

Women in Love by Jeremy Tambling

In re-reading Leavis, especially on Lawrence, after so much theorization of modernism which as Graham Martin pointed out largely post-dates both, it is essential to undo virtually all the expectations given as to what modernism comprises.¹ In *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), Leavis connects Lawrence with George Eliot, and adds: ‘it has been said of George Eliot, by way of a limiting judgment, that the world for her is “ethical” rather than religious. This could not have been said of Lawrence, and a great difference lies there’.² That statement immediately precedes the quotation of what Leavis calls a ‘distinctive vibration’ in Lawrence: Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow* thinking ‘he knew he did not belong to himself’. When George Eliot essays a note which is similar, as after Dorothea’s night lying on the floor, there is the sense, as Leavis suggests, of too great an identification with Dorothea; the ‘vibration’ is willed, by the writer, not inevitable. In the essay on *Women in Love*, which is called a ‘dramatic poem’, a term first used for his essay on *Hard Times*, Leavis’ phrase becomes ‘the vibration of inner significance’ (160), ‘vibration’ being a key term in Lawrence. Leavis has already distinguished between ‘the poetic intensity’ in Lawrence, and in George Eliot (111), and perhaps the alliance of the poetic and the religious is Leavis’ way of finding something intensely modern, in the sense of new, in Lawrence, but it is less obviously modernist in the way that *Four Quartets* seems less modernist than *The Waste Land*, which is, indeed, usually taken as a prime instance for teaching the formal qualities of modernism: fragmentation, questioning of chronological time; the absence of a single voice within the text, especially a Romantic voice, which proclaims the priority of its own feelings: modernism being more classicist, impersonal. (It also seems significant that Leavis, after *New Bearings in English Poetry*, downplays its significance in comparison to *Four Quartets*.)

On one reading, *Four Quartets*, like *Ash-Wednesday*, is more religious than *The Waste Land*, and works like *Women in Love*, in that both attempt to find an ‘art-speech’ by which they can speak in a public domain; *Four Quartets* being, perhaps, the last major text to do so. *Women in Love*, whose

definitive writing came between April and June 1916 while Lawrence was living at Higher Treggerthen, and was then revised up to November that year, and again in January 1917, and again between March 1917 and September 1919, appeared in the USA in late 1920, with a Foreword which explains how the whole writing began before the War, in 1913, in the Tyrol, and whose time is therefore 'unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters' (485). Lawrence implies from that, persuasively, that it made little difference who won or lost the war; that the event of the war could not be registered. Like the later *Four Quartets*, *Women in Love* is a public statement of themes, intended for the public sphere, however much Lawrence might have despaired of that, certainly in Britain, and of course it works by an extraordinary poetry, of which I take the opening of 'Diver' as paradigmatic.

In noting Leavis' reading of *Women in Love*, which concentrates on Gerald, two points may be stressed. One, following Leavis' own hint, the Crich family owes something to Dickens and *Hard Times*, and the analysis of Gerald, which includes the statement 'no great novelist can be a Benthamite' (169) recalls what he had written about Dickens. In that way, the analysis of *Women in Love* underwrites what Leavis will later write in *Dickens the Novelist*, which even includes discussion of Dickens as a religious writer; so that the difference between *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* in Leavis' sense may have something to do with the difference between George Eliot and Dickens. Second, the analysis of a religious sense in *Women in Love* relates to a sense expressed by Birkin in 'Moony', in his memory of a West African fetish seen at Halliday's, subtly linked to Pussum, with whom Gerald has slept, though she was Halliday's mistress. Birkin takes this statuette of a woman in 'labour' (both a slave, even a sexual slave, and a woman in travail) as a type of 'purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge', showing that in the culture the statuette represents, 'the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual'. He adds that 'that which was imminent in himself' had taken place in that culture: 'the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness' has lapsed (253).

This last phrase is specifically quoted by Leavis (174-175) with regard to Lawrence on art, as a way of indicating positives which are religious, and present in both Lawrence and what Leavis takes from him. Leavis' emphasis on Gerald's 'will' anticipates his later discussion of Mrs Clennam in Dickens' *Little Dorrit*. That novel is present in *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, because when Leavis writes an appendix, 'Being an Artist', he draws specifically on *Little Dorrit*. Gerald's death in the snow, the ice-bound condition, echoes many passages in *Bleak House*, especially Lady Dedlock's freezing mood, and the opening of the second half of *Little Dorrit*, in the Alps, are intensely anticipative of elements of *Women in Love*, and imply a move in a Borges-like literary history where a text creates its predecessors, from George Eliot to Dickens. But I began with the alliance between a religious writing and art-speech. Discussions of art and poetic intensity and the religious in *Women in Love* mean that there can be no new art without these: this creates a very specific form of modernism, reacting to its more familiar forms, inside very different and weaker contexts from the European, and its forms of modernist expression.

