inherently antithetical, even antagonistic, to the basic principles of anarchism, but as George Woodcock observes it is in fact central to them. "In reality," Woodcock writes, "the ideal of anarchism, far from being democracy carried to its logical end, is much nearer to aristocracy universalized and purified. The spiral of history here has turned full circle, and where aristocracy...called for the freedom of noble men, anarchism has always declared the nobility of free men" (1962:34). Lawrence, I believe, held a similar idea about the "nobility of free men," and his own declaration of it is part of what I want to pursue here.

My second purpose in this chapter is somewhat more wide-ranging than the first and it involves identifying the place that libertarian ideas have within the overall scope of Lawrence's political ideology. In the Introduction to this study I observed that Lawrence cannot be easily classified as an anarchist, primarily because he all too often makes pronouncements of a distinctly authoritarian kind, sometimes rather shockingly so. As early as 1915, for instance, he was writing to Bertrand Russell that "The whole [of society] must culminate in an absolute *Dictator*" (2*L* 365), and notions of a similar nature surface at various intervals throughout his career, inevitably leading some critics to conclude that Lawrence's politics were essentially fascist. While I think that this conclusion about Lawrence is generally wrong, I also think that it demands a much more considered response than F.R.Leavis's rather flailing remark— perhaps more appropriate to his own era of Lawrentian criticism than to ours—that associating Lawrence in any way with fascism represents one of the "grosser stupidities of our intellectual *élite*" (1955:9). If, like Leavis, we are inclined to believe that Lawrence expresses "important truths about human experience" (1955: 9), it is also important to recognize, at least for the sake of perspective, that Lawrence's pronouncements also include the idea that "Men have got to choose their leaders, and obey them to the

death" (*FU* 182). Ideas of this type are not hard to find in Lawrence's writing, and they are clearly not what Leavis was thinking of when he asserted that Lawrence embodies a "wisdom" which "we desperately need" (1955:xiii).¹

I believe that any truly rewarding approach to understanding Lawrence's politics must involve at least some attempt at identifying the authoritarian elements in his writing and weighing them against his libertarian ideas, the kind of ideas that I have been looking at in the preceding chapters. Rather than making categorical claims about what Lawrence did and did not believe, therefore, we should recognize the strong component of selfcontradiction in his writing and try to gauge the general tendencies of his ideological concerns; we should try to discern what trends in his social and political thought stand out above others and why. What makes Lawrence's concept of the natural aristocrat so well suited to a discussion of this type is that Lawrence employs it to promote both his libertarian and authoritarian views, with the result that the term "natural aristocrat" serves as a kind of locus for his competing political visions. A clear understanding of the tension between these two visions, as I now hope to show, is not only crucial to a comprehensive understanding of Lawrence's somewhat fractured ideology, but it allows for a better appreciation of where his real political sympathies ultimately lie.

Let me begin by suggesting that central to both Lawrence's libertarian and authoritarian concepts of the natural aristocrat is a particular notion of what constitutes the core of human beings. Whether he is writing as an authoritarian or as a libertarian, Lawrence's concept of "being" can be defined, simply enough, by what he calls "life-energy" (*RDP* 310), that fundamental and animating force that separates all living organisms from all dead matter, and which Lawrence also refers to as, among other things, "blood-being" (*2L* 470), the "quick" of the self (*PS* 253), the "deepest *whole* self" (*SCAL* 13), the "spontaneous self" (*RDP* 82), the "soul" (*2P* 233), the "Holy Ghost" (*RDP* 286), the "God-mystery within us" (*2P* 275), the "gem of gems" (*2P* 233), the "life-plasm" (*2P* 230), and the "spark of nobility" (*MEH* 265), terms that quickly become familiar to even a casual reader of Lawrence's work. Lawrence's libertarian and authoritarian concepts of aristocracy do not thus proceed from different definitions of being itself, but from different ideas about how being or lifeenergy is distributed among individuals. As a libertarian Lawrence conceives of being as the birth-right of every

¹ More recent critics have developed other strategies for ignoring Lawrence's authoritarian side. For instance, after asking how "this poet of spontaneity, tenderness and sexual freedom [could] also endorse charismatic leaders and obedient followers" (1), Barbara Mensch then defends Lawrence by asserting that Lawrence only "recognized" the authoritarian personality and then "incorporated it into his writing" in order to criticize it. Thus according to Mensch this recognition "does not constitute an endorsement of the rigid personality that would be receptive to the negative, life denying political structures of fascism and totalitarianism" (2). In a similar sort of way, Anthony Burgess argues that Lawrence "was not as anti-democratic as he liked to think; he was merely honest enough to state openly that we all need living models of superior energy and genius" (204). It seems to me that neither of these critics meets the challenge that Lawrence's authoritarianism actually presents: the claim that we must "obey" leaders "to the death" provides little room for ambiguity.

thing that lives: “every living creature,” he writes in *Kangaroo*, “has an individual soul, however trivial or rudimentary, which connects it individually with the source of all life.... So is every creature, even an ant or a louse, individually in contact with the great life-urge which we call God” (295). Human beings, largely due to their overemphasis on consciousness and the workings of the mind, have a tendency to remove themselves from the “source of all life,” but reconnection is still open to anyone who makes the effort, and any human who does—who manages to live spontaneously and according to impulse—fulfils the most fundamental requirement that Lawrence makes for status as an aristocrat. This notion is the principal message of Lawrence’s poem “Aristocracy of the Sun,” for instance, where the source of life—which Lawrence usually locates in the “deep, selfresponsible spontaneous centres of every individual” (*FU* 85)—is conveyed through the more standard trope of the sun:

To be an aristocrat of the sun
 you don’t need one single social inferior to exalt you;
 you draw your nobility direct from the sun
 let other people be what they may.
 I am that I am
 from the sun,
 and people are not my measure.
 Perhaps, if we started right, all the children could grow up sunny and sun-
 aristocrats,
 We need have no dead people, money-slaves, and social worms.
 (*Poems* 526–527)

Contained within these few lines is a vision of both individual and social redemption, Lawrence’s idea being that all people are potentially noble insofar as they are all capable of living “direct” from life’s source. This nobility is a far higher kind of nobility than that presently found within a structure of social hierarchy because the ennoblement itself derives from a source far higher than the exaltations of any “social inferior.” It is for this reason, therefore, that Lawrence writes in his essay “Aristocracy,” “The sun makes man a lord: an aristocrat: almost a deity” (*RDP* 375). Nobility does not rise to the few from the social values of “slaves,” but descends to all from the natural fact of the sun.

Lawrence, however, does not always and everywhere maintain the idea that “being” is universally accessible. In fact, far from believing that “every living created thing has its own unfailing quick” (*SEP* 37), Lawrence is from time to time rather insistent that while some people have being, most do not—not as a result of any choices they have made, not from deliberately rejecting or embracing the source of life, but simply because of the way they were born. Thus in the same essay that I have just quoted from, “Aristocracy,” where Lawrence claims that any individual who “looks up and is with the sun” will be “an aristocrat of life” (*RDP* 374), we also find the claim, in stark contradiction

to this, that “Among men, the difference in *being* is infinite. And it is a difference in degree as well as in kind” (*RDP* 367). And how does this “difference in degree as well as in kind” express itself in humanity as a whole? Most human beings, Lawrence suggests, will never achieve the ontological status of “aristocrat,” whatever their social status happens to be, because in terms of life-energy they have been “born short” (*RDP* 41); they are “half-born slaves” (*FU* 31), necessarily condemned, presumably from the moment of conception, to being “second rate” and “middling,” and thus they “*cannot* have an individual wholeness” (*A* 66, 68, 145; original emphasis). “Very few men have any being at all,” Lawrence claims when writing in this mode. “They perish utterly, as individuals” (*RDP* 273).

Those “Very few men” who do have being, according to this view, are the only possible natural aristocrats, not simply “higher” by degree, but different in “kind”: they are the “elect” (*P* 286), and the “sacred few” (*FU* 88); they are not only the individuals who live by impulse, but the individuals in whom, by some mysterious process of selection, the “lifeissues concentrate” (*RDP* 109). Far from living on equal terms with the masses of “half-born slaves,” they function—or ought to function—as leaders, in what Lawrence calls a “system of culminating aristocracy, society tapering like a pyramid to the supreme leader” (*FU* 182). “I believe in the divine right of a natural aristocracy,” Lawrence writes in this regard, “the right, the sacred duty to wield undisputed authority” (*4L* 266).

The division Lawrence makes between “aristocrats and plebeians, born, not made” (*2L* 379)—between those individuals who have being and those who do not—simply cannot be reconciled with his idea that “each being” has “a spark of divinity” (*RDP* 88), that “Each being,” is “a fountain from the unknown” (*P* 216). The most we can say in this regard is that on the subject of human ontology, Lawrence held two very different and two very much opposed views, and did so throughout his writing life. It is also important to notice that whereas hierarchy is necessarily absent from Lawrence’s libertarian vision of society—where “all” individuals are “aristocrats of life”—hierarchy is at the centre of his authoritarian vision, society arranging itself according to a graded scale of who is “*most alive*” (*RDP* 375), from the aristocratic few down to the masses of “*fragmentary* beings” (*A* 105). Indeed, as the poem “Aristocracy of the Sun” implies, in a truly libertarian society stratification is simply not possible: a society in which “all the children” “grow up sunny and sun aristocrats,” is a society in which all individuals fully realize the life within themselves, where those toiling in the ontological shadows—“dead people, money-slaves and social worms”—necessarily vanish. Lawrence conveys these different visions of society, furthermore, through two different types of metaphor—organic and inorganic—which appear at various places in his writing, sometimes in the same work. In “Education of the People,” for instance, Lawrence’s notion that “the vast, living masses of mankind [are] incoherent and almost expressionless by themselves” (*RDP* 109), translates directly into an image of the true society as an organic and unified whole, a plant rising up from the pedestrian earth and bursting forth in aristocratic flower:

