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WOMEN AND UTOPIANISM  
IN DICKENS AND LAWRENCE

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The texts I examine in my thesis are all published and accessible. I applied myself not to scholarly discovery, but to examining available material from a new perspective. For the Lawrence texts I have used the Cambridge Edition where possible. For Dickens, for whom no standard Works exists yet, I have used Penguin wherever possible. I have given references to the editions I

used, since references to first editions made no sense under the circumstances and led to confusion. For Dickens's letters I have used the Pilgrim Edition as far as it is available. The reference to Letters in my text is to this edition. For Lawrence's letters (and those of Frieda Lawrence published there) I have used the Cambridge Edition. Where the reference in my text is by the date of the letter or to Letters it is to this edition.

The selected bibliography is of works cited and works that are of interest and have some bearing on what I discuss in my thesis. I have not included a list of the works of Dickens and Lawrence, but only to those works cited in my text. Nor have I included, for reasons of space, the enormous amount of secondary Lawrence and Dickens literature, which is available from comprehensive bibliographies. I have not included works on subject areas I am discussing just because their title refers to the same subject, but only if I found them relevant to my discussion.

It will be found that in my thesis I refer to the wives, Catherine Dickens and Frieda Lawrence, by their first names, while I refer to their husbands by their surnames. This is because it was impossible to refer to Catherine Dickens or Frieda Lawrence by either her husband's name or her father's name (her maiden name) without creating confusion. To refer to Dickens as Charles would have been possible, but what would I have

called Lawrence, 'our Herb'? My usage will have to stand  
as a pointer to social conditions.

## Introduction

I have written this dissertation as a contribution to the sociology of literature, especially feminist sociology of literature. I have taken two very popular novelists, Lawrence and Dickens as my subject. The point at issue is their attitude to women, both to the women characters in their novels and to their wives. The dissertation falls into two parts, a theoretical and a biographical one. Very baldly put, the first deals with the relation of the novelist to the novel, the second with the relation of the man to his wife.

My argument is that the novel has a potential for social change and that this has to do with the central position that affective relations and the relation between the sexes occupy in the novel. And if these ideas are correct, the most affective relation in a novelist's life, the relation to his wife, must have an important bearing on his work. This is true of Lawrence to an unusual extent and true of Dickens in a specially interesting way. The relation is of course not a direct one. It is dialectical, and the impulses of resistance and rejection play as large a part as those of acceptance and openness to learn (Generally speaking I have found that novelists are willing to accept where their work is concerned what they reject in life. But this is again too simple: Lawrence's work is as strongly marked by his learning from Frieda as it is by his rejection of what she valued, and

Dickens has a double attitude to his most interesting women characters). Since the influence is culturally 'invisible' and largely unexpressed, one of my difficulties from the start has been finding ways of defining it.

Though the thesis is divided into a theoretical and a biographical part, I move all through on a theoretical and a 'real' or ontological level at the same time, and my main effort has gone into keeping a constant connection between the two. In the theoretical part on the nature of the novel, the connection with the 'real' is made mainly through an inquiry into the sociological dimension, the sociology of writing. In the biographical part on the lives of Catherine Dickens and Frieda Lawrence theoretical questions are raised with the help of historical perspectives. I have found that a historical perspective in fact goes some way to define that culturally 'invisible' influence of the wives on their husbands' work.

I have used three historical perspectives in this thesis to buttress my theory. In the first part (Novel and Society) I assume, that the thought of the socialist utopians of the 18th and early 19th Centuries has an affinity with the socially critical potential of the novel. It was a maxim of the socialist utopians that you can test the state of civilization by testing the state of women in that civilization and according to me, the novel is a testing place of the relation between the sexes. I



therefore briefly examine the thought of the socialist utopians in Chapter 1 and relate it to Lawrence's and Dickens's writing. Socialist utopianism belongs to the history of individualism and connects this history firmly with the history of women. In the second part (Lives of Wives) the important problem was how to get a purchase on women's experience from their point of view. I begin this part with a note on possessive and magnanimous individualism to give the perspective we need. My assumption is that women were prevented for reasons to do with the ownership of property from developing the assumptions of possessive individualism and instead revived, in the wake of industrialization, an older form of individualism that contradicts mainstream assumptions. From this point of view, women make up a kind of counter-culture. Magnanimous assumptions are always present in society in some form, though often latent. In our society they are shared by women and artists. Here there lies the connection between the first part and the second part on the theoretical level: the utopian theme surfaces now in the relation of women and artists, flesh and blood women as novelists' wives. Women are involved in the potential of the novel for social change in a more than ideal, in an objective and practical way.

My concept of magnanimous individualism was especially useful for looking at Catherine Dickens's relation to Dickens. When I came to Frieda Lawrence, that is to the chapters that conclude the thesis, I had to

change my historical perspective<sup>e</sup>. Not that Frieda does not belong to the history of magnanimous individualism, like Catherine. She does, though she held magnanimous assumptions of a different kind. But more important, she was a personal rebel against society and we have to go to a quite different, conscious historical anti-tradition to understand her. My theoretical basis for this concluding part of the thesis is therefore an examination of the thought of groups and personalities I call 'matriotic'. They are groups that reacted against patriotic ideals, especially as they affected women. My examination takes the form of historical notes on some of the early German romantics and some radical German feminists of the 1890s. These notes make up Chapter 7 and open the part on Frieda. The thought of the 'matriots' belongs centrally to the history of individualism and shows again strong utopian features. Unlike socialist utopianism it is, however, not thought about women, but the thought of women, thought generated by women, (And thought is here again not to be taken in the narrow sense of abstract thought - I had to extend my discussion to the life and activities of these women in order to be able to render the thought accurately). This was the intellectual and spiritual heritage Frieda brought to Lawrence. It has entered Lawrence's work, again dialectically, so that we can see it in resistance formations as well as in the form of positive integration. Lawrence gave the account of this influence in his posthumously published novel Mr Noon,

which is the subject of my last chapter.

I have used three methods in the writing of my thesis. Though, as I have said, I have tried to write a contribution to the sociology of literature, my methods are not strictly sociological. One of them may be fairly called literary analysis, the close reading of literary texts in the light of feminist theory and research. Another I should call historical contextualising, the substantiating of my argument by putting it in a historical framework and elucidating it with anthropological evidence. My third method I should call critical biography. It is critical in part with the help of historical contextualising which enables me to take up a different position from that of conventional biography. I would like to say something here of how I employ these methods in relation to my argument.

In the first part of my thesis, on the novel and society, I am concerned with the potential of the novel to be subversive. The questions I raise in this part are all concerned with my hypothesis that the novel, because of its utopian strand, allows for an identification of the private and the public and is a testing place for the relation between the sexes. This hypothesis I can strengthen with the help of anthropological examples, initiation rituals of a utopian kind that are works of art like the novel and can be shown to have the same central concern.

In my second chapter, on utopianism as a general

criterion for the novel I make the claim that the novel is rooted in the discovery - the literary discovery - of ordinary everyday life. Descriptions of domestic work are native to the novel, the experience of women is the nodal point where novel and society come together. I argue that the novel is the literary genre in which a democratising of reality took place. Stiltrennung was superseded, characters came to be treated not any more according to their social position but as important in themselves, everyday concerns and humble objects began 'to speak' to make the novelist's point. This argument sees the novel as a widening of human possibilities and clashes with the claim that, because of its concentration on the domestic, on feeling and personal relations, the novel is afflicted with a 'certain narrowing of the framework of experience and of permitted attitude' (Or, as the feminists who have put this right side up have it: it causes a certain narrowing of the framework of experience and of permitted attitude for women). What I can show with the help of my anthropological example is that all these claims are justified and yet the case is different. The novel is indeed a restricted field, concentrated as it is on the domestic, on feeling and on personal relations, but this narrowing is deliberate and means that intra-personal and interpersonal relations can be tested as it were under laboratory conditions. The initiation ritual, so close to the storytelling that is at the heart of the novel, shows that this narrowing of the field has to do

with a cultural facilitating of individuation. Our culture gives little help toward this. I argue that the novel in our society takes up that concern (The supposition is strengthened when one looks at the historical background the novel has in letter writing and the self-examination of the diary). In an analysis of two of Dickens's novels I show how important the question of individuation was in his writing and in how masterly a way he can convey it - surprisingly - where women are concerned.

The question Chapter 3, the last chapter of part 1 asks is whether there is a generally valid criterion of value for the novel. I believe that there is. I coin the word 'charity' for the scrupulous attention the writer has to give to the minutiae of everyday life if he wants to write a good novel. This attention, I claim is a sort of 'listening', and what the writer hears goes quite often against the grain. That is because when the novel's narrow world of the domestic is scrupulously described, it reveals itself as the nucleus of the system of power relations in the outside world. If the writer has the courage to overcome his prejudices and write honestly what he 'hears', his work will in turn make the reader bristle with discomfort, since we have all internalised the world as a system of personal power relations. This relation between the writer and the reader sums up what I understand by 'charitable writing'. Charity in my sense is, to borrow a phrase from Leavis, the 'properly indocile

perception of what our civilization is doing to life'. I make a literary analysis of three pieces to develop my point, one from Dickens, which shows that proper indocility and two from Lawrence, which disappointingly fail to show it.

The concept of charity links the writer's work with his life. My discussion of it ends the first part of the dissertation and leads on to the second, where my critical biographical method comes fully into play. By critical biography I mean a reading of the life and work of the novelist for the light they cast on each other and the attempt to bring the lives of their wives to light. Genius eclipses others, especially their nearest and dearest. I have tried to rescue the lives of two artists' wives from suppression and misrepresentation, partly in the hope of redressing injustice, but partly also to try and show how genius may be used to distort life and nowhere more than in relation to women. In any case I have committed the biographical fallacy freely, in the belief that it is a good route to demystification. Where Lefebur and Diane Johnson have led the way, who could be ashamed to follow?

Debunking is a necessary activity in critical biography, but it is only a first step. If it is used as an end in itself, it leaves the women essentially where they are, in the shadow of their husbands. Nor does deploring the behaviour of Dickens and so feeling sorry for Catherine help biographers to see Catherine Dickens in

her own right. And that would be true of Frieda and Lawrence as well, if ever a biographer felt sorry for her. What I have set out to do therefore is not only to say something new about lives of wives in general, but in the case of Catherine Dickens and Frieda Lawrence to interpret specifically their contribution to the 'marriage with genius' in ways that are distinct from and subversive of current accounts.

My historical contextualising has given me the focus for my interpretation. If one looks at the history of women, one sees that women have chosen an individualism that is based on creativity. It is not the kind of creativity that issues in immortal works of art (this is a narrow, ethnocentric idea of creativity), it is a creativity that has to do with how one lives everyday life. An essential for it is freedom and respect for the individual. I argue that there is a woman's creativity in our culture that takes this form.

Seen from this point of view, Catherine Dickens's life was a great achievement. She did an impressive job in her marriage. Dickens biographers see her (if they view her kindly) simply as a victim, incapable of self-directed activity. This is seeing her through Dickens. There is no point in such a report if one does not add that Dickens denied her the freedom and respect as an individual she needed for self-directed activity. He did indeed defeat her magnanimous assumptions in the course of the marriage. But he did not crush her creativity. If

one looks at Catherine as herself, and at her life as her own, one is struck<sup>by</sup> what she accomplished. One need only collate her pregnancies with her entertaining schedule and the many moves to new houses to see how active she was and what a task she mastered. I try to do this in chapter 5. In Chapter 6 I give an account of the separation from Dickens. The way the marriage ended makes Catherine truly a victim: she could not possibly escape from the net of falsehood that enmeshed her. But even under these conditions she was not incapable of self-directed action. Far from passively accepting her fate, as all the Dickens biographers portray her as doing, she fought for justice. Fighting for justice is however dangerous for the powerless unless they combine in a group. Catherine was alone, and she was finally undone by her very fight. Her insistence on a fair hearing was interpreted as the ultimate disloyalty and as subversive of the most sacred of human bonds.

It is of great interest that Catherine, at the end of the formidable job she had done, was arraigned before an invisible court and accused of unVictorian activities: to have been no fit companion to her husband, a bad mother, repugnant (in some unspecified way - this led to endless speculation) and mad. Dickens put it all before the public, and the verdict was that she had to be put away, cut off from home and children. Victorian public opinion was on Dickens's side. This raises the question of what was really demanded of the Victorian woman, what was the



real (true but unexpressed) ideal to which she was expected to conform. I argue in Chapter 6, which concludes my discussion of Catherine, that Catherine's fate shows the gap between even an ordinary Victorian woman's self-conception and conception of her task and the accepted mainstream conception. In this light, women are outsiders.

The last three chapters - 7, 8, 9 - provide a kind of backhanded answer to the question raised by Catherine Dickens's case. In Frieda Lawrence the hidden subversiveness of women comes into the open. Even 60 years after Catherine's case this disconcerted people (Frieda was not alone in bringing it into the open: in Chapter 7 I put her into the historical context of her predecessors - but they are forgotten and safely labelled). Frieda struck her contemporaries as outrageous, and she still outrages us. Yet she too put her creativity at her husband's disposal, in fact in a more direct way than Catherine. Catherine had a large house and large family of children as her objective task, and Dickens's needs and comfort were only part of it. Frieda put all her creative vitality into Lawrence's work. Nevertheless she struck her contemporaries as crude and self-important, and modern critics hardly disagree with the verdict. No-one could really make anything of her, not even the few who were well-disposed. Some saw that she was extraordinary, but did not define in what way (Frieda herself had never any doubt that she was extra-

ordinary). Looking at Frieda's case also makes clearer a point present in Catherine's history: the need for women to see themselves as the group they in fact are. Frieda reached out for companionship with women all her life, but never made a lasting friend. In Chapter 8 I examine mostly how others saw her, but also how she comes across in her own writing.

In the concluding chapter of the thesis, Chapter 9, I return once more to literary analysis as a method. The novel Mr Noon II is Lawrence's most directly biographical account of Frieda's and his life together, though it remained unfinished. As such it is clearly an important source of information about their relation, and I examine Lawrence's account carefully. But even more interesting is a subtext in Mr Noon in which Frieda can be heard speaking for herself, and this subtext is the real object of my analysis. Through it Mr Noon becomes one of the best sources for what Frieda brought to Lawrence and what the marriage was about in a wider sociological context. The dialectical relation between the artist and his wife, with its interplay of resistance and acceptance comes out more clearly in Mr Noon than in any other of Lawrence's books. In Mr Noon acceptance wins and Lawrence ends with a description of the new heaven, new earth 'true marriage' means. This makes Mr Noon almost a test case, at any rate a surprisingly direct example of the utopian theory of the novel I developed in the theoretical part of my thesis. I must note here that when I wrote the

theoretical part, Mr Noon II had not yet come out and I didn't know it.

PART I

NOVEL AND SOCIETY

## Chapter 1. Lawrence, Dickens and the Socialist Utopians

After having attacked Dickens for the best part of a long essay, Orwell stops to ask 'why then do I care about Dickens?' I find myself in this chapter taking up something of the attitude that leads Orwell to this question and to his answer. Indeed my own question 'what made Lawrence, what made Dickens a great writer? is at bottom the same as his. Let me quote him at greater length.

By this time anyone who is a lover of Dickens ... will probably be angry with me. I have been discussing Dickens simply in terms of his 'message', and almost ignoring his literary qualities. But every writer, especially every novelist, has a 'message', whether he admits it or not, and the minutest details of his work are influenced by it. All art is propaganda. Neither Dickens nor the majority of Victorian novelists would have thought of denying this. On the other hand, not all propaganda is art. As I said earlier Dickens is one of those writers who are felt to be worth stealing. He has been stolen by Marxists, by Catholics, and above all by Conservatives. The question is what is there to steal? Why does anyone care about Dickens? Why do I care about Dickens?'

Orwell answers his question not quite as trenchantly as he attacks Dickens in the earlier part of the essay; but then such questions are never easy to answer. He talks of Dickens as a comic writer and says that had he been merely a comic writer the chances are that no one would remember his name. Dickens attempted something different, something for which, perhaps, his genius wasn't

particularly suited and that makes us sorry, sometimes, that he didn't stick to his last and produce something that we think of as the real Dickens:

The thing that drove Dickens forward into a form of art for which he was not really suited, and at the same time causes us to remember him, was simply the fact that he was a moralist, the consciousness of 'having something to say'. He is always preaching a sermon, and that is the final secret of his inventiveness. For you can only create if you can care. Types like Squeers and Micawber could not have been produced by a hack writer looking for something to be funny about. A joke worth laughing at always has an idea behind it, and usually a subversive idea. Dickens is able to go on being funny because he is in revolt against authority, and authority is always there to be laughed at. There's always room for one more custard pie. (1940: 501)

What is good about Orwell is that he is always resolutely superficial. No searching for the hidden unconscious roots of creativity: preaching a sermon as the root of inventiveness (he is not talking here of Dickens's original exuberance but of an inventiveness that hardly ever dried up in forty years of writing) and the ability to care necessary for the ability to create. Orwell has put his finger on two important points here. First, the effrontery of preaching a sermon, especially if it is your own sermon, your message, is connected with a confident sense of self, of pride in yourself.<sup>2</sup> No one who didn't respect himself or believe in himself could do it. Inventiveness has to do with this belief in oneself. Yet the sermon, the message, transcends the self, it is

for others, and this is the other point. In the end it is in this mingling of self-forgetfulness and pride that the springs of inventiveness lie. 'Care' too - the other word Orwell connects with creativity - has two senses: sorrowing - a kind of labour on behalf of oneself - and exerting oneself for someone or something outside oneself, nurturing. It looks inward and outward. We use it quite unselfconsciously in the double sense, as Orwell does here, though the two meanings are logical contradictions. It connotes a particular intensity of feeling in both senses, but also a particular accuracy, a 'carefulness' in the second, outward-looking sense. 'Care' is a social word, it belongs to the context of individuality and community, to a person's 'mundanity', a relation (as George Steiner has it in his article on Heidegger) 'of active constant involvement with others, of the necessary projection of the self into the 'otherness' of surrounding humanity'.<sup>2</sup>

Literary criticism has in recent years turned its attention again to this level; and in the case of Dickens and Lawrence this is particularly apt. Both were unusually inventive writers whose springs of inventiveness lay in their caring. Their 'sufferings' and their relation to others are closely connected with their work; and it is up to us to ask what precisely they cared about and what relation caring has to the quality of their writing, or the quality of any writing.

In this theoretical part of the thesis I make three

assumptions. First, that what made Dickens and Lawrence great writers was that they cared about what Lawrence called 'a new world'. Second that, in the novel, caring about a new world, or social criticism, is necessarily bound up with the writer's attitude to women and that a critique of Lawrence's and Dickens's work is therefore in a special sense a critique of their attitude to women. Third that in the novel 'good writing' is less a matter of well-wrought structure than of a talent for looking through conventional assumptions to the actual power relations in which people (and groups) face one another. And that to do this a writer has to be capable of two things: to see his characters as centres of consciousness. in their own right and to show the presence or absence of such an awareness in the characters' attitudes to one another.

I shall begin by talking about Lawrence, because Lawrence was more articulate about the questions at issue. He belongs more clearly to a historical tradition of caring and can be used to illustrate the basic points of my contention. Lawrence cared so much that throughout his mature career (not only the first part of it) he played with the idea of giving up writing for political action or at least for a direct relaying of his message, a sort of philosophy of society. Carswell, who knew him well, lays stress on this in her memoir of him.<sup>4</sup> The pressure of circumstances (and some shrewd instinct) kept him to novels; but the need to preach sermons was certainly the



secret of his inventiveness.

In this introductory chapter I shall briefly look at the socialist utopians. Their ideas about the individual and society give us a background to the thesis about the novel and society I develop in Part 1. Lawrence's 'preaching' has many points of contact with them. He is close to Fourier, for instance, in seeing desire as a revolutionary force. Yet in the end the differences between him and Fourier are even more instructive; and the same holds for the other utopian I discuss, Otto Gross. Lawrence did not have the courage to face the fact that 'the new world' will only come about when men and women are equal; or he did and backed away from it. In fact, though both Lawrence and Dickens reach out for a new world in their work, both falter at this point. For Dickens this faltering can be illustrated with so simple a matter as what he selected and what he ignored in his journalism. Lawrence made a theoretical issue of it in his Study of Thomas Hardy, which I will discuss in some detail.

What made Lawrence a great writer

There are a number of good things about Lawrence's writing: his luminosity that makes the world glow in fresh colours for us (mostly based on a choice of adjectives that would repay examination); the way he uses his background, whose reality enters into his men and

women and makes them 'necessary' in a way rare in literature; his patient, accurate observation and description of birds, beasts and flowers; and above all his insouciance.<sup>6</sup> But none of these separately or together make Lawrence a great writer. They were there even if only patchily when he wrote the White Peacock and the Tresspasser. Yet these are poor books, and even if Lawrence had developed his powers along the lines they indicate, he would only have been a good writer, a pleasant and loveable writer, a writer who 'shows an unconventional power in the rendering of emotion and passion'.<sup>6</sup>

What made Lawrence a great writer was that the conviction 'there must be a new world', emerged as the mainspring for his writing. This had happened by the time he wrote The Rainbow and came to him from Frieda Weekly who became his wife. Frieda was the essential impetus because she introduced him to the ideas of Freud and Otto Gross.<sup>7</sup> Freud himself is ambiguous about 'a new world' but his pupil, Gross, made it his life's work to spell out the revolutionary implications of psychoanalysis; how, taken to its conclusion, psychoanalysis leads inevitably to the need for a new world. The curious position of Sons and Lovers in Lawrence's work shows how the influence of the two men worked for him. Freud enters into the last rewriting of Sons and Lovers and makes it the book it is. At that time Lawrence was still shaking off his family shackles, and the psychological struggle to make himself

free and whole made it impossible for him to visualise a new world (But of course without a new self there cannot be a new world, so that Freud for all his conservatism and caution is the original liberator). Once Sons and Lovers was off his chest he could visualise a new world and begin to work out his own version of the world he wanted to come. Without this revolutionary and utopian element Lawrence would not have been a great writer. His luminosity, his accurate observation, the reality of his men and women, his insouciance, all fuse now with the idea of the new world and enter into significant relation through it. His bad qualities as a writer - his philosophising and moralising - fuse with it too, and these bad qualities, curiously enough, contribute to make him a great writer. Only his tendency to rave instead of thinking remains, like a dull, unleavened part of the lump. The knowledge that there must be a new world gives depth to his observation, which would otherwise merely delight by its accuracy, and gives his writing a universality and human scope which saves him from being an English provincial of the fine quality of Richard Jeffries, a Heimatdichter, or a travel writer with an unusual eye for local colour. To be great, a writer must care for something both universal and subversive of convention; he must open a window, give access to new space. Lawrence puts it inimitably when he says in 'Surgery for the Novel - or a Bomb' of novel writing: 'You've got to find a new impulse for new things in

mankind....'

And the public will scream and say it's sacrilege, because when you've been jammed for a long time in a tight corner ... you find it suffocatingly cozy; then, of course, you're horrified when you see a new glaring hole in what was your cosy wall....But gradually first one and then another of the sheep filters through the gap, and finds a new world outside.'<sup>8</sup>

If the utopian element is the mainspring of Lawrence's writing, it is this element we must examine. What is its nature and quality? What are the essentials of this sort of utopian writing and in what tradition does Lawrence stand?

Lawrence's version is akin to that which inspired the old popular rebellions, heresies and messianic movements. To these the Reformation gave a tremendous impetus. One of their perennial urgencies was sex, the relation between men and women. The messianic sects that grew out of the turmoil of the Reformation - Anabaptists, Diggers, Adamites - sought for a new, more innocent sexual relation. The Pansophists of the 17th century, who hoped to marry the new learning to a new spirit of Christian love, wanted a reform of education that included the equal education of both sexes.<sup>9</sup> With the socialist utopians of the late 18th and early 19th Century the position of women became a touchstone of society's quality. It is in this fringe tradition that we must look for Lawrence.<sup>10</sup> The 'new world' is always a world of people. For Lawrence particularly it was the world of human relations. People

are women and men. How is their relation to be made new, the relation of people of opposite sex and the relation of people of the same sex? Fourier thought that the degree of civilization in any one period can be told by the position of women. How civilized is Lawrence's new world by this test? From The Rainbow on, Lawrence treats systematically the range of human relations: heterosexual relations, lesbianism, homosexual relations between men, as well as friendship and leadership relations. Human relations are nodal points for him from which a culture takes its direction, and therefore also the living points at which a culture can be changed. How did Lawrence want to change our culture?

We can answer this question only when we discuss his work. But here we can come to a rough estimate by looking at his spiritual ancestors, St. Simon, Fourier and Owen, whose influence came to him through the socialism and feminism of the last years in Eastwood and his Croydon years, and Otto Gross whose influence came to him through Frieda.''

What distinguishes the early 19th century utopians, as I have already said, was the important place they gave to women in their social analysis. This emphasis stems from a psychological rather than political approach and links them on the one hand to the traditions of popular rebellion and on the other to Lawrence. Gross refines on this emphasis and gives it a scientific basis - he was, of course a psychologist. The learned Pansophists belong to

this tradition through their emphasis on love. The new society was not to be brought in by seizing political power but by changing people's hearts and minds. St. Simon, Fourier and Owen all rejected the prevalent commercial individualism that makes for mechanical relations between people (Lawrence's 'foul mechanicalness') and advocated more communal forms of association. People had to be made to see the perniciousness of political economy, with its competition and free market, and be made to give up their cherished notions about the inalienable right of everyone to amass property and expand his resources. Instead the important place of work in the scheme of things had to become clear, and co-operation and a social purpose were to replace competition. But these economic and political changes were only the substructure of the new society. There was a strong religious element in these early socialist-utopian creeds: the keynote of the new society was love. It was with the religion of love that the importance of women was connected. On the one hand women belonged, with the proletariat, to society's oppressed. On the other, women were supposed to have a special gift for love. On both counts women must be freed and made equal: their gift for love even ensures them a leading role.

The religion of love rejected much of conventional Christian doctrine and morality and called especially for a new attitude to marriage, whose link with property and the oppression of women was well understood long before Engels. In a rudimentary way these early utopians understood the

intertwining roots of political oppression and psychological repression: the new society was to give more scope to natural human desire. The religion of love therefore also included a stress on erotic love.

Their attack on morals, just at the dawn of the Victorian era, gave respectable society a convenient handle against them. They were accused of blasphemy and immorality. And it is true that the connection between socialism, religion and feminism produced some grotesque (and to us delightful) results. The prophets of the new religion were all men; they felt themselves, and were thought by their followers, to be redeemers of the world. But as women were so important, an embodiment of the 'new woman' had to be found to provide an image of the new world. This proved curiously difficult. There were the fathers - even Robert Owen was known as 'Our Social Father' - but no mothers. The father of the St. Simonians, 'pere Enfantin', kept a vacant chair beside his own waiting for the 'mere', should she materialise. St. Simon himself is said to have proposed to Mme de Stael - confident no doubt that this would reveal her destiny to her. Grotesqueness seems to be inseparable from utopianism. And indeed their religion (or irreligion) proved the St. Simonians' eventual downfall.

For all their grotesqueness the social analysis of these early socialist utopians can hardly be bettered, especially where women are concerned.<sup>12</sup> There is an interesting article by Southey in the Quarterly Review of

1831 attacking the St. Simonians, that sums up their position on marriage and family very lucidly. What is interesting is that Southey gives the question of who in a community is allowed to develop into a 'social individual' the importance it deserves, though in traditional society this question is simply not asked and Southey had by that time long put his radical youth behind him and was an arch-conservative: 'the St. Simonites ... address themselves to the understanding, and as far as they understand it to the heart of man: and no system which has been advanced under cover of pious fraud has ever been presented ... so reasonably' (p.447). But here his intelligence and grasp gets the better of him and makes his exposition into an apologia.

The rights of women are fully acknowledged by the St. Simonites. Having been charged with pleading for a community of women as well as goods they repel the first charge as indignantly as the other, but they proclaim that women are to be delivered from that domination, that pupilage, that eternal minority which all existing institutions impose on them, but which are incompatible with the social state that is about to commence. Christianity, they say, has raised the sex from servitude, but has condemned them to subalternity, and throughout Christian Europe they are still under an interdict religious, political and civil. The St. Simonites announce their definite enfranchisement, their complete emancipation .... They demand, with the Christians, that one man shall be united to one woman but they teach that the wife shall be equal with the husband, and that, according with the peculiar grace which God has conferred upon her sex, she ought to be associated with him in the exercise of the triple functions of the church, the state and the family: so that the social individual, which has hitherto been the man



alone, henceforth shall be the man and wife  
.... What the religion of St. Simon puts an  
end to is that shameful traffic, that legal  
prostitution which so often under the name  
of marriage, consecrates a monstrous union  
of devotedness with selfishness, of  
intelligence with ignorance. (Southey's  
*italics*)<sup>12</sup>

The St. Simonian's demand that women too should be allowed to develop into social individuals is highly relevant to our discussion and will be taken up in the next chapter, but it does not of course exhaust the question of individualism, and a more fundamental point must be considered in the context of Lawrence's ancestry. Behind the social individual with its responsibilities stands the human individual that insists on the satisfaction of its desires, its physical desires and the desires natural to its own unique make-up. The point where socialist utopian thinking most sharply divides from traditional social thinking is in assuming that these desires are good and their gratification will benefit society. The thinker who went farthest in this direction was Fourier, and he is therefore in the most direct line to Gross and Lawrence. His erotic doctrine is remarkably close to Gross's, though Gross almost certainly never read him.

Fourier is the most intelligent of the early socialist utopians, the most interesting to us and without any doubt the most absurd and loveable. He had the passion for structuralism so often observed in madmen. His system of correspondences is surrealist (and indeed

the surrealists were the first to revive him and take his erotic doctrine seriously). He constructs a scale of the ages of the social world in which each age has ascending and descending 'vibrations' and is classified morally by its main institutions. Our age, 'Civilisation', does badly. The pivotal attribute of an age is always drawn from 'amorous custom'.

If God gave amorous custom such influence on the social mechanism and on the metamorphoses which it can undergo, it was because of his horror of oppression and violence. He wished the happiness or unhappiness of a society to be proportionate to the constraint or liberty which they tolerate. But the only sort of liberty recognised by God is that which is extended to both sexes and not just to one. Thus, he decided that all the periods which spawn social horror, like Savagery, Barbarism and Civilization, should have no other pivot than the servitude of women, and that all other periods which produce social welfare, like the sixth, seventh and eighth should have no other pivot, no other guide than the progressive liberation of the weaker sex.<sup>14</sup>

The 6th, 7th and 8th are futurist periods. He formulates his general proposition more neutrally in the famous sentence: 'Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women towards liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women' (1972: 195).

But Fourier did not construct only an anatomy of society but also an anatomy of the passions. The new society is based on the satisfaction of desire - not only

of socially acceptable desire but of all desires, however perverse. His point is that society is made for people, not people for society. The good society is that which accommodates people, and he proceeds to make such a society. His system therefore includes such delightful categories as 'Advanced Gastronomy', 'Attractive Work', and 'New Amorous Institutions'. His studies in psychopathology are not sceptical enough by post Freudian standards.<sup>15</sup> But they have an essential ingredient: compassion with human nature. Fourier has a complicated system of types and mixed types and he contrives to bring them together so cunningly in the 'orgies' he prescribes for his happy society, Harmony, that almost all passions are satisfied. An endearing trait of the orgies is that they face the fact of the sexual desires of old and no longer attractive women. As Lawrence did a hundred years later, Fourier thought that sex had nothing to do with sex appeal.

It is only fair to add that in the concrete utopias based on Fourier's writings that sprang up all over Europe and America, his more extreme erotic doctrine was not followed, in fact was not even known. His leading disciples suppressed such portions of his writing as offended the moral sense too much, and they have been available in print only since the 1960s, after the ban on obscenity had been lifted.

I shall not describe Fourier's system of 'amorous manias' but quote a fragment of autobiography which he

himself inserts as an example. I have said that what sharpens Fourier's analytical insight is compassion.<sup>16</sup> The example shows that he had hold of what might be called the key formula of this sort of utopianism: to satisfy oneself is to know and love the other.

I have said that it is difficult to discover manias in civilisation. I was 35 years old when by chance I found myself in a situation which made me realise that I had a taste or mania for sapphianism. I discovered that I loved lesbians and was eager to do anything to please them. In the whole world there are roughly 25,400 people like me (if one calculates at the rate of 33 per million) because every male omnigyne is necessarily a Sapphonist or a protector of lesbians, just as every female omnigyne is necessarily a pederastite or protectress of pederasts. If this were not the case, these personalities would lack their pivoted quality in love, which is an impulse of philanthropic dedication to the opposite sex and to everything that might please it in both the ambiguous and direct modes . . . . I have never met a single one of my fellow Sapphianists even though I have admitted to my inclination in various gatherings. This penchant should not be disguised for it tends only to benefit women. Yet that is the very reason why it is roundly criticised by philosophers. (1972: 350)

An 'omnigyne' is a rare type: he or she has seven dominant spiritual passions. Fourier classed himself as an omnigyne. At the age of 35 he was living in poor circumstances among the industrial poor of Lyons. We see from the extract that in his overall scheme the inner or passionate world corresponds to the outer or social world: in a good world the pivot is always the resurrection of that which has been most savagely repressed. In a male

civilization the female is suppressed in the social world, and within each of us the other sex is suppressed. On both levels liberation is beneficial or as he puts it philanthropic. The utopian who took up this theme seriously with scientific backing was the psychoanalyst Otto Gross.

Gross is closely connected with Frieda and D. H. Lawrence, and we shall meet him again in Frieda's biography. He was born in 1877, Frieda in 1879 and Lawrence in 1885, so that they all belonged roughly to the same generation, Frieda and Gross sharing additionally the same cultural background. Frieda had loved Gross before she met Lawrence and believed passionately in his message.

Otto Gross was one of those people who, extremely well-known and influential in their own time, are completely forgotten later. In Gross's case the neglect was also due to the fact that he had not published a 'system' and that his writings have until recently been inaccessible. He was the first of a number of Freud's pupils who pointed out that the new science of the unconscious did not pay enough attention to social conditions and that the analysis and therapy of the individual must be complemented by an analysis and 'therapy' of society. The revolutionary 1960s revived Reich's memory and gave Tausk his due. Gross remained forgotten (Because he was too radical? Because his theories of psyche and society are so much more complex and less mechanical than Reich's? Because of his

feminism?). We owe it to Martin Green, who devoted part of The von Richthofen Sisters<sup>17</sup> to him that his name has become known. Green's account differs from mine in emphasis and detail, though we are both interested in the similarities and dissimilarities between Gross and Lawrence. Green is largely concerned with biographical detail, with the 'erotic movement' and the historical setting; I am concerned with what 'Erotik' meant to Gross and how the concept is absorbed into and changed by Lawrence's thought. I am also more interested than Green in Gross's psychological and political views and his feminism, since these show his connection with utopian socialism and the tradition to which Lawrence also belonged. I am fortunate in that Neues Forum of July 1978 carried 'unpublished and lost texts' by Gross from which I can quote, and an excellent long article on him by Josef Dvorak.<sup>18</sup>

Gross was in many ways like Lawrence: they shared an intense feeling for the natural world; like Lawrence he studied biology; and both were restless, travelling rather than settling during their short lives. But Gross was also a qualified doctor and psychoanalyst and put his training into the service of his political convictions as an anarchist communist. The creative spirit that with Lawrence went into writing, Gross put into the analysis of his patients. He treated them one at a time, travelled with them and lived with them. Both Gross and Lawrence shared a furious compassion for the state of humanity in

our day and age and a conviction that a change had to come and that they were instrumental in that change.

They were greatly different as thinkers, and their thought and mode of expression arises in the end out of profounder psychological differences. For all Lawrence's vivid and concrete poetic language his thought is more abstract and tends to lose touch with reality, at times descending to waffle. Gross always stays on the ground, though his language is often stiff and abstract. He was a careful, consequential thinker, whose training as a psychoanalyst with Freud led him to a kind of communist feminism. In all his writing he never for a moment lost sight of the connection between the inner life and suffering of the individual and the political and social constellations that condition it. Like Lawrence he believed that change would come from a change within, from a fuller development of humanity, but unlike Lawrence he was quite clear about the changes in political and family structures that have to accompany individual change and make it possible. This clarity is at the bottom of his profoundly different attitude to women. Gross saw that the existing political and familial structures force women to give up their individuality and their will toward self-chosen and self-directed activity and that the same structures at the same time develop in men a will to dominate and use force. If the position of women is an indication of what is wrong, it is also the key for him to the direction change must take. Women must get material

support in their tasks as mothers and this support must come from the state, not from individual men. On this basis they must develop their active potentialities.

It takes courage for a man to see these connections, and a kind of personal wholeness Lawrence seems not to have had. Though Gross appears to be the psychologically more damaged of the two, he must have managed to achieve greater integration than Lawrence.<sup>19</sup>

Gross and Lawrence both loved Frieda. But for Gross, Frieda was the embodiment of the woman of the future because, as he says, she has a genius for insisting on herself.<sup>20</sup> Lawrence was infuriated by this same insistence on herself, and Frieda becomes in his writing the eternal adversary and finally the opposite of what the new woman should be like. The difference in their attitude to Frieda is important because it links up with the crucial concepts in their idea of a new world. Lawrence's crucial concepts - he changed them from time to time - we will examine later. For Gross the new world means above all an end of power relations. He does not talk of equality - inequality is unthinkable for him. His communism was not so much based on feminism as on the necessity to free women and children from patriarchal authority (His writings on children and on the loneliness of children that can be exploited for enforcing conformity are of great immediacy and perceptiveness). Power relations in Gross's new world are replaced by self-knowledge and a knowledge of others. Hence the



revolutionary potential of psychoanalysis for him.

This new kind of self-knowledge and knowledge of others Gross called Erotik: he is said to have founded a movement called the 'erotic movement' though as a label it may have been invented rather by his followers than by him. Eros for him is essentially 'Mitfreude and 'Miterleben' - a rejoicing in the other and with the other and a capacity to share the other's experience, to see from the other's point of view.<sup>21</sup> A central tenet of Gross's Erotik was that it is not the one or other lover that is important but a third thing, the relationship; this tenet has entered importantly into Women in Love and to a lesser extent The Rainbow.<sup>22</sup> Lovers should not abandon themselves to one another, nor identify or take possession of each other but care about their relationship. This will enable each to 'recognise' the other with his or her special needs and desires. In doing this they will also recognise their own needs and desires and so achieve their own individuality. By achieving one's individuality Gross understood the capacity (implied in 'Mitfreude') to come alive with all of oneself, to remain open to all experiences, to respond warmly to what is around us and retain a sense of connectedness. 'Relationship' in his sense 'forces such an individualising on us'.<sup>23</sup>

It is typical of Gross that he gives careful concrete consideration to what achieving one's individuality means to a woman. I shall come back to it when I come to

Lawrence's attitude but want to touch on it here in passing. Because she is the childbearer, Gross sees a woman's problems as different and greater than a man's. Not that he sees motherhood as a limitation of her humanity - on the contrary it contains the rudiments of a fuller humanity for him. But he sees that under existing social circumstances the striving for individuality contains necessarily a component of 'manliness' that rejects the female role and makes a woman turn against herself as a woman. The wish to have children on the other hand contains, again under existing circumstances, a component of passivity, even masochism (We might say the striving for individuality is surrendered in the interest of 'service' or 'sacrifice'). These components are facts and cannot be circumvented (A woman entering into a relationship with a man - and we must remember that relationship is the condition of individuality for him - has to keep this in mind). It follows that she can consolidate her individuality only by directly exposing herself to the clash, by remaining, so to speak, in the arena of conflict and not letting herself sidetrack to one side or the other. This, one must say, is a livelier and more concrete account of what the ordinary woman faces than we are used to, and the warning about relationships it contains is a welcome note in the paean to 'Mitfreude'.

The element in which 'Mitfreude' and 'Miterleben' come most spontaneously to life is, according to Gross, homosexual love. Gross distinguished between primary and

secondary homosexuality and thought that in primary homosexuality, which springs from spontaneous impulse and not from the repressive constellations of family and society, the possibility of rejoicing with the other and feeling with the other is most immediate. The other is, however, not simply and solely the partner of the same sex. Gross's 'erotic' understanding of homosexuality goes further: 'Its biological function' he says 'is empathy with the sexual attitude of the other sex'.<sup>24</sup> In other words a happy male homosexual will love and understand women particularly well, and vice versa. Gross plumbs possibilities of relationship here we are barely conscious of yet, just as Fourier does with his 'Sapphianism' and other complex types.<sup>25</sup> Gross understood this primary homosexuality as a homosexuality of feeling rather than of practice.

Secondary homosexuality (the group psychology of 'Blutbruderschaft' and 'Maennerbund') has to do with the will to power according to Gross. It also connotes for him a will to force reality and an attempt to achieve psychic unity by intellectual means. This is clearly interesting in view of Lawrence's development, and we will come back to it in later chapters. For Gross the hierarchical national state carried the symbol of secondary homosexuality (though it forbids and punishes homosexuality). He also finds the same constellation of features in it as in marriage, a constellation he sums up as 'Vergewaltigung': overpowering or making impotent

through (superior) power, the German word for rape.<sup>26</sup>

Lawrence apparently never met Gross and may not have read him, though Frieda, who believed in him so passionately must surely have kept up with his writings.<sup>27</sup> It is impossible to speak of influence in the strict sense. But even from my rough sketch of some of Gross's ideas it is clear how much Lawrence owes to Gross, how close he was to him in his cast of mind and inclination, and how sharply he reacted against him. The ideas that compound Gross's Erotik turn up in Lawrence's writing (often in letters and the polemical pieces) particularly around 1914, the time when he was closest to the 'wholeness' he sought all his life, and at the height of his powers as an artist. But they turn up always as Lawrence's ideas, never as Gross's; they are even inverted, and already at that time the underlying trend is in a direction hostile to the one chosen by Gross. In a sense all Lawrence's work is a debate with Gross, if only it was a debate with Frieda. In the Study of Thomas Hardy he comes closest to actually debating Gross's ideas on individuality and human completeness. As the essay is also about what Lawrence saw as crucial for the making of a new world, it can serve to show what kind of a utopian Lawrence was.

Study of Thomas Hardy, first planned as a potboiler to make money<sup>28</sup> was written quickly in the first few months of the war 'out of sheer rage' with the war, as Lawrence wrote to Pinker on Sept. 5, 1914 (Letters, 2,

212). It did not find a publisher (see Carswell 1932: 65) and came out complete only posthumously in Phoenix (1936). Lawrence thought highly of it. The letters show that he saw it almost as a programmatic statement of his views on our society, its discontents and their cure. He spoke of it to Amy Lowell as 'a sort of Confession of my Heart' (Letters, 2, Nov. 18, 1914).

The piece still carries the mark of the potboiler; the argument is obscured by the whimsicality of the style and quite often also by the sloppiness of the thought. I am not concerned here, however, with criticising it as a whole but with relating it to the utopian tradition in which Lawrence stands and looking at the quality of his utopian vision. For all its diffuseness, the essay hangs well together. Since it was originally planned as a study of Hardy it is about art, and the keynote is 'what makes for a truly complete art?' or 'what form of expression is properly adapted to our time?'. But if it is about art, it must also be about life: about cultural life and the different expressions art gave to cultural life in different ages, and about personal life that is nourished and shaped by cultural life. Lawrence therefore develops his argument along two lines, one concerned with individuality and with what is necessary for fulfilment, for human completeness, the other with the historical development of culture. In other words, like a myth, it is about the inner life and the outer life, one reflecting the other; and it is indeed more

like a myth in this and other ways than like an ordinary essay. At the end the two lines are intertwined and the essay culminates in a statement of what Lawrence thought was crucial for bringing into being a new age. The lines of argument touch, cross and branch out in all sorts of directions. I shall reproduce them here for clarity's sake in a crudely simplified form.

The inner or personal argument concerns 'woman' and the relation between men and women. It runs roughly like this: our deepest desires are not concerned with material security but with perfecting our individuality, with being. We want to flower like the poppy, which is most intensely itself not in its bud, not in its seed, but in its red flag. But for this flowering, this being ourselves, we have to combine with something not ourselves. Woman is, for the man, the unknown, the other (as man is for the woman). We must risk ourselves, we must venture into the unknown, we must meet her. She must be neither dominated nor made into a servant, for that shows fear of her and a lack of willingness in risking ourselves. She must be left as she is, totally other, and as this other she must be embraced. In this meeting, this embrace, he (or she) will find completeness. But the meeting and embracing will always be only momentary because she travels in the opposite direction. So completeness also comes presumably in different guises at different times.

The outer or cultural argument concerns the

development of culture and the direction of that development. It runs roughly like this: there have been two great cultural phases, an age of the Law (the Father, Nature, the female mode) and an age of Love (the Son, Knowledge, the male mode). In the age of the law when female consciousness ruled, a man was fulfilled in the body, in procreation, in his sexual pride. The law bade him preserve the body. He worshipped God the Father and the natural law, who were one. Consciousness was static, conservative.

Then came a time when self-love, self-preservation and sexual pride were not enough any longer for men. The age of the law was followed everywhere in the world by the age of Love. Consciousness became questing, adventurous, sceptical. The body was denied; it was not the pivot of self-love or sexual pride any more and one's being was not fulfilled any more in procreation and one's children, but in risking oneself, in throwing away or holding cheap the body. Intensest being now lay in spiritual striving, in askesis. Since one couldn't love oneself any more, one loved one's neighbour, even one's enemy.

If a man must live still and act in the body then let his action be to the recognising of the life in other bodies. Each man is to himself the Natural Law. He can only conceive of the Natural Law as he knows it in himself. The hardest thing for any man to do is for him to recognise and to know that the natural law of his neighbour is other than, and maybe even hostile to, his own natural law, and yet is true. This hard lesson Christ tried to instil in the doctrine of the other cheek. ... This

Christianity would teach them: to recognise and to admit the law of the other person, outside and different from the law of one's own being. It is the hardest lesson of love. And the lesson of love learnt, there must be learnt the next lesson of reconciliation between different, maybe hostile, things. That is the final lesson. Christianity ends in submission, in recognising and submitting to the law of the other person. 'Thou shalt love thy enemy'. (Phoenix 1936: 512)

Both these ages are now past. They are not superseded: Love once fulfilled the Law, and we are now asking where to turn after Love. Meanwhile Love has left us desiccate, cerebral, bodiless.