Whether Lawrence is modernist or not partly depends on how he thinks of the single subject, which in modernist texts is de-centred, not only because of the work of Nietzsche and Freud. But Lawrence declares himself to be 'not a Freudian and never was – Freudianism is only a branch of medical science, interesting'³. The catch is in the word 'only', even if Lawrence does finish with the word 'interesting'. In *Women in Love*, the lives of four people, who have as minor subsidiaries: Hermione Roddice, the Criches, Pussum / Minette and Halliday and Loerke, are traced through steadily and with great concentration through thirty-two chapters, each short and episodic, so many of them dominated by a single image, and with the sense of a steady development in all them – including a character-development - from first to last, from early spring to an Alpine winter, the concentration made most evident in their dialogue, which is always provocative and fascinating and convincing, though it is not dialogue which associates with Bakhtin on the polyphonic novel; indeed, more Tolstoyan, and Eliot-like, than Dickensian or Dostoevskian: Lawrence seems to mis-read when he runs

Tolstoy and Dostoevsky together, finding in both ‘a certain moral scheme’ into which ‘all the characters fit’ (*Letters* 78). It would be a valid criticism of *Women in Love* to find the writing so concentrated in direction that it allows too little space for divergence, so that what happens does so in fulfilment of intuitions offered within the first few pages. Perhaps Birkin speaks for something that is lacking in the novel when he objects to ‘Hamletising’, and says ‘only believe me when I show a bit of healthy pride and insouciance’ (187). But there is still a large space given to Birkin’s thoughts. For instance, he takes a major emphasis of the novel and defines how it is modernist and how not when he considers that to say ‘I love you’:

was not the real truth. It was something beyond love, such a gladness of having surpassed oneself, of having transcended the old existence. How could he say ‘I’ when he was something new and unknown, not himself at all? This I, this old formula of the ego, was a dead letter. (369).

If this is examined, first there is the recall of Lawrence’s refusal of ‘the old stable ego’ in his letter to Edward Garnett.⁴ Second, how this thought, which is partially that of Birkin, part free indirect free discourse, goes back to Sir Joshua Mattheson (Bertrand Russell) contesting Birkin’s statement, in ‘Breadalby’ that ‘you can only have knowledge, strictly ... of things concluded, in the past’ with the statement ‘could we call our knowledge of the laws of gravitation, for instance, knowledge of the past?’ (86). To which Birkin replies, ‘Yes’. Significantly, and in keeping with logical positivism, Sir Joshua’s interest is in truths which he feels are established outside language. To find knowledge as having always moved on, so that I cannot claim a present knowledge, articulates with Lacan, who argues from his first essays on, that to claim knowledge is paranoiac.⁵ Lacan explains this in a piece of 1949 called ‘Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis’, where aggressivity, to use Sheridan’s older translation, entails disintegrating, destructive tendencies in the ego and Lacan calls it ‘the tendency correlated with a mode of identification [called] narcissistic, because it means the subject’s identification with the reflecting, alienating image of himself that he sees in

the mirror, and ‘which determines the formal structure of man’s ego and of the register of entities characteristic of his world’. Other things are regarded as equally fixed in a rigid ‘formal stagnation’ which Lacan writes:

is akin to the most general structure of human knowledge which constitutes the ego and objects as having the attributes of permanence, identity, and substance – in short as entities or ‘things’ that are very different from the gestalts that experience enables us to isolate in the mobility of the field ... what I have called paranoiac knowledge is therefore shown to correspond in its more or less archaic forms to certain critical moments that puncture the history of man’s mental genesis, each representing a stage of objectifying identification.

(111/90-91)

Paranoiac knowledge demands that there be an appearance of unity in the way things appear each time, because these buttress the ego’s sense of permanence, and identity, and substance. The subject goes through several stages of development, but each confirm the desire to put a space between it and the world, and to see the other in an ‘objectifying identification’, fixing it, seeing it too as directly opposed to it, as an image of it. Thus, to say that I know has the paranoid tendency of protecting identity, defending the self against the world where to say that it does not have sure knowledge would actually, in paranoid thinking, annihilate the self. At the heart of this is a refusal of Descartes’ positing the *cogito* as the source of knowledge. And it all seems central to *Women in Love*, and towards finding Lawrence modernist. And when Birkin feels that he cannot say ‘I’ when he is something new and unknown, that sounds like Rimbaud’s statement that ‘je est un autre’: Rimbaud, of course, being one for who said we must be utterly modern (and Rimbaud’s statement is also quoted as a contrary to paranoiac knowledge, by Lacan [118/96]).

Yet this discussion must be qualified by something more conservative: Birkin is not laying claim to not being Birkin, he is only claiming for himself a continual growth of the self, which could go in directions not yet

known. It is not a decentred self in the sense that Freud would give, because for Freud, the rational self does not know itself, is not its own master, because of its repression and its unconscious desire. Birkin at least defends the being that he is (refusing the ego, as in the Lawrence letter) as saying that it has a continuous course into the unknown. If the difference seems small it is symptomatic, for Lawrence denies what Freud would hold, that the subject is split, because of contrary demands being placed upon it, from a repression exerted on the sphere of desire by consciousness which wants to form a single, firm identity. This conflict divides its speech, which is given to it, from the subject's autonomy; for this reason there cannot be what Birkin claims: that 'final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility', where there is 'no speech' and where 'that which is perfectly ourselves can take place in us' (146-147). These expressions are richly phrased, and the 'impersonality', which escapes the imposition of the will (Leavis' distinction between 'identity', and 'selfhood', in his discussions of Blake) relates to much in *The Rainbow*, but it is not modernist in affirming a self beyond its constitutive splits, though the language is absolutely soaked in modernism in its expressivist tendencies. It defines an assurance quite outside the hesitations about the self which Lawrence parodies in 'Did I feel a twinge in my little toe, or didn't I', which he says every character in Joyce, or Dorothy Richardson, or Proust asks, calling it a 'self-consciousness' which is 'post-mortem behaviour'.⁶ That characterises a difference between the romantic and the modernist, for whom the self comes into being through language which cannot express the self, because the subject does not authorise language, but is held in it, language questioning by its doubleness, what the self professes to be.

This is where Lawrence's concept of two consciousnesses, mental, and blood, seems problematic: there is no sense here of these consciousnesses not being both available, immediate, having a presence in the subject's life. In contrast, Proust, when he writes about the body having a memory, indicates that this is unconscious, inaccessible to conscious memory. When Lawrence parodies Proust finding in him extreme self-consciousness, that misses the point that for Proust there is no no immediate presence; self and

subjectivity, formed in language, are absent; what recalls them is repetition which does not repeat a first authenticating action, but which has always existed as repetition. Lawrence reasons differently. In a letter to Russell (8 December 1915) Lawrence tells him, on the basis of reading Frazer, 'Now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty- that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nerve system: there is a blood-consciousness which exists in us independently of the ordinary mental consciousness, which depends on the eye as its source or connector'.⁷

Lawrence, affirms belief in a self present to itself (able to be angry with itself), and containing sharply distinguishable binary oppositions: these twin consciousnesses; the radically opposed characters of male / female (though the Law and the Father is also feminine, and the Word and the Spirit is masculine); willed knowledge versus knowledge which is from other, deeper centres of sentience. He contends for both isolation and singleness which are as essential as love, their contrary. If language is mistrusted it is because it misrepresents feeling which are known and intuited; it is not that feelings themselves may be constructed, and in a way, there is no repression, or repression can always be undone.

In 'Moony. Birkin's recall of the African statuette, already referred to, implies that southern places may lapse out in a sensual knowledge, while northern races, like Gerald, will dissolve in 'ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation', producing 'death by perfect cold' (254). Leavis, whose reading of Lawrence is always tactful, and sober, turns Lawrence's argument round, in a way which lessens the sense of twin opposites, always present; he even saves Lawrence from himself. Whereas Birkin sees these two possibilities as parallel, or the African state as having happened, finally, Leavis sees the cult of African art, visible in Halliday's flat, and so representative of modern taste, as a 'symptom of the malady' that Gerald has produced (175). Gerald as symbolic of the industrial magnate, descendent of Gradgrind (his own father is called Thomas), has rooted out one form of experience, and replaced it with 'the malady of a civilisation in which, says Leavis, 'will and "idea", controlling from above, have usurped the direction, and the smooth-running of an almost inconceivably intricate interlocking of

mechanisms has become the supreme end'. Impossible to go back from that, to the Primitivist values of the African statue. To go back to what the African fetish means after that dominance, Leavis says, is 'a flight from intelligence and responsibility': it would be reflected in some of Lawrence's points about Futurism. I do not think this is Lawrence's argument, but it is an intelligent appropriation of it. The split between the two possibilities – the sensual and the rational - is exactly parallel to the drive within Eliot's essay 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921), itself a major text for understanding modernism, on the 'dissociation of sensibility', the loss of 'a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience' in poetry and language use since Donne. It informs Leavis' interest throughout in thinking about intelligence, which must, of course, be an emotional intelligence; he takes it back to Lawrence, producing the extraordinary commentary he gives on Lawrence in his most technical when discussing *Hamlet* in *Twilight in Italy*.