When it is a question of the human soul, the direction must be a cumulation 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.... The people is an organic whole, rising from the roots, through trunk and branch and leaf to the perfect blossom. (RDP 110)

In the same essay however, Lawrence also expresses the notion, directly opposed to the idea that the vast majority of people are “incoherent,” that “our ideal” must be “living, spontaneous individuality in every man and woman” (RDP 107). And the image of society that corresponds to such an ontological view is not an organized collectivity, but a fundamentally atomized one. Accordingly, the image of a flowering plant—a fully integrated biological system, rooted in the earth—is replaced with the image of a multiplicity of stars, separately integrated and scattered in the sky:

Finish for ever the old unison into homogeneity. Let every man fall apart into a fathomless, single isolation of being, exultant at his own core, and apart. Then, dancing magnificent in our own space, as the spheres dance in space, we can set up the extra-individual communication.... Not a mass of homogeneity, like sunlight. But a fathomless multiplicity, like the stars at night, each one isolate in the darkly-singing space.... [O]ur being we have in integral separateness, as the stars at night. To think of lumping the stars together into one mass is hideous. Each one separate, each one his own peculiar ray. So the universe is made up. (RDP 135)

There is no elevated wreath of aristocrats and no exalted “first of men” in this vision of society because each separate individual is an exalted aristocrat on his own—and exalted precisely because he is separate; he is alone and independent, not a functioning and dependent part, root or flower, of some greater whole. This image of the cosmos is thus the image of a society without stratification, where individuals do not find expression in a supreme “utterer,” but instead express themselves: like the stars, each one is “his own peculiar ray.”²

Lawrence’s notion of a “supreme judge and utterer” suggests another major difference between his libertarian and authoritarian concepts of aristocracy, which is the social function that the aristocrat is expected to fulfill. In his authoritarian mode, Lawrence asserts that aristocrats must take a preeminent place within society because of what they are able to impart to the masses of “fragmentary beings”: “the providing of *life*,” Lawrence declares, “belongs to the aristocrat” (RDP 369). Thus the aristocrat acts as a kind of mediator between the ontologically deficient masses and the source of life itself, the “lower” members of society having access to greater life only insofar as they “serve the higher” (RDP 375): they acquire “being” only insofar as they are “prepared to obey, body and soul” (FU 88). Hence, according to Lawrence:

² See Lawrence’s remark: “Service means authority: while self-expression means pure negation of all authority” (RDP 95).

It is not man's weakness that he needs someone to bow down to. It is his nature, and his strength, for it puts him into touch with far, far greater life than if he stood alone. All life bows to the sun. But the sun is very far away to the common man. It needs someone to bring it to him. It needs a lord: what the Christians call one of the elect, to bring the sun to the common man, and put the sun in his heart. The sight of a true lord, a noble, a nature-hero puts the sun into the heart of the ordinary man, who is no hero, and therefore cannot know the sun direct. (P 290)

"It is time," Lawrence urges elsewhere, "to begin to recognize the aristocracy of the sun." And once recognized, he claims, the influence of these aristocrats will start to extend beyond the limits of their personal relationships and beyond their given communities, even beyond their nations: aristocrats everywhere will be able to band together to form a kind of aristocratic super-state—an "aristocracy of the world"—which "in the coming era," Lawrence predicts, "will rule the world" (*RDP* 376).

Ideas of obedience and leadership still inform Lawrence's libertarian concept of the natural aristocrat, but in ways that are stripped of any direct social or political significance. Thus whereas in his authoritarian mode Lawrence suggests that the aristocrat is meant to "rule the world," in his libertarian mode the aristocrat is simply a man who "chooses to rule his own life" (*Hardy* 49). As an authoritarian, such as we find in passages of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence's idea is that we should delegate all "responsibility" to the "sacred few" and "Let the few, the leaders, be increasingly responsible for the whole" (88). As a libertarian, however, Lawrence—again in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*—insists rather that we must all be "self-responsible" (85): "We've got to learn to live from the centre of our own responsibility only," he writes, "and let other people do the same" (47). In the same vein, while the authoritarian Lawrence urges an absolute submission to aristocratic leaders—"obey them to the death"—the libertarian Lawrence completely and explicitly negates the idea of submitting oneself to anyone, claiming that the only act of submission must be directly to the source of life itself:

There is a sacrifice demanded—only one, an old sacrifice that was demanded of the first man, and will be demanded of the last. It is demanded of all created life. I must submit my will and my understanding—all I must submit, not to any other will, not to any other understanding, not to anything that is, but to the exquisitest suggestion from the unknown that comes upon me. This I must attend to and submit to. It is not me, it is upon me. (*RDP* 28)

Once again, the idea of the aristocrat as a kind of middle-man has been shoved aside in favour of the idea that all humans are equally capable of "being"—provided, of course, that they are prepared to yield themselves, not to anyone outside themselves, but to

what Lawrence calls “the perfectest suggestion from within” (*RDP* 29). This submission to something within oneself makes one “beautiful and beyond aspersion” (*RDP* 29): it is ennobling, therefore, because it is submission to what Lawrence in “Twilight in Italy” calls the “me of the flesh,” which is “me the king, the Lord, the aristocrat, me who am divine because I am the body of God” (*TI* 120). One is a natural aristocrat, according to this view, not simply because one submits to nature, but because one submits to one’s *own* nature. No obedience or service to social or historical figures, no matter how much they might embody “life,” could substitute for submission of this kind. We will “degenerate,” Lawrence claims in this regard, “unless we proceed to connect ourselves up with our *own* primeval sources” (*Hardy* 204; emphasis added)—and not, we should infer from this, with someone else’s.

It is also crucial to observe that whereas Lawrence’s authoritarian conception of the natural aristocrat upholds the idea of the aristocrat as a leader, someone at the head or at the center of society, directing society, his libertarian conception stresses the “inevitable isolation [and] detachment of the aristocrat” who, far from providing “life” to others, is instead “by his very nature, cut off” from them (*Hardy* 99). Indeed one of Lawrence’s most strident prescriptions for the creation and maintenance of a higher form of society—an “aristocracy of the sun”—is for each member of society to embrace what seems to be a palpably anti-social reserve toward the welfare of others. It is this kind of idea that leads Lawrence to claim, for instance, that we must “stop looking after our neighbour” because “It only robs him of his chance of looking after himself. Which is robbing him of his freedom, with a vengeance” (*RDP* 74). Indeed, in much the same way that Stirner, among other anarchists, warns against “toiling at the limits of others”—primarily because “the overturning of *their* limits remains their affair” (141)—so Lawrence, returning to his image of society as a constellation of stars, asserts that:

Any assumption by one person of responsibility for another person is an interference, and a destructive tyranny. No person is responsible for the being of any other person. Each one is starrily single, starrily self-responsible, not to be blurred or confused. (*RDP* 103)³

The notion that no one is “responsible for the *being*” of any one else is, of course, a denial of the idea that the fundamental role of aristocrats is to be “responsible” for the

³ For other anarchists, see, for instance, Oscar Wilde’s remarks that “Charity degrades and demoralizes” (258), and so “unselfishness is letting other people’s lives alone, not interfering with them” (284). According to Wilde, “those people who do most harm are the people who try to do most good” (258). See also Godwin: “It is an extreme folly to endeavour to secure to others, independently of exertion on their part, the means of being happy” (616). See also Benjamin R. Tucker: “‘Mind your own business’ is [anarchism’s] only moral law. Interference with another person’s business is a crime and the only crime, and as such may properly be resisted.... [Anarchists] recognize the right of the drunkard, the gambler, the rake, and the harlot to live their lives until they shall freely choose to abandon them” (15). Thoreau suggested the same sort of idea earlier in American anarchistic history when he wrote in *Walden*: “Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made” (345).

“whole” of society and to keep those who are deficient in being from “perishing utterly.” Those who assume responsibility for others are now called tyrants because the act of “looking after” someone else is conceived of as an act of usurpation, of forcing the Other to submit to someone outside himself instead of to the “aristocrat” and the “lord” within, to the “me of the flesh.” All human beings, once again, are potentially “sacred” and aristocratic, not just “the few,” and the freedom to determine one’s own life is clearly a function of this aristocratic status. This is a radically libertarian view of society: people are ennobled not when they assume an attitude of obedience to leaders, but when they are “self-responsible” and “self-possessed” (*FU* 123), terms which Lawrence often employs in his writing and which mean, essentially, “free.”

Another reason why Lawrence’s libertarian view of the natural aristocrat cannot accommodate the principle of leadership, however, is not simply that leaders limit the freedom of everyone else, but that leadership itself involves obligations and duties that will profoundly and necessarily curtail a leader’s own freedom. The responsibilities of leadership, that is to say, involve an element of service—“the providing of life”—that is clearly opposed to what Lawrence calls “the glamour of kings,” which he defines as “the glamour of men who had opportunity to *be*, who were not under compulsion to do, to serve” (*Hardy* 35). This treacherous connection between leading and serving surfaces as a theme in *The Plumed Serpent*, where Don Ramon draws attention to it by claiming in the same breath that “I will not command you, nor serve you” (179), the two modes of social behaviour clearly being seen as essentially the same thing. It is also for this reason that Don Ramon proclaims to Don Cipriano that: “We will be masters among men, and lords among men. But lords of men, and masters of men we will not be” (178), an idea remarkably similar to that expressed by the early British libertarian Gerrard Winstanley, who claimed that “there shall be none Lord over others, but every one shall be a Lord of him self” (184). Indeed, Don Ramon’s claim, existing more or less at the thematic heart of one of Lawrence’s so-called “leadership novels,” is an explicit denial of the idea that the aristocrat is a social leader. Because the essentially social principles of commanding and serving are all too easily interchanged, a “lord” must avoid assuming the public function of command: an aristocrat is the master of himself only.