We must remember that the essay was ostensibly a study of Hardy. For Lawrence the quintessence of what we have come to at the end of the age of Love is Sue Bridehead. What he has to say about Sue is so important to his utopian vision, the final reconciliation, that at the risk of disrupting the scheme I must insert it. 'She was born with the female atrophied in her', he says, 'she was almost male. Her will was male'.

Sue wished to identify herself utterly with the male principle. That which was female in her she wanted to consume within the male force, to consume it in the fire of understanding, of giving utterance. Whereas an ordinary woman knows that she contains all understanding, that she is the unutterable which the man must forever try to continue to utter, Sue felt that all must be uttered, must be given to the male, that in truth only Male existed, that everything was the Word and the Word was everything. ... One of the supremest products of our civilization is Sue, and a product that well frightens us. (Phoenix 1936: 496, 497)

Having spoken of the Father and the Son Lawrence



speaks now of the Holy Ghost, the reconciler. The new age can only come through a reconciliation of the mode of Love with the mode of the Law. As this is a difficult matter, I'll let him speak for himself.

The two great conceptions of Law and of Knowledge or Love, are not diverse and accidental but complementary. . . . They are the fixed condition of our being, and they are the transcendent condition of knowledge in us. . . . they are our Feelings and our Mind. They are our Body and our Brain. They are Two-in-One. And everything that has ever been produced has been produced by the combined activity of the two in humanity by the combined activity of soul and spirit. When the two are acting together, then Life is produced, then Life, or Utterance, Something, is created. And nothing is or can be created save by the combined effort of the two principles, Law and Love. . . . Now the principle of Law is found strongest in Woman and the principle of Love is Man. In every creature the mobility, the law of change, is found exemplified in the male; the stability, the conservatism is found in the female. In woman man finds his root and establishment. In man woman finds her exfoliation and florescence. The woman grows downward like a root to the centre of the darkness and the origin. The man grows upwards like the stalk, towards discovery and light and utterance. Man and woman are, roughly, the embodiment of Love and the Law; they are the two complementary parts. In the body they are most alike, in genitals they are almost one. Starting from the connexion, almost unification of the genitals, and travelling towards the feelings and the mind, there becomes ever a greater difference and a finer distinction between the two, male and female, till at last, at the other closing in the circle, in pure utterance the two are really one again, so that any pure utterance is a perfect unity, the two as one, united by the Holy Spirit. (Phoenix 1936: 513, 514-15)

At this point one is absolutely agog to know what this pure utterance could be. In it clearly lies the key to the new world. Lawrence has said earlier that at this

point in our civilisation people should not need to work more than two or three hours a day; we can afford now to be. Could this pure utterance be the self-chosen, self-directed activity which Gross saw as expressly denied to women in the old social set-up? Will he be saying now that human completeness demands not only satisfaction but an active and objective expression of satisfaction, for instance in art? He does indeed say something like this, but his description of Sue who wanted to consume that which was female in the fire of utterance should warn us that even in the new world there will be difficulties for women. That which is female has clearly to be preserved if the condition of utterance is the coming together of male and female.

We start from one side or the other, from the female side or the male, but what we want is always the perfect union of the two. ... Every man starts with his deepest desire, a desire for consummation of marriage between himself and the female, a desire for completeness, that completeness of being which will give completeness of satisfaction and completeness of utterance. ... But it needs that a man shall first know in reverence and submit to the Natural Law of his own individual being ... It needs that a man shall know the natural law of his own being, then he shall seek out the law of the female, with which to join himself as complement. He must know that he is half, and the woman is the other half: that they are two, but that they are two-in-one. He must with reverence submit to the law of himself: and he must with suffering and joy know and submit to the law of the woman: and he must know that they two together are one within the Great Law and the Great Peace. Out of this final Knowledge shall come his supreme art. There shall be the art which recognises his own and also the law of the woman, his neighbour, utters the glad embraces and the struggle between them, and the submission of one: there shall be the

art which knows the struggle between the two conflicting laws, and knows the final reconciliation, where both are equal, two in one, complete. This is the supreme art, which yet remains to be done. (Phoenix 1936: 515-16)

I am not being fair to Lawrence - there are better things in the Study than the passage I have just quoted. It seems to me that the insufferable incantatoriness, which has become marked in the last two passages (and which comes out much more strongly in the unabbreviated text) has something to do with his theme and was not his natural style as he claimed. When Lawrence thinks, his rhythms are lively and irregular. The repetitive double rhythm has to do with the man/woman dichotomy he sets up (the duality that underlies all dualities) and with the fact that where he talks of it he is marking time - his mind stops working, properly speaking, and he cannot move forward though it seems to him he is moving. We shall look more closely at this inability to move (just when he is saying that man is all mobility and change and woman stability and conservatism) later in our discussion. What must be said first, however, is that even here, underneath the intolerably incantatory prose is hidden a revolutionary insight, the insight that women 'must be uttered', that what was voiceless must be given a voice and what was outside history enter history. Lawrence is a writer, and as a utopian concerned with the revolutionary possibilities of art, just as Gross, the analyst, was concerned with the revolutionary potential

of psychoanalysis. Lawrence was moreover true to the revolutionary task he here sets himself (and other writers) almost to the end of his writing life: women speak in his pages as they have not spoken before.<sup>300</sup> He was his own revolutionary hero (or martyr), which is fair enough. It is up to us to examine how he executed his self-chosen task and whether the voice he gave to women has any message for us.

Delany suggests on the basis of the preoccupation with dualities that the Study was influenced by Weininger's Sex and Character which Lawrence may have read around that time (1979: 35 and 397 n. 47).<sup>301</sup> There is indeed an underlying misogyny in the Study, which allies the two pieces. But Weininger, who equates 'male' with 'genius', would never have seen it as a man's - a genius's - task to 'utter women'. Lawrence was onto something really bold and new, which he puts more briskly in a letter to A.W. McLeod (Letters, 2, 3 April 1914).

I think the only resourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of a man and a woman. I think the one thing to do is for men to have courage to draw nearer to women, expose themselves to them and be altered by them; and for women to accept and admit men.

This is the 'pure utterance', the new world note on which the essay ends. In this sense, then, the Study of Thomas Hardy belongs to the history of feminism. Lawrence stands in the tradition of socialist utopianism in which the focus is on two interrelated things: the fuller expression of human nature and the position of

women. But it is clear that in him the tradition has suffered a sea-change.

The first and most striking difference between him and the utopians we have discussed is the lack of a sociological or political perspective. His feminism is without the material dimension that gives feminism its pragmatic value in the schemes of the others. For instance, in the Study the economic security of women is assumed, and moreover assumed to be that 'dependence on a single male' which Gross saw as the root of all evil in social and personal life. This is not to criticise the Study for something Lawrence did not set out to do. Though Lawrence was working-class and had had socialist/feminist friends in Eastwood, the details of the Study reflect again and again the attitudes of the conservative branch of feminism (which indeed with the war finally gained the upper hand). They are a poetic restatement of the doctrine of the two spheres.<sup>22</sup>

Lawrence's ideas were not always so unsocialist. In 1915 when he hoped to enter political life and be instrumental in a revolution, he expressed an extreme socialism in his letters to Bertrand Russell. He talked of total nationalisation, wages for housework, even a woman dictator 'of equal authority with the supreme man' (a foreshadowing of the Plumed Serpent). But the hallmark of his socialism (as of the social anarchism he voices in one or two places in the Study) was its extreme vagueness. Lawrence was not interested in the material

realities of social life. Though he had resolved to utter the law of the woman, he did not connect this law with circumstances. In the Study he admires the suffragettes for their heroism but scolds them for wanting the vote to make more laws when there are already too many. He seems to have known of the sensational feminism of the Pankhursts who fought for a vote on the same qualifications as for men - that is a vote for propertied women only - but he seems not to have known, nor cared to find out, about the patient work of the Women's Freedom League and Charlotte Despard in the courts of law, work that revealed the shocking inequality of women before the law.<sup>33</sup> He sees no need for legal reform. He says he would gladly support a parliament of men and women if it was for the unmasking of law. Though this sounds like anarchism, it is the conservative argument against radical reform; there are too many laws already. New laws have to be made, he says, because some men are sex-degraded and some others money mad.<sup>34</sup> And he goes on to ask:

Whence does the degradation or perversion arise?  
Is there any great sickness in the body politic?  
Then where and what is it? Am I, or your  
suffragist woman, or your voting man, sex-whole  
and money-healthy, are we sound human beings?  
Have we achieved to true individuality and to a  
sufficient completeness in ourselves? Because  
if not - then, physician, heal thyself.  
(Phoenix 1936: 405)

Lawrence belongs to the extreme of the branch of utopianism that seeks the remedy in a change of heart, in

the renewal of personal relations. This is fair enough, one has to start at one end or the other. But even in his chosen field, Lawrence always sidetracks. Especially where women are concerned he always starts bravely enough and then shirks the issue. This can be clearly seen by a comparison with Gross. The Study is about becoming an individual in Gross's sense, and the stress is on the need to be, to fulfill oneself, echoing Gross. Women also must become individuals, he asserts again and again. But there is no realistic discussion of women's special position and therefore special difficulties with individuality as in Gross.

Instead there is a great deal of talk about women's special 'nature'. So from the brave and radical assertion that women must also become individuals he slips into the conservative and mythological assertion of women's 'otherness'. Gross also sees women as other, but for a biological reason, because they are mothers. He even assumes that a woman has a strong basic drive to be a mother, an assumption which is debated today. But the argument he bases on this 'otherness', the argument of what it takes for a woman to be a complete human being, is painstaking and realistic. As our society is arranged she can get the material care she needs for the child and herself only from a single man. This has as a result 'the material and universal dependence of women on men for the sake of motherhood'. Our society forces on a woman the alternative of renouncing children or

renouncing 'free, self-chosen activity,' and creates a conflict between her two basic drives: the specific female drive for maternity and the general human drive to defend one's own independent individuality. Generally the will to individuality and independence, to freedom and activity, associated itself with a denial of herself as a woman, while becoming a mother means, in the overwhelming number of cases, becoming humanly and sexually passive (According to Gross, because of a residual resentment present in even the happiest wife, her attitude becomes masochistic; all sex within this constellation is rape). So, unlike Freud (from whose basic scheme the insights are, however, derived) Gross comes down on the side of tension, against solution:

It is self evident from what has gone before that the conflict between the two basic attitudes, this deepest inner conflict of a woman can be preserved only where a woman does not relinquish the will to hold fast to her own individuality, the will not to be raped [literally perhaps: where a woman cultivates a will to hold fast to her individuality, a will not to be raped].<sup>25</sup>

For a woman to be complete, to be able to 'be' depends then on her being capable of upholding this tension. To do this is only possible in a new society, but as is the case with all revolutions, the new society will only come if women are capable of doing it. It is an active, challenging and at the same time convincing ideal of the new woman. In Sue Bridehead of Jude Hardy shows how under existing conditions a woman must go wrong



and be defeated if she tries to be such a woman. One is tempted to think her defeat too cruel, like the German reviewer Hardy quotes at the end of the 1912 Postscript, who feels that a woman novelist writing about a new woman like Sue would not have allowed her to go back on all she stood for. But given Sue's class and exposedness in addition to the ordinary difficulties of a woman, Hardy's bitter conclusions are realistic.\*\*\*

Lawrence understands Gross well enough and Hardy well enough, but he himself will not take conditions into account, and in his own treatment of women is consistently unrealistic in the Study. In fact, as I have said, though he focusses on 'woman', he never deals with the subject straightforwardly. He swerves when it comes to details and talks instead of the man. This is one reason why his discussion for all its imagery is so abstract. Almost all Gross's ideas turn up in Lawrence's highly idiosyncractic language but never the details that form the pragmatic basis, the sub-stance. As a result the essay is insubstantial.

Where the substance is thinnest one sees fear shining through. A good example is the argument on pp. 445-6 that a man, an artist, needs a woman to be creative. Though one does not know which is the greater abstraction, the 'wife of the body' or the 'husband of the spirit,' one follows with a sort of fascination through to the discussion of what people are forced to do when they are disappointed in their sexual lives:

This is the desire of every man that his movement ... and the supremest effort of his mind shall be the pulsation outward from stimulus received in the sex ... that the woman of his body shall be the begetter of his whole life, that she, in her female spirit shall beget in him his idea, his motion, himself. When a man shall look at the work of his hands ... and shall know that it was begotten in him by the woman of his body, then he shall know what fundamental happiness is. Just as when the woman shall look at her child that was begotten in her by the man of her spirit, she shall know what it is to be happy, fundamentally. But when a woman looks at her children that were begotten in her by a strange man ... she must know what it is ... to love with pain. So with a man who looks at his work which was not begotten in him by the woman of his body. ... For while, ideally, the soul of the woman possesses the soul of the man, procreates it and makes it big with new idea ... in the sexual act, yet, most commonly it is not so. ... In this case a man must seek elsewhere than in the woman for the female to possess his soul to fertilise him and make him try [sic] with increase... And the finding of it for himself gives a man his vision, his God. And since no man and no woman can get a perfect mate ... each man according to his need must have a God, an idea that shall compel him to the movement of his own being. (Phoenix 1936: 445)

This is interesting and one now wants to know what the woman does, what gives her her God, what compels her to the movement of her own being when she is sexually disappointed. But nothing on this follows; instead one hears that God is unutterable and unknowable, that his attributes are eternal, infinite, unchanging, that 'man' on the other hand is a creature of change and dissatisfaction, that desire is the admission of deficiency and the object of desire reveals the original defect.

So that the attributes of God will reveal that which a man lacked and yearned for in his living. And these attributes are always, in their essence, Eternality, Infinity, Immutability. And these are the qualities man feels in woman, as a principle. Let a man walk alone on the face of the earth and he feels himself like a loose speck blown at random. Let him have a woman to whom he belongs he will feel as though he had a wall to back up against; even though the woman be mentally a fool. (Phoenix 1936: 446)

Another swerve of the argument has brought us back to 'woman' but this time not woman as the fellow creature whose parallel if different case is examined but as someone totally outside any reality at all, woman as a form of protection that does not exist.

Lawrence's ideal of 'woman' is not only unrealistic, it is regressive in the ontogenetic sense of the passage above (only a baby needs 'a woman to whom [it] belongs') and in the phylogenetic sense. When Lawrence says 'if we turn our faces west, towards nightfall and the unknown within the dark embrace of a wife, they turn their faces east towards the sunrise and the brilliant, active, bewildering embrace of a husband', he uses words and ideas that have been present in the misogynist taboos of hunting peoples from times unknown. Amongst the Northern Athapascan hunters, for instance, a woman sleeps with her head to the west, a man with his to the east. She must take care not to cross his path which runs east, toward the sun, or touch his weapons which hang on the east side of the tent or she will 'spoil the game'. Wherever we find the dichotomy east/west, life/death, active/passive,

etc applied to men and women we can expect a tendency to deny the importance of women's work as a contribution to the survival of the group. This is one of the truly primitive sides of human society that seems to have existed from its inception. Behind Lawrence's heightened prose we can suspect the same impulse, barely changed. For all his dislike of evolution, Lawrence is outlining an evolutionary development in humanness; from Law to Love, to something beyond both. But if woman is Law and man Love this can only mean that she has no part in the development. As in Freud's scheme of evolution to humanness in Totem and Taboo, women exist outside the possibilities of human development.

Since woman is not properly part of human development of the new era, she cannot be creative. When Lawrence said the only way of revivifying art was to make it more the joint work of a man and a woman, he may not have been thinking of the same thing as Frieda when she claims that she helped him write his books. He may have meant that she made him 'big with ideas' - as the wife of his body. In Gross women are doubly creative, in the body and as human beings. Their attainment of being is a more difficult thing than men's and depends on keeping a precarious balance, but their creative potential is also greater. But in Lawrence's new era men must utter woman. Lawrence was always uneasy in his attitude to women who actually were artists. To Catherine Carswell, to whom he was infinitely kind about her writing, he says about a

poem she sent:

This is a really good conception of a poem but you have not given yourself with sufficient passion to the creating, to bring it forth. I'm not sure that I want you to - there is something tragic and displeasing about a woman who writes - but I suppose Sapho [sic] is as inevitable and as right as Shelley - but you must burn, to be a Sapho - burn at the stake. And Sapho is the only woman poet.

(Carswell 1932: 42; date probably 1915)

The reference to Sappho and to witches is significant. Lawrence thought writing, or any other activity or drive expressive of individuality, unsexed a woman.<sup>37</sup> He must have been afraid of such a drive in women, for in the Study he associates Sue, also, with witchcraft: 'She belonged, with Tess, to the old woman-type of witch or prophetess, which adhered to the male principle and destroyed the female. But in the true prophetess, in Cassandra for example, the denial of the female cast a strong and almost maddening effect. But in Sue it was done before she was born (Phoenix 1936: 496). To Catherine Carswell he wrote on a later occasion: 'I am very glad to hear of the novel. I firmly believe in it. I think you are the only woman I have met, who is so intrinsically unattached, so essentially separate and isolated as to be a real writer or artist or recorder' (1932: 46). We think this is perceptive: women do not have a husband of the body to make them big with ideas. But it does not come out of a real perception of the conditions under which women labour, nor is he really

recommending Carswell's strength in separating herself; he is saying in the nicest possible way that she is odd, outside the normal. Sappho, after all was also a woman and a poet: but she was unnatural and she was an exception, a freak of nature: 'the only woman poet'.

Under these conditions and these only, Lawrence finds in the end a place for Sue Bridehead's individuality in his new society, and by the same token, for the individuality of other unsexed, unnatural women.

Sue had a being, special and beautiful. Why must not Jude recognise it in all its speciality? ... She was not a woman. She was Sue Bridehead, something very peculiar. Why was there no place for her? Cassandra had the temple of Apollo. Why are we so foul that we have no reverence for that which we are and for that which is amongst us? If we had reverence for our life our life would take at once religious form. But as it is in our filthy irreverence it remains a disgusting slough... If we had reverence for what we are, our life would take real form, and Sue would have a place, as Cassandra had a place, she would have a place which does not as yet exist, because we are all so vulgar, we have nothing. (Phoenix 1936: 510)

Lawrence's language is very persuasive, mostly through its use of adjectives: Sue's being is special and beautiful, we are foul, our irreverence is filthy, we are all vulgar. We feel how true it all is. Meanwhile what he proposes is as old as patriarchy: to defuse a woman by allowing her power in the occult field. Lawrence developed the idea further a year later when he was wooing Lady Ottoline Morell to put her considerable wealth and influence behind his scheme for a concrete

utopia in England. She is born to be the centre, the focal point of the new society, he assures her.

Why don't you have the pride of your own intrinsic self? Why must you tamper with the idea of being an ordinary, physical woman - wife, mother, mistress. Primarily, you are none of these things. Primarily you belong to a special type, a race of women: like Cassandra in Greece and some of the great woman saints. They were the great media of truth, of the deepest truth... It is necessary for this type to reassert itself on the face of the earth. It is not the salon lady or the bluestocking - it is not the critic and the judge, but the priestess, the medium, the prophetess. (Delany 1970: 72)

The passage is important because it refers directly to Lawrence's new world. Lawrence is saying two things. One is that a woman who is intellectually active should not put her powers into the criticism of society but into becoming a medium - a medium of truths that are not specified but that must be, by force of the contrast, truths accepted by the society. The other is that sexlessness is a condition of this independent intellectual activity and that the new society will have an important place for such sexless women. What for Gross is a condition of the old society and a tragedy - that women have to choose either a passive wifely role or unsex themselves - becomes a condition of the new society and a promise here. Gross's new woman will have to learn to be both a mother and an independent human being who holds on to her freedom of action, and he sees this as a difficult thing, full of conflict. Though we have a

different attitude to maternity, and much of the problem has been solved by birth control and by the sharing of housework, it is still a realistic challenge for most women. But Lawrence's promise to women that they will be allowed to escape the wifely role and exercise their intellectual and imaginative powers as religious leaders is regressive, and this for two related reasons. First because sexlessness, which is for Gross a corollary of independence forced upon women by the old society, becomes the celebrated attribute of certain rare types in whom it is innate. Second because in reality the promise is a threat and acts restrictively: if in order to be independent you have to be sexless, few women will choose independence. This religious fervour coupled with a rather cunning cowardice is typical of the thinking in archaic society, especially archaic city states, where you find a few 'chosen' women tower above the rest. In Lawrence it crops up whenever he chooses not to think too carefully.

Lawrence's great revolutionary insight - the crux of his new world - was then that men have to draw nearer to women, have to expose themselves to them, and that women have to admit them; and that this will lead to a new art made by both. This insight is qualified by a fear, which comes out in the witch imagery, that women may be stronger than men and more creative and are therefore a threat to the male and a rival of the artist. The fear leads to an almost mythical insistence on duality and on



women's 'fertilising' part in creative and intellectual matters.\*\*\* To be fertilising they have to be 'pure woman', with the paradoxical result that Lawrence's (new) woman is the more 'womanly' woman.

Lawrence was young at the time when he wrote the Study of Thomas Hardy. He changed many times in what he saw as the crux of the new world and we shall follow these changes. But though he was young he was also in a sense at his most mature at the time of the Study. What he could not do then he could not do later; though his boldness and inventiveness was connected with his treatment of women the area was also like a dead spot on his soul through which the life blood never ran and which never became sensitive and integrated with the living tissue. After the war he seems to have increased the area of insensitivity deliberately.

My general proposition that Lawrence was a great writer because of his 'there must be a new world' is not invalidated by this, perhaps because our standards of what makes great writing are not yet high enough, perhaps because we recognise that everything the human mind turns out must be by its nature partial and incomplete. There is nevertheless a point in remarking where Lawrence (and for that matter Dickens) failed to be a great writer and why. After what I have said about Lawrence there will be no need for more than a few notes on what made Dickens a great writer. Dickens's work and his times will be more fully treated in later chapters.

What made Dickens a great writer?

In looking at Dickens from the same perspective - that of the utopian quality of his writing - quite different things become important from those we found in Lawrence. When Lawrence decided that his goal was 'to utter the law of woman' (as well as that of the man) he was taking up a utopian programme consciously and militantly. He starts in, so to speak at the very highest level, and this is why he makes such a good illustration for what is at stake. The key to the utopian streak in Dickens is by contrast found on rather a low level, a level which is, however, of great interest to any question about the nature of the novel. It lies in his training as a journalist and his journalistic curiosity. To find out and reveal, to 'look through' and to make known the truth is Dickens's passion. Dickens had first come to a sense of his powers as someone who recorded faster and more accurately than others. Seeing himself as a pioneer recorder seems to have given him a sense of the writer as mediator between the world as it appears (the ordinary world which is yet a never-never world) and the world as it really is, bringing the shock of 'what is' to a blind and complacent public. This has obvious affinities with a utopianism that claims to reveal the real structure of society, especially that of power relations, behind the facade. Another step easily made from this position is toward the demand that there must be a change of heart so that there can be a new world. Dickens was not a utopian

thinker, but he clearly used his journalistic basis to make this step. An impulse that played an important role here came from an unusually strong memory for his childhood experiences. Childhood is a time when we find ourselves at the bottom of the hierarchy of a huge power structure. Dickens was at the bottom not just as a child but as a suddenly poor and abandoned child. He never let that naked view of the power structure children have get blurred for him. I would like to look here at these two influences and the achievements in regard to utopianism they produced. Then I want to look at the area where they failed: Dickens's attitude to women and the whole embattled question of utopian socialism of his time.

For all a writer's predisposition toward a certain direction, it always seems to need the touch of someone's finger to tip the balance. The person who did this for Dickens was Black of the Morning Chronicle. This editor, who engaged Dickens as a parliamentary reporter, was a liberal and philosophical radical. Mill knew him, and what he has to say about him in the Autobiography shows the nature of his influence very clearly:

... the editorship and management of the paper had devolved on Mr John Black ... a man of most extensive reading and information, great honesty and simplicity of mind; a particular friend of my father, imbued with many of his and Bentham's ideas, which he reproduced in his articles, among other valuable thoughts, with great facility and skill. ... The defects of the law, and of the administration of justice, were the subject on which that paper rendered most service to improvement. Up to that time hardly a word had been said, except by Bentham and my father, against that most peccant part of

English institutions and of their administration. It was the almost universal creed of Englishmen, that the law of England, the judicature of England, were models of excellence. I do not go beyond the mark in saying, that after Bentham, who supplied the principal materials, the greatest share of the merit of breaking down this wretched superstition belongs to Black, as editor of the Morning Chronicle. He kept up an incessant fire against it, exposing the absurdities and vices of the law and the courts of justice, paid and unpaid, until he forced some sense of them into people's minds. On many other questions he became the organ of opinions much in advance of any which had ever before found regular advocacy in the newspaper press. 33

Dickens at twenty-one was naturally sensitive to the tone of the paper for which he wrote and to the opinions of his editor. But the influence seems to have been more direct and personal. The Morning Chronicle published some of Dickens's early sketches and Black discussed the pieces with Dickens. The young author of the immensely popular Sketches by Boz delighted at this time in his eye and ear for the London scene. He proposed to do something on the gin palaces for the Morning Chronicle. Black told him that simply a description, however funny and moving, was not good enough. If he wanted to write for his paper, he had to substantiate his description with the social background. He had to ask himself why there were gin palaces and what was their effect on the London poor. This lesson seems to have been reinforced by Dickens's future father-in-law, George Hogarth, a Scotsman like Black, who took an active and generous interest in Dickens's writing from the start.

The person who administers such a touch is, of course, only a catalyst. There were many reasons why Dickens should have an eye for social abuse. But without the presence of such a catalyst at the critical time, the elements present may never crystallise in the significant way. In Lawrence's development we actually know of a series of such incidents. When he gave an early draft of Sons and Lovers to Jessie Chambers, she told him bluntly she was surprised he had kept so far from reality and that what had really happened was much more interesting than what he had invented.<sup>40</sup> This made Lawrence once and for all turn against being story-bookish, as Jessie called it, and develop the remarkable powers he had of drawing on a living reality. How Frieda tipped the balance by introducing him to psychology and the socialist utopianism of her friends I have already told. It both opened up the world for him and gave him a focus for his mission as an artist. Dickens started off with his incomparable knowledge of London, his 'ear' and his knack for making people and situations appear comic. Socially his driving impetus was to become a gentleman; to get out of the stifling lower middle class atmosphere he grew up in and the squalor and insecurity his father had imposed on the family. His social and intellectual ambitions were one; to become a writer was to become a gentleman. His knack for making situations appear comic seems to have been closely related to his desperate drive to work his way up, to get out. Without Black, Dickens might have been a

comic writer and portrayer of the London scene. As it is, most people love him for that 'pleasant little whiff of oysters and brown stout', as Orwell has it (1970: 501). There seems to have to be an impetus from a respected and admired quarter to make one strike out and combine one's original and local impulses with universal ones. Black's social perspective opened for Dickens that extra dimension which gave him his focus for his mission as an artist. The context of reporting in which he received this impetus added the concreteness without which a utopian tendency would in Dickens have degenerated into fantasy. Dickens never said 'there must be a new world' but he showed the evils of the world as it is and therefore implied it. Without Black he would have shown the world as funny-lovable-sinister.

Dickens's journalistic zest for showing things up combined with a psychological bias: an eye for social abuse based on childhood experiences. The fact that he had been put to work in a blacking factory at the age of twelve to stay there for six months impressed him as nothing else could have done with the power society has over human beings. A justly famous passage in 'The Two Scrooges' points to the connection between childhood trauma and the utopian tendencies in Dickens (though the focus of Edmund Wilson's essay is on Dickens's divided personality):

For the man of spirit whose childhood has been crushed by the cruelty of organised society, one of two attitudes is natural: that of the

criminal or that of the rebel. Charles Dickens, in imagination, was to play the roles of both, and to continue up to his death to put into them all that was most passionate in his feeling.<sup>41</sup>

The influence of the blacking factory episode on Dickens's social criticism is so well recognised that it needs no more than a mention here. Dickens was one of the first writers to take childhood as a central theme (others were the Brontes), and the figure of the lost or abandoned child, into which he pours his bitterest memories, becomes a symbol for what is wrong with society. It seems to me that another childhood experience that influenced Dickens deeply has been overlooked as a source for his social criticism. In his father, Dickens had before him the spectacle of another sort of social outcast, much closer to the ambiguous rebel/criminal Wilson put his finger on: the man who cannot make it by reason of his class. John Dickens had, as the son of a servant, grown up in one of the great houses of England. He aped the aristocracy, especially in getting credit and not paying his bills. But unlike them he didn't get away with it. He was constantly snubbed, punished and put outside the pale - yet to the socially sensitive young Dickens it must have become clear that he did nothing which his betters weren't doing. Dickens, with his intense desire to be a gentleman must have identified with his father and suffered an agony of shame, indignation, pity and fear in contemplating his fate. This would explain the continuing tenderness of his references to him. Two passions of pity then make up the

psychological sources of his social criticism: pity for himself in immature form as the innocent and abandoned child and pity and fear for himself in adult form as the adventurer who has overstepped the bounds, the dandy who isn't acknowledged, the unconventional man who is dubbed criminal - the eternal outsider, gallant, bragging and dishonest like his father.

Dickens never overcame his childhood traumas to the extent that Lawrence did. His talent for self pity was prodigious, and self-pity and fear continue to provide a strong undercurrent of motivation for his writing to the end of his career. Self pity is of course necessary if we are to feel pity at all - it is the opposite extreme to an alienation that renders us unfeeling to ourselves and others. However, such strong unsublimated feelings as Dickens kept alive can be as much in the way as a help toward that sense of the world which is based on a recognition of the feeling, suffering other. Dickens could never forgive his mother for the role she played in the blacking factory affair and this influenced his writing as strongly, and in this case to the detriment of his sensitivity, as his feeling for his father influenced it positively. This is why I think that Dickens's journalistic 'fact finding' manner was the important objective ingredient. One astonishing way in which the factfinding manner combined with the psychologically coloured view of the world and informed it, which has not been given enough attention, is that when Dickens is



attacking society he does not concentrate on an abuse or a person but builds up a world created in the image of a particular institution. The Chancery world of Bleak House is the best-known example. Each of the institutions under attack acts like a magnetic field so that we see the whole of society - with its dominant class, oppressors or benefactors, their hangers on, the exploited as supporters or as victims, the outsiders, outcasts and rebels - 'ordered' by the laws of the particular institution. Dickens's technique preserves something of the vision of the child who, intensely miserable, say at school, sees all human relations in terms of the head, the master, the bully, the pal. The technique is itself a form of social criticism: in his books Dickens does not attack social groups, or institutions like the law or utilitarianism, but shows the lives of people and the world of personal relations distorted by the system under scrutiny (In book after book, if we take in his work as a whole, society emerges as a number of such systems superimposed and overlapping). Oliver Twist shows a whole rural society involved in the abuses of the Poor Law, its human relations distorted by the principle of 'no outdoor relief'. There are not only Oliver and Noah Claypole, victim of the system as hero and as villain, but Dickens manages to show how perfectly ordinary people are corrupted by a system that impinges only marginally on their lives. Because they are parishioners the system of parish relief has its tentacles in their souls; their

material lives may not be greatly affected but their attitude to fellow human beings is poisoned.

The least successful of these worlds created under a particular sign is the world of Hard Times, though Dickens approached it in his best journalistic factfinding vein, going up to Preston during a strike. But no childhood tie, no deeply engraved experience connected him with the industrial proletariat; as David Craig shows in his introduction to the Penguin edition (1969), Dickens did not understand the structure that related the workers to bosses motivated by political utilitarianism and members of parliament motivated by philosophical utilitarianism. The world to which he is tied by psychological experience in childhood and adolescence is the world of business and the City and especially the world of law in all its facets. Dombey depicts society under the sign of business and patriliney, Bleak House under the sign of law suits, Little Dorrit under the sign of the prison, Our Mutual Friend under the sign of the City and of money as excrement.

I have stressed up to now Dickens's realism as the basis of his social criticism and have indicated how his psychological tendency to see himself as the abandoned child or the outsider made for the creative form that realism took. The point is important because I believe his realism to be the ground of his utopian vision. We need only compare Dickens's fiction with such results of social research as Mayhew presents in London Labour and

the London Poor (also originally published in the Morning Chronicle) to see how true to fact even Dickens's sentimental fiction was: compare for instance Charlie in Bleak House with Mayhew's Watercress girl.<sup>42</sup> However, this social criticism implies the 'new world' only negatively by showing what the 'old world' is like - a world people cannot live in. Dickens had also a positive way of implying a new world, and here his strong unsublimated childhood impressions again combined with his realism, though the combination is quite different from the one we have discussed. Dickens was one of the few English writers (another is Keats) who draw for their inspiration on that very early, glowing sense of a whole world that comes from infantine sensual satisfaction. His writing is full of gigantic good meals. According to Freud, the infant originally 'magics' these satisfactions. As a popular novelist Dickens incorporated sensual dreamstuff and fairytale-like transformations into his stories and this links him to the socialist utopians' concern with human desire and a fuller humanity. I have already mentioned that this particular root of the utopian tradition goes back to those popular movements of dissent and rebellion against crushing constrictions and dream images of a freer, more equitable world. Transformations are at the heart of this tradition. Lindsay, in his biography, which is basically an elaboration of the theory put forward by Edmund Wilson in 'The Two Scrooges', has pointed out that transformations are also at the heart of

Dickens's work (The popular forms Lindsay is referring to in this passage are presumably melodrama and the gothic and sentimental novel).

I have already sketched the way in which Dickens's work grew up out of a ferment of popular forms and forces. The Key nature of such popular elements is to be found in the emphasis on the notion of trans-formation and on all images and characters that seem to embody the transformative process. Dickens found his deepest contact with these elements through his subtle and pervasive use of the day dream, the childhood fantasy. It is because he always fuses the fantasy with realism that he redeems realism from its bourgeois distortion (naturalism) and shows himself an outstanding upholder of the great creative tradition which the triumph of the bourgeoisie threatened.<sup>43</sup>

Transformation is here associated with a theory of the novel which we will take up in the next chapter. One need not agree with Lindsay's view of the great creative tradition which the triumph of the bourgeoisie threatened (without that triumph we wouldn't have had the novel) to see that this section of Lindsay's biography contains something extraordinarily interesting for our theme. What interests us here is that he has put his finger on a combination of realism with dream images of a brilliant festive world that adds up to a vision of different society, a society of the more communal, more human tenor the socialist utopians imagined - a world people can live in. Hard Times which I criticised as one of Dickens's less successful microcosms because he didn't understand the true relation between workers and industrialists is wonderfully successful in its transformative utopian

aspect. The world of the circus is one of those brilliant festive worlds where life is fuller and relations between people warmer and more spontaneous than in the ordinary world. It is also a world of wonders. Its contrast with the Gradgrind world is the contrast between the old world seen properly and a new world which we can only grasp as possibility and to which Dickens has given the childish, glittering, slightly garish image of the circus.

If we turn now to the question of Dickens and women - the crucial question in an inquiry of the sort we are making - we draw a blank in every sphere where, on the basis of the connections I have made, we would have expected lively interest: in the journalistic, factfinding and documentary sphere, in the sphere of social criticism and in the psychological sphere. It is not that Dickens did not write interestingly about women. Looking carefully at his books teaches one that in some ways he was shrewder about their real position and desires than was Lawrence. But here we are concerned with attitude in a more general sense, as we were in the section on Lawrence, and what we find is surprising in the light of what I have said above. Dickens's writing career coincided with the period when the 'woman question' came for the first time to the attention of a wide public. The beginning of his writing career coincided with the period when women's legal status had reached a nadir and when people, aware of the antediluvian nature of English law and of the legal and social disabilities women laboured

under, began to consider reform. Yet Dickens who always had his ear to the ground and picked up what was topical and who was sensitive to a degree about legal abuse, never concerned himself with the woman question at all. The women's movement in an organised form had not got under way in his time, but there were a number of preliminary moves that should have interested a journalist like him. The only direct reference in Dickens's work appears in the malign portrait of Mrs Jellyby in Bleak House.<sup>44</sup> The beginning of Dickens's writing career also coincides with the greatest public stir about the socialist utopians, who were, as I have said, closely connected with the 'woman question' in its more scandalous aspect. Yet Dickens was silent about them too. Both movements came so close to touching his life that one must assume that his blind spot was of a significant, not an accidental nature.

The woman question in its legal aspect touched his life most nearly through the Norton-Melbourne trial, which Dickens covered as a reporter for the Morning Chronicle in 1836. The person actually on trial was Caroline, wife of a Captain Norton who accused her of adultery with the prime minister; but as a woman and therefore a legal minor she could not appear in court. Melbourne was the defendant. The case was easily squashed because no evidence could be produced apart from servants' gossip. As Caroline Norton explains in a political pamphlet later, it was probably a try-on: Norton had sued in the hope of hush money. Melbourne conducted his own defence. Dickens

felt great admiration for the poise and coolness he displayed in an extremely nasty position, and one has the impression that he determined then and there to take a leaf out of his book. Of Caroline Norton's impossible position, her legal helplessness in the face of her husband's trickery, her plight in being tied to a marriage like this - as a woman she could not divorce her husband, though she was proved innocent of his accusations - he says not a word. The Dickenses must have known her well, at least her children came to their children's parties, yet of all Dickens's remarks reported not a single one touches on her plight or her courageous public stand. They are all 'urbane' male jokes about her beauty and social vulnerability. Caroline Norton was a well-known writer, journalist and pamphleteer, whose political pieces concern themselves with women's legal and social position. Her writings should have been of great interest for Dickens as an artist and reformer, for while he helped create the Victorian vogue for motherhood, Caroline Norton wittily pointed to the paradoxical discrepancy between Victorian beliefs in pure womanhood and women's legal rights. The law was so constituted that a mother, even if she was the innocent party in a separation was not allowed custody of her children. This led to situations like her own: though she had been cleared by the court, her husband, who had been implicated, had custody, and his mistress ( a 'bad woman' by definition) was bringing up her children. Caroline Norton's pamphleteering helped

make the first breach in a law that regarded children automatically as the property of the father, and divided mothers, whether guilty or innocent, from their children. Dickens's interests touch on hers at so many points that one is puzzled by his never mentioning her fight or her success. His silence is particularly strange for another reason. The first law passed by parliament to give separated mothers a right to see something of their children is known as Serjeant Talfourd's Bill (or Custody of Infants Bill), and Talfourd was a life-long friend of Dickens. Talfourd had first been a law reporter for the Times and later became a serjeant at law and member of parliament. The two men had in common their interest in law reform. Yet Dickens never, to my knowledge, mentions the bill (the first official recognition of the rights of women) which Talfourd fought for so long and hard and which bears his name (the bill was finally passed in 1839). Indeed he seems to have been unconscious of the whole issue or he could hardly have behaved as he did over his own separation from his wife twenty years later.

In chapter seven of his Tennyson and 'The Princess'<sup>45</sup> - the chapter called 'J.M. Kemble, Caroline Norton and the Idea of a University' - John Killham shows how intense the excitement was in the 1830s and 40s over the rights of women and how Talfourd's Bill, Caroline Norton, women's education and the destruction of English traditions were connected in the popular mind with utopian socialism. St. Simon was cast as the particular villain. Talfourd, who



was the most moderate of men, who had simply wanted innocent wives to have access to their young children and who only gained a pitifully small concession, was accused (rather wittily) of following 'St. Simon rather than St. Paul'.

Killham (1958: 149ff) quotes largely from an article in the British and Foreign Review which attacks Talfourd and Norton and gives us a taste of the atmosphere in which the debate was carried on:

the view that the two sexes are equal is so fundamentally opposed to English traditions that an entirely different system of legislation and society must necessarily spring from it ... this last doctrine [of equality] pushed to its furthest limits, as the Saint-Simonians tried to push it, must inevitably end in domestic anarchy and the destruction of the family. Indeed Mr Fourier, who, strange writer though he be is yet a far more consistent logician than Mr de St. Simon, openly avows his intention, as does Mr Owen, to destroy the family as it is presently constituted.... Mr Serjeant Talfourd must surely see that his advocacy of equal rights for women will tend in the same direction, since common experience shows the inferiority of women to be natural, and in accordance with Christian teaching: ... if we were once to admit, and establish by law the speculative doctrine of the equality of the sexes, of the "co-equal rights of parents" the most dangerous and alarming practical consequences would speedily follow. ... But we ask of those purblind, short-sighted legislators, who are so ready to revile and destroy the fundamental principle of the old law of England as a hideous tyranny, whether they are aware that, at this very moment, in the very centre of London, exists a society, consisting principally of the working classes, numbering thousands of members, and having agents and booksellers and branch societies in almost all the great towns of England, whose professed object is entirely to revolutionise the whole social system? While Lords and Commons are disputing about insignificant forms ... these men are meditating, nay, already preparing, nothing less than the destruction of all

Christian society, - propagating the belief of the necessity of a complete social sub-radical change; and what is more, one of the chief doctrines that they most zealously propagate in order to effect this change is this very one of THE EQUALITY OF THE SEXES. (acc. to Killham 1958: 151-2)

Caroline Norton who was thought to be the author of an article pleading women's education is reviled in the same piece. First the writer 'is careful to give full details of Caroline Norton's domestic misfortunes and her connection with the Bill', then he states that 'women are naturally inferior; no example of a woman genius is known; any attempt to reform on the basis of equality would lead to anarchy', then he says women have equal rights anyway - what more does 'this bold Bradamante of the 19th Century' who 'fearlessly denies that her sex are at all inferior in ability' want?

If they be 'retained in profound ignorance', who is it that so retains them, unless it be themselves? We know of no places devoted to education from which they are excluded, except the dissecting room and its adjuncts, for if women cannot go to the universities, they lose little by that. (acc. to Killham 1958: 153)

Dickens had a life-long interest in education yet he never mentions women's education. He must have known Tennyson's Princess which came out in 1847; he was a supporter of the Governesses' Benevolent Society from which Bedford College grew, yet from his writing we would not guess that the question of university education for women existed.<sup>46</sup> The St. Simonians sent proselytising

members of their sect to England in the early 1830s. John Stuart Mill describes in his Autobiography how he formed a friendship with d'Eichthal and met Bazard and Enfantin.<sup>47</sup> Dickens was very young at the time, but he reported debates on abolition and other inflammatory issues and as a young journalist with anti-conservative leanings was very much in the thick of things. We have seen what a stir the St. Simonites created in the British press for at least ten years. Yet Dickens never mentions their much publicised visits, or, to my knowledge, their doctrine. Though he must have been familiar with Robert Owen and his doctrines and experiments, since he supported the Mechanics' Institutes, no one could have guessed from his work that the Owenites existed.

It is true that Owen had a reputation, as we have seen, of openly avowing 'his intent to destroy the family as it is presently constituted', and that Dickens's work was pledged to uphold the family. The journals Dickens published were all family magazines. But if we look closely at his fictions (as we shall in the next section at the two Rosas, Rosa Dartle and Rosa Bud) we shall see that Dickens too attacked the family. His actual pictures of family life (at least when there isn't a sweet young baby wife involved, and sometimes even then) are quite gruesome.

Orwell suggests in the 1940 article that Dickens had no interest in the future. By my theory this is wrong, and yet his shying away from the 'woman question' and his

neglect of the socialist utopians give colour to it. I see the trouble as very deep-going and connected with the idea of home. The central doctrine of utopian socialism has to do with closing the gap, opened up by the modern market society, between 'the world' and 'the home'. This is why women are so important to their view of society: women have for economic reasons been relegated to the home, while it is central to their vision of a better society that people should be 'at home' in 'the world'. With the ideology that 'a woman's home is her world' firmly lodged in their minds, women constitute the greatest obstacle to the new society. Dickens may have been deeply aware that there is something wrong with the family and marriage - in mid-career he delivered himself even of the sentence 'I loathe domestic hearths' - but he could not accept that there was something wrong with the division between 'home' and 'world'. All through his life, even after he had left his wife, he upheld the idea of home as a haven, a private secure place superior to the world. If there was something wrong with marriage and the family, it was because women did not make better homes. (The equation is worked out concretely in the Dora episode of Copperfield: Dora incapable of running a home = something wrong with the marriage; it still holds in Great Expectations where Joe Gargery is proved wrong in thinking that what ails the family might have something to do with men). In real life Dickens was almost insanely concerned with the choosing and furnishing of houses (only

young and pretty sisters-in-law were allowed to help him) and with how the home was kept. His attitude to women, their dependence or independence, their education, indeed his attitude to his own children was coloured by this obsession, and his attitude to society could not but be influenced by it.

Why did Dickens's utopian vision fail him where this crucial issue was concerned? Though we have seen from the tone of the British and Foreign Review article how high feelings ran about the woman question, I cannot, in the end, put it down to the risks that were involved with his reading public. It has been said that Dickens only supported radical causes when they were already popular. This is not true; it is true that he was often conservative; but it seems to me that in Dickens's case his decision over every issue warrants separate consideration. I have already said that in his writing he attacked the family, though he was committed to it; he could have made it palatable to his public if he had attacked 'the home' as counterpart to 'the world'. His failure was not that he was incapable of seeing further than his time; it was not a failure of intelligence - he was intelligent enough to be subversive on issues subtler than the one under discussion. He was of course as a man influenced by an exceedingly male-dominated age, but at bottom his failure was, I think, a decision (one of those which we have to call moral decisions even if they are not fully conscious), which had to do with the vivid way in

which he retained childhood impressions. Here the psychological bias worked as an obstacle to his vision of society, not as a sharpening of it; it had not a stimulating but a stultifying effect on his intelligence and creative imagination. His mother had been 'warm for' his staying on at the factory; she had wanted him out in 'the world' and denied him his child's right to be in 'the home'; he would never forgive his mother (A mother is not easily forgiven by any of us, she is constitutionally in the wrong; but Dickens's mother had presented him with an incident, almost symbolic, to which his strong, passionate, self-pitying imagination could attach itself). I believe that Dickens's relation to his mother was even more important than his relation to his father, that indeed its importance for his art and his life cannot be exaggerated. I will deal with it in the biographical part, but a few facts should be looked at in this context. The motive of revenge on his mother runs through the whole of Dickens's work, though it diminishes in strength after Copperfield. It takes a number of forms, from jeering at stereotyped 'mothers' (for instance the mother in Nicholas Nickleby of whom Dickens's mother said the only thing that can sensibly be said: such a woman never existed) to the question of women's education. I have already said that Dickens was, because of the ups and downs of family fortunes in his childhood, even more sensitive to class differences than children usually are. If he saw that his father was trying to appear as a gentleman, he must also

have seen that his mother was a lady. She therefore meant security and the hope of a better life where his father roused pity and fear of life. Security was also connected with education, and for the infant Dickens 'mother' stood for 'education'. Elizabeth Dickens taught him up to grounding him in Latin, a thing his father could not have done. It is striking how Dickens was driven to the end of his career to ridicule in his fiction her efforts to open a school (in order to salvage the family fortunes and give him a home), though she failed through no fault of her own and would have been an excellent teacher.

This brings us in conclusion to the question of the relation between Dickens's attitude to women and his quality as a writer. If we can say in a straightforward way where Lawrence is concerned that his attitude to women prejudiced the quality of his writing (or his attitude to men, or to the 'phallic mystery' - the two come to the same thing), we can only say where Dickens is concerned that the relation is not at all simple.

Let us return for a moment to Mr and Mrs Micawber. Mrs Micawber is as famous, as popular and 'immortal' a literary figure as Mr Micawber. Yet her popularity is of a different kind. While we laugh with Mr Micawber, the laugh in the book is against her. He cocks a snook at society, she is ridiculous. This is not because Dickens makes Mr Micawber at bottom a better person. On the contrary he is careful to let at times peep through the genial surface the crook, the ruthless sponger, the

exploiter of people better than himself (among whom is Mrs Micawber). It is rather quite simply because Mrs Micawber is no longer young, has no access whatever to birth control and still upholds pretensions to being a human being. She seems to live in fact rather successfully within the tension Gross described as necessary if a woman wanted to be an individual (If in her loneliness she forgets that David Copperfield is only a child, that can surely be forgiven here). However, it is precisely these 'pretensions' that make her comic. Mrs Micawber's most famous line is 'I will not leave Mr Micawber'. Why is this so infinitely comic? The inane repetitiveness of it makes one think of what Freud said about the link between repetition and the death wish. The truth is that Mrs Micawber cannot leave Mr Micawber; she is in a trap. Yet when Mrs Micawber phrases it as 'I will not leave Mr Micawber', she asserts, she pretends, that she still has a human choice. The clash between the pretence and the reality (a reality perhaps tacitly understood as 'what does Micawber care?') is what Dickens laughs at and what we laugh at with him. Yet who could have shown us like Dickens the gallant fight a Mrs Micawber can put up, half abandoned, half starved and a baby always at her breast?

Black, we remember, told Dickens that if he wanted his stuff to be really good he had to combine his sharp eye, his talent for observation, with an eye for the structures behind appearances, a talent for social criticism. Dickens took the hint, and the fusion became



the essence of what we have called his utopianism, and the basis of his greatness as a writer. In a case like Mrs Micawber, and other, similar female figures, the fusion has clearly not taken place. Mrs Micawber's plight is not used to light up any structure behind it, for the simple reason that it is not 'placed' as a plight. Her plight is at bottom that it is made impossible for her to act, that she is immobilised by her situation. With this Dickens touches directly on the question of the position of women in marriage and in the home, where they are isolated from the world in which men act. He uses popular misogyny (the picture of the woman 'caught' or imprisoned is an old joke) to make her plight comic, and so creates more popular misogyny. In doing this he also draws on those conservative and sharp-sighted fears, voiced by the antifeminist critic I have quoted. The fears are sharp-sighted because feminism is of course a revolution, an overturning of the old established structure, even if the feminists of his day denied it. Dickens remains traditional and conservative in this area, his talent for observation and his sharp eye for the structures behind appearances parting company. Yet as I have already indicated this is simply not all there is to say about the relation of Dickens's attitude to women and the quality of his writing. Where Dickens 'warms up', as he does about Mrs Macawber and a host of women characters he dislikes, his observation is so accurate and the picture he gives so complete that the reader can without difficulty look

through to the social system behind it and gauge the pressures and deprivations that make the women behave as they do. Dickens is in fact much sharper and more interesting about women than about men. The onus is, however, on the reader to make the judgement and do the placing. Criticism shifts here from the writer to the critic, who in praising Dickens's art where it is insensitive and brutal (as it often is) exposes only himself and does not do justice to the art. Dickens's control over his art was not as complete as Lawrence's; he surmounted his limitations in his perceptions. The proper task of Dickens criticism would be to show where he held back from the implications of his own perception and where he had the courage to follow the implications and marry them to the perception.

## Chapter 2 Utopianism as a General Criterion for the Novel

### I

If Dickens and Lawrence are great novelists because of a utopian element in their writing, it follows that the novel itself, as a genre, must be significantly related to utopianism. This would mean in turn that the novel as a genre has a positive relation to the struggle of women for independence and individuality. Yet the novel has, justly, been attacked for having the opposite relation, for being a powerful ideological instrument in retarding this struggle. I have already touched on the core argument for this attack in the section on Dickens: the novel upholds division between home and world and in this belongs to the politics of industrialization and self-consolidating capitalism, both dependent on having women in a subordinate 'supportive' role. We have also seen that Dickens's and Lawrence's utopianism stopped short just where the question of home and world comes up: both relegate women to the home, as a refuge for men, Dickens directly, Lawrence metaphorically; , both are concerned that women should not enter the world - whether because the world is too dangerously treacherous or too dangerously adventurous is not really material. This means that neither of them in the final count wants a new world because that would mean a world in which people - women and men - could be at home. Our question then is

whether this blind spot in Dickens and Lawrence as artists was fostered by the novel form with its well-known concentration on domesticity, emotion and personal relations or whether they failed to realise (or realised only incompletely) the utopian potentiality of the novel form. In this section I do not want to look at Dickens and Lawrence (except in so far as their work is useful for illustration) but to ask the general questions their work gives rise to: what is the paradox that makes the novel appear, according to one's point of view, as 'imprisoning' or 'liberating'? Can one rely on the novel to this extent at all, rather than simply talking about individual novelists and novels? Can one make a case for thinking that a good novel must have a utopian strand?

I have talked about the tradition of the utopian socialists above, and Dickens's and Lawrence's link to the tradition, but in order to tackle these questions I must define more directly, in relation to the novel, what I mean by utopian. Utopian as I shall speak of it means radically critical of society as it is, that is of the prevailing power structure. It means revolutionary in the sense that it aims at over-throwing this structure, but not in the sense that it has a programme which contains the seeds of a new hierarchy. The special feature of this kind of utopianism is its concentration on individual happiness rather than political organization. It argues, optimistically, that if you fulfil your desires (or: if you are fulfilled) you are more loving. On this

foundation it believes a society can be based - the society people can live in. It recognises that people's basic desires are for self-assertion and companionship.

The stress on the fulfilment of desire, and on the twin desires of self-assertion and companionship, links utopianism to the novel with its concern for individualised character, feeling and personal relations. The two are linked in the following way. On the political level, only a community that can make congruent and satisfy these desires is a society people can live in. The programme for individual happiness therefore presupposes equality, and in this precise sense utopianism is revolutionary. On the literary level, the novel, if it is utopian, allows for an identification of the private with the public, the inner world of emotion and the outer one of social relations. It means that it has the possibility of expressing what the feminists have discovered, that 'the personal is the political'. This has the same egalitarian implications as the political programme for individual happiness, and if the novel expresses it, it is in its own way revolutionary. I suggest that the novel has inherently a tendency of this sort. The question then is why doesn't it do it? And also what are its inherent technical possibilities for doing it? Let us approach these questions by looking first at what some experts - critic or novelist - have to say about the novel. Especially two critical attitudes interest me here, because they both, though they

contradict one another logically, seem to convey 'the truth' about the novel.

The first was expressed most succinctly by Ian Watt in his Rise of the Novel. It is that the novel because of its concentration on the domestic, on feeling and personal relations, is afflicted with 'a certain narrowing of the framework of experience and permitted attitude' (1957: 299). How this happened is worked out particularly in the chapters on Richardson: 'Love and the novel: Pamela' and the extraordinarily interesting 'Private experience and the novel'. Watt stresses Richardson's femininity - he was so to speak the mother of the novel (which has no father but was conceived parthenogenically). The narrowing of experience and permitted attitude in the novel, as well as the concomitant deepening of personal relations, is a reflection of the narrow world of women and their social experience, both as writers and readers, as the context from which I took the extract makes clear:

In Jane Austen, Fanny Burney and George Eliot the advantages of the feminine point of view outweigh the restrictions of social horizon which have until recently been associated with it. At the same time it is surely true that the dominance of women readers in the public for the novel is connected with the characteristic kind of weakness and unreality to which the form is liable - its tendency to restrict the field on which its psychological and intellectual discriminations operate to a small and arbitrary selection of human situations, a restriction which, since Fielding has affected all but a very few novels with a certain narrowing of the framework of experience and permitted attitude.'

We shall see below, in our discussion of Stubbs, how feminist criticism extends Watt's argument, turning him in the process right side up: the novel is instrumental in causing a narrowing of the framework of experience and permitted attitude, especially for women. But before we look at this argument we shall consider the second, and contradictory attitude to the novel.

This is that the novel is specially suited to widen the framework of experience and permitted attitude. It is expressed most clearly and convincingly by Lawrence, for whom the novel is the form (to the exclusion of other literary, philosophical and scientific forms) in which the whole spectrum of life and human experience is caught<sup>2</sup> (He believes it is particularly suitable to catch the spectrum of modern life). Lawrence argues in his essays on the novel and such pieces as 'A propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover' that the novel promotes a loosening of rigid attitudes and a more active and fuller capacity for experience. He has, from his workmanlike knowledge of writing, no hesitation about reifying it and pointing out that it works according to laws that can defy the conscious intentions of the writer: 'The novel itself gives Vronsky a kick in the behind, and knocks old Leo's teeth out, and leaves us to learn.'<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately it is not easy to give his argument in quotation, because he takes up the theme discursively from a number of different angles. In 'Why the Novel Matters' he develops the idea of the novel as a guide: 'Let us learn from the novel.

In the novel the characters can do nothing but live. If they keep on being good, according to pattern, or bad, according to pattern, or even volatile, according to pattern they cease to live and the novel falls dead. A character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing. We likewise in life have got to live, or it is nothing' (Phoenix, 1936: 537). But in life, he goes on, we are confronted by a mass of contradictory notions, all presented as doctrine, cut to a pattern. 'In all this welter, we need some sort of guide. It's no good inventing Thou Shalt Nots! What then? Turn truly, honourably to the novel':

To be alive, to be man alive, to be whole man alive: that is the point. And at its best, the novel, and the novel supremely, can help you. It can help you not to be dead man in life. So much of a man walks about dead and a carcass in the street and house, today: so much of woman is merely dead. ... But in the novel you can see plainly when a man goes dead, the woman goes inert. You can develop an instinct for life, if you will, instead of a theory of right and wrong, good and bad. In life there is right and wrong, good and bad, all the time. But what is right in one case is wrong in another. And in the novel you see one man becoming a corpse, because of his so-called goodness, and another going dead because of his so-called wickedness. Right and wrong is an instinct: but an instinct of the whole consciousness in a man, bodily, mental, spiritual at once. And only in the novel are all things given full play, or at least they may be given full play, when we realise that life itself, and not inert safety, is the reason for living. For out of the full play of all things emerges the only thing that is anything, the wholeness of man, the wholeness of a woman, man alive, and live woman. (1936: 537-8)



In saying this, Lawrence warns us repeatedly to trust the tale, not the teller. In 'Morality and the Novel' he says: 'Morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance. When the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his predilection, that is immorality' (1936: 528). Putting his thumb in the balance brings up the question of the novelist's own prejudices. The effect the novel has on its readers and, through a wide readership, on social mores is obviously a complex question.

Ian Watt's criticism is historical: the novel, because of its concentration on the domestic, on feelings and personal relations, has narrowed the framework of experience and permitted attitude. Lawrence's criticism concerns the future: in 'Surgery for the Novel - or a Bomb' he asks 'supposing a bomb were put under the whole scheme of things what would we be after? What feelings do we want to carry through into the new epoch? What feelings will carry us through?' and concludes that if the novel is to have a future it must present us with 'new, really new feelings, a whole line of new emotion' (1936: 519-20). Though the two critical positions converge on the importance of feeling in the novel, there is an important difference here about what role in the novel emotion or feeling plays. Let us look at the argument about the negative role in more detail.

The most interesting recent criticism of the role emotion plays in the novel is Patricia Stubbs's, in Women and Fiction. Stubbs has taken Watt's argument about the 'narrowing of the framework of experience' to its logical conclusion. Her concentration on women puts the discussion in the most telling context. It also brings the question of the division between home and world to the foreground again. Stubbs's theory is that because of its concentration on the domestic, on emotion and personal relations, the novel has provided narrowing images, or models, for women. It was 'through the novel that the dominant images of women and their experience in our culture have been most easily, and until recently, most widely elaborated', and,

No matter what part in society individual women in fact play, traditional images focus on their domestic and sexual roles. This has the effect of continually limiting women's notions of themselves and their possibilities; it undermines from within. For images are not an innocent pictorial guide to reality, a neutral mental shorthand which helps us to recall the outside world. We certainly use these simplified ideas of how people and things 'really' are to make sense of our experience of the world; but this is an essentially subjective process. So far from helping us perceive a supposed 'reality' it in fact creates that reality from within. Our images create the world for us; they shape our consciousness. The women's movement knows this, and so attempts to combat cultural stereotypes of female experience. These are confronted and, hopefully, discredited by the creation of new, alternative images which instead of narrowing women's consciousness of themselves, try to expand it.<sup>4</sup>

This is a low estimate of novel writing. The novel purveys simplified ideas which modify our consciousness and make us create a simplified world. Later in the book Stubbs links the novel with the economic and political conditions of the time in which it grew up. Indeed it is a central tenet of her book that novel writing is associated with an unhealthy tendency in an unhealthy age, and that the images of people and their relations novelists make up furnish the proof. Her most interesting claim, brilliantly developed in her discussion of individual writers, is that the direction this image-making had originally taken in the traditional novel did not change with the advent of the modern novel, not even the advent of the feminist novel.

Though it may seem at first glance that nothing could be further removed from the feminine idea of a hundred or so years ago than the sexually active, curious or experimenting women we meet in today's fiction, the virgin heroine of the past and her contemporary fictional sister are not really so very different. Both are defined through their private emotional experience; ultimately neither is allowed any other kind of relation to people or material life. There is, then, an underlying continuity between the dominant images of the past and those of the present. Women are still 'Pamela's daughters' and are likely to remain so until they are defined through their contact with the 'outer' as well as the 'inner' world. (1979 : XV)

Stubbs quite rightly gives Dickens a large share of responsibility for these narrowing images. Dickens sets up ideals and anti-ideals, and uses his images of women to create an 'unreality' which confuses his readers about the

reality of their lives.<sup>5</sup> But she also attacks realism in the novel for the fact that it is inherently incapable of providing 'widening' images for women. Women are, after all, the 'prisoners of feeling and the emotional life' that the novel shows them to be, and realism can only reinforce that which already exists. The passage which I began quoting, in which Stubbs says that women will remain Pamela's daughters until they are defined by their contact with the 'outer' as well as the 'inner' world, continues:

Whether traditional realism can evolve a pattern which will free women from their association with private feeling, and yet still retain its characteristic concern with individual experience, is an interesting and important question. . . . It raises in turn a more fundamental question about the relation between literary forms, known experience and desired change. It may be that the novel, and certainly realism as we know it, simply cannot adapt in the way feminists would wish. Monique Wittig's Les Guerillieres, in which the notions of individual experience and private morality have disappeared altogether and are replaced by a poetic vision of a collective female culture, perhaps indicates the direction in which fiction will move in order to accommodate the notions of reality and experience currently evolving out of contemporary feminism. (1979 : XV-XVI)

The question Stubbs raises here about the relation between literary form, known experience and desired change is the very question we are pursuing. Her attack on the novel makes one look very closely at what sort of thing the novel is. One can only agree with her charge that the novel has traditionally provided narrowing images for women. She is right in saying that whatever part in society women in fact played, traditional images focus on

her sexual and domestic role, that this stereotyping of women through their private emotional experience continues and that women are still defined through their contact with the inner, not with the outer world. But it is in the last quoted passage that she brings together the really basic issues: can the traditional realistic novel develop patterns that free women from their association with private feeling and yet retain its concern with individual experience? What is the relation between literary forms, known experience and desired change?

I agree with Stubbs at every point except in the main premise, which underlies the argument rather than being explicit in it: that the 'novel as it is' (the realistic 'bourgeois' novel) is not capable of being subversive. When I say that utopianism is a criterion for the novel in general (not only the special cases of Dickens and Lawrence) I put myself in a position of fundamental disagreement with her premise. The disagreement has to do with questions about the genesis and genre characteristics of the novel. Put in an oversimplified way: in her thesis the novel is an expression of the capitalist age in which it came into being. In my thesis the age that saw the rise of capitalist-industrialist society had two trends and just because the novel arose in that age, it also had part in what I call the socialist utopian trend; it has strong affinities with the social criticism of this trend.<sup>6</sup> For this affinity there are two reasons. One is that the novel is an art form and

that no art form ever simply reproduces and reflects the evolution of a society. The very making of a work of art implies a distance. So the novel never simply reproduced the spirit of the capitalist industrialist age, it commented on it, criticised it and at its best subverted it. The other reason is that the realistic novel is about people, in a way new to art. As the product of an age that affected people in a particularly disturbing way it contained from the start possibilities for criticism and for alternatives. It seems to me that Stubbs is ignoring the possibility that the novel inherently, as a literary form, might be particularly suited to move between known experience and desired change, might indeed almost have been designed for that purpose.

What about the narrowing images then? The argument that the novel has a utopian streak does not get us round the fact that it has since its inception typed women in an unrealistic and limiting way. It has never portrayed their actual lives and has made them, or helped to make them, the 'prisoners of feeling' that they are.

I would say this is because novelists do not use the possibilities inherent in the form: narrowing images, to put it bluntly, are cases of bad writing. But the fault is by no means the novelist's only. It is true that even great male writers have had a blind spot where women are concerned and that female writers often do no better. The typing of women (in various ways) is after all very old and one of our most obstinate preconceptions. These

preconceptions are shared by writer and reader alike and to a striking extent by the critics, who are professionally incapacitated by them. The narrowing images have given great delight and have been praised as good writing. It is this state of affairs that makes the service feminist criticism is doing us so inestimable.

But the answer can in the end only lie in a close reading of the texts. Good writing like all good art is always 'subversive' and great novelists have written well even about women. Even men who had the most appalling opinion of women's place have created female characters - often minor characters - that belie their opinion because of the sheer truth of the observation. The onus is on the critics. Criticism has to show where the writer works blindly from opinion and prejudice, and where he uses his powers of observation and creates a living and therefore 'widening' image. By criticism I mean our whole literary culture, from the way a child is taught to read and the earliest influences of school and television to the discussion of books in the university and written literary criticism. The critics have been far more obtuse than the writers.<sup>7</sup>

If narrowing images are a form of bad writing, we might as well base our criticism on the techniques available to the novelist for providing images which expand people's consciousness of themselves and others. This raises the question of what sort of thing the novel is, what 'field of experience' it covers. No art form

can take in all experience and all possible development, though it can reflect on matters outside its range from its own point of view. The novel's 'field' is without any doubt social relations, but social relations considered in a characteristic way. The relations are always developed in two directions at once, the intra-personal and the interpersonal. The emphasis can be on one or the other in different kinds of novels, but the novel typically develops the relation to oneself in an interplay with the relation to others.

I can best describe the novel's field by an anthropological comparison which, though some of it may seem far-fetched at this point, is in fact relevant to my argument as a whole and will gain in relevance as the argument develops. The novel's field resembles the field of those utopian rituals of which I shall have occasion to speak again, especially in chapter 4 on different kinds of individualism. These rituals have a significant trait in common with a Henry James novel: the characters, that is the participants in the ritual, are so rich that they have a freedom of moral choice not normally enjoyed by people.<sup>6</sup> The community has laid by stores all summer and on these stores the people live, consuming them communally in feasts. The feasts are usually hosted by groups (for instance one of the many dancing societies) so that not only the labour of gathering food but the daily work of the women for the family disappears: the fetching of firewood and water, the cooking and clearing up.



Everyone becomes a dancer. The comparison with the novel then lies first of all in the consciously isolated field, literally a 'cleared space' provided with signs proclaiming its artificial or fictitious status. The purpose is of course a more unobstructed focus: people meet, so to speak, under laboratory conditions. ²

While at other times of the year the people are intensely concerned with their relation to the outside world, and perform for instance rituals for animals they hunt, they now turn, in this space cleared of subsistence concerns, to the 'inner' world and questions of social relations. This 'inner' world has, however, itself an inner and outer side, a private as well as a public face. The main problem the ritual focusses on is what makes for a full humanity. In an isolation ritual charted by myths it explores the intrapersonal or psychological side, and in a public ritual the interpersonal one. Essentially it is concerned with the relation of individuality to communality. I have already mentioned that these are also the concerns of the novel, though the novel develops them in a less conscious, more rudimentary way.

The ritual, though many-layered and rich in incidental characters, and even touching at many points symbolically on subsistence concerns, has a main plot, and a hero or heroine in the novices. I cannot do justice here to the complex symbolism of the plot, though I shall touch below on the significance of eating. What I want to draw attention to here is the archetypal structure of

the plot, the archetypal psychic strategies of the novice, which as I will later argue bear comparison with the deep structure of the novel and the development of its main characters. Freud, who had an uncanny understanding of myth has noted these similarities: 'the myth' he says, 'is the step by which the individual emerges from group psychology'.<sup>10</sup>

The plot of the ritual (or of the ritual myth) reads from this point of view like the anthropological prehistory of the novel. A number of novices for the dancing societies - young people at the threshold of adulthood - are sent individually into deep seclusion in the forest. There they turn 'wild', become 'men of the woods'. When they return they have shed the conventions into which they have been socialised and behave in the most anti-social and destructive manner possible, destroying property and trying to bite people. They have 'met with the Cannibal' - and, in eating them, he has turned them into cannibals themselves. Cannibalism is the most unthinkable human behaviour in native terms. In other words, the novices have regressed and met with themselves in their socially least acceptable form. Their 'test' consists in learning to accept themselves by accepting their socially reprehensible desires.

The desocializing process in isolation is guided by myths. When the novices return, the process enters a second, public phase. The villagers (who represent society) do not try to humanise them. Their 'wildness'

is culturally valued as a step toward their full humanity. The next step consists in defining the freedom which they have gained in relation to themselves (the native phrase for what happens in isolation is 'to become free' or 'unobliged'), in relation to others, to the community. This is done by sharing - 'giving their wildness' in a dance that mimes their experience in the woods, a dance in which they behave like the Cannibal, drawing the audience into it, who now play the role, one might say, of novices. Turned into a gift, redeemed from isolation, shared by all, the 'wildness' loses its aggressive destructiveness and turns into a communal delight.

The novices also pose, however, an organizational problem to the community. The problem is how to integrate people as 'free' as this into the body social or, to put it more accurately, what sort of society is capable of assimilating free people. The answer is clearly: only a society with a non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical structure. The societies that enact these rituals are at other times of the year hierarchical with chiefs and a rank order. They now make themselves over into an egalitarian society, based on a balance of roles and offices, expressed as mutual giving. Everyone's dance - each of them an expression of the self gained in isolation - performs a social function and is at the same time, as a work of art, a gift to others. In this second phase the novices achieve their authentic humanity by being 'themselves' in and through their relation to

others.''

We must remember, however, that the ritual societies are an image of a society and hence related to the novel as one work of art to another. They exist as lived possibilities and last as long as stores last. Their effect must be described in terms somewhat like those Lawrence uses to describe the effect of the novel: 'Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble' (Phoenix 1936: 535).

The myths that are the charters for these rituals often stop short of describing the second, public phase (which is enacted anyway), and leave the hero (the novice) stranded in an unassimilable form, hopelessly at odds with society. If novel and ritual share the same field, the myths indicate for us more clearly than the developed ritual what field it is: the development of the individual in its clash with institutionalised society.<sup>12</sup> Economic problems, or subsistence activity, are relevant to this field only from a particular angle of approach. Yet there is clearly an 'inner' and an 'outer' world, and the very crux is the proper relation of the inner to the outer.

The novel diverges from the ritual on several important points by virtue of a culturally different idiom. It differs most sharply in the habit novelists have (or had in the 19th Century) of confusing the development of the individual with a striving for moral

perfection, a 'higher and higher' (This does not make for the best part of the novels, however, as Daniel Deronda shows, or David Copperfield's marriage to Agnes. Only Lawrence seems to have consciously realised, as a novelist that it is contrary to what the novel is about). The ritual with its inbuilt 'return of the repressed', insists that becoming oneself involves a 'lower and lower'. It seems to treat self-integration under two interrelated aspects: that of a return of oneness with nature from which socialization has cut us off, and the retrieval of socially reprehensible desires. Forbidden desires have to do in every culture with the body and the senses, but in our culture the emphasis would not be on eating - from feasting to cannibalism - but on sex.<sup>13</sup> The most evident feature of communal life in the ritual is the feasting - eating together - at which fabulous quantities are consumed. The equivalent in our society is sexual communication. If we allow that the novel, like the ritual, has to do with self-integration and the relation to others, sexual relations, from the bodily to the sublimated, are at the heart of the novel. In this case the love interest belongs to the novel sui generis. If feelings and personal relations disappeared, the genre would change, just as it would not be a novel any more if 'individual experience and private morality' were eliminated. It is through feeling that the inner and outer are linked in the novel; in our society love is the clue to the community people can live in.

This immediately also explains the imprisoning and limiting effect of the novel. The community of love it describes is usually that between two people, and in this way a division between an inner and outer world is established after all - we get the 'home against the world' syndrome. Yet a good novel (or the good parts of a novel) does make the connection between the struggle of the individual to transcend his socialization and what is wrong with society in a more general way. Through the way society thwarts the individual (who in our culture does not get any help in 'becoming free') interrelated systems of power become visible. We shall see later, when we look at examples, that wherever individual experience is vividly realised in the novel a criticism of society is present.

If in our society love is the clue to the 'community people can live in' and if the novel is one of the rare guides we have to such a community, one of the key questions must be for us: what would be the sound relation between individuality and love? And what does the novel have to offer in that sphere? This is a question we can only gradually answer as we look at individual novels. The novel - true to the state of our culture - provides us mostly with negative instances and therefore with a kind of inverted answer. But it also has 'nodal points' where its potentiality for positive answers can be clearly recognised. These potentialities can, however, only be developed in an interplay with

extra-literary forces in society.

The nodal points in the novel where the soundness of the relation between individuality and love can be tested are descriptions of women's work: their public and their domestic work. Stubbs recognised this as the sensitive area and concentrated her attack there. Her case against the novel is basically that it has worked against women's developing individuality and against their realization of their actual contribution to society. It has done that by giving them models that lack individuality, that are feminine stereotypes. 'No matter what part in society individual women in fact play, traditional images focus on their domestic and sexual roles. This has the effect of continually limiting women's notions of themselves and their possibilities; it undermines from within' (1979: IX).

About the justice of Stubbs's attack on the novel in general there can be no doubt. Women play in fact a role in public life, as workers and professionals, which the novel does not reflect. But do traditional images really focus on their domestic and sexual roles? Or perhaps we should ask more specifically: what special ways do novels have to present women's domestic and sexual roles? What are the images? In Dickens a good woman is 'a good little housekeeper' always with a bunch of keys at her side. We may be told that she has 'an adorable baby'. These are decorative images and they refer to the world and taste of a man. We never see a woman actually do her

work, making the madeira cake and the preserves that are kept in the locked cupboard, or feeding the adorable baby in the middle of the night after having first changed its very dirty nappy.

Does this mean that the realistic description of domestic work, of women's daily grind, falls outside the novel's 'field' and does not belong to the complex of relations that is under scrutiny in the novel? The direct contrary is the case; description of domestic work is positively native to the novel. The novel is rooted in the discovery - the literary discovery - of ordinary everyday life. Something must have gone wrong; if the discovery had been properly followed up, the novel could not have dealt in the stereotypes that make narrowing images for women. Let us examine this discovery and what might have gone wrong for a moment in another excursion into the prehistory of the novel - this time not the anthropological prehistory but its immediate social one.

The novel was affected, both in subject and tone by a change that took place roughly in the 16th and 17th Centuries, and for which we have still no satisfactory explanation in material terms. This was a move away from the ideal and an interest in what might be called creatureliness, in the humble physical and emotional laws of human existence. Things that had been taken for granted or dismissed as unimportant suddenly took on a new value: affection between spouses and between parents and children, the daily domestic round, things of everyday use



and physical relations. The change is generally associated with the various protestant movements but, as Aries shows in Centuries of Childhood it took place at the same time within catholicism. <sup>14</sup>

It was as if people suddenly recalled their embeddedness in the physical world - both the world of human contacts and of things - as something important. Hand in hand with this realization of the surrounding world went a new interest in introspection, in the inner world of motives and feeling. The two directions of interest are connected, no doubt because introspection, though done in the light of God, revealed also the nature of human embeddedness. With the preoccupation with the self went a new awareness of one's fellow creatures. The change affected particularly children and women. Women and children and their world became for the first time visible. <sup>15</sup> (It had always been assumed that they shared a world and that this world was concrete and physical in a way that the world of men wasn't; and because of the exclusion of women from public life this was largely true). The obscure details of domestic work, done by women for millenia without being noticed, assumed something of the value they actually have and began to glow with a light of their own. There was a dawning realization that the concrete physical world and the world of feeling are intimately connected and that they demand respect if we are to be fully human. <sup>16</sup>

Luther is an early and perhaps the best example of the complex as a whole. With his catechism a whole new concrete language entered into religious thinking: where there had been abstract notions, Luther talked of bread and shoes and fields. As he had been brought up as the child of poor parents this is perhaps not surprising. But his attitude to marriage is surprising. He had been educated by the Augustinians, one of the orders most hostile to sexuality and to women, and had been an Augustinian monk until he was about forty. Naturally he did not overcome this influence entirely. Yet he praised publicly the physical relation to his wife. In a famous saying he claimed that if he put his hand on 'certain parts' of her body the devil (who much troubled him) would disappear.<sup>17</sup> His relation to his children, for instance as seen in the songs he wrote for them, shows the same joyful attention to the concrete things of everyday life and a spontaneous physical warmth. Luther combined this with a life of intense introspection. He is said to have spent four hours a day in solitary prayer.

So far then the sketch of a social prehistory of the novel. Ian Watt in his Rise of the Novel gives an excellent account of how the new feeling for the domestic entered into literary consciousness and left a precipitate in the novel. He describes how before the rise of the novel the domestic had not been a subject for literature: literature dealt with lofty or public issues. He is, however, not conscious of the paradox that occupies us

here: if the novel has its roots (or one of its roots) in the new feeling for creaturely relations and the things of everyday life, if women and children, who had not been visible 'in themselves' were for the first time visible and given a voice, why did women's experience in its concrete reality not enter the novel? Why did the novel not make it its special business to bring alive a woman's ordinary day?

The answer lies in developments that also have their beginning in the period of the prehistory of the novel and which we have not taken into account yet. One of these developments is that the same period that recognised wives for the first time as 'companions' and 'friends' was also the period when hierarchy in marriage increased to a sort of theocracy. The tendency to see the husband as the direct representative of God, even confuse him with God, is not absent in the early novel. Pamela is a record of a woman's experience; and in Pamela Mr. B is a villain who changes to a figure undisguisedly godlike when he appears in the light of husband. Pamela muses on the eve of her marriage:

And it is with very great pleasure that I look forward on the high benefits my master seems determined to confer upon his poor servant, because I think I shall not be puffed up with my high condition; since thus I argue with myself: it is always the sign of a dependent condition to be forced to lie under obligations one cannot repay; as it is of a rich mind, when it can confer favours, without expecting or needing a return. It is, on one side, the state of the human creature, compared, on the other, to that of the Great Creator; and so, with due deference, may my master's beneficence be said

to be God-like.<sup>16</sup>

Another development (and this can be seen as related to the first) is that the deepening and refining of the marriage tie also refined the conception of the nature of women. Since women lost their tasks as independent producers and recognised contributors to the practical enterprise of marriage, this led to a spiritualising which developed into the concept of female delicacy. Pamela has a spirituality and delicacy Mr. B. cannot match. This detracts directly from her creatureliness and her relation to the physical and concrete. Ordinary human love with its mixture of the spiritual and physical is split up between her and Mr. B.: Pamela's love is all purity and innocence, Mr. B.'s of a physicalness that has to be purified and redeemed.

One reason why women's experience did not enter into the novel is surely, then, that the rival tradition of the 'higher and higher' - the climb to moral perfection and the tradition Lawrence calls 'ideal love' - was stronger than the dawning passion for the exact and concrete. The other is that women became visible only in a very restricted sense; the voice they were given was not their own, but an ideal, voice; their work lost its status as work. The two go together; yet even a novelist like Lawrence who on the one hand saw clearly the penchant of the novel for the physical and concrete and on the other was particularly interested in women's experience could

not see how they go together. In his short stories about the miners one can sometimes get the feel of a woman's work. In his novels women never work. Lawrence is concerned with the relation between individuality and love. But his women are forced to define their individuality totally in relation to a man, never to things, to doing, to the world. This is why their individuality exists, really, only in words, and is so precarious a thing that it is easily absorbed into a relationship. Yet Lawrence was particularly good at 'things' and the life of the extrahuman world. He is also the novelist who realised that the tradition of ideal love goes against what the novel at its best can do.

Perhaps the most obvious reason why the novel could not commit itself both to ideal love and a concrete view of women's work was that describing a woman's day (whether a wife's, a mother's or a daughter's) throws such a pitiless light on the power relations within the domestic circle. To show the way husbands, children and fathers expect and accept services would endanger the picture of ideal love and make it difficult to show life as a 'higher and higher'.

There are a number of modern novels by women (often feminist) that show what an excellent subject the daily grind of a woman's life makes for the novel. The concrete details are always fascinating. Surely these descriptions of banal, personal, everyday experiences come over so well in a novel because here the patient,

observant attitude to things comes together with the preoccupation with the self and its relation to others that is at the heart of the novel. Work within the family circle - the unending feeding and cleaning up of dirt - is work in touch with the basic physical realities and work permeated by feeling. What the modern novels bring out is the killing isolation in which women do this work. The men have separated themselves off from the domestic in their offices and work-places (except as consumers of its comforts) and the women's efforts have no public and productive issue. Not unexpectedly the novels show that the 'feeling' with which the work is permeated is often rage.

The novel possesses then, in the description of women's domestic work, a creative point that has hardly been developed. But the point contains its paradox: without non-domestic, outside work women can't develop their individuality. 'The domestic' in and by itself is for women too close to the biological. When it has no longer part in 'the public', women must find roles to play in public life. This necessity has been with them as long as the novel has existed; and women do in fact work outside the home, as Stubbs points out. However, the novel is not really suitable for the description of outside, professional work. This is true of men's work as well as women's. But men's work is socially visible and acknowledged as work, and a novelist has symbols to hand for it, small bona fide shorthand indications which

we understand and in which we concur. David Copperfield for instance has his pens, and we believe Dickens that he is a writer, though there is nothing in the novel to prove that he could be. For women's work there exists no such shorthand. No number of pens in Dora Copperfield's hands would convince us that she is a writer (though there is nothing in the novel, mutatis mutandis, to prove that she couldn't be). Dickens actually makes the conventional point by letting her hold David Copperfield's pens for him. Here only a change in cultural attitudes will allow the novelist to develop 'widening images', though, as always in such matters, an attempt at 'widening images' will help bring about a change in cultural attitudes.

At this point, before going on to the techniques available to the novelist, it will be convenient to sum up the argument about the novel as inherently utopian. My argument is that the novel as a work of art has an artificially restricted field, which one might call the field of humanness: it explores the question of what makes us human. The inherent utopian element of the novel lies in the fact that it comes up with answers that cut across the lines society has developed on this question - lines we conventionally follow. 'Humanness' implies social relations, and the novel is revolutionary because it shows that 'humanness' does not accord with the relations that exist between people in our society. This insight, which belongs to the novel itself, is however as often as not perverted by the novelist, so that 'the

novel' and 'the novelist' tell us different stories.

My argument runs that the change that took place in the 16th and 17th Centuries (before society changed economically) laid the foundation for the utopianism of the novel, and that it did this through a number of interconnected developments. A new and positive attitude grew up in respect to 'the humble things of life', to the daily round, to domestic work. Women and children who had been 'invisible' became visible; affection between spouses and between parents and children was given a new value. A more positive view was taken of the body and this affected especially the attitude to the female body. Altogether, there was a greater sense of creatureliness, of one's embeddedness in the actual world, both extra-human and human. Introspection increased, and with a greater sense of oneself and one's embeddedness there came a growing awareness of others as fellow creatures and unique selves.

My argument includes, further, that industrialization in the 19th Century and developed capitalism in the early 20th Century gave the utopianism of the novel its special form - the form of social criticism. Especially two features have had an impact on the novel. One was the breaking up of traditional forms of community life, that both isolated (and often crushed) the individual, but also made him more conscious of his individual desires, made him put his stakes higher. Consider for example Keller's Der Gruene Heinrich (1854)



and Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1896). The other was the urbanization and industrialization of life that led to alienation and a Hobbesian form of community. Consider for instance Dickens's London novels, Dombey (1848), Bleak House (1853), Little Dorrit (1857), Our Mutual Friend (1865).

Yet this utopianism, which belongs to the novel as a genre, I argue was betrayed by the novelists where the following features are concerned. (1) Women's work: When the world of the domestic (which includes women's work, emotions and personal relations) is described as it is, it reveals itself as the nucleus of the system of power relations in the larger society. It is therefore inherently a means for examining power relations, for showing that the personal is the political and that the inner world and the outer world are not separate. But novelists have not been realistic about women's work (or women's position in the home) and have in this way betrayed what the change in the 16th Century promised (A curious example which makes my point by inversion is the blood-and-soil type novel, which often does describe women's work and with great respect. Knut Hamsun's Growth of the Soil (1921), for instance, shows us the hero's wife's work on the farm, her aspirations for work outside and her husband's crushing of these aspirations, with perfect complacency as part of an immutable law of domination and subordination). (2) Division between home and world: This division which is a realistic feature of

capitalist society, was uncritically incorporated into the novel. It consists really of denying that women work (if they did there wouldn't be a division). Whether this 'denial' refers to a blindness to the work women actually do in the home or outside, or to the fact that women of the propertied classes were actually denied work when their traditional tasks disappeared, is immaterial here.

(3) The home as haven: this is an idea which follows on the division between home and world and links up with the tradition of ideal love, which infected the novel early. It is again a betrayal of what the 16th Century change of moving nearer to the physical and the concrete promised. It is closely associated with the cant about women's moral superiority, which serves two purposes: to veil the fact of the domestic power structure and women's actual servitude and to divert women's drive for rebellion and individualism (Lawrence, who exploded ideal love is interesting here. Kate, the heroine of the Plumed Serpent does no work whatsoever. She separates herself from her husband's 'world' - the world of rapine and murder - making sex their 'home' and his haven. But it is the sexual relation as Lawrence describes it that mirrors precisely the power structure of the world, while at the same time mirroring her loss of an individuality she has up to then defended). (4) The alienation of women: The novel fostered the alienation of women in our culture by making the woman who accepts the traditional virtues (even if they are directly against her interests)

the heroine. The more alienated a woman is the nearer she is to the ideal (docility or reform in the young, self-sacrifice in the mature). This produces the stereotypical heroine. Female characters who are not alienated (who are 'out for themselves') are portrayed in a denigrating, ridiculing fashion and yield the anti-heroine stereotype. (5) The viewing of women as functional: Here the novel has also generally followed the trend of society instead of criticising it. Women are seen from the point of view of men - hence their lack of chance to develop as individuals. In the novel any woman who works tends to be made into an individual but in a hostile way, while any woman who is 'a wife' or 'a mother' tends to be robbed of her individuality by an idealization of her work and her character (In Dickens for instance there is an interesting relation between characterization by work and characterization by sex, that is from the point of view of men, functionally: the women who are characterized by their work, all of them minor characters, do not fit into the categories of Victorian feminine stereotypes).

I have arranged these 'points of betrayal' of the utopian possibilities by novelists on a descending scale; that is, betrayals in the first mentioned areas are I think more frequent than in the last mentioned areas. This is, however, based on impression rather than statistical study.

II

In turning now to technique in the novel it seems best to state briefly what I am going to do. I have no intention of discussing all the techniques a novelist could possibly use, even if that were possible. I want to show which of the techniques that are natural to the novel as a genre help the writer to realise the utopian possibilities of the novel. This I will do with the help of examples. In looking at the examples, it will be important to keep in mind what we said about the interest in the ordinary that sprang up in the 16th and 17th Centuries and whose clearest expression is found in Puritanism. This new interest meant a democratising of reality, and the technique of the novel shows this democratising of reality at work. I want first to take up two minor points - the democratising of reality in two forms: through a stylistic departure from literary usage, in the novel and through a technique that might be called symbolic circumstantiality. The question is whether the form of representing reality that emerges is enlarging or constricting; and before going on to the discussion of examples I shall touch briefly again on Stubbs who has raised this question in its most interesting form, namely in relation to the representation of women. Women in fiction are one of the most sensitive points in the democratising of reality that is at stake in the novel.

In terms of literary technique the most important result of the interest in the humble and everyday, the world of the domestic, was that Stiltrennung fell into disuse in the novel. It had been literary convention up to then to treat humble characters and subjects that were considered low, in a 'low' or comic style, while highborn characters and elevated subjects called for a 'high' style. This is the convention known as Stiltrennung: separation of style. Since the subject that was considered low had predominantly to do with the body and our animal nature and since elevated subjects tended to be associated with public life and public purposes, it is no wonder that Stiltrennung affected the treatment of women in literature materially. Women are in all societies associated with nature rather than culture, but our society particularly turned a fact speculated about in myth into a religious and scientific truth. They therefore tended to be treated as were the low-born characters, that is in a 'low' style. A notable exception is the subject of female chastity (which must have been considered as 'against nature'): highborn heroines of outstanding chastity always called for a particularly celebratory elevated style. A dropping of Stiltrennung would therefore mean a democratizing both of social and sexual attitudes.

I am not claiming that Stiltrennung disappeared in the novel, only that it does not belong to the novel. We need only look at Dickens to see that it did not

disappear: it was especially hard for a comic novelist to resist the chances offered by it. The tradition that connects the comic with the vividly realised and particular lingers on. But Dickens is also an example of a writer very aware of the chances offered by a dropping of Stiltrennung - the liberating effect its absence has on writing. It was suddenly possible to treat the world of the domestic, of women, children and private emotions and relations, as important and worth being serious about. This opened the realm of the psychic - always of deep interest - in a new way to literature. In penetrating that impersonal realm where people are alike and their deepest desires are rooted, the novelist could at one and the same time write about what was closest to his own heart and what would unfailingly fascinate his readers.

There is further a sociological aspect of this technical departure which is particularly interesting for our context of utopianism in the novel. The arresting thing sociologically is that the dismissal of Stiltrennung did not echo a political or social change. On the contrary, it was Stiltrennung that reflected the prevailing political and social attitudes. This made the novel revolutionary even on a basic technical level (I like to think that it was this sociological oddity - its not fitting into the framework of accepted notions - that gave it its name of 'the novel'). To say that it was purely on a technical level makes no sense because the technical level corresponds here to the deeper.

psychological level. Abandoning Stiltrennung in a generally undemocratic climate makes the novel revolutionary in the utopian sense that makes a change of heart the condition for social and political change. The question for the novelist was from the start how to handle the revolutionary possibilities of the novel.

The treatment of character stands at the very centre of all questions about the novel. All the novel's revolutionary possibilities cluster around the characters and their relationships. Stiltrennung had affected characters, dividing them into high and low, but the social bias had also inhibited a development in the treatment of character. What happens when Stiltrennung is dropped is really a shift between 'us' and 'them'. Character now moves over from 'them' - women, children, servants - to 'us'. Humanity becomes common. The danger in the shift is that an elevated style takes over and makes the characters wishy washy. Dropping Stiltrennung can lead to abstraction. This is paradoxical since the cause for the dropping of it was the new interest in the particular and the concrete. A good example of what can go wrong is Dickens's treatment of Martha, the prostitute in David Copperfield. It is not that Martha is too good or overidealised as is often said. It is that in his effort to abolish Stiltrennung, to show her as 'us' and not 'them' Dickens has elevated his style to a degree that makes her abstract. The concrete images in which she is embedded and that are meant to body her

forth do not properly signify what Dickens intends. When she walks down the street to drown herself in the Thames, for instance (chapter 47, end), Dickens means her walk to signify her agony of mind. She walks down a crowded London street at night lingeringly, looking back many times, pausing; always followed by the two men (David Copperfield and Peggotty). What Dickens in fact produces is a scene he must have seen many times himself and which convinces the reader that if Martha behaved like that she would be accosted. The image has made itself independent of the intention - Dickens was so absorbed in showing the high quality of Martha's emotions that he did not realise he had produced a street-walking scene.

One of the results, then, of the dropping of Stiltrennung was a tendency to idealise characters who would formerly have been 'low' in an effort of overcompensation. This meant an inherent danger of abstraction in the novel. But the tendency to abstraction was countered by the fact that novelists from the start tried to build up characters the reader could accept by giving 'a full and authentic report of human experience' (Watt 1957: 32). Such a report is of course impossible, though the ambition produced, in the 18th Century, some of the longest novels the world has seen. In actual fact novelists use a technique that acts as a sort of shorthand for that full and authentic report, and it was this technique that also counterbalanced perfectly the tendency to abstraction the dismissal of Stiltrennung



had introduced. It is the technique we use in dreams when mental operations are presented in a picture language. Freud calls it dreamwork, and the novel uses it on a scale that is unique in literature. It consists of what one might call a gigantically extended pathetic fallacy: all objects - in this case images - are full of significance, they speak. It is easy to see the parallel if we remember how important for instance houses, or clothes are in novels and in dreams. They tell us in the novel about the characters and their 'fate', just as they tell us about our familial and emotional involvements in the dream. In fact the world of the unconscious is the world of the domestic, and this binds dream and novel together. The objects people in novels use, or surround themselves with, the weather in which the characters meet, seasons, time of day, all speak for them and speak to us in the multidetermined language of symbols. They allow the reader to follow meaning from a focus in different directions. They tell him things he may understand only subliminally; but it is from them he gathers his interpretation. They therefore have to add up, which means that the writer must have chosen them with absolute surety. The surety comes from exactly the right balance of conscious control with unconscious associations - a balance that was disturbed in favour of conscious control when Dickens wrote the scene of Martha going down to the river. The reader does not know the personal associations that motivate the writer, but they share a

substratum of impersonal associations that allows him to 'recognise' the objects. He also recognises them by their connection, the way they speak for one another in the course of the novel. We might call this 'symbolic circumstantiality': setting acts here as information, ordinary reality can be symbolic of human concerns.

This living universe created by the dream technique of the novel is another expression of the democratising tendency that has moved character over from 'them' to 'us', only in this dreamlike substratum of the novel the moving over is much more wholesale. A small object, an irrelevant detail, a minor character is here fully as significant as a major character or event. Each detail has its intrinsic significance, and objects and people are woven together in a web of life.'

The style of the novel insists on this democratization of reality: there is only one world; there is one reality and it is everyone's reality. Yet if in the technique that involves the dropping of Stiltrennung the democratization has revolutionary potential because it shows 'low' figures to be as good as 'us', here the democratization is neutral. Very successful novelists indeed have used the symbolism of circumstantiality without being utopian in the least. However, we must also remember that both the techniques refer to a basic and impersonal level of operation; though they are employed by novelists invariably they are also employed quite unconsciously and tell us nothing

about their intentions. The important question they raise is whether this representation of reality makes the novel an enlarging experience or a constricting one. This brings us back to Stubbs who asked questions about novelistic technique far more important than those we have so far touched on and who demanded that the novel should provide us with widening images; or, to put her point the other way, who doubted that the novel was capable of doing so.

Stubbs's questioning of the novel goes right to the point: the utopian possibilities of the novel are ultimately realised through images that expand our consciousness instead of narrowing it. We must therefore ask what a widening image is. This involves looking at images and image-making in the novel, but in two separate senses: images in the sense of portraits the writer produces - the overall impression we get of a woman's character - and in the more workmanlike sense of the images the writer uses to build up these portraits and get us to consent to them. I believe that we can come near the answer to the question only by looking closely at image-making in the second sense. But looking at it in the first sense, as Stubbs does, provides us with an excellent perspective for doing so.

We must retrace our steps for a moment over ground we have already covered and recall Stubbs's thesis and what I have urged against it. Briefly put, Stubbs's thesis is that whatever part women play in fact in society, the

novel has focussed on their sexual and domestic roles, and has in this way provided them with models that can only be called narrowing images. Women in novels were defined through their private and domestic experience and were not allowed any other kind of relation to people and material life. Stubbs mentions in this context Richardson's Pamela - 'the first novel proper' - as the prototype. Women in fiction are still 'Pamela's daughters', she says, and will remain so until they are defined through their contact with the 'outer' as well as the 'inner' world. This can probably only be done, according to her, by breaking with traditional realism. Only experimental literary forms can provide the new widening images women need.

I have pointed out that what makes Stubbs's theory interesting is that it is so right in its main thrust and yet wrong. The novel has concentrated on women's domestic role - but then the novel was, from its beginning, about 'the domestic'. It has provided women with narrowing images, not as a consequence of showing women in domestic roles, but rather by not showing realistically enough what these roles meant. The novel was truly novel in its subject matter. To write about the ordinary, concrete and everyday opened revolutionary possibilities. Stubbs forgets that the personal is the political. The new subject matter gave the novelist a new opening for social criticism. 'The domestic' is a good vantage point for looking at the various power

systems in society and for showing how the 'inner' world links up with the 'outer' world.

So much by way of recapitulation. Stubbs uses image in the sense of portrait, and essentially her accusation is that novelists have, to this day, only created stereotypes of women. We shall therefore also have to look at the image as stereotype. The truth is, it is very difficult to produce a woman character that is not a stock figure; and stereotypes are usually only recognised retrospectively. What seems a bold innovation at the time is seen by later generations as a stereotype; and this goes for our own writing too, even feminist writing. Moreover we, the readers, are ourselves full of prejudice and have a habit of reading carelessly and putting our prejudice in place of what the writer actually says, creating a stereotype. This happens too easily in the case of Dickens, and for that reason it is important to have a close look at the concrete images a writer uses and the way he relates them. I will do this by looking at Dickens's two Rosas - Rosa Bud in The Mystery of Edwin Drood and Rosa Dartle in David Copperfield.

But before starting on this minuter examination - looking carefully at the concrete images an artist uses as blocks in building up his portraits - I would like to look at such a portrait in a more wholesale way. It seems to me that a stereotype is always a form of characterization that obscures a clear view of the power systems in which a character is involved, and that non-stereotypical

characterization would consist in showing how the inner and the outer worlds link up. This may be too glib a formulation, but with it in mind I would like to look for a moment at the portrait that serves Stubbs as an example for all that is wrong with the novel, Richardson's Pamela.

If Pamela is the first novel proper, as Stubbs says, then novelists were conscious from the start of the possibilities for social criticism and the exposing of power systems. As I have said, the real question was how to handle these possibilities. I think myself that Stubbs is wrong in associating the novel so exclusively with realism, or in thinking realism cannot provide widening images. Novelistic techniques are subtler than she gives them credit for. Novelists used from the start, for instance, two techniques to confront power relations in society, a realistic and a transformational one. Both operate with surprise. Realism surprises - and shocks - by showing the world we thought we knew as quite different - as it really is. It is essentially a revealing technique. Transformation deals on a more obvious level with change. It introduces the element of flexibility and possibility, which is the essence of surprise, often through outward change, turns of plot, reversals of fortune. A writer has always two kinds of transformation at his disposal, transformation of the reader and transformation of the fictional character. Pamela for instance is not a realistic but a transformational novel (though it is full of realistic

detail - most novelists use both techniques, though in different proportions) and Richardson uses not transformation of character, as we first think when we look at the plot, but transformation of the reader.

The plot shows that poor girls like Pamela encounter the sexual power system as part of the class system. Pamela is put out to service at the age of twelve. She becomes a lady's maid, and her mistress befriends her and recommends her to the protection of her son when she dies. But the son, Pamela's new master, Mr B., loses no time in trying to seduce her. When she resists he imprisons her on one of his estates. The people of consequence in the neighbourhood she manages to contact all refuse to help her - the general feeling is she is making a fuss about nothing, a gentleman wanting a pretty girl is the most natural thing in the world. Even if she had managed to escape she could not have got legal redress because her master is himself the justice of peace. However, in spite of her desperate plight, Pamela impresses Mr B. so much that he finally makes her his wife.

The power system on which the novel's attack focuses is clearly the class system. Richardson assumes that his reader has conventional assumptions. His heroine is a servant: and here the reader is surprised and his assumptions are overturned - she is not at all what he thinks a servant girl is like. She is intellectually and morally better than her betters (She is for instance a born writer, and her main power lies indeed in a superior

articulateness). But what makes Pamela 'a lady' more than anything else is that she is absolutely determined that she will not be coerced. At the very centre of the novel stands her assertion that she is as good as Mr B. - that she is a human being with a free will - that her body is her own. She puts it in religious terms: 'my soul is of equal importance with the soul of a princess', but it is clear that she means to challenge the system. To her jailor, Mrs Jewkes, she says about Mr B.: 'And pray ... how came I to be his property? What right has he in me, but such as a thief may plead to stolen goods?' The woman is so shocked she exclaims: 'This is downright rebellion, I protest' (1980: 163).

Why then is Pamela such a narrowing image? It is of course because she is a stereotype, the virgin heroine. Stereotypes are receptacles for the crudest accepted notions, in the case of the virgin heroine notions about the relation between innocence and sex. A virgin heroine has to be asexual, but so aware of sex she sees it lurking in every bush. To bridge that contradiction, innocence becomes 'feminine delicacy'. Pamela blushes at everything, even at being given some secondhand shoes and stockings by her master when she enters his service. When he says 'Don't blush, Pamela, dost think I don't know pretty maids wear shoes and stockings?' she reports to her parents she was 'so confounded at these words you might have beat me down with a feather'. Her parents hasten to reply that they are alarmed at Mr B.'s 'free expressions



about the stockings' (1980: 51).

One can see Richardson's difficulty. He wants to say a country girl can have true delicacy. That these girls had reason to mistrust men and especially gentlemen goes without saying. But the notion of feminine delicacy is so contradictory that Pamela is willy nilly made to look like a prig and a hypocrite. His contemporaries were quick to pounce on this weakness. Fielding wrote two parodies, one called Shamela. Yet ironically it is not the debunking Fielding but the ladylike Richardson who is bold and unconventional: to attribute delicacy to a servant girl in the 1740s was revolutionary.

And yet the notion of feminine delicacy imposed other conventions that subverted Richardson's very point. Pamela's hands are 'white' and 'fine'; the only work we ever see her do is 'flowering a waistcoat'; she faints at every fright; she has all the airs and graces of a lady. In other words she is not a servant at all. There is no surprise in her and the reader can return to his old assumptions. What Richardson has given with one hand he has taken away with the other.

Pamela seems to be written almost as an illustration of the overcoming of Stiltrennung. Pamela herself is a 'low' character whose motives and actions are high. She is as chaste as the chaste high-born heroine, and just as fiery and determined in defense of her standards. It is illuminating to look for contrast at Fielding, who did not abandon Stiltrennung. In Tom Jones the high-born

heroine, Sophia, is naturally chaste, and Molly, the low-born one, naturally unchaste. Fielding is not content with making Molly sensual; she has also low motives in dispensing her sexual favours and this leads to comic scenes and makes her comic. There is no reason why Molly should not have loved Tom Jones genuinely but have been driven by poverty to sell herself. All the conditions for such a treatment are present in the story. Fielding, however, wastes no time on psychological finesse: her comic falseness, her sensuality and her mercinariness all come in the packet of her 'lowness'.

The treatment of Pamela on the other hand shows how little the dropping of Stiltrennung in itself could do for the novel. Pamela is so determinedly 'high' that she never changes; she is static. She is born good and beautiful, like the heroine in a fairy tale - and the fairy tale pattern is particularly unsuitable for the novel. The fact that the book is in letter form and that the letters are written by her to her parents also works against making Pamela a flexible character, someone with possibility and surprise. She bases her virtue - which, we have seen, is really her challenge to the system - adamantly on the teachings of her parents and her mistress, Mr B's late mother. Richardson's enthusiasm for delicacy (though in some way this is the best part of him as a novelist and a man) makes it quite impossible for him to treat her as the servant girl she is. In a novel full of the symbolic circumstantiality we have been

discussing, the detail of a servant's work are missing. Pamela comes from a poor home and has been a servant since she was twelve. Such girls had to start at the bottom and do work that was both hard and dirty. Richardson gives us no sense of the harshness of the world these girls found themselves in, the humiliating work they had to do (even if they were the favourite of a lady who kept them about her person, or just if they were) at a period when the slop pail and the close stool were the rule. At the time when we meet Pamela she is in charge of her master's linen - a job that must have involved, at the time, a lot of tedious and heavy work, though possibly she did not do the washing, starching and ironing herself. If Richardson had shown her in relation to her work as a servant but still as virtuous and determined to be virtuous, the detail would have introduced tension: her oppression, the monotony of her life and her temptation would have come alive, and she would have had to be shown as striving for something, as struggling to transcend something in her situation and herself. To say that this is not a realistic novel - that she is not that sort of servant - does not make sense since the whole novel is built on the fact that she is a servant.

Yet Pamela is alive and things do speak for her, but only on one level. The objects that typically speak in the novel are clothes. Not her master's dirty linen, or the soap and scrubbing brush she herself wields to make it clean, but clothes as appearances and as disguise. These

clothes are true multi-determined symbols that make a living web of a novel - we need only think of Pamela's changes from the silk gowns she had inherited from her lady to the home-spun gown and 'round-eared ordinary cap, but with a green knot', and back to the silk gowns again, or of her three bundles, or of the significance of slippers and dressing gowns: '(I) was going to it [the closet door] slip-shoed, when, O dreadful! out rushed my master in a rich silk morning gown' (1980: 95) - but it is a language carried out purely at the level of morals and convention. What Stubbs sees as typical of the novel when she says, 'the novel as a form is ... characterised ... by the elaboration of the individualistic moral values which emerged as a response to the fragmentation of morality and economics into conflicting areas of activity' (1979: XI) is certainly true of Pamela. Because Richardson shows a delicate Pamela as the moral centre of the book, he cannot show a woman who through her work is part of power relations and whose position lights up power relations. For all his brave beginnings, he does not in the end show the connection between the sexual and the political power hierarchy; the moment marriage is in question he positively exalts the sexual hierarchy (Mr B. is openly and naively possessive, and Pamela, who has once compared herself to stolen goods, does not compare herself to bought goods now, though it would be appropriate). With his retreat from a spirited opposition to oppression to the sanctity of marriage, Richardson also gives up his

polemic about the class system. With this the whole polemic about freedom<sup>n</sup> and equality, which is the key to the novel, has been moved to far too abstract a level, that of the personal conscience. There is a curious gap, a rift that goes right through the novel and through Pamela herself. Pamela defends with panache her right to be herself, and hence her equality with the quality - but only on the spiritual level. On the material level she remains a stereotype, and her marriage to Mr B. confirms the class system as the order of merit.

Richardson was of course no political leveller, but he was very much a novelist. As a novelist he was revolutionary, but he kept his dissent on an abstract level. On that abstract level he tells the story of a confident and spirited girl. On the level of the plot, for his happy ending in marriage, he needed a stereotype, a pattern young women with feminine delicacy. Hence the gap, which we shall also find in other novels, and which made Pamela not a widening but a very self-contradictory image.

How then can a novelist make a widening image? The most intelligent thing in answer to this question has been said by Frieda Lawrence in a letter to Garnett, written in March 1914 from Lerici. The context is that Garnett objected to the new method of characterization Lawrence used in The Rainbow. He liked what he saw as the sharply defined characters in Sons and Lovers. Now we know that through Frieda and through Gross's ideas about the

'erotic' relationship possible between women and men Lawrence had gained a new insight into what character in relation to the movement of a novel could be. In Sons and Lovers the women are seen through the narcissistic and possessive eyes of an immature Paul Morel-Lawrence. For all the glowing realism, they are the novelist's creatures. Now Lawrence was emancipating himself from his possessive and rigid grasp on them. In the consecutive drafts of The Rainbow and Women in Love (which were at the time of the letter already separated into The Wedding Ring and what remained of the draft of The Sisters), the women take on an inner life of their own, independent of the wishes and fears of the male protagonist and controlling novelist. They change - certainly through interaction with other characters - but to a goal that is their own. This was obviously a great advance in Lawrence's technique, and he defended it to Garnett in a letter written sometime after Frieda's.

Frieda is answering a letter from Garnett, which we haven't got, but which apparently blamed her for letting Lawrence's art go to seed. Frieda at this time claimed a large share in Lawrence's writing - she assures Garnett in another letter that he can trust her to see to it that the women characters will be 'women and not superior flounders'. She begins this letter by saying that he is right, she 'hadn't cared twopence for Lawrence's novel', in revenge for his beastliness about the children.

If he denies my life and suffering I deny his art, so you see he wrote without me at the back of him. The novel is a failure but you must feel something at the back of it, struggling, trying to come out - You see, I don't really believe in Sons and Lovers it feels as if there were nothing behind all those happenings ... only intensely felt fugitive things... To me it seems an irreligious book - It does not seem the deepest and last thing said, if for instance a man loves in a book the pretty curl in the neck of 'her', if he loves it ever so intensely and beautifully, there is some thing behind that curl, more than that curl, there is she, the living striving she - Writers are so beside the point, not direct enough. (Letters, II, 1981: 151)

Nowhere has Lawrence described what he struggled toward in his conception of character so interestingly. The 'living striving she' is obviously the only truly widening image because the future can only be caught as possibility, as people reacting against what is dead or leading toward rigidity in the present. Frieda has grasped a triple connection. First, the novelist must be able to see the girl as a living striving she, someone full of possibility and potentiality. Second, he must find a concrete sign, or signs, through which the livingness and striving speaks - Frieda's 'curl on the neck'. Third, he must set a context for the life and striving in her, and this is done through her relation to others, in this case the lover who gets his flash of recognition through his love for her.

But the third condition is complex. Frieda is talking about writing, about how one can say the 'deepest and last things', and the lover in her conflated statement

is also an image for the reader. She is saying that a love story must carry this conviction: that the man loves the girl because she is 'a living striving she', that is as a centre of consciousness in her own right and a consciousness that strives toward its own goals. This is obviously relevant to the context of Sons and Lovers, where it was not the case. She is also saying that writers must learn to be more direct if their stories are to carry conviction. I take it that they are direct by choosing the right images, that the images have to spark off recognition in the reader, just as the lover recognised all of her in the curl on her neck. This extends the context in which the 'living striving she' is set from the characters in the book, who can either read the signals or cannot, to the reader, who should be able to read the signals and judge the sensitivity or insensitivity of the other characters to them. Frieda it is clear is setting a high standard for novel writing or novel-reading here. It becomes a kind of test of our humanity and a battle between our maturity and our prejudice.

Lawrence never formulated a conception of character as fluid and dynamic as Frieda's.<sup>2</sup> He made at around the same time, however, some statements about the novel and character that echo Frieda's, and the contrast with Frieda's formulation is interesting. In a letter written a month after Frieda's, evidently in response to the same critical letter of Garnett's he says: 'You should



understand and help me to the new thing, not get angry and say it is common and send me back to the tone of the old Sisters. In the Sisters was the germ of this novel: woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative' (Letters, 2: 165).

About two months later, still responding to the same criticism, he explains his 'futurist' conception of the novel and makes his famous statement about character.

I don't agree with you about the Wedding Ring. You will find that in a while you will like the book as a whole. I don't think the psychology is wrong: it is only that I have a different attitude to my characters, and that necessitates a different attitude in you, which you are not as yet prepared to give.... Somehow - that which is physic - non-human in humanity is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element - which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turgenev and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoievski, the moral scheme into which the characters fit - and it is nearly the same scheme - is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead.... What is interesting in the laugh of a woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat: it is the inhuman will, call it physiology... that fascinates me. I don't care so much about what the woman feels - in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care about what the woman is - what she is - inhumanly, physiologically, materially - according to the use of the word: but for me what she is is a phenomenon (or a representing some greater inhuman will), instead of what she feels according to the human conception.... 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 we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element. (Letters, 2: 182-3)

Lawrence never developed fully in the direction which Frieda's letter to Garnett indicates. It is interesting that he, too, connects characterization in the novel with women. But in the first letter he confuses his own newly-acquired sense of women as individuals with a historical process - women 'becoming' individual<sup>2</sup> - and in the second letter he partly relapses into a 'scientific' attitude to women that is already present in Sons and Lovers, where Paul says about Clara: 'What does she mean to me after all? She represents something, like a bubble of foam represents the sea. But what is she? It is not her I care for' (1948: 435). Yet what he says about character made consistent by a certain moral scheme, and the new character which is not stable is profoundly interesting.

I prefer Frieda's formulation of what is needed for the new character because it is more on the ground and more humanly utopian. Her 'livingness' and 'strivingness' convey Lawrence's unstable ego, but also a character that clashes with social conventions. Frieda adds a combative element where Lawrence's description is neutral and almost deterministic. 'The living striving she' is in opposition to something, her striving suggests the struggle against the dead hand of something. She is striving to transcend her socialization; she objects to being put into 'a certain moral scheme'. To bring a character alive in this way means seeing the ego pass through what Lawrence calls allotropic states, and it does

need 'a deeper sense than we've been used to exercise' to see that these states belong to an underlying, important part of the ego. But Lawrence's description of that 'other ego' is only physio-psychological, while Frieda's adds a social dimension.

Lawrence, with his curious pseudo-scientific talk, is surely avoiding something which Frieda's formulation faces. He says he is avoiding the inessential but he does not want to face the whole human being, at least where women are concerned. In Frieda's formulation the link between the psychic and the social is taken account of in a way that is true to experience and true to the area of experience the novel is suited to explore. If her 'living striving she' points to the urge in the characters to overcome their socialization - to expand and transform themselves - then this puts them into the context of the power systems that control their environment and makes them illuminate these power systems for the reader. The 'living striving she' strives for herself but her struggle has universal connotations (It shows, to use our old phrase, that the personal is the political). And Frieda has put her finger on the important working condition: the concrete images the writer uses for his woman characters must have a force which convinces us of this universality.

Lawrence's innovation lies in exploring the psychic realm in a new way, taking hold of character at a deeper, more impersonal level (though never at the level which he

claims in the letter we have quoted - his bite is much more interesting than his bark) and in dropping plot conventions which distract from that exploration. But the traditional novel was never so bound to the 'old stable ego' as he makes out. The 'living striving she' is not unknown to it. If a novelist can convey the urge to transcend socialization - the urge, not the fulfilment - he makes a widening image. Realistic novelists bring out the living striving quality of a character by showing the check it suffers. If they locate this check accurately, they provide widening images through a sort of negative process in which the new thing can be discerned through the old. However, Lawrence is right about the moral scheme into which characters are fitted - we need only think of Pamela. Many 19th Century novels come close to seeing the connection between the living striving self and the force of 'inhuman institutions'; but divert the insight. This is particularly true of the Bildungsroman, which makes the living striving self its particular subject; I have already referred to Keller's Der Gruene Heinrich in this context. Even Hardy, who sees the connection clearly, for instance in Jude the Obscure, implicates some great inhuman ineluctable force. George Eliot turns the situation inside out. She sees it is society, and even comes near to calling it society, for instance in Middlemarch, but she approves of the check coming from within, internalised as conscience and morality. She approves of the 'living striving she'

striving for self-restraint, duty and self-sacrifice. No other novelist has shown Frieda's 'living striving she' more clearly than she has. Yet because of her trick of locating the check to their living and striving within them, she misses making them widening images. Instead we witness the horrible sight of their battering themselves against bars which they themselves constantly strengthen."

Other novelists have missed making a widening image simply by not finding the images through which the livingness and striving can express itself - the equivalent of Frieda's 'pretty curl on the neck of her'. These images are indispensable, whether the novel uses a more realistic or a more transformational technique. The reader is only convinced of such an intangible as a character's potentiality by signs or processes he recognises from his own unconscious processes. We do not know why novelists sometimes miss the right images and sometimes hit them exactly. But we can examine the question by looking at two women's portraits in Dickens, one of them a character in a transformational novel who has the possibilities of change open to her, the other a character in a realistic novel whose livingness and striving becomes clear to us only through the checks she suffers.

'The two Rosas' are called Rosa Bud and Rosa Dartle. It is always worth listening to names in Dickens. Rosa Bud is of course a rosebud, and if you call a woman 'rosebud' you probably mean an immature sweet young thing.

But a bud has also potentiality and could be an image of growing and unfolding. We shall see that this is an ambiguity Dickens intended. Rosa Bud appears as a sweet young thing but has tremendous potentialities. Rosa Dartle: a thorny rose? The end syllable of Dartle always suggests to me a dart whose tip is broken, or a dart that wavers instead of going straight to its mark.

Edwin Drood has a special status among Dickens's books as his last novel, which he could not finish before he died, and a detective story broken off just before the threads were to be pulled together for the solution. It is not a who-dunnit - we know who the murderer is - but a psychological mystery story in which the 'why' and 'how' are important. I shall concern myself here with only the three main characters: Jasper, the choir master who is a most respected citizen of Cloisterham but a secret opium addict; Rosa Bud, a boarder in a Young Ladies' Seminary in the same town, who has been brought up in that institution and apparently never left it; and Edwin Drood, Jasper's nephew, who is engaged to Rosa and comes up from time to time from London to see her and stay with his uncle. These three characters and their relations make up a complete story which ends with Rosa's leaving for London. Rosa and Edwin are orphans, engaged since childhood by a dying wish of their parents. They are both somewhat oppressed by the bond. Jasper is very fond of his nephew but secretly in love with Rosa. He kills Edwin, taking care to implicate someone else. But he

mourns for his nephew so genuinely and is so passionately dedicated to finding and exposing the murderer that he cannot be suspected.

Dickens obviously spent a lot of his ingenuity on the detective story plot with its apparatus of drug addiction, hypnosis, personality changes, transvestism and, probably, Indian thuggery. In discussing Pamela I mentioned that a novelist who uses non-realist trans-formational techniques may be aiming at the transformation of the reader. The detective story can be seen as an extreme expression of that aim, located at the end of a scale where 'transformation' has become more and more mechanical and less and less psychological. It operates with an apparatus of clues, hidden or misleading, and with sudden revelation - the surprise that overturns all the reader's expectations and accepted notions. This allows the writer a powerful manipulation of the reader, but it also has disadvantages where the quality of the writing is concerned. Dickens became more and more interested in detective fiction in the last years of his life, when he needed to feel that he had power over his readers, that they responded to him almost as to a magician, were wax in his hands. His readings were another expression of that need. The main character of the book, Jasper, with his extraordinary, almost magical powers of manipulating people, mirrors that need. Partly then this apparatus has taken the place of psychological development in Edwin Drood. The transformations of the detective genre stand

for the transformations proper to a novel in which the transformational technique is used. But commanding this apparatus seems also to have reassured Dickens and freed him from some of the anxieties that block his insights particularly where women are concerned. Edwin Drood is unique in Dickens's work for its attitude to women; it is so unexpected a departure that one can only grieve that it was Dickens's last work. It has nothing of the dreary misogyny that we feel for instance on page after page of Bleak House though it is so much better a novel. Dickens is for the first time happy with his women characters: this is quite clear from the adventurous portrait of Helena Landless, whom I shall neglect here because she belongs almost entirely to the unfinished detective plot, and above all from Rosa Bud, the heroine of the more interesting, finished story. Rosa Bud is the obverse, psychological side of the mystery of Edwin Drood; in her are buried the clues and she was meant to transform the reader. Her psychodrama is the echo and at the same time the explanation of the crude detective fiction. Unfortunately Dickens buried the clues too deeply - Rosa Bud has up to now neither surprised nor transformed his readers. Fascination with the plot has made us overlook what the story is about.

Edwin Drood is a book in which the plot-interest and the story and its theme are unusually disparate. When John Carey talks of 'the cowering, revolted Rosa Bud' he has only the plot in mind, in which Rosa plays a



comparatively unimportant, technical role<sup>6</sup> (The situation is not unlike that in Pamela where there is also an unusual gap: the heroine of the story is a woman who fights for self-determination, while a woman with feminine delicacy is necessary for the plot). The story is about what Dickens calls 'the true lover'; it asks what 'true loverhood' would consist in. Rosa is important to the story; because of her honesty she is the measure of true loverhood. Yet the theme of Edwin Drood is also the theme of death. The whole book is pervaded by the smell of death. Dickens uses here what can only be called smell-images: the smell coming from the old, damp and mouldering walls of the cathedral, the crypt with its rotting corpses, the dead elm leaves in the close. In relation to the story that asks who the true lover is, the theme is that love between men and women is deadly.

In some way which I do not fully understand Dickens connects the deadliness of love with the colossal conceit and stupidity of men in relation to women (In the story both Edwin who is engaged to her and Jasper who passionately loves her have nothing but contempt for Rosa). He has an image which at first sight seems just Dickensian high jinks, but which pulls the whole thing together: Mr Sapsea's tomb. Mr Sapsea is an eminently respectable citizen, mayor of Cloisterham. Here is the epitaph which he has made up and put on his wife's tomb.

ETHELINDA  
Reverential Wife of  
MR. THOMAS SAPSEA  
AUCTIONEER, VALUER, ESTATE AGENT ETC.  
OF THIS CITY  
whose knowledge of the World,  
though somewhat extensive,  
Never brought him acquainted with  
A SPIRIT  
More capable of  
LOOKING UP TO HIM.  
STRANGER, PAUSE  
And ask thyself the question  
CANST THOU DO LIKEWISE?  
If NOT,  
WITH A BLUSH RETIRE. ♀

This is the tomb Jasper chooses as a hiding place for Edwin Drood's body.

Rosa is a character who is also a combination of Dickensian high jinks with significance, and yet she puts most people off. Actually, the images that make her that most dreadful of virgin heroines, the nubile baby doll, are Dickens's joke - he is having us on. But critics have always seen her as a stereotype. Edmund Wilson for instance - the first to point out the extraordinary psychological interest of the characters in Edwin Drood - finds her uninteresting. He says: 'But the characters that are bright and good - Rosa Bud with her baby name for example - are as two-dimensional as paper dolls'

Actually Wilson is confused here. Rosa is so vividly a doll that he is repelled and denounces her as 'only a doll'. Dickens warns the reader from making just this mistake. Neville Landless, who objects to the condescending possessiveness with which Edwin treats Rosa, says in so many words 'He treats her like a doll' (1956:

105), and Rosa's guardian, the stiff old London lawyer who is one of the few good characters in the book, is made to snub Edwin in no uncertain manner. He has just been telling Edwin that he has been down to Cloisterham, and that Rosa is expecting him. Edwin says

'Indeed, sir! Yes; I knew that Pussy was looking out for me.' - 'Do you keep a cat down there?' asked Mr. Grewgious. Edwin coloured a little as he explained: 'I call Rosa Pussy.' - 'O, really,' said Mr. Grewgious, smoothing down his head; 'that's very affable'. (1956: 117, Ch. XI)

Later Mr. Grewgious picks up the theme that runs like a red thread through the book. Dickens tucks what he says away, as he so often does with important references, in a half-humorous scene in which the pedantic old man protests that he, of course, cannot know what 'the true lover' is like. He pictures him, however, he says to Edwin, as someone who wants to be truly with his love, as someone who has 'no existence separable from that of the beloved object of his affection and is living at once a doubled life and a halved life' (1956: 122, my italics).

He says all this, of course, because the blase condescension with which Edwin treats his ward makes him anxious. But in the context of the book as a whole it is a disturbing description. Edwin does not truly want to be with Rosa, whereas Jasper does. And Jasper is the character in the book who is living at once a doubled life and a halved life owing to his opium addiction and near insanity, but also owing to his obsession with Rosa.

Because he is double - or half - he can kill Edwin (whom he also loves). This is the first reference, in the form of a double meaning (Mr Sapsea's tomb is an image) to the connection of love with death, and I must own that I do not understand what Dickens means with this mysterious and complicated suggestion. Jasper is in contrast with Edwin 'the true lover'; yet surely in a most perverted sense, since he 'makes a doll of her' in a much more sinister and frightening way than Edwin - he tries to make her his puppet through hypnotism.

Men's tendency to make a doll of a woman was something that preoccupied Dickens in many of his books (Ibsen's title, 'The Doll's House' is taken from Dickens). We will meet it again when we come to Rosa Dartle. But in Rosa Bud, his last virgin heroine, he shows us something he has never shown before, a woman who changes in front of our eyes from the 'toy' men have made of her to the most intelligent and decisive character in the book. Rosa is the only one who penetrates the real mystery of Edwin Drood and who guesses and gives us a clue to why it cannot be solved.

The trouble is that Dickens is himself very fond of nubile baby dolls and his images for the infantile, coy, petty Rosa are so vivid that most readers don't get beyond them. Rosa sucks her thumb; when her lover calls, she puts her pinafore over her head and peeks out from underneath; when he asks her for a kiss, she says no, she has 'an acidulated drop in her mouth'. She is eager to

go a walk with him because this means she can sneak a visit to the 'lumps-of-delight shop'. Turkish Delight is of course powdered with sugar, and when she finally kisses him she lifts to him 'rosy lips covered with the dust of delight'.

Apart from being sweet, Rosa is really insufferable in the first part of the novel; but Dickens is at some pains to make us understand what makes her insufferable. He introduces us to her through a portrait painted by Edwin and hanging over Jasper's mantle piece. It is the picture of 'a blooming schoolgirl' with her 'beauty remarkable for a childish, almost babyish touch of saucy discontent, comically conscious of itself' (1956: 8). Neville Landless calls the picture 'unflattering' because, with something of the intuition of a 'true lover', he recognises its insulting quality. As he did not know who painted it, he has to apologise for his criticism. 'O, a joke sir, a mere joke' Edwin cuts in with a provoking yawn. 'A little humouring of Pussy's points! I'm going to paint her gravely one of these days, if she is good' (1956: 73, Ch VIII).

The discontent is in fact her first, still directionless resistance against the way she is treated, even if she is still insecure enough to be self-deprecating about it. Dickens is trying to do through the character of Rosa a number of quite difficult things, some concerning her personal development, some her status as a woman. The portrait is one of the book's focusing

images, like Mr Sapsea's tomb. On the one hand it tells us more about Edwin, who painted it and Jasper who treasures it, than about Rosa herself. One of the things Dickens is doing in the book is to explore the relation between 'love' and 'respectability' - the socially permissible. Because a woman, as herself, is not visible socially speaking, a man can both hide and betray himself in relation to her. Edwin betrays himself and Jasper hides himself in relation to the portrait.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand the 'discontent' of the portrait foreshadows the rather extreme character-changes Dickens makes Rosa undergo. One of the things he is interested in doing through Rosa is showing the relation between change and being oneself: Rosa is one of the few characters in his work (the only woman character) who change in front of our eyes to reveal themselves as themselves. In this changing to be oneself lies the surprise for the reader and the 'transformation' of the reader: his expectations of character, his prejudices are overturned.

Rosa is indeed meant to surprise us. After having shown her as extremely infantile, self-absorbed, vain and petty, Dickens reveals her 'real self' in a number of astonishing scenes. The first is a party at which she sings and Jasper, who is accompanying her, is trying to hypnotise her. She is apt to get a little out of key, and he does it by sounding from time to time, faintly but insistently, the key note. This repeated note is one of the most effective images Dickens ever employed. On the

one hand it shows Jasper's respectable duplicity: he is 'putting it over her' under cover of 'putting her right'. But it is also clear that Dickens is imagining here something like 'the feelies'. Jasper is using sound to 'feel her up'. As we hear later, he has been developing this technique as Rosa's music teacher: it gives him special pleasure here, to do it in front of a respectable audience including her betrothed (his nephew), a clergyman and the headmistress of her school. Rosa of course does not know she is being hypnotised; all she knows is that 'he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover and commanding me to keep his secret' (1956: 69). But on this occasion humiliation and anger give her the strength to break the spell: she breaks off singing and begins to scream. It is important to understand that Rosa's hysterics are not the result of Jasper's mesmerizing, but of her resistance. They are a victory, and not a defeat. Dickens underlines this by making her the same night break through the hypnotic command to secrecy. What she describes to Helena is clearly what Dickens understood by 'malign animal magnetism'.

'You speak as if he had threatened you in some dark way' - 'He has never spoken to me about - that. Never.' - 'What has he done?' - 'He has made a slave of me by his looks. He has forced me to understand him without his saying a word; and he has forced me to keep silence without uttering a threat. When I play, he never moves his eyes from my hands. When I sing, he never moves his eyes from my lips. When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he

forces me to see them without looking at them. ... Tonight, when he watched my lips so closely while I was singing, besides feeling terrified I felt ashamed and passionately hurt. It was as if he kissed me, and I couldn't bear it, but cried out. You must never breathe this to anyone. Eddy is devoted to him.' (1956: 68-9, Ch. VII)

The scene is meant to show that Rosa has something in her that is stronger than even the sinister John Jasper. Dickens also uses it to show Jasper's predilections: he is a violator, who enjoys forcing someone who is helpless. He will show this clearly in the garden scene, to which we will come.

I won't dwell on the next scene, in which Rosa breaks off her engagement, though it is rather moving because Dickens shows Rosa here at her warmest and most mature. What needs stressing about the scene is that it is Rosa who has done the thinking and Rosa who makes the decision. Dickens shows that Edwin has been feeling uneasy about their relationship but that he would have let things slide, hoping that marriage would put things magically right. She is altogether the more courageous: she dissolves the engagement, although this exposes her to a man she dreads - Jasper; Edwin agrees because he has someone else at the back of his mind - Helena. She acts in good faith, while he acts in bad faith. What Edwin is really anxious about is that his uncle shall not hear of the break because he 'cares so much' for him. Rosa is on the brink of telling him what Jasper cares for, but she knows it would do no good; Edwin would never believe her.



They therefore agree to keep their secret for a bit, and this is Edwin's doom because Jasper kills him the next night. The murder is not shown: to all appearances Edwin simply vanishes without a trace.

Critics often mention that The Mystery of Edwin Drood is quite without that social criticism that gives Dickens's other late novels their bite. Shaw thought so; and even John Forster who had discussed the book with Dickens. Edmund Wilson says: 'Dickens has dropped away here all the burden of analysing society' (1961: 90). I think the opposite is true. The theme of the true lover is by implication itself a social theme. I think that the garden scene, to which we come now, is pivotal to the book and that it brings out its social implications.

I mentioned earlier that the question of 'who is the true lover' is associated with the theme of death in the book and how a sort of death-smell imagery pervades the book. Cloisterham is described as 'a monotonous silent city deriving an earthy flavour throughout from its Cathedral crypt.' (1956: 18, Ch. III). It comes almost as a shock when the garden scene is introduced with the most luminous light imagery. It is high summer; Cloisterham is suddenly related to the sunfilled country spaces around it. 'The cathedral and the monastery ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them, rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot cornfields and smoking roads that wind

distantly among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit' (1956: 217). At the end of that scene Rosa, who has never been out of Cloisterham, never set foot outside the 'Nuns' House' (her school) on her own, is alone on her road to London.

The scene is set about three months after Edwin's disappearance. Rosa had of course to make a statement about the breaking up of their engagement, and it is first thought that he might have gone away out of despair. By now he has been given up for dead. Jasper has surprised Rosa into seeing him, and to avoid being with him in a room she has met him in the garden. They are both dressed in black, and during the interview Jasper leans against a sundial, throwing his shadow on it, 'his black against the very face of day' as Dickens says. The chapter is called 'Shadow on the Sun-dial' (Ch. XIX).

Jasper has come to ask Rosa to marry him. He tells her that as long as she was affianced to his 'dear boy' he has 'endured his love in silence'. Dickens interrupts with a comment: 'This lie, so gross, while the mere words in which it is told are so true, is more than Rosa can endure'. The comment tells us that the key to the scene is doubleness, especially the doubleness of respectability, whose other face for Dickens at this time of his life is obscenity. Rosa flashes out: 'You were as false throughout, sir, as you are now.'

And now Dickens brings together the theme of male contempt for women with that of the violator. Jasper

doesn't care what Rosa feels as long as he can force her and break her. She might as well have saved her breath. He answers 'with a fierce extreme of admiration': 'How beautiful you are. You are more beautiful in anger than in repose. I don't ask for your love; give me yourself and your hatred, give me yourself and that pretty rage, give me yourself and that enchanting scorn, it will be enough for me.' He tells her he is sacrificing for her, here and now, his love for his 'poor boy' and his revenge on the murderer. When she still resists he tries to break her by blackmail. He threatens to cause Neville Landless, whom Rosa likes and believes innocent and who is her best friend's brother, to be hanged.®

In thinking the scene over afterwards Rosa suddenly knows that Jasper himself must be the murderer. The way he is trying to force her shows that he has the mentality of a killer. It also comes to her that he has killed in order to get her. But her reason tells her that Jasper cannot be the killer. The killer would not speak about Edwin as Jasper does, or expose himself to her as Jasper has exposed himself. Jasper is totally careless of exposure. Rosa is the only character in the book who sees the dilemma clearly, and in following her thoughts we are given what must be the solution of the mystery: that there are two Jaspers; that, in psychological jargon, he is a divided personality and that the mystery cannot be solved until the two are brought together. Doubtless must be reduced to singleness, and the half man must

become whole again. But the man who was living both a doubled and a halved life was the true lover. It would follow that Jasper, the perverted image of the lover, cannot be brought to confess until his obsession with Rosa is over.

This theme of doubleness also leads us to the social criticism the scene contains. From the social point of view the garden scene is an exploration of 'love' in relation to 'respectability'. The clue to the mystery hidden in the scene is that in relation to women the two personalities come together. In relation to Rosa the respectable choirmaster is a killer and a rapist. Here he can be careless, because in relation to 'love', society does not impose the usual restrictions on respectability. Overbearingness, violence, even murderousness all come under the label of 'passion'. Dickens makes his point by carefully staying within the conventions of the vocabulary of love. 'Pretty rage' and 'enchanting scorn' are words very proper in a love scene from a gentleman to a lady. The vocabulary of love is still used when the topic becomes one of blackmail and threatened murder. The hideous gaiety of the wordplay fits a proposal scene: 'You care for your bosom friend's good name ... then remove the shadow of the gallows from her, dear one!' - 'You dare propose to me to -' - 'Darling, I dare propose to you. Stop there. If it be bad to idolise you, I am the worst of men; if it be good I am the best. My love for you is above all other love, and my truth to you is

above all other truth. Let me have hope and favour, and I am a forsworn man for your sake' (1956: 229).

Dickens is making here quite a devastating statement about the love and marriage system in our society. He shows that women are outsiders and that you can drop appearances with them. He shows that love and marriage can be equated with murder and be based on hate and still be 'all right' according to our conventions. He shows that women are caught in the way society has set up the system and are therefore helpless against men - the hypnotism is the concrete symbol for that - and he also shows that they are not helpless if they have the courage to get rid of their femininity.<sup>10</sup> Rosa for instance has been so highly socialised into femininity that she has never been out in the street by herself. A lady does not walk alone. After the garden scene she goes to London alone to get help against Jasper. Dickens underlines his point about Rosa and femininity by making 'The Nuns' House' - the Seminary for Young Ladies - not only her school but her home from earliest childhood. He wants to show that a 'living striving she' can transcend her socialization.

But for all his concern with femininity and female strength (a concern that shows itself also in Helena Landless) Dickens has not managed to make Rosa Bud a widening image. She is not the stereotype critics have made her - that was the result of not looking properly. But she also does not come across as Dickens meant her to.

One reason for this failure is the language he uses: the garden scene, for all the subtlety with which doubleness is played on in the language, is execrably written. He simply did not find vigorous images for a grown-up strong Rosa. It is all very well to put cliches into Jasper's mouth, it suits his role. But Dickens himself (not Jasper) calls Rosa a 'trembling little beauty' and talks of her 'panting breath'. Why should he go so wrong over her? This is a question well worth thinking about. One explanation that suggests itself is psychological, and perhaps not a very good one. There is no doubt that Dickens identified with Jasper, the divided man. The question of love and reputation, or love and respectability, bothered him very much at the time he was writing the novel on account of the double life he imposed on himself and Ellen Ternan. Perhaps he unconsciously extended the identification to Jasper's sadism? This would mean he could not 'see' Rosa properly in these scenes, and this would explain why he had to use cliches for her. If this is so, Dickens's obsessions are not the sources for his art, as Carey suggests in The Violent Effigy but an obstacle to his art.

But the relation to Jasper, and through him to the theme of the book, is surely more complicated. Dickens has not found any particularly energetic images for Jasper either. The best are of a general kind, like the immensely suggestive 'shadow on the sundial'. There is no doubt that Jasper with his craving to have power over

women is Dickens's 'shadow' in the Jungian sense and that Dickens had an insight into this which led him to the image. In writing about his shadow Dickens must have recognised and accepted his shadow. Nothing but such an assumption can explain the insights into love and respectability and the position of women, which underlie the story. Because he recognised the tendency - which he divides between two men - to own and to violate (or force) women, he could write against femininity. This insight also gave him the idea of making a young girl with nothing in her background to help her into a 'living striving she'. But the idea was not enough. He found 'the diagram but not the picture'.

Let us look at Rosa Dartle now. The scenes in David Copperfield in which she is introduced to us belong to the best Dickens has ever written. Here the language is energetic. Later in David Copperfield Rosa Dartle turns into a rhetorical figure, but by then the book has lost its thrust. The question that interests us here is how Dickens builds up her portrait - her 'image' - and what he is telling us with this image, what interests him in a person like Rosa Dartle.

The context is David Copperfield's arrival at the house of his old schoolfellow, Steerforth. David is on his way to a holiday with the Peggottys, and in the course of the scene Steerforth agrees to come with him. Steerforth, confident and callous, has an easy affable charm that dazzles the provincial David. We have already

met him at school, where he does an unspeakably mean thing in front of David's eyes that ruins a young teacher and his family. The hero-worshipping David shuts his eyes. In fact he has unwittingly given him the means to do it. This is important for the context of the scene, because when later Steerforth seduces Little Em'ly there is a repetition of the pattern. Again, it was David who introduced him, who did not see what was happening, and again a whole family is ruined.

In a sense, then, the scene we are going to look at is about blindness and one's duty to see. David, through whose eyes it is seen since the book is in autobiographical form, is chronically and wilfully innocent, far too innocent for his age. Steerforth's mother is blind to her son out of vanity and pride of class. She and David talk about how generous and noble Steerforth is and always has been.<sup>12</sup> The only person in that family circle who is not blind is Rosa Dartle, a remote relation and Mrs Steerforth's companion. She has had a love relation with Steerforth of which he has grown tired. Throughout the scene she tries to open the others' eyes, to expose Steerforth as what he is, but she does it in such a roundabout, bizarre way that it backfires on her. Her halting, stumbling, rushing speech makes people draw back and distrust her. In Rosa Dartle's speech Dickens has found a brilliant image for the hopeless battling of neurotics against walls - walls of inhibition within and walls of prejudice outside.



Being walled-in is indeed as important an image here as blindness. The scene is set in the dining room of a wealthy North London house. If in the garden scene in Edwin Drood Dickens was at pains to give an impression of space and light, here he gives one of rather oppressive comfort and opulence in an enclosed space. The chapter is called 'Steerforth's Home', and though Dickens is later in the book sentimental about house and home, here he clearly wants to show how poisonous a cosy home circle can be.

David is placed opposite Miss Dartle at table and we are introduced to her through his fascinated gaze. Steerforth calls David 'Daisy', and Daisy's social consciousness, at once diffuse and vague and as acute as only a child's can be, is the perfect ironic medium to take in Rosa Dartle. She is small and dark, 'not agreeable to look at but with some appearance of good looks too'. She has 'eager eyes', which he also calls later 'eyes that have a hungry lustre'. She has a scar that cuts across her mouth, altering the shape of the upper lip. She is thin and she is clever. 'She brings everything to the grindstone and sharpens it as she has sharpened her face and figure' says Steerforth later, 'she is all edge'. David concludes in his 'own mind that she was about thirty years of age, and that she wished to be married'. Her thinness seems to him 'the effect of some wasting fire within her, which found a vent in her gaunt eyes' (1907: 277).

If we ask ourselves now how the images work, we see that Dickens has made Rosa Dartle appear, above all, hungry. The whole dining room setting suggests someone who is sitting at a rich table, ravenous, but unable to eat. She is so thin because the scar makes a bar across her mouth.

But the image of the scar not only indicates that nothing can go in, but that nothing can come out. She is not only hungry but devoured by an inward fire. Critics have seen Rosa Dartle as a study in sexual frustration. This is fair, but the meaning of the frustration is surely wider. Dickens is interested in power relations here, and she is a study in imprisoned, frustrated energy. The scar is a symbol of impotence. She got it when Steerforth, as a boy, threw a hammer at her in a fit of rage. I take it this hammer-blow has some symbolic relation with the name Dartle. It is an expression of brutal power, and with Steerforth, power, even sexual power, is always based on money and class. If Dartle means a dart that cannot go to its mark because it wavers or has a broken tip, Steerforth's hammer is the dart that goes home. It causes the scar that 'crosses out' Rosa Dartle's mouth. I think we are to understand that her main claim to power has lain in her brains and her power of expression. David makes the connection when he says: 'She is very clever, is she not? ... What a remarkable scar that is on her lips'. Her brain and her power of expression are of no account, 'crossed out' by the scar.

With the bar across her mouth, she can only speak 'out of the side of her mouth'.

Before we hear her speak, we must consider two other aspects about her that Dickens brings out in these early scenes. She is one of those women figures in Dickens, like Miss Wade or Tattycoram, who are socially in an impossible position. She is neither a daughter of the house nor a paid companion. She is in the house because she is poor, but also because she has a little money and the Steerforths are a 'good connection'. It makes it possible for her to add the interest to the capital each year and so become more eligible. At the same time her value in the marriage market has been lowered by her disfigurement.

She is also sexually bound to Steerforth. This is shown in a scene further on in the book, again a dining room scene recorded through 'Daisy's' innocent eye.<sup>12</sup> At that time Steerforth is seducing Little Em'ly. Again Rosa is the only one who can 'see' in that circle of blind people. Steerforth, afraid of what she may say, puts himself out to charm her and remind her of old feelings. He succeeds against her will, and she lets him persuade her to sing for him to the harp, a thing she hasn't done 'these three years'. At first she stands by the harp, playing it without sounding it, an amazingly poignant and accurate image of her hovering in the balance between knowledge and desire. Then with a sudden decision she sings. She sings in such a way that David feels: 'there

was something fearful in the reality of it'. Steerforth however is simply relieved that he has gained his point. He laughingly puts his arm round her and says: 'Come, Rosa, for the future we will love each other'. She turns on him 'with the fury of a wild cat' and hits him in the face. Later when she talks to Mrs Steerforth about the history of the relationship, she says: 'I descended into a doll, a trifle for the occupation of an idle hour, to be dropped and taken up and trifled with as the inconstant humour took him' (1966: 872).

To return to our own scene. The truly arresting thing Dickens does in the dining room scene is to show that her own impossible position has made Rosa aware of power relations far beyond those practised in the domestic circle. She is hopelessly involved with her class but her insights also divide her from her class. In that cosy family circle Rosa is the only one with decent feeling and with the courage of her feelings. But, as I have said, she can only speak out of the side of her mouth. So on this occasion. David has just invited Steerforth to come with him to the Peggottys. Steerforth responds amiably that it might be pleasant to 'see that sort of people ... and to make one o' them'. Miss Dartle, 'whose sparkling eyes had been watchful of us' breaks in.

'Oh but really? Do tell me. Are they, though?' she said. 'Are they what? And are who what?' said Steerforth. 'That sort of people. Are they really animals and clods, and beings of another order? I want to know so

much.' - 'Why, there's a pretty wide separation between them and us', said Steerforth, with indifference. 'They are not to be expected to be as sensitive as we are. ... They are wonderfully virtuous, I dare say. ... But they have not very fine natures and they may be thankful that, like their coarse rough skins, they are not easily wounded.' - 'Really!' said Miss Dartle. 'Well, I don't know, now, when I have been better pleased but to hear that. It's so consoling! It's such a delight to know that, when they suffer, they don't feel! Sometimes I have been quite uneasy for that sort of people; but now I shall just dismiss the idea of them altogether. Live and learn. I had my doubts I confess, but now they've cleared up. I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking - don't it?'  
(1966: 352, Ch. 20)

From a social point of view, the target of the dining room scene, just as it was in the garden scene, is power relations in the wider society. But here it is not the sex and marriage system alone; we are made aware of widening circles of power and exclusion from power, from the family to the economic and the class system. One of the best touches is Dickens's use of 'feeling' as a measure of who belongs and who doesn't. It shows the primitivism and revengefulness of the 'us against them' spirit that pervades the whole system. Steerforth is meant to be only half serious when he talks about 'that sort of people', but what Rosa elicits by her cunning questions is a picture of an elite system constructed to conserve power and backed by prejudice which is real enough.

Dickens is, here again, aware that women are so placed that they can light up the connections between the

systems. Rosa Dartle is the only character who is at the same time inside and outside each of the power systems the scene touches on. She is inside the family, but the coupleism between mother and son excludes her. She has some money, but compared to Steerforth and his mother she is poor. She is granted feeling, but not such fine feelings that they cannot constantly be outraged, so that her treatment puts her closer to 'that sort of people'. The sex system, where men have power over women, makes her position particularly clear. Connected as it is with 'feeling' it is also the key to the other systems. Given her position, Rosa cannot overcome her feeling for Steerforth, but she can see him as he is. They have loved, but love allowed him to make a doll of her.

I would call Rosa Dartle a widening image because Dickens has given her these insights. She fights for herself but on a universal basis. He makes her show that injustice and oppression in one place link up with injustice and oppression in other places. Through Rosa Dartle the inner and the outer worlds are connected.

But what about the images Dickens has found to build up such a portrait? No-one can deny that his imagery makes Rosa Dartle come alive. The language is vigorous, and all the characters and their relationships are placed firmly, though often only with a touch or a hint. Rosa comes alive, however, as someone twisted, malicious, self-abasing at times, and frustrated to near insanity. All the images, her scar, her thinness, her mannerisms and

speech habits, are repelling and disturbing. Can such a person make a widening image? It seems to me that it is in the disturbing quality of the portrait that its power as a widening image lies; I think that in a realistic novel a widening image would always have to be ugly. A character who was to expand our consciousness would have to be shown to struggle against and transcend socialization. This would involve showing feelings that are usually suppressed - that are not socially permissible - and behaving in ways that uncover social conditions we want to keep covered. Such tactlessness and such a struggle always strikes us as ugly. It might be interesting to look at the mad women in the attic of Victorian fiction and ask whether any of them make widening images.

What would Dickens himself and his Victorian audience think of Rosa Dartle? Q. D. Leavis says about the scene (1966: 496, Ch. 29) when Rosa hits Steerforth: 'Such a violent action, in a drawing room, and from a lady, would be excessively shocking to the reader of the day',<sup>14</sup> but she forgets that in the context of the whole Rosa is characterised as a shrew, and that such behaviour was expected from a shrew. Dickens himself is excessively shocked. He clearly dislikes Rosa; he would never have given one of his heroines a scar that could give her mouth the expression of a sneer. He is afraid of women like her, and the scar in a sense stereotypes her as a shrew, making her safe, making her again - but now for Dickens

and for us - of no account, dismissible. Nevertheless, it was Dickens who made her the most interesting woman in Victorian fiction.

### III

Rosa Dartle involves us in a paradox: what is enlarging in the novel has to do with constriction, with struggle. The widening image is not a model, doesn't invite us, smilingly, to emulation. As an image it is disconcerting and doubtful and assails us with an estranging force. This paradox, which has to do with socialization and transcending socialization, is at the heart of the novel but also at the heart of society. The question of transcending socialization is in fact the point of vital contact between novel and society. That there is a two-way, interdependent connection between social attitudes and novel writing has always been known, but it is less clearly realised that the focus of the connection is the transcending of socialization. In the last section we have seen that the novel as a genre with special technical possibilities has an inherent tendency, a penchant, for promoting the transcending of socialization. This penchant affects the writer, who cannot write an interesting novel without coming to terms with it, positively or negatively, but for whom the act of writing, because of the distancing it involves, must be



always, to an extent, a transcending of his own socialization. It affects the character who is an outcome of this tendency but who is, independently of it, 'placed' by the author. It affects the reader who is willy nilly 'educated' by the novel. The various interconnected effects will occupy us in this section.

Lawrence, who was an interesting theorist of the novel, described the interconnection in his own terms in the letter to Garnett from which I have already quoted, and which I will quote again here more extensively. In our context of the utopianism of the novel his use of the words 'human' and 'feeling' are especially interesting. He begins by defending his 'psychology' and then continues:

That which is physic - non-human in humanity is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element - which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turgenev, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostolevski, the moral scheme into which all the characters fit - and it is nearly the same scheme - is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead. When Marinetti writes: 'It is the solidity of a blade of steel that is interesting by itself, that is, the incomprehending and inhuman alliance of its molecules in resistance to, let us say, a bullet. The heat of a piece of wood or iron is in fact, more passionate, to us, than the laughter and tears of a woman' - then I know what he means. He is stupid, as an artist, for contrasting the heat of the iron and the laughter of the woman. Because what is interesting in the laugh of the woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat; it is the inhuman will, call it physiology or like Marinetti - physiology of matter, that fascinates me. I don't care so much about what the woman feels -

in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care about what the woman is - inhumanly physiologically, materially according to the use of the word: but for me, what she is as a phenomenon (or as representing some greater inhuman will) instead of what she feels according to the human conception. This is where the futurists are stupid. Instead of looking for the new human phenomenon, they will only look for the phenomenon of science in the human being. ... You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of 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. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond - but I say 'diamond, what! This is carbon! And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.) (Letters, 2, 1981: 182-3)

Lawrence uses 'human' in two senses in this passage: firstly as something which is voluntary and conceptual, human according to the Idea, the socially and selectively arrived at consensus (as in 'the old-fashioned human element which causes one to conceive character in a certain moral scheme'); secondly (as in 'the new human phenomenon', and also paradoxically 'what is non-human in humanity') as that which lies below the social arrangement, has no mask or persona and represents some 'greater inhuman will', something more general than personality.

The same contrast underlies the use of 'feeling' when he says: 'I don't care what the woman feels - in the ordinary usage of the word'. What she feels, he implies,

is why she thinks she is laughing, her version, used to herself and others of the idea of feeling. But her laughter bubbles really out of what she is, that is, again, out of a different layer of being, unsuspected by the personality.

Lawrence is writing as someone struggling to make himself a novelist. He sees clearly that what novel writing demands is a critical attitude to society. The old novelists have fitted their 'extraordinary characters' into a dull, old, dead moral scheme to make them consistent so that they could give them stable egos. The stable ego is here, surely, not the ego who behaves in a stable way, but the ego judged by stable, agreed-upon notions. These notions may be imposed from the outside, but they are also internalised, as Anna in Anna Karenina shows.' The 'other ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable and passes through ... allotropic states' is then surely, at least from one point of view, the ego who struggles against socialization. But Lawrence has moved on from his original theme by now; he is not concerned with the relation of ego to society in this explanation of his new 'futuristic' conception of character. He is interested in proving that his psychology, which Garnett has attacked, is sound. This leads him perhaps to a certain essentialism, at least one can read the example of diamonds and coal in relation to carbon as such.<sup>2</sup> But ego is defined psychologically as a sort of skin, a barrier between the inside and the

outside. It is nothing much in itself, only skin-deep (though it can be useful as a tough hide). It is the appearance that makes us tolerable, fits us into the moral scheme. Lawrence's 'other ego' has no fixed appearance. It exists only as possibility and potentiality, it manifests itself in change: 'an ego ... according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable and passes through ... allotropic states' (We have seen that the older novelists did have an inkling of that 'other ego': Rosa Bud changes, Rosa Dartle struggles and both are 'themselves' only through this uncertain element in their character). Lawrence's psychology is therefore demonstrably sound. He wants to get 'under the skin' of his characters and make us see them from the inside and not judge them by prearranged notions.

But the social angle cannot be dismissed by talk about psychology. Lawrence is really writing about the author's dilemma. What he wants to do - the unstable ego - is already present (as a possibility), in the techniques of the novel. He has discovered for himself something that is inherent in novel writing. But what the novel impels a writer to do is always cross-cut by the writer's intention.<sup>23</sup> The writer belongs himself to society and wants to stay there, and hence he fits his 'extraordinary characters' into 'a certain moral scheme', that is a scheme that allows us to judge them by agreed-upon norms. What Lawrence thinks of as new in his psychology is in fact the greater freedom an artist was allowed in his

time. When the artist was still an entertainer (and needed a patron) he could not express his psychological insights freely. But the check is also internal - the artist is in this sense not different from his character. Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky make good examples. Tolstoy in old age was a social rebel, but you cannot get under your characters' skin, see them from the inside, that is, in psychological terminology, from the side of the id rather than the ego, if you deny the body as Tolstoy did for religious reasons. And Dostoyevsky, who had been a political rebel in good earnest, was for ever overawed by the father figure after his sudden and traumatic reprieve. They were great novelists in so far as they created extraordinary characters, but they did not dare exempt these characters from a moral scheme which has the character of sacred in society. It is hard to go against the sacred, and we are socialised to see the norm, the moral scheme, a certain way of judging moral action, as sacred. This is particularly true where the man-woman relation is concerned, and where it is a question of sex roles, especially the female role (One wonders in this context whether Lawrence himself transcended his socialization).

When Lawrence therefore objects to the moral scheme, he points to the effect society has on the novel, and when he talks of the need to look for the new human phenomenon (on which the futurists have their eye but which they miss) he points to the effect the novel has on the writer.

The writer, to write a good novel, to let his extraordinary characters have their head, must himself have transcended his socialization. And there is of course no such thing as transcending one's socialization. The phrase must always be read as a shorthand for struggling to transcend it.

What makes Lawrence's letter important in our context is that it brings together the writer's struggle (unsuccessful, he thinks in writers before him), the nature of the character and the need for flexibility in the reader (the latter implies that the novel helps the reader to transcend his or her socialization: 'you will find that in a while you will like the book as a whole. I don't think the psychology is wrong: it is only that I have a different attitude to character, that necessitates a different attitude in you, which you are not, as yet, prepared to give'). These interrelated themes are also the subject of this section. I have pointed out how important the words 'human' and 'feeling' are in Lawrence's exposition: the theme of socialization and transcending socialization is of course in effect the theme of what makes us human, and the question of the role feeling plays in the novel belongs closely to this theme. We will start off with another look at Dickens's two Rosas and the relation of character to moral scheme. I then want to make a brief excursion into anthropology as a background to discussing socialization and the novel. At the end of the section I shall give examples of how the

theme of transcending socialization is used in actual novels. But before doing this I must return to a question which I have brought up, above, in parenthesis.

Did Lawrence transcend his socialization? And if he did, where did it lead him? What is the relation between socialization and tradition? We are of course in this section not concerned with Lawrence specifically, but he has always been associated with tradition, has been shown us by Leavis as standing in one of the finest traditions England could offer.<sup>4</sup> It seems therefore appropriate to ask the question about the relation of tradition of socialization with special reference to him.

One can simply take the attitude, as Leavis does, that Lawrence stands in a tradition and that what is good in his writing comes from his grasp of this tradition. When he has 'transcended his socialization' as he did, with a vengeance, in The Plumed Serpent he produces rubbish. In 'The Daughters of the Vicar' he has a firm grasp of the Eastwood social system and of a tradition of judging people, a grasp which presumably derives from chapel, and from his mother.

The trouble with this view is that it is impossible to write, or to write well, without going outside one's tradition. It takes distance to write. 'Transcending socialization' does not mean losing what tradition has given us; it is simply a word for growing up. A child accepts what it is told; a grown-up uses what he has been given because he judges it good. He has moved from the

passive position to the active one. In order to be active in his tradition he has to have gained a critical distance from it: he has to have moved outside it, has to have gained the Archimedean point, must be able to 'look through' it (In other words what surrounded him as a child as his own house, giving security, becomes a contraption of bits and pieces, often put together very shoddily, on which he can improve). He must become an outsider to be an insider. He can only become part of his tradition when he has learnt to 'see' it.

In any case, tradition is not socialization exactly. Socialization is the sum total of pressures on the child to conform. The tradition to which Lawrence's mother and 'chapel' belonged (if we take it in the ideal sense in which Leavis takes it<sup>24</sup>) was already a dissident tradition and therefore an association of alert and critical people whose moral judgements were the fruit of having transcended their socialization. However, because transcending socialization is an impossibility except in the constantly repeated attempt and is always partial, and because culture changes continually, one cannot use even a good critical tradition unless one has already transcended one's socialization and divided judgement from prejudice. This is where the need for distance comes in. Only when one can see the whole, bag and baggage, can one pick the good and leave the bad.

Lawrence's tradition, or mother, for instance, may well have made the judgement about the parsonage that is



central to 'The Daughters of the Vicar'. One can see Lawrence's mother make shrewd remarks about the vicar and his wife and their way of bringing up their children, and say in her own way (though she didn't use big words) that the place was cold and life-denying. At the same time she and chapel generally had no quarrel with class or with refinement and certainly not with denying the body. They understood caring about a place in the world, and if they would not have applauded Mary's choice they certainly would not have applauded Louisa's.

If Lawrence had not transcended his socialization he would have retained the prejudices of his tradition: he would have written a shuddering or a humorous anecdotal story about the coldness of the parsonage. But though he kept the core of the tradition, the radical and critical attitude to cold human relations, he also handled his tradition critically and drew the consequence that, if you do not want cold human relations you must also be sceptical of refinement, say yes to the body and be prepared to give up 'place'. In other words drawing on a tradition in a critical way means using it as stepping stones in going further. Choosing your stepping stones and the direction in which you want to go is transcending your socialization.

'The Daughters of the Vicar' is a great achievement. We shall come back to it in the context of socialization at the end of this section. But Lawrence's capacity for transcending his socialization was very uneven. At the

core of every socialization is the attempt to familiarise a child with power and make it internalise a hierarchical view of human relations. The power relations are invested with a sacred character, and, as I have mentioned, this applies specially to the relation between the sexes and to sex roles. Transcending socialization has therefore always to do with a demythologising of power relations and a rejection of the hierarchical view of human relations. But the later Lawrence (for instance in The Plumed Serpent) positively cultivated a hierarchical view of human relations. When he began his cult of the phallus he finally went back on all his great achievements. The conceptualised phallus (as it appears in Lady Chatterley) is, at least in Lacanian psychology, the representation of what is conscious and voluntary, of the Idea in the platonic sense. As anthropology can tell us, it is the most ancient and socially ingrained symbol for the 'moral scheme' he condemns in his letter to Garnett. So that at the moment when Lawrence thinks he speaks for the body he speaks for what he disliked most, the disembodied Idea, the human normative order which makes the ego stable.

The impassionedness with which he did this is no doubt also an inheritance from the Puritan tradition. If we look at the Puritan tradition of the 16th and 17th Century we get an amazed sense of how vividly Lawrence realised all its virtues: attention to the concrete, the particular and ordinary, a new sense of the body, a new

sense of the otherness of the other and attention to women in their specificity, a celebration of love in marriage and married fidelity. There is no doubt that his closeness to this tradition helped make him a good novelist. But just because these virtues were so alive to him he had also a lively and superstitious sense of what had been impressed on him as sacred in his early youth: the sanctity of marriage, the lordship of the husband, the passive, nurturing, sustaining function of the woman. These notions form a strong part of the Puritan tradition and Lawrence did not have the critical acumen to reject them. In the end they took over in his mind. But these notions are the very girders of the moral scheme to which he objected in the novel.

Against his unconscious failures to transcend his socialization we have to set the vigorous theoretical statements he made around 1914, like the one that a novel suffers if 'extraordinary characters' are made artificially consistent by being fitted into a certain moral scheme. This brings us back to Rosa Dartle. I began by saying that Rosa Dartle involves us in a paradox. The paradox has to do with the notion of image, of model: an image is always something fixed. But if we want a 'widening' images we must precisely look for the character that is not made consistent by a certain moral scheme. We cannot be content with the character that is extraordinary because he is unstable. A widening image must take into account how the author has placed the

character, whether the medium itself is fluid so that he can move freely like a fish in water, or whether there is an underlying rigidity of prejudice that freezes him in a certain posture. How does this apply to Rosa Dartle and Rosa Bud? We have already seen that they are not consistent in an ordinary way. Rosa Bud changes: and the change is not based on a misunderstanding of the reader. It is not that the scales fall from his eyes; that would be a conventional ploy: no, she is as genuinely childish, pettish and mean (in the American sense) as she is genuinely resolute, intelligent and noble. Rosa Dartle is painfully, gratefully 'dissident' in all her actions. But does Dickens fit them into a moral scheme in the novels? And then there is still the main question, the question by which we inevitably judge a novel: whether it is energetic and precise, whether the characters come alive. Does the difference in vigour of presentation, the fact that Rosa Dartle comes off as a character while Rosa Bud does not, have to do with the former being 'free' while the latter is fitted into a certain moral scheme? What are the moral schemes in the two novels?

The two examples are quite fascinating in this respect. Rosa Dartle is a social rebel. Her sarcasm hits the class system in a liberal country at its most vulnerable point: 'it's such a delight to know that when they suffer they do not feel'. But on the whole David Copperfield is not a novel that is sensitive about class

relations. Dickens shares some of his hero's snobberies, and the irony with which Rosa Dartle speaks here must be seen as hitting him (Dickens) too: 'are they really animals and clods and beings of another order?'. David, with his author's approval, does think the boys at the warehouse (Ch. 11) beings of another order, and 'they are not expected to be as sensitive as we are' (Steerforth's words) either by him or his author. He does not like them to call him David (1966: 218) and he 'never, happily ... made a single acquaintance, or spoke to any of the many boys whom I saw daily in going to the warehouse' (1966: 223).

David Copperfield is not a novel that can be said to be free from a certain moral scheme. And we have seen that Dickens uses the scar, that versatile symbol that more than anything else makes Rosa Dartle come alive as a character, to impress her into this moral scheme. The scar sometimes gives her mouth the appearance of a sneer, and a woman who sneers does not belong to the world of good characters; she is an outsider, a wrong 'un. Does the context into which Dickens has placed her not mean that her jibes are perfectly justified? The point, though, is not whether they are justified or not but that a woman is making them. It is not a woman's place to sneer. It is this snobbery of sex, so closely related to the snobbery of class that places Rosa Dartle.

The disconcerting thing is that the image of the scar serves simultaneously to make her an unstable character

and to fix her in a certain moral scheme. We have seen the skill with which Dickens made the scar across her mouth show that she is 'crossed out', of no account, and with which he made her speech show how she battles against this imposition of a callous other will. But this does not keep him from using the symbol for the same purpose in a way we all understand: to cross her out, make the stand she is making of no account, because she is a woman, no longer quite young, uncertainly handsome, and with a disturbing, frightening sexuality.

And yet Rosa Dartle is a widening image. She is consistently penetrating and sarcastic not only about people's behaviour but about the social structure which endorses their behaviour. Dickens is trying to do a difficult thing in the scenes with her: he is trying to show that the personal, the domestic and petty (and the domestic atmosphere in these scenes is stifling) is also the political, and he succeeds. If he had not been able to show her fighting spirit, as well as her impotence, he would not have succeeded. It is her fighting spirit, the way she dashes against the bars of her cage, that make her the medium for his utopian vision. She is representative, as a 'living striving she', for the utopian quality of David Copperfield which the book as a whole misses. After David's marriage to Dora this quality departs from David Copperfield.

All this goes to show that books are patchy. In the chapters that involve Steerforth and Rosa the certain

moral scheme is forgotten. A more sensible moral medium takes its place in which the characters move freely. The novel gains the utopian quality which comes from an author's insight into the power structure. In a word, it is written by an adult, someone who has transcended his socialization. There is no doubt that such a patch of 'freeing' occurs when an author is deeply interested in his characters. In Dickens these patches always occur when he is writing about a hysterical woman. Dickens loathed women like Rosa Dartle, but his loathing seems a precise measure of his understanding and respecting them. Did he respect them for their courage to rebel, throw everything up, be ugly, stand in an impossible place which he felt was also his place? Did he loathe them because he himself lacked this courage? One suspects at any rate that he identified in spite of himself with those unattractive outcast neurotic women he so abhorred; and in this case the identification was fruitful.<sup>6</sup> But these patches do not make a book, and when one looks at the end of David Copperfield where Rosa Dartle appears again one agrees with Lawrence that novels tend to have a moral scheme into which the characters fit, that this scheme is nearly always the same, and that it is dull, old and dead.

Rosa Bud on the other hand is truly not fitted into this dull, old, dead moral scheme. It is of course dangerous to speak of a novel that is unfinished as if one knew all about it. But the moral ambience, or moral tone of Edwin Drood (one hesitates to call it a scheme) is so

firmly established that it is hard to believe Dickens would still have changed it. Edwin Drood is a sustained bitter attack on the relation between men and women as they are conventionally visualised. And what is more astonishing, the attack is directed against the sexual hierarchy. Men are asinine in their contempt for women, but they also have power, and they use it murderously. If there is a moral scheme in the book, it exists only in the possibility which Dickens called 'the true lover'. Rosa Bud fits perfectly into this 'scheme' because she is the complement to the true lover. In Edwin Drood, quite unlike David Copperfield, the social scrutiny - the utopian element of the book, in this case a scrutiny of love and marriage - is closely integrated with the plot and theme. If Jasper can be a murderer because he is split, society is equally double. With a woman, as a lover, Jasper is socially permitted to show himself the killer he is. In ordinary life he is unconscious of his murderous propensities because he is eminently 'respectable'. Society colludes with him by allowing him to behave murderously in the 'inner sphere' (which it pronounces sacred, just as he does), but not in the 'outer sphere' (which both pronounce to be of less value, of little real account). The whole turns on the fact that women do not matter. That it was Dickens's intention to show this is clear from the way Rosa is treated with contempt by the main male characters, Edwin and Jasper, who both love her. Only odd characters and outsiders



like Neville Landless, who are not real men (Neville cannot control his temper, and anyway, he is as good as black), 'recognise' her.

Why has nobody noticed this beautifully worked integration? Why has Dickens's attack on the dull, old moral scheme he had upheld in novel after novel not made a sensation? Why is Rosa Bud so invisible? In the fairy tale terms of the transformational plot she is much more triumphantly a 'living striving she' than Rosa Dartle. Why does a critic like Jack Lindsay, whose thesis is that Dickens in his later novels became a sort of feminist, and who spends considerable time on The Mystery of Edwin Drood in his Life (1950) not even notice her?

I have talked of the extraordinarily imprecise language Dickens uses for the adult Rosa in the last section, and suggested a psychological explanation there. He identified so closely with Jasper that he touches some sadistic vein in himself, and the feeling released makes him, artistically, blind to Rosa.<sup>7</sup> Here, in the context of the relation of character to moral scheme I will approach the question from a technical angle.

Dickens identified with Jasper, the split man, or the double man who lived two lives, one open and respectable, the other hidden and vile. Dickens's passionate identification is based on his life at that period. He was afraid like Jasper to be found out; he therefore separated his public and his private life so much that he probably came to see himself as another man in each. But

this split was there in Dickens long before he decided to live it out in his relation to Ellen Ternan. It is there in his art, as all his most perceptive critics have noticed. Slater talks of a 'secret ... sympathy ... [with] ... the creature he is ostensibly encouraging us to view with hatred, fear or repulsion' (1983: 269, my italics) but sometimes it is not so clear what is secret and what ostensible, and to what we are encouraged.

Steerforth and Rosa Dartle are clearly and firmly placed in the senses we have discussed. There can be no doubt where Dickens's sympathy lies, when we consider the lines he gives them about feeling: 'They are not as sensitive as we are ... they may be thankful that, like their coarse rough skins, they are not easily wounded' and 'Really ... I don't know ... when I have been better pleased than to hear that. It's such a delight to know that when they suffer, they don't feel.'<sup>8</sup> Rosa Dartle sees with devastating clarity that Steerforth is brutal and dissolute and that this is due to a system in which she, as a woman and poor, is the underdog. To make her conscious of the system and fight it in spite of her position should make her something of a tragic heroine.

And yet she is not; she is more of a mad woman in the attic. Dickens is ambiguous about her struggle. When, after he has described her gaunt looks, her dreadful eager eyes, her hungry sexuality, he makes Steerforth say 'she brings everything to a grindstone' we feel there is something in his disapproval. Dickens is on Steerforth's

side. A woman should not bring everything to the grindstone. We can see with little effort that if he had placed a man in the same situation, the struggle would have been noble, he would have been a hero. Now, bringing everything to the grindstone is in fact the struggle to overcome one's socialization. One can only 'look through' society if one does just that - and 'looking through', seeing clearly is the main theme of the book. It is the task given to the male hero, David Copperfield, a task at which he so lamentably fails for so long. Hence, in spite of his sympathy Dickens discredits Rosa's struggle. He finds it distasteful (ugly, unbecoming) that a woman should transcend her socialization. In other words Dickens himself supports the power structure in some of its aspects.

To say that he was under pressure from the mounting censoriousness of public opinion and had to consult the feelings of his conventional readers is not to the point. Dickens himself was the censor here; he himself was his readership and public opinion. He wrote, partly, to overcome them in himself, and where his writing mirrors this struggle he always writes well. His writing was his way of overcoming his socialization. This makes his art at its best revolutionary. But writing is not only a private but also a public undertaking. Dickens didn't want to bring his private and his public life into accord. He wanted to be 'quite different' in some secret life no-one knew of. He rated socialization high; another main

theme of David Copperfield is the struggle to be socialized. The blacking factory is a desocializing experience. (Only an Agnes has the calibre to wipe this out). Hence the book has a pull in two opposed directions.\* Dickens had a profound impulse to be double, to cover his traces. This gives the 'mystery' to his art; it makes Rosa Dartle for all her vividness an ambiguous figure, and it makes Rosa Bud for all her revolutionary conception virtually invisible.

Rosa Bud in The Mystery of Edwin Drood is also shown as striving to transcend her socialization, and as striving successfully. Dickens is not uneasy about her struggle and gives it full support. Yet Rosa Bud is a woman, and the love and marriage system he attacks through her is far more sacred to 19th Century society (and to our own) than the class system he attacks through Rosa Dartle. One might of course think that so close to his death Dickens became very bold, but Dickens is to the end playing a game with himself: as he gets bolder and bolder the cover-up becomes more impenetrable.<sup>10</sup> Here he moves the 'mystery' to the technical level: he is writing a mystery story. His boldness is surely due to the fact that he uses here a transformational, fairy-tale-like technique, and that Edwin Drood is not a developed novel but belongs to a more primitive protoform. Yet that Rosa, a nicely brought up young girl, is shown to be in conflict with the code she is brought up in is a great advance over earlier women characters in Dickens's

writing. As I have already said, there is something gallant about Rosa and Helena which comes as a relief after the dreary anti-feminism of Bleak House and other novels much better than Edwin Drood. However, Rosa and Helena are allowed to defy convention and think and act for themselves because of an inferior overall technique. Instead of being complex they are good; the ugliness of the struggle has been removed from them and placed on the villain. Rosa's extreme situation in the garden, the melodrama of the plot, replaces here the striving to transcend her socialization. Faced with the murderer, and with the threat of rape and more murders Rosa can only flee. The flight itself is a breaking out of her socialization - Dickens was careful to establish that ladies are never seen out alone - but the plot makes it possible here for him to show her pain and her struggle rhetorically and painlessly. Further he was apparently not prepared to go with a beautiful young heroine of whom he was fond. Hence the conventional language.

He is, however, at pains to establish that what he is writing about is socialization and the transcending of socialization. Rosa Bud is unusually heavily socialized: as an orphan she is placed as a small child in a young ladies' seminary and brought up there. Her mother substitute is a headmistress who is all etiquette. The hierarchy in the school is prodigious. Rosa rebels at all the sensitive points: she fails to be obedient and trust her elders and betters (Dickens makes her call

Jasper, who is her teacher, 'sir', while he calls her Rosa), she takes a coach unaccompanied to London (Dickens makes it clear that she was not allowed out alone and in fact had never been out alone) and she seeks help in a place she doesn't know and from people she doesn't know much about and of whose support she cannot be certain.

Yet the struggle, which is so painfully rendered in Rosa Dartle, is all translated into action here. I said that this is a substitute for transcending her socialization, but we could also call it an image of it. Images are a writer's way of getting closer to what he intends, and what Dickens here immediately intends to convey are emotions: Jasper's passion, which is a sinister power drive, and set over against it, Rosa's passionate resistance and assertion - the strong emotion of tearing herself loose from the habit of respect and obedience for older people, from the habit of acting like a lady; emotions of fear of the unknown, emotions of triumph and relief as she acts on her decision. We have said that the novel is willy-nilly about emotions and relationships; here, in a rather crude novel we are faced with what looks like an etymological analysis of this: emotion appears as ex-motion, as motion away, motion from the inside outward, from the familiar (both as habit of mind and place) to the unknown (both as place and as new relationship which exists as yet only as possibility). Such motion is an image for transcending one's socialization; in the realistic novel it would become

interior rather than exterior emotion, psychological rather than physical motion. Yet if we look at life, or imagine a naturalistic novel of low life, it becomes clear that where it is a question of subsistence and oppression the transformation must always be on this material level. In a working woman's life exploitation at work and brutality at home can only be fought by drastic action; refusal, rebellion, flight, alliance with fellow women and fellow workers. Such drastic action in the aggregate becomes revolution. Revolution is reaction to an extreme situation under the pressure of extreme emotion. There is then a connecting line that leads from the extreme situation under the pressure of extreme emotion. There is then a connecting line that leads from the extreme situations of melodrama to the extreme situations of life on the subsistence level, where 'transcending one's socialization' also involves emotion as exterior motion, motion to another place, to another relationship, exterior motion as the necessary condition for a stance of freedom.

It is possible that the enormous popularity of melodramatic and sentimental fiction in our society must be understood on this level. 'That women are the main readers (and writers) of this fiction fits the picture. Women in general are in a situation where subsistence and oppression are closely allied because they are traditionally kept by men within the family, and, outside the family in public life, not given work that allows them to rise above the subsistence level. Fantasies of abrupt

and violent action and magic transformations - as we also get them in folk tales - are therefore appropriate to their situations, and their preference for them has the same proto-political basis as that of the 19th Century proletariat for melodrama.

But the connecting line that leads from melodramatic fiction to a transcending one's socialization, whether personally or in the aggregate, as revolution, is a thin one. In the sentimental and melodramatic novel we have after all only a mythology of emotion as motion. Mythology generalises and lifts its subject out of time, while revolution and transcending one's socialization (as interior revolution) have a historical referent, happen in time. The psychological effect of such a mythology may be great but we have no way of measuring it, and it looks as if what it gave with one hand it took with the other. Melodramatic fiction may decrease the power of action because it increases alienation.

Alienation is an important concept in our discussion because it is, as it were, the other side of transcending socialization; let us pause therefore here for a moment to see how this happens. Alienation as I understand it is not simply a not-seeing, a form of deception and self-deception. It is a partial awareness, a rudimentary and incomplete assessing of one's situation. Because it has a germ of action but also of indecision in it, it is related to sentimental and melodramatic fiction in a way that is dangerous particularly for women readers. A



reader sees in the heroine's plight a picture of her own and is stimulated by the fictitious situation to 'see through' her own situation. She is then presented with a solution: rescue by a hero, change of fortune. In the first case, the case of the plight, there is an analogy between a real and unbearable situation and the fictitious situation; the picture that lights up the real situation. In the second case, the solution, there is no such analogy. By stimulating the reader to see through her situation the fiction has given her a sense of power, but also increased the tension she lives in. The automatically offered resolution of the fictitious heroine's plight is accepted as a relief of tension. The reader cannot honestly identify with the heroine's change of fortune; she knows some essential link is missing here between problem and resolution; she knows that no deus ex machina will deliver her, especially if she is no longer young and pretty. But she is grateful for having been made to 'see', having been given that amount of power, and is so avid for release of the tension that she now identifies 'blindly', accepts that a problem which is real and unbearable can be solved in a world which is timeless and ahistorical. This state of half-seeing, half being blind is alienation. It constitutes an inner split, and the split paralyses the powers of action.

What has gone wrong in such fiction, what makes it unrelatable, or only part relatable, to experience seems to have to do with the nature of images. Pictures are

finished, static and timeless. In the purely transformational novel with its virtuous heroines and evil men there is no organic connection between the problem and its solution. Because such fiction has an investment in finished pictures of a certain type - the passive heroine, the active rescuing hero (stereotypes) - it has no interest in softening the hard, inconsequential serializing of the pictures (conventional plot). An organic connection between 'problem' and 'solution' could only be made by abandoning pictures for a technique of showing process - the process that leads from 'seeing' to change. Transcending socialization happens principally in the mind; it is the change from passive acceptance to independent action based on analysis (however unconsciously the analysing is carried out). It is not a change of fortune but a change toward taking responsibility for what one is doing. To show such a change needs a more realistic, psychologically finer and more flexible technique.

Novelists realise this, and use a mixture of realistic and transformational techniques. But such a mixture is also a way of having their cake and eating it. Edwin Drood is interesting in this respect. Dickens shows Rosa Bud as especially heavily socialised and, in spite of the conventionally comic picture of the young ladies' seminary, this belongs to the psychologically flexible strain of the novel because it shows the strength of her change. But what happens after her flight - the

rescue, the resolution of her difficulties - belongs to the picture-world of luck. In ordinary life a woman in such a precarious situation cannot count on the intelligence and loving understanding of those she turns to for help. Yet to end with such pictures of automatic resolution enabled Dickens to give his readers comfort and to encourage himself to believe that 'the true lover' existed (though he had spelt out in the strong part of the book why he can't exist). Perhaps because he was so deeply engaged with the problem (and tortured by the impossibility of 'true loverhood') Dickens did not, this time, have the heart to finish the novel.

However that may be, the mystery story provided him with an alibi; he could attack the love and marriage system and express revolutionary opinions about women incognito, so to speak. He could remove the moral scheme and still be safe. The price he had to pay was the cliches of melodrama. But this price also defeated the purpose. Rosa faded into the cliches. She did not fuse with the plot; she separated, and the courageous Rosa who transcended her socialization became invisible to the reader below the stereotype of the panting little beauty. And Dickens was himself caught in the state of half-seeing, half being blind that melodramatic fiction imposes on the reader. It caused in him too the conflict that paralyzes action. Only in him, the writer (because he had written better novels, or because of his exhaustion, or because he despaired of solving his problem) the

conflict was so great that it caused a paralysis that led to death.

At this point it would be useful to look at the theme of transcending socialization from a general sociological and anthropological angle. We shall then see just how Dickens and Lawrence fail us even where they push us in the right direction.

From the cultural point of view, transcending socialization is the most important contribution the individual makes to social life. It can only be done by the individual, and there is not much that can be done to help toward it. Yet because it is a testing of what has been handed on, a critical rehearsal of tradition, the livingness of the society depends on it. On the other hand the mere continuation of complex societies at least depends more on inertia than on 'livingness', and there are vested interests in all societies that are hostile to the transcending of socialization. Hence all societies thwart it, yet all societies give also a somewhat surreptitious help toward it; the simplest societies most openly. Oddly neither sociology nor anthropology have shown an interest in the subject.<sup>12</sup> In modern industrial society for a number of political and cultural reasons the thwarting is particularly heavy. The novel, which is itself the product of this society has crystallised around the counter movement to this thwarting, a point I shall illustrate at the end of the section. Here I am only concerned with the general tendency. The process of

crystallization was slow but gathered momentum in the best novels of the 19th Century. The problem of transcending socialization is indeed the point of vital connection between the novel and society, the connecting point so many modern critics, especially feminist ones are seeking.

It will have been noted that we are dealing with a paradox. Societies socialise their members and conceive it as their duty to keep them socialised. The body politic depends on it. Novelists have on the whole worked in this tradition, not only forced by the censorship of the public but from genuine conviction. We need only think of so great a novelist as George Eliot with her stress on duty, responsibility and self-discipline.<sup>12</sup> Yet in spite of this mainstream tradition good novels, George Eliot's included, have been concerned with characters transcending their socialization, or being defeated in their struggle toward it, or being oppressed so that such a movement was made impossible for them. This counter-movement is also historically part of society as such, as I have said, and I shall dwell for a moment on this aspect before turning to modern society and the novel.

It goes without saying that all societies socialise their children. Socialization practices vary in different societies and are perhaps one of the signs by which groups distinguish themselves from one another, but socialization itself is one of the defining characteristics of human society. Children in traditional

societies are often not regarded as human before they are socialized. Acquiring language is itself part of socialization; it gives both direction to and limits experience. Socialization has two main purposes: to enable the adults to get on with the business of gaining subsistence (hence socialization in subsistence societies can be heavy, at least in certain respects), and to uphold the power relations that structure the particular society. The power structure functions like another language as a framework for experience, and finding its place in it gives the dependent child originally a sense of security. A great deal of anthropological time and effort has gone into studying variations in socialization practices and pressures, and their effect on the personality - Margaret Mead has done pioneering work in this area. At the same time it has escaped anthropologists that most traditional societies, especially the simplest, also believed that in order to be human, people have to be desocialized again. This is because under subsistence conditions the survival of the social group depends on adults who are independent, who can think and act for themselves at any time of their lives.<sup>14</sup> Where there is not yet a marked division of labour, all individuals are therefore encouraged to transcend their socialization. As the division of labour proliferates and a more complex hierarchy develops, certain groups come to think and act for others (put across as a sort of independence by proxy) and desocialization customs drop or become group privileges. The

desire to transcend one's socialization seems to be, however, part of the human psychic make-up, and where it drops out of official recognition it tends to lead an underground and unrecognised life in the customs and beliefs of subgroups, taking all sorts of imaginative and symbolic forms. As desocialization can never, in the nature of things, be complete, its expression takes on in any case, in all societies imaginative and symbolic forms. Another aspect of its necessary incompleteness is that it is a continuous process which accompanies all phases of life. Symbolically, however, it can only be represented as an event (or at most a series of events). The novel, especially in its transformational aspect belongs to this symbolic tradition. Yet the psyche uses such symbolic language even to itself; it represents transcending socialization regularly as a crisis, an enlightenment, often the impetus to material change, in short, an event. The strategies of the psyche are 'literary', as Freud found them to be, and closely related to the strategies of the novelist. Their 'literariness' is indeed the link between the private purpose and the social and communal purpose of desocialization. The social group is conceived to be made up of adults, and the mark of adults is that they can think and act for themselves at any time of their lives. To achieve this they have to have discarded an automatic acceptance of social patterns and become makers rather than accepters of tradition. This involves a withdrawal from association to isolation, to

explore and test the unsupported self. The result of this test can only be conveyed in symbolic form - it becomes the tale of danger faced, help gained and the astounding deed done, that changes the world - in short, the original novel as pattern for others and pattern for a new striking out.

The desocialization practices of traditional societies are almost always isolation practices. The individual is uprooted from his familiar surroundings and thrown back on himself (It is quite literally from his familiar surroundings that he is separated because it is the family bonds that are broken, especially the bonds between mother and child). This happens at different ages in different societies, most frequently perhaps at the threshold to adulthood; but it can be repeated, in varying forms and degrees through the best part of life. In the simplest societies, small bands of nomadic foragers, whose survival depends on the absolute independence of every man and woman in the group, desocialization practices go virtually hand in hand with socialization. Among some of the northern hunters of Canada, children of three and four, who have just learnt to find their way around the camp and with their mothers on well-trodden paths to the river, are encouraged to go to the bush by themselves for a day to find an 'animal friend'. They are not allowed to eat or drink on that day and not allowed to speak about their experiences afterwards.<sup>15</sup> The bush is a terrifying place to them and



the whole experience particularly painful because it often coincides with the arrival of a new brother or sister, which increases the sense of rejection. For the mother it means that the older child is at that time weaned of dependence on her. Later, when the children can bear longer fasting they are encouraged to stay for two or three days. This is a long time for a child, and the children go 'savage' in the literal sense of becoming little 'people of the woods'. The nights spent in isolation mean at first of course a new terror. Yet the experiences are the source of adult 'power', that is of the ability to act independently, as an individual, from within. They are re-lived in adulthood in the form of dreams, when the 'animal friend' of childhood returns to give the gift of its power (We can hear a faint echo in our fairy tales of beliefs and practices similar to those of the North American Indians).

In these societies the animal friend's power is symbolised in a song, a dance, a medicine bundle, all signs or symbols for the animal itself. The gifts are kept secret. Only in extraordinary situations, often of extreme need or great danger, does the person sing his or her song. It is hard to put into words what happens at such a crisis because all is 'shown': the person becomes the animal, or the animal's greater strength or cunning is added to his own. In any case he changes. We would say that he reaches down to sources of strength below the level of personality; that his early desocializing

experience has given him access to these deeper, 'inhuman' strata of being, and the culturally encouraged dreaming the ability to keep in touch with them. Yet the paradox is that these 'inhuman' strata, symbolised by an animal (or, in the ritual I have described at the beginning of this chapter, by a cannibal monster) are also experienced as the place where one is 'oneself'. Meeting the animal friend or the man-eating monster means meeting oneself on a level where one can properly integrate oneself. What we have here is an intuition like the one Lawrence had when he spoke of 'the other ego'. These societies have developed the different, less rigid conception of individuality Lawrence gropes for. For them such a conception is a condition of survival.

However, when Lawrence speaks of the other ego, he does so in a context of explaining the work of art, and this context is also present among the Indians. Singing your song and dancing your dance - becoming the animal friend - means that what is usually kept secret and 'inner' is externalised and becomes public. And this is not done artlessly; it is a dramatic performance, a work of art. Among the subarctic hunters it happens spontaneously under the pressure of a crisis (illness, famine, interpersonal disturbances, shock to self-esteem) or at their rare communal dances in camp. Among the richer coast dwellers who have developed rituals it is more institutionalised and happens every winter and all winter. What they have in common is that the dancer

mimes his other ego (many of these dances are animal imitations of extraordinary suggestiveness), often in an aggressive stance with an ingredient of threat or challenge to the group, and that his or her performance is 'read', interpreted and appreciated by the group. I see in these old, vitally necessary ways of establishing contact between the group and the assertive self the roots of the novel. Not just the roots of art in general, which I think are many, but of the novel in particular.

As society becomes more elaborate the need for the total independence of each member becomes smaller. Indeed when society becomes very elaborate the balance tips the other way and the need for conformity becomes greater than the need for independence. Most of the simpler, but already socially articulated, traditional societies institutionalise desocialization in the form of age grade societies, life crisis rituals, especially puberty rituals for girls (among the Athapascan hunters of the North girls could be isolated for two to four years after pubescence), spirit quests, and initiation rites.<sup>16</sup> Societies with the ability to accumulate stores often celebrate the utopian rituals I have described at the beginning of the chapter in one form or another.<sup>17</sup> In these the whole group 'desocialises' itself for a part of the year, usually with the help of initiates who as 'people of the woods', like the animal friends or other spirits of the wild, invade the village. In these rituals the hierarchies on which the social order rests

are overthrown.<sup>12</sup> We might say that two types of strategy come together here: the strategies of the soul, which struggles for its independence and self-expression, and the strategies of the community, which also depends for its life and vitality on change. The two come together in the work of art: the institutionalising of desocialization corresponds to the externalising of inner change in art. Symbolization fulfils here the need I have already touched on: it enables the group to participate in what is essentially a psychological change in the individual. In the course of elaborating, however, this becomes the road to the substitution of the symbol for the experience. Finally the symbol embarks on a career of its own. It loses the function I have outlined and takes on an opposite function. The symbolic, the image - which is by its nature something finished, something 'established' - begins to speak for what is finished and established in society, for 'the establishment'. It becomes associated with the social order, not with the overthrowing of the social order. This development links up with the development I have already pointed out: that the more complex societies become, the greater the tendency for desocialization practices to drop out of recognised social practice and go underground. They surface then as dissenting sects, heresies, and even terrorist organizations which later strike one as inverting the original psychological purpose, both personal and communal. This deflection from a

purpose still fairly clear in traditional but socially already articulated societies (the purpose is, however, never, in any society, as clear as my abstracting it from an ethnographic context has made it), is due to the fact already touched on that social evolution, which is based on the division of labour, goes with a progressive development of hierarchy, the suppression of individual self-dependence and self expression and the oppression of social groups by other social groups. In small nomadic foraging bands decisions are by and large made communally; individuals who disagree go off to join other bands. We can therefore postulate a state - which applies in practice only to the smallest and simplest societies - of a dialectic between socialization and desocialization, with social life in its entirety representing the synthesis of both. And we can postulate a state of social evolution in which desocialization practices always represent a counter-evolutionary tendency. In reality these are not two separate states but two different ways of looking at society. A sociological discipline which looks at society totally from the perspective of evolution and regards only this point of view as scientific naturally overlooks the tendencies to desocialization or misinterprets their nature.

Another feature of social evolution that goes with the progressive division of labour and proliferation of hierarchies is a more and more severe socialization. In our own society the development of the market society, the

nation state, the family and education, all of which went hand in hand, also went with a hitherto unheard of degree of socialization. There are no institutionalised desocialization processes any more, and education as we understand it makes it harder rather than easier to transcend one's socialization. In such a society socialization and political oppression converge, and socially critical movements tend to identify socialization with oppression. This is a confusion (As we have seen in small communal societies a high degree of socialization may be necessary for the survival of the group, yet the independent, self-reliant adult is equally necessary - hence there is little hierarchy and no political oppression). The relation between the two is, however, very complicated. Let us look for a moment at modern Western society as it developed from the 17th Century on. The two most oppressed and exploited groups are the proletariat and women. Both groups do the basic heavy work of the society, the proletariat in factories and on the land, the women in households and child care, the former for a bare living wage, the latter for their keep (Proletarian women often carry a double load). Both groups are discriminated against in education and have, historically, no access to the more prestigious jobs and to public office. Yet socialization patterns cut across these divisions. The proletariat is the least heavily socialised group in our society. The middle classes are by far the most heavily socialised. The upper class is

less socialised again. In all three groups the women are, proportionately, more highly socialised than the men. This makes middle class women the most heavily socialised of all. What we can infer from this evidence with some certainty is that the middle classes were at the time in question the group aspiring to dominance. The heavy socialization of the men, internalised as self-repression, is an instrument for acquiring this dominance. The heavier socialization of women in all classes on the other hand seems to be an instrument of oppression. Women, though more heavily repressed, do not seem to me to have internalised socialization as perfectly as the men. Girl children are exposed to high socialization because as the future educators of small children, especially male children, they are important for upholding the status quo. It fits this pattern that in women any attempt to transcend their socialization is called immoral or unnatural or both. To men, society covertly allows certain ways of transcending their socialization, especially in the upper class. It also fits the pattern that on the whole the more repressed are the more oppressive (To work for a middle class man is more oppressive than to work for an upper class one; feudalism made for better social relations than capitalism) and a woman is said to be more oppressive as superior or parent than a man. What is, however, also true is that it is in the middle classes where socialization is heaviest that the battle for desocialization is fought. The women's

movement is a case in point: whatever its practical objective, it has always been for its members first and foremost a way of seeing through society and of freeing themselves from the tyranny of custom.

The movement which most profoundly affected our culture by questioning socialization was psychoanalysis. Basically psychoanalysis is a technique of desocialization. It is the only publicly sanctioned way we have of transcending our socialization (and, true to the structure of our society, it is available only to the privileged few). But Freud never thought in terms of desocialization. He had no access to the anthropological material I have mentioned here. He had to battle to have his theory of the unconscious accepted at all, and he was socially conservative. Within the terms of his own theory he was hampered in two ways: he could never decide whether socialization was a form of oppression to be fought or the necessary instrument for preserving the great values of civilization; and he did not have an answer to how the 'free' individual (freed by psychoanalysis) could link up with society. Let us look at the problems in our own context, taking the last question first. Freud left the patient we might say in the state of isolation. In a successful analysis the patient turns, so to speak into a 'man of the woods' (Even in societies where initiates go physically into the forest the wood is always the country of the inner self). He can act out his savageness in the consulting room. But



awaiting him outside there is no community ready to let him fit in with his newly found freedom or to give him a chance to turn his 'savage' energy to constructive uses. In other words Freud neglected the social dimension of psychoanalysis, shutting his eyes to the obvious revolutionary implications Gross, for instance, pointed out. 1\*

This made for the problem of socialization and desocialization I mentioned first. In order to back a desocialization process one must have a robust utopian imagination of the sort Fourier and Gross had. One must believe in positive qualities in people that will come out, in a yet unknown way, and in a society they can live in because it will allow them to be 'themselves' without being destructive (We have seen that the societies that celebrate utopian rituals fully accept the individuals' aggressive urges and still believe that social life can be a harmonious association of free people). Freud singularly lacked this utopian imagination and could not visualise such a society, while he saw the force of individual aggression only too clearly. This put him into the dilemma he never solved: on the one hand he believed that socialization had a crippling effect on the psyche which could only be counteracted by a lessening of social restraint; on the other hand he saw the moral pressure our society puts on people as the only guarantee of a civilised existence. 2°

The complicated question of the relation between

socialization and childhood traumas becomes important in this connection. Freud's theory on the whole identified the two: the oedipal attachment is part of socialization and is traumatic - unless one channels one's oedipal feelings into socially acceptable channels one is a neurotic. Where such an identification is made there must be a villain. Again because he had no social theory Freud led the way with his biological theory of social gender, of innate feminity. The mother as the first socialiser is the villain. Today the whole of psychology is permeated by this assumption.<sup>21</sup> Only a proper theory of desocialization (a recognition that the knot must be tied, but that it can also be undone), in which men and women both function as people who need it, could put an end to this use of a scapegoat.<sup>22</sup>

In actual fact even quite severe socialization need not traumatise, given a chance to transcend one's socialization and an adequate amount of freedom to perform an adult role in life. This is clear from anthropology. Freud should have pursued his insights about transcending socialization boldly in the knowledge that even if it made for a less high civilization it made for a society people could live in. It is what all his most brilliant pupils, Reich, Gross and others (who all ended up as cranks, suicides and social outsiders) urged him to do. The difficulty was that in the absence of the anthropological material I have mentioned here it appeared to them all, Freud included, a question of less socialization or even

no socialization at all. Gross went farthest in this respect: he rejected all authority in a child's life, from the start, as pernicious, distorting to the psyche, and instrumental in building up the sort of authoritarian state which he saw, mutatis mutandis, as the root of the evil. This understandably alienated the realistic Freud. None of them saw the solution which the simpler societies had long worked out: a rhythm of socialization and desocialization which suits the needs of both individuals and societies and which if kept up throughout life makes for healthy individuals and a healthy society. A lot of the intelligence and energy of these societies traditionally went into making this rhythm work (just as a lot of ours goes into a system of education which on the whole inhibits it). They perfectly recognised the aggressive energies which are released by the return of the repressed, but their solution was to take these as creative: the new person - terrifying as he or she may be when he returns from the wilds - is essentially the inventive person, the person who shows others something new. And as civilization in its true sense depends on inventiveness they only benefited their culture.

Among psychoanalysts Jung understood this complex of ideas best. His theory of individuation comes nearest to recognising a rhythm: individuation is the outcome of a long building up of the social personality. When the armouring has gone too far and the person has become all outer shell the need for an integration of what has been

repressed becomes overwhelming. Jung puts this crisis at after fifty - a sign that 'desocialization' remains a need throughout life. Another of his observations is interesting in this context: he tells us that individuation does not make for a pleasant personality - the integrated person can be socially offensive.

But what makes Jung particularly interesting in this context is the role he gave to art - to creative self-expression - in his therapy. Jung gave his patients the same chance as simple traditional societies give to their initiates: to objectify their essentially unsharable psychological experience in a work of art. The work of art is both individual and social and hence sharable. It is the sharing that makes essentially 'the new thing' which is both the patient turned agent and the new society created by the sharing. Unfortunately the only society Jung's patients could share with was the one they formed with their analyst, and the only new thing that emerged was their cure and the theoretical knowledge Jung gained. Everything still takes place in the closet - there is still no society outside willing to share and be made new. Jung's analysis like any other demands from the patient the somersault of adapting.

Freud often said that the poets ('die Dichter' among which he counts by German usage the novelists) had long preempted his insights. We could certainly say that novels are the one great and popular force for transcending one's socialization earlier in the field than

Freud (though belonging to the same historical era).<sup>23</sup>  
This does not mean that novelists were on the whole more radical than Freud or questioned socialization processes more consciously. On the contrary, in so far as they were earlier in the field and established a tradition under less enlightened public conditions, they had greater difficulty in seeing what was at stake. They were dogged by the same ambiguities as Freud: they suffered from the fear of destroying what is civilised and has been built up with such pain; they suffered from fear of the censor, or not being acceptable, not being read and not making money; and they suffered like Freud from a lack of knowledge how the 'freed' individual could link up with society. The novelist's position in regard to this lack of knowledge is peculiar. The lack of knowledge reflects of course the individualistic and atomistic society we live in, which makes the novel's milieu and pervades the novelist's consciousness; it is itself his subject matter, or at least his starting point. In the absence of any idea about the interdependence of freedom in individual and communal life novelists have on the whole fallen back on the same adaptation that the analysts advise. The 'freed' individual generally speaking enters a new relationship, and the novel usually judiciously closes while that relationship is new (avoiding the fact that it will in time pose the same problems as the old one). In this way the novel attains its ambiguous effect (again not unlike analysis): liberating and imprisoning at the same time,

offering a widening image and giving in the end a narrowing one (Both tendencies are present in the work of Dickens and Lawrence to a striking degree).

However, the important difference is that the novel, because it is an art form, really gets out of the closet. Transcending one's socialization is essentially a private act of courage which, as we have said, no-one can share. But in the objective form of a work of art it becomes sharable. I assume that the novel is the sort of work of art that consists at bottom in being such an act and describing it. It describes it primarily through its objectivity, the density so to speak of its presence, and only secondarily in the analysis of the characters, the plot and the overall intention. Its objectivity makes it public property. It is the coming together of reader and writer through this public character - the sharing - that gives the novel its thrust into 'a new world'. We are as readers by no means inactive in making this 'new thing'. Since everything has assumed an objective and public form we are at liberty to 'trust the tale' more radically and critically than the writer intended.

In this 'anthropology of the novel' we have moved a long way from the subject of the novel, the 'living striving she', the character struggling to transcend her or his socialization. However, our topic was emotion in the novel, and it was important to show that e-motion, the motion outward and toward others, does not only occur on the level of the subject. It occurs on three levels:

first, that of the subject, second, that of the writing which, because of the subject, is a transcending of the writer's own socialization, and third that of the finished objective work of art which becomes public property, being shared by a reading public and creating through its impact a 'new society'. The utopian quality of the novel resides not in what happens on any one but what happens on all three of these levels. Of the second and third we know very little; they belong respectively to the psychological and the social realm. The relation on the second level is of the self with the self; it corresponds to what we said about the state of isolation; the writer in the act of writing faces himself. The relation that is established on the third level is even more elusive, at least at our present state of knowledge: it is that of the work of art with established norms, with tradition, with society itself.<sup>24</sup> But both these relations are inherent in the writer's treatment of his subject within the novel and this is consequently the immediate and proper object of our criticism.<sup>25</sup>

I shall turn now, for the end of this section, to the interest transcending socialization has had for novelists and to the way they have dealt with it in their writing. Freud was right when he thought the novelists had preempted much of his insight and improved on it. The whole issue of socialization is so important for the novel that it calls for a much more careful look than the

brief sketch I can give here.

In the 18th Century, and also in part in Dickens as we have seen, the novel was still largely transformational; that is, exterior change is substituted for transcending one's socialization. A good example is Pamela. In these early novels of sentiment (and my argument is that novels are a peculiarly sentimental genre) emotion is still exteriorized as motion, motion out of an old situation to a new one; for the good characters, if possible, motion up the social ladder. But with this, the key theme of the novel is sounded, however figuratively. Good novels show people transcending their socialization. People are fixed, bound in the conventions growing up has taught them. They must break out to 'become themselves'.<sup>24</sup> This breaking out happens with the help of emotion - it is a motion out from themselves toward the other; out of an old self toward a new one which is simultaneously a motion out of old inherited relations to new self-chosen ones. This double movement away and toward the other, is love. The two are not logically connected; one could theoretically become 'oneself' in isolation (Psychoanalysis seems to visualise such a process). But in fact one becomes oneself through love (love of oneself and love of the other). Lawrence is supremely the novelist of this e-motion, the moving outward from an old stale state and becoming new through love. All novelists only grasp aspects of the process of



transcending one's socialization - the aspect to which their particular interest and temperament leads them - and Lawrence grasped the aspect that the impulse for transcending one's socialization is love with particular force. What he visualises as the new state - the shape he gives to the possibility of a new community - has to be critically examined. But that he saw the central importance of transcending socialization for the novel and was aware of the ramifications of the process, individual and social, is beyond doubt. I shall return to Lawrence and socialization below when I talk about 'The Daughters of the Vicar'.

In the early days of the novel, before the novel of sentiment had properly got into its stride, Defoe developed an interesting sideline. He shows in Moll Flanders, what we have already seen, that transcending one's socialization if one lives on the subsistence level must always be a material change, an outward motion. But Moll becomes a criminal and with this shows that in a realistic novel the 'possibility' - the 'new self' - could convincingly be the criminal self. This is a line the modern novel has developed further. Moll herself has nothing of the rebel. She longs at any moment to be respectable and will be respectable if material conditions allow (In this she is the sister of Hardy's Arabella). But how different Roxana is, in that most interesting of early novels of the same name. Roxana deliberately 'desocialises' herself by whoring long after

there is any material necessity for it. Hence the leading question of the book, its theme-song is: why am I a whore now? Defoe gives two answers both interesting for the development of the novel. One is that Roxana transcends her socialization by 'looking through' marriage. She is interested in being herself and being free, and she knows that this is incompatible with marriage for a woman. She is perfectly clear about the economic nature of marriage which makes the husband the proprietor and the wife the dependant and hence the husband the master, the wife the servant. She also rejects the Puritan idea that love, in making husband and wife one, makes them equal, by saying that love only makes things worse in that it makes the woman willingly a slave.<sup>27</sup> She believes that she can be free as a mistress, and she deliberately chooses a commercial basis for the relationship, so that she is indeed a whore. The impetus for her to transcend her socialization is therefore not love but the overwhelming desire to be independent. This is a line that has been developed again today by the feminist novel (Indeed Roxana's only love relationship is with another woman, her servant and companion, Amy). But Defoe points to another impetus in her struggle to overcome her socialization. Roxana longs for greatness. Being a woman, and totally uneducated, greatness can only come to her through a man. Her ambitions take therefore the touching form of wanting to be the mistress of the King. In the end she goes

back on her insights and chooses marriage (preferably to a prince so that she will be called 'Your Highness', but when this fails, to a merchant who will buy her the title of 'Lady' in England and 'Countess' in Holland) and with this step her downfall begins. She is at the mercy of society again, she has to be at all costs respectable and this leads to the tragic struggle with her daughter, whose love threatens to expose her, and to the murder that destroys them all and allows society to take its revenge on her for her presumption.

In Roxana the struggle has moved already to a psychological plane, but Defoe shows beautifully that for women it must always remain at the same time on a material level. Women are not free agents (Henry James later tried to examine what women would be like as free agents by providing fabulous sums of money with no strings attached for his heroines, but he forgot that the material level includes women's social disabilities: Isabel Archer is not 'free to do as she likes' in spite of her fortune). Roxana foreshadows the 'living striving she'; and this was the aspect of transcending socialization which George Eliot developed in her novels. Eliot's heroines long for greatness, like Roxana, and though it is for them a moral, intellectual, imaginative greatness, Eliot shows that its realization is still connected with a man. Her heroines do not manipulate their men; her special touch consists, on the contrary, in showing how the longing for greatness can fuse with

the impetus to transcend one's socialization through love. Dorothea believes as much that she will be great through Casaubon as Gwendoline, in her cruder way, dreams of being great through Grandcourt.

No-one has excelled George Eliot in her analysis of the interplay of psychological and social forces that is at stake in overcoming one's socialization. But in the end the movement is circular. If Defoe makes Roxana undo herself by turning respectable,<sup>20</sup> Eliot makes her heroines repent of crimes which were forced on them by their position in society as women. She comes down on the side of an internalised voice of society, a new, self-imposed, self-disciplinary socialization. Neither repentance nor self-discipline are of course in themselves unconstructive, and they could be necessary phases in the struggle to transcend one's socialization. One cannot dismiss Leavis's critical point that Gwendolen is a more real character than James's Isabel - in our terms, more of 'a living striving she' - just because Eliot gives her something to repent of and something to discipline.<sup>21</sup> But the self-imposed, self-disciplinary penances of Eliot's heroines do not build on their struggles. They go back on them. Eliot does not strike out against a society that on the economic and social level does not give women a chance and then demands they be heroically good. Her ethics are ultimately rooted in an attitude not sufficiently critical of society.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas Hardy's ethics are rooted in an attitude sufficiently critical of society. Under modern industrial conditions, when life at subsistence level and oppression come together, there is, as I have shown, a direct equation of transcending one's socialization with action, which, taken up communally, is revolutionary action. There is an area in this world where the novel should be particularly at home, an area between unconscious suffering and revolutionary action, where the novelist can show both the magnitude of the oppression and the stirring of rebellion in the individual, the struggle to assert the self, to find a way out, to find a more self-chosen and fulfilling activity than that imposed. This is the area where the inner world of the 'living striving she' and the outer world of power systems meet and interact. Hardy was the novelist of this interaction. He is a realist, and he has grasped an aspect of transcending socialization which is tragic: that just because of our socialization and in the absence of any help from society, the struggle is blind and full of illusion and wrong choices, so that the individuals may collude with the power structure in their own undoing.

In Jude the Obscure Hardy shows us four characters struggling to overcome their socialization, each succeeding and failing in different ways. Jude and Sue are central to the theme, Arabella and Phillotson subsidiary but important. All four live most of their

lives on the subsistence line, with the threat of the direst poverty, even of destitution, continually present. The most moving figure of the four is to me Phillotson, a poor schoolmaster, who is a pedant, deeply conservative and by temperament totally averse to any struggle against his socialization. Instead he struggles endlessly, harrowingly to enter the church and is, in this aspect, a sort of forerunner, a John the Baptist, to Jude. This dry and pedantic man shows that transcending one's socialization through love may involve a reverse movement, not out from isolation to union but away from union to isolation, to leave the loved one free. When Phillotson has found a measure of economic and social security and has married Sue he is suddenly faced with the fact that Sue cannot live with him if she is to be a free being and herself. His love for her makes him see her as she really is, and this enables him to act totally authentically in the crisis when she leaves him. He finds himself believing, against the conventions of marriage, that people should not be forced. However, almost everyone else believes that people - especially women - should be forced, and this becomes one of the themes of the book. Society revenges itself so horribly on Phillotson that he later goes back on his belief.

Arabella, Jude's wife, is the least socialized of the four and the one most capable of transcending her socialization. All four characters are very poor, but while the other three are idealists, Arabella is

realistic and more conscious than the others of what living at subsistence level means. She transcends her socialization through action. Hardy shows her as amazingly decisive and resourceful for a country girl. He even makes her capable of getting a divorce for herself when she sees that her marriage to Jude doesn't work - a fact that staggers one. Nor does she shrink from deception and criminality. She does not transcend her socialization psychologically - like Moll she yearns to be respectable. Whatever she does, she pays a quite unashamed tribute to the power of public opinion. Stubbs thinks that due to her hypocrisy she, of all the characters, will end up respectable and rich, a rich widow. This is not true; Arabella acts at any moment with the gulf of destitution beneath her feet. The old quack doctor for whom we see her angling at the end of the novel is as desperately poor and as much a social outcast as she is.

Jude and Sue are shown to be more obviously the victims of the power structure than Phillotson and Arabella because they more consciously pit themselves against it. Both are struggling to overcome their socialization and become themselves, to become free and be allowed to follow self-chosen and self-directed activities. Hardy makes the fate of their struggle describe opposite curves. When we meet them Sue is crystal clear in her mind about the interconnecting systems of the power structure, and has decided on

action. She knows that as a woman, under prevailing conditions, she cannot risk sex and marriage. Jude has no idea about the power structure or its interconnecting systems but chases after an illusion as a way of transcending his socialization: study at Christminster. The chase only drives him deeper into poverty. Sue teases him about it: she shows him that Christminster is the seat of bigotry and superstition, an ancient bulwark of prejudice, which will not help him to the greater freedom, the sharper vision of the truth for which he yearns. Sue is totally unrespectful at this point and laughs at tradition; Jude solemnly respectful and full of pieties. Hardy makes it clear that Jude does not understand Sue and patronises her. But at the end of the novel he has learnt from her: he is crystal clear now as Sue once was about the power structure and its interconnecting systems, and what's more, he is prepared to act on his insights as Sue never really was. They are now both married to someone else, but he shows her that these marriages are nonsense and that their only reasonable action is flight. Hardy allows Jude, who is defeated in everything else, to die with this clarity and freedom of mind. Sue ends in utter confusion. The power structure, in the form of tradition, which she once looked through so easily and mocked so lightly has assumed a magic power and authority for her. She abases herself before mere forms and manufactures her own oppression. She who was free when the novel opens



presents at the end the spectacle of a voluntary return to a socialization we never associated with her.

The four figures make a paradigm for the struggle to transcend socialization, but Hardy is not so impartial as I have represented him. Inevitably, as a male he feels that women who are involved in this struggle are presumptuous; and as a novelist he uses his power to punish them both, Arabella for being sensual and Sue for not being sensual. It seems to be almost impossible for a male novelist to deal with a woman's struggle to transcend her socialization without some protest at her presumption (Henry James speaks in the preface to the Portrait of a Lady of 'a young woman affronting her destiny', and of 'the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl').<sup>21</sup> What neither Hardy nor any male critic can forgive Sue is that she wants to control her own sexuality and still be a man's friend, even his lover. But Hardy as a novelist was impartial enough to make it clear that in the absence of birth control and so near the starvation level, Sue could only remain 'free' and 'herself' if she rejected sex. When we see her selling ginger bread, pregnant and with three small children, we know that she has lost 'herself', long before her mind collapses in dread and superstition. Hardy makes the point that for women there is no purely psychological transcending of socialization; it has to happen on the psychological and material level at once. Sue and Jude get their ambitions, their clarities about

the system, from the fact that they live in a changing world, a rural world becoming industrial, but this same world that has given them the potential for something new also denies them the space to develop.

In this context I should briefly mention Tess, another of Hardy's figures defined by a world changing from rural to industrial. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles Hardy's subject is not the struggle to overcome socialization. Tess is a farm labourer and an itinerant, as the four figures in Jude are most of their lives itinerants. But she does not fight as they do. In Tess, Hardy has celebrated something great and rare which until recently could be found among women of poor communities, especially agricultural ones: the woman whose strength for endurance comes from her openness to others. These women escape the effects of an alienating system not by struggling against it (Tess never looks through the system as Sue does) but by conceiving themselves as givers. They have overcome their socialization by having changed from being 'wanters' (which children naturally are and which we remain to varying extents all our lives) to being givers, and their undoubted independence lies in a goodness that is a living awareness of others. The subject of Tess is 'a she' who endures and yet remains open, and this is a great subject, but it is not so suitable for the novel as the 'living striving she' who struggles to transcend her socialization.<sup>32</sup> Hence Jude is a better novel than

Tess. But in Tess too, we find Hardy's theme of the illusions that make us deviate from truly transcending our socialization: Tess idealises Angel to such an extent and believes so absolutely in his freedom and superiority to her that she waits for him to act and remains passive when she should have acted for herself. Angel himself of course is a character who has consciously transcended his socialization and believes he is free from prejudice. He sees his marrying of Tess, the milkmaid, as a proof of his freedom. In the event the marriage becomes a proof of his total inability to free himself from the prejudices of the double morality. Angel is also related to Sue Bridehead in an inverted way, as a man in our society is related to a woman in our society: Sue cannot transcend her socialization and let herself love physically at the same time; Angel cannot love physically because he has not transcended his socialization.

Lawrence is a great novelist because transcending socialization is the very stuff of his writing (For this reason we also resent it so deeply when he shows himself renegade - almost always in relation to his women characters). One could say that 'desocialization' was his theme. I shall discuss one example here, in which the theme is so boldly treated that the story could be called an allegory of socialization: 'The Daughters of the Vicar', in which the idealistic, beautiful daughter, Mary, is, so to speak, socialization and Louisa, the

plain stubborn one, transcending one's socialization. The story was published in 1914 and comes therefore from Lawrence's best, most integrated period.<sup>323</sup> It is set in the contemporary mining Midlands. Lawrence shows with clarity the interconnection between the power systems - family (moral), education (cultural) and class (national-political) - that makes transcending one's socialization so difficult in our society.

Leavis in his 'Lawrence and Class: "The Daughters of the Vicar"' (1964: 85-112) has seized on the point that was pivotal for Lawrence and brought out Lawrence's treatment of the relationship between the individual as a free, or living, self and the class-system so admirably that we can take all the essential things as being said. I want to comment on the story strictly in the context of our discussion of the novel as dealing with emotion and personal relations, with transcending socialization and with utopianism.

I have mentioned that Lawrence stressed the social aspect of transcending one's socialization, the aspect that transcending one's socialization means entering into a new community through love. This is at the centre of this story; but I have not mentioned an important related factor: that Lawrence saw (with Freud) that socialization is a bottom the repression of the sexual, and struggling to transcend one's socialization is struggling to hear the voice of the body, to let the body speak. No other novelist except Hardy, who could,

however, not be as open about it, had seen the importance of this connection. Hardy the realist treats the connection as tragic, as in the case of Sue and of Angel, who for different reasons cannot let the body speak and therefore cannot succeed fully in their struggle, but Lawrence treats it optimistically as the possibility for a new world.

The story is important because of what the voice of the body says. It speaks against the tyranny of class, money and family honour and for a linking up with real people for real reasons. In other words, sexual feeling, around which the story is built, is not isolated physical desire but a feeling that extends to a critical judgement of society and a view of the sort of society people could live in. In this Lawrence stands centrally in the tradition of the socialist utopians. But where their insights were worked out pedantically, his light up wittily a reality we all know. Lawrence's story illustrates with exactitude why the good novel is, to make a bad pun, senti-mental: it is about the continuity between feeling and thinking.<sup>34</sup> The good novel shows us a world in which feeling is intelligent and the mind feeling. This is also the world the socialist utopians have been trying to show us.

The story opens in a mining village of the Midlands with a vicar and his wife who live under conditions of humiliating poverty. The stipend is just not enough to feed and clothe the rather large family properly and to

warm the large draughty house properly. There is no turning outward for them: the miners are indifferent, mostly chapel, the tradesmen despise them because of unpaid bills. So the parents turn inward to a pride of class, to educating the children as gentlefolk.

The children grew up healthy but unwarmed and rather rigid. Their father and mother educated them at home, made them very proud and very genteel, put them definitely and cruelly in the upper classes, apart from the vulgar around them. . . . Gradually Mr and Mrs Lindley lost all hold on life, and spent their hours, weeks and years merely haggling to make ends meet, and bitterly repressing and pruning their children into gentility, urging them to ambition, weighting them with duty.\*\*\*

The children must react, some day, in some way, against such pressure. Lawrence shows us how the two eldest daughters react. The catalyst is a young clergyman who comes to the house to help out during the vicar's illness. He comes from a good family, has an independent income and a good living waiting for him. Clearly he is a way out for one of the daughters, neither of whom can find husbands locally. But he is repulsive: retarded in growth by some 'internal complaint', retarded in human feeling, in any ability to make human contact, he has developed his logical mind and his sense of justice to such proportions that there is something uncannily compelling about him. Lawrence's characterization is brutal: he is not interested in what made Mr Massy inhuman; he is what he is, and what Lawrence is interested in is how the two marriageable

daughters will react to him.

It is soon clear that Mary, the tall beautiful idealistic one of the sisters, will marry him. She is attracted by his goodness. 'What right has that to be called goodness?' cries Louisa (p.65). Louisa is stocky and plain, the practical one of the two. Her reaction to Mr Massy is ugly (as straightforwardly callous as Lawrence's):

Suddenly a flush started in her. If he had come to her she would have flipped him out of the room. He was never going to touch her. And she was glad. She was glad that her blood would rise and exterminate the little man, if he came too near her, no matter how her judgement was paralysed by him, no matter how he moved in abstract goodness. (p.56)

But Lawrence shows us with great subtlety Mary's motives. Mary wants freedom. She wants a higher freedom, in which she can be 'good and purely just', and for this she needs the lower freedom, to be 'free from mundane care'. To attain this she must also free herself from her body, so 'she shut herself rigid against the agonies of shame and the terror of violation which came at first. She would not feel, and she would not feel'. Getting rid of feeling does give her freedom: 'in a kind of independence, she moved proud and free'. The bargain is fair; she has paid with her body. But curiously enough she is also afraid. 'There was also a deep craven fear of him, something slave-like' (p.68).

Her fear turns out to be justified: Mary has

entered a prison far more horrible than the cold and dingy vicarage. Lawrence shows brilliantly that it is dangerous for a girl to be kind to a man she feels sorry for, dangerous to condescend in a world where the male principle is dominant, and dominant perhaps particularly in such broken reeds as Massy.

There was not much fault to be found with his behaviour. He was scrupulously just and kind according to his lights. But the male in him was cold and self-complete, and utterly domineering. Weak, insufficient little thing as he was, she had not expected this of him. It was something in the bargain she had not understood. (p. 57)

Through Mary's marriage Lawrence brings out the link between socialization and the power structure in its sexual form. Mary has wanted freedom, but she followed the straight line of her socialization which taught her that there is no link between the body and the 'higher emotions' which Lawrence in 'A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover' enumerates as 'love in all its manifestations ... love of our fellowmen and love of God'. Leavis has put his finger on the fact that it is socialization which misleads Mary, when he comments 'this continuity of 'physical' and 'spiritual' Mary Lindley, with her 'proud pure look of submission to a high fate' has learnt from her upbringing to deny' (1964: 92). But Mary has really gone a step further than follow the line of her socialization (Socialization is on the whole commonsensical and does not urge steps like marrying Mr



Massy). Like a Henry James heroine she has wanted freedom only to be more moral than others. Like them she is 'a living striving she' who must transcend transcending socialization. Her courage lands her like Isabel Archer in a marriage that is a nightmare.<sup>26</sup> But James, because he approves of Isabel, must make Osmond a villain, and Osmond always remains unreal. Mr Massy is not a villain and is real because Lawrence can show that he has a society behind him that will back a man against a woman regardless (Mr Massy may be an 'insufficient little thing' but he has a penis and that is decisive). Both spouses, bewilderedly, accept the situation as right.

He was kind, and almost anxiously considerate. But when he considered he was right, his will was just blindly male, like a cold machine. And on most points he was logically right, or he had with him the right of the creed they both accepted. It was so. There was nothing for her to go against. (p.57. My emphasis)

Through Louisa's marriage Lawrence brings out the link between socialization and the power structure in the form of class. But Louisa has determined to overcome socialization, to 'desocialise' herself in the sense of declassing herself, and, in a revulsion against Mary who thought she could be 'spiritual in being' and 'dirty in act', she begins by affirming her body. The callousness with which her parents have let Mary sacrifice herself has opened her eyes to the 'nothingness' of their pretensions, and to the fact that they all live coldly,

isolatedly, hating one another. She decides she will live differently, she 'will have love', she will marry a man she loves. There is a young miner in the village with whom she is connected through a strong bond of physical attraction. The young man is much too proper to have let this bond become conscious to him but she decides against her family's class pride, and against the barriers of class inferiority in him, that she will fight for his love and a marriage with him.

The contrast Lawrence sets up between the two sisters makes one inevitably think in terms of another contrast, that between the big house and the cottage. But Lawrence is too realistic to set up such a contrast. At the most the cottage is 'overbright, overheated and stuffy where the vicarage is dingy, threadbare and cold. Life in the cottage, with the inert, drink-sodden father and the mother who serves her boys and despises them if they don't behave 'like men' is perhaps more human but not better than life at the big house. There is no attempt to idealise the young collier, either. Lawrence's: 'Alfred was the most lovable of the old woman's sons; he had grown up like the rest, however, headstrong and blind to everything but his own will' (p.66), coming so soon after a description of Mr Massy's will, reminds us painfully of Louisa's difficulties ahead. The hope, the possibilities for a 'new world' all lie in the fact that Alfred, like Louisa, is a whole human being, and that he, like her, has struggled to

overcome his socialization and become a 'new man'.

Alfred is very different from the ordinary miner: he plays the piccolo, he reads books, he 'notices' his mother, whom this breach of convention makes very impatient. It is this flexibility in him, which matches the flexibility Louisa has shown in breaking out of the bonds of her conventions, that makes one willing to share Lawrence's optimism.

'The Daughters of the Vicar' is not a novel, only a novella, but it brings out (perhaps because of its greater simplicity) almost with textbook clarity the utopianism which I think goes to the making of a good novel. Much of this utopianism remained Lawrence's concern through life, and I shall touch on some of the things that remained important to him below. But in 'The Daughters of the Vicar' he has an integrated vision which he never achieved again (After the period which ended with The Rainbow, an insistence on maleness, blurs the focus - Birkin already has some of the principles of Mr Massy). Without any insistence, without any feminism, he makes women the point through which we focus on society. He bears out, simply through the close accurate observation of his art, what the socialist utopians insisted on: that through the position of women the structure of our society (or state of our civilization) is revealed. Since novels are about society, it seems to me that they are interesting in proportion to how clearly a novelist has realised this, or how capable he is of

dramatising it, even if he has not consciously formulated it in his head. Among the novels we have touched on Roxana is a case in point: it comes alive because social conditions are lit up through the focus on women's position.

In its concern with the struggle to transcend socialization the novel is also concerned with what Lawrence has called automism, or mechanicalness, as a curse of modern life. This automism is a result of the lack of encouragement our society gives to transcend socialization. Socialization is of course necessary for a child as a protection and a framework for learning. In his Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence points out how intensely conventional children are; but how this conventionality (which is proper to their state of learning) becomes in an adult 'The automism of ideals and conventions'.<sup>27</sup> How to break out of this automism is the theme of all his books. The 'mechanicalness' he attacks for instance in Gerald Critch (and in his industrialist father) is a compound of ideals and conventions.

We have up to now only dealt with obstacles that society, or the system, or the sworn upholders of the system, put in the way of a character's struggle to transcend socialization. But figures like Gerald Critch remind us of a different theme on which we should touch before closing this section: the theme of 'inner consent', of the character who deliberately resists becoming a living self livingly connected with others.

In its widest reference this is the theme of alienation. The novel, due to its historical ambience, is suited like no other art form to the exploration of alienation and the bringing home of it to our consciousness.

Alienation is a disturbance in the perception of one's relation to reality; a disturbance that occurs in individuals and whole social groups. Apart from this basic definition the word is used in different senses; I use it, as I have already said, to describe a state of consent when you really know better. It often involves making up a story that proves how good the particular status quo is for you when it is clearly bad. Rosa Dartle in David Copperfield is alienated when she adds the interest to her capital every year instead of using her money to get away from the Steerforths. She believes she does it because it will give her a chance of a good marriage, which means freedom, but she knows she does it because she cannot free herself from Steerforth. She is so uncannily alive in contrast to the usual young Dickens heroine because Dickens has caught how this split goads her to an endless agonised struggle, and because we immediately recognise the struggle. Mary in 'The Daughters of the Vicar' is a study in a deeper alienation. She is not conventional in the ordinary sense; she is noble. Marrying Mr Massy costs her a fearful struggle but she overcomes. There are of course also realistic pressures: her parents' poverty and what she will be able to do for them; the fact of her

parents' tacit encouragement. But basically Mary does what she does because she substitutes an idea for reality. She struggles to put ideals of goodness, justice and freedom into practice where they are inapplicable. She does not realise that at bottom she is simply afraid to be declassified, and that this is a reality she has to come to terms with, like Louisa. And yet she knows, since Louisa, who is realistic, is a living embodiment of the alternative. The trouble is that Mary also knows that she is so much finer, so much more highly organised than Louisa, a fact everyone is conscious of, not least Louisa herself. Mary's pride, therefore, the consciousness of being 'finer' and 'higher' makes her blind to what she really sees.

I have mentioned that Henry James often deals with a similar subject. The comparison is interesting because it shows how Lawrence's special moral vision, his belief in the body and hatred of spirituality make him capable of insights which are beyond Henry James. Lawrence can make us see how the 'automism of ideals and conventions' can take over even in 'a living striving she', in fact particularly inspires her sort of heroism (Mary is called heroic). He does not even dwell on the poignancy of the contradiction, he roundly condemns the moral choice. James on the other hand can never clearly place this sort of heroism for us. James is interestingly the one great novelist who had direct contact with socialist utopianism, through his parents. There is no doubt that

he rejected it - The Bostonians is evidence. He would be the clearest refutation of my theory that the best novels are novels in which the utopian element inherent in the novel is realised, if one could say with certainty where he stands in his own best novels. These novels are without any doubt interesting, in fact they are fascinating; and sometimes one feels that they are interesting for the same subversive reason that make Roxana interesting: society is lit up for us through the position of women. Yet James's critical judgement of the status quo is blurred; there is often a perverse, almost masochistic admiration of the pure male and the 'maleness' of the system. Yet at other times there is a very subtle identification with women against the male, based on a feeling for the body that rivals Lawrence, as for instance when Isabel Archer is taught by Caspar Goodwood's kiss that there is a kind of sexual overbearingness that threatens her with a greater loss of freedom than Osmond's social overbearingness. We are faced with what seems an infinite regress of psychological biases and insights. What is certain is that neither James nor Lawrence nor even Hardy (not to speak of Defoe) could bring himself, even at his best, to support women's struggle to transcend their socialization for themselves, without reference to the good or otherwise of the outcome for men. Where it is a question of autonomy, the subject is fraught with fear for them. But where it is a question of the struggle against

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Chapter 3 Does a Universal Standard of Value Exist for the Novel?

In turning to the question whether a universal standard of value exists for novel writing, we turn from the character as a main focus of our interest to the writer and to the reader as critic. One's answer to such a question depends in the end, of course, on one's standard of excellence and how one applies it (One could ask the question in the form of whether the novelist can give us something worthwhile, which we cannot get anywhere else, and whether cultivating a power of perception in the reader capable of grasping this something is in itself worthwhile). For me the standard of excellence for all writing but particularly the novel, is what I call charity. 'Charity' is a particular quality of attention which the novelist gives to his characters and which he invites the reader to give to what he reads. Painstaking, patient and accurate description (which can be done by a mere touch) results in an 'understanding from within' that does justice to the subject. The really knotty question is: justice by what standard? and the answer can only be worked out satisfactorily through looking at the actual novels. In the abstract it is too vague: it is justice by the standards of what is real. The attention has nothing to do with the form the writer chooses to give to his novel, and yet it has a relation to realism; when Leavis says, in a comment on Dombey and Son I shall quote below, that Dickens is here 'possessed by an intense and

penetrating perception of the real', he names an essential condition for charitable writing. The real can be expressed surrealistically but charity cannot be achieved without a sense of the real.

Perhaps I can clarify what I mean by charity and meet some of the obvious objections to such a standard by distinguishing my position from Leavis's. For Leavis, standards go with tradition, a past in which these standards were evolved and were applied and upheld. In 'Mutually Necessary', an essay in The Critic as Anti-Philosopher he connects the disappearance of an educated reading public with the disappearance of standards of writing: 'Where the educated reading public has been destroyed, with the serious standards and the prestige they enjoyed ... the tradition is dead or dying, and even in a country with as rich a literature as the English, there will be no more great writers.' When I use the word 'standards' I do not so much refer to a past in which these standards were evolved as to potentialities inherent in the novel from which the standards are evolving. An educated reading public is invaluable to the novelist for a number of reasons. But the education of the educated reading public has not made them invariably good critics. By my standards their standards are not good enough (and I am thinking naturally particularly of their standards in regard to writing about women). I see the novel as having an inherently critical relation to tradition. As long as novels are written and read - and the novel is very much

alive today - I feel confident that this critical relation to tradition will persist. In fact my approach to the question of universal standards of value is utopian and grounded in the utopian element in the novel, which I discussed earlier. My basic premise was that the novel concerns itself with people and with people's desires, and that people have two very deep desires: the desire for self-assertion and the desire for companionship. In its utopian tendency the novel concerns itself with these desires not didactically and punitively but benevolently. We have seen this in our examples of how central the characters' struggle to transcend socialization is to the novel. The characters struggle for two things: 'becoming themselves' and forming new, self-chosen relations in the place of the old given ones. The same thing is true on the purely technical level. The novel tends to a democratising of reality which means that the characters are, regardless of their social status, 'important in themselves'. Its technique of symbolic circumstantiality makes everything equally 'speaking' and therefore equally important. It is on this inherent 'good will' of the novel to these deep-going human desires that I base my argument for universal standards of value in novel writing.

Leavis is far too acute a critic to be insensitive to the utopian quality of the novel. He recognises for instance that Lawrence is a utopian writer: I shall quote what he has to say on this when I come to my discussion of

Lawrence's pieces below. His realization of the utopian element is especially clear in his Thought, Words and Creativity, in which he returns, at the end of his life, to Lawrence's art and thought. But it is especially clear there too that Leavis bases himself on tradition in still another sense than the one I mentioned: in the sense that he believes in a better, rural England that lies behind us. He is surprisingly insensitive to what was oppressive in that past, and to the effort of the various oppressed groups to change its 'immemorial tradition'.<sup>2</sup> His attitude in these matters has a limiting effect on his critical acumen. His traditionalism means that he cannot see where Lawrence's utopianism goes wrong and inverts itself to become a form of radical conservatism. Lawrence's attitude differs from Leavis's, but he too has, at least in his less good and much of his theoretical writing, a romantic and insufficiently critical attitude to the past. Where this attitude is connected with his attitude to women he can become vicious, as we shall see below when we come to 'The Woman Who Rode Away'.

Leavis's formulation of a basis for value judgements (corresponding to my 'charity') is 'human centrality'. In The Critic as Anti-Philosopher he says

Continuity has meant that the surest insight into human nature, human potentiality and the human situation is that accessible in the great creative writers. They establish what human centrality is. They differ in timbre but they all had genius, and their genius is a capacity for experience and for profound and complete sincerity (which goes in them with self-knowledge). The rare real critic too has more

than average capacity for experience, and a passion at once for sincerity and complete conviction. (1982: 192)

Clearly the question of what human centrality is is crucial. But it worries me that we are invited here to locate the standard for it simply in the 'genius' whom one trusts in a wholesale fashion. Leavis says two pages later, a propos Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence on which he was then working: 'In expounding Lawrence I express my own thoughts, for I judge him, who was so original, to have been humanly central, and, in his perception and main conclusions, ungainsayable' (p. 195). The tautology here makes detailed criticism unnecessary: if Lawrence is humanly central, then all his major perceptions and conclusions are sound (and his major conceptions and conclusions make him of course humanly central). But one of Lawrence's major concerns is the man/woman relation which he sees (with the socialist utopians) as the operative ingredient in civilization; and here his perceptions and main conclusions are surely not sound and should be gainsaid. He was 'humanly central' in more ways than most of these utopians, and nevertheless subverted the tradition in which he stood with them by taking out the keystone of the whole edifice, the equality of men and women.

'Human centrality', it seems to me, is too compact a block and needs dividing into concrete, detailed criteria to combat the temptation of ascribing it to a writer in

bulk. 'Charity' is not the thing itself, only an attitude, and it can therefore be applied in precisely the piecemeal, local way needed for detailed analysis (It is simply easier to say: 'here so and so is not charitable' than 'here he is not humanly central'). When I now launch on a definition of charity, I must first repeat once more that I base my standards on the inherent, formally grounded 'good will' of the novel toward the desires for self-assertion and companionship. To be a good novelist a writer must have something that matches this (impersonal) 'good will', something which helps him develop these possibilities of the novel. Only in the novelist it is personal and rooted in an attitude to life. He must have sympathy with people's desires including his own, and a real, deep curiosity about them. He must be aware of how regularly the desires for self-assertion and companionship are thwarted, and be imaginatively concerned how they can be fulfilled.

If these are preconditions of charity, then charity has originally to do with feeling. But on the page, in what meets our eye, this is not evident. The feeling enters into observation and emerges as a form of attention. A concentrated and scrupulous attention to the characters and the setting in which they are rooted and in which they move is in fact the most general definition of charity. The attention is a form of 'listening', and the precision and vigour of a writer's language depends on how good he is at listening - how much he can curb his own

voice to 'be all ears'. This makes the attention I am discussing sound excessively passive. In fact it has a passive and an active aspect, but the passive one is decisive where the energy of a writer's language is concerned. Before I examine the quality of this, literary, attention in more detail let me focus for a moment more closely on the level where it is still interconnected with experience. Charity on this level means giving to fictional characters the sort of attention that is due to people in life. It is the gift of grasping the reality, the 'otherness' of other people. We know from biographical criticism that the writer's attention to his fictional characters can be the result of a self-knowledge that tells him that he has failed in attention to people in life.<sup>28</sup> The very failures (which are a form of slovenly or rough 'working' where people are concerned) can turn into the precision and accuracy of attention he gives to his characters in his work. George Eliot says something in Middlemarch about the quality of attention people owe one another in life which throws light on the quality of the literary attention we are concerned with here.

We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves; Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling - an idea wrought back to the directness of sense like the solidity of objects - that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the

lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.<sup>4</sup>

To conceive the other's otherness 'with that distinctness which is not longer reflection but feeling' is difficult enough. But in writing, it seems, feeling has to be once more wrought back to reflection (without, however, losing its quality as feeling). Reflection implies critical distance, a 'placing' that is the result of thought. It is the character here that has to be made concrete, gain the solidity of an object, and this cannot be done without the placing. A test of charitable writing is how wholly the original impulse of feeling (which is a feeling for characters as if they were people) has been transformed by thought and how totally it has been made concrete in description. By this I do not mean that all has to be absorbed into concrete description; not all the writer has to say must necessarily be 'shown'. What he thinks and what he shows may be present in two distinct but mutually reinforcing lines. For instance, one thing that makes Lawrence's dialogue so good is his habit of interspersing comments. The characters come alive for us both through what they say and through Lawrence's commentary on what they say. But it is clear that in the 'placing' the danger of departing from the necessary attention is greater than in the 'showing'.

What I have been saying makes it clear that the novelist's attention is always simultaneously passive and active. Nevertheless to divide it into passive and



active, though the division is analytical rather than real, does tell us something about the quality of the attention. In its passive expression it is grounded in a kind of native benevolence - the novelist's empathy with desire, which means his capacity to feel with people - in its active expression it is, by contrast, a kind of rage, a disgust with what people have made of life and of the earth they live on. The two naturally complement one another, as my list of requirements for charitable writing will show. Charity in the passive mode, then, means, first, that the writer's attention to his characters is generous and disinterested (that is, not prejudiced). Second, that it is given equally to all characters. (This does not mean that they are treated at equal length). Third, that the attention is not of a vengeful nature. The point calls for a brief explanation. Writers tend to revenge themselves for injuries in life through their characters. We have all, for instance, inevitably, been hurt by our mothers who did not give us enough attention (it was humanly impossible to give us as much as we wanted). Nearly all writers, including women, therefore revenge themselves on women in their writing. Hence writing about women is again a touchstone - here of charitable writing. Fourth, charity means that the writer must be able to see cruelty as cruelty - and recognise it in all its forms, even the subtlest. He must see how the characters' blind struggles for themselves lead to cruelty. He must see how the accepted hierarchies lead to

cruelty. He must be able to distinguish between the different forms of cruelty, see how they overlap, and place them for the reader.

This is of course a test of maturity. He can do it only, to put it another way, if he has the gift of 'listening' to his characters. And as the characters are his own brainchildren, this is at bottom a gift for listening to himself and his own experience. That brings us to the most important point in our series, where 'passive' and 'active' overlap. The novelist must be in touch with his unconscious. I said earlier that 'listening' involved being able to keep down his own voice. In this context it means that a novelist must not exercise too rigid a cerebral control while he is writing. What Lawrence called 'not quarrelling with the passional inspiration' is the discipline of letting the unconscious speak. It has to be learned. Most careful writers know how to listen, but hardly any of them can credit their ears. They are shocked, because what listening tells them - what they discover is really interesting and important to them - goes right against what their upbringing, their culture, their education has made them believe is interesting and important.<sup>55</sup> There is hardly any fit - all the really important things have been left out. It is astonishingly enough T. S. Eliot, the spokesman for conformity with classical precepts, who has put the case for this sort of attention, in his essay on Blake in The Sacred Wood. Eliot is discussing the relation between

technical accomplishment and honesty here.

It is important that the poet should be highly educated in his own art, but his education is one that is hindered rather than helped by the ordinary processes of society which constitute education for the ordinary man. For these processes consist largely in the acquisition of impersonal ideas which obscure what we really are and feel, and what we really want and what really excites our interest. It is of course not the information acquired, but the conformity which the accumulation of knowledge is apt to impose, that is harmful. Tennyson is a very fair example of a poet almost wholly encrusted with opinion, almost wholly merged into his environment. Blake, on the other hand, knew what interested him, and he therefore presents only the essential, only, in fact, what can be presented and need not be explained. And because he was not distracted or frightened, or occupied in anything but exact statements he understood. He was naked, and saw man naked, and from the centre of his crystal. <sup>6</sup>

We do not know how, in the creative process, the subjective desire - 'what we really want, what really excites our interest' - becomes the objective art, 'the exact statement'. But it is certain that the attention involved in writing has an aspect of the return of the repressed. If the writer cannot welcome what returns, if he is afraid (as Blake was not), the repressed will return anyway, but masked. In this disguised form it is always pathological. It creates in novels that undercurrent of obsession and hatred - often a crosscurrent to the ostensible flow - we are so familiar with that we hardly notice it. <sup>7</sup> Obsession is the underside of desire.

Our unconscious is, in fact, what we have been taught to suppress when we were socialised. It is here that

charity touches on the subject of socialization. Socialization means a proper internalising of the power hierarchies that make up human relations. At bottom being socialised means seeing things from the perspective of personal power and accepting this perspective as the only way of seeing: the opposite of seeing 'man naked'. As always when there is only one way, a 'natural' way of seeing, it means accepting without seeing at all. This is why charitable writing seems to show us something entirely new, new values, judgements we don't accept, relations which make us bristle with resistance and discomfort. It is actually only showing us reality, the world as it is. Blake's poetry, with its knack of making us see the real relations behind the apparent ones (as in 'London') are an excellent example of charitable writing. Charitable writing penetrates the disguises of convention in the world around us, but penetrates them in the form of our own prejudices, our secret fears, our cherished primitivisms and superstitions. Charity in the active mode could therefore be described as the writer's flexibility, his non-commitment to things as they are, his refusal to consent. It is this aspect that links it to the utopian disposition, to the 'there must be a new world', since no writer would say this unless he had penetrated the disguises of the 'known world' and seen it for what it is, a world impossible for people to live in. To borrow a phrase from Leavis (coined to describe Lawrence's religiousness) charity is a 'properly indocile

perception of what our civilization is doing to life' (1976: 134).

Is it perhaps an aspect of this 'proper indocility' that the active attention a writer gives his characters is often playful? Playfulness is important, anyway, for it is a distancing device that corrects the identification attentive writing inevitably involves. Lawrence's attention to his characters is typically cocky and confident. He told Garnett in a letter to which we will come that it was part of his apprenticeship to break himself of a habit of jeering at his characters. However that may have been, his tone in his best writing always retains a sparkle of malice.<sup>28</sup> In one of Dickens's best pieces - the opening scenes of Dombey at which we shall look presently - the approach to the characters is so oblique that we get broad comedy where Dickens is most serious.

A proper indocility means that the writer's 'passional inspiration' could never be entirely unconscious: it comes from the unconscious but is held up against what we have been taught, how we have been taught to live, and the clash produces the indocility, the spark of indignation which is an attitude to life. In a truly charitable piece of writing the 'passional inspiration' would therefore be one with the artistic intention. The 'properly indocile perception of what our civilization is doing to life' would keep the inspiration focused on the particular, the sharply defined, the

objective.

Does such wholly unambiguous, fully realised writing exist? It exists, even in Dickens who has plenty of inspiration but is notably divided against himself and on the defensive against his own experience. I shall take my example of what I mean by charity from Dickens.

The beginning of Dombey and Son is a wholly charitable piece of writing. Dickens could not sustain the quality beyond the first few chapters; Leavis suggests - in his essay on Dombey in Dickens the Novelist (1970) - because of a mistaken sense of duty to his reading public that made him break off to write the customary Christmas story. To use Lawrence's phrase he 'quarrelled with his passion inspiration' and this made the book less good than it could have been. I do not entirely agree with what Leavis says, below, on what the theme of Dombey is - I shall argue presently that we have to do with a much more concrete, definable theme - but his definition of the theme is also a general definition of charitable writing. Leavis is, further, so interesting on the uneven quality of Dombey and the whole question of the 'creative process' that I quote him at some length as an introduction to my attempt to show what charitable writing is.

What Dickens does later in the book with the potentialities of pathos in his theme we know, and it is impossible to say that there is not the clearest continuation between the effect struck in this close to the opening scene [which I quote at the end of my discussion] and the later insistent lushness that plays so

large a part in Dombey and Son. Yet what we have here in the treatment of Mrs Dombey's death is all the same an essentially different kind of effect. The theme as Dickens is possessed by it here is a very different thing from what it becomes. For he is possessed by it: he is possessed by an intense and penetrating sense of the real - his theme here is that. The art that serves it does not run to the luxuries of pathos and sensation or to redundancies. . . . It is remarkable that an art so strong, and a moral insight and a grasp of realities so sure should be associated in Dombey and Son with things so different. The association is in many ways close and embarrassing, though the essential distinctions are easy to make - they make themselves. The impressive, the truly great art I have been considering forms part of an elaborately plotted novel written - and written with conviction - for the Victorian market. With conviction: Dickens would have told us that the book had a long-pondered unifying theme and was conceived as a whole. He would have told us this in good faith: there is evidence enough of that. If, however, we are to do justice to what impresses us most in Dombey and Son we have to judge that the book is not a whole conceived in any unified or unifying imagination - that it is certainly not, in its specious totality, the work of that genius which compels our homage in the strong parts. The creative afflatus goes in other, characteristic and, large parts of the book with a moral elan that favours neither moral perception nor a grasp of the real. I speak of 'creative afflatus' advisedly. We pass our adverse judgement, but we can't help perceiving - for all the evidence we have of the anxious calculating eye he kept upon the public and the sales return - that here too Dickens writes with the conviction, the triumphant conscious power, of the inspired artist. In fact, to arrive at a full recognition of the nature of his greatness, it is necessary to recognise how far, as a creative force, he was from being either a Romantic genius or a Flaubert. If we look through the chapters of Forster's Life covering the period during which . . . Dombey was written, that truth comes home to us. As, in the summer and autumn of 1846 he wrote the first two numbers, he felt that he was doing something superlatively good. Yet, after agonies of worry and hesitation, he laid the new and prospering work aside in order not to miss producing the annual Christmas tale this

year, The Battle of Life. It was not a rival creative compulsion though it was a characteristic scruple of the actual great creative force Dickens was, that took him from Dombey. Simply, the Christmas tale had become an institution, and to defeat the expectation of the public, he felt, would be to damage his status.... There was certainly a profit-and-loss calculation - Dickens was never a less than eager money-maker - but equally what we must call a sense of duty entered in. Was not his status - his genius - to be the public entertainer? The public entertainer had as such his obligations to the public.\*

We shall see later that good openings and bad sequels are common; it seems to be easier at the beginning of a story to hold inspiration and intention together and make them function as a whole.<sup>10</sup> The book does have a unifying theme and was conceived as a whole; but it would have been difficult for Dickens to name that theme in such a way that he could easily hold on to it, and after the break Leavis mentions he blurs it and in the end he actually subverts it. The beginning of the book makes the theme totally clear: here inspiration and artistic intention are one, and the attitude is one of 'properly indocile perception of what our civilization does to life'.

'The House will once again, Mrs Dombey,' said Mr Dombey, 'be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son;' and he added, in a tone of luxurious satisfaction ... 'Dombey and Son!'. The words had such a softening influence, that he appended a term of endearment to Mrs Dombey's name ... and said 'Mrs Dombey, my - my dear.' A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes towards him. 'He will be christened Paul, my - Mrs Dombey - of course'. She feebly echoed 'Of course' or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes



again. 'His father's name, Mrs Dombey, and his grandfather's!. I wish his grandfather were alive this day!...' He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the Firm. Of those years he had been married, ten - married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him; whose happiness was in the past and who was content to bind her broken spirit to the dutiful and meek endurance of the present. Such idle talk was little likely to reach the ears of Mr Dombey, ... and probably no one in the world would have received it with such utter incredulity as he if it had reached him. ... Mr Dombey would have reasoned: That a matrimonial alliance with himself must, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of common sense. That the hope of giving birth to a new partner in such a House could not fail to awaken a glorious and stirring ambition in the breast of the least ambitious of her sex. ... That Mrs Dombey had always sat at the head of his table, and done the honours of his house in a remarkably lady-like and becoming manner. That Mrs Dombey must have been happy.... Or at all events, with one drawback. Yes. That he would have allowed. With only one .... With the drawback of hope deferred.... They had been married ten years, and until this present day, ... had had no issue. - To speak of; none worth mentioning. There had been a girl some six years before, and the child, who had stolen into the chamber unobserved, was now crouching timidly in a corner whence she could see her mother's face. But what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the House's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested - a bad Boy - nothing more. '1

Mr Dombey has a financial turn of mind; the girl is a bad Boy, it seems, by some analogy with the way in which a boy is often called a bad penny; but the newborn baby is, at any rate, a real boy.

The contrast between the two children, with the image of hard coin accompanying it for emotional effect,

underlines the theme of the book which the whole opening speaks. This theme is patriliney as it is institutionalised in our society - and what the institution of patriliney does to people; how it affects the relative positions of men and women, what it does to the relationship between them. Dickens could not have formulated it in this anthropological or sociological way, but he is (at least at the beginning of the book) totally clear that this is what he is writing about. He called the book Dombey and Son. He is looking at the institution of patriliney in the form it takes as patrilineal inheritance in the moneyed merchant class of the city, a setting he was familiar with.<sup>12</sup> Patriliney is of course related to the wider system of patriarchy, which means the rule of the father over the other members of the family, and much of the book is later concerned with Mr Dombey's will pressing on others, especially Paul himself, the heir to the patrilineal inheritance.<sup>13</sup> But in this opening scene Dickens focusses on a narrower, more sharply defined issue. He shows that the patrilineal system sets up men over women and makes men into the 'humans' while women lead a shadowy existence as sub-humans or nothing very much at all. This is the impersonal system; it has nothing to do with people but is just a way of creating descent and handing on name and property - together with the burden of office, as Mr Dombey and all his forefathers would very much stress. Women come into this system in two ways. They are (as

daughters) exchanged, used as links, carrying property from one man to another and making alliances between houses.<sup>14</sup> Mrs Dombey 'as some said' had wanted to marry someone else, had been in love, happy, with some other man. In the context, Dickens implies with this aside that it had suited her father better that she should marry the rich Dombey. As links between houses women sit at the head of their husband's table and do the honours of his house, that is, act as hostess for him. The other way in which women come into the patrilineal system is as mothers. It is impossible to keep the system up without women to bear male children. From this comes most of Dickens's comedy here.

Dickens also makes clear, in the beginning of the book (the second chapter) that this system is not nationwide, that there are two nations so to speak: the propertied classes, in which it is effective, and the wage earners, where it is ineffective. The book is not essentially about class, though class pride, snobbery, toadyism come into it in many different ways. That it is about the patrilineal system of inheritance and what it makes people do to people is clear from the fact that the Toodles - the working class family who are the foil to the Dombey family - are comparatively well off. They are 'thriving' in financial as well as other ways.<sup>15</sup> Both parents earn. Mrs Toodle is not mute (like Mrs Dombey), she does not accept with an 'of course', like that lady, any name when it is suggested by Mr Dombey, she is the

business brains of the family.

'My good woman', said Mr Dombey, turning round in his easy chair, as one piece, and not as a man with limbs and joints, 'I understand you are poor, and wish to earn money by nursing the little boy, my son, who has been so prematurely deprived of what can never be replaced. I have no objection to your adding to the comforts of your family by that means.... But I must impose one or two conditions.... While you are here I must stipulate that you are always known as - say as Richards - an ordinary name and convenient. Have you any objection to be known as Richards? You had better consult your husband.' - 'Well?' said Mr Dombey, after a pretty long pause. 'What does your husband say to your being called Richards?' As the husband did nothing but chuckle and grin, and continually draw his right hand across his mouth, moistening the palm, Mrs Toodle, after nudging him twice or thrice in vain, dropped a curtsy and replied 'that perhaps if she was to be called out of her name it would be considered in the wages.' (1970: 67-8)

Mr Toodle simply isn't going to be made into the head of his family, the responsible one, the authority. When Mr Dombey presses him about whether he has understood his conditions, he cannot make him say more than 'Polly heard it. It's all right. She's awake, Sir' (pp. 69-70). When Dombey asks him where he worked all his life, he says: 'Mostly underground, Sir, till I got married. I come to the level then' (p. 70). Though this refers literally to the building of the railway, it has a figurative sense that points the contrast. Mr Dombey could never have spoken of his marriage in these terms.

What Dickens is concerned to show, and what he uses the Toodles for, is of course that the impersonal system of patriliney (by which we all live, and which Dickens

certainly accepted in life), is not impersonal. It is not simply a system of handing on name, property, honour and duty to certain people and not to others. It is a power hierarchy which confers personal power on men over women, and which leads to inhumanity and cruelty, and corruption in the power wielders. At the same time Dickens is at pains to show how 'innocent' the protagonists are, how we have all been socialised into accepting this as the right and proper, the natural, indeed the only way of managing our affairs (Dickens certainly accepted it in life, as is shown by the way he treated Catherine, his wife, when he did not want to live with her any more, by the way he impressed on his children that his name was their only real property when he was afraid they might join her rather than him, and by the way he referred to her in his will, when he curtailed her allowance). As so often in Dickens, the theme is blindness, here the blindness to cruelty which looks to us like respectability, because we believe in the institutions that breed it. This is why he points out again and again what an upright man Mr Dombey is and what a good husband he thinks himself, and also how passively Mrs Dombey accepts that he cannot see her at all. He cannot even see her when she is dying in front of his eyes. Again Dickens points the contrast with the Toodles: 'You'll be so smart', said Miss Tox, 'that your husband won't know you, will you, Sir?' - 'I should know her,' said Toodle gruffly, 'anyhows and anywheres'

(p. 72). Dombey knows Mrs Dombey nohow and nowhere.

That the patriline has to depend on women if it is to exist at all provides Dickens with some of his cruellest jokes. Paul, the heir to the line will die, because Mrs Dombey, wilfully, perversely, dies a few minutes<sup>†</sup> after his birth. This is what brings Polly Toodle to the house as a wet nurse. Before she comes, when nobody suitable is to be found, Mr Chick, Dombey's brother-in-law inquires, 'Couldn't something temporary be done with a teapot?' Dombey's main object when interviewing Mrs Toodle is to make her understand that she is to be no more to the child and the family than a teapot, and that his conditions are that she will let herself be returned to the shelf like a teapot, when she has served her turn. There are to be no feelings. Mrs Toodle, the foster mother, the woman on whom the line depends, stands here for the wives and mothers of the patriline, makes their position as clear as no description of a woman of the propertied classes could make it clear. The position is one of utility. Women are instrumental in keeping up the line. They have a value, like other household objects. When the two doctors finally succeed in bringing home to Mr Dombey that his wife is dying

To record of Mr Dombey that he was not in his way affected by this intelligence, would be to do him an injustice. He was not a man of whom it could be properly be said that he was ever startled, or shocked; but he certainly had a sense within him, that if his wife should sicken and decay, he would be very sorry, and

that he would find a something gone from among his plate and furniture, and other household possessions, which was well worth the having, and could not be lost without sincere regret. (1970: 54)

It is Mr Dombey who is a thing, though nothing as comforting as a teapot. This is what being head of a House has made of him. His thinglikeness is underlined when he, in interviewing Polly Toodle, turns round in his easy chair 'as one piece, not like a man with limbs and joints'. He is seen as a thing through his little daughter's eyes in the scene with which we started, in the bedroom, when he is so overjoyed at the birth of a child that isn't merely a bad Boy, that he cannot see that his wife is dying.

Mr Dombey's cup of satisfaction was so full at this moment, however, that he felt he could afford a drop or two of its contents, even to sprinkle on the dust in the by-path of his little daughter. So he said, 'Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like, I daresay. Don't touch him!'. - The child glanced keenly at the blue coat and stiff white cravat, which, with a pair of creaking boots and a very loud ticking watch, embodied her idea of a father; but her eyes returned to her mother's face immediately, and she neither moved nor answered. 'Her insensibility is as proof against a brother as against everything else', said Mr Dombey to himself. He seemed so confirmed in a previous opinion by the discovery, as to be quite glad of it. (1970: 51-2)

Again, as in the remark about the teapot and the interview with the Toodles the account is perfectly realistic and yet fully significant, signifying the general theme. Again Dombey, who is really a thing

because he cannot feel, tries to make another into a thing. Because he lacks sensibility he sees Florence, who is aware of what is happening, as insensible. As in the scene with Rosa Dartle in David Copperfield, Dickens is at his best in the place he gives to feeling in his dialogue. His most acute observation is in the dialogue between Mr and Mrs Dombey I quoted first. The sharpest touch, the touch with which Dickens goes to the heart of the matter is that Mrs Dombey shows surprise when she is called dear. 'A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes towards him'. She has been excluded from the real world, degraded to a mere instrument, so that now her only response to a note of feeling in her husband's voice can be surprise. Unless the flush tells of a deeper response: that she has been starved of affection; and the eyes are raised in question: is the affection really for her.

It is also realistic that the mother had made a world of affection with her little daughter (though Flora's response to her mother's condition is perhaps an idealised account of a six year old child's capacity for awareness). But this remains a secondary world, a sub-society of females. Both of them are outcasts from the real world and its affections unless they let themselves be used as instruments.

It is also realistic that some women do not join this sub-society of females but attach themselves



parasitically to the world of men. Mrs Chick, Dombey's sister is blood-related to the patriline, and plays up this advantage against Mrs Dombey. Belonging to the House has the same effect on her as it has on Dombey. If Dombey in his joy over the birth of his son is totally unfeeling, Mrs Chick in her servility to Dombey is equally so. It is inhuman to behave as Dombey does in the presence of death, but to behave as Mrs Chick does sets our teeth on edge. She assures her brother that 'there is nothing wanting but an effort on poor Fanny's part. And that effort', she says, taking Dombey upstairs again into Mrs Dombey's room 'she must be encouraged, and really, if necessary, urged to make.'

The lady lay upon her bed as he had left her, clasping her little daughter to her breast. The child clung close about her ... and never raised her head, ... or looked on those who stood around, or spoke, or moved, or shed a tear. 'Restless without the little girl,' the Doctor whispered to Mr Dombey. 'We found it best to have her in again.' - 'Can nothing be done' asked Mr Dombey. The Doctor shook his head. 'We can do nothing more.' The windows stood open, and the twilight was gathering without. The scent of the restoratives that had been tried was pungent in the room, but had no fragrance in the dull and languid air the lady breathed. There was such a solemn stillness round the bed, and the medical attendants seemed to look on the impassive form with so much compassion and so little hope, that Mrs Chick was for the moment diverted from her purpose. But presently summoning courage, and what she called presence of mind, she sat down by the bedside, and said in the low precise tone of someone who endeavours to waken a sleeper: 'Fanny! Fanny!' There was no sound in answer but the loud ticking of Mr Dombey's watch and Doctor Parker Pep's watch, which seemed in the silence to be running a race. 'Fanny, my dear, ... 'here's Mr Dombey come to see you ... Don't you think it's time

you roused yourself a little? Eh?' ... No word or sound in answer. Mr Dombey's watch and Doctor Parker Pep's watch seemed to be racing faster. 'Now, really, Fanny my dear,' said the sister-in-law, ... 'I shall have to be quite cross with you if you don't rouse yourself. It's necessary for you to make an effort, and perhaps a very great and painful effort which you are not disposed to make; but this is a world of effort, you know...' The two medical attendants exchanged a look across the bed; and the Physician, stooping down, whispered in the child's ear. Not having understood the whisper, the little creature turned her perfectly colourless face, and deep dark eyes towards him, but without loosening her hold in the least. The whisper was repeated. 'Mama!' said the child. The little voice, familiar and dearly loved, awakened some show of consciousness even at that ebb. For a moment the closed eyelids trembled, ... and the faintest shadow of a smile was seen. 'Mama!' cried the child, sobbing aloud. 'Oh dear Mama! oh dear Mama!' The Doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child, aside from the face and the mouth of the mother. Alas, how calm they lay there, how little breath there was to stir them! Thus, clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world. (1970: 59-60)

One of the tests of charitable writing, we said, is that each character is made vivid as a 'centre of self'. Mrs Dombey only plays the smallest role in the book; she is seen, like a flitting shadow, only in the first scene, from which I have quoted. And yet we get an impression of her as a centre of self in her own right. This is done through what I call the oblique method.<sup>17</sup> She is not developed as a character, for obvious reasons. It is through the way she is treated by others, and through the system that encourages such treatment, that she is revealed.

This oblique method is effective in linking character to the social forces around it. It is particularly suitable as a 'shorthand' for women characters in charitable writing. It is realistic where women who have not much character in any case are concerned, who are 'pale' because they are oppressed. Their very absence speaks for them. The method is perhaps negative more than oblique: the character is presented as a blank against a crowded background, a blank whose outline tells us something about the society around it and the pressures it exerts on people through its shape.

Dickens also makes Mrs Dombey come alive as a centre of self for us through some tiny, sharply focused concrete touches. One is her blushing when Mr Dombey calls her dear. The other is the oddly and movingly put observation that the dying woman cannot smell any more, that her breathing is so laborious that she seems to be breathing a different air from ours. 'The window stood open and the twilight was gathering without. The scent of the restoratives that had been tried was pungent in the room, but had no fragrance in the dull and languid air the lady breathed'.

Both these touches are too general to make come alive a personal character. But they make us feel the life that stirs at the centre of consciousness itself, the physical, feeling life that gives us our sense of self and our connection with others. The blush speaks of

the life of the affections with its involuntary bodily language, and the breathing, of departing life that cannot link itself with sensation any more. The acute understanding such a description demands from the writer can be met, if it is taken in properly, with an equally full and deep understanding by the reader. The borderland where physical and emotional life meet is where charitable writing is most naturally at home. This area where physical and emotional life meet is also the chosen 'field' of the novel, as we saw in our discussion of that topic.

Charity of the order of the beginning of Dombey is rare in the novel. Even the passages in Copperfield involving Rosa Dartle and Steerforth that we thought so good are not fully charitable writing. Dickens's attention to the character of Rosa is not disinterested and generous enough; it has an undertone of prejudice. With his attitude to Rosa as a hysteric goes a certain admiration for the manly Steerforth, though Steerforth is clearly placed as a contemptible character. One only catches the undertone of prejudice that smudges the edges of these splendid passages as a general impression. The writing about Mr and Mrs Dombey has none of this doubleness. Yet what Dickens is putting across - the characters and the interplay between them - is as complex in Dombey as it is in Copperfield.

Failures in charity are very common, but they are rarely recognised. I shall take two examples from

Lawrence, who is interesting because in his writing failures in charity are particularly difficult to recognise. This is because he is particularly good at showing his characters as centres of self in their own right.

The first is an unimportant example as far as Lawrence's work as a whole goes. It is an early tale, a piece of juvenilia. But in itself it is a very simple and clear example of a failure in charity and therefore worth looking at carefully. The second is one of the late novellas which Leavis has taught us to see as short novels and as particularly important in Lawrence's work. It is a significant example as far as Lawrence's work as a whole goes.

Lawrence is not double in his writing like Dickens; either he was not a split man or he worked at his writing patiently enough to overcome such a split. There are passages in his early letters to Garnett that make one think the latter must be true:

... it is no good unless you will have patience and understand what I want to do. I am not after all a child working erratically. All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is hard to express a new thing, in sincerity. And you should understand, and help me to the new thing, and not get angry and say it is common, and send me back to the tone of the old Sisters. In the Sisters was the germ of this novel: woman becoming individual, self-responsible taking her own initiative. But the first Sisters was flippant and often vulgar and jeering. I had to get out of that attitude, and make my subject really worthy. ... I have very often the vulgarity and disagree-ableness of the common people, as you say Cockney....

But primarily I am a religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that. And my Cockneyism and commonness are only when the deep feeling doesn't find its way out, and a sort of jeer comes instead, and sentimentality and purpleism. (Letters II, 1981: 165)

There are two interesting points to note here. One is that Lawrence uses 'jeering' to describe treating characters flippantly here. He did indeed overcome the temptation to jeer in that sense, especially where his women characters were concerned, while Dickens did not. It is possible that a changed attitude to the artist in the reading public contributed to the difference. Dickens's different methods of publication would also tell here: they demanded speed, and Dickens never rewrote to the extent Lawrence did. The other point is that, whatever he says, surely Lawrence's narrator's voice is usually a cocky, cheerful jeer, which is why he is fun. It is interesting that he connects his old habit of jeering with sentimentality here. In the Lawrence we know it is precisely where the feeling is too 'deep' - as at the end of 'The Mortal Coil' - that we sense a crypto-sentimentality. Generally, Lawrence never gives us his characters' emotions straight - never a noble feeling for a noble feeling, as in George Eliot - but uses his cheerful jeer instead. In so far as this method is effective, and I think it is, the 'commonness' he saved from his old habits paid off.

Lawrence did not have difficulties with seeing his

characters as centres of self. The whole of his art was bent to making them come alive in this way. This leads to the absence of class or sex discrimination that is particularly striking in his tales about the Eastwood miners of his youth. The women in these tales are psychologically fully as convincingly done as the men, their point of view comes across as insistently (A slight tale like 'Her Turn' will bear me out in this). Where class was concerned, Lawrence himself told E. M. Forster in a letter that he was interested in human beings, not in class.

Whether I sit at tea with Mrs Orchard, who had been an underservant at Welbeck ... talking about the Duke and Lord Henry and Lady Ottoline - or whether I sit with Lady Ottoline and talk about the war or about people - what is it, after all? One is only going down different avenues to the same thing. One is only tracking down the secret of satisfaction for the individual - the naked, intrinsic, classless individual. What is class, at its best, but a method of living to one's end! It doesn't really alter the end. And for each class, the other class seems to hold the secret of satisfaction. But no class holds it. (Letters II, 1981: 265)

The danger for Lawrence - what made his writing uncharitable in spite of the advantages he has over Dickens - lay in his ideas. And here the period he lived in seems to have played a role, as Dickens's period played a role in making him double. My second example, 'The Woman Who Rode Away', illustrates how ideas can turn charitable writing into uncharitable writing. But in the first example, 'The Mortal Coil' the trouble is not

ideas, and we shall therefore wait with the discussion of the relationship Lawrence's ideas have to charity till we have looked at this tale.

To show how 'The Mortal Coil' is uncharitable I have to give an account of the plot and theme. The plot involves one of those grotesque and sinister accidents that happen in life but cannot easily be assimilated into fiction. A young officer, who is already threatened with having to leave the army because of gambling debts, and who is deperate about the loss of his honour, has left his mistress in his room when going out early for a day of military exercise. The old house in which the officers lodge is cold; another girl who has spent the night with a brother officer joins her friend in bed for warmth after the men have gone, and the two are asphyxiated by fumes from the stove. When the young man returns at night the two women have been found in his room and he is faced with a scandal which makes all hope of still saving his honour vain. Not only his own weakness, not only bad luck, but fate itself has destroyed him.

The theme of the story if I understand it right is the theme of what Lawrence calls 'mastery' and 'the life flow'. For the hero, Friedeburg, the sense of mastery that guarantees the life flow is bound up with his career in the army. If this social framework is taken away from him he feels he is nothing - and indeed he is nothing, because he is not constitutionally equipped to fight his



way without such a support. The young woman he loves, Marta, cannot understand him. She herself is a young actress who has to fight her way. For her his despair is a self-indulgence, a sign that he has given up the manliness for which she loves him. She is vividly realised, and the scene with her which makes up the first part of the story contains some of Lawrence's best dialogue. It begins with her waiting for Friedeburg in his large bare attic room (a scene we know from the beginning of a very different story, 'The Captain's Doll') while he is delayed at the gambling table.

She stood motionless in the middle of the room, something tense in her reckless bearing. Her gown of reddish stuff fell silkily about her feet; she looked tall and splendid in the candle-light. Her dark-blond hair was gathered loosely in a fold on top of her head, her young blossom-fresh face was lifted. From her throat to her feet she was clothed in the elegantly-made dress of silky red stuff, the colour of red earth. She looked complete and lovely, only love could make her such a strange, complete blossom. '®

When Friedeburg finally comes in she cannot reach him.

He was barely conscious of the girl, intoxicated with his own desperation, that held him mindless and distant. To her, the atmosphere of the room was almost unbreathable, since he had come in. She felt terribly bound, walled up. She rose with a sudden movement that tore his nerves. She looked to him tall and bright and dangerous as she faced round on him. 'Have you come back with a fortune?' she cried, in mockery, her eyes full of dangerous light.... He could not answer, his lips seemed dumb. Besides, silence was his strength. 'Have you come back with a fortune?' she repeated, in her strange, clear voice of mockery. 'No' he said, suddenly turning. 'Let it please you that - that I've

come back at all'. ... She looked at him: he was insignificant in his doom. She turned in ridicule. And yet she was afraid; she loved him. (1971: 215)

The trouble with Friedeburg's manliness, to which Marta appeals and for which she loves him, is that it does not really exist independently of the social world of his army career of which she is so contemptuous. In making Marta speak of Friedeburg's 'naked self', which she knows because she loves him, Lawrence is raising an issue which was for him, in life, extremely important, complicated, and beset with doubt. The story is in that sense very near the bone.

'It isn't true', she said, 'is it? It's not so tragic, really? - It's only your pride is hurt, your silly little pride?' She was rather pleading. He looked at her with clear steady eyes. 'My pride!' he said. 'And isn't my pride me? What am I without my pride?' - 'You are yourself.' she said. 'If they take your uniform off, and turn you naked in the street, you are still yourself.' His eyes grew hot. Then he cried: 'What does it mean, myself! It means I put on ready-made civilian clothes and do some dirty drudging elsewhere: that is what myself amounts to.' She knitted her brows: 'But what you are to me - that naked self you are to me - that is something, isn't it? - everything', she said. 'What is it, if it means nothing?' he said. 'What is it more than a pound of chocolate dragees? - It stands for nothing - unless as you say, a petty clerkship, at twenty five shillings a week.' - These were all wounds to her, very deep... 'And what does it stand for now?' she said. 'A magnificent second-lieutenant!' He made a gesture of dismissal... 'And our love!' she said. 'It means nothing to you, nothing at all?' - 'To me as a menial clerk what does it mean? ... What worth do you think I have in love, if in life I am a wretched inky subordinate clerk?' - 'What does it matter?' - 'It matters every-thing'. There was a silence for a time, then her anger

flashed up in her. 'It doesn't matter to you what I feel, whether I care or not', she cried, her voice rising. 'They'll take his little uniform with buttons off him, and he'll have to be a common little civilian, so all he can do is shoot himself! - It doesn't matter that I'm there -' He sat stubborn and silent. He thought her vulgar. And her raving did not alter the situation in the least. 'Don't you see what value you put on me, you clever little man?', she cried in fury. 'I've loved you, loved you with all my soul, for two years - and you've lied, and said you loved me. And now, what do I get? He'll shoot himself, because his tuppenny vanity is wounded. - Ah, fool!' (1971: 221-2)

Her appeal to the 'naked self', however, bears fruit. The 'life flow' comes back to Friedeburg. They enter together their world, the world of love, in which they both have 'mastery'.

'You've deceived me', she said.... 'Have I? Then I've deceived myself.' His body felt so charged with male vigour he was almost laughing in his strength.... Don't hurt me so much, she faltered.... A faint smile came on his face. He took her face between his hands and covered it with soft blinding kisses, like a soft, narcotic rain. He felt himself such an unbreakable fountain-head of powerful blood. He was trembling finely in all his limbs, with mastery. When she lifted her face and opened her eyes, her face was wet, and her greenish-golden eyes were shining ... like sudden sunshine in wet foliage.... Softly, infinitely softly, he dried her tears with his mouth and his soft young moustache. 'You'd never shoot yourself, because you're mine, aren't you!' she said, knowing the fine quivering of his body, in mastery. 'Yes', he said, 'Quite mine?' she said, her voice rising in ecstasy. 'Yes'. 'Nobody else but mine - nothing at all -?' - 'Nothing at all', he re-echoed. 'But me?' came her last word of ecstasy. 'Yes'. And she seemed to be released free into the infinite of ecstasy. (1971: 225-6)

This scene of reconciliation ends the first part of

the story. The two enter the night, their own isolated world symbolised by the bare attic high above the street under the frosty stars. This world does not, however, have an absolute value as it does in so many other Lawrence stories. In a sense it is complete in itself; in another it doesn't answer the question concerning the naked self. A reflection which occurs long before the reconciliation, and which is one of the curious comments with which Lawrence intersperses his dialogue, half the character's and half Lawrence's own, qualifies the value of the reconciliation. The context is the quarrel over why he cannot become a waiter or a clerk. Marta, dismissing it, has been saying 'if they kick you out of the army, you'll find somebody to get round - you're like a cat, you'll land on your feet.'

But this was just what he was not. He was not like a cat. His self-mistrust was too deep. Ultimately he had no belief in himself, as a separate isolated being.... The free indomitable self-sufficient being which a man must be in relation to a woman who loves him - this he could pretend. But he knew he was not it. He knew that the world of man from which he took his value was his mistress beyond any woman. (1971: 218-9)

This is the realistic note. The next day, which Friedeburg spends in a field exercise, establishes the dominance of the 'real world' again. By the time he is on his way home, cold and hungry, his old despair has returned. It is then that he sees Marta's sheeted corpse being put into an ambulance.

As he neared his own house, the snow was peppering thinly down. He became aware of some unusual stir about the house-door. He looked - a strange, closed-in wagon, people, police. The Sword of Damocles that had hung over his heart, fell. O God, a new shame, some new shame, some new torture! His body moved on. So it would move on through misery upon misery, as is our fate. There was no emergence, only this progress through misery unto misery, till the end. Strange that human life was so tenacious! Strange that men had made of life a long slow process of torture to the soul... Strange that but for man this misery would not exist. For it was not God's misery, but the misery of the world of man. He saw two officials put something white and heavy into the cart, shut the doors behind with a bang... and run round to the front of the wagon. Friedeburg drifted near in that inevitable motion which carries us through all our shame and torture. He knew people talked about him... 'Two young ladies found dead in your room', said the police official, making an official statement. But under his cold impartiality of officialdom, what obscene unctious! Oh what obscene exposures now! 'Dead!' ejaculated Friedeburg, with the wide eyes of a child. He became quite child-like, the official had him completely in his power. He could torture him as much as he liked... 'A young lady slept here last night?' - 'Yes' - 'Name, please?' ... Friedeburg continued to answer. This was the end of him. The quick of him was pierced and killed, the living dead answered the living dead in obscene antiphony... The room was unchanged from the night before... the lustrous, pure-red dress lying soft where she had carelessly dropped it... But do not look, do not see. It is the business of the dead to bury their dead. Let the young dead bury their own dead, as the old dead have buried theirs. How can the dead remember, they being dead? Only the living can remember, and are at peace with their living who have passed away. (1971: 234-6)

The last words make up the ending. Though the story is simple, I had to quote so much to show what a falling off the end is. Lawrence had built up the characters carefully to make us see a real problem. There are men

who cannot master the world yet cannot cock a snook at it either with the help of a world of their own, the help of a woman who replenishes their 'life flow'. Marta, who 'believes in love' and who cannot understand that Friedeburg is not truly nourished by her, establishes this problem concretely for us. To concentrate at the end on the shock to Friedeburg's 'sensitive constitution', on the torture exposure means to him, is going back on the careful balanced study of character Lawrence has given us up to now. Friedeburg is shockingly callous. But there is nothing to convince us that Lawrence does not share his callousness. Lawrence does not place Friedeburg's callousness for us. It is perfectly possible that a man like Friedeburg, under the shock of exposure thinks only of himself and feels nothing for the woman he loves, with whom he has shared the 'ecstasy' of their love only a few hours before. It is even possible that we are all capable of reacting like that. But Lawrence should show this egoism for what it is. It is part of his study of Friedeburg's character, but also what he 'owes' to a character as carefully built up, as alive, as Marta's. Marta is a good example of the rule that if characters are seen as centres of consciousness in their own right they have to be treated with equal importance. The way Lawrence forgets Marta is a lapse in charity. In the place of what should have gone into that ending we get the wordy talk about fate and the obscure word play on the dead burying their dead.

Keith Sagar writes in his introduction to 'The Mortal Coil': 'The protagonist, Friedeburg, like Skrebensky in The Rainbow and Gerald Crich in Women in Love, suffers and causes suffering because he lacks the Lawrentian strengths - independence and integrity. Nevertheless Lawrence writes of him with an unusual depth of inwardness, understanding and compassion. Although in this story Lawrence specifically exculpates God, we seem to be in a Hardylike world where tragedy, oblivious of human values, hunts down the truly living and leaves the dead to inherit the earth' (1971: 9). It seems to me that the mechanicalness of Skrebensky and Gerald Crich is totally different from Friedeburg's paralysis which makes him 'mindless and distant'. They are both a form of death; but the others have 'mastery' without any 'life flow'. Lawrence is compassionate to Friedeburg because what he is describing in his own state in the period after his mother had died. At that time he felt he had no 'mastery' because the 'life flow' had stopped in him.<sup>129</sup> He was incapable of being independent, but also incapable of establishing a relationship with a woman who could guarantee his 'life flow'. His relationships with women certainly lacked integrity (Though Lawrence recovered, his belief that a man needs a woman behind him seems to be a legacy from the anguish of that period). It is his identification with Friedeburg that makes him forget about Marta; more accurately it makes Friedeburg's presence in the story get out of proportion

relative to the presence of Marta. The talk about fate is a sort of sentimentality, the counterpart of Dickens's sentimentality which we are so much more ready to see. We have seen that the lack of sentimentality with which Dickens treats the deathbed scene in Dombey is part of its charitableness. Leavis's comments on sentimentality in Dombey as a whole are also relevant here.

There are, however, two more things that bear on Lawrence's failure in charity in this story, and they are more important than the possible biographical connection. Lawrence in his essay 'The Novel' sets up three criteria for the novel: it has to be '(1) quick, (2) inter-related in all its parts, vitally, organically, (3) honourable'. We might say that with the talk about fate, at the end, Lawrence gets out of inter-relating the parts properly. But he is also, from the start, not entirely 'honourable' in the facts he gives about his characters. This standard of being honourable, which according to him should distinguish the novel from other, more traditional writing, is an important and interesting one, and he is very amusing about it. Traditional literature thrived on leaving things out, he says - and particularly the things that matter, that make all the difference.

And that wouldn't have been so bad, if Dante had put the thing [his worship of a remote Beatrice] in its true light. Why do we slur over the actual fact that Dante had a cosy bifurcated wife in his bed, and a family of lusty little Dantinos? Petrarch, with his Laura in the distance, had twelve little legitimate Petrarchs of his own, between his knees.... Then there would have been an honest



relation between all the bunch. Nobody grudges the gents their spiritual concubines. But keeping a wife and family - twelve children - up one's sleeve, has always been recognised as a dirty trick.... I call Dante's Commedia slightly dishonourable, with never a mention of the cosy bifurcated wife, and the kids.<sup>20</sup>

'The Mortal Coil' is slightly dishonourable in a similar way where Marta's relationship to Friedeburg is concerned. Lawrence is leaving out too many things that are important and relevant. One is the fact that it is not a 'respectable' relationship. Marta, as a young actress in the provincial theatre of a small German town, needs presumably to attach herself to a man in order to amend her income, needs his 'presents' in return for sleeping with him (not that she would have got much out of the unfortunate Friedeburg in that respect). Her friend's spending the night with another officer in the same house points in this direction. Marriage to Friedeburg is presumably out of the question because of the class difference. What are they doing about contraception?<sup>21</sup> A child would ruin Marta's career as surely as gambling debts ruin Friedeburg's. Without touching on these facts Lawrence cannot possibly give an 'honourable' account of their love.

The second issue I want to raise is connected with the first. I have said that Lawrence's writing was amazingly free of class and sex discrimination. We remember how he puts it in his letter to Forster: that the writer is intent on 'tracking down the secret of

satisfaction for the individual - the naked intrinsic classless individual'. It is obviously one of the conditions for charitable writing that people are treated as individuals and not treated differentially according to class. We have discussed how the equal treatment of characters belongs to one of the genre specificities of the novel, which is associated with the dropping of Stiltrennung. But this 'equal' treatment demands that the inequalities between the characters are taken into proper account, especially inequalities that arise from the various power structures in society and family. Treating each character as a centre of consciousness in her or his own right is not enough if those aspects of consciousness that relate to the social hierarchies (or those aspects of the character's background that throw light on them, since not everyone is conscious of them) are left out. Without these facts equal treatment - the presentation of 'the naked intrinsic classless (and sexless) individual' - becomes unequal treatment. A good example is what Henry James leaves out of account in the structure of his novels. In The Wings of the Dove for instance he gives his two heroines, Kate Croy and Milly Theale, exactly the same amount of moral freedom, and judges them by the same moral standard. Milly emerges as a near-angel, Kate as a virtual she-devil. But the fact is that Milly is rich - she has untold millions - and Kate is poor and dependent. Milly is supported in her independence by a serviceable older friend, Mrs

Stringham; Kate's dependence is exploited by a rich aunt, Aunt Maud, for her own ends. Kate has to fight for the most basic personal rights to independence, the right to her own feelings for instance. To treat the two heroines as just the 'naked intrinsic individual' - as therefore morally equal - and to base the structure of the novel on their equality is fraudulent (Lawrence himself in 'The Mortal Coil' is asking whether such naked individuality divorced from society exists, though his perspective on the question is different).

In the case of 'The Mortal Coil' it is the ignoring of class differences above all else that makes the story as Lawrence tells it 'not quite honourable' and therefore not charitable. Friedeburg's absorption in shame, his inability to feel the tragedy of Marta's death, does after all not happen in a social vacuum. It has as its background that he is an aristocrat and she the daughter of a small tradesman. He is 'nothing' in his own estimation because being dismissed from the army he has lost his honour. But she is 'nothing' in the public estimate, a loose woman, an actress who has to make something on the side to keep herself. Friedeburg's callousness is due to his absorption in his despair, but it is also part of a general, a public and social callousness. It mirrors society's double morality and the callousness of generally accepted class and sex distinctions. To make nothing of class and sex distinctions in such a case is not good writing. One

feels in this story uneasily that Lawrence's very classlessness, his sense of the human being in itself acts as an obstacle to the best writing he could do. Marta is so fully human that she is totally lifted out of her class. She is just a human being. By the end of the story one begins to feel that the way Lawrence has brought out her individual radiance, her loveliness, has blurred the issue - some obscure sort of cheating has been going on. The callousness of the ending - the careless dropping of Marta's fate and the over-attention to Friedeburg's - and its hollowness and wordiness are the result of this cheating.

'The Mortal Coil' illustrates a very common cause for the failure of charity in writing. It is this that makes it interesting to our general discussion of charity as a universally valid standard of value for novel writing. The cause is here a common social disease which the writer has not consciously diagnosed and which he unconsciously reproduces, or 'mirrors', in his writing. Thanks to his working-class background Lawrence did not suffer himself from many of these social diseases, nor can he be accused of being unconscious of them. What tripped him up on the whole where charitable writing is concerned were his ideas. I have already said that the period he lived in seems to have played a role in this (just as the Victorian period had something to do with Dickens's 'doubleness').<sup>22</sup> Leavis says in Thought, Words and Creativity:

To be a great creative writer, born in England at Eastwood, of a miner's family, at that moment in history, was for Lawrence to find himself committed to a prophetic role. He was impelled inevitably by his astonishing gifts, into a questioning examination of the deepest underlying conditions of civilized life. Was the continuance of civilization in the spirit of its modern accelerating development possible? Wasn't overt human disaster certainly ahead, and not far distant, and essential human disaster already upon us? Thus his preoccupation with human responsibility and the relation of man to the unknown was everywhere urgent and insistent: it was in and of the creative drive behind his thought and art. This was, to invoke his own injunction, to cultivate 'consciousness'. (1976: 134-5)

The point that Lawrence because of the time in which he lived and his circumstances was committed to a prophetic role is well taken; the question is what he chose to be a prophet for. Leavis always talks in a fairly general way about creativity and consciousness, but it is the concrete issues with which the creativity and consciousness engaged that interest us here. Lawrence's time span - the period from the late 19th Century to the beginning of the thirties - was a time of intense ideological controversy. It was the time of a socialist-industrialist-capitalist revolution, but its most revolutionary feature, seen anthropologically, was the women's emancipation. Lawrence was in touch with the best thought of his time. I have shown how he was in touch, through Frieda, with Otto Gross's ideas. Gross, who was also a 'prophet' (a role he rejected), and who was in spite of personal oddities a better thinker than

Lawrence, as we have seen, is a representative of the best ideas of this time. Lawrence as we know rejected these ideas after having initially absorbed them, perhaps because they came through Frieda, perhaps because they were German and did not seem appropriate to him as an Englishman. The ideas which he developed instead - which were also in the air - were not the best ideas.<sup>24</sup> They were not fascist as has been claimed. Lawrence always resisted pinning himself down politically, and what he says about party politics is often very sensible. But they had certain aspects that are also aspects of fascist ideas. The most striking of these are his ideas about the nature of women, ideas that are always concerned with woman's will and her consciousness or individuality.

He could never resist introducing these ideas. They were close to his heart because of his marital warfare against Frieda's 'insisting on herself'. We therefore find them superimposed on his actual perception of women. In the tales of the Eastwood miners this isn't the case; he sees the women in their actuality, as he had seen them as a child, and he leaves them alone. But his ideas are introduced into his other stories. The best example of an abrupt introduction of 'ideas' is 'The Woman Who Rode Away'.<sup>25</sup>

I don't mean that the ideas weren't part of the conception of the story. The story is in fact the embodiment of an idea, or cluster of ideas: it concerns the mechanicalness of our civilization and the harmful

role the modern wilful 'nervously conscious' woman plays in it. The one is associated with the other. But even if the impetus for the story came from these associated ideas, his plot - the way in which he conceived the story - would have forced Lawrence to begin by reflecting why such a woman would want to 'ride away', what sort of life would drive her to such an incredible and foolhardy step. Lawrence does get hold of the woman's situation imaginatively; his experience, his knowledge, his powers of sharply and accurately observing all come into play to make an honest picture.

As a result we are faced with what are practically two stories in 'The Woman Who Rode Away', and they are not even consistent. I do not know whether there was a break in the writing similar to the one Leavis describes for Dombey but I don't think so; the ideas expressed in the main body of the story are also the ideas expressed in The Plumed Serpent, and Lawrence wrote 'The Woman Who Rode Away' at around the same period. At any rate the story begins with a close, and totally charitable, examination of the state of mind of a woman in an intolerable position. It proceeds logically to the point where the half-crazed woman, who above all cannot go home again, back to her prison, meets the Indians and follows her dream to cross over to 'the other', 'the unknown'. At this point the story breaks. Lawrence abandons his scrupulous attention to the motives of the character and begins to follow a dream of his own: the end of our

mechanical civilization through doing away with the modern, white 'intensely personal and individual' woman. The bulk of the story is undisguisedly a dream. This makes it difficult to ask: does Lawrence really mean it? What is he actually saying? and yet these are questions the story urges upon us. The woman certainly seems to become a victim, not of the Indians, in whom we cannot believe, but of Lawrence's obsession with women as his adversaries. Wrapped up in his obsession he cannot 'see' her any more, and this makes him capable of the sadism of the story.

The story faces us more seriously with the question what the standard of charity really means than our last examples, because the writing does not deteriorate. If there is indeed a break, a failure of charity that makes the story fall into two parts it is not easily detected. There is no break in plot or theme - from this point of view the story is a seamless whole. It becomes not less interesting but more interesting, and gains an extraordinary beauty and fascination past the middle. The woman is treated as a centre of consciousness throughout. Obviously we will have to look carefully at the writing, and ask ourselves in what precisely the interest and fascination lie. We shall do this when we look at the theme, or themes, after I have given a brief account of the plot.

Lawrence connected the plot in a concrete way to his theme - the theme of the failure of civilization because



of the breakdown of the right relations between men and women - through stories or myths told by the Indians within the tale. These stories are so essential that I am treating them as a part of the plot, which I think cannot be understood without them. The plot is that there exists, in a remote valley of the Sierra Madre, an Indian people who preserve the old religion of preconquest Mexico. They are agriculturalists and herders. Their culture and religion is based on the opposition between male and female, and they express this in a cosmic myth. The sun is male, the moon female. They are inexorably divided by the width of the sky, but on their coming together depends the life of the world, or more precisely, the world's livingness. It is up to the people to keep sun and moon happy and docile, as they keep their animals happy and docile. Women ask the moon into the cave inside them and keep her quiet there. Men draw the sun down till they have 'the power of the sun'. When a man takes a woman, the sun goes into the cave of the moon, and the two are brought together. The Indians got weak and lost their power, and the white men stole the sun. They don't know what to do with him, they use him only as a toy; and particularly white women don't know what to do with the moon. Sun and moon have turned vicious, especially the moon. She is angry in the white women's cave, and bites them, inside. Soon the Indian women will get the moon back and 'keep her quiet in their house'. The Indian men will get the sun and 'the power

over all the world'. A white woman will sacrifice herself, and her sacrifice will ensure the Indians' victory over the white people, the possibility that sun and moon are happy again and the livingness of the world is restored.

A white woman rides by herself into the Sierras. She is stopped on a mountain trail by three Indians, one of whom speaks Spanish. She declares she is going to the mountain Indians behind the great range that towers above them. The Indians come from a valley in the upland behind the range and go with her. On the way she becomes their prisoner. They keep her imprisoned in a house in the village, drug her, and kill her on the day of the winter solstice by cutting out her heart as an offering to the sun. They do this in the belief that she has come to be sacrificed by them so that they can become the people of the earth again. With her white skin and blue eyes she symbolises the moon. The Indians believe that if they give the moon to the sun, the sun will give them power again.

The plot, extracted in this bald way, itself contains contradictions that puzzle one. Why, if the main aim is to make the moon happy again, is the coming together of moon and sun symbolised by a bloody murder? But there are other, more serious contradictions on the level of the working out of themes, to which we now turn.

For all its brilliant surface, the story is curiously disparate. We must for example begin by making

a distinction between theme and underlying assumption. The general theme is, as I have said, civilization and its connection with the relation between men and women, but the underlying assumption is that civilization is purely male. This assumption is there in both parts of the story but it has a different complexion in each: in the first part it is critical and sardonic, in the second it is uncritically accepting. <sup>25</sup>

The story is justly famous for its description of landscape. Lawrence establishes his theme with the help of the technique I have called, earlier, a gigantically extended pathetic fallacy: everything 'speaks'. He uses it, however, with great sophistication: it is just because the stupendous mountain landscape of the Sierra Madre which surrounds the woman is so inhuman (in other words refutes the pathetic fallacy) that it reflects and emphasises the mechanicalness of our inhuman civilization. The woman lives in her husband's house, an adobe house below a disused silver mine, and the bareness of the slagheaps and the unbroken sweep of the slopes above them fuse into one great lifeless isolation. The circumstances peculiar to her life (she remains anonymous - 'the woman' - throughout the story) again reflect a general mechanicalness and lifelessness: her isolation in the high Sierras, the lonely house below the deserted mine, the little patio garden from which she can see the disused plant but which she is not allowed to leave by herself. Lawrence is making here a statement

about marriage as part of our inhuman civilization, and he is making it from the woman's point of view. Leavis thinks of the story as 'pure Lawrence',<sup>27</sup> but this seems extraordinary and unLawrentian to me.

It is, however, spelt out, with great care, in all its aspects in the text. 'The woman' lives in a male-dominated world in which she is regarded as property. She is guarded so closely that her house becomes a prison. She has been socialised to accept it and to be passive. But on another level she was not at all prepared for it; she thought she would take part in the adventure of life through the man she married. Marriage was therefore a great cheat; it had the effect of a blow on the head for her. Lawrence begins the story with the sentence: 'She had thought that this marriage of all marriages would be an adventure'.

She had two children, a boy and a girl. And her eldest, the boy, was nearly ten years old before she aroused from her stupor of subjected amazement.... He [her husband] was a man of principles and a good husband.... When he married he was over forty, and had enough money to marry on. But his capital was all a bachelor's. He was boss of his own works, and marriage was the last and most intimate bit of his own works. He admired his wife to extinction, he admired her body, all her points. And she was to him always the rather dazzling Californian girl from Berkeley, whom he had first known. Like any shark, he kept her guarded among the mountains of Chihuahua. He was jealous of her as he was of his silvermine: and that is saying a lot.... Her conscious development had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested. Her husband had never become real to her.... Only morally he swayed her, kept her in an invincible slavery. (1950: 46)

If the woman is dead like the endless uniform mountains and bare hills of slag she is surrounded with, her husband is terribly alive and active. He personifies another aspect of the mechanicalness of our civilization. Lawrence has touched on it when he says: 'he was boss of his own works and marriage was to him the last and most intimate bit of his own works'. Everything is an extension of his ego, subservient to it, and also just a thing, part of his capital, an object. Lawrence says he was 'an idealist, and really hated the physical side of life. He loved work, work, work, and making things. His marriage, his children, were something he was making, part of his business, but with a sentimental income this time' (p.47).

But after eleven years of living on this less than human level, too alienated even to notice what is happening to her, the woman wakes up. It takes the form of a nervous breakdown. 'Gradually her nerves began to go wrong: she must get out. She must get out'. (p.47) Her husband takes her to the States for a holiday, but when she has been back for a time she decides to 'ride away'. It is strange that the decision to 'get out' is called her nerves going wrong. After eleven years of passivity it seems the healthiest reaction she has ever had. But Lawrence has also made the point that marriage has arrested her mental development; there is something demented and irresponsible in her reaction. She has heard stories of wild Indians living in the mountains and

she makes up her mind that she will visit them. She has been cheated out of doing anything by her energetic husband: why, then, this will be her adventure. 'She had her own horse, and she dreamt of being free as she had been as a girl, among the hills of California' (p. 49).

There is another side to it that makes the decision look not just childish and irresponsible. She has in fact nowhere to go - she can only go into the unknown. If she forced her husband to let her go somewhere she would still be on a lead. She has never been out of the house and walled garden alone. Curiously enough, after all these years of isolation it is doing something on her own that she needs. When her son and the servant ask her why she is going alone (she pretends she is going to see her little girl at the convent) she breaks out: 'Am I never to be let alone, not one moment of my life?' (p. 49). She is like one of the women we have discussed who can overcome their socialization only by the concrete act of flight. She can only express the change in herself by removing herself. But unlike Dickens's Rosa Bud she has absolutely nowhere to go.

The description of the next two days, while she is riding toward the high range, crossing lower ranges, seems marvellously observant and psychologically accurate to me. Her mind is filled to the exclusion of anything else with the joy of being free, the pride of having acted on her own.

Curious that she was neither afraid not lonely. Indeed the loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty. And a strange elation sustained her from within. (1950: 51)

Her release is as real as her prison was real. What is 'mad' in her action is imposed by circumstances: the impulse to get away itself was healthy. But there is nowhere she can get away to, no other side. The madness lies in a civilization that makes such a position possible. Lawrence describes how, during the second night she heard 'a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious' (p. 51).

This is the first ambiguous image. On the one hand the crash is the tearing loose, the end of the intolerable, inhuman life, the act of rebellion, and also the first intimation that on the other side of it there is nothing for her, only death. But on the other hand Lawrence is already beginning to fit her into his dream, to prepare her for her great cosmic role, a sort of horrible Persephone act. She will be raped and killed like Persephone to make the earth flower again. From then on he speaks of her constantly as dead.

She also begins to realise her plight. Neither her food nor the oil seed cakes for the horse will last much longer. And here, just before she meets with the Indians, Lawrence sounds for the first time the theme of

her will-lessness: 'if she had had any will of her own left, she would have turned back, to the village, to be protected and sent home to her husband' (p. 52). He has himself told us why she cannot go back to her husband. Her courage is still there but it has turned into the frozen indifferent courage of despair. She is tired. She is nearing her destination and she knows that there is nothing there for her. All this is still realistic. But we are near the point of transition now, and for his dream Lawrence needs a will-less woman. So he insists: 'But she had no will of her own' (p. 52).

The break in the story can, I feel, be pinned down to a sentence. It comes with the meeting with the three Indians on page 52: 'Suddenly her horse jumped, and three men in dark blankets were on the trail before her'. From then on it is not an 'honourable' story any more in Lawrence's own terms. But I find it difficult to account for the feeling. By 'honourable' Lawrence meant that no important information is kept from the reader. We remain, indeed, inside the consciousness of the woman, so that on the surface the technique has not changed. The storyline continues logically and realistically. There is one noticeable change however, a change in the use of adjectives. Adjectives are always important in Lawrence; he does his conjuring with them. Up to now the woman has moved and existed without descriptive adjectives. After a brief characterization in the beginning ('She was now thirty-three, a large, blue-eyed, dazed woman, beginning



to grow stout' >), she comes across for us through what happens to her and what she does. Now, in conversation with the three Indians, there is a cluster of adjectives of a special kind. She has an 'assured', 'American woman's' voice. Her Spanish is 'hard', 'Saxon'. She is 'cool', 'laconic', has a 'half-childish, half-arrogant' confidence.

There is nothing unrealistic about such a description. A woman like her would very likely combine a romantic enthusiasm for the unknown Indians with unconscious assumptions of superiority. The adjectives are nevertheless a measure of the change. The character of the woman is still the centre of Lawrence's attention, but the kind of attention he gives her shifts. It is not any longer the kind of attention that can report, for example, that loneliness for her was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty. Perhaps one could say that such pronouncements have given her authority. This authority is now withdrawn. It goes to the Indians. Perhaps it is simply that Lawrence identifies with the Indians now, while before he identified with the woman. But this is problematic because the Indians never become real characters. They are phantoms, while the woman remains real. However, Lawrence sides with his own, self-created phantoms against her; of this the tone of the second part, the bulk of the story, leaves us in no doubt.

The adjectives I have been mentioning (there are

more of them in these transitional passages) lead of course up to the insight, or vision the woman has, long after her imprisonment, while she is watching the Indians dancing in the plaza. This is a famous paragraph, quoted by everyone who comments on the tale.

For hours and hours she watched, spell-bound and as if drugged. And in all the terrible persistence of the drumming and the primeval, rushing deep singing, and the endless stamping of the dance of the fox-tailed men, the tread of heavy, bird-erect women in their black tunics, she seemed at last to feel her own death; her own obliteration. As if she were to be obliterated from the field of life again. In the strange towering symbols on the heads of the changeless absorbed women she seemed to read once more the Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin. Her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual, was to be obliterated again, and the great primeval symbols were to tower once more over the fallen individual independence of woman. The sharpness and the quivering nervous consciousness of the highly-bred white woman was to be destroyed again, womanhood was to be cast once more into the great stream of impersonal sex and passion. Strangely, as if clairvoyant, she saw the immense sacrifice prepared (1950: 69).

But what does Lawrence mean by it? Surely the same writer who has given us the sharply focussed picture of her marriage, the same Lawrence who wrote to Garnett 'in the Sisters was the germ of this novel': woman becoming individual, self responsible, taking her own initiative' cannot want to be associated with this? And Lawrence does to a certain extent take care to dissociate himself. The woman is not drugged when she has her insight, but we are told toward the end of the story that 'the Indians with their heavily religious nature had made her succumb

to their vision' (p.74).

And yet the bit about 'womanhood' going to be 'cast once more into the great stream of impersonal sex' could neither have been thought by the woman, as Lawrence has described her, nor by the Indians. It is (to use Leavis's phrase about the tale) 'pure Lawrence', and it belongs particularly to the Lawrence of the worst period, the period of The Plumed Serpent, though it is present from Aaron's Rod on, where the men talk about 'this terrible thing, this woman's desire over the man, beforehand'.<sup>29</sup> Lawrence is hiding behind the entranced receptivity, the drugged consciousness of the woman. It is this that makes the story so dishonourable. He puts all his art into the task of making 'that other state of passional cosmic consciousness', into which the woman lapses, vivid to us, and in doing so overlooks how inconsistent the story he tells is (The terrible thing is that we overlook it too). His attention is not what I have called generous and disinterested. He is conjuring for a purpose of his own. If we trace his inconsistencies we can see how bad the story is.

In the second part the woman - the woman who rode away - plays the role, prepared for by the adjectives I have quoted, of 'her kind of womanhood', which is 'intensely personal and individual'. She is the highly-bred white woman, with the 'sharp', 'quivering', 'nervous consciousness'. But she plays this role simply in Lawrence's mind, as an idea, not in the story itself.

None of his observations about the woman confirm it. In fact, they confirm the opposite.

He has told us in the beginning of the story that the woman could not develop any individuality at all, nor was she ever independent. She was so stunned by what happened to her at marriage that she was stupefied, dazed, subjected, enslaved. All these are Lawrence's words. As for her consciousness, Lawrence has told us that she was really a girl, that her conscious development had stopped with her marriage, been completely arrested (p. 46). He never shows us, throughout the book, anything 'sharp' about it. When she rebels, the only thing she can go back to is the wish to be free as she was as a girl. He gives us a convincing picture of the passivity which Gross talks about as entailed, in our society, by the choice of marriage for women, a passivity which is the opposite of an exclusive individuality and independence.

The strangest thing he says is that she (or her kind of womanhood, the intensely personal and individual kind) 'must once more be cast into the great stream of impersonal sex and passion'. What is the great stream of impersonal sex and passion? The experience of sex and passion is universal, but it is always a personal experience. At least this is true of adult sex and passion. It would be horrible if it weren't. What was wrong with the woman's sexual life and her husband's passion for her, as Lawrence described them, was

precisely that they were so impersonal. Of course he blames her there for her lack of sexual and passionate awakening, but he can hardly blame her here, then, for being overconscious. He himself has told us that her husband's passion consisted in 'admiring all her points' (not her herself) and that he had 'never become real to her, neither mentally nor physically. In spite of his late sort of passion for her, he never meant anything to her, physically. Only morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery' (p. 46). No Aphrodite of the foam this. She has not asserted her female will sexually. She has not even sexually developed a personality. Lawrence has forgotten, in the second part of the story, what he himself has built up in the first. He is attacking a woman who isn't there.

Of course she isn't there in the second part either, because by the time he is writing the second part Lawrence is imagining that she was that highly bred, intensely personal and individual woman with the sharp quivering consciousness in the past, in the first part, and that the Indians with their drugs and their 'insidious powerful maleness' have subdued her 'individual independence'. What he has in fact produced are two parts that are exact parallels as if having written the first part he had been forced by some mental spasticity to rewrite it as the second part.

Both parts describe a purely male world in which the male will rules and dominates over a woman. In neither

part does the woman have any will. In the first part her husband treats her as a thing (she is guarded as his property, and he sees her as the 'last and most intimate bit of his works'). In the second part she is a thing to the Indians ('he looked at her ... as if she were some strange, unaccountable thing, incomprehensible to him, but inimical' (p.54)). In both parts the men treat her instrumentally, as a means to their ends. In the first part she is dazed, stupefied, enslaved, imprisoned. In the second part the Indians stupefy her with drugs, intimidate her physically, put their power over her in some mystical fashion and imprison her. She is in the Indian village in a prison that exactly duplicates her home: a house in an enclosed garden which she cannot leave by herself.

It is Lawrence's attitude that is different in the first and the second parts. In the first part he writes objectively and what he says is based on observation. There is no reason to believe that he was sorry for the woman or intended the story as a critical examination of marriage. He is led to a critical examination of marriage by the accuracy of his observation and the objectivity of the description. This is what makes the first part charitable writing. In the second part he writes about the same abuses one might say caressively.

Before we look more closely at the caressive writing we must look at the Indians who are connected with it. In Thought, Words and Creativity Leavis says something

that is relevant to what the Indians stand for here.

It [the title Women in Love] reminds one for how much, where Lawrence was concerned, the relations between woman and man counted in any question regarding the livingness of a culture, the health of civilization. Where the habit, economy and institutional ethos should tend to make proper relations - relations involving recognition of the total difference between them and of the nature of their essential need of each other - impossible, there could be, Lawrence believed, little livingness and no hope. (1976: 140)

'The Woman Who Rode Away' is precisely concerned with questions regarding the livingness of a culture, the health of civilization. The Indian myths that are woven into the story show that Lawrence wanted to convey that the health of civilization depends on the difference between men and women, a difference the modern development had threatened. In fact throughout the story the men are active and make decisions, while the women are passive. In both cultures, Indian and white, habit, economy and institutional ethos make 'proper relations' - relations involving recognition of the total difference possible. By that count Lawrence should have regarded white modern civilization, by his own showing, as particularly healthy. No-one could have been less like her husband than the lethargic dazed white woman. He was a 'dynamo of energy'. But of course another difference is important here. The activeness of the white man is mechanical, anti-life, and stands for the mechanicalness of our civilization. Lawrence uses mechanical images to

describe the husband: he is a little, wiry, twisted fellow, a little dynamo of energy who loves work, work, work and whose marriage and children are really part of his business. He is an idealist who really hates the physical side of life. A woman can come to no good with such a man; and indeed one has the impression that the husband's activeness takes all initiative away from the wife. By contrast the activeness of the Indian men seems full of life, 'organic' to Lawrence. There is no doubt that they stand for life with their magnificent physiques, their glowing deep-toned naked torsos, their flowing 'living' hair. But the activeness of the Indians, as the story shows it, is surely more horribly mechanical still, with the magic-ritualistic view of the world, its enslavement to ritual, its inability to break through customary perception, its imprisonment in unreal, illusory ideas. A woman can come to no good with these men either, so much seems clear from the story. But then the only woman we see is of course no good in herself, she is a brand for the burning.

Kate Millet in her discussion of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' in Sexual Politics gives the best account of what is behind Lawrence's fantasy of black men murdering a white woman.<sup>30</sup> It takes an American to see the pattern. It is the old white man's fantasy that 'the savage' will punish his, the white man's unmanageable woman for him by raping and killing her (laying himself open, then, of course, to the white man's violence and revenge). Only



through a latent fantasy such as this can the poor pathetic victim of the story become the symbol of the independent woman who has to be razed off the face of the earth.

At the point where the fantasy is nearest expression in rational, universally understandable terms the writing is least clear. We must ask once more: how can you 'cast womanhood' into 'the great impersonal stream of sex and passion'? It sounds as if the dance the woman witnessed was to end in one of those indiscriminate sexual orgies savages, according to early anthropology, indulged in. What are 'the great primeval symbols' that are to 'tower once more over the fallen individual independence of woman'? (p. 69). 'Tower' and 'fallen' give one a graphic idea; but surely it is essential to understand more precisely what they are if one is to follow Lawrence.

The picture Lawrence gives of the Indian village is curiously over-vivid and at the same time static, dead. This is partly due to the fact that there are no women around - the woman sees women only once, at the dance she watches. All activity Lawrence describes, inside the houses in the plaza and outside the village is male. It is also partly due to the fact that the village is totally unmessy: every house is dazzling, clean, white, perfectly complete like a sugar cube. In real Indian villages there are always houses tumbling down and others being built. It is true that the picture of the village

is reconstructed from accounts of the preconquest garden cities of Mexico. But Lawrence also used his experiences of both Mexico and New Mexico for the description of the culture (Mabel Luhan identifies the cave in which the woman is killed as a place near Taos). Many of the features belong to Pueblo culture, the Indian culture he knew best: the rain beings and wind beings of the myths he makes up, the holding of feathers in religious ceremonies, the Kiva he describes on page 76. One asks oneself what Lawrence knew about the position of women in such a society. Evidently nothing; he had not bothered to find out but followed his assumption that in the primitive state, women are kept in their place. There are Pueblos where women own the land, as well as the houses of the village, which they build themselves while their husbands work their land and weave the clothes for the family. They are culturally typed as sexually active and aggressive; the men are sexually passive and afraid of them. They take the initiative in courtship and marriage. If a husband behaves badly the wife puts his moccasins outside the door as a sign, when he comes back from the fields, that he has to go back to his mother's clan; he is not welcome in her house any more. Information about these people had already been collected and was accessible at Lawrence's time; if he had made a more careful study of the societies he knew he could not simply have transferred his ideal of the anonymous, unenterprising, dependent, unconscious woman to them.

There are of course other Indian societies, with different social organizations and customs. But they are all more complex than Lawrence's imagination of them; their myths about the man-woman relationship are infinitely subtler than Lawrence's poor bald stories suggest. Above all, where the men heavily dominate the women this does not mean that the women are swimming happily and unconsciously in 'the great stream of impersonal sex and passion'. He did not assume that they did in the tales he wrote about the Eastwood colliers, a society he knew well, where the men do heavily dominate the women. Leavis following Lawrence gets it wrong; the 'total difference' between men and women which up to now the habit, economy and institutional ethos of all human societies have assumed is a function of the division of labour, not a guarantee for the livingness of a culture, the health of a civilization. In our type of society this difference will disappear with the sexual division of labour. Its disappearance will not make our society mechanical, but neither will it make it a living culture. The only 'healthy civilization' is one where people - and there are only people - are allowed to express themselves freely and actively, and at the same time not live isolated from one another but have a communal life that involves proper communication and companionship.

If people are to express themselves freely and actively, there must be a basic equality. It is the notion of a basic equality that the story attacks.

Lawrence betrays here the things that have made the very core of his writing: his affirmation of the voice of the body as a guiding principle. If we compare 'The Woman Who Rode Away' with 'The Daughters of the Vicar' it is quite clear that the woman in her muddled way is looking for something not so unlike what Louisa looked for: an affirmation of her feeling body, a breaking out of a mechanical, cold, denying relationship and existence. Vaguely, and with a romantic silliness, she looks for it among the remote Indians. But unlike Louisa she is punished for her presumption. The Indians torture her from the moment they meet her; they see her immediately as a thing they have power over. If we ask ourselves why the woman was punished, the answer can only be, because she rode away. And if we ask how she was punished, the answer is that she was punished somehow in her body, in her physical dignity as a woman. She had some physical dignity for a short time, for the two days she was riding by herself through the mountains. She was active, she was in command of her own movements, her solitude was to her 'like a drink of cold water to someone who is very thirsty', and ahead there was still the vague outline of something that meant freedom and a fuller life. Lawrence makes the Indians, immediately on meeting her and quite gratuitously, beat her horse so that she is painfully jerked in the saddle to make the point that she has lost this physical dignity, this command over her movements.

The caressive writing I mentioned earlier has all to

do with punishing the woman in her body, her physical and sexual being. The story is deeply anti-sexual; but on the surface this revulsion against the body is wrapped in great beauty. Lawrence can express it through the Indians, who, used to other women, cannot see in a white woman a sexual being at all. This allows them to touch her sexually without meaning it, so to speak, and with this touch, which is at the same time sexual and negating her sexuality, they destroy her at the very core of her being.

'You must take off your clothes ...' - 'Not while you men are here' ... He looked at the two men by the door. They came quickly forward and suddenly gripped her arms as she stood, without hurting her, but with great power. Then two of the old men came ... and slit her clothing so that it came away from her. In a few moments she stood there white and uncovered.... The old man spoke again. The Indian led her to the bedside. The white-haired, glossy-dark old man moistened his finger tips at his mouth, and most delicately touched her on the breasts and on the body, then on the back. And she winced strangely each time, as the finger-tips drew along her skin. (1950: 63)

This is the beginning of the most interesting part of the story, her life in the Indian village. The Indians are delicate, kind and coercive. They give her emetic drinks, and with the exhaustion from vomiting, possibly some other drugs and the pressure of their 'silent, insidious, fatherly' presence exerts on her, her consciousness begins to 'bleed out into the cosmos'. 'She was utterly strange and beyond herself, as if her

body was not her own' (p. 64).

Yet her body is constantly before us. At the religious ceremony in the Kiva (a round underground chamber reached by a ladder through a narrow opening at the top),

they laid her on a couch ... and now rubbed all her body with sweet-scented oil, and massaged all her limbs, and her back, and her sides, with a long, strange, hypnotic massage. Their dark hands were incredibly powerful, yet soft with a watery softness she could not understand. And the dark faces, leaning near her white body, she saw were darkened with red pigment, with lines of yellow round the cheeks. And the dark eyes glittered absorbed, as the hands worked upon the soft white body of the woman... They never saw her as a personal woman: she could tell that ... the immense, fundamental sadness, the grimness of ultimate decision, the fixity of revenge, and the nascent exultance of those that are going to triumph - these things she could read in their faces, as she lay and was rubbed into a misty glow, by their uncanny dark hands. Her limbs, her flesh, her very bones at last seemed to be diffusing into a roseate sort of mist, in which her consciousness hovered like some sun-gleam in a flushed cloud. She knew the gleam would fade ... but ... she did not believe it. She knew she was a victim... But she did not mind. She wanted it. (1950: 76-7)

Surely the story has the fascination of sadism. We are so enthralled because it rouses our sadistic and masochistic impulses. Sadism and masochism do not belong to true sexuality but to power: they are anti-physical, but connected to the body and sexuality through the power to hurt. Almost all pornography is about power and connected to the body only in this negative way; but this seems to be what has a particular sexual fascination

for us. Lawrence makes us his accomplices in an obscene and pornographic undertaking.

The great beauty of the writing, the amazing beauty of the landscape he evokes, are in the service of this obscenity. Landscape has powerful sexual connotations for our unconscious. When Lawrence describes the wonderful country through which the woman is taken and the cave in which she is going to be killed, with its arrested stream of ice through which the sun is going to strike, he is exploiting these sexual connotations for sadistic purposes.

The sun was sloping down the afternoon sky, on the left. She knew that this was the shortest day of the year, and the last day of her life. They stood her facing the iridescent column of ice, which fell down marvellously arrested, away in front of her. Some signal was given and the dance below stopped. There was now absolute silence... Two priests took off her mantle and her tunic, and in her strange pallor she stood there ... beyond the pillar of ice, beyond and above the dark-faced people. They gave a low wild cry... Then the priests turned her round, so that she stood with her back to the open world... And they cried again. From the fire came the old, old priest, with an incense-pan... He fumigated his victim... Behind him came another robeless priest, with two flint knives. When she was fumigated, they laid her on a large flat stone, the four powerful men holding her by the outstretched arms and legs. Behind stood the aged man... holding a knife and transfixedly watching the sun... Turning to the sky, she looked at the yellow sun. It was sinking (1950: 80).

Why the curious gratuitous insistence that her bottom, too, must be exposed to the people? It is all very strange. It is all wrapped up in the description of

splendid barbaric ritual and the blazing beauty and clearness of the winter day and we feel only vaguely uneasy. We have been told earlier, in the myths, that the livingness of the world depends on the coming together of the sun and the moon, who are naturally apart. They come together in the cave, 'the women's house', to which the women have enticed the moon. The cave is clearly the womb, and the moon must be female desire. Here in this ritual enactment of the coming together, the woman 'in her strange pallor' is clearly the moon. She is therefore female desire. In the cave, the womb of the earth, she is caught, trapped and held down. When she and the sun will come together she will be killed, wiped out. What Lawrence is saying (he has already indicated it in the myth) is that only through an act of male will, an act of domination over the woman, can the coming together be auspicious. The livingness of the world, then, depends on the subjugating of women, and the essential thing that has to be subjugated, the core, that has to be crushed and wiped out, is female desire. The story ends with the curious half-sentence, forming an isolated paragraph: 'The mastery that man must hold, and that passes from race to race'. Ostensibly this refers of course to the end of white civilization.<sup>21</sup> But if the Indians are phantoms behind whom Lawrence is hiding it refers to his theme that female desire must be crushed - a task handed on from civilization to civilization. The woman was desirous when she rode away.



There is of course nothing new in Lawrence saying that; he has said it many times (most clearly in The Plumed Serpent which was written just before 'The Woman Who Rode Away'). He is only saying it more graphically, with a more convincing concreteness here. But it is curiously enough the very concreteness that has hidden what he is actually saying. Leavis says in Thought, Words and Creativity of the story,

How profoundly Lawrence was impressed by what intuition brought home to him is evidenced by one of his most impressive tales: 'The Women Who Rode Away'. The imagination who created this was not arbitrary; it was devoted with all its powers, to realizing a truth. And the truth is crucially important; it enforces Lawrence's contention that what the West desperately needs is a new kind of 'commonsense'. (1967: 56)

And if it should be objected that it isn't fair to quote what Leavis said in his old age against him, here is his voice twelve years earlier, in D H Lawrence : Novelist, on the same subject:

The whole thing is an astonishing feat of the imagination. If we do not, in reading it, think of it as a feat, that is because it all seems so real. And this reality derives from the intensity and profound seriousness of Lawrence's interest in human life... The poetic power of the tale is in its creative way, an earnestness and profundity of response to the problems of modern civilization. (1955: 332)

Leavis is right in saying that the reality derives from the intensity and profound seriousness of Lawrence's interest in human life. What he does not say is that the

nature of this interest has gone entirely wrong. Here is an example of a great and perceptive critic being enthralled by the surface of a piece of writing, its beauty, the apparent seriousness of the theme (or the seriousness of the apparent theme). Using charity as a standard of criticism should help us to avoid just that. Its greatest usefulness lies in helping us to look through to the real theme, which is often hidden from the writer himself. The treatment of women in fiction is here, again, the sensitive point, a sort of measure of charity. As I have already said, we have all, male and female writers, and male and female readers, a grudge against our mother who did not give us all the attention we 'deserved'. This will make us inclined to take revenge on women, and we are therefore particularly insensitive to how women are treated in fiction. If a writer covers up acceptably, he can indulge his obsession about and hatred of women, and we do not notice it, or collude unconsciously. Lawrence was perceptive about human motives, and in the writing of the story he comes near to seeing his own motives, but he transfers them to the Indians: their 'fixity of revenge, and the nascent exultance of those that are going to triumph'. It was his revenge, and his triumph he was writing about. If we do not learn to look through to what a writer is really talking about (and after all the clues are all there in the text) we help to perpetuate, as critics, teachers, or simply for ourselves as readers, these ingrained and

destructive obsessions that certainly help to make for an unhealthy civilization. The critical standard that attention to a character must be generous and disinterested, that is unprejudiced, makes it possible to discover what the writer's real theme is.

#### Conclusion to Part 1

And yet the problem of obsession in the writer's work remains - our concern with charity has so far only brought it into the open. It is near the bone for us, because the writer's obsessions are more deeply entangled with his 'utopian tendencies' than we have faced yet. 'The Woman Who Rode Away' appears to be genuinely utopian: Leavis's assessment leaves one in no doubt about that. For our purpose it is therefore a piece of writing that makes a good test case. Lawrence's career itself is a test case: he was to an extraordinary degree aware of what was going on at his time, was critical, alert and yet he is in the end very doubtfully a 'utopian' writer. Looking at him enables us to bring out the main lines of our argument.

Let us try to gather our main threads together and formulate the problem of obsession in writing in relation to what we have been establishing in this part. We have argued throughout that while the novel as a genre has to

do with the topics of emotion and personal relations it also contains inherently the possibility of relating this inner world to the public world, emotion to larger social questions, 'the personal' to 'the political'. We ask the novelists to give us something like 'feeling thought' - not to divide thinking from feeling; to give us evaluative objectiveness - not to divide description from 'placing'; to speak with the sort of truth out of his private experience that lights up public issues. How is he to keep obsession out of the feeling, the evaluating, the speaking out of private experience? (And if he can't, how does this affect the thought, the objectiveness, the light thrown on public issues?) Or to put the problem differently: we ask that the thought be progressive, while novel writing itself, with its delving into the unconscious, has an element of the regressive. Utopian writing especially with its concern about desire (an infantile concern) is by nature regressive. How is the writer to 'control' these regressive elements; how is he to use the regressive for the progressive?

Lawrence wrote 'The Woman Who Rode Away' in exactly the spirit of engagement with his time we thought essential for good novel writing. His story is a fantasy about the death of our civilization and a utopian suggestion of how civilization might improve if the relation between men and women were changed again, if the course of development that makes women independent individuals were reversed. Here, in the middle of using

the novel for what it should be used - to make a connection between the private world and the public world, to tie the writer to his time and allow him to make a critical analysis of his time in an imaginative form - Lawrence intrudes his most antihuman and destructive obsessions. He sees as an urgent problem of his time, connected with the unhealthiness of our civilization, that women strive for individual independence. Speaking both out of his time and out of his personal experience he is urgently concerned that the fragile advance in humanity made by women should be reversed. How could he get the spirit of the times so wrong? Or did he get it wrong?

Writing well means, if we use the utopian criterion we have established, that the writer has to be engaged, committed, that he fuse with his time where it, as it were, generates most heat, where the most ardent controversies take place. Both Dickens and Lawrence were committed in this way, though, as one would expect, there were gaps and blind spots in the commitment. Lawrence did not get the spirit of the times wrong where women were concerned. He wrote in 1914 to Garnett that what he was writing about was 'woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative'. He placed himself with this statement in the heart of the controversy of his time where the argument was hottest and where it had, so to speak, melted prejudice enough to make movement possible. Lawrence knew that a novelist,

to write well and according to the best possibilities of the novel form, must ally himself with the thought of his time and the movements of his time that envisage a future for people worthy of the name, a world people can live in. He knew the novelist must have sympathy for people and have a basic optimism about humankind. By the time the Great War had run its course Lawrence had lost that optimism. (We see the change taking place in Women in Love). His experiences with his society were too terrible - and a capitalist, highly nationalist society at war is indeed a spectacle to chasten optimism.

Lawrence began withdrawing at a time when the conflicts in his society were at their most serious and most painful. Nationalism made its bid and all the regressive elements were stirring and becoming powerful.<sup>22</sup> The women's movement itself went back on 'women becoming individual, self-responsible and taking their own initiative'. At the beginning of the Great War feminism both in Britain and in Germany sold out to nationalism (This is particularly striking in Germany where the radical socialist elements had been stronger).<sup>23</sup>

But the writer's optimism - the optimism about people, needed to write good novels - doesn't of course have anything to do with avoiding the most painful conflicts of the time. It lies in penetrating below the evil to the place of possibility, where a change of direction is possible. Lawrence found the evil of his

society so untouchable that he could not make the effort any more to penetrate to this point. He began to beat about, to look for 'remedies'.<sup>34</sup>

That Lawrence at this time abandoned his 'milieu' - the conditions essential to making him a good writer - becomes clear if we look at his personal life. To write well, in a new and living way, a novelist has to be able to bring together his own most intensely personal conflicts and the conflicts of his time. Good writing is, as it were, the result of an 'attraction' between what is most painful in the writer's life and what is most painful in the experience of his society.

At the time feminism was without any doubt at the centre of society's most painful conflict, that which stirred the deepest feeling and about which there was least agreement. Lawrence's falling in love with Frieda of all people, their fights; their 'coming through', their relation as a source of his writing, is an extraordinary case of this 'attraction'. Now, at just the time we are speaking of - the period of the Great War - Lawrence found he could not take Frieda's 'insisting on herself' - what he called her Godalmightiness - any more. His withdrawal here is clearly of the greatest significance. Being open to Frieda - to her outrageous, unheard-of demands - had been the point of his fusion with society. 'Taking it' meant he could also 'take' his time. If he evaded the one, he also evaded the other. And indeed at this time the concept of 'insubordination',

the idea that 'submission' is proper to a woman, first finds its way into his writing. <sup>35</sup>

With this we return to 'The Woman Who Rode Away'. Exposing himself to 'it', in the inner and the outer sphere - to Frieda's Godalmightiness and to women insisting on themselves - had been the condition of his accuracy and objectivity as a writer. This accuracy has nothing to do with naturalism of course; it seeks constantly new forms, a new language to render the human reality for which we haven't yet a language. It is therefore in the true sense experimental. To remain exposed, both to one's own reality and that of the time, is in itself a kind of utopianism, a pushing the limits of writing forward into the future and bringing the future into the present. The writing can take the form of a fantasy - it is then fantastically accurate. If Lawrence shied away from exposing himself - we might say from the historical moment in which his time and he (through Frieda) experienced their most intense and painful 'attraction' - he injured his capability for accuracy. 'The Woman Who Rode Away' is fantastic without being accurate. And where this accuracy is lacking, this objective focusing on what is the most important issue in him and in the world around him, the obsessions intrude, filling in as it were for the reality that has been avoided.

The obsessions seem at first blush to belong exclusively to the personal or 'inner' sphere. But their



ambience is larger. They are a counterfeit of what we named as the conditions for good writing: the writer's connection with that thought of his time and those movements of his time that anticipate a future that deserves the name; the 'attraction' between his personal conflicts and public conflicts. In their case too there is an attraction between urgent inner preoccupations and public preoccupations, except that they connect themselves with public prejudice and regressive thought. This 'attraction' also generates a kind of 'creative afflatus', to use Leavis's phrase; it can even mean beautiful writing, as we saw in the second part of 'The Woman Who Rode Away'; it can give expression to cherished desires. In fact obsessive writing generally strikes us as original rather than allied to prejudice. It can be technically experimental and utopian in design.

The counterfeit can however be easily detected because it is always cruel. Utopianism is benevolent to desire, we said; but we haven't stressed enough that the principle of this benevolence is that it recognises the same desires as equally present in everyone. In this it has no illusion about the selfishness of individual desires. But it operates according to a simple and no doubt naive recipe, that runs: selfishness will turn to love if its desires are fully satisfied, and people will live sanely together if everyone has the same chance for satisfaction. Utopianism is therefore predicated on equality, and utopian writing on the 'justice' we have

called charity. Obsessional writing cannot be equitable in this sense because it has by its very nature an axe to grind. If it talks about the fulfilment of desire, about self-realization and self-assertion, there is always someone who suffers, who has to pay the price. The writer will of course say that those who pay the price will pay it gladly, that it is their desire to suffer. All he is doing in that case is putting his finger on the problem of self-alienation ('The woman' who sinks into a trance of acceptance in Lawrence's story is self alienated). And alienation does not exist before the power world is established, but is concomitant with it.

The obsession in 'The Woman Who Rode Away' is of a special kind: it is sadistic, and sadism is a form of sexual cruelty that has its roots in sexual deprivation (and in a substituting of the will to power for sexual feeling). The deprivation can of course be of many kinds and can be wilfully imposed on oneself.

I said above, in explaining charity: 'A writer must have sympathy with people's desires including his own, and a real, deep curiosity about them. He must be aware of how regularly the desires for self assertion and companionship are thwarted and be imaginatively concerned with how they can be fulfilled'. And somewhat below that passage: 'The attention involved in writing has an aspect of the return of the repressed. If the writer cannot welcome what returns, if he is afraid [of it], it will return anyway, but masked. In its disguised form it

is always pathological'. What desire does Lawrence repress to arrive at his obsession? In 'The Woman Who Rode Away' he wants, according to my analysis, female desire controlled, in the end female desire extirpated. Could he be wishing for a passive sexuality, a being the recipient - crudely put, being over-powered by the female? And could it be impossible for his fragile male identity to acknowledge such a desire?

If it was so, it was a real impasse. There are two ways out of such an impasse. One is the way of sadism (involving also auto-sadism). Closing oneself off against one's desire, suppressing one's 'real deep curiosity about one's desires', one turns things upside down and feels rage against the desire of the other, in fact against the very thing that would satisfy one. The other is the way of communication. If Lawrence had talked to Frieda about his dilemma, he needn't have hated women. But communicating in such an absolute way would have injured his sense of superiority, the phallic lordship he wanted to establish. Being ashamed of desire takes the form of fighting against equality. The desire for self-assertion (in the sense of asserting what one really wants, of being sympathetic to one's own desires) and the desire for companionship, again in the real sense of companionship among equals, are both thwarted. Sadism has replaced the desire for communication and a false kind of self-assertion the desire for genuine self-assertion.

This is the point at which part 1, the theoretical part, which is about equality, and part 2, the biographical part which is about communication, meet.