The perception of crisis that Birkin has does not mean there can be an identification with the past; the symbol of that is the finality of the architecture of Breadalby (82), even the critique of the world of Dorothy Wordsworth and Jane Austen that Ursula offers (48, 355). The symmetries and neatnesses of the late eighteenth-century are not for Lawrence, and incidentally, I think they complicate Leavis' sense of Jane Austen: however much he admires her, as appears in the opening of *The Great Tradition*, he actually never wrote about her (of course Q.D. Leavis did, and very interestingly), and he says that if anyone invented the modern novel, it was Dickens. Second, the writing is compelled to the new, and criticism must take heed to the lack of respect for authorial intention, in the insouciant spirit of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, the writing of which was begun in August 1917: 'Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it'.⁸ That might be thought to be a romantic and organic statement in Coleridgean spirit: the tale as a unity, which has a drive in a particular direction, but since the tale is always language, and language works in a double mode, as difference and deferral, which internally divides the text, it does not have a single stress;

and criticism will never be a matter of underwriting either author or the presumed sense of the tale.

At the heart of *Women in Love* come the comments on forms of modern art which arise when in the chapter 'Snow', Loerke arrives at Hohenhausen accompanied by his lover Leitner (422) – the two of them are the artists, as Gudrun is the artist. The conversation turns on the granite frieze for a factory in Cologne, which is apparently:

a representation of a fair, with peasants and artizans in an orgy of enjoyment, drunk and absurd in their modern dress, whirling ridiculously in roundabouts gaping at shows, kissing and staggering and rolling in knots, swinging in swing-boats and firing down shooting galleries, a frenzy of chaotic motion (423).⁹

Before turning to Loerke's, and the novel's own commentary on this, the implications of one of its likely sources needs discussing. There appears in the description, especially with the word 'roundabout', an allusion to Mark Gertler's 'The Merry-go-Round' (1916), a reproduction of which Lawrence saw, and which he calls 'the best *modern* picture I have seen', further adding to Gertler in a letter (9 October 1916) that it is 'obscene', though 'obsenity is the truth of our passion today, it is the only stuff of art'. He finds it 'a combination of blaze, and violent mechanical rotation and complex involution, and ghastly, utterly mindless human intensity of sensational extremity'.¹⁰ 'Involution' must include its biological sense (*OED* 5): 'a retrograde process of development; the opposite of evolution; degeneration', first cited from 1896; the word 'obscene', which must have resonated for Lawrence from the suppression of *The Rainbow* in November 1915, may include *OED*'s sense of 'ill-omened, inauspicious'; but also resonates from Baudrillard's sense of postmodernism as the 'obscenario', meaning that everything is on the surface, nothing is hidden, nothing left in shadow, everything on display. The obscenario produces a culture of the platitudinous and the indifferent. The obscenario shows everything that is desired ('the truth of our passion today'), where the meaning of 'our passion' is

ambiguous: it implies what we are undergoing (like Christ's passion?); and what we want, with the extremity of pain? That passion seems implied in Loerke's frieze, where going round the the roundabout also implies repetition: what Gudrun, in her hysteria, calls 'the terrible bondage of this tick-tack of time ... this eternal repetition of hours and days' (464), where 'tick-tack' also implies the sound of small artillery, a sense *OED* gives from 1909. That, incidentally, was the same year as Marinetti's first Futurist Manifesto. Repetition is at the heart of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), which Lawrence could not have known, and it is there inseparable from the death-drive; this being an intuition which Freud derived from the war, though philosophically he attributes it to Schopenhauer.¹¹ The death-drive in Freud does not answer to anything in Lawrence, save for a sense of willed destruction, which Birkin intuits in 'Moony': Gerald, he feels is a 'messenger', an omen': a warning to Birkin himself, who talks to Ursula about 'the dark river of dissolution' as equivalent to 'the silver river of life' (172). Colin Clarke uses this to argue, against Leavis, that Lawrence argues for both life and for a will towards darkness, and for 'flowers of dissolution'; and no doubt that is what Birkin means at this stage of the book, but Clarke does not seem to get further than arguing for a certain idealising dualism, or Manicheism in this sense of two rivers: the concept of *fleurs du mal* implies, better, that the processes of decay and life are to be thought together, an argument familiar from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, that it is foolish to idealise beauty, idealisation being Lawrence's object of critique throughout *Studies in Classic American Literature*. And if this division is to be thought of as replicable in the human, this seems a problematic essentialist viewpoint: it would be better to note that Lawrence's sense of dissolution is historical and belongs to a perception of the modern; it associates with reading the world of 1914, and in his own sense that he had to get away.

The repetition-compulsion, mentioned as the subject of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where it associates with the death-drive, also forms the subject of 'The Uncanny' (1919), repetition being uncanny; what disturbs so much with the force of the *unheimlich* is the sense of lifeless objects taking

over; repetition taking out the sense of the originating, unique, single individual subject, which of course, Lawrence is committed to, while for Freud, this is entirely what is put in question by repetition. The short chapter where the African statuette of *Women in Love* is discussed by Birkin and Gerald was called 'Totem' in Leavis' day; it is now called, in the Cambridge Edition, 'Fetish', which word gains its meaning from Marx and Freud alike, and in both means the inorganic substituting for the organic; the replacement of the human by the lifeless. If we think of the statuette as a fetish in Freud's sense, as seems inevitable, since *Three Essays on Sexuality*, which discusses fetishism, had appeared in 1905, then the woman is indeed commodified, the sexual has lost all meaning save as an attempt to exploit the sensual to its limits. In Freud, the fetish means what Walter Benjamin calls 'the sex-appeal of the inorganic', and with the sense of life as machinic, which is what Gerald as a captain of industry has produced. Gerald thinks of the statuette as 'obscene', giving not just the objectifying of the woman, but the sense of processes at work in her beyond her conscious mind: 'the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness' (74). But that sense of the obscene, for Gerald, is that it infringes taste, or the idea of art as linked to the ideal. It is inadequate as a description: the obscene has become the norm as I earlier referred to the obscenarior: Gerald, who wants to keep certain illusions (79) has not grasped how the machinic has affected him as much as the Pussum, or the African statue. A link may be made to Futurism, which Lawrence admired in a specific way for its stress on the 'non-human in humanity'.¹² The same year (1914), in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence finds himself 'confused' by Boccioni's desire to portray 'motion, simple motion' in his 'Development of a Bottle through Space' (1913).¹³ In this Futurism, the opposite of Cubism, which takes an object and looks at it through multi-dimensions, the argument is, as Boccioni writes: 'no one can any longer believe that an object ends where another begins, and that our body is surrounded by anything- bottle, automobile, house, tree, road – that does not cut through it and section it in an arabesque of directional curves ... we therefore ... proclaim the absolute and complete abolition of definite lines and closed sculpture. We break open the figure and enclose it in environment'.¹⁴ What is left out, for Lawrence, is the portrayal of a state of

mind. Instead, ‘there can only be made scientific diagrams of states of mind. A state of mind is a resultant between an attack and a resistance. And how can one produce a resultant without first causing the collision of the originating forces?’ The resultant has disappeared: Futurism becomes abstract. In the earlier letter, Lawrence shows himself interested but critical in Marinetti’s ‘physiology of matter’:

I don't care what about what the woman *feels* – in the ordinary usage of the world. That presumes an *ego* to feel with. I only care about what the woman *is* – what she *is* – inhumanly, physiologically, materially ... what she *is* as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater, inhuman will) instead of what she feels according to the human conception. That is where the futurists are stupid. Instead of looking for the new human phenomenon, they will only look for the phenomena of the science of physics to be found in human being. (Letters 78)

The criticism of Futurism is acute, though Lawrence could not at the time have known that Marinetti had not joined the Fascist Party, which he did in 1919, seeing Fascism as the natural extension of Futurism. Nor could he have known Marinetti’s eulogies to War as an aesthetic experience: ‘War is beautiful’, which Benjamin quotes, before turning to the judgment that the aestheticising of politics, in Marinetti, means ‘Fiat ars – pereat mundus’, and that humanity’s ‘self-alienation has reached the point where it can experience its own annihilation as a supreme aesthetic pleasure’.¹⁵ The pleasure in the machinic does not lead to a new thinking about the ego, as Lawrence tries this, searching for something non-human in the human prompting action; it accepts the machinic nature of the ego, as part of the machinic in motion. In that way, Futurism joins with the character of the ‘fetish’ in Halliday’s flat, in dehumanisation.

At this point I will turn back to Loerke’s factory-frieze, which, uncannily seems both to comment on the war, as a carnivalesque frenzy, and to

comment also on the idea that modern life and capitalism depends on keeping people as consumers, unthinking. Loerke comments:

Sculpture and architecture must go together. The day for irrelevant statues, as for wall pictures, is over. As a matter of fact sculpture is always part of an architectural conception. And since churches are all museum-stuff, since industry is our business now, then let us make our places of industry our art – our factory-area our Parthenon ...’ (424)

His attitude to sculpture is to insist that it be part of the architecture of the building: to disallow the distinction between ornament and structure, therefore, which made Ruskin argue that ornament was what distinguished architecture from mere building; to argue a functionalist purpose for sculpture and architecture together, making everything business-like, or machine-like.

Ursula’s response to this – ‘there is no *need* for our great works to be so hideous’, and his answer is fascinating, because Loerke certainly contradicts himself in the several defences he makes of his work: he says the ugliness of factories ruins them in the end; people will think ‘the work itself is ugly: the machines, the very act of labour. Whereas machinery and the acts of labour are extremely, maddeningly beautiful. ... this will be the end of our civilisation, when people will not work because work has become so intolerable to their senses ... *then* we shall see the hammer used only for smashing ... yet here we are – we have the opportunity to make beautiful factories, beautiful machine-houses ...’. He both affirms, then, and denies the ugliness of the factory; he endorses a Futurist sense of machinery as beautiful; he sees the people as right to revolt, and he sees the artist as having the chance to produce machine-houses (the echo of Corbusier is essential). Further he seems to argue for a collective death-wish which will one day take hold. Loerke is the split subject, because he is the several times alienated figure: the artist, Polish, Jewish, and homosexual, who must make love to industry, and as he says to Gudrun, ‘*interpret*’ it. The question whether art can become critique, essential to Thomas Mann in *Doctor*

Faustus, and, if so, the justification of modernism as a response to modernity, is implicit here: modernism can be critique if it can offer some analysis, not justification, of what modernity means, unlike Futurism. To be critique requires going beyond the techniques of modernity. Loerke's word 'interpret' is ambiguous: he may mean that the task of art is to explain what industry is doing in such a way which justifies it, or he may mean 'to explain its hidden tendencies', in which case he would be critical of it. Yet his interpretation does not seem critical, however descriptive of a state of affairs it may be: He says: 'what is man doing when he is at a fair like this? He is fulfilling the counterpart of labour – the machine works him, instead of he the machine. He enjoys the mechanical motion, in his own body' (424). While it could be argued, perhaps reading against the text, that the frieze subverts the aims of industry, in being an excessive art which parodies, or critiques industry as encouraging a certain mindlessness in the workers, or sees industry as producing a grotesque deformation of life, Loerke does not seem to have such a critique in mind; He is more interested in the reversal of order: not man on the machine, but the machine mechanising the man. And here he accepts the alienation this implies: that man enjoys what the machine has done to his body, just as much as Gertler's horses are mechanical, rocking horses in a carousel, not those which embody an other life, like the Arab mare.

Loerke and Gerald hate each other, but Gerald is an instance of the factory-owner who in Germany (where Gerald went to study) would be running the factory for which Loerke works, and which is built on the basis of 'the plausible ethics of productivity' (56), where Gerald's go goes 'in applying the latest appliances' (478). So far has this industrial magnate perfected the mining industry, it means that, in a nicely put irony, 'Gerald was hardly necessary any more' (232). The machine provokes the question what happens after it has taken over, and the orgiastic fair cannot be the answer, though that may figure the warfare that the international demand to buy and sell machines provokes. Gerald could become a Conservative MP, working out every problem in life 'as in geometry' (17), but Gudrun has enough self-awareness to know that that answer will not do. His death in the snow is the

result. And this suggests a split in the text: what brings Gerald to that ultimate crisis is Loerke, who also speculates that eventually the workers will give up on their work and would rather starve. But, as a model of productivity, Loerke serves the factory's values in a lackeying way, on the view that since the day for cathedrals is gone, their place has now been taken by factories. His argument in equating the two is merely formalistic: to find cathedrals and factories equivalent to each other is to ignore the contrasted ends to which these things are put. Humans have never needed cathedrals; their very building is a form of excess, and confounds the concept of need: cathedrals were, historically, ways in which a belief in something other than the self is made possible; but the belief in productivity demands factories. There is a subtler critique of the cathedral's pretensions in *The Rainbow*; its claims to totality, its belief in timelessness: the proposition 'God burned no more in that bush' comments negatively on the sense that a work of art can be for ever.¹⁶ Loerke's dismissiveness of the idea of the cathedral effectively leaves him with no alternative than the factory, whose ugliness of work-practices he is called on to disguise by making his art serve it; a pure definition of aestheticism, making what is ugly inherently appear beautiful.

What is certain is that he regards material considerations as the major driver: he has gone hungry; it is hinted broadly that he has lived by prostitution (425), in which case he is unconsciously endorsing a Marxist analysis; that the artist is a commodity as much as everything is commodified; the production of art which will be acceptable is compelled to have as its agenda that the art will be consumed. Loerke has no illusions, as, as Gudrun puts it (427), being a 'pure, unconnected will, stoical and momentaneous'. The analysis implies that he refuses to make his art a criticism of life, that he has subdued his sculpture to the factory simply to survive. It is then not surprising that Gerald, separated by class, dislikes him: he is too uncomfortable for Gerald's illusions; but it is curious that Birkin dislikes him even more (and more than Ursula); calling him 'a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of life' (428), which beyond Loki also suggests Goethe's Mephisto; it is open to think that Birkin simplifies, and overlooks something in Loerke: it also puzzles why the Jewishness seems

problematic to him, especially since Lawrence's letter to Gertler, who must at some level give something to Loerke, concedes that 'it would take a Jew to paint this picture. It would need your national history to get you here, without disintegrating you first' (136). Is it to be assumed that the text shows a limitation in Birkin, certainly in the sense that his politics is limited, as is his antennae for what was happening in Europe already to those who were Jews? It is also striking that the men do not speak about his homosexuality, though that is a challenge to both, unless Birkin is alluding to it indirectly in thinking of a rat in the river of corruption (428). The rat connotes singleness, recalling the man in the chapter 'A Chair' (358-359), but the statement is so inflated that it indicates Birkin still has much to learn. It is Gudrun who questions Loerke about sexuality (434), and it is significant that both women engage more with him than the men can; in that way, the text is more divided about Loerke than Lawrence recognises.

On another occasion Loerke shows the sisters a photograph of the statuette in green bronze of the young girl 'exposed naked on the naked flank of the horse', which Ursula reacts to seeing it as a degrading of the horse (the chapter 'Arab Mare' will be recalled: Loerke is brought into connection with Gerald). This statuesque horse is as abstract from horses as Bitzer's definition of a horse in *Hard Times*.¹⁷ Loerke's reaction to Ursula's realism follows Roger Fry and Clive Bell on 'significant form'; the horse 'is a certain *form*, part of a whole form. It is part of a work of art, a piece of form ... it has no relation to anything outside that work of art' (430). Gudrun objects to Ursula thinking there can be a publicly knowable idea about a horse (if Gudrun's argument held sway, that would be complete subjectivism, and a denial that art can be criticised), but Ursula sees the horse as a picture of himself. He denies that angrily, saying that '*you must not* confuse the relative work of action with the absolute world of art'; thus claiming an absoluteness for the work of art, as though it stood outside change, like Sir Joshua Mattheson thinking that there are things, like scientific laws, outside language, which are known for ever: Loerke certainly shows himself as paranoid when he is questioned about his work. His view is endorsed by Gudrun, but Ursula contends that the horse

embodies his own 'stock stupid brutality' and that the girl was one he 'loved and tortured and then ignored', and that his refusal to acknowledge that means that he must split off the real from the world of art: 'The work of art is only the truth about the real world, that's all' (431). Gudrun accepts the exploitation of the very young art-student: in a way she agrees with Ursula because she feels that the power-relationships which the work of art displays, on its own terms, *are* the truth about the real world (they show how young artists are treated). And whereas Ursula picks on the horse as being ill-treated, as if she sees it as feminine, like the mare, Gudrun implicitly sees the horse as masculine, and if she can see herself in the girl, that implies that the symbolism may be of Gerald and her. Her question to Loerke's response to men proceeds from that, and interestingly, Loerke confirms that his homosexuality, a word which is of course never used in the text, and its absence implying that sexuality is not to be thought of as settled, but always in process, is a response to power, which makes him like the girl on the horse. He is part of a homosexuality of the right, such as Klaus Theweleit diagnosed in Germany before the second world war: an identification with masculinity.

In the following chapter, 'Snowed Up', the Gudrun/ Loerke relationship becomes more regressive, a matter of 'barely comprehensible suggestivity' (448), which is used by Gudrun in her reaction against Gerald's power: he himself has not the subtlety to do other than insult Loerke, as an insect, or flea (455). The two take refuge in primitive art, so reprising the Halliday sections: negating one culture by using the other, though the interest in primitivism is also inseparable from colonialism and orientalism. They go for 'the inner mysteries of sensation' while idealising, in a form of aestheticising, and playing with 'the achieved perfections of the past' (453) or thinking of the future only in apocalyptic terms: 'the world went cold, and snow fell everywhere ...'. Loerke's language is 'full of odd, fantastic expression, of double meanings, of evasions, of suggestive vagueness' (453) using the fragments of three languages; his values are her own nihilism spread before her when he says: 'women, and love, there is no greater tedium' (458): a sense of the equivocalness of everything: 'soit ou non soit

pas ... it is all the same' (459). He has translated Hamlet's words, which are so essential in Lawrence, recalling their discussion in *Twilight in Italy*, because of his sense that there has been a decision 'not to be': in a way, he is saying that Lawrence's discussion, itself heavily committed to an argument about the way Europe is going, is immaterial in its conviction and its desire to make that public. This part-nonsense language, with apparently portmanteau words and punning from language to language, an example of what Lawrence called 'involution', sounds like an anticipation of what Joyce attempts in *Finnegans Wake*, and suggests what Lawrence draws back from in modernism; its attention to language as something in itself, as a playfulness which deflects the self from its language; a playfulness which risks not speaking beyond its group.

Each of these criticisms that Lawrence makes of Loerke are insightful, but there is a yes, but. They seem to place Lawrence outside the movements of modernism, which is ultimately making him too negative. Loerke himself is called on to represent no less than three forms of modernism. The first is the Futurist sense of the machinic in motion which has taken over the self and both creates and controls and drives its sexual drive. The second is of art as abstract, disengaged from the real world, even though its abstraction cannot separate it from that world. And third, there is the sense of art being a collection of fragments, including fragments of language and languages, which need not command loyalty either to them, or to the work of art, which becomes play.

Lawrence's critique is followed by Leavis, in his account of Loerke. But while these three forms of modernist art may overlap, they are different, and if the text demands overmuch of Loerke in requiring him to embody them all, it also prejudices the issue in how he is discussed: it implies that divergent views of art can be dismissed by making their representative problematic, and that limiting judgments can be made about modernism through an *ad hominen* despising of the artist as somehow not genuine. The Gudrun who likes him is at her most self-alienated; the others withdraw from him. But if Loerke is taken at face value, he must be seen as a split

subject, following divergent tendencies even within each particular art-form; not just embodying contrary responses to a European crisis within the arts, but not even allowed his own honesty in pursuing any of these. The reaction to that has to be seen as compelling a withdrawal from Europe, as seen in the end of *St Mawr*, but that alternative is also to be questioned because the text shows that the attitudes of Birkin and Ursula and Gerald will not do, for differing reasons: Ursula as someone now overly normative, and less than Gudrun; Birkin as somehow troubled by Loerke, and Gerald not realising how much of he threatens what he stands for.

¹ Graham Martin, 'Lawrence and Modernism' in George Donaldson and Mara Kahlins, *D.H. Lawrence in Italy and England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1999), 135-153.

² Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 194), 114.

³ Letter to Gordon Campbell, 21 September 1914, 80.

⁴ 5 June 1914, See Anthony Beal (ed.), *D.H. Lawrence: Selected Literary Criticism* (London: Mercury 1961), 18.

⁵ Term first used in 'The Mirror Stage', trans. Bruce Fink (New York; W.W. Norton 2002), 94 (French), 76.

⁶ 'Surgery for the Novel – or a Bomb' (1923), Beal, 114-115.

⁷ *Letters* 2.470, quoted, (and see discussion) in David Game, *D.H. Lawrence's Australia* (Farnham: Ashgate 2015), 162.

⁸ 'The Spirit of Place', Beal, 297.

⁹ For discussion of these passages, see J.B. Bullen, 'D.H. Lawrence and Sculpture in *Women in Love*', *Burlington Magazine* 145 (2003), 841-846.

¹⁰ James T. Boulton, (ed.), *The Selected Letters of D.H Lawrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), 135. For Lawrence on art, see Keith Alldritt, *The Visual Imagination of D,H, Lawrence* (London: Edward Arnold 1971).

¹¹ *SE* 18. 49-50).

¹² (letter of 5 June 1914)

¹³ *Phoenix* 464.

¹⁴ Quoted, John Golding, *Boccioni: Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (London: The Tate Gallery 1985), 16. The 'Development of a Bottle in pace' appears as figure 22.

¹⁵ Walter benjamin, *Selected Writings 4: 1938-1940* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2003), 270; see 269-270 and 282-283.

¹⁶ *The Rainbow* ed. Mark Kinhead-Weekes (London: Penguin 2007), 188.

¹⁷ The connection is made by Marianna Torgovnick, *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence, and Woolf* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1985), 210.