To take the question of the natural aristocrat into the domain of Lawrence’s fiction, furthermore, is to find that the heroes of his novels and stories consistently turn away from the opportunity to, in Stirner’s words, “toil at the limits of others”—to lead or even to assist those around them. A very early illustration of the idea can be found in *Sons and Lovers*, where it is meant to be a sign of Paul Morel’s strength that he refuses all responsibility for Miriam’s being, even though he is convinced, correctly or not, that she will remain unfulfilled without him. Hence:

He felt, in leaving her, he was defrauding her of life. But he knew that in staying, stifling the inner, desperate man, he was denying his own life. And he did not hope to give life to her by denying his own. (463)

Paul's refusal to deny his own life in order to give life to someone else constitutes, of course, a complete rejection of the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice, an ideal with a dead lord at its core. Lawrence's libertarian notion of a true "lord" reverses this ideal, upholding the completely contrary notion that a lord is someone who refuses to be self-sacrificial; he is not hostile to those around him, but understands that the authenticity of his own life, the possibility of fully realizing himself, depends upon remaining untouched by their plight: he must not "serve," but "*be*": or as Lawrence suggests in "Aristocracy of the Sun," he must "let other people be what they may."

This element of what Lawrence calls "aristocratic singleness and aloneness" (*A* 68), of detachment, is also a central part of the character Lewis in "St. Mawr," who is described as someone who "did not care about persons, people, even events" and is accordingly identified as "an aristocrat, inaccessible in his aristocracy" (121). The ultimate manifestation of Lewis's aristocratic detachment, apart from the sheer intensity of his solitude throughout the narrative, is the fact that even though he has spent years taking care of St. Mawr as a professional groom, he shows little sign of concern when the horse's impending death is brought to his attention:

"You'd leave St. Mawr to his fate?"

"I can't help his fate," said Lewis. "There's too many people in the world, for me to help anything." (96)

Aristocratic isolation is also important to Birkin's character in *Women in Love*, and is particularly evident in his relationship with Gerald. On a number of occasions in the narrative Gerald turns to Birkin for advice and for help, and each time Birkin more or less refuses him. In an episode, for example, where Gerald, exasperated, says to Birkin: "I wish you'd tell me something that *did* matter," Birkin, in response, simply "turned his face aside" (96). An exchange shortly after this one follows precisely the same kind of pattern, with Gerald reaching out and Birkin showing very little concern:

"I can't see what you will leave me at all, to be interested in," came Gerald's voice from the lower room. "Neither the Pussum, nor the mines, nor anything else."

"You be interested in what you can, Gerald. Only I'm not interested myself," said Birkin.

"What am I to do at all, then?" came Gerald's voice.

"What you like. What am I to do myself?"

In the silence Birkin could feel Gerald musing this fact.

"I'm blest if I know," came the good-humoured answer.

"You see," said Birkin, "part of you wants the Pussum, and nothing but the Pussum, part of you wants the mines, the business, and nothing but the business—and there you are—all in bits—"

“And part of me wants something else,” said Gerald, in a queer, quiet, real voice.

“What?” said Birkin, rather surprised.

“That’s what I hoped you could tell me,” said Gerald.

There was silence for some time.

“I can’t tell you—I can’t find my own way, let alone yours. You might marry,” Birkin replied. (97)

Having created precisely the kind of context in which a relationship of leader and follower could emerge, Lawrence conspicuously refuses to follow through with it. In fact, read within the context of the novel as a whole, what actually emerges from this passage, and from others like it, is the sense that refusing to offer guidance is as much a mark of Birkin’s superiority as an individual as looking outside himself for guidance is a mark of Gerald’s inferiority. Birkin’s reluctance to assist Gerald, in fact, is completely consistent with his claim, made to Will Brangwen, that he does not want to “influence anybody” (257); and it is really only within this kind of context that we can make sense out of his extremely odd reluctance to assist Gerald at a time when Gerald is injured and exhausted and searching for the body of his drowned sister:

Gudrun and Ursula kept a look-out for Gerald.

“There he is!” cried Ursula, who had the sharpest eyes.

He had not been long under. Birkin pulled towards him, Gudrun following. He swam slowly, and caught hold of the boat with his wounded hand. It slipped, and he sank back.

“Why don’t you help him?” cried Ursula sharply.

He came again, and Birkin leaned to help him into the boat. (182)

Ursula’s question is a good one: why doesn’t Birkin help Gerald at this particularly critical point? The answer, I suggest, is to be found in a much earlier scene where Gerald’s mother tells Birkin that Gerald needs a “friend.” Although Birkin is immediately moved to ask himself “‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’” (26), his response is far more a statement than it is a question. It is in fact a declaration that he is positively *not* his brother’s keeper, and he confirms this through, among other ways, his reluctance to reach out and pull Gerald from the dangers of Willey Water.

This theme of aristocratic detachment also plays an important part in *Aaron’s Rod*. Although the central character of the novel, Rawdon Lilly, tells Aaron at the narrative’s end that “‘men must submit to the greater soul in a man, for their guidance’” (298–299), he also claims (in the same scene) that “‘There’s no goal outside you—and there’s no God outside you’” (295), and that “‘The only goal is the fulfilling of your own soul’s active desire and suggestion’” (296). And it is clearly the latter principle

that Lilly upholds as a guide for both himself and others to live by, for even though he is obviously cast in the novel as one of the “greater” souls, his greatness is manifested primarily by his refusal to assume responsibility for any of the inferior souls around him. His detachment in this regard is particularly conspicuous in a scene where he is conversing with those who, while they are his friends, are clearly not his peers:

Lilly was alone—and out of his isolation came his words, indifferent as to whether they came or not. And he left his friends utterly to their own choice. Utterly to their own choice. Aaron felt that Lilly was there, existing in life, yet neither asking for connection nor preventing any connection. He was present, he was the real centre of the group. And yet he asked nothing of them, and he imposed nothing. He left each to himself, and he remained just himself: neither more or less. (247)

A reader may well wonder just how the leadership of a “greater” soul is supposed to express itself if, as so much of *Aaron’s Rod* suggests, the defining attitude of a such a soul is to leave people “utterly to their own choice” and to “impose nothing” on them. But the importance that leaving each to “his own choice” has for Lilly’s integrity is clearly conveyed through the last line of this passage: leaving “each to himself” is absolutely necessary for the greater good of remaining “himself,” the role of looking after or being responsible for his neighbour representing a compromise of the isolation and detachment that constitutes his status as a natural aristocrat. Even when explicitly asked for his alternative to the existing society that he so severely criticizes, Lilly still refuses to give a direct answer, suggesting only that “a real committal” of “inferior beings to the responsibility of a superior being” is an idea not to be taken “seriously” (281–282), and claiming that “‘My alternative...is an alternative for no one but myself, so I’ll keep my mouth shut about it’” (281). These aspects of the narrative are especially important to consider before coming to any fast conclusions about the novel’s status as a “leadership novel,” manifesting what Cornelia Nixon (among many other critics) claims is the development of Lawrence’s “leadership politics at a time when authoritarian political thought was on the rise” (5).⁴

But how are we to understand Lawrence’s conception of natural aristocracy—and his politics generally—when faced with this almost bewildering array of self-contradictions on the subject? One could, like Leavis, remain forever in the realm of Lawrence’s approved “wisdom,” virtually ignoring his rigidly authoritarian pronouncements, and holding on, as Leavis does, to a groundless belief in the “embracing organic totality of Lawrence’s thought” (1976:9). Conversely, one could, like a number of Lawrence’s critics, confirm this idea of “organic totality” by emphasizing an

⁴ Both Nixon (10) and Rylance (164) claim that Lawrence’s politics “shifted ground politically” (Rylance) in 1915, from that year on becoming authoritarian. But while it is true that Lawrence’s authoritarianism begins in 1915, it is also true that the vast majority of his libertarian ideas are expressed after this point as well. It is simply impossible, I believe, to impose a valid chronological order of development on Lawrence’s politics.

entirely different side of Lawrence's thought, ignoring his "wisdom" and concluding that Lawrence's "doctrinal kinship" is with fascism (Watson 111).⁵ Another option would be to agree with a recent commentator that all of Lawrence's "ruthless certainties...changed by the week" (Scammell 33), and simply give up on Lawrence's politics altogether, surrendering, as Bentley puts it, "in the face of Lawrence's continuing refusal to coagulate" (59).⁶

A better way to approach an understanding of Lawrence's ultimate political leanings, however—or at least to gain some sense of the overall shape of his conceptions—is to consider his libertarian and authoritarian notions of the natural aristocrat within the context that his writing as a whole provides. If we stand back far enough from Lawrence to bring his entire work into view, certain ideas inevitably and clearly emerge as more important to him than others. Lawrence's notions about living "direct from the spontaneous, vital centre of oneself" (*RDP* 105), about the evils of self-sacrifice, about the inherent falsity of a "fate dictated from outside" (*2P* 275), about consciousness properly being a "flow from within outwards" (*P* 380), about "God in me" being "my desire" (*2L* 634), all such ideas give an ontological priority to the internal over the external and to the individual over the general, and they configure themselves into a kind of system of core concepts, without which, as the vast majority of critics seem to confirm, Lawrence would be unrecognizable as Lawrence. While Lawrence's libertarian concept of the natural aristocrat is obviously an integrated and fully functional element within this system, his authoritarian concept finds no such place: the ideas, for instance, that "the lower shall serve the higher, if there is to be any life among men" (*RDP* 375), and that "Some amongst us are born fit to govern, and some are born fit only to be

⁵ S.L. Goldberg joins the contingent of "organic totality" critics when he writes that the "limiting factor" in Lawrence is "his developing *over*-certainty about what, finally, he wants to say" (419). On the other hand, I think Paul Eggart does well to attack what he calls the "monologic" (136) approach to Lawrence, correctly pointing out that Lawrence's "philosophy did not come from a single speaking position" (134). But what Eggart then proceeds to look at is not the "polyvocality" (136) of Lawrence's "philosophy," but of his fiction: as it turns out, polyvocality has nothing to do with the element of self-contradiction in Lawrence's discursive work; Eggart instead uses the term to describe the interplay between characters who question each other's convictions—Ursula, for instance, who "pricks the ballooning implications of Birkin's extremest intellectual positions" (135). There is really nothing new in this observation apart from the vocabulary it is couched in: critics have been noticing this feature of Lawrence's work for many years.

Perhaps it is more helpful instead to read some of the comments made by Lawrence's characters as reflections of Lawrence's own awareness of his selfcontradictory ideas. In *Women in Love*, for instance, Ursula says of Birkin: "'You see he says one thing one day, and another the next—and he always contradicts himself—'" (294). See also "The Ladybird": "'Obedience, submission, faith, belief, responsibility, power,' [the Count] said slowly...as if searching for what he wanted, and never quite finding it" (Penguin 58).

⁶ Norman Mailer's claim that Lawrence was "a great writer, for he contained a caldron of boiling opposites" (137), while charitable, is still not very helpful for understanding the self-contradictory nature of Lawrence's work.

governed" (2L 379), have no connection to his dominant beliefs, and in fact violate every one of them on almost every possible level.

Or we might look at the question of the natural aristocrat exclusively from the perspective of Lawrence's art. If, as Lawrence claims, "Art-speech is the only truth" (SCAL 8), and if, as he also claims, his "philosophy" is to be "deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse" (FU 15), then we can only conclude that the refusal of so many of his fictional heroes to accept responsibility for the "being" of others—as I have discussed—reflects Lawrence's own decisive rejection of the idea that an aristocrat is a social leader, "responsible" for the whole and a provider of "life." Indeed, the idea that Lawrence illustrates again and again in his fiction is the absolute need for each and every member of a society to remain detached and alone, to concern oneself with one's own being, and not with the being of anyone else. This theme is as dominant within the novels of Lawrence's so-called "leadership period" as it is in the novels outside of it, the heroes of both *Aaron's Rod* and *The Plumed Serpent*, as I have noted, explicitly disclaiming the role of being "lords and masters of men." The rejection of leadership is also a key theme in that other "leadership novel," *Kangaroo*; but the rejection here is so explicit and so decisive, so broad and yet so clearly consistent with the history of libertarian ideas, that it calls for analysis on its own. And so it is to *Kangaroo* that I now want to turn.

Chapter Six: The Making of an Anarchist in *Kangaroo*

You cannot fail to admit the necessity for rule. Either you admit yourself an anarchist, or you admit the necessity for rule....(K22)

In this chapter I want to argue that *Kangaroo* can and should be read in connection to the tradition of philosophical anarchism. Before I do, however, it is necessary to point out that taking such an approach to this novel is bound to meet with at least two obvious and immediate lines of resistance. The first line derives from the fact that throughout *Kangaroo* the terms “anarchy” and “anarchist” are used in incontrovertibly negative ways. Anarchists here are depicted as “nihilists” (21), and “anarchy” itself is regarded as nothing more than an “irresponsible” sense of freedom, leading to a “vacancy” that is “almost terrifying” (27). Even the lines quoted at the head of this chapter suggest the idea that one becomes an anarchist only through an initiating process of failure, through being unable to recognize the self-evident truth that all members of a society must submit themselves to the “necessity for *rule*.” Thus a reader who looks to *Kangaroo* for a sympathetic word concerning “anarchy” or the “anarchist” looks in vain: Lawrence registers these terms within a hostile and very narrow range of understanding.

The second line of resistance comes not from the novel itself, but from the broad consensus of its critics. Long classified as a product of Lawrence’s so-called “leadership period,” *Kangaroo* is often regarded as a manifestation of what one critic has termed “the rightwards drift of Lawrence’s thought” (Rylance 167). Hence for David Holbrook the novel “betrays” Lawrence’s “admiration for authoritarian leadership” (284); according to Frank Kermode, it demonstrates Lawrence’s belief in the “need for submission to a leader” (102). Such is the general understanding of the novel, which John R. Harrison, writing in the mid 1960s, clearly articulated when he declared: “What Lawrence became increasingly certain about in writing *Kangaroo* was the need for aristocracy, authority, rule, based on the natural superiority of certain individuals” (183).

But how valid are these claims? Obviously the narrator’s approving observation that “Somers was a true Englishman, with an Englishman’s hatred of anarchy, and an Englishman’s instinct for authority” (22) serves to create strong expectations for an anti-libertarian thrust to this novel, as does the passage where Somers himself advocates “the joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority” (107). But it is also important to notice that by the end of the narrative Somers is articulating a very

different view of authority, one which suggests that Lawrence himself was not becoming “increasingly certain” about the need for a ruler, but increasingly less so: ““You must have deep control from within,” Somers declares just before leaving Australia. ““You must have a deep, dark weight of authority in your own soul. You must be most carefully, sternly controlled from within”” (351). What Somers is expressing here is a notion that shifts the source of control from the structures of society to the structures of the self: “authority” does not refer to an external command but to an internal necessity. This, as I have been observing throughout the present study, is an essentially anarchistic idea, as it proceeds from the uniquely anarchistic assumption that, in Marshall’s words, “people are capable of governing themselves” (1992:38). For the purposes of comprehending *Kangaroo* within the sphere of libertarian thought, however, it is important to understand not only the anarchistic nature of this conclusion, but the whole process of thought and experience that stands behind it. That is, Somers ultimately comes to confirm the very ideology that *Kangaroo* purports on the surface to disdain, and we gain a significant insight not only into this novel, but into Lawrence’s political thought generally when we understand precisely why this is so.

One of the key elements that connects the development of Somers’ politics to the anarchistic tradition is the particular way in which he finally rejects the idea of obedience; what is important to notice here, I mean to say, is not simply the bare fact of his rejection, but his reasons for rejecting it. It almost goes without saying that anarchism regards obedience to an external power as a woeful surrendering of individual freedom, and opposes it on that ground. But anarchism’s opposition to the idea of obedience extends further than this, for all anarchists are fundamentally united in maintaining that obedience is a profoundly disruptive force where society as a whole is concerned; they consistently align obedience with brutality and suggest that the most obedient members of society are the most (and perhaps the only truly) dangerous members. Peter Kropotkin speaks for many anarchists in this regard when he urges his readers to “consider what corruption, what depravity of mind is kept up among men by the idea of obedience” (217). Thoreau expresses a similar idea about obedience when he writes—in a line I have partially quoted elsewhere—that “Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice” (86). But it is perhaps Godwin who gives the most robust warning about the dangers of obedience, claiming that when I obey anything other than my own conscience “I annihilate my individuality as a man” and put myself, at least potentially, in the service of those who are “least under restraint from the scruples of integrity and justice” (243). Hence according to Godwin:

where I make the voluntary surrender of my understanding, and commit my conscience to another man’s keeping, the consequence is clear. I then become the most mischievous and pernicious of animals.... I am the ready tool of injustice, cruelty and profligacy; and, if at any time I am not employed

in their purposes, it is the result of accident, not of my own precaution and honesty. (243–244)

In *Kangaroo* Somers also comes to the idea that obedience is a dehumanizing and dangerous condition, a lesson he learns for the first time in England during the war. Thus in much the same way that Godwin sees the obedient individual as the most “pernicious of animals,” so the narrator of “The Nightmare” chapter—clearly speaking for both Somers and Lawrence—suggests that people who complied with orders during the war were “jackals” (217) and “rats” (222), and “reeking hyaena[s]” (250), that they existed at the level of “foul dogs” (255) obeying the commands of their masters: hence, the “terrier-like sergeant” (218), and the “military *canaille*” (233), the “puppy lieutenant” (234), and the entire “mongrelmouthed world” (250). All such individuals who “sink” their “sense of truth, of justice, and of human honour,” the narrator claims, are “like some horrible unclean hound” which bays “with a loud sound, from slavering, unclean jaws” (212). Indeed, for Somers the entire war owed its very existence to the spirit of obedience, where each man would either “fling himself away” or else “let himself be dragged away, bit by bit” (213):

The terrible, unnatural war, made so indecent because in every country practically every man lost his head, and lost his own centrality, his own manly isolation in his own integrity, which alone keeps life real. Practically every man was caught away from himself, as in some horrible flood, and swept away with the ghastly masses of other men, disinclined to speak, or feel for himself, or to stand on his own feet, delivered over and swirling in the current, suffocated for the time being, and enjoying it. (213)

“If men had kept their souls firm and integral through the years,” the narrator claims, “the war would never have come on” (221). Thus whereas “the greatest secret of behaviour” is to “stand alone” (250), the “terrible, unnatural war” gathered force only because people, in Godwin’s sense, “surrendered” their own understanding and “annihilated” their own individuality: every man “lost his head” and his own “manly isolation,” according to the narrator, becoming “disinclined to speak, or feel for himself, or to stand on his own feet.” There was “Plenty of superb courage to face death” during the war, he claims, “But no courage in any man to face his own isolated soul, and abide by its decision. Easier to sacrifice oneself. So much easier!” (213).

Given that Somers comes to such clear and definite conclusions about the horrors of obedience in England—and about the vital importance of standing “alone”—it is rather peculiar that he should arrive in Australia soon after the war recommending obedience as a social necessity and a “joy”; he makes such a recommendation only for a brief, initial period, but the fact that he makes it at all should give us pause. But if this rather implausible shift in Somers’ political opinions represents an inconsistency in the construction of his character, it nevertheless serves an important narrative purpose,

for having Somers recoil from the idea of obedience all over again in Australia allows Lawrence to reinforce this theme by illustrating it a second time, and in much the same way. Somers' entry into the world of the Diggers—an organization largely comprised of returned soldiers—is an entry into the very psychology of obedience that nourished the war and gave it life.¹ It is a group in which the members are, as Jack points out, “‘a set of chaps with some guts in them, who’ll obey orders when they find a man who’ll give the orders’” (91), and who are “‘sworn to *obey* the leaders, no matter what the command’” (92). The “surest members,” Somers learns, are “sworn in to secrecy and to absolute obedience to any decision” (186), and all members submit themselves to what clearly amounts to a systematic course of political indoctrination. Hence during a discussion with Jack about the organization of the Diggers, Somers learns that:

The public members of the clubs were initiated into no secrets. The most important questions were discussed only among the chiefs. More general secrets were debated at the section meetings. That is, the great bulk of the members gave only their allegiance and their spirit of sympathy. The masters and chiefs carefully watched the response to all propositions at all open discussions. They carefully fostered the feeling they wished for, or which they were instructed to encourage. When the right feeling was arrived at, presumably, then the secret members started the discussion of propositions proposed from above....

“What I feel,” said Somers to Jack, “is that the bulk of you just don’t care what the Chief does, so long as he does something.”

“Oh, we don’t lose our sleep at nights. If he likes to be the boss, let him do the thinking. We know he’s our man, and so we’ll follow him. We can’t all be Peter and Paul and know all about it.” (186)

What Somers is beginning to learn here is that embracing the values of subordination and conformity—surrendering one’s own understanding—is as much a requirement for the Australian Diggers as it was for the members of the English “mob.” Just as no one was able to “feel for himself” during the war, so he finds that feeling among the Diggers is “fostered” by the “masters,” who themselves are acting on instructions from “above.” Just as the war came about, according to Somers, because “courage” was mistakenly aligned with “self-sacrifice,” so the Diggers mistakenly align “guts” with a willingness to “obey orders.” And just as the existence of the war depended upon men

¹ As the editor of the Cambridge edition of *Kangaroo* points out, the term “Digger” comes from “the colloquial name for an Australian private soldier in the infantry in the First World War” and “was later used of any returned soldier” (xxiv). One might also add that no evidence exists in this novel or anywhere else in his writing to suggest that Lawrence knew that the term “Diggers” was also (or originally) used by the seventeenth century protoanarchist group led by Gerrard Winstanley. For the anarchist “Diggers” see, for instance, Woodcock (1962:44–49) and Marshall (1992:96–100).

who could not “stand on [their] own feet,” and who could be “swept away,” so the Diggers depend upon men who will give “absolute obedience” to their leader, and who will embrace Jack’s attitude that “he’s our man, and so we’ll follow him.” Indeed Jack’s alacrity to “let [Kangaroo] do the thinking,” his willingness to act in ignorance of his own circumstances (“‘We can’t all...know all about it’”) goes far to connect him to that war-time pathology in which “practically every man lost his head.” It also goes far to confirm Godwin’s notion that “political associations” have “a more powerful tendency than perhaps any other circumstance in human affairs to render the mind quiescent and stationary” (284).²

What Somers also finds in Australia, just as he found in England, is that abject obedience inevitably makes individuals the “ready tools of injustice and cruelty”—Godwin’s terms again being entirely appropriate here. In this regard, the structure of this novel serves to convey its theme, for the fact that *Kangaroo* more or less ends with a bloody confrontation between opposing political parties strongly suggests the idea that brutality is the inescapable end of obedience. Whatever Lawrence actually heard about the “mob spirit” in action during the war in France, his image of what went on there, we might speculate, could not have been much different from the brawl he depicts between the Diggers and the Socialists at Canberra Hall, two groups which Somers had earlier recognized as the “accumulating forces of social violence” (260):

There was a most fearful roar, and a mad whirl of men, broken chairs, pieces of chairs brandished, men fighting madly with fists, claws, pieces of wood—any weapon they could lay hold of.... A mob with many different centres, some fighting frenziedly round a red flag.... But the central heap a mass struggling with the Diggers, in real blood-murder passion, a tense mass with long, naked faces gashed with blood, and hair all wild, and eyes demented, and collars bursten, and arms frantically waving over the dense bunch of horrific life.... (314)

The sheer chaos of this scene, the utter disorder and savagery of it, is not the consequence of spontaneous individuals acting out of their own volition, but the product of a “mob” acting in accordance with orders: it is a calculated and deliberate battle where the members of the Diggers are acting as tools for the political goals of the “higher command.” As Somers has already realized during the war, “demented” and “wild” and frenzied behaviour of this kind—the “real blood-murder passion”—is typical behaviour of individuals who “surrender...all their old beliefs, and all their sacred liberty” (215),

² The poem “Revolutions as Such!” (*Poems* 647) makes explicit Lawrence’s attitude toward ideologues involved in revolution:

Curiously enough, actual revolutions are made by robots,
living people never make revolutions,
they can’t, life means too much to them.

These lines are also germane to Somers’ rejection of revolution as a general principle.

those who sacrifice their “sense of essential truth, essential honour, essential justice” (212). And because this “sense,” according to Somers, is the “deepest part of a man,” it is only fitting that Jack, who is not only “bound to follow Kangaroo’s orders” (187), but who is also “as shallow as a pie-dish, and proud of it” (109), should serve as a kind of incarnation of this honorless and unjust mob, finding his highest fulfilment, as mobs in *Kangaroo* always do, in murder. Hence, returning from the brawl with the Socialists and boasting of how he “settled *three* of ‘em’,” he says, with “an indescribable gloating joy in his tones”:

“Cripes, there’s nothing bucks you up sometimes like killing a man— nothing. You feel a perfect angel after it.”

Richard felt the same torn feeling in his abdomen, and his eyes watched the other man.

“When it comes over you, you know, there’s nothing else like it. I never knew, till the war. And I wouldn’t believe it then, not for many a while. But it’s there. Cripes, it’s there right enough. Having a woman’s something, isn’t it? But it’s a flea-bite, nothing, compared to killing your man when your blood comes up.” (319)

The reference Jack makes to the “war” in this passage is important, for it creates a clear continuity between this localized battle and the recent and immeasurably larger conflict in Europe. And it also suggests that Jack’s obvious, if extreme, demonstration of a depraved mind—the depravity which Kropotkin saw as the inescapable result of obedience—is far more than a manifestation of individual or personal corruption: by claiming that homicide is the highest value, Jack is giving voice to what Somers (and of course Lawrence) sees as the very spirit of the corrupt and obedient age.

Another way in which Lawrence connects obedience to injustice and cruelty in *Kangaroo* is to depict the absolute intolerance that individuals who are obedient to external authority show toward those who are not. It’s worth noticing in this regard that the central focus of “The Nightmare” chapter is less on the “mob spirit” that drove soldiers to kill each other on the battlefield than it is on the brutal behaviour of the “mob” that stayed at home to “torture” those who refused to “acquiesce” (213). It is because Somers “simply could not commit himself to any service whatsoever” (221), for instance, that the military doctors—who are part of the “criminal mob”—were “pinning almost whimpering to give the last grab at him, and haul him to earth—a victim. Finished!” (255). Indeed, just as Max Stirner noted that a conformist society “persecutes with dull mercilessness the individual, the real man” (255–256), so Somers finds that the general population in England seeks to “torture any single, independent man as a mob always tortures the isolated and independent” (225). Just as Stirner believed that a conformist society will treat the non-conformist as a “neverceasing criminal” (179), so the people of war-time England—the “foul, dense, carrion-eating

mob...trying to set their teeth in him”—harass Somers to the point of making him feel like “a criminal marked out by society, marked-out for annihilation” (250). The mob violates his privacy, it assails him as a spy, it removes him from his home, it restricts his movement and it subjects him to an almost unceasing barrage of ridicule and humiliation. “[O]nly he...who practices ‘self renunciation’,” Stirner writes, “is acceptable to the people” (179). “They hated him,” the narrator of *Kangaroo* similarly observes, “because he wasn’t cowed, as they were all cowed” (228).

This same kind of hatred toward Somers as an independent man is replicated in Australia after he decides not to “pledge” himself to the Diggers— when he tells Jack that “I can’t join in with what you’re doing here,” and adds that “I am one of those who must stand and wait— though I don’t pretend that by so doing I also serve” (289). On hearing this declaration of independence, Jack responds with precisely the same kind of hostility toward Somers that the “stay-at-home bullies” (212) did during the war:

There was a silence of hate....

“I’m sorry I’ve sort of fizzled out so quickly,” said Richard. “But you wouldn’t have me pretend, would you? I’d better be honest at the beginning.”

Jack looked at him slowly, with slow, inchoate eyes, and a look of contempt on his face. The contempt on Jack’s face, the contempt of the confident he-man for the shifty she-man, made Richard flush with anger, and drove him back on his deeper self once more.

“What do you call honest?” said Jack, sneering.

Richard became very silent, very still. He realised that Jack would like to give him a thrashing. (290–291)

Jack’s “contempt” and “malevolence” and “jeering” and “hate,” during this scene (289–291), his overhanging threat of physical violence, even his oblique attack on Somers’ manhood, are all component parts of what Somers was subjected to during the war because of his similar refusal to join in. The similarity between Jack and the “criminal mob” in England extends even further than this, however. After Somers breaks with the Diggers, Jack comes to Somers’ house “like a spy to take soundings” (287), in much the same way that the people of Cornwall “spied on” Somers by “watching through a hole in the drystone wall” (227). And just as the people spying on Somers in Cornwall attempted to twist his independence into a form of espionage, so Jack also turns the tables by accusing Somers of acting as a spy:

“You’ve found out all you wanted to know, I suppose?” said Jack.

“I didn’t want to know anything. I didn’t come asking or seeking. It was you who chose to tell me.”

“You didn’t try drawing us out, in your own way?”

“Why no, I don’t think so.”

Again Jack looked at him with a faint contemptuous smile of derision.

“I should have said myself you did. And you got what you wanted, and now are clearing out with it. Exactly like a spy, in my opinion.”

Richard opened wide eyes, and went pale.

“A spy!” he exclaimed. “But it’s just absurd.”

Jack did not vouchsafe any answer, but sat there as if he had come for some definite purpose, something menacing, and was going to have it out with the other man.

“Kangaroo doesn’t think I came spying, does he?” (291)

And it is during this same exchange that Jack threatens to prevent Somers from leaving Australia:

“Then what do you want of me now?” [Somers] asked, very coldly.

“Some sort of security, I suppose,” said Jack, looking away at the sea.

Richard was silent with rage and cold disgust, and a sort of policefear.

“Pray what sort of security?” he replied, coldly.

“That’s for you to say, maybe. But we want some sort of security that you’ll keep quiet, before we let you leave Australia.” (291–292)

The “police-fear” that Somers experiences here alludes to the fact that the military police in England had also restricted his movement, in a sense incarcerating him in England (as part of its will-to-torture) for his refusal to sacrifice his own integrity. The police, according to Somers, were “just *things*, obeying orders” (244), emissaries of the “black animosity of authority” (240) that pervaded England at the time. Jack, too, operates as a tool for a “black animosity”: by shifting into the plural “we” as he delivers this threat to detain Somers, he underscores the fact that he is acting as a functional part of a structure of power. Obviously having sunk his “sense of truth, of justice, and of human honour” beneath the imposing obligations of being a Digger, he has become, in Thoreau’s phrase, an “agent of injustice.”

Another aspect of Somers’ politics that connects him with philosophical anarchism is the sense he develops over the course of the narrative that leadership not only destabilizes the integrity of those who are led, but inevitably destabilizes the leaders themselves. Thus, although Somers comes to Australia with the notion that “it was his own high destiny to be a leader” (92), he leaves Australia having developed an idea about leadership that is entirely consistent with Bakunin’s: namely, that “power and

authority corrupt those who exercise them as much as those who are compelled to submit to them” (Maximov 249). One of the key factors that brings Somers to such a conclusion is his recognition, through his dealings with Kangaroo, that leaders are by definition at least as intolerant of the “single, independent man” as any “criminal mob” could ever hope to be. Kangaroo, in fact, repeatedly responds with violence to any kind of dissent, interpreting the independence of others as a kind of “treachery” toward himself. This is clearly the case, for instance, when Somers disagrees with his idea of imposing “one central principle in the world” (207):

“Of course you understand,” [Kangaroo] began in a muffled voice,
“that it must be one thing or the other. Either you are with me, and I feel
you with me: or you cease to exist for me....
“I’m not really against you, am I?” said Somers. And his own heart answered,
Yes you are!
“You are not with me,” said Kangaroo, bitterly.
“No,” said Somers slowly.
“Then why have you deceived me, played with me,” suddenly roared Kan-
garoo. “I could have you killed.”
“Don’t do that,” laughed Somers, rather coldly.
But the other did not answer. He was like a black cloud. (209)

This (ironic) threat to kill Somers for refusing to conform to a belief in universal love—an extension of Somers’ stubborn resolve that they should remain “hard, separate men” (209)—very soon turns into a flagrant act of aggression: rage and “hatred” have transformed Kangaroo into an object of terror, a “horrible” and murderous “Thing”:

“I am sorry if I have been foolish,” [Somers] said, backing away from the Thing. And as he went out of the door he made a quick movement, and his heart melted in horror lest the Thing Kangaroo should suddenly lurch forward and clutch him. If that happened, Kangaroo would have blood on his hands!... Kangaroo had followed [him] slowly, awfully behind like a madman. If he came near enough to touch—! (211)

The context in which this scene occurs includes references to Kangaroo as “hideous” and “dangerous,” “mindless” and “blind,” all terms that the narrative has applied in one form or another to the “criminal public” in England for its similar attempt to destroy “a separate, single man” (214)—an attempt that is depicted, ultimately, as an attempt to destroy the very principle of separateness itself. Thus as Somers is soon to reflect, Kangaroo is the leader of a mob—a “gang,” as Jaz calls it (157)—not just because he is outside of it, controlling its values and movement, but—and perhaps even

more so—because he epitomizes the mob, embodying its resentments and hostilities toward the “independent soul.” From Somers’ perspective, therefore, the distinction between leaders and followers completely collapses: “he was the mob, really,” Somers tells himself when considering the character of Kangaroo. “See his face in a rage. He was the mob: the *vengeful* mob. Oh God, the most terrifying of all things” (265).

Another, though closely related, corruption that Somers finds in both Kangaroo’s leadership and in leadership as a general principle is that leaders are by definition deprived of the “isolation” and “independence” required for a fully individualized and authentic life. It is probably more for this reason than any other, therefore, that each time Somers is offered a position of leadership—once by the Diggers and once by the Socialists—he is overwhelmed with a sense of his own impending doom. When, for instance, he is asked by Willie Struthers to ““Come and breathe the breath of life into us”” and to ““Show us how to *believe* in one another”” (200), Somers has an intuition that “something in the glisten [of Struthers’ eyes] was bearing him down, as a snake bears down a bird. Himself the bird” (201). The sense of being brought down, of being hunted, is, of course, precisely the same feeling he had throughout the war, when the mob tried to “grab at him, [and] haul him to earth, a victim.” Somers experiences the same sort of feeling in the scene where Jack tells him that: ““We want a man like you, you know—like a sort of queen bee to a hive”” (95):

Jack was trying to put something over him—in some way, to get a hold over him. He felt like an animal that is being lassoed. Yet here was his chance, if he wanted to be a leader of men. He had only to give himself up, give himself to it and to the men. (94)

Once again, Somers associates leadership with entrapment, with being “lassoed” and held down. Perhaps even more significant, however, is that he also makes a very clear connection here between being a leader and having to “give himself up,” leadership in a sense involving a surrender of himself, a definite kind of subservience, to the very men that he should be leading. Thus at the center of any position of leadership, the narrative suggests, is a negation of the very independence that Somers consistently associates with a higher type of human life. This negation is clearly conveyed through an image Somers has of Kangaroo fulfilling the same kind of role that Jack had earlier tempted him with: the role of “queenbee”:

But Kangaroo wanted to be queen-bee of another hive, with all the other bees clustering on him like some huge mulberry. Sickening! Why couldn’t he be alone? At least for once. For once withdraw entirely. (282–283)

Of course, a leader who is “alone” is hardly a leader at all, for to withdraw from a “clustering” group of followers in the way that Somers means would be to withdraw from leadership itself. Indeed the image of Kangaroo clustering with his followers is the

image of a social unison, which for Somers is the demonic inversion of the sacred state of “individual integrity.” What this image of Kangaroo and his followers represents to Somers, that is to say, is the idea that leaders are inseparable from their followers; they necessarily cluster together in a state of “sickening” mutual dependence. Hence leading (or following) either the Diggers or the Socialists, Somers declares, is “a choice of evils, and I choose neither” (304).

As a final point, I want to suggest that what emerges from Somers’ rejection of both leaders and followers—of both authority and obedience—is a clearly defined idea for an alternative path to a higher society, an idea which perhaps more than any other in the novel finds its context within anarchistic thought. In this regard, if we combine the crucial importance Somers bestows upon “individual integrity” and standing “alone” with the profound regret he eventually feels for ever having wanted to “join in revolutions or reforms or any of that stuff” (272), two central ideas about social change begin to suggest themselves. The first idea is that deliberately collective political effort cannot be the means to social improvement, because collective effort is itself the source of the deepest social ills.³ In *Kangaroo* social solidarity is shown to find its apogee far more readily in the cruel and destructive movements of a dehumanized “mob” than in the productive actions of living and authentic human beings. Godwin’s warning about the “evil of co-operation” and its propensity “for imprisoning the operations of our own mind” (758–760) is clearly relevant here, for what Somers learns above all else in the course of this narrative is that involvement in any kind of collectivity is bound to compromise one’s own “sense of truth, of justice, and of honour.”⁴ While in England Somers “despise[d] politics” (98) and “belonged to no group” (212); the fact that he even considers associating himself with either the Diggers or the Socialists in Australia is presented as a certain, if temporary, fall from grace.

The second idea, related to the first, is that the only truly revolutionary force in society, the only force for positive social change, is individuality itself. “Isolation,” “separation,” “singleness,” “independence,” all these terms occur frequently in this novel and they all serve to convey its overarching theme that a higher type of society will be brought about not when people band together, but when they “stand alone.” This notion, it is important to note, is also a key idea in Stirner, who rejected conventional revolution as a means to real social change and promoted the idea of “insurrection” in its place. Indeed, to understand the distinction that Stirner makes between these two

³ However suspicious of *deliberate* co-operation, Lawrence, like all anarchists, celebrates *spontaneous* forms of co-operation, as we find in his essay “Democracy”: “If men would but *keep* whole, integral, everything could be left at that. There would be no need for laws and governments: agreement would be spontaneous. Even the great concerted social activities would be essentially spontaneous” (*RDP* 81)

⁴ Godwin’s strictures concerning co-operation extend to playing in music concerts (because of “The miserable state of mechanism of the majority of the performers”) and to acting on the stage: “Shall we have theatrical exhibitions? This seems to include an absurd and vicious co-operation. It may be doubted whether men will hereafter come forward in any mode formally to repeat words and ideas that are not their own?” (760).

categories for social action—“revolution” and “insurrection”—is to go far to understand what is perhaps the most central political concept in *Kangaroo*, one that is suggested on almost every page of the text but is never quite fully pronounced. Thus whereas revolution, according to Stirner, only “commands one to make *arrangements*” in society, insurrection goes much further and “demands” that an individual remain unconcerned about arrangements—the social system—and concentrate all his efforts in the attempt to “*rise or exalt himself*.” Hence:

Revolution and insurrection must not be looked upon as synonymous. The former consists in an overturning of conditions, of the established condition or status, the State or society, and is accordingly a political or social act; the latter has indeed for its unavoidable consequence a transformation of circumstances, yet does not start from it but from men’s discontent with themselves, is not an armed rising, but a rising of individuals, a getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it. The Revolution aimed at new arrangements; insurrection leads us no longer to let ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on “institutions.” It is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collapses of itself; it is only a working forth of me out of the established. If I leave the established, it is dead and passes into decay. Now as my object is not the overthrow of an established order but my elevation above it, my purpose and deed are not a political or social but (as directed toward myself and my ownness alone) an egoistic purpose and deed. (279–280)⁵

What revolutionaries do not and cannot understand, according to Stirner, is that the real enemy of liberty is not any *particular* ideological structure or system of social order, but *all* structures and *all* imposed systems of social order. A real “transformation of circumstances” has therefore to be motivated by each individual’s own need for self fulfilment—“men’s discontent with themselves”—not by the desire to realize an abstract social plan. Hence the only possible way for an individual to avoid acting as an agent for yet another oppressive social form (again, all imposed social forms are oppressive for Stirner) is to avoid politics and “armed rising” entirely: one should not fight against the old order but do what one can to walk away from it; one must work

⁵ Lawrence bears a remarkable similarity to Stirner where his ideas about social action are concerned. Where Stirner writes of insurrection as a “getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it,” Lawrence writes: “When men become their own decent selves again, then we can so easily arrange the material world. The arrangement will come, as it must come, spontaneously, not by previous ordering” (*RDP* 82). Just as Stirner writes that insurrection “is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collapses of itself,” so Lawrence writes: “And if sufficient people come out of the walled defences [i.e. the established order] and pitched in the open, then very soon the walled city would be a mere dependent on the free tents of the wilderness. Why should we care about bursting the city walls? We can walk through the gates into the open world” (*Hardy* 38–39).

oneself “out of the established” so that it “collapses of itself.” What will follow, Stirner suggests, is not chaos, but a new and higher kind of social order, one that develops organically out of individual human need, not one that is enforced from on high by institutional fiat.

In *Kangaroo* Somers comes to much the same conclusions about the means to social change, but he does so in more or less progressive steps. The first decisive step he takes in this direction is in fact his explicit rejection of “armed uprising,” which he comes to see as a manifestation of misplaced need, something that is bereft of any capability to deliver personal or social redemption:

He had been thinking, in his anger of the morning, that he would get Jack to teach him to shoot with a rifle and a revolver, so that he might take his part. He had never shot with a gun in his life, so he had thought it was high time to begin. But now he went back on his thoughts. What did he want with guns or revolvers? Nothing. He had nothing to do with them, as he had nothing to do with so much that is in the world of man. When he was truly himself he had a quiet stillness in his soul, an inward trust. Faith, undefined and undefinable. Then he was at peace with himself. (154)

What Somers has realized at this point is that it is not an armed rising that he requires but, in Stirner’s sense, a rising up of himself. He realizes that he cannot be “truly himself” if he is to “take his part” in the revolution because guns and revolvers will not deliver the “quiet and stillness in his soul.” And this need to remove himself from the “world of man,” this sense that he must rise above the current structure of society rather than attempt to overthrow it, becomes increasingly more pronounced the more he understands the methods and goals of the revolutionary parties in Australia. Thus as a second step toward insurrection he comes to reject not only armed rising, but any attempt whatsoever to help anyone but himself:

That was now all he wanted: to get clear. Not to save humanity or to help humanity or to have anything to do with humanity. No—no. Kangaroo had been his last embrace with humanity. Now, all he wanted was to cut himself clear. To be clear of humanity altogether, to be alone. To be clear of love, and pity, and hate. To be alone from it all. To cut himself finally clear from the last encircling arm of the octopus humanity. To turn to the old dark gods, who had waited so long in the outer dark.... And the spontaneous soul must extricate itself from the meshes of the almost automatic white octopus of the human ideal, the octopus of humanity. It must struggle clear, knowing what it is doing: not waste itself in revenge. The revenge is inevitable enough, for each denial of the spontaneous dark soul creates the reflex of its own revenge. But the greatest revenge on the lie is to get clear of the lie. (265–266)

The only form of “struggle” productive of freedom, this passage suggests, is the struggle to extricate oneself from social involvement altogether. This is essentially what Stirner sees as the struggle to elevate oneself above the “established order,” a struggle that he opposes to the struggle *against* that order with the intention to “overthrow” it. In *Kangaroo* Somers similarly regards seeking “revenge” on the existing social system as a “waste”: the self or “soul” simply cannot be “spontaneous” when engaged in conflict because it will necessarily be conditioned by the very force that it opposes. One is reminded here of Ursula’s warning in *Women in Love* that “even fighting the old is belonging to it” (438); the idea also surfaces in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in a scene where Connie asks Mellors if he hated Clifford. Mellors replies: “‘Hate him, no! I’ve met too many like him, to upset myself hating him. I know beforehand I don’t care for his sort, and I let it go at that’” (196). This idea of refusing to fight what one opposes—of refusing to engage with it—finds a more direct political significance in *Kangaroo* in the idea that the only liberating act of reprisal against a lie is “to get clear of the lie.” Freedom, Somers gradually learns, is the reward of insurgence, not of revolt.

As Somers also learns, moreover, the ultimate reward for the insurgent is entry into a higher kind of society. Just as Stirner sees an insurrectionary “movement”—I use the term provisionally here—leading directly to a “transformation of circumstances,” to a fully libertarian community where we each “arrange ourselves” (rather than “*let* ourselves be arranged”), so Somers conceives that the individual who has “cut himself clear” from humanity has made a crucial advance toward a community where each member is governed only by his own “spontaneous soul.” Thus for Somers cutting himself off from so-called “humanity”—or working himself forth from it, as Stirner would say—is not an act of cutting himself off from the possibility of social interaction, but rather an act of ensuring a real basis for it: solitude and sociability are reverse sides of the same coin:

Man’s isolation was always a supreme truth and fact, not to be forsworn. And the mystery of apartness. And the greater mystery of the dark God beyond a man, the God that gives a man passion, and the dark, unexplained blood-tenderness that is deeper than love.... “The only thing one can stick to is one’s own isolate being, and the God in whom it is rooted. And the only thing to look to is the God who fulfils one from the dark. And the only thing to wait for is for men to find their aloneness and their God in the darkness. Then one can meet as worshippers, in a sacred contact in the dark.”(327–328)

This idea of sticking to “one’s own isolate being” is, of course, directly opposed to the kind of society which the revolutionary *Kangaroo* had hoped to create, one with leader and followers all sticking or “clustering” together like bees on “some huge mulberry.” A true society, Somers suggests here, is created not through clustering but

through “separateness,” and the only authority to be obeyed is one’s own “inward sense of an inwelling magnificence” (328). Social order, in other words, is immanent rather than transcendent, society being rooted—because each individual is rooted—in “the God who fulfils one from the dark.” Obedience in this society is not so much negated, therefore, but raised and transformed into the practice of “worship,” a form of worship whose end is the fulfilment rather than the annihilation of the individual self. And contact among individuals is transformed in precisely the same way: it is no longer a profane exercise in mutual destruction, but something “sacred”: “To meet another dark worshipper,” Somers reflects in this regard, “that would be the best of human meetings” (328).

What Somers in fact arrives at here is a vision of society that is very much the reverse of that vision which led him to believe in the “joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority.” By rejecting all social and political forms of leadership and obedience, by rejecting revolution in favour of a spontaneous uprising of individuals, and, finally, by internalizing the source of true authority, making it individual rather than social— and personal instead of political—he has in fact utterly denied that “necessity for *rule*” which the narrative initially suggests is the only possible basis for society. As the narrative proceeds, that is to say, Somers’ political sensibility clearly and steadily swings from authoritarian to libertarian. And without ever having explicitly spoken its name, Somers has, by the end of his Australian journey, admitted himself an anarchist.

Conclusion

But there is hope of a new world; no hope of a reformed world. (2L 666)

The central purpose of this study has been to establish that D.H. Lawrence's social and political vision—the heart, if not the whole of it—is best understood within the context of philosophical anarchism. At no point in his writing career can Lawrence be said to have sustained any single, coherent ideological perspective—one organizing system of ideas that comprehended all aspects of his political thought—and his writing, largely as a result of this, is often fraught with self-contradiction: libertarian and authoritarian ideas often compete with each other for attention in his work, and they compete not only from book to book, but sometimes on the same page, even within the same paragraph. Discerning the fundamentally anarchistic nature of Lawrence's politics therefore requires an initial act of separating the libertarian from the authoritarian strands; only then can one see just how essential libertarian ideas are to his work as a whole and how his belief in individual liberty—the “essence of anarchism” (Runkle 3)—is inextricably linked to so many other significant areas of his thought.

The familiar political terms of “left” and “right,” imprecise categories at best, have no truly useful application to Lawrence, and to claim, as at least one critic has done, that at some point in 1915 “Lawrence shifted ground politically to the right” (Rylance 164), is largely to obscure the nature of Lawrence's dominant political beliefs, both before 1915 and particularly after it. Lawrence's frequent and excoriating critique of socialism, for instance, is not often articulated from the perspective of the so-called “right,” and it is not, as has also been suggested, the expression of a “proletarian” writer who has somehow become a “major precursor of fascism” (Eagleton 157, 158). Rather, it almost always derives from an entirely different political position: Lawrence's insistence, for example, that “young reformers, Socialists, Fabians...are our disease, not our hope” (3L 49) is part of his rejection of politics and social reform as a whole, “left” and “right,” and it is clearly connected to his conviction that “the most perfect social systems are probably the most complete nullities, that all relentless organisation is in the end pure negation” (RDP 46). George Woodcock's observation that anarchists “are united in regarding themselves as apolitical or even antipolitical” (1962:31), and that “Anarchists do not advocate political freedom” but instead advocate “freedom from politics” (1992: 86), is highly relevant to this aspect of Lawrence's political thought. In fact, freedom from politics is precisely what Lawrence urges in, among other works, his essay “Democracy,” where he claims that existing political systems function to negate

rather than to support individual liberty and that the only kind of democracy worth having is one that cannot really be called a political system at all:

Let us get over our rage of social activity, public being, universal selfestimation, republicanism, bolshevism, socialism, empire—all these are mad manifestations of en masse and One-Identity. They are all self-betrayal. Let our Democracy be in the singleness of the clear, clean self, and let our En Masse be no more than an arrangement for the liberty of this self. (RDP 73–74)

In *The Plumed Serpent* Don Ramon's wish to avoid tainting his social movement with a "political smell" is clearly consistent with this repudiation of "social activity": "The surest way to kill [the new spirit],'" Ramon says, "'is to get it connected with any political party'" (247). As I discussed in my final chapter, the confining and corrupting nature of political parties is also one of the main themes of *Kangaroo*, a novel that focuses on both the futility of social reform and the necessity of remaining free from any kind of political association.

To my knowledge, Lawrence used the phrase "naked liberty" only once in his writing, and even then in a letter that was not intended for publication. It is a phrase, however, that has the peculiar quality of encapsulating a very great deal of what Lawrence had to say about individual freedom and the nature of a higher type of society. It carries with it, of course, the connotation of sexual freedom—though we have to keep in mind Lawrence's rather austere sense of what sexual freedom entails—but its implications extend far beyond the domain of sexual relationships to suggest something about social relationships in general. Contained within the phrase "naked liberty" is Lawrence's belief that interaction among individuals in any "real community" must be stripped of all forms of cultural mediation—"duty," "law," "morality," "obligation"—all the social encumbrances that exist outside of and that serve to restrain and even to distort true spontaneous desire. Lawrence's thinking in this regard is much the same as Stirner's, who wrote that "The state cannot endure that man stand in a direct relation to man; it must step between as—*mediator*, must—*intervene*" (226). When Birkin in *Women in Love* tells Ursula that they must leave England and find "a free place" where "one needn't wear much clothes" (316), he is clearly using clothing as a metaphor for the ways in which the established social order, the State, prevents direct contact between individuals—how it comes between them and prevents their ability, as Lawrence says elsewhere, to "touch each other" (*Poems* 611), as they will do in what he calls a "Democracy of touch." This "direct relation" of free individuals defines the libertarian vision of a world beyond the established order.

Although I have been pursuing what I call the "elements" of anarchism in Lawrence's work—by which I mean, of course, the core concepts of anarchism—I have also attempted to convey that these elements must not be regarded as separate and discrete ideas in Lawrence, but must be recognized as interconnected and more or less interdependent; they combine to reinforce each other. I will end by giving an example of

what I mean by this. Lawrence's belief in the need to "smash the frame" of society (2L 286), his belief in the need to "destroy" "all that is, in our public and national life" (2L 328), is not necessarily, in itself, a manifestation of his anarchism: anyone with a strong enough opposition to the existing social order could make such a claim, no matter what his or her political convictions happen to be. Rather, Lawrence's desire to "destroy" the "established world" can be viewed as a significant component of his anarchism only if we recognize its place in the larger context of his libertarian ideas; such ideas as his profound distrust of the State, his hatred of all external forms of domination and control (including ideals), his faith in the essentially moral nature of the instincts, his belief that human beings must be governed only by the laws of their own nature, and, finally, his conviction that individual desire is the cornerstone of true social order. All of these are key ideas in Lawrence's thinking, as they are in anarchistic theory generally; for Lawrence, just as for anarchism, they form an overarching vision of a completely cohesive society in which the liberty of every individual is of paramount importance.

I might also add that the wish to destroy the "established order" is not a wish to destroy "order" itself, but a wish to destroy the "established," which for Lawrence, as for all anarchists, is an immensely oppressive kind of chaos on its own, however seldom it is recognized by others as such. A "reformed world" has no "hope" because it will only introduce a new form of compulsion, and will therefore introduce yet another kind of discord. On the other hand, however, Lawrence's "*new world*," removed from the ostensibly "civilizing" pressures of constraint, will be an outward and direct manifestation of what he calls the "inviolable order in one's soul" (2L 601): it will be the world we truly desire because it will be the world in which desire is truly fulfilled. This particular vision of a "new world" is deeply rooted in anarchistic thought and the long history of libertarian ideas, and it serves, as I have tried to show, as the coordinating principle for the vast majority of Lawrence's explicit political statements and for a very great deal of his fiction. It is for this reason, I believe, that when a full account of the relationship between anarchism and English literature is finally written, D.H. Lawrence will take a prominent place.

Quotations from Lawrence's Essays

The following list provides details for the quotations taken from Lawrence's essays. All dates are from Keith Sagar's *D.H. Lawrence: A Calendar of His Works*. Notes are keyed to page and line.

- 3:19 "the many." "Review of *The Grand Inquisitor*," 1930.
3:20 "the lower." "Aristocracy," 1925.
5:13 "hatred." "Review of *Cavelleria Rusticana*" 1927.
5:15 "transgression." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
5:18 "the dictates." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
5:23 "imagine any." "Review of *Cavelleria Rusticana*," 1927.
5:44 "Do we want." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*" 1929.
6:2 "The State." "Democracy," 1919.
6:3 "state educations." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
6:23 "Which is greater." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
7:7 "The proper adjustment," etc. "Democracy," 1919.
8:9 "in [a] collectivity." "Education of the People," 1920.
9:21 "Each man." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
10:25 "A man's self." "Democracy," 1919.
11:1 "a parliament." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
11:9 "insist[s]." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
11:31 "the worms." "The Crown," 1915.
13:19 "It is not." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
15:2 "distinct." "Democracy," 1919.
15:32 "he who has." "The Real Thing," 1929.
15:35 "a sort of." "Democracy," 1919.
16:24 "indescribable." "Education of the People," 1920.
16:34 "my integrity." "Why the Novel Matters," 1925.
17:9 "power." "Blessed are the Powerful," 1925.
17:9 "continuum." "The Individual Consciousness V. the Social Consciousness," 1927.
17:11 "flow." "We Need One Another," 1929.
17:11 "life-energy." "Him with His Tail in His Mouth," 1925.
17:19 "primal, spontaneous." "Democracy," 1919.
17:43 "real works." "Introduction to These Paintings," 1928.
18:1 "complete." "Introduction to These Paintings," 1928.

18:44 "insistence on." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
 19:3 "If I say." "Why the Novel Matters," 1925.
 19:16 "We cannot." "Democracy," 1919.
 19:26 "All ideals." "Democracy," 1919.
 19:39 "each opposite." "The Crown," 1915.
 20:1 "highest reality." "Education of the People," 1920.
 20:7 "the great lesson." "Democracy," 1919.
 20:18 "unshakable." "The Two Principles," 1919.
 20:31 "flow." "We Need One Another," 1929.
 20:31 "All the time." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
 21:4 "at the static." "Life," 1916.
 21:14 "direct from." "Education of the People," 1920.
 21:28 "Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness*," 1927.
 21:41 "mankind." "Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness*," 1927.
 21:43 "picture." "Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness*," 1927.
 23:21 "abysmal insanity." "Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness*," 1927.
 23:36 "One is one." "Education of the People," 1920.
 24:32 "He is kind." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," 1929.
 25:33 "Insist on." "Nobody Loves Me," 1929.
 25:43 "into abstracted." "Democracy," 1919.
 26:12 "slave." "John Galsworthy," 1927.
 26:41 "pure spontaneous." "Love," 1916.
 26:42 "finer." "Art and Morality," 1925.
 26:45 "decent." "Democracy," 1919.
 27:2 "deep instinct." "Introduction to These Paintings," 1928.
 28:7 "individualist." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 28:34 "Don Juan." "Love Was Once a Little Boy," 1925.
 30:34 "mass homogeneity." "Education of the People," 1920.
 30:38 "must work." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 31:1 "How one craves." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 31:16 "the finer." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 31:19 "is herself." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 32:14 "new Democracy." "Democracy," 1919.
 32:17 "realize at last." "Education of the People," 1920.
 32:24 "the fact." "Democracy," 1919.
 34:25 "always-civil." "Prologue to *Women in Love*," 1917.
 36:20 "I am convinced." "The State of Funk," 1929.
 51:1 "In the great." "Education of the People," 1920.
 51:13 "The great social." "The State of Funk," 1929.
 51:17 "each individual." "Education of the People," 1920.
 51:19 "what holds." "Education of the People," 1920.
 51:23 "sickness." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.

53:16 "A servant." "Education of the People," 1920.
 53:22 "We." "We Need One Another," 1929.
 67:18 "whole relationship." "We Need One Another," 1929.
 67:28 "sacred and inviolable." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*" 1929.
 70:1 "smaller system." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 70:18 "the morality of life." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 71:7 "the established system." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 74:35 "accoutrements." "Education of the People," 1920.
 80:9 "symbolic of." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," 1929.
 81:5 "immediate contact." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," 1929.
 81:8 "sway." "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," 1929.
 84:34 "life-energy." "Him with a Tail in His Mouth," 1925.
 84:38 "spontaneous." "Democracy," 1919.
 84:38 "soul." "The Two Principles," 1919.
 84:39 "Holy Ghost." "The Crown," 1915.
 84:39 "God-mystery." "Foreword to *Women in Love*," 1919.
 84:40 "gem of." "The Two Principles," 1919.
 84:40 "life-plasm." "The Two Principles," 1919.
 85:33 "The sun makes." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 86:2 "looks up." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 86:9 "born short." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
 86:13 "Very few." "The Crown," 1915.
 86:18 "elect." "Review of *The Grand Inquisitor*" 1930.
 86:20 "life-issues." "Education of the People," 1920.
 86:30 "each being." "Education of the People," 1920.
 86:30 "a fountain." "Review of *All Things are Possible*," 1919.
 86:37 "*most alive*." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 87:3 "the vast." "Education of the People," 1920.
 87:42 "the providing." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 88:2 "serve." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 88:5 "It is not." "Review of *The Grand Inquisitor*," 1930.
 88:18 "aristocracy of." "Aristocracy," 1925.
 88:24 "chooses to." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 88:37 "There is a." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
 89:4 "the perfectest." "The Reality of Peace," 1917.
 89:14 "degenerate." "The Novel and the Feelings," 1925.
 89:21 "by his nature." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 89:27 "It only robs." "Democracy," 1919.
 89:34 "Any assumption." "Education of the People," 1920.
 90:14 "the glamour of." "Study of Thomas Hardy," 1914.
 94:1 "direct from." "Education of the People," 1920.
 94:3 "fate dictated." "Foreword to *Women in Love*," 1919.

94:4 “flow from.” “Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness*,” 1927.

94:12 “the lower shall.” “Aristocracy,” 1925.

110:3 “the most perfect.” “The Reality of Peace,” 1917.

110:15 “Let us get.” “Democracy,” 1919.

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