

Modernism and the Event: Lawrence, Lewis, and the Agency of the “Evental Subject”

Stefanie Elizabeth Duerr

A thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate in Philosophy degree in English

Department of English

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
INTRODUCTION	1
“Tainted with Individualism”: Lawrence, Lewis and the State of the Situation.....	4
Declaring the Event: Crisis, Utopia, Novelty	14
Fidelity to the Event: Agency, Individuality, and the Subject	29
Evental Modernism for Lawrence and Lewis	37
CHAPTER 1: “What Feelings Will Carry Us Through?”: D. H. Lawrence and the Agency of Affect	41
“A Propos” Feeling, Relation, and Novelty in Lawrence’s Critical Essays	42
The “Tragedy of Hardy”: Lawrence’s Moral England	58
Crisis and the Future Unknown: Change Hurts	70
The Promise of American Place.....	80
Avoiding “Myself Monomania” in Whitman: Reincorporating the Individual	91
What Next? The Artist and the Unknown.....	102
CHAPTER 2: <i>Women in Love</i> : “To Make a World”	109
Love as Evental Site: The “Two-Scenes” of Ursula-Birkin and Birkin-Gerald	114
Belief in a “New World”: the Mobilization of Affect.....	127
“Love Includes Everything”: Resistance, Individuality, and Other Forces against Change	143
Fidelity to “Another World”	163
CHAPTER 3: <i>The Enemy</i> ’s Approach: Wyndham Lewis against “Revolution” in Literary Modernism	172
The Enemy in Review: Lewis’s “Effective” Persona	181
Opposing the “High Bohemian” Utopia and their “Revolutionary Simpletons”	200
The Enemy Versus the “Romantic Self”.....	221
The Enemy Versus <i>transition</i>	234
Being “Detached with Yourself”: the Enemy as Subject.....	249
CHAPTER 4: <i>Tarr</i> ’s Enemy: How the Group Limits Agency	260
A Cartonnage of Selves: Surface and Representation in the Vitelotte Quarter.....	267
The Liepmann Influence: Group-characterization, Bertha, and Individual Agency.....	280
Kreisler, the “Revolutionary” as “the Common Enemy”.....	298
“Tragic Laughter”: The Evental Logic of Lewisian Satire	308
EPILOGUE: “Thinking Through a Form of Thought”	320
Works Cited	325

Abstract

This dissertation examines D.H. Lawrence's and Wyndham Lewis's exploration of the evental subject, and asks how their work might help us understand agency in a way that does not discount powerful forms of socio-historical determinism. Examining a variety of their critical and fictional writing from the first three decades of the twentieth century, I argue that Lawrence and Lewis explore ways of thinking about the subject's relationship to radical novelty without occluding the constraining forces of mass culture. Challenging conventional modernist forms of novelty which seek to except themselves from forces of historical and social determination, they pursue a form of novelty that emerges from these forces, yet radically reconfigures the world that history has produced. Similarly, even though the "evental subject" is conditioned by the forms of relation encoded by society, its agency lies in the power to transfigure the modes of being that have been normalized. The evental subject is not an autonomous source of agency that is exempted from the social order, but derives its agency from reconceptualizing the nature of social embeddedness—understanding social relations as unpredictably generative rather than narrowly limiting. In this regard, the forms of subjectivity articulated by Lawrence and Lewis substantially anticipate, and are illuminated by, Alain Badiou's theory of the event. Chapter 1 argues that Lawrence's *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature* approach the problem of the evental subject largely in terms of affect, understanding the subject not as the preexistent and stable bearer of affective experience, but as the processual product of mutually-constituting affective relationships. Chapter 2 examines *Women in Love* to find Lawrence negotiating love as an affective site of radical subjective possibility that reconfigures the cultural norms through which intimate relationships are coded and constrained. Chapter 3 turns to Lewis's *The Enemy* to ask how his version of the evental subject largely inhabits the tension between personality and selfhood, where the former suggests social performance and the

latter denotes an autonomous, ontological category. Contra the conventional turn to the autonomous self as the source of agency, he seeks to understand the subject, and its agency, as the product of social performance. Finally, Chapter 4 argues that *Tarr* articulates the possibilities of a radically exteriorized understanding of personality; through Lewis's ironic portrayal of the ineluctable ways in which even the perception of choice is coded by the situation, he presents fiction and authorship as the spaces in which to imagine an eventual subject.

Acknowledgements

I am most thankful for my partner, whose patience and insight cannot be overestimated. Without your help, love, this dissertation would simply not exist. Thank you for encouraging me to talk about it, for reading it, for redirecting my attention to the bigger picture, for insisting that I carefully think things through, and for convincing me, month after month, and every time I succumbed to doubt, that this was a worthwhile challenge to overcome.

I am deeply grateful to the past and present faculty members of the Department of English at the University of Ottawa for offering intellectual support and for volunteering their time and thoughts both in the office and at social gatherings. In particular, thanks to David Rampton for agreeing to supervise my dissertation, and for all the support he has provided in the course of its completion. I would also like to recognize the effort of my examiners—Adam Barrows, Anne Raine, Andrew Taylor, and Gerald Lynch—and thank them for their thoughtful responses and practical suggestions that helped me to articulate how it all fits together.

I also owe a great many thanks to my family and friends for their unwavering support: my mom for her profound belief in my abilities; my *mémère* and *pépère* for their encouraging pride in my accomplishments; my dad for his pragmatic sass concerning academic work; my sister for her friendship and generosity; and my brother for his sense of humor, and for gifting me the laptop on which nearly all of this dissertation was written. My extended MA cohort also deserves many thanks: Kja, Megan, Robyn, Will, and Stacey, thank you for your moral support, and for sharing your experiences and knowledge with me.

Finally, thanks to the Ontario Graduate Scholarship fund, the David Staines Scholarship fund, the Christa Zeller Scholarship fund, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and the United Commercial Travelers of Moncton for their financial support.

INTRODUCTION

If you are pessimistic, [then] the situation suffices.

We must have some hope to transform the world, and

to go in the direction of a better world, if it is possible.

—Alain Badiou, “On Optimism”

In “Surgery for the Novel—Or a Bomb” (1923), D. H. Lawrence asks, “What is the underlying impulse in us that will provide the motive power for a new state of things, when this democratic-industrial-lovey-dovey-darling-take-me-to-mamma state of things is bust? *What next?* That’s what interests me. ‘What now?’ is no fun any more” (117). Despite Lawrence’s characteristically sardonic exasperation, in this brief passage, he poses one of the central questions that he will investigate throughout his work in the twenties. He asks *what* impulse might produce the agency necessary to mitigate disaster, and what form the motivation to “fin[d] a new world” might take (118). In this sense, he is less interested in the qualities that characterize the present than in seizing a “motive power.” Wyndham Lewis shares Lawrence’s frustration with the current state of human activity when he writes, “The last ten years of action has been so overcrowded with men-of-action of all dimensions, that they none of them have been able to act; and what has been done on this doctrinal but terribly real field-of-action, has brought us to our present state of inaction, in due course” (*Time* 20). He reveals his forward-looking aim when he accounts for why inaction defines the state of things: “I am entirely sick to death, like a great host of other people, of many of the forms that ‘reaction’ takes, [...] and I would, however modestly, hasten the day when ‘revolution’ should become a more rigorous business, humanely

and intellectually, if undertaken at all, and no longer be left only in the hands of people who do nothing but degrade and falsify it” (135). Whereas Lawrence and Lewis both diagnose the myopic passivity of their culture, they pursue divergent solutions. Lawrence repeatedly focusses on affective response as a source of agency, while Lewis asks whether agency itself is conflated with forms of “reaction” that occlude or exhaust otherwise revolutionary activity.

Lawrence and Lewis reflect the divisiveness of modernist literary circles in the twenties through their typically oppositional stances. Lawrence’s “now” is associated with a paternalistic notion of democracy that he ultimately views as fundamentally undemocratic, and Lewis is repulsed by the hypocritical “men-of-action” who are unable or unwilling to act effectively. In this regard, both authors diagnose a problem with thought in the modernist period, and so, their commitment to a sense of “what next” or of revolution involves ideological critique. Indeed, critical accounts describe this period of literary modernism as one marked by ideological disagreement, particularly over literature’s aims and values. In *Aspects of Bloomsbury*, S. P. Rosenbaum details the conflict that emerged, post-War, amongst the Bloomsbury circle’s writers and literary critics, following Virginia Woolf’s critique of her Edwardian predecessors for their materialism (106). Acknowledging the emerging class divide both within groups of modernist authors and amongst the broader reading public, Michael Levenson argues that in 1921, a “decent middle-class mob” of literary elites were the taste-makers of the period that authors assumed they needed to either buck or accommodate (166); he cites T.S. Eliot’s “London Letter” as an example of a prominent literary figure chastising the literary culture of London for its “moral cowardice” when confronted with the avant-garde (Eliot qtd. in Levenson 166). By cataloguing various infights in the modernist literary scene, Rosenbaum and Levenson identify a cultural rift in the aftermath of the War—one that not only presented artists with opportunities,

but also revealed their uneasy questioning of the value of literary production during an anxious period in British history. In her discussion of the same historical context, Anne Wright dramatically characterizes this rift as a “crisis”: “an acute split in society, as radical division, something that cannot hold together” (5). The echoes of Yeats’ “The Second Coming” aside, Wright suggests that the zeitgeist was one in which modernists began to reformulate literary goals and strategies in a newly-recognized and named post-war era. Lawrence and Lewis thus find themselves in the midst of an at least doubly-riven cultural terrain. In addition to the tensions between an emerging generation of authors committed to experimentation and novelty and a preceding generation of traditionalists, Lawrence and Lewis were also acutely aware of the disagreements between modernists concerning the most desirable forms of experimentation and novelty.

While Lawrence and Lewis are not unique in characterizing their period as one of divisiveness and crisis, they are remarkable in that they both respond to their situation by identifying an antagonism between a certain form of individualism and the drive toward novelty and agency. For example, Lawrence argues that England is in a state of crisis or decline, and in proposing a solution to that crisis, he contends that individualism and egoism limit the potential to imagine different ways of relating to others. He hopes that “get[ting] back into relation” will result in artists’ “achiev[ement] of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe around us” (“A Propos” 329; “Morality” 108), thus anticipating actions that could wrest England from its current state. Lewis takes a more narrowly focussed approach and doggedly pursues evidence of the ways in which literary experimentation is limited by the influence and taste of the literary elite, who misunderstand individualism as the cultivation of psychological depth, and who therefore support questionable models of selfhood. His critique leads him to hope that

authors could “be put in a position finally to be effective” (*Enemy* 3: 53). In this regard, when Lawrence and Lewis critique the situation in which they find themselves, they tend to reimagine the subject as one who might both understand and participate in changing literary and social space. In short, Lawrence and Lewis both posit a strong connection between individuality, novelty, and agency and argue that the status quo tends to reaffirm forms of individualism that limit the possibility of change. When they address this problematic, they share a pattern: they identify the situation in which they find themselves by highlighting examples from other modernist authors; they identify particularly striking aspects of literary work that signal a potential disruption to their situation; and they ask whether proposed changes to the situation would impact how subjective positions and individual agency could be newly conceived. While they share this interrogation of their contemporaries, Lawrence and Lewis pose their questions differently: whereas Lewis will emphasize the effects of collectivity on the desire for revolutionary action, Lawrence will devote his energies to the problems of passion and affect. Thus, Lawrence and Lewis ask both how we might conceive of individuality when we understand the future to be variable, and how the individual might be reoriented toward that unknowable future. In so doing, they redefine the individual in divergent ways so that it might be capable of activity in a new environment.

“Tainted with Individualism”: Lawrence, Lewis and the State of the Situation

This project is motivated by a question that haunts much of modernist literature: what does it mean to have agency, particularly when we are inadvertently complicit in and limited by the ways in which society is structured, commercially, socially, and politically? Lawrence and Lewis invest this question with a sense of urgency that leads them to prioritize answering it over

proposing concrete social reforms, even though they claim that they hope to change or “remak[e] the world” (Lawrence, “Letter,” 15 Dec 1916). Reclaiming agency is an elusive goal, however, as these authors identify several obstacles to reimagining action in social space. One major obstacle, upon which they agree, is the extent to which concepts of change or revolution have been evacuated of their potential to introduce unknowable or unpredictable outcomes. Partly, they believe that this elision of true novelty—that which might be introduced through change or revolution—is caused by their contemporaries’ understanding of individualism. They characterize the misapprehension of the individual as endemic, not only to literature but to culture more generally, and suggest that prevalent versions of “individualism” actively impede one’s ability to rescue a sense of agency necessary to imagine a truly revolutionary future. To reimagine individuality in a post-war world, Lawrence and Lewis must first address the state of their cultural situation—a situation that they find unduly conserves the status quo.

If Lewis and Lawrence position themselves as critics of purportedly widespread tendencies of thought, and in so doing question their contemporaries’ conceptions of literary experimentation, change, and “revolution,” their emphasis differs. Lewis will highlight the effects of consumer culture and collective influence on revolutionary action, whereas Lawrence will devote his attention to the potentially innovative impact of affective relationships. In Lewis’s second little magazine venture, *The Enemy*, he focusses on groups of artists who, he suggests, replicate each others’ work to the extent that there are no longer any innovators among them. “No collectivity,” he suggests, “ever conceives, or, having done so, would ever be able to carry through, an insurrection or a reform of any intensity, or of any magnitude” (*Enemy* 1: 49). Consequently, he asserts that “it is clear that we cannot go on for ever making revolutions which are returns merely to some former period of history” (1: 58), and addresses these groups as a

pressing impediment to “new creation” in art and real “Revolution” in social and political space (1: 34; 186). In contrast, Lawrence investigates the psychological and affective modes on which he imagines action and revolution are founded. He notes, for instance, that although American literature in the first decade of the twentieth century is purportedly the testing ground for original thought, and is supposed to exhibit “a shifting over from the old psyche to something new” (*Classic* 1), in actuality America is “tangled in her own barbed wire, and mastered by her own machines” (21). While they both engage with the same issue—that social and cultural impediments deny a “new state of things” and the “initiative and development” that a new state might inspire (Lewis, *Blast* 2: 42)—their differing emphases often offer divergent analyses of the impacts of crisis on personal relationships and cultural production.

Their divergent analyses also indicate that this problem is not solved by simply correcting misconceptions about what is new and what is not. For example, Lewis will argue that the experimental work exhibited in Joyce’s *Ulysses* is tantamount to mere technical innovation or “stylistic exercises” rather than a new form of artistic expression (*Enemy* 1: 114). Similarly, Lawrence reveals that the representation of absolute freedom in American literature is nothing more than “a rattling of chains”—the generic declaration of freedom merely an exchange of one master for another (*Classic* 6). However, their critiques do not intend to correct these local instances of insufficient innovation or insufficient liberty. Instead, Lawrence argues that the kind of change sought through “freedom” may be either ineffable or unknowable within the existing conditions. He claims that to be truly “free,” one must “break the spell of the old mastery” before submitting to “the open road, as the road opens, into the unknown” (6; 173). For his part, Lewis will claim in the final pages of *The Enemy* that

What I am trying to show by these remarks is that what we call Revolution, whose form is spectacular change of the technique of life, of ideas, is not the work of the majority of people, indeed is nothing at all to do with them; and, further, is even alien to their instincts, which are entirely conservative. (1: 187)

Both authors thus highlight the extent to which novelty must always be bound up with the unknown, lest it has some connection—if only negative or oppositional—to the past and its established modes of knowledge. Whereas Lawrence baldly states his position—that the “long life-travel into the unknown” is the goal of human endeavor (*Classic* 173)—Lewis is more subtle in his demonstration of how we are imbricated in a network of influences called “ideology” that affects all of our ideas (*Enemy* 1: 107), including our understanding of novelty, such that most people are capable neither of producing nor recognizing it. Consequently, both authors consider the new as a break of an absolute kind—not necessarily a break from the past, but a break from the material and historical circumstances that define a state of affairs. For something to be truly new, they argue, that state of things must be reconfigured—including the predominant traditions, conceptions, and social organizations that organize the present and in part determine one’s ability to imagine the new itself. They charge that competing avant-garde or experimental approaches fail to realize the “revolution” that they advertise, and, more pressingly, perpetuate some of the more deleterious effects of the current state of things.

While Lawrence and Lewis suspect that artistic movements often operate to support the status quo, they again pursue this shared suspicion differently: Lawrence will mainly emphasize the effects of what he calls morality, while Lewis will focus on the consequences of social influence and of a particular form of individualism. Lawrence argues that morality, which he defines as a force compelling social cohesion, is the restrictive standard that comes to replace a

more substantial ethics of community. Moreover, contemporary art is assessed through that moralistic lens. In *Study of Thomas Hardy*, he describes the “system of morality” against which art is adjudged worthy of recognition (89), and argues that morality functions to dissuade both authors and readers from understanding novelty as a potentially positive force. Instead of inspiring growth, he argues, morality forces conformity; in British novels, he writes, we “let a man will for himself, and he is destroyed. He must will according to the established system” (24). He sees in literature an important potential balm in this regard. “The essential function of art is moral,” he insists, “But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake” (“Morality” 171). Lawrence emphasizes literature’s potential to elude the problem he sees in the encounter with novelty: literature could possibly “change the blood,” and the mind could then assess the new sensations that are introduced. But to understand the positive function of this new “deeper morality” and to recognize how it affects the individual (“A Propos” 329), he argues, one must dispose of morality as it is currently conceived.

Lewis is more emphatic that the state of things poses a threat to revolutionary activity. His “system of criticism” in *The Enemy* purports to reveal the two main forces that restrict artists’ capacity to recognize novelty (1: 46): firstly, the groups of “false revolutionaries” who dilute the significance of the “new” and “radical” (1: 65), and secondly, the misconception of individualism, which has become confused with a kind of retreat from social life into the absolute authenticity of the self (as though this were a novel strategy). He insists that the stakes of community life depend on how the individual interacts with the world, and writes that if you understand “individualism” as the signifier of your uniqueness, “Your ‘individualism’ will be that mad one of the ‘one and only’ self, a sort of instinctive solipsism in practice. It will cause

you to be, therefore, the most dangerous of madmen, that kind that has no scruples where other peoples are concerned, because he has an imperfect belief in their existence” (*Enemy* 1: 34).

Lewis critiques a form of individualism that denies or disparages connection to social life—even though he is notable as a modernist precisely because of his “relentlessly” polemical critiques of his contemporaries (Munton, “Imputing” 5). Much of Lewis’s effort revolves around challenging the individual as the sole measure of value; he sees literary production as “tainted with individualism” (“Fictionist” 447), and claims that the “High-Brow High-Bohemian” literary circles which organize themselves around this taint actively impede unique artists (*Enemy* 2: xi). Assessing modes of literary-cultural production, he repeatedly cautions that the tendency to collaborate with “homogenous groups of friends” that influence one another paradoxically produces a conformist “collectivity” of supposedly individualist artists (1: 52). That conformity has an impact on whether an artist can be “effective” (3: 53). If artists conform, he argues, then they are “false revolutionaries” who will never participate in the production of “an order of things radically different from the ‘capitalist state’” (3: 25); instead, they will perpetuate that state under a new name. In this regard, Lewis’s understanding of individualism is neither based on a conception of the unique genius of the individual artist, nor dependent on the artist who is part of an artistic or avant-garde collective.

As we can see, both authors understand their contemporaries’ notions of novelty and individuality as different facets of a situation from which individual agency must be rescued. The key critical works in which they discuss this problem are Lawrence’s *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*, and Lewis’s *The Enemy*. Each of these texts describe a state of affairs—whether social or literary—that is defined by a state of attrition. Lawrence and Lewis argue that novelty is not the effect of past events; instead, it produces a rupture that

reveals the ways in which the present conditions of experience render an individual incapable of recognizing what could be truly new or revolutionary. In sum, their discussions pivot around two central ideas: first, if the new can manifest in a radical occurrence, such an occurrence will affect how we define and understand action in the context of literary production; and, second, the potential for radical occurrence can be renewed by reimagining the individual.

For Lawrence and Lewis, agency is closely tied to the negotiation of individualism and egoism in the modernist period. As Levenson has convincingly suggested in *A Genealogy of Modernism*, the period was one in which “wars” amongst the literary elite were waged, and many of these wars concern the conception of individualism and how it is deployed in literary works in the early decades of the twentieth century. Levenson focuses in particular on the influence of Max Stirner’s *The Ego and Its Own*, translated into English in 1907 and spawning 49 editions (not to mention many adherents and detractors) in Britain between 1900 and 1929 (66). Stirnerian egoism, an extreme form of individualism that was greeted with suspicion in England, essentially posits that the judgment of the unique individual surpasses that of all extant evaluative frameworks. It comes quite close, therefore, to a kind of solipsism: the stability and self-sufficiency of the individual ego excuses Stirner from revolutionary activity in favour of a more individualist-friendly collective “rebellion,” and allows him to advocate for the centrality of the ego as a measure for all values. This form of egoism was refashioned and popularized in England through Ezra Pound’s editorship of the *Egoist* magazine (1914-1919), in which Lewis’ *Tarr* and Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, among others, were serially published. According to Pound, each contributor was to be committed to what he calls the “individualist principle in every department of life” (qtd. in Levenson 71). Under Pound’s editorship, the magazine reinterpreted Stirnerian egoism to suggest guidelines for artistic production: *The Egoist*

wanted to “confin[e] art to the physically and psychologically given” (110), which was under the purview and control of the individual, rather than sanction in literature the more abstract and less controllable realms of morality or politics.

Notwithstanding egoism’s popularization and emergence as a cultural phenomenon, literary egoism considered self-expression a central artistic goal, and thereby implicitly posits the self-sufficiency of subjective experience. Lawrence dissents from this view, famously claiming in a letter to Edward Garnett in 1914 that he seeks to find “another ego” on the basis of which to reimagine individualism. Uncomfortable with how the Stirnerian ego was promoted as a “fixed, stable” quantity, Lawrence argues for an alternative that would neither throw the individual out with the solipsistic bathwater nor advocate for the implicit supremacy of instinct or individual will. He writes to Garnett about his goals for *The Rainbow*:

You mustn’t look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we’ve been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element. (*Collected Letters* 183)

In this well-known letter, Lawrence emphasizes that he wants to conceive of an alternative to the double-bind into which his contemporaries have fallen. While much has been made of the “allotropic states” associated with his version of mutable individuality¹, it remains necessary to investigate the extent to which those states are dependent on the “action” the individual undertakes.

¹ See, for example, Bruce Clarke’s discussion in “D.H. Lawrence and the *Egoist* Group,” pp. 74-5.

Lewis, too, reevaluates egoism, intentionality, and individualism. His early involvement with the Vorticists meant an implicit connection to *The Egoist*: indeed, Lewis's first volume of *Blast!* in 1914 explicitly advocates for "an art of individuals" (8), which he imagines offers "greater imaginative freedom" for the artist (46). Lewis's ambivalence regarding British individualism becomes clearer a few years later, in his novel, *Tarr*. Published serially in the pages of *The Egoist* in 1916, *Tarr* is characteristically polemical even in its material form: its main character, Tarr, is a satiric representation of an egoist artist who, despite his many orations on the subject of art, never creates any because he is too embroiled in personal drama. Paul Peppis argues that *Tarr* "refut[es] the Egoists' representation of persons as self-defining beings" by presenting its characters "failing to fulfill the Egoists' ideal of personal and artistic liberation" (136; 235). In this sense, as both Peppis and Joel Nickels agree, Lewis explores the ways in which individuals are imbricated in networks of influence external to the ego, to the extent that Nickels is comfortable declaring the post-war Lewis an "anti-egoist" ("Anti-Egoism" 348). In addition to opposing the literary trend of promoting individualized subjectivity, Lewis demonstrates that the stable, impenetrable ego will not go uncriticized, and in practice he emphasizes the extent to which the materiality of social life affects intention and decision-making processes so deeply that these external forces must be inextricable from our conception of the subject.

Moreover, while Lawrence and Lewis dispose of appeals to subjective authenticity, they also reject the desire to locate a more compelling motivating force in the automatism implied by evolutionary narratives—another of modernism's conflicted paradigms. Lawrence's efforts on this subject are organized around his assertion that novelty requires an organic process whose outcome is impossible to predict. He writes that man is "a quivering plasm of what will be, and

has never yet been,” and argues that “for real, utter satisfaction, he must give himself up to complete quivering uncertainty” (*Study* 35). He reimagines the biological imperative to grow or reproduce as something more than a “mechanical” process governed by linear causality (34), and instead claims that the agency of the “primitive” or “deepest self” that seeks the “full achievement of itself” is better understood in terms of the processes of relation than an evolutionarily-intuited imperative to reproduce or to work (12). Lewis is less interested than Lawrence in recuperating a valuable insight provided by evolutionary processes, but he, too, is invested in articulating the source of an agency that might initiate radical change. In contrast to Lawrence, he examines the proposition that a retreat into a kind of deeper self might imply that this more “natural” self has an authenticity or purchase not afforded to rational or conscious agency, or that a “primitive” pre-consciousness implies a sincerity that trumps other forms of conscious agency because of its subconscious origin. Contra this line of argument, Lewis emphasizes that even a purportedly authentic self has been affected by external influences beyond an individual’s control; a form of “individualism” that has come to be understood as an appeal to an authentic self leads one into “an instinctive solipsism” (*Enemy* 1: 34), which has the effect of “an egoism that bathes in the self-feeling to the exclusion of contradictory realities” (1: 35). To those realities, Lewis will persistently devote his critiques.

In a period in which contention over individualism and egoism effected a crisis of agency in the literary world, the specific ways in which Lawrence and Lewis frame agency make them notable: agency is tied to the cultural work of exposing the extent to which prevailing conceptions of individuality function to foreclose the possibility of radical change. Notably, the agency that Lawrence and Lewis want to rediscover neither emerges from an internal core of the

self, nor results from wilful control over subjective experience. Instead, agency as they imagine it is facilitated by an external source, novel and disruptive, that I will refer to as “the event.”

Declaring the Event: Crisis, Utopia, Novelty

We have thus far considered how Lawrence and Lewis characterize their situation: they maintain that their contemporaries have deployed egoism and individualism to support a point of view that largely rejects the influence of external conditions in favor of a sense of agency born of subjective experience. Because, for Lawrence and Lewis, agency is not the wellspring of change, but the consequence of what I will describe as the event, they present a conception of change that differs from that of their contemporaries. Indeed, scholarship has long associated modernist accounts of historical change with notions of *crisis*, *utopia*, and *novelty*. Generally speaking, each of these terms concern the approach of and encounter with the altogether new. Because of the ways in which Lawrence and Lewis position the question of agency as central to these familiar notions, I will argue that we can more productively understand this aspect of their work as articulating what I will call an “evental logic.”

The language of *crisis* is commonplace in criticism of modernist literature and culture, and covers everything from profound suspicion of cultural and political institutions in the wake of the war, to socio-economic upheaval of the sort embodied by the General Strike of 1926, to narrower concerns regarding the financial sustainability of literary and artistic production in an

increasingly international marketplace.² Among this tableau of concerns was, of course, the memory of the War and a commitment to not repeat its devastation. Lecia Rosenthal argues in *Mourning Modernism* that scenes of catastrophe are often presented in the literature of the interwar period “with unprecedented urgency” (3). As a result, she claims, the prospect of more war, and ever more devastating violence, is often reactively countered in literary works by a “fantasy of protective immunity” that “affirm[s], with great ambivalence, the power of the aesthetic” (5). In effect, modernists’ growing urgency held the sense that people no longer trusted the institutions and traditions that had sustained their society because they saw these institutions as culpable in the progressive slide to catastrophic war.

In the critical lexicon, the language of crisis is frequently associated with a descriptive or historicist approach that seeks to identify an historical crisis—such as the War, the General Strike, or the changing conditions of artistic production—in order to show how cultural production responds to these crises by reflecting the state of crisis or presenting imaginative compensation for it. A good example of this critical trend is Anne Wright’s *Literature of Crisis*, in which Wright identifies the first World War as “effect[ing] a crisis” visible in the literature of the period through a thoroughgoing “end-anxiety” that permeates narrative form (18). This “end-anxiety” is a sustained position of uncertainty that Wright argues is evident in a novel’s plot. It is “held *in medias res*, is thwarted in its end-direction: it strives for meaning, in a normative

² See, for example, Lawrence Rainey’s *Institutions of Modernism* for an outline of British writers’ concerns with economic stability and with the sustainability of artists’ living wages between the wars, the concatenation of which introduced impediments to the production of new or innovative works (169-72); Lise Jaillant’s *Cheap Modernism* for a discussion of expanding markets’ impact on international publication, distribution, and censorship, which cautioned authors against polemical experimentation due to the risk of international legal recourse (79); and Tyrus Miller’s *Late Modernism* for a discussion of how these economic realities, in the wake of the General Strike, caused a “catastrophic balance between opposed forces” which he argues led to literature’s distancing itself from civil engagement (72).

configuration which cannot be definitive or unambiguous, and an ending which cannot, in a sense, be finalised or achieved” (16). Surveying a variety of modernist literature, Wright suggests that the literature of crisis moves in one of two directions: in the first, an obsessive concern with narrative distance becomes a means of producing a “coping mechanism” for the crises of modernity, which often takes the form of “mak[ing] crisis a private vision” or experience (198), and thus renders crisis controllable and contained. In the second, the novelist produces either a “continuous present” or “a fiction of permanent and persisting crisis” (112; 157), and dwells in the experience of uncertainty and imbalance, often at the expense of narrative completion and of introducing internal contradictions. Wright identifies these tendencies in modernist literary works and accounts for them as part of a general trend of “end-direction [driven by] the crisis-in-the-world which the fiction seeks, as it were, to resolve” (200). This focus on end-direction also implies, however, that the “fiction of permanent and persisting crisis” remains an outlier even in the literature of crisis, such that it does not offer the reader a calming *gestalt* of private experience. Thus, the language of crisis views cultural production as a response to historical fact. Such a response seeks either to reflect the conditions of catastrophe, or to present imaginative compensation for them.

Similarly, the language of *utopia* seizes historical crisis, but as the occasion on which to demonstrate how literature can (contra reified historical totalizations) reveal the mutability of historical processes and intervene in history as an agent of change. It allows us to think about how crisis can inspire change-oriented engagement rather than passive reflection of social and cultural realities. As Nicholas Brown notes in *Utopian Generations*, significant cultural events impact a generation of writers who reinterpret concepts of newness and change, and adapt discursive models to better contend with catastrophic changes in the cultural landscape; novelty

thus offers one such discursive model for modernist projects that would facilitate their efforts to adapt. Brown argues that theorizations of utopia often intend totalization. However, he finds that modernist authors supply the means by which totalizations are often undercut by that which is excluded from the perceived whole. Modernist authors such as James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis thus resist the “foreclosure” of a totalizing utopia (175): Joyce’s *Ulysses*, for example, proffers “the lack of unifying meaning—a lack of closure that can be seen as either liberating or ideological” (42), and in *The Childermass*, “it is Lewis’s scrupulous refusal to resolve social contradictions by traditional means—even by the traditional magic of narrative closure—that leads perpetually to revolutions” (148). Brown ultimately argues that the utopianism of the modernist period “is founded on a fundamental rift, an internal limit” (10). In this regard, Brown suggests that modern utopian fiction purposely exposes its own “radical incompleteness” (10), such that we become aware of totalization itself as artifice. In the “Postscript” to his work, Brown asks whether utopia can be reimagined through modernist literature so that it might include this trend of incompleteness. He wonders, moreover, “how this Utopia might be brought into being, how the creativity of the multitude might be fashioned into a political subject” (199). By framing modernist utopianism in this way, Brown views literature as something that seizes crisis in order to demonstrate that historical processes are mutable, and thereby repositions literature as an agent of change rather than as a device that inspires passive reflection.

The modernists for whom “what next?” is a recurring question tend to adopt this conception of the “utopian” without concrete visions or methods. Brown’s gesture towards a modernist form of utopia that avoids totalization approximates what Fredric Jameson, in *Valences of the Dialectic*, will argue is the original meaning of *utopia*. Whereas Brown asserts that the generic form of utopia is totalizing or even totalitarian, Jameson allows us to make the

argument that utopia, properly understood, accords with the definition Brown arrives at in his postscript. In his articulation of the problematic, Jameson asserts, “What is important in a Utopia is not what can be positively imagined and proposed, but rather what is not imaginable and not conceivable” (413). Jameson argues that it is precisely the impossibility of imagining the future that makes utopianism so attractive for modernists; the negative stances with which they begin their discussions are attacks on the limits of imagination and knowledge, so modernist authors mark themselves as “utopian” when they identify these areas of inquiry as potentially productive or useful paths. Whereas Brown suggests that modernists diverge from a utopian project when they reveal or expose the limitations of utopia, Jameson sees the identification of those limitations as ends in themselves, claiming recuperatively that

to deploy a language whose inner logic is precisely the suspension of the name and the holding open of the place for possibility, which is the language of Utopia, . . . neither rules out the eventual return of the vocabulary of socialism nor offers a possible alternative . . . which might then be appropriated in an altogether different and manipulative way. (12)

In his emphasis on possibility, Jameson offers both a hopeful articulation of and a warning concerning modernist utopianism. The “radical incompleteness” of the vision (12), to Jameson’s eye, is a sign of the lack of totalization that utopianism implies, which makes it both valuable and vulnerable to co-optation. The negative connotations of the utopian critical framework to which Jameson briefly alludes are also a concern for Lawrence and Lewis. Lawrence argues that idealists who champion “freedom” on the American frontier have adopted the democratic idea of liberty and reinterpreted it as the freedom to “murder somebody else” (*Classic* 54), and Lewis warns his contemporaries about the “politico-art man” who co-opts their ideas so as to perform

his work as “an agent of catastrophic political reform” (*Enemy* 3: 24), in an implicit reference to the operations of propaganda. Despite their suspicion that concepts adjacent to utopianism might host catastrophic possibilities, however, they persist in their critique and suggest that social change is possible, but resist concretely describing it. Similarly, precisely because utopia is susceptible to being co-opted in bad faith, Jameson affirms that utopia does not prescribe the future.

Yet, as is the case for Lawrence, Lewis, and many minor modernists, the utopian tendency of their thought has been “understudied” or retrospectively treated with hostility (Kohlmann 2-3). In *Utopian Spaces of Modernism*, Benjamin Kohlmann surveys the extent to which modernist utopianism was until recently considered “a threat rather than a promise” (2), and outlines the various ways in which modernist utopianism was subjected to “a wholesale identification with the totalitarian ideologies of the twentieth century” (2). Contra this critical trend, Kohlmann proposes that modernist utopianism often proffers “weaker formulations of utopia”—formulations which present an “exploratory, ubiquitous and multiform impulse rather than a set of ideologemes and propositions about the future” (3)—that are understudied. Like Jameson, Kohlmann insists that many modernist utopian works explore “conjectures about a different social order” rather than impose a grand, coercive vision of social and political organization (3). In this regard, Lawrence and Lewis are uniquely positioned as explorers of both the problem and promise of the utopian modernist project. In their affirmation of the ubiquity of ideological influences, and their unwillingness to propose the contours of the world to come, they demonstrate why those influences must remain subjects of inquiry and critique.

Implicit in utopia is the familiar modernist lexicon of *novelty*—it functions here as a marker of the extent to which historical processes generate instances of potential change. While

utopianism figures novelty as unknowable, that understanding of novelty remains mostly implicit in the critical frameworks I have surveyed thus far. The language of novelty in the modernist period is commonplace and the subject of a critical history too vast to summarize here, but Michael North's *Novelty: a History of the New* provides a useful genealogical frame. He writes that although "modernism did not have its own account of what it means to be new" (151), there are nonetheless particular models of modernist novelty that can be traced throughout the period. He suggests that, even in its most famous iteration, Ezra Pound's exhortation to "Make it new" was actually a gloss intended to promote his translation of *The Great Digest*, such that "the emphasis was not on novelty at all but on 'the sense that historical recurrence comes to inform the *Cantos*'" (170). In this regard, "Pound's injunction," as Hugh Kenner puts it, is a recognition of the extent to which the emperors of the past can be reintroduced in the present in new clothes; through this example, North suggests that the discussion of modernist novelty during the period was less simplistic than a three-word phrase suggests.

North's analysis records two almost competing models of the "new" in modernist artistic production, which he refers to as the *revolutionary* and *evolutionary* paradigms. With reference to the revolutionary model, North argues that modernist artists appeal to a conception of novelty that demands an absolute break from the past, to varying degrees of practicality, such that for some modernists, "the call to revolution in manifestos and works was at least to some extent literal" (153), whereas for others it was more abstract. The question that North raises regarding this model of novelty is that it so busies itself in opposition to a past that it accumulates the disappointments of past failures when total revolution fails to emerge. As a result, North argues that according to this model, "modernism faces the impossible task of establishing its foundations, over and over, on ground that it has itself undermined" (149), and he cites Alain

Badiou's claim that some modernists were engaged in a kind of continuous present of endless revolution, in which "yet another radical doctrine of beginning" takes the place of real changes in social, cultural and political spaces (qtd. in North 155). Turning to a competing model, North argues that one of modernism's grand narratives, the theory of evolution, offers modernists the opportunity to interpret novelty as the product of emergence or willed reorganization, in much the same way that a scientist or chemist might chance upon a "new" discovery that is nonetheless the product of existing elements: "what the artist invents, then, are new relations, new arrangements of pre-existing forms" (159). He calls this the "recombinant model of aesthetic novelty" (160), to which artists such as the Dadaists, Kandinsky, or collage artists adhere. The difficulty with this model, however, is its potential to align itself with what Georg Lukács derisively names the "great jumble sale" artwork, which simply rearranges the world "into a slightly different version of its existing disorder" (160).

It is useful in this context to reconsider whether North's opposition between revolutionary and evolutionary grand narratives has come to inform our understanding of modernist novelty in ways that might obscure literary gestures toward novelty as they pertain to *action*. Notwithstanding North's discussion of Badiou's work in relation to the revolutionary model of novelty, I would suggest that Badiou's philosophical position allows us to reframe the opposition to which North devotes his attention. Rather than provide a substitute for or an amalgam of *crisis*, *utopia*, and *novelty*, Badiou powerfully reconfigures the problem as an "evental process"—what he terms the experience of a subject who encounters radical novelty. In his *Being and Event*, *Logics of Worlds*, *The Handbook of Inaesthetics* and others, Badiou presents a comprehensive theory of the "event," which I argue can be deployed as a useful framework through which to read modernist literature; Bruno Bosteels has also noted that literary theory

could learn much from Badiou if it can “produce an effective and applied thinking of the event” (“Thinking” 85).

To the extent that critics have identified a family resemblance between *crisis*, *utopia*, and *novelty* and have used these concepts as key ways of framing important trends in modernist cultural production, it is not at all surprising that Badiou’s notion of the “event” has been the focus of discussion in recent scholarship on modernist literature, for the focus of his theory is on the extent to which the radically new might be “seized” by the subjects who inhabit a specific socio-historical situation (*Handbook* 14).³ Indeed, some of the appeal of Badiou’s work may be that it engages substantially, and primarily, with works by modernist writers. Nor does modernist literature appeal to Badiou merely as a source of superficial illustrations of his logic. In *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature* (2010), Arthur Lecercle argues that modernist literature particularly captures Badiou’s attention because the period has a paradoxical quality: the twentieth century was rife with social, political, and international conflict, but it is “also a century of hope in a better future and the construction of a new figure of humankind” (41). Reading modernist writers and poets is not only thematically relevant to Badiou but also essential to his development of a theory of the event and the subject: “for him, [literature] is a practice before it is an object of analysis” (Lecercle 57). Badiou asserts that literature participates in the chronicling of events, and that artistic production can inspire activity, education, and political participation; for this reason, the modernist period and its twin poles of revolutionary and evolutionary models of

³ In addition to Arthur Lecercle’s *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature* (2010), among some of the other book-length works that endeavour to make the connection between the event and modernist literature are Andrew Gibson’s *Beckett and Badiou* (2006) and Luke Thurston’s *Literary Ghosts from the Victorians to Modernism* (2012). David Ayers in *Modernism and Race* (2011) also cites Badiou as a useful theoretical frame through which to read Lewis, and Michael Sayeau explores the extent to which scenes of the mundane in Woolf and Joyce might feature the event in *Against the Event* (2013).

understanding novelty offer Badiou fertile ground on which to reformulate the philosophical concept of the event, which has a history stretching from Heidegger to Sartre to our contemporary philosophers.

Badiou's central argument is articulated fully in his magnum opus, *Being and Event*, in which he develops a theory of the event that departs from the theorizations of his philosophical predecessors. Whereas the event may have begun in Heideggerian philosophy as a formal element that was useful in understanding how the new emerges (as something, from nothing), and developed into how we might understand historical periods (as in Sartre and Foucault), in Badiou's work, the event communicates pure novelty as an unaccountable disruption to past forms of organization, rather than casting it as a significant occurrence that has a linear causal origin. Thus, Badiou frames the event as something that "*happens*" in the perpetual present tense (*Inaesthetics* 55), rather than something that *has occurred* as a result of a sequence of events, either natural or otherwise. Badiou's evental procedure therefore does not neatly fit into North's model of revolutionary novelty in modernist literature, for Badiou asserts that the event happens in the present social and cultural environment, which he calls the "state of the situation" (*Being* 233). At first glance, Badiou's conception of novelty might consequently appear to align with North's evolutionary model, particularly when North refers to this understanding of novelty as the reorganization of existing elements in a situation. Badiou insists, however, that novel immanence is included in the evental process. In the outline that follows, I will clarify Badiou's articulation of the evental process by touching on three key and interconnected terms—the *state of the situation*, the *event*, and the *subject*—and will outline how they inform the analysis in the dissertation chapters that follow.

To grasp Badiou's understanding of the event, we must turn first to what he calls the *state of the situation*, a phrase which denotes a set of material conditions that govern the epistemological frameworks and sets of norms that fundamentally shape a given historical context. While these conditions fluctuate, they achieve formal stasis as a "state" when they become reified, either as a shared ideology, or as an object of inquiry and critique. This "state" of a coherent social or world order thus functions as a "count-as-one" (*Being* 105); that is, it functions as an intelligible and singular organization of a political, social, cultural, or even global body or community, and it offers a "count" of each of the elements that comprise it and enable it to function as a coherent whole. As its primary function is to organize and provide formal stability, the state of the situation has far-reaching implications. It includes "regimes of thought" (*Inaesthetics* 9), which are the processes through which things become and are accepted as intelligible. Badiou argues that the situation itself cannot define or disrupt its limits because a "regime of thought" includes everything that is known or that can be imagined—including the limits of the imagination and of knowledge. If limits are named, they are already "counted" by the situation that has codified their appearance and recognition: for "Nothing from within the configuration itself either delimits it or exposes the principle of its end" (13). This conception of the state of the situation, and its strong ideological influence through the regime of thought, raises the question of how novelty is even possible.

Given Badiou's definition of the state of the situation, novelty must be understood as fundamentally threatening and disruptive to the situation. When the state of the situation is threatened, its organizing features, such as its regimes of thought, are subject to suspicion; any novel irruption therefore reveals that there is a "hole in knowledge" (*Inaesthetics* 10), meaning that the regimes of thought that have come to organize the situation are no longer sufficient for

understanding everything it contains or could contain. The “hole in knowledge” is threatening because it reveals that the situation is an anachronistic or fundamentally incomplete set—either the state of the situation no longer provides stability after a culture-altering change, or it does not “count” all of the potential outcomes of its arrangement. If the state of the situation is revealed to be insufficient or incomplete in this way, it can and will be overwritten by a new situation: “it can happen that an incalculable event comes to reveal in retrospect a configuration to be obsolete” (*Inaesthetics* 14).

We thus arrive at Badiou’s most central concept: the “event.” It is the event that “pierces a hole in knowledge” (10). The event is “unpredictable and incalculable” (*Inaesthetics* 55), and therefore alien to those who exist within the situation: “if it was actually normal, and could thus be represented, the event would be *part* of the situation” (*Being* 181). Because it is unrepresentable, it cannot be positively identified, except as an absolute novelty, but it can nonetheless be recognized, even within the state of the situation. Badiou argues that limitations are applied to the situation (usually, by the regime of thought that helps to organize it), but those limitations are not essential to it. The situation therefore includes an immanent source of the event, which he names, in *The Handbook of Inaesthetics*, one of a multiple of “truths.” Badiou does not deploy a correspondence theory of truth here, according to which truth is a status assigned to a discursive model (e.g., in which a statement is “true” or “false” based on its relationship to external reality). Rather, Badiou follows the Platonic model of truth such that it is a designation of that which is in excess of, or alien to, the situation and therefore cannot be represented in the discourses, regimes, or language of that situation. Furthermore, Badiou asserts

that there are multiple “truths.”⁴ The recognition of the event is thus part of a revolutionary “truth procedure” (12), which has the potential to produce one evental “rupture” after another (14), inspiring others with the original impact of the initial event and thus disposing of the now-obsolete state of the situation via collective consent and participation in the evental process. By thus articulating the problem, Badiou necessarily links the novelty inaugurated by the event to the individual subjects who name it, and accounts for how human society is reconfigured when it reaches an ineffective “state.”

Badiou’s “event” therefore reframes North’s taxonomy of novelty. According to North’s summary, novelty either emerges through the rearrangement of disparate parts that then reconstitute a whole (as in the evolutionary model), or is forced by a sense of a break with history (in the revolutionary model). On the one hand, history dominates the concept of novelty, such that a radically diminished sense of the new consists of little more than a reorganization of that which is historically given. On the other hand, a strong notion of novelty must more or less dispense with history. Badiou’s theorization of the event takes a slightly different shape. He intends to differentiate between what is *intelligible* and that which is *sensible* (*Inaesthetics* 21): if the state of the situation governs that which is intelligible, then how do we account for the *sense* that something is new, even when our regimes of knowledge do not permit us to notice or identify it? It is precisely in this sense that Badiou’s formulation is useful for the study of literature; it helps us to identify the ways in which North’s revolutionary model will always have an attachment to the material conditions, or state of the situation, in which novelty is intelligible. That is, Badiou is committed to the idea that novelty is not ahistorical, but instead is understood

⁴ See *Being and Event* for a lengthier definition and for the context in which Badiou makes the assertion that truth is necessarily multiple, p. 525.

as a truth that emerges through a local combination of material and historical conditions. For example, when a novel artwork is produced, Badiou describes such an artwork as “the local instance or the differential point of a truth” (*Inaesthetics* 14). Similarly, the evolutionary model of novelty, which emphasizes a catalyzing arrangement that manifests as a novel product, is reconfigured through Badiou’s model of the event. In short, Badiou considers novelty not as an intentional product or goal, but as a potential that is immanent to a situation. Unlike the recombinant approach to novelty, Badiou’s evental logic suggests that when the event is named, it reveals to subjects the possibility of a new but unforeseeable future—a new state of the situation in which regimes of knowledge are reconfigured to include that which was beforehand only sensible.

Badiou’s notion of the state of the situation, and his conception of the event, offer us a means to explore how his evental logic has significant similarities to Lawrence’s and Lewis’s understanding of individual agency. In *The Century*, Badiou claims that “the problem of the [twentieth] century is ... the relationship between life and will” (15-16), where the central questions of the century are organized around a fundamental opposition between the materiality of the body—its evolutionary drives or irrational desires—and the conscious, human agency that evaluates and decides on courses of action. Against this opposition, Badiou seeks “to lay the foundations for a doctrine of choice and decision that would not bear the initial form of a mastery upon choice and decision” (*Inaesthetics* 53-54), such that the ostensible “masters” of either desire or the ego are not the prime movers of intentional action. With the extremes of mechanistic biology on one side and technological automation on the other, Badiou’s terminology helps to clarify how these two modernists understand the emergence of novelty in connection with human action. Badiou implicitly defines agency by offering a framework that

suggests the subject is exclusively constituted neither by its biological imperatives nor its rational decisions. Rather, Badiou argues, “the evental declaration founds the subject” (*Saint* 91). In other words, the active subject does not exist except through its “declaration” of the event—a necessarily public expression about the event’s occurrence—which means that the subject is always coterminous with the event that founded it, and the subject participates in a social space rather than retreats from it. In this sense, the evental logic does not imply a guarantee that human agency might be rescued from the network of influences in which the subject lives, but it nonetheless asserts that the event could *possibly* inspire revolutionary or challenging thought; Badiou emphasizes, “it is always possible for a nonconformist thought to think in the century. This is what a subject is” (*Saint* 110-11).

The subject is the final of the three key Badiouvian terms that I will highlight here. Badiou argues that “the only ‘proof’ of the event lies precisely in its having been declared by a subject” (*Saint* 5). As we have seen, both Lewis and Lawrence do not anticipate the concrete forms in which novelty could appear (which is not to say that they do not theorize novelty or change), but instead make declarations about the state of the situation—that “this lovey-dovey... state of things” or this “world” is beset by a host of problems that they identify. The consequence of their declarations is not that they place themselves as the authoritative arbiters of the state of the situation. Instead, they take on a questioning posture, and wonder what effects change could have (“What next?”), and what is lost by failing to address the issues that they identify. In identifying issues that threaten the state of the situation, they implicitly do justice to a thought, and an opening, that they want to pursue in a public arena—and as a result, they situate themselves as declarative subjects. With their work as examples, we can see that the syntax of Badiou’s formulation—“the subject is founded by its declaration of the event”—is significant.

From its expression in the passive voice to the choice of the word “declaration,” we see that the subject, which we might normally understand as the active agent in a situation, is reframed as the passive object that is *subjected to* the event, and agency is manifest through the subject’s declaration.

In the chapters that follow, I will suggest that Lawrence and Lewis substantially anticipate Badiou’s theory of the event and his understanding of the subject. In so doing, I will follow two broad lines of approach. In exploring their critical writing in Chapters 1 and 3, I will suggest that neither Lawrence nor Lewis seeks to offer a sympathetic analysis of the authors on whom they focus—Hardy, Poe, Joyce, and Stein, among others. Instead, they focus on the ways in which their interlocutors provide the opportunity to critically evaluate the extent to which these authors have disclosed how a given situation provides an insufficient “count” and opens “hole[s] in knowledge”—the truths they have made sensible. When I turn, in Chapters 2 and 4, to Lawrence’s and Lewis’s fiction, I focus not only on the ways in which their fictional worlds investigate potential evental sites, but also on the extent to which characterization allows them to explore various responses to the event—from reactionary rejection to subjective “fidelity to the event”—and the modes of agency these responses entail.

Fidelity to the Event: Agency, Individuality, and the Subject

In this context, Lawrence and Lewis share an urgency in their assessment of the degree to which their contemporaries’ conception of the individual constrains or influences action.

“Nothing in the world is more pernicious than the ego,” Lawrence insists, “every individual receives it almost *en bloc* from the preceding generation, and spends the rest of his life trying to drag his spontaneous self from beneath the horrible incubus” (“Democracy” 75). Similarly,

Lewis focusses on the idea of the authentic self and seeks to critique it as an example of the “domination achieved by an idea and how it ceases to be an idea, and becomes an ideology” (*Enemy* 1: 107). They find that their contemporaries’ conceptions of individuality are impediments to agency, ultimately supporting the constraining effects of an insufficient state of the situation. “Our education from the start has taught us a certain range of *emotions*,” Lawrence writes in “A Propos of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*,” “what to feel and what not to feel, and how to feel the feelings we allow ourselves to feel. All the rest is just non-existent” (311). He thus argues that what is often considered to be a deeply authentic expression of the individual—his or her emotional response—is in fact produced by a situation that encourages “self-expression” through these “counterfeit feelings” (311). Lewis is similarly suspicious of the celebration of subjective motivation as the ground of the individual. For Lewis, purportedly authentic, autonomous motivations are actually constructs of a commodity economy. In *The Enemy*, he argues that consumerism has surreptitiously colonized an individual’s “personality” to the extent that one believes one is acceptably “unique” if one is wearing the “complicated attire” dictated by the latest fashion (*Enemy* 1: 101). In this way, both authors argue that the socially produced and commodified content of “emotion” or of “personality” pacifies the individual into thinking that he is the master of his emotions and thoughts when, ultimately, those aspects of the self sustain the state of the situation and limit individual agency.

This approach to individuality, and the agency that is its predicate, is notable because, for Lawrence and Lewis, the individual cannot be understood as a fully autonomous core, and must be conceived instead as the result of an omnipresent network of influences. For Lawrence, agency must necessarily include a rethinking of the self in its relationship with others. Diagnosing the individual and its potential to form new connections, he writes,

Men only know one another in menace. Individualism has triumphed. If I am a sheer individual, then every other being, every other man especially, is over against me as a menace to me. [...] This sense of isolation, followed by the sense of menace and of fear, is bound to arise as the feeling of oneness and community with our fellow men declines, and the feeling of individualism and personality, which is existence in isolation, increases. The so-called “cultured” classes are the first to develop “personality” and individualism, and the first to fall into the state of unconscious menace and fear. (“A Propos” 332)

The self-isolating individual, he argues, might curtail potential relationships that otherwise could disrupt the state of the situation. This individual is not open to aleatory encounters, or new or challenging relationships. Lewis, too, shares Lawrence’s sense that people have turned on one another to the extent that they have become isolated individuals. Conformity produced by the ready-made “personality,” he argues, signals the reification and support of the status quo.

Even though they are at odds in their understanding of the effects of “personality,” Lawrence and Lewis share the impulse to reflect carefully on how one participates in the social world, and to reimagine the subject as the product of, rather than the autonomous agent in, a situation. They both understand the individual not as an embattled enclosure, but as open to and affected by the complex network of relationships in which it participates. Their goals are, as Jameson writes of Lewis, “resolutely social” (*Fables* 135); their critiques, furthermore, often seek to understand how artistic decisions impact the way we understand others living in the same social space. Lawrence, for example, argues that the age is defined by a “great mistrust between persons,” which limits the potential to revitalize “fundamental emotional sympathy” and attenuates the formation of new kinds of relationships (“A Propos” 313). Lewis, too, believes

that the artist's compulsion to appeal to "authenticity" as the measure of value for artwork will result in that artwork being "cut off from the rest of the world" (*Enemy* 1: 72). In this sense, both authors emphasize that participation in public space is a necessary process for the creation of a new form of individuality. Moreover, they recognize that there is value in engaging directly with their contemporaries in the form of cultural critique.

Lawrence's and Lewis's antagonism to their contemporaries' conceptions of individuality also brings us to arguably the most important implication of Badiou's evental theory as it concerns individual agency: the event depends on an act of interpretive choice. In *Saint Paul: The Foundations of Universalism*, Badiou argues that individuals must *choose* to "declare" the event, and thus their subjectivation, for there is the possibility that the event "remain[s] foreign" or that it might be rejected outright (21). This dependence on the subject's declaration is what makes the event both "precarious" and precious (54). The "price" of the event is that for an event to have any purchase at all, it must have a meaning to the local agent who then chooses to declare it (22). In other words, the declaring subject can introduce to others the insufficiency of the situation, but his or her actions are not guaranteed to be successful. Badiou insists upon this because the subjective declaration is local and variable.

The precarity of the evental declaration also has an impact on how we might understand the subject as Lawrence and Lewis want to imagine it. As I have noted, Badiou writes that the event simply "happens" in a perpetual present tense (*Inaesthetics* 55). He means that the event could simply pass without notice; only if a subject declares it as a potentially transformative event does it continue to happen. For Badiou, *happening* diverges from its colloquial definition. An event is not merely an occurrence, because the facts of its happening—its date and time and location, for example—are important only in a purely historical sense. Rather, an event *happens*

because it *continues* to motivate a subject, who recognizes the event as potentially transformative to the state of the situation: it inspires a “process, and not a judgment or state of affairs. This process is de jure infinite, or uncompleteable” (55). In this way, Badiou differentiates the event from a singularly transformative moment in time; rather than undergoing a sudden Damascene conversion, the subject decides *ex post facto* that the event has not only taken place but also has and continues to have significance. As a result, the declaration of the event seems like a “fragile” process (C. Wright 83), for it depends on the agency of the subjects within a state of a situation. One can believe that the event “happens,” or obscure the event as “belonging to the situation” and thus divest it of its transformative power (Badiou, *Being* 202), or react by ignoring the event altogether. If one remains faithful to an event, one is an “apostle”: “How is one to know when one is an apostle? According to the truth of a declaration and its consequences, which, being without proof or visibility, emerges at that point where knowledge, be it empirical or conceptual, breaks down” (*Saint* 45). So, “without proof or visibility,” the subject declares the precarious event’s significance, even amongst a potential “infinite multiplicity” of other competing representations (10).

Although the terminology differs, this distinction between apostles and competing representations of the event is present in Lawrence’s and Lewis’s work, particularly when they represent the ways in which some characters embody individual agency as the rebellion against or rejection of the state of the situation. Merely reacting to the present by rejecting it, they suggest, runs the risk of a retreat into a fantasy of individual self-sufficiency. According to Lewis, if one claims oneself to be an “individual” against the collective, the result is “a fanatical hegemony with your unique self-feeling” (*Enemy* 1: 34). Similarly, Lawrence warns that “all amount of clumsy distinguishing ourselves from some other things will not make us thus become

ourselves. [...] We start the wrong way round: thinking, by learning what we are not, to know what we as individuals are” (*Study* 44). They agree, therefore, that simply rejecting the present situation will exaggerate the unique qualities of the individual at the expense of his participation in social space. In their assessment of the state of experimental literature, both Lawrence and Lewis critique other authors whose decisions foster and encourage that kind of rejection, which they read as the complacency of maintaining the current state of things. Lewis, for example, criticizes Joyce’s use of free indirect style in *Ulysses* as an indulgent and ultimately fruitless exercise in intense navel-gazing, and Lawrence critiques Walt Whitman for having a monomaniacal conception of the self, such that he imagined Whitman at “the edge of a cliff, [looking] down into death. And there he camped, powerless” (*Classic* 174). Experimentation, they argue, has not led to significant cultural change—for them, the urgent and moral goal of literary work. For Lewis, literature should seek “to finally be effective” (*Enemy* 3: 53), and for Lawrence, it should “help us” in the creation of a new world (“Why the Novel” 197).

Moreover, the precarity of the event aligns with Lawrence’s and Lewis’s persistence in their critiques; when they insist that the foundations of individuality are unproductively imagined, either in *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*, or *Tarr* and *The Enemy*, they indicate their participation in a process whose impact they find potentially precarious, such that the focus of their critique needs to be continuously revisited. The phrase Badiou uses to describe this kind of persistence is “fidelity to the event” (55), which entails a belief in the truth that the event has disclosed—and the continued declaration of that truth. In other words, the subject is compelled to produce potentially infinite works in the service of a “truth process” (55). Thus, the declaration involves a choice to engage in ongoing work—a choice that can be denied through “subjective weakness,” or pursued (*Inaesthetics* 54). This

focus is, in Badiou's framework, an indication of their participation in an evental process.

According to Badiou, the persistence of the evental declaration is necessary, for it shares the potentially universal "truth process" with others—meaning that the declaration has the potential to be meaningfully true for everyone. Without fidelity to the event, Badiou argues, "the evental declaration ... is useless" (*Saint* 91).

Finally, and most importantly for our discussion of Lawrence and Lewis, "fidelity to the event" is not born of morality or an attempt to offer a corrective, as both of these motivators would necessarily be included in the state of the situation. Instead, fidelity emphasizes the subject's "hope" for a new state of the situation: it "is to participate, point by point, in the organization of a new body, in which a faithful subjective formalism comes to take root" (*Logics* 35). In sum, Badiou's logic both emphasizes the processual nature of subjectivation, and insists that having "hope" for the outcome of work is "the subjectivity proper to the subjective process" (*Saint* 93). In so framing the subject and its participation in public space, Badiou's theory of the event and its declaration allows us to see that the deployment of evental logic implies belief in a universal ethics of participation in public space. Crucially, however, its success is not guaranteed. In terms of how this impacts our analysis of Lawrence and Lewis, "fidelity to the event" succinctly connects their persistence, their emphasis on particularism (via the antagonistic methods through which they deploy their critiques), and their assumption that the work they produce anticipates a novel approach to individuality by characterizing the convergence of these interests as the "hope" for reimagining cultural space.

Badiou's theory, therefore, allows us to understand agency not as a tension between imbrication and autonomy, but as a supposition that the subject can identify and declare an event that radically reshapes the state of the situation. The extent to which the declaration serves that

purpose is dependent on ongoing acts of fidelity. As I demonstrate, both Lewis and Lawrence strongly believe that fiction is an effective means of disclosing the evental procedure and the barriers to fidelity, so it is especially important to establish a critical model that will align with their evental logic. This dissertation therefore deploys a theoretical framework adapted from and inspired by Badiou to explore both how Lawrence and Lewis evaluate the impact of subjective decisions and whether they constitute effective or world-building actions. Although some terminology is borrowed from Badiou, I argue that Lawrence and Lewis expand the implications of Badiou's evental process, particularly when their characters interact with others who either reject the event in a show of autonomous will, or deny its existence in order to reinforce the state of the situation. Their characters emphasize the importance of the particularity and singularity of subjective experience, and thereby foreground the often messy, often confused, and often tragic situation of the subject near an evental site, a detailed area of inquiry that Badiou's work invites through his claim that a truth disclosed by the event is precarious.

Both of the novels that I will discuss in this dissertation are examples of authorial fidelity to the event that Badiou will describe as evidence of being an "apostle ... without proof" (*Saint* 45). In this regard, the fidelity to the event that I will explore is essentially an effort to map Lawrence's and Lewis's critical work as part of an optimistic process. The evental logic asserts that even without proof, the subject can nonetheless declare an event that could initiate the same evental process for others, who could then imagine changes to the situation in which they find themselves. As Badiou notes, it is essential to be optimistic in this way, particularly during a time of crisis or upheaval, for the hope of a better world. He argues, "For many of those faithful to it, the revolution is not what arrives, but what must arrive so that there is something else" (48). I isolate the aspects of both Lawrence's and Lewis's works that suggest hopefulness of this kind,

for that “something else”. Lewis wants to initiate “a sudden barrage of destructive criticism laid down about a spot where temples, it is hoped, may under its cover be erected” (*Enemy* 3: 25), and Lawrence, too, wants us to “set our hands to the remaking of the world” (“Letter”).

Evental Modernism for Lawrence and Lewis

I have divided my analysis in what follows into two parts, the first devoted to Lawrence and the second to Lewis. Each part opens with a chapter devoted to the relevant author’s critical writing, and is followed by a chapter focusing on a representative fictional text (*Women in Love* and *Tarr*, respectively). The conceptual focus of the critical chapters falls most heavily upon the ways in which Lawrence and Lewis come to understand the state of the situation that they inhabit and the constraints that it entails. My analysis of the fiction shifts focus to consider questions of agency and the emergence of the subject—or the complex of barriers to its emergence—in relation to the event. My analysis seeks less to actively forge connections between Lawrence and Lewis than to suggest that their work is notable for the extent to which it is animated by a shared set of conceptual problems, despite the fact that their responses to those problems frequently diverge.

Chapter 1 reads a selection of Lawrence’s critical writing, focusing heavily on *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*, in order to understand the tension that Lawrence sees between the state of the situation and the agency he finds in that context. This tension is embodied by the extent to which Hardy’s work comes to emblemize the constraint of English custom, whereas America provides the opportunity to consider an escape from those constraints. In this regard, Lawrence traces the concepts of *morality*, *freedom*, and *feeling* in order to codify experience and explore the ways in which the individual might escape from that

constraint. Morality, in *Study*, describes the codification of a status quo. Freedom, in the American context, comes to organize the possibility of an escape from constraint. Feeling is the mediating term between these two poles—although it is structured by morality, it suggests that affective relationships proffer a substantial challenge to the status quo, for feelings take into account the mutable quality of relationships, not only between individuals but also within the structures of a given situation.

Chapter 2 will focus on how amorous relationships in *Women in Love* form an evental site, which suggests to the novel's characters a form of agency that must reorganize the state of the situation. Given the novel's early investment in establishing critical distance between characters' feelings of love from those feelings' associations with marriage (as a socially sanctioned goal for their relationships), I will organize this chapter by focusing on how Lawrence uses the triad of Ursula, Birkin, and Gerald to represent what Badiou calls "Two-scenes," or evental sites as they manifest through love. Amorous relationships in this novel signal an irruption to the state of the situation that fundamentally alters characters' understanding of relationships and social organization. Birkin's pursuit of "another world" in which he and Gerald could form "an additional perfect relationship" is central to this discussion (352), for it reframes the novel as an exploration of how Birkin's idea of a relationship with Gerald is not counted by the state of the situation, despite its explicit effects on each of the members of the triad. Birkin thus provides an example of a subjective declaration, which Lawrence represents as predicated on "belief". Insofar as the affective modes in Birkin's relationship with Gerald are neither counted in the state of the situation nor recognized by at least one of his partners, his pursuit of a new state of the situation relies on his subjective declaration that he "believe[s]" that a new relationship with Gerald is possible (481). By thus framing Birkin's agency, *Women in*

Love suggests that attending to the transformative power of affective relationships could manifest resistance to the social systems that only superficially govern and structure them.

Chapter 3 grapples at length with Lewis's *The Enemy*, a little magazine in three issues, in order to identify the ways in which ideologies find their agents in the purportedly "revolutionary" avant-gardism of the twenties and thirties. Lewis's central essays focus on how human agents may unknowingly participate in campaigns that actively denigrate cultural innovation. In this regard, Lewis takes aim at three related targets: the concept of "Revolution" in literary modernism; influential modernist coteries, to which he refers as the "High-Brow High-Bohemian utopia" (2: xi); and the well-connected literary editors who insist on forming groups of like-minded contributors. In each case, Lewis's interest falls on the degree to which these modernist institutions limit meaningful literary experimentation. By consistently tracing his suspicions and the effects of group influence on literary production, Lewis insists that these three features of the post-war cultural environment have evolved alongside the commercialization of the literary marketplace to force a renegotiation of the terms on which modernists understand novelty—terms which include the egoist or authentic self, commonly understood to be uniquely "detached" from cultural influence. For this reason, he presents the idea of "being detached with yourself"—the production of a persona such as "The Enemy" that deliberately situates a *position* or point of view as the *object* of critique—in order to demonstrate how a literary critic and author might acknowledge, if not address and curtail, the ideological influence that he sees permeating cultural production.

In Chapter 4, I argue that Lewis's most celebrated novel, *Tarr*, demonstrates the ways in which processes of representation can sometimes function to misdirect individuals' attention toward surface as a *replacement* for agency. This unconscious replacement is, in effect, ideology

at work. *Tarr* stages the state of the situation by way of a group called The Liepmann, the ostensible organizers of a kind of bourgeois moralism that comes to police the actions and plans of action that each character undertakes. In this regard, *Tarr*'s approach to the question of agency consistently emphasizes the limits of autonomy. By highlighting characters who are ultimately ineffective at wresting themselves from the influence of the group, Lewis presents various subjective positions that assume autonomy from ideological imbrication, and reveals that each is nonetheless susceptible to the predations of group influence. *Tarr* thus largely expands on Badiou's model of resistance to the event: the *reactive* subject, who recognizes the impact of an evental site, but is unable or unwilling to participate in the declaration of the event, is sympathetically framed through Bertha's character arc, wherein she makes an effort to regain individual agency, but is ultimately unsuccessful. Through Kreisler, Lewis further demonstrates that a complete rejection of social realities does not constitute autonomy. In this regard, Lewis demonstrates his version of the evental logic in *Tarr*. Whereas individual characters are unable to recognize the extent to which representation affects the recognition of their options, the novel itself satirizes their behaviors in order to develop Lewis's "non-moral" satire, which exposes and critiques the mechanisms by which ideology operates, and thereby points to what the situation lacks: effective agents.

CHAPTER 1: “What Feelings Will Carry Us Through?”: D. H. Lawrence and the Agency of Affect

In “A Propos of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*,” D.H. Lawrence argues that the plight of modernity is that, in an ever-changing world, “people allow themselves to feel a certain number of limited feelings” (311). The permissible feelings to which he refers are “counterfeit[s]” (311), exaggerated expressions of sentimentality and custom, rather than reactions to difficult experiences. Lawrence argues that the permission that people give themselves to feel is dictated by a static conception of “culture and civilization” (307), and that feelings are misunderstood as inherent emotional content rather than products of networks of socialization. For in addition to implicitly limiting allowable feelings and thereby sanctioning unsatisfactory “fakes” (311), a culture that has a limited number of permissible feelings will also affect people’s ability not only to understand themselves but also to sympathize with others. Lawrence claims that this central problem generally makes modernity an “age of [great] mistrust between persons” (313), and specifically limits authors’ ability to innovate. Novels, he claims, become commodities which represent “counterfeit emotions” that stand in for love and friendship, and are marketed precisely because their emotional content is permissible and recognizable, not because that content represents how people actually understand their relationships or their life in common (312). In sum, Lawrence argues that modern culture is hamstrung by a lack of “fundamental emotional sympathy” that impacts moral, social, and artistic spheres (313). He insists that restoring emotional sympathy will reinvigorate both social life and culture, and exhorts us to “get back into relation” to address the foundations of human relationships and re-establish the emotive ground that could inspire change in social structures (329). Under the conditions Lawrence

describes, however, getting back into relation, and thereby opening up the space for novelty and change, requires resistance to moral and social boundaries.

These core elements of Lawrence's argument in the *Lady Chatterley* essay will coordinate my analysis in a range of his critical writing for the chapter to come. Lawrence presents us with a key opposition between two kinds of affect: emotion, the "counterfeit feelings" that are a mechanism through which the status quo reinforces itself; and feeling, which will take on the contours of what I will call the evental site. To a large extent, I will ask how Lawrence explores the correlation between feeling and event: how is the subject shaped, how could it be reshaped, and what are the consequences of that reshaping? In this regard, affect becomes that which cannot be accounted for in extant models of subjectivation, and therefore cannot be accounted for within the situation—the broader network of affective experiences that shapes possible responses within a given historical context. This network of affective relationships that Lawrence will exhort us to "get back into" thus offers us a microcosm of his vision for the future, and the individual's active role within it.

"A Propos" Feeling, Relation, and Novelty in Lawrence's Critical Essays

The revised essay that accompanied the 1930 Mandrake Press edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "A Propos," reacts to the lucrative sales of pirated versions of the novel—for

which Lawrence had suffered under England's obscenity laws⁵—and objects to the laws' premises. Because "obscenity only comes in when the mind despises and fears the body" (309), he argues, his answer was to write his novel to rehabilitate the mind so that it no longer fears the body, thereby establishing a space in which to explore "the thoughtful consciousness of the body's sensations and experiences" (308). Lawrence reasons that "obscenity" displays a problem with the moral restrictions that are placed on representations of bodily experience. He therefore asserts that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was "an honest, healthy book" whose "real point" was to produce an ameliorative "harmony" or balance between the body and thought (307; 309). Although the tone of his essay suggests that he is pessimistic about the state of cultural production in England, he insists that "fear of the body and the body's potencies" should not be the prevailing feeling promoted by English literary works (309).

One might begin to think that, at this level of generalization, his comments refer to erotica, but Lawrence differentiates his novel from other works in which the body becomes "at best the tool of the mind, [and] at the worst, the toy" (310); he implies that novelty, not titillation, should be the aim of representation. But the seemingly catch-all restrictions placed on "obscene" literature, he claims, limit the full range of feeling that would otherwise permit novelty. By way of explanation, he writes,

Today, many people live and die without having had any real feelings—though they have had a "rich emotional life" apparently, having showed strong mental

⁵ Lawrence's financial state had been grim in the years following WWI (Harrison 170; Delavanay 212), a situation only complicated by "all of the antagonism" he experienced in the aftermath of *Lady Chatterley's Lover's* first publication ("A Propos" 307). Publishers were also anxious about distributing Lawrence's work, given the threat of prosecution, seizure of goods, and substantial fines (Hilliard 177-8). So, the idea that Lawrence was missing out on a significant number of sales from pirated editions of his novel made him feel as though, as he put it in a letter to Martin Secker in 1929, "I am left with nothing" (qtd. in Squires lvii).

feeling. But it is all counterfeit. [...] Our education from the start has *taught* us a certain range of emotions, what to feel and what not to feel, and how to feel the feelings we allow ourselves to feel. All the rest is just non-existent. The vulgar criticism of any new good book is: Of course nobody ever felt like that!—People allow themselves to feel a certain number of limited feelings. So it was in the last century. This feeling only what you allow yourselves to feel at last kills all capacity for feeling, and in the higher emotional range, you feel nothing at all.

(311)

Lawrence argues, here, for a contrast between the “rich emotional life,” which is taught or received, and the much rarer “real feelings” on whose behalf he struggles. His attempt to represent bodily experience in fiction appears to be, for him, less consequential than the possibility that the experience of such representations might give his readers a kind of permission to engage in purportedly taboo forms of affective relationship. The world in which *Lady Chatterley* was banned for “obscenity,” and in which Lawrence was antagonized for being sex-obsessed, is precisely a world governed by the enforcement of a limited range of acceptable emotions. In Lawrence’s lexicon, *emotion* designates the “counterfeit” subjective content that has been taught or socially reproduced, implicitly defining the acceptable range of affective experience. Moreover, as Lawrence suggests when he associates it with the demonstration of a “strong mental feeling,” *emotion* is less a truly affective experience than the cognitive representation of one. *Feeling*, or “real feelings,” signifies, by contrast, the expanse of affective experience that emotion excludes. In defending *feeling* against the predations of *emotion*, Lawrence seems partially to have in mind the recovery of the variety of emotional content that moral codes and censorship laws have suppressed. More importantly, though, he seeks to recover

feeling as the capacity for empathetic relationship to one's world—an experience that is truly affective because it is at least partially irreducible to cognitive representation.

Lawrence's differentiation between *emotion* and *feeling* thus reframes the conditions for relationships: feeling is preferable to emotion as the organizing feature of human experience. When Lawrence calls for a return to "relation," he is arguing against a "dry and sterile world" that makes a "mean separateness of everything" (331). His emphasis on feeling thus reorients the conditions of change: accounting for and representing the human body's affective relations, as in literary work, could then challenge the organizing structures that moralize and thereby limit the potential for the diversification of lived experience. Indeed, many of the concerns Lawrence outlines in this late essay, "A Propos," are also manifest in his earlier works; as Taylor Stoehr has noted, Lawrence's interest in feeling and emotion can be connected to a number of his works, from the unpublished *Mr Noon* to *Kangaroo* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (Stoehr 106). The recursive gesture—in which Lawrence continuously finds his way back to the centrality of feeling, contra the prohibitive nature of emotion and morality, on occasions that differed from those that inspired this essay on obscenity for *Lady Chatterley*—is an indication that Lawrence was getting at a problem that he saw as pervasive throughout the twenties and extending into the thirties.

We have traced some of the difficulties of Lawrence's lexicon, but one terminological alignment I would like to explore is his insistence that we "get back into relation" (329), where *relation* functions as a rough synonym for the affective condition that he characterizes as "real feeling." More specifically, I want to explore this concept of relation in order to see how closely it aligns with Badiou's theory of the event, and to identify some of the key moments when Lawrence anticipates that theory. Turning first to "Morality and the Novel" before returning to

“A Propos,” I will clarify how Lawrence understands *feeling*, *relation*, and *novelty* as connected in an effort to establish the groundwork for more inclusive organization of social life.

“Morality and the Novel” proposes a theory of affective relations, which we have already seen Lawrence briefly outline in “A Propos” as a “capacity for feeling.” In “Morality,” Lawrence expands the meaning of this concept so that it includes non-human objects, and suggests that feeling can redefine morality so that it connotes a socially conscious, ethical drive. In this context, artwork plays a substantial role in promoting this more inclusive redefinition of morality. In his example of a “perfected relation” (108), he explains that

The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment. As mankind is always struggling in the toils of old relationships, art is always ahead of the “times,” which themselves are always far in the rear of the living moment.

When van Gogh paints sunflowers, he reveals, or achieves, a vivid relation between himself, as man, and the sunflower, as sunflower, at that quick moment of time. His painting does not represent the sunflower itself. [...] It is a revelation of the perfected relation, at a certain moment, between a man and a sunflower.

[...] If we think about it, we find that our life *consists in* this achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe around us. (108-09)

Lawrence here argues for a model of relation that disposes of the individual as the solitary agent; the objective world, the artist, and the artwork must act on each other, and the relation enhances each of them. Both the sunflower and the man are “changed” (112), and part of this change entails the “struggle with and the displacing of old connexions” (111; 112), such as old

relationships or forms of relation. In this regard, Lawrence distributes agency between both individual and object.

Lawrence focuses more specifically on artistic relations in “Morality” because he wants to emphasize the novelty that emerges. In this “perfected relation,” “man and sunflower both pass away from that moment, in the process of forming a new relationship. [...] Hence art, which reveals or attains to a perfect relationship, will be for ever new” (109). The novelty that an artist produces is therefore not exclusively a property of his or her artwork: the various elements that stand in relationship to the artwork also change in the process. Thus, art has the capacity to both produce *and* represent “new” forms of relation that displace prior configurations. In other words, Lawrence is less interested in how van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* represents its subject matter than in how the painting occasions a series of relationships between the painter, the sunflowers, and the viewer of the artwork—relationships that fundamentally alter the participants. Lawrence’s conception of artistic novelty insists, too, on its aleatory dimension: because the perfected relation produces a new artist and object through their interaction, relation is not precisely a willful attempt to generate a “new” artwork. Instead, novelty depends on these perfected relations in which agency is distributed, and which “displace” prior forms of relation. Consequently, he argues that the perfected relation is moral; it attends to the goal of establishing a new form of relationship between the human and the “living universe,” both in the relation itself and through the creation of the artwork that remains. In contrast, to have “old relationships dished up” in novels is “immoral” (111), Lawrence insists, as these novels attempt to replicate existing forms of relation.

Lawrence thus argues that relation is a process in which agency is distributed and a subject is newly (albeit momentarily) constituted, and change displaces prior modes of relation.

Emphasizing the potential for agency in the relation, Andrew Kalaidjian characterizes Lawrence as an advocate for “positive inertia” (a phrase he adapts from Lawrence’s discussion of energies in *Study of Thomas Hardy*; 42). In Kalaidjian’s analysis, positive inertia is the effect of a sequence in which the body and its material processes are affected by a network of forces. Rather than the inaction or passivity inertia typically denotes, it refers instead to “the slight modulations that the living makes in response to the non-living. [...] The body no longer holds a unique and autonomous space within nature; rather, body and environment participate in a shared field of forces” (42). In other words, the key feature of Lawrence’s “positive inertia” is that the body simultaneously experiences, reacts, and acts. In this sense, what is “positive” about *relation* is that it proffers a kind of agency in which the subject recognizes its part in a participatory process, and acts on the basis of that feeling. The affect-inspired action, Kalaidjian argues, “provides the grounds for a new form of community” (50), one which appeals to an “organic, felt, or affective logic” but is still tethered to “the perpetual forces of impulse and resistance that determine material interaction” (45; 46).

As we can see from this mapping of one of the paths of Lawrence’s thought, the “perfected relation” suggests that the body’s subtle reactions to experience provides a form of agency. In this regard, relation not only affects the local actors in the relationship but also could potentially affect social organization. When Lawrence claims that the perfected relation will begin the process of “the struggle with and displacement of” prior forms of relation (112), he confirms that a “new form of community” is immanent to the situation in which the local actors find themselves. However, whereas the notion of “positive inertia” clarifies Lawrence’s understanding of how the relation might suggest a certain dynamism, it also implies that relation is compelled by natural or physical forces. In other words, it neither fully accounts for how

relation might generate novelty or “really new feelings” nor suggests a form of agency fully predicated on self-consciousness or rational intent (and thereby disposes of the opposition between the material body and thought).

Through the “perfected relation,” Lawrence introduces the kind of novelty that Badiou argues is a necessary precursor to agency. Badiou frames this aspect of his work with a question: “can we think that there is something new in the situation, not outside the situation nor the new somewhere else, but can we really think through novelty and treat it in the situation?” (qtd. in Bosteels, “Change,” 252-53). Like Lawrence, Badiou does not claim that novelty comes from “outside” the situation, or from “somewhere else,” which would imply that an outside source is always necessary for the introduction of novelty to a situation. Instead, he argues that the event is “an irruption of pure novelty which exceeds its situation, forcing upon it singularly transformative consequences” (C. Wright 73). In terms of literature and artworks, Badiou’s and Lawrence’s models of novelty both imply that “new” artworks are at least partially accidental; novelty, in short, happens by chance. Badiou argues, moreover, that the “principle of novelty” to which artworks submit themselves is an indication of an artwork’s participation in the logic of the event (*Inaesthetics* 12), in that the *radically new* necessarily obviates the possibility of either forcing, creating, or willing an event. Grounding radical novelty in the wilful actions of an individual constrained by the situation, he cautions, would imply that novelty is already included in the state of the situation. Because the state of the situation in which the artist works does not account for the radically new, Badiou reasons that when an artist produces avant-garde or experimental art, he can only declare it as such *after* participating in a “process” that makes the experimentation successful. Badiou argues that the subject therefore “subordinates its existence to the aleatory dimension of the event” (*Saint* 4). This formulation is remarkably similar to

Lawrence's parable of the sunflowers, which infers the success of the "perfected relation" only by analyzing its effects: the man and sunflower are both changed, which is only perceptible after the change has occurred and has been noted. The *post facto* analysis is necessary, for Lawrence emphasizes that relation occurs before its novelty is perceptible: "art is always ahead of the 'times,'" he argues, "which themselves are always far in the rear of the living moment" ("Morality" 108). In this regard, the "living moment" contains within it the potential relation between artwork and the living subject.

This retroactive approach to the event is not an oversight; both Badiou and Lawrence understand the evental process in this way precisely because it reconfigures our understanding of agency so that it might better account for networks of influence. Crucially, the evental process involves a form of agency which is bound neither to human will nor the assumption that change occurs as an outcome of an evolutionary drive. Instead, the agency afforded to the subject lies in its *choice* to declare the event. Badiou claims that "revolution is not something that arrives, but what must arrive so that there can be something else" (*Saint* 48). By implication, novelty in artwork, or change in revolution, depends on a perceived necessity, which is mediated through the artist-subject who "must" declare the event. So, when Lawrence redefines "morality" after taking careful note of the conditions under which artwork is declared "obscene," or when he disentangles "feeling" from the more socially acceptable "emotion," he first describes the state of the situation and then marks the necessity of "reveal[ing]" new forms of relation ("Morality" 108). Therefore, Lawrence's extended focus on feeling in his critical writing identifies forms of relation and artistic production as evental processes that disclose the possibility of necessary changes to social and cultural space.

Moreover, Lawrence's repeated opposition between "the perfected relation" and "morality" also anticipates Badiou's intervention into aesthetics in *The Handbook of Inaesthetics*, where he argues that subjectivity and novelty are inextricably entwined (139-41). For Badiou, the subject is constituted by its relationship to the event, and to the social and cultural context in which it is imbricated. The subject only comes into existence as such through the choice to "declare the event" (*Saint* 22). The production of a subject—in Badiou's terms, the process of "subjectivation" (91)—entails an active decision to participate in what the event newly discloses; the declarative subject acknowledges that a "trace" left by the event has disclosed a truth (*Logics* 49).⁶ When Lawrence insists that van Gogh's *Sunflowers* illustrates a "perfected relation," he declares that an event has left a trace that discloses the insufficiency of prior forms of relation: a significant encounter with sunflowers radically reshapes the subject's experience of the world. Moreover, the painting reshapes Lawrence's experience: the painting, as the product of the relation between van Gogh and the sunflowers, bears an evental trace. In this way, the observer of the trace—in this case, Lawrence, who observes the painting—will infer that the encounter between van Gogh and the sunflowers is a fundamentally novel experience, even though he did not share in the experience himself. Because relation has this potentially cascading effect that is facilitated through artwork, the evental process is more significant than a mere occurrence. The significance of the event—a "truth"—is accessible in the trace, but its status as truth requires that it be accessible *to all*, and not just to the subject (van Gogh) who has immediate or direct experience with an event.

⁶ As I outline in the introduction, a "truth" in Badiou's sense means something that cannot be accounted for within the situation, as it constitutes a "hole in knowledge" (*Inaesthetics* 10). In this way, a "truth" demonstrates that something *was* missing from how the situation was previously understood or experienced.

Lawrence also understands “getting back to relation” in terms of this sort of universal accessibility. By producing a novel that could potentially reframe human relationships, an author can introduce models of relation that bear traces of an event. Lawrence, then, not only demonstrates the form of agency available to the artistic subject who recognizes the event (to declare it, say, by writing a novel), but also identifies how this new “perfected relation” reveals the insufficiency of existing modes of relationship. In this way, Lawrence demonstrates the process that Badiou describes as “subjectivation”: the action that the subject undertakes to *make himself subject* to the evental truth, and to permit others to access it. Badiou names these declarative actions “fidelity to the event” or the faithfulness of the subject (*Inaesthetics* 55). That which might once have been defined as repetitious or obsessive fascination becomes, in Badiou’s theory, the sign of the agency of a newly formed subject who acknowledges the trace. This, too, aligns with Lawrence’s emphasis on artwork, and on the difficulty of dealing with “really new feelings”—subjectivation is not an easy task, and it requires a certain degree of fidelity to a truth that was disclosed by an evental trace.

Having explored how Lawrence’s “capacity for feeling” is exemplified in the “perfected relation,” and how subjectivation is necessarily tied to these two important nodes in Lawrence’s evental logic, I will now return to “A Propos” to consider the constraints within which these evental processes operate. For Lawrence, the most general form of constraint is morality, which limits the emergence of perfected relations and traces thereof. In the same way that he distinguishes between emotion and feeling, Lawrence introduces a distinction between “little needs and deeper needs” (328), and the abstractions by which they are structured:

There is a little morality, which concerns persons and the little minds of man: and this, alas, is the morality we live by. But there is a deeper morality, which

concerns all womanhood, all manhood, and nations, and races, and classes of men. This greater morality affects the destiny of mankind over long stretches of time, applies to man's greater needs, and is often in conflict with the little morality of the little needs. ("A Propos" 329)

He thus identifies the "little morality" as representing the status quo, insofar as it conditions and limits experience. But he also suggests that this "little morality" has an exclusionary function: unlike the "deeper morality," the little morality neither applies to nor concerns "all nations, and races, and classes." Just as "the mind has an old, groveling fear of the body" (309), the little morality is scandalized by that which challenges, is exceptional, or is altogether new to the situation. So, when Lawrence warns that authors who endeavor to "get back into relation" will encounter the obstructions of "moralism," he implies that the moral concepts by which novelists will be judged are based on what is thinkable within an existing social organization. The existence of a "deeper morality," however, draws our attention to forces immanent to a given situation that could change this moralistic structuring of human needs. When Lawrence asserts that "It is no use asking for a Word to fulfill such a need" (329), he suggests that manifestoes or pronouncements are insufficient, and will not force a revaluation of needs. Instead, he argues, "We need only pay true attention" (329). In this sense, Lawrence positions human agency as dependent upon the perception of an event: to "pay true attention" to the conditions of social life, he claims, begins a process of work. "Let us prepare now for the death of our present 'little life'" (329), he exhorts. Thus, he imagines the agent as one who makes preparations for a "re-emergence in a bigger life" by "get[ting] back into relation" (329).

Lawrence's "deeper morality" at first glance appears to set the stage for a kind of depth psychology, wherein unconscious motivations will always trump the organizing features of

social life. But when we look closely at Lawrence's discussion of this "depth," we discover that he essentially argues for a means by which we might appreciate, or at the very least recognize, the novelty that might be produced by a more nuanced account of feeling. Deeper morality, he argues, can be accessed through affective relations, which originate in the body, and are susceptible to distortions produced by the mind: "the body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. [...] All the emotions belong to the body and are only recognised by the mind" (311). Here, Lawrence emphasizes the extent to which the subjective content of emotion is governed by the material conditions of the body. "The life of sensations and emotions" that precedes and often supersedes "mental consciousness" is the body's material reality. Consequently, the body's affective response—emotion and feeling—is the source of agency in which Lawrence is interested. In this context, he critiques the philosophical tradition of idealism whose abstraction avoids the important element of material reality:

The last three thousand years of mankind have been an excursion into ideals, bodilessness, and tragedy, and now the excursion is over. And it is like the end of a tragedy in the future. [...] There the dead bodies lie, and the inert ones, and somebody has to clear them away, somebody has to carry on. It is the day after.

Today is already the day after the end of the tragic and idealist epoch. (330)

According to his extended metaphor, a change has already occurred: the evidence is provided by the material body, here made explicit in piles of dead bodies that have been forgotten. If no one has noticed the shift from bodily experience to ideals, it is because the "excursion into ideals, bodilessness, and tragedy" has occluded the body's abandonment and prevented the work of "carry[ing] on." Lawrence's characterization of the turn to ideals as an "excursion" suggests that the reliance on abstract, scientific, or idealist thought signals a world that is disconnected from

the body's potencies, and that, moreover, appeals to a sense that transcendence is the aim of idealist thought. This commitment to ideals therefore forges a kind of knowledge that excludes the body:

The world of reason and science, the moon, a dead lump of earth, the sun, so much gas and spots: this is the dry and sterile little world the abstracted mind inhabits. The world of our little consciousness, which we know in our pettifogging *apartness*. This is how we know the world when we know it apart from ourselves, in the mean separateness of everything. (331; original emphasis)

Lawrence rejects the abstraction that separates the mind from its materiality in the body; instead, he suggests that he sees the work of “carrying on” as the work of those who reject the “dry and sterile” way of thinking that he describes. Consequently, he seeks to redefine “knowledge” so that the body has a place as another producer of knowledge.

In this regard, Lawrence does not attribute a mystical depth to the knowledge that the body contributes. He instead proposes a kind of participatory logic: knowledge is produced by both the mind and the body, and each could provide potentially novel ways of understanding affective experience. The kind of knowledge that Lawrence wants to emphasize is distinct from that exhibited in the “world of reason and science,” insofar as it is distributed to all agents in the epistemological field. As in his conception of the “perfected relation,” Lawrence again insists on the reciprocal nature of affective networks by insisting that even knowledge can be affected by, and can affect, the body. Lawrence’s “deeper morality” is therefore more accurately a *novel* morality to those who might deny the body’s contribution to forms of knowledge.

To broaden the scope somewhat, many of Lawrence’s shorter essays address different stakes of this conflict between morality and novelty. In those essays, he delineates more clearly

the implications of the “little morality” not only for general human knowledge but more specifically for artistic production and novelty. In “Surgery for the Novel—Or a Bomb” and “The State of Funk,” he argues that artworks not only offer both reader and writer an opportunity to actively inhabit an experience, but also inspire recognition of “new feelings” as a means to pursue new ways of being (“Surgery” 118; “State of Funk” 59). The novelty of the “feelings” to which Lawrence refers is also clarified in “The Novel and the Feelings,” in which he writes, “I say feelings, not emotions. Emotions are the things we more or less recognize. [...] We have no language for the feelings” (202). Referring to “emotions” such as love, hate, anger, and greed, he argues that we understand emotions through systems of association that render them controllable: “We see hate like a dog chained to a kennel. We see fear, like a shivering monkey” (202). For Lawrence, feelings are unlike these “pet” emotions; they are uncontrollable, untameable “manifestations” of the “jungle of us” (203). In sum, these shorter essays allow Lawrence to emphasize the embodied nature of feelings, and affirm their inherent ability to disclose experiences that are not easily recognizable within existing frames of understanding. Feelings are therefore affective responses, and compared to the cognitive mapping entailed in “emotions,” lack the associative coordinates which would render them susceptible to understanding and control. Through the affective register, Lawrence essentially describes “feelings” as a kind of trace: they are bodily experiences that expose “a hole in knowledge” and disclose the truth of the event.

As we have seen, Lawrence seeks to identify *feeling* as an affective response that challenges the situation, and understand *relation* as the process that produces feeling and distributes agency between self and object. His approach is two-pronged: first, identifying a cultural situation that maintains itself by controlling certain emotional structures, and then

exploring the ways in which that situation is challenged by affective relations that are not easily assimilated or recognized. In the sections that follow, I will explore how Lawrence's *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature* (hereafter, *Study* and *Classic*) respectively elaborate each half of this dual focus. I will turn first to *Study*, where the bulk of Lawrence's effort is devoted to identifying a cultural problem that is revealed through Hardy's novels: that "we struggle mechanically ... repeating some old process of life, unable to become ourselves, unable to produce anything new" (45). For Lawrence, Hardy's fiction is organized by structures of repetition and constraint, where passionate characters reject the "established system" but always meet a tragic end (24). Even as he praises Hardy's "contempt" for "the irony of human life" (29), Lawrence is troubled by the world that Hardy's novels disclose. He identifies the state of the situation represented in Hardy's novels as a static social order which produces subjects who resist it, but condemns them for their resistance. For Lawrence, the forms of resistance to the situation that Hardy emphasizes are merely reactionary and ultimately ineffective. "All amount of clumsy distinguishing ourselves from some other things will not make us thus become ourselves," he writes, "and all amount of repeating even the most complex motions of life will not produce one new motion" (*Study* 44). This claim suggests that forms of ineffective resistance ultimately sustain the status quo; Hardy's characters become complicit even if they are reactionaries or dissidents.⁷ Consequently, Lawrence not only sees Hardy's novels as cautionary tales, but also suggests that they represent the social order from which he will attempt to turn away in *Classic*.⁸ When I turn to *Classic* in the subsequent section, we will see that Lawrence focusses far less on describing the state of the situation. Instead, he turns his

⁷ Badiou names these "reactive" or "obscure subjects" (*Logics* 54).

⁸ Although Lawrence published *Classic* serially in *The English Review* in 1918, the collection was revised in 1923 before it was published as a complete collection (See Worthen, "D.H.").

attention much more fully to exploring subjective positions that might effectively resist and reconfigure the status quo.

The “Tragedy of Hardy”: Lawrence’s Moral England

As many scholars have noted, Lawrence’s work changed significantly after he undertook a project about Thomas Hardy in 1917 (T. Wright 472; Black 102; Herzinger 130); more specifically, Lawrence’s perspective on British literature and culture began to take a pessimistic turn. Lawrence was in the process of writing both *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *The Sisters* at the same time (Delavenay 175), and his comments on *Study*’s composition demonstrate his growing belief that British culture was wallowing in decadence and decay (Herzinger 174). In *Study*, Lawrence seeks to assess what Hardy represents rather than to explore Hardy’s intentions; as he wrote to J.B. Pinker in 1914, “[*Study*] will be about anything but Thomas Hardy, I am afraid” (*Collected Letters* 290). In December of the same year, Lawrence narrowed the scope of the study when he wrote to Amy Lowell that *Study* was turning out to be a “Story of my Heart” (298). The opening chapters of *Study* are primarily focused on assessing symptoms of an overarching problem with British culture in perceived decline. His critical essays in this collection substantially express his understanding of the situation in which he wrote—a situation that valued morality at the expense of artistic and affective progress. As critics such as Emile Delavenay have argued, morality becomes a particular focus, in part, because the composition and publication of *Study* coincide with *The Rainbow*’s suppression on the grounds of “its immorality” (Delavenay 227; *Collected Letters* 533).

Indeed, Lawrence’s comments on British culture are largely organized by a discussion of morality, for which Hardy’s novels appear to be a testing ground. Some scholars have noted that

a rigorous exegesis of Hardy's novels is largely absent from *Study*, to the extent that, by the study's end, it appears that Lawrence is not "interpreting but totally rewriting" Hardy's work (Swigg 79). This rewriting is perhaps due to Lawrence's obsessive moral evaluation of the context in which he found himself. By Lawrence's own admission, *Study* was inspired by his "sheer rage" at the "colossal idiocy" of England's participation in the First World War (*Collected Letters* 290). Inasmuch as this sentiment fuels the composition of *Study*, it also appears that Lawrence saw Hardy as a representative of an English literary elite with whom he had associated the failures of the War. As is well known, Hardy had a significant influence on England's post-war poets—so much so that they would "ma[k]e pilgrimages to his home"—because he "restored their faith in cultural continuity" (Myers 34). Cognizant of this association with a nostalgic response to the War, Lawrence finds in Hardy's novels the opportunity to assess how the traditions of the past inform his present. Hardy thus becomes a representative of British culture, and by extension, a signifier of what Badiou calls "the state of the situation" (*Saint* 15). Lawrence turns to Hardy as a cultural symbol that effectively represents a continuation of the cultural norms that existed before the War, and his novels offer Lawrence an occasion to distill both a cultural moment and a significant period of English literary and cultural history. In this regard, Lawrence is less interested in what Hardy intends to discuss through his novels than in what Hardy's novels make available for discussion.

Study extensively explores the "little morality" that we have seen Lawrence discuss in "A Propos." He finds in Hardy's novels a form of morality that excludes the affective networks that he understands as the engine of change. One of the many examples of Lawrence's wariness concerning morality appears early in *Study*, when he investigates the "convention" Hardy employs in his novels (21). By "convention," Lawrence designates the static and iterative form

through which morality is conveyed; he finds a critique of morality in Hardy's use of convention because his novels expose the mechanisms by which morality functions. Lawrence therefore praises Hardy's use of convention because he interprets it as critiquing the effects of morality on human life. He summarizes the unsettling impetus of Hardy's novels as follows:

[You may] remain quite within the convention, and you are good, safe, and happy in the long run, though you never have the vivid pang of sympathy on your side: or, on the other hand, be passionate, individual, wilful, you will find the security of the convention a walled prison, you will escape, and you will die, either of your own lack of strength to bear the isolation and the exposure, or by direct revenge from the community, or from both. (21)

In this passage, convention becomes a physical enclosure with physical effects. The "pang[s] of sympathy" and the "strength to bear the isolation and the exposure" take on a bodily intensity in rejecting convention. One places oneself in a "walled prison" at the expense of one's ability to express individual desire as a distinct agent among others. Those "happy few" who acquiesce to the security of convention become almost non-entities, unworthy of the notice embodied in sympathetic response, whereas those who reject the "walled prison" disproportionately attract readerly interest and commiseration, but do so at the cost of their inevitable destruction.

Lawrence claims that his critique differs from that of his contemporaries who argue that Hardy's characters "do unreasonable things" (20); by contrast, he praises Hardy's creation of characters who have "exceptional or strong individual traits" that are reasonable in "the progress of life" (47; 41). He is less enthusiastic about the fact that Hardy "always, always represents [his characters] ... as having some vital weakness, some radical ineffectuality" that tragically stems from precisely the strong individuality he finds praiseworthy (45). Hardy consistently creates

“unbegotten hero[es]” whose potential is never achieved before they meet a tragic end (40). They are examples of “unaccomplished potential individuality” (45)—doomed by their very distinctness—for “Hardy makes every exceptional person a villain, all exceptional or strong individual traits he holds up as weaknesses or wicked faults” (47). The fates of Hardy’s characters are thus determined, Lawrence claims, either by their “identification with the community” or their rejection of it in favor of passionate release (24), which then characterizes them as villains. But they are not villainous in intent; it is convention, he argues, that creates the villain by producing “a division of a man against himself” (21). This description of how convention operates in subjective space pertains not only to genre conventions but also to how “the people in Hardy’s novels” represent a moral convention that perpetuates social constructs that actively impede their growth (20).

Lawrence’s evaluation of Hardy’s characters, therefore, leads him to insist on a more inclusive model of morality that does not exclude affect. He seeks to describe both the ways in which Hardy’s characters are constrained, and the nature of the damage that the constraints cause. Early in *Study*, he emphasizes growth, and the freedom to grow, as the foundation of a successful world. Using the organic metaphor of a seedling becoming a poppy, he suggests that its growth constitutes the “full achievement of itself” (13), which is only possible through “excess”:

The excess is the thing itself at the maximum of being. If it had stopped short of this excess, it would not have been at all. If this excess were missing, darkness would cover the face of the earth. In this excess, the plant is transfigured into flower, it achieves at last itself. The aim, the culmination of all is the red of the poppy. [...] But no, we dare not. We dare not fulfil the last part of our

programme. We linger into inactivity at the vegetable, self-preserving stage. As if we preserved ourselves merely for the sake of remaining as we are. (11-12)

This cautionary tale underpins Lawrence's critique of Hardy: change, or growth, is part of a natural progression that not only demonstrates a goal-oriented evolutionary process but also necessitates the subject's acceptance of the unknown. Anticipating the possible implication that this "programme" of growth is an inevitable natural process, Lawrence describes that growth as neither preordained nor inexorable. He claims instead that growth is attenuated in some way by a moment of uncertainty: the seed of the poppy "lean[s] on the sill of all the unknown" (15). The change from seed to poppy is, therefore, marked by a kind of encounter with the unknown, or a break between the known and unknown: when what is known to the personified seedling is seedlinghood, it cannot conceive of a situation in which seedlinghood itself is cast off. Therefore, it must produce an "excess" of seedlinghood in order to "achieve at last itself." The fulfilment of this process, he argues, directly affects not only the individual poppy's selfhood but also the "excess" that he sees as the foundation for activity on the "earth".

Lawrence also asserts that while the positive forces of mutability and possibility are life's attempts to preserve itself via adaptation and growth (13), life makes its attempt even as it recognizes that a strong instinct of self-preservation is antithetical to that growth. This paradox lies at the heart of the poppy seed: if those forces that drive the seed to become the poppy are ignored—if life cannot accept change—then "it will thrash destruction upon itself" (12). The precise nature of the paradox is important to emphasize. The temporary, static forms of life, such as seedlinghood, must submit themselves to a constant state of mutability—for life depends on it. To remain a seedling would be to put an end to the progress of life. Thus, out of a principle of "self-preservation," Lawrence argues, the bud needs to open, or it will be "beaten rotten at the

heart” like a cabbage that does not flower (12). In sum, the progress of life works in a contradictory fashion—it works to preserve itself precisely by opening itself up to that which is unknown and (in a sense) poses a mortal threat. Lawrence’s extended metaphor crucially allows him to articulate his understanding of the constitution of the subject, upon which his interpretation of morality depends. Some readers have understood Lawrence’s conception of the self as an “intensification of that which already exists” (Mackenzie 111-12), which might be implied in his claim that the seedling “achieve[s] at last itself.” However, in the story of the poppy, he describes the subject not as a static identity that has been amplified, but as the product of an ongoing process of change that is constituted through the encounter with the unknown.

Lawrence distinguishes between altogether new subjective experiences (the encounter with the unknown) and experiences that come to be subsumed under the already known. In so doing, he introduces the problem of the encounter itself: it produces a new subject that is independent of the subject’s expectations. The seedling parable anticipates one of the central tenets of Badiou’s work, which will assist us in seeing some of the implications of Lawrence’s distinction between change and reaction. In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou emphasizes the importance of the encounter with the unknown, which is contained in the event, and the casting off of what is known, which is contained in the situation. The encounter plays a crucial role: he stresses that the subject is not already constituted, but instead, the event produces the subject (*Inaesthetics* 55). We can see a similar method in Lawrence’s metaphor: the seedling, as personified stand-in for the becoming-subject, is not already a flower. Thus, the seedling is not an already-constituted subject in the same way that the flower is. The flower has become a subject only after it has undertaken an evental process to achieve “itself.” Lawrence’s framing of this transitional phase is also notable: the seedling-subject must encounter the unknown and persist through it.

Lawrence warns against “remaining at the vegetable, self-preserving stage” because to fear the unknown is also to fear growth and change. Badiou’s logic conveys a similar reticence toward the virtue of remaining at a “vegetable” stage because it would favor what is already known: he argues that an “intervention”—which is an analysis that decides an evental process belongs to the situation—will “annul it as an event” (*Being* 202). In this sense, the self-preserving mechanism “intervenes” in the evental process in order to nullify the event’s significance. To return to Lawrence’s metaphor, if the seedling insists on preserving itself as such (in the already known form of seedling), then it denies the encounter with the unknown, upon which its creative unfolding depends. To be subject to an event is to recognize that new subjective experiences are formed by a radical rupture with what is already known. In other words, the event for Badiou and Lawrence is simultaneous with the creation of the subject. Badiou calls this “subjectivation,” and Lawrence describes this acceptance metaphorically as the moment when the seedling acts to “achieve itself.”

This evental model of growth becomes especially significant because it forms the basis of the moral scheme through which Lawrence will analyze Hardy’s characters—reading their actions as attempts to achieve subjectivation. The tragedy is that they either never achieve subjectivity, or they meet a fatal end when they do. In criticizing the morality that Hardy’s novels present, Lawrence posits that the “little morality” often operates at the expense of the “intensification” for which he argues. Hardy’s characters’ feelings are similar to the seedling’s need to “beat its way into being” or risk death (*Study* 12). One such mode of feeling is “passion,” which compels characters such as Jude, Fitzpiers, Elfride, or Tess to resist cultural norms (48); because it suggests both the intensification of self and a relationship with others, passion is an especially rich site within which to explore an alternative to the “little morality.” In Hardy’s

characters, passion is inspired by sexual desire, but it comes into conflict with the “little” morality. In the resulting clash, the characters either “achieve ... a distinct personality” or they do not (45). According to Lawrence, however, if they do achieve this differentiated subjective state, Hardy inevitably dooms them to death. Hardy has thus staged the poppy’s double-bind for the characters in his novels. His “exceptional” characters must choose between preserving the force of passion and locking themselves in the prison of their community’s convention. The former sustains the encounter with the unknown that fashions them as subjects—albeit at the cost of breaking with the community—whereas the latter dooms them to stagnation. For Lawrence, both paths have unsatisfying resolutions because each leads to its own kind of death, meaning that the fully realized subject and the conventional hero are levelled because they meet the same end. Lawrence declares this double-bind the overall “tragedy of Hardy” (21): the will to survive is effectively the will to death by way of social exclusion, while the passive acceptance of “little” morality and convention is also a kind of death.

The “tragedy of Hardy” that Lawrence identifies affects not only the characters in the novels (21), but also the way in which tragedies are read. If the novel functions for a popular readership as a condemnation of characters who are “passionate, individual, [and] wilful” rather than as a critique of the conditions that discourage active subjectivation and growth (21), then it implies that the struggle for subjectivation is futile. For Lawrence, Hardy’s tragic theme, and the more general “weakness of modern tragedy,” is that “transgression against the social code is made to bring destruction” (30). “The theme of novel after novel,” Lawrence claims, is that the passionate individual comes to be “destroyed by the community” (49):

[Hardy] will create a more or less blameless individual and, making him seek his own fulfilment, his highest aim, will show him destroyed by the community, or by

that in himself which represents the community, or by some close embodiment of the civic idea. (49)

Hardy's novels, in other words, implicitly condemn the emergent subject. By showcasing characters whose individual aspiration leads them to tragedy, Hardy "succumbs to what is in its shallowest, public opinion, in its deepest, the human compact by which we live together, to form a community" (51). Hardy's "pessimism" is evidenced by the fact that there is no alternative for these characters (49), as the novels do not depict a positive example of a community that would or could count them.

It is worth clarifying here that Lawrence's argument is not a reactionary condemnation of the social sphere in service of some libertarian notion of individual freedom. He avoids making that kind of easy opposition by pointing to Hardy's somersaulting morality as evidence of a nascent form of the morality he describes. For, he argues, the irony of the characters' acceptance of the exchange (giving up individual freedom for the stability of the social situation) emerges when a few characters in the Wessex novels heroically attempt to turn the state of the situation, and its concomitant little morality, on its head. Lawrence is disappointed, however, that Hardy casts these characters as villains. For example, "In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the dark villain is already almost the hero," and "Jude is a complete tragic hero" according to the conventions of romance (47). As a result, Hardy performs through these characters "a complete and devastating shift-over, a complete volte-face of moralities. Black does not become white, but it takes white's place as good: white remains white, but it is found bad. The old, communal morality is like a leprosy" (47-48). Lawrence sees Hardy substituting the place of the traditional heroic archetype (of a "virgin knight," for example [47]) with a hero who is subversively individualist and anti-communitarian (the "dark villain" [47]). To Lawrence's eye, Hardy subverts readers'

expectations by having heroes become villains and vice versa. The dark villain becomes hero, and the aristocrat slips to the lowest rung of the status ladder while the “average man” takes his place (49). Lawrence judges that Hardy “rule[s] out the individual interest” in order to “represent the community as a whole” (49), which implicitly supports the indistinct collective average rather than the passionate individual. In other words, Hardy’s strategies effectively promote the state of the situation. Meanwhile, the “individualist ... [who is] a man of distinct being” is doomed to fail because he has no recognizable role within the existing social order (49).

Lawrence’s dissatisfaction is partially due to Hardy’s presentation of the possibility of a complete break with the “little” morality, only to then reinscribe it as already belonging to the state of the situation. However, he finds some solace in the novels’ backdrop, the Heath. To Lawrence, the Heath represents the “real freedom” in the novels: the unknown. In contrast with the individualist freedom that is constrained by the novels’ implicit adherence to convention, the Heath becomes an unassailable symbol of freedom. The mere possession of “passion” is an insufficient condition for freedom: Elfride’s “passion [is] not vital enough to overthrow the most banal conventional ideas” (22); Manston is “fleshly passionate, ... commits murder ... and meet[s] death” (22); and Bathsheba falls in love with a bad choice, Troy, and “the flower of imaginative fine love is dead for her with Troy’s scorn of her” (23). Against this pattern of eventually fatal or constricting human drama, the freedom of the Heath is conceptualized by “the vast, incomprehensible pattern of some primal morality greater than ever the human mind can grasp” (28-29). While Lawrence is at pains to critique Hardy’s condemnation of the “exceptional individual” (29), he is also intrigued by the contrast between Hardy’s little morality and the “incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself, surpassing human consciousness” (29). Lawrence betrays something adjacent to mysticism in his praise of Hardy’s fictionalized, vast

unknown space. Alluding to the frontleaf map included in most editions of the Wessex novels, Lawrence writes: “What did it matter if [Hardy] had calculated a moral chart from the surface of life? Could that affect life, any more than a chart of the heavens affects the stars, affects the whole stellar universe which exists beyond our knowledge?” (28). As Lawrence sees it, the Heath offers the reader an imaginative way out of Wessex, upon which Hardy has superficially imposed a moral “chart”; regardless, for Lawrence, the Heath represents a space in which the unknown thrives and awaits recognition.

Through his fascination with the Heath, Lawrence again returns to an implicit insistence on the encounter with the unknown. Whereas *Study* begins with the discussion of a seedling and its encounter, when he discusses Hardy’s novels, Lawrence shifts focus somewhat and explores the implications of an imaginative relationship with the essentially non-human and unknowable—the space described as “surpassing human consciousness” and “incomprehensible” (29). To mitigate the tragedy brought by the enclosures of morality and convention, Lawrence insists that the Heath might include a trace of the event, and that the unknown reveals the insufficiency of the state of the situation. By including the vast and amoral space on the boundary of Wessex, Hardy’s novels imply by contrast that human morality is constructed in opposition to that which is excluded from social life—the natural world, in this case.

This framing of Lawrence’s reading of Hardy, with its emphasis on the unknown and the becoming-subject, is somewhat alien to the current scholarship on Lawrence’s *Study*, which primarily focuses on the tragedy to which Lawrence refers. As Michael Black argues in his summary analysis of *Study*, “Hardy’s tragic principle shows that destruction follows infringement of the social code. One can further grasp that this code is local, of its time and class, and therefore partial: so that Hardy’s tragic principle is insufficiently universal” (164).

Given Lawrence's concerns, it appears that it is not the particularity of the characters' downfalls, but the promise of Hardy's Heath that makes the tragedy "insufficiently universal." In setting up this contrast, Lawrence again implies that the unknown is a necessary part of a process of change which ultimately reconfigures morality, and therefore reconfigures social space. Although it is impossible to recognize that which is unknown in the static conditions of the situation, the "bud" is present, and "it will produce what it will produce, it will bear the fruit of its nature" (12).

Despite his critique of morality in *Study*, Lawrence considers morality as capable of changing as the social situation shifts, given his belief that that which exists outside knowledge is a necessary foil both for subjectivation and the assessment of the situation's "little" morality. In that light, he maintains that morality is one of the functions of an effective artwork. We recall that he writes in "Morality and the Novel" that "the essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral. But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic" ("Morality" 171). The morality that artworks disclose, he implies, is unlikely to be received as an acceptable representation of the status quo. He will eventually argue that morality-to-be must be accounted for through feeling, lest English literature meet the same tragic end as Hardy's characters. Lawrence ultimately argues that Hardy discloses his culture's tragic trajectory, should the forces of change and progress be impeded by social constructions that depend upon a confining understanding of morality. In redefining morality, Lawrence seeks to highlight the importance of not only the distinctness and variety of individuals, but also the recognition that representations of the unknown disclose traces of the event.

Crisis and the Future Unknown: Change Hurts

Before turning to *Studies in Classic American Literature* and the modes of subjectivation that it explores, I want to turn briefly to a problem that Hardy's novels open up for Lawrence: change is not always welcome, but it is nonetheless necessary to find a subjective position through which to assimilate it. The state of the situation that *Study* introduces not only reveals external constraints upon subjectivation but internal barriers as well. Just as the body can sometimes be considered obscene, or "real feelings" can be dismissed because "nobody ever felt like that," change can also present itself in forms that are not particularly palatable for the individuals who experience it. If literary predecessors like Hardy draw into relief the potential decline of social life, or the destructiveness of a morality that earns prominence at the expense of individual passion and growth, Lawrence understands that the pursuit of change must confront those difficult and painful realities. In surveying possible modes of reaction to the sense of cultural decay, Lawrence isolates two competing models: an affirmative but nostalgic approach that he associates with the Georgians, and a pessimistic model for which Oswald Spengler stands as a representative. Lawrence will reject both of these models in "Surgery for the Novel—Or A Bomb," which he wrote in 1923 when he undertook "a final reworking of the much revised" *Classic* (Worthen, "D.H."). In the essay, Lawrence tries to thread a needle between those who seek a future that is founded on nostalgia, and those who are thoroughly pessimistic about the implications they find in cultural decline. Between these two poles of thought, according to which the future is reduced to either pastoral England, green and pleasant, or a state of unmitigated chaos, Lawrence claims that it is precisely the traversal of the chaos—of the painful or unpleasant—that might lead to even greener pastures than those to which the Georgians nostalgically appeal.

In Lawrence's later essays, in *Apocalypse*, and in his letters regarding the utopian Rananim, Lawrence proactively assesses crisis by suggesting how one could prepare for its aftermath. The persistence with which Lawrence discusses decline and its variants is often cited as evidence of a neurotic or obsessive quality in his writing, or as part of an argument for Lawrence as pseudo-nihilist (Weller 109), but his main focus is to consistently insist on an urgent need for action. He often does so by emphasizing modes of feeling that are not those that might be implied by the "passionate individuals" in Hardy's novels. Lawrence repeatedly emphasizes in his discussion of the work of the future that the affective states in which he is interested are neither desire, passionate release (or passion's *effects*), nor joyful individual expression, but discomfort, fear, and pain.

Lawrence is difficult to neatly place in an English literary tradition or in modernist literary circles, either in recent scholarly debates or in his own time. His early novelistic and poetic influences were the Georgians; Kim Herzinger makes a strong case that Lawrence's early work was fostered by a literary circle of patrons and enthusiasts led by Edward Garnett, who encouraged the young Lawrence's realist depictions of productive working-class labour even though the group expressed concerns about his novelistic representations of sexual relationships (29-34). Despite Lawrence's weak affiliation with this younger generation of Edwardians, in other literary circles, there was a growing sense that Britain's rural locales were no longer the source of divine and ordered work. In his 1909 *The Condition of England*, C.F.G. Masterman claims that the countryside as a national symbol is decaying in no small part due to industrial progress in farming (in Herzinger 37). The separation between rural and urban life also compelled writers to introduce the issue as affecting hope for England's future, as H.G. Wells does in *Tono Bungay*, which depicts a weary pessimism brought about by fragmentation of the

national spirit (36). By 1914, Lawrence “began to define himself in clear opposition to the Georgians” (106), having decided that “Georgian gentleness” had not only misapprehended the natural, political, and national landscape (93), but had also failed to adapt the Georgian mode so that it could grapple with the new ideas about emotion and destructive vitality that Imagists and Futurists had begun championing as early as 1912.

Still, Lawrence’s writing about the cultivation of a new world, and the necessity for work, retains some of the optimism of the dwindling set of early twentieth-century Georgian poets and authors with whom he had corresponded in his early career. After Oswald Spengler’s influential *The Decline of the West* (1918) made the growing pessimism explicit, Lawrence describes British society as existing in a state of decay that will continue until “the state of things is bust” (“Surgery” 117). But in “Surgery,” he also argues that the modern novel suffers from a lack of optimism, a quality that he believes must be reclaimed. This lack, he writes, is due in part to the modern novel’s failure to represent new ways of becoming; the novel is too focused on reproducing types of characters who are overly concerned with self-conception and self-perception (117). Moreover, he notes a repetitive pattern of “stunts” that modern writers perform (117): in his view, novels such as Joyce’s *Ulysses* have an insistent focus on the individual, and on mundane details of characters’ daily lives, at the expense of representing what they could be or become. In short, he writes that characters in contemporary novels are focused on “What now?” rather than “What next?” (117). Were a catastrophe to occur, he proposes that artwork might anticipate or negotiate the world afterward, and he asks the reader to imagine that occurrence: “Suppose a bomb were put under the whole scheme of things, what would we be after?” (117). His question implicitly values a hard-won optimism: one that has been challenged by, and has overcome, the encounter with crisis and conflict. An optimist must negotiate a way

of seeing the world that does not unduly focus on, or value, the minutiae of the present state of affairs. Rather, he or she should focus on the aspects of individual experience which might anticipate ways of being in an unknown and unknowable future.

“Surgery” is only one instance among many in Lawrence’s essays in which he suggests productive action as the solution to the problem of cultural decay. He writes to S.S. Koteliansky on 15 December 1916,

I believe we shall see changes. I believe we shall be able to set our hands to the remaking of the world, before very long. For this that is, will fall to pieces very soon. We can set to to build up a new world of man in a little time, believe me. So be ready—like the Virgins with the lamp. Nil desperandum—this world can go, there shall be another, we will shape its beginnings at least. (Lawrence, “Letter” f. 260-61)

Lawrence here demonstrates that his criticism aims to negotiate what kind of work might be involved in the aftermath of crisis or catastrophe.⁹ His insistence on the need for work in the aftermath of crisis provides a counterpoint to some modernists’ contentions that literature and culture existed in an atavistic state that requires either a return to a more conservative or restrictive form of morality or an appeal to the metaphysical to guide cultural corrections. So, when Lawrence refers to “the state of things” in which many modernists are complicit, he implicitly refers to writers who can be broadly grouped into what Paul Sheehan calls “the fall

⁹ See *Modernist Nowheres*, where Nathan Waddell argues that, for Lawrence, labour and work have a strong connection to social improvement (117). Waddell asserts that this connection appears in its early forms in *Study of Thomas Hardy* and can be traced throughout Lawrence’s novels, where labour is usually figured as an antagonist to mechanization (113). Herzinger would also agree with this assessment, insofar as George Bernard Shaw’s plays on the subject of social improvement, such as *Major Barbara*, feature as significant influences in Lawrence’s early career (Herzinger 28).

thinkers” of the early twentieth century. Wyndham Lewis, T.S. Eliot, and T.E. Hulme, for example, are thus characterized because they represent a “turn away from self-actualization and a consequent diminution in human potential” and a turn toward the metaphysical (103). In this regard, Lawrence’s emphasis on work, situated as it is amidst a network of pessimistic thinkers, has often been considered in scholarship as a kind of utopianism.

While Nathan Waddell argues that Lawrence values relationships as a fundamental source of change that he wants to call utopian, he follows the lead of many modernist scholars in identifying the extent to which Lawrence’s utopian impulse is associated with the more politically problematic aspects of his thought.¹⁰ He writes, “utopianism was always [for Lawrence] a matter of relational processes in which political change had to be imagined as part and parcel of a ‘bartering’ between self and world” (Waddell 173). In short, Waddell argues that Lawrence’s thought tends toward seemingly totalizing concepts that supersede extant forms of political and social organization, but in so doing, he only partially identifies the affective relations in which Lawrence is interested. Lawrence’s goal is not only to imagine an exchange or bartering between self and the world but also to emphasize a kind of exchange that will change both parties in a “perfected relation.” Thus, his conception of a new world is much more focused on subjectivation than on the prescription or definition of a political world order. As he writes in a review of Frederick Carter’s *The Dragon of the Apocalypse*, “What does the Apocalypse matter, unless in so far as it gives us imaginative release into another vital world?” (“Dragon” 156). Lawrence’s emphasis on affective relations is the cause and binding force of his aesthetic

¹⁰ Among the body of scholarship dealing with this, Barbara Mensch discusses how Lawrence’s work can at times lean toward supporting the cult of the leader in *D.H. Lawrence and the Authoritarian Personality*, and Michael Bell’s *Primitivism* argues that for Lawrence, there are racial requirements in some forms of global community or brotherhood.

approach; his conception of how we might understand a utopian future emphasizes the local site of feeling precisely because the subject struggles with “achiev[ing] itself” when that achievement requires an encounter with the unknown.

Any detailed analysis of Lawrence’s thought must account for his persistent interest in sustaining the mystery of a possible future while working toward that unknown. He asks how we could “set our hands to the remaking of the world” if its remaking lies outside of orthodox regimes of knowledge (“Letter,” 15 Dec 1916). In this regard, Lawrence draws on some key influences. His writing is conceptually saturated with the influences of Oswald Spengler, Bertrand Russell, William James, and Lev Shestov. The threads that bind this disparate group of thinkers include their discussion of the decline of civilization and the affective experience of that decline, and “life philosophy” and its suspicion of reigning instrumentalist discourses. A prominent example in this regard appears in Lawrence’s foreword to S.S. Koteliansky’s translated volume of Lev Shestov’s *All Things Are Possible* (1920), where he argues that the value of Shestov’s work lies in the indeterminacy of its conclusions. The statement that “‘I do not myself know what I want,’” he writes, “seems to offer a guarantee of something important” (“Foreword” 38). Seemingly influenced by the notion of indeterminate goals, Lawrence avoids prescribing a particular political or subjective state in his own work, and instead argues that despite the conflicts they produce, new feelings and new forms of relation are generative, for they bear a kind of “hope” in a crisis or states of conflict. In this sense, Lawrence “motiv[at]es us in healthy directions” (Asher 87), rather than prescribes where we should end up. Sustaining the mystery of the endpoint is essentially a utopian gesture of the kind that Fredric Jameson describes when he claims that “What is important in a Utopia is not what can be positively imagined and proposed, but rather what is not imaginable and not conceivable” (*Valences* 413).

Up to this point, and even with Jameson's understanding of utopia in mind, we might assume that the unknown generally takes on a positive valence. Crucially, however, Lawrence asserts that new modes of feeling and the transformative relations they invite are *unpleasant*. He repeatedly figures change, and relation, through metaphors of pain. He writes in "Morality and the Novel," for example, that "to read a really new novel will always hurt" (112). Although Lawrence mainly discusses the response that readers may have to the "new novel" or to "different feeling," the discomfort applies to readers and authors alike. The subject is taken up again in "The State of Funk," where we find Lawrence's lengthiest exposition of change as an unpleasant experience. Casting change as a bitter pill, he writes,

The time of change is upon us. The need for change has taken hold of us. We are changing, we have got to change, and we can no more help it than leaves can help going yellow and coming loose in autumn. [...] Instinctively, we feel it.

Intuitively, we know it. And we are frightened. Because change hurts. (219)

This description of experiencing pain, hurt or discomfort is compounded by an organic metaphor for change. For Lawrence, pain, discomfort, and dis-ease signify the importance or necessity of the change. They are also an inspiration for action: "courage" is needed to recognize that discomfort is necessary for renewal in the face of crisis (220); for "in our readiness to admit and fulfill new needs, to give expression to new desires and new feelings, lies our hope and our health" (220). The form of change that he describes is an uncontrollable event that must be endured.

Lawrence, therefore, asks why the experience of discomfort will prepare us for discomfiting change. He insists that pain indicates the kind of relation in which he is interested, writing that "A new relation, a new relatedness hurts somewhat in the attaining; and will always

hurt. So life will always hurt. [...] Each time we strive to a new relation, with anyone or anything, it is bound to hurt somewhat. Because it means the struggle with and the displacing of old connexions, and this is never pleasant” (“Morality” 112). Thus, Lawrence does not describe an irreducibly singular sensory experience in the struggle between new and old; rather, the pain and hurt are shared affective registers for the experience of the struggle. For Lawrence, forms of pain, discomfort, and unpleasantness are conditions for not only the inspiration of new feelings but also the development of new forms of relation.

The paradox that Lawrence presents, however, is that while pain is often understood as a necessarily subjective experience, the expression of pain in literary works is, as Elaine Scarry argues in *The Body in Pain*, an exercise in making explicit (in writing) that which is necessarily personal in the effort to share that experience. Scarry argues that writing about pain “enables pain to enter into a realm of shared discourse” (9), whereas if pain were merely experienced prior to perception, as Ruth Leys argues, it would be registered “below the threshold of consciousness” (Leys 436). Scarry underscores the difficulty of the process, however, when she explains, “physical pain does not simply resist language ... its resistance is essential to what it is” (5). But that resistance to language is not a deterrent to pain’s expression. For Scarry, the very expression of the experience of pain works to deny the potential relegation of that personal experience to the realm of autonomic unconsciousness that cannot be registered by others. She claims, “the successful expression of pain will always work to expose and make impossible that appropriation and conflation [of the body and materiality]” (Scarry 14). In other words, when “pain” is expressed in forms that make it communicable to others, the body in pain retains its position as the originator of the experience, but the pain itself has been rendered in a communicable form. It is therefore no longer an altogether personal experience. Even though

pain might resist linguistic expression, its communication works to negotiate a connection between individuals who feel discomfort and those who experience it second-hand. It furthermore suggests that this virtual mode of expressing pain or discomfort—in literature, for example—offers an opportunity for authors to not only convey their own experience in an expressible form but also to introduce it to others as a condition that must be confronted.

Lawrence's emphasis on pain, understood in this light, further clarifies his eventual logic because he uses this affective register to explain how artworks might perform a social function. Pain also links two concepts with which he is interested: understanding and appreciating feeling, and the encounter with the unknown. Although experience may be painful and altogether personal, it can also be represented and therefore shared. For example, novels that represent an unpleasant or unusual experience may cause the reader discomfort, but through their unpleasantness, they also signify their capacity to expose the reader to an unconventional object and an unknown experience. When the feeling of pain or discomfort enters the realm of "shared discourse," the novel demonstrates the broader range of experience that convention inadequately attempts to codify. In short, he suggests not only that the purpose of literature is to have the reader discover and submit to pain, but also that literature's "unpleasantness" compels the reader to "struggle with and displace the old connexions" (112).

It is worth noting how Lawrence's judgment of "unpleasant" artwork resonates with recent work in affect theory. If we unduly exaggerate the importance of the individual experience of an artwork, we could introduce the problems that Ruth Leys addresses in her essay, "The Turn to Affect." Leys levies the charge that affect theorists who emphasize materiality and affect in literature will inevitably reduce aesthetic judgment to a mere assessment of "pleasant or unpleasant" works (445). In so doing, she identifies a problem similar to that which Badiou

encounters when he argues that if an artwork's value is determined by its ability to perform a public service, its value is adjudicated by whether or not the observer "likes" the art object (*Inaesthetics* 4). Lawrence worries that "identification" and "merging" eventually serve the same function as this form of "liking" to which Leys and Badiou object: if "liking" is akin to recognizing oneself in the work in question, then this "identification" with all objects and persons in his environment will either dismiss or deny the essential otherness of those objects. Identification thus effectively denies novelty: new connections and experiences are "never pleasant" ("Morality" 112). The unpleasantness of an artwork indirectly informs us of the artwork's value, insofar as "pleasantness" might distract from the constructive purpose of an unpleasant experience of literature. Lawrence seems to anticipate Leys' concern when he suggests that the experience of pleasantness draws us towards that which is understandable, expected, and ultimately conventional. To the extent that the pleasant is that which one can identify, and with which one can identify, it is antithetical to Lawrence's understanding of novel experiences.

Lawrence's thought again converges with Badiou's when he emphasizes the pain and unpleasantness of the evental encounter. The experience of "liking," Badiou argues, is a process of identifying and understanding the terms given by the situation: the "likability" of an artwork is, therefore, an index of the extent to which the art object demonstrates its identification with knowledge or with current frames of reference and association (*Inaesthetics* 4). In Lawrence's terms, to "like" an artwork is to find it pleasant, which is to evaluate it based on its ability to evoke pleasant emotions, thereby elevating a kind of conventional morality as the measure of art's worth. In his essay on Poe (to which we will turn in more detail in the next section), Lawrence insists that, "moralists have always wondered helplessly why Poe's 'morbid' tales

need [to] have been written” (*Classic* 65). In his view, if moralists’ assessment of literature is based on the relative pleasantness of their reading experience, then authors who dedicate themselves to exploring “new feelings” might find themselves in the same tragic situation as Hardy’s heroes-turned-villains. In Lawrence’s answer to the imagined moralists’ question, he claims that Poe’s works need to have been written because “old things need to die and disintegrate ... before anything else can come to pass” (65). On Lawrence’s reading, Poe occupies an authorial position similar to Hardy’s: he introduces characters who embody ways of being that are tragically fatalistic, and in conventional tragic form, their death serves as the sacrifice needed for social renewal.

The Promise of American Place

As we have seen, *Study of Thomas Hardy* focusses predominantly on the ways in which feeling is constrained by forms of morality and knowledge that define and replicate the state of the situation. If Hardy gestures in places to affective coordinates that provide tragic closure to the suggestive openings of the unknown, *Studies in Classic American Literature* focusses on the other side of the coin: the seeming openness of possibility. Among his critical texts, Lawrence’s *Classic* provides the most extensive exploration of new or “different” modes of feeling (1). In *Study*, he discovers that the literature of the “old world” explores the process by which feelings and relationships have been shaped and limited by morality. *Classic*, by contrast, opens with Lawrence’s affirmation that he finds in the literature of the “new world” something substantially different precisely because it *displaces* the affective range that dominates its European counterpart. He writes, “There is a ‘different’ feeling in the old American classics. It is the shifting over from the old psyche to something new, a displacement. And displacements hurt.

This hurts. So we try to tie it up, like a cut finger. Put a rag around it" (1-2). For Lawrence, however, simply bandaging the wound produced by "something new" does not do justice to its potential to improve not only our understanding of literature, but more broadly our understanding of the full range of the "psyche." In the essay that opens *Classic*, "The Spirit of Place," Lawrence argues that American émigrés "came gruesomely over the Black Sea" in order to find a place in which they could be "masterless" (5). The spirit of America, he writes, is "the slow, smoldering patience of American opposition" to any kind of master, whether understood in terms of nation, race, or other figures of state and worldly authority (4). As Lawrence reads it, the European émigré is inducted into the unified spirit of American "freedom" upon arrival, and even the obedience of the "more servile Europeans ... never outlast[s] the first generation" in America (4). Lawrence implies that there is a link between the newness of the space and the shift in ideological and cultural priorities. This connection is important, as he admires American authors for their "alien quality" that inspires "different" and "new feelings" (1). However, he moderates that admiration with his suspicion regarding the motives underlying the American celebration of freedom and masterlessness. He tends to read American "freedom" as freedom from European influence, and therefore claims that freedom of this kind is ultimately only a "negative ideal of democracy" (8). Nonetheless, Lawrence's New World is imagined in contrast to the world he inhabits.¹¹

Lawrence's differentiation between American and British literature highlights how he conceives of the encounter with the unknown in a literary context. The ideal of American

¹¹ David Cavitch argues, in *D.H. Lawrence and the New World*, that Lawrence's desire to explore and experience new spaces and cultures coincides with his interest in founding a utopian community, Rananim (33-35). I would submit that the desire Cavitch isolates is, too, a variation of Lawrence's attempt to find a space in which a subject might be more inclined to accept the encounter with the unknown.

exceptionalism bolstered his assumption that the foreign state promised a kind of community that would dispose of nationalism as the connecting thread between citizens, and offered an opportunity to run with new feelings that break the leash of British morality. He has, however, conflicted emotions about America. In a letter to Koteliansky in May 1917, he claims that America “is a stink-pot in my nostrils, after having been the land of the future for me” (*Collected Letters* 512). Only two months later, on July 27, he claims in a letter to an American friend, “I believe America is the New World” and professes his desire to go there (520). Whereas Lawrence finds Hardy’s novels difficult precisely because morality produces a kind of enclosure, despite his ambivalence about America, he finds its “classic” literature a viable space in which to discuss an aspect of the event upon which Hardy’s writing forecloses. In American literature, Lawrence finds the desire for an absolute break from historical forms of social life; his reading of selected figures in American literature explores the kinds of affective relations in which he is interested absent the constraints of the state of the situation that he describes in *Study*.

However, Lawrence’s *Classic* immediately disposes of the notion of America as a blank slate even in its title—to identify and introduce a variety of “classic” texts is to acknowledge that an American literary and cultural history already exists. Lawrence’s America, therefore, seems less like a new arena and more like a unique place of possibility, but the possibility is conditional. He considers the “freedom” that America comes to embody to be “active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose” (6). This qualification of his understanding of freedom, versus that which he will see in American literature as it stands, allows us to consider why, in *Classic*, Lawrence highlights some biographical sketches of the authors and offers very little exegesis of the texts he references: he is both suspicious of the artists (here we find his famous pronouncement that one should “Never trust the artist. Trust the

tale” [2]), and is convinced that their environment might suggest an antidote to European confinement that is not a simple reversal. While there is no easy comparison between Hardy and, say, Walt Whitman, Lawrence’s shift in focus coincides with his growing impression that England was a “tomb” (*Collected Letters* 501), whereas America is a continent with “its own great spirit of place” (*Classic* 5). The new world, and its seeming promise for an “unrealized purpose” thus bears the same possibility that Lawrence saw in Hardy’s Heath. Suggestive as it is of the potential for freedom, the land is nonetheless restricted by the people who populate it and carry with them the burdens of European history—its population largely consists, he argues, of Europeans who have gone to America “simply on a tide of revulsion from Europe and from the confinements of European ways of life” (*Classic* 3-4). Still, Lawrence finds in American literature the opportunity to discuss an eventual procedure.

This understanding of America as a space of boundless possibility is by no means unique to Lawrence. As Rachel Crawford outlines, the idea has its roots in the Georgic tradition: British advertisers in the late eighteenth century associated America with nation-building forms of productivity bolstered by the work ethic of the Protestant (and largely British) émigrés, and pushed its representation as “an agrarian site of infinite potentiality” (142), despite the counterfactual status of such ideals. Furthermore, as “the European concept of space, and certainly that of Great Britain, was that of confinement” (144), Lawrence likely saw an easy means of exploring his sense of humanity’s potential through America, a place so vaunted in the British press, by way of engaging with American literature.

Contrary to those intentions, *Classic* becomes an evaluation of concepts of individual freedom, agency, and selfhood through an analysis of feeling and subjectivation in some of America’s most celebrated authors’ works. While the collection engages with Benjamin

Franklin, Herman Melville, and others, Lawrence's analysis of Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Fall of the House of Usher" contains the richest evidence of Lawrence's grappling with this nexus of issues. In the essay on Poe, Lawrence emphasizes what in Poe's works would suggest a kind of eventual procedure. Poe's short stories also allow Lawrence to ruminate on some of the criticism to which he was subjected following the publications of *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*: the charges were that he was obsessed with sex, that he impertinently investigates incestuous love, and that he delves with unpleasant detail into aspects of human character that are by turns immoral and salacious. Poe's stories at the very least imply a similar range of subject matter, so when Lawrence identifies them as affective themes in the context of American possibility, he is able to explore familiar terrain at something of a critical distance. Finally, Poe also allows Lawrence to return to the themes he identified in Hardy's work from a different angle: the question of individual passion and motivation, the pressures and limitations of convention, and, in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," the way in which difference is treated as humanity's emaciated and beleaguered sister.

In Lawrence's analysis of "Fall," he demonstrates that relationships are necessary to maintain as a process of intimacy between separate individuals, who each have their own capacity for feeling. The story's main character, Roderick Usher, has "become a sensitized instrument of external influences" (77), in that he accepts that he lives in an "atmosphere" in which "all vegetable things had sentience" (78). The ubiquitous quality of objects is borne out in the story's setting: the house of Usher is a notoriously isolated building, and Roderick and his sister are thoroughly self-enclosed. Roderick, however, continuously assumes that windows, doors, walls, and other objects within the house are possessed by a malicious and threatening presence—a kind of third tenant. The Ushers' orientation toward life is "a special one in which

the Ushers alone could live,” but the Ushers are not unique, for all “living men ... subtly impregnate stones, houses, mountains, continents, and give these their subtlest form” (78)—a process Lawrence calls “merg[ing]” (79). Lawrence points out that although the Ushers understand the objective world to be subordinate to human agents, the environment also has considerable agency. The characters exert their mastery upon the inanimate, but by the same token, Lawrence wants to insist that the human residents are reciprocally affected. It is telling that Lawrence chooses to analyze the generic gothic setting of the story’s psychological horror—he writes, “surely all material things have a form of sentience” (78), and that sentience could be malicious. In that context, however, Lawrence reads the story not as a projection of human anxiety *onto* objects in one’s surroundings, but as representing how objects can work to influence people.

Roderick’s love for his sister is Lawrence’s prime example of how a form of relation—in this case, longing for identification or “merging”—can develop into denying or otherwise eradicating otherness. In Lawrence’s reading, Roderick’s eventual death is caused by his delusional encounter with the ghost of his dead sister, which Lawrence concludes is a predictable result of relationships that propose a “merging” of two isolate individuals: “the result is the dissolution of both souls” (80). Lawrence asserts a fundamental human “longing for identification” that tends to produce relationships based on familiarity and the recognition of that which is already known (76). “Merging,” he argues, denies alterity: “When the self is broken, and the mystery and recognition of *otherness* fails, then the longing for identification with the beloved becomes lust” (76). Lawrence reads the story’s climax as the moment when Roderick treats other potential subjects in the same way that he treats “his whole surroundings ... [as] woven into a physical oneness with the family” (78). Roderick’s downfall is partly a result of his

desire to identify and eradicate otherness: his tragedy is that his mode of understanding subjectivity, evident in his relationship to his environment, ultimately results in his inability to recognize his sister, Madeline, as a separate and “isolate” entity (79). So, he desires an ultimate “merging” with her that Lawrence reads as tending toward death.

Lawrence’s reading of “Fall” qualifies several aspects of his thinking about feeling and relation. First, Roderick allows Lawrence to distinguish between relationships that fatally “merge” the participants and those that maintain the “isolation” necessary for two unique individuals to maintain their distinctive otherness. Second, his reading of the story indicates that the desire for merging can be a result of “external” or environmental influences, such as the “atmosphere” in which the Ushers lived, which encourages the conflation of familiarity with *relation*. Third, and most interestingly, Lawrence seizes the opportunity to articulate some reservations about “feeling” in extremis. Even if feeling might be authentically generated (as Roderick’s actions are, because he is “convinced” that he shares a “physical oneness with the family” and his environment, and that therefore he loves his sister “passionately” [78]), the result of Roderick’s mode of feeling, “extreme love,” is still death (80). Lawrence repeatedly attributes the cause of Roderick’s death to his longing to merge with the other: “[Brother and sister] would love, they would merge, they would be as one thing. So they dragged each other down into death” (79). Although Lawrence will elsewhere argue that some emotions are counterfeit or fake, he demonstrates, here, that his criticism of counterfeit emotions does not inversely imply that he values “authentic” emotions. There is no question for Lawrence that Roderick’s emotions, or the affective mode that draws him to his sister, are authentic. However, Roderick’s feeling is a direct consequence of his rejection of a *perfected* relation. For Lawrence, therefore, “Fall” represents a mode of subjectivity that demonstrates the fatal effects of relations that function to

merge, rather than distinguish the otherness of, its participants. Consequently, when Lawrence uses Roderick as an example through which to assert that there are some situations in which “man must be stripped even of himself” if he hopes to free himself of “the old consciousness” and experience new feelings (65), he associates the situation with merging, a mode of consciousness and relation to which he directs his critique.

We also learn through Poe that feeling could be strongly influenced by one’s orientation toward one’s cultural and physical environment. In this sense, because Lawrence’s conception of feeling is that it denotes an affective system of relations that include the body, the feelings, and the environment, isolating any of these terms at the expense of another necessarily performs the kind of merging that Lawrence argues is fatal.¹² Consequently, when Lawrence discusses feeling, he has in mind affective relations, in which individuals’ experiences are the product of a set of relations between subjects, objects, and environments, rather than isolated emotional states. We tend to think of feeling as something that an individual subject *has*, such as one person’s experience of hate, or another’s experience of love. But Lawrence’s discussion of Roderick suggests that he understands feeling as a complex set of subjective relations in which agency is distributed. In other words, *feeling produces subjects*. Lawrence is less interested in individual subjective experience than in how feeling influences our understanding of the subject. One of the consequences of this new conception of feeling is that we have to think about subjects as produced through these networks of affective relations, just as Roderick is. In short, when

¹² Lawrence again here anticipates some recent affect theorists’ work on systems of affective relations. Duncan A. Lucas provides a useful summary of affect theory’s recent developments in *Affect Theory, Genre and the Example of Tragedy* (2018). His definition of Silvan Tomkins’ “script theory” articulates some of the systems at work in affective relationships and is especially helpful in this context (54-66).

Lawrence emphasizes the importance of the individual, he simultaneously insists on the networks of influence to which the individual is subjected.

Lawrence's discussion of Poe and his short stories draws our attention to the disjunction between the somewhat idealistic terms in which he initially frames the collection and the substance of his engagement with individual authors. In the opening essays of *Classic*, he seems to want to explore a space—America—in which processes of subjectivation might unfold differently than in Britain. The “confinement” associated with Hardy's Wessex, and English morality more generally, seems to stand in sharp contrast with the “freedom” promised by American place. But as Lawrence turns his attention to specific American authors, he frequently finds them replicating the same forms of confinement that plague English culture. In the first essay of *Classic*, “The Spirit of Place,” Lawrence argues that the “freedom” America represents is a claim to freedom without substance: “The shout [of freedom] is a rattling of chains, always was” (7). He argues that American culture has so defined itself in opposition to Europe that it has failed to consider what it *is*. “Henceforth, be masterless,” he writes, “Which is all very well, but it isn't freedom. Rather the reverse. A hopeless sort of constraint. It is never freedom till you find something you really *positively want to be*. And people in America have always been shouting about the things they are *not*” (3; original emphasis). Despite their claims to freedom, Americans have settled on a negative version of what they seek to escape, thereby binding themselves to the old world and its conventions and ideas—a situation Lawrence laments because “different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence” (6). Lawrence therefore seems to mourn the potential for the “progressive American consciousness” (7), and ultimately asserts that America has ignored that which puts Americans in the unique position to explore the “wholeness” of man and the freedom of what “the deepest self likes” (7; 6).

Lawrence implies, therefore, that Roderick's case is a warning: where the "perfected relation" exemplified by van Gogh and the sunflowers in *Study* suggests a process through which both parties are transformed, Poe's "Fall" exemplifies a kind of relation in which both parties "merge" rather than participate in a mutually affecting relationship. More precisely, Roderick serves as an example of one of the forms of agency that is born of America's foundational belief in absolute freedom. If America is the space in which "freedom" is merely the rejection of the constraints of European culture, that freedom leads only to chaos and apathy: "the moment you can do just what you like, there is nothing you care about doing" (7). This warning echoes similar concerns about losing the "capacity for feeling" that he articulates in "A Propos" (311). If one is unable or unwilling to encounter new modes of feeling, and pursues only what one likes, then it is unlikely that one will pursue what is painful or unpleasant—the sort of experience that, as we have seen, could be a source of positive change. In this regard, Lawrence emphasizes how the American conception of freedom implicitly supports "pleasant" relationships that satisfy the ego.

Roderick's case, and the warning that Lawrence introduces, is an example of a kind of subjective position that rejects relation. Roderick's attempt to "merge" with his environment is fatal to the kinds of relation in which Lawrence is interested—and, in the terms of the story, literally fatal. The implications of Roderick's subjective position, treated in outline in *Classic*, are deeply important to Lawrence, for the concept of "merging" is a constant concern throughout his career. In this regard, "merging" is another conceptual node that Badiou's theory can productively illuminate. American culture allows Lawrence to isolate a subjective position that shares much with what Badiou calls "the reactive subject." The reactive subject "says 'no' to the event and cleaves to the familiar norms of the old world" in much the same way that the

American subject treats the freedom to choose as the freedom only to reject (C. Wright 83). Because Badiou's theory of the event proposes that the subject constitutes a new world when the event is declared, that new world is conditional upon the subject's acceptance of the event, however difficult or, in Lawrence's formulation, painful.

Lawrence's America is therefore an example of Badiou's "evental site": "it is the localized point within a situation from which novelty might burst forth" (C. Wright 79). This evental site is identifiable within the situation; while the term "site" might suggest a particular location, Badiou's intention is instead to clarify that the event has a local emergence. A site could, therefore, denote an experience, a reaction, or a rejection, but what remains consistent is that the site is the locus of a complex of relations that include and influence a potential subject. The evental site, as its name implies, contains the event, but it does not disclose it: the event's disclosure is dependent on the subject, who is beset by the influences of his environment. In this regard, its declaration—and potential importance—is fragile. In Lawrence's case, the fragility of the event becomes clearest when he focusses on America's opposition to Europe absent a positive claim for its own consciousness, for he fears that "we are not the marvelous choosers and deciders that we think we are" (*Classic* 7). Because of the conflation of freedom with opposition, America's evental site is misapprehended by some of the subjects within the situation: it is regarded as a local experience rather than as an event that might have universal applicability.

In sum, Lawrence seeks to identify subjective positions that are particularly unproductive. His analysis of Poe and his understanding of the American psyche isolates two such forms of subjectivity against which he will mount critiques. In the case of Poe, Lawrence emphasizes a subjective drive to merge that is roughly reducible to the imposition of will upon

various aspects of the individual's environment. In the case of American culture, the freedom to resist convention constitutes a negatory subjective position that Lawrence ultimately understands as a failure to affirm eventual possibility. In the essay on Walt Whitman, to which I will now turn, we find Lawrence evaluating a more fruitful subjective position—one which advertises a version of the self, or the individual, which more closely resembles the subject who recognizes the importance of feeling.

Avoiding “Myself Monomania” in Whitman: Reincorporating the Individual

Having surveyed the subjective position that Lawrence critiques in Poe's writing, we will turn to another: the eventual logic in his chapter on Walt Whitman explores a position that encourages “feeling with” others (*Classic* 172). Lawrence's conceptions of the individual and personality are central to this discussion. He attempts to identify a source of human action in the fact that the individual is continuously influenced by his environment, as we have seen in the case of Roderick. For Lawrence, the individual is figured in fluctuating, unstable terms that suggest it cannot be considered a reliable or stable source for the change in which he is interested. Critical discussions of Lawrence often understand his aversion to processes of socialization such as convention and morality as commitment to a kind of authenticity of the “self”. As we will see, however, Lawrence's reading of Whitman raises some important questions about such a commitment.

Whereas Lawrence seems to understand the subject as produced by its relation to its environment, there remains for many critics a central “core” of identity whose genuineness Lawrence seems at pains to defend. Paul Sheehan, for example, argues in *Modernism, Narrative, and Humanism* that “the soul, the emblem of authentic selfhood” is the central feature of

Lawrence's criticism (107). This traditional conception of the soul is precisely a "core" self whose main quality is its ineffability. On Sheehan's account of Lawrence's writing, one only "vaguely apprehend[s] a mysterious force within" (107), and this force serves to tell us of "the wretchedness of a metaphysically diminished mankind" (107). Indeed, Lawrence himself tends to describe the self in terms of "darkness" and "deepness," which might seem to connote a vague sense of instinct, irrational action, and spontaneity as synonyms of the ineffable source, the authentic self.

It is therefore crucial to consider why, in *Classic*, Lawrence is less reliant on the "soul" as a core of the self. His exploration of forms of "merging," that qualify the idea of relation, uses the language of "blood" to more precisely connote dynamic and subjective *impulses* rather than something resembling a stable or static centre. He writes that "passionate, implicit morality" is "a morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake" (*Classic* 171). In this way, "blood" implies a form of mutable selfhood—one which is characterized by the sequence through which it emerges—rather than an integral self that is woefully cut off from its metaphysical transcendence. We may recall that this is similar to the argument Lawrence makes in "A Propos" when he critiques idealism as a desire for "bodilessness" (330). "Blood," in other words, becomes another term in Lawrence's lexicon that, like affect, implies the thoroughly relational self.

Whereas Sheehan engages with Lawrence's sense of the self as having a kind of depth that is not readily defined, Tim Armstrong's *Modernism, Technology and the Body* offers a more productive approach in that it identifies the psychological centre of that depth, the unconscious, as a creative and fluctuating site in the body. Armstrong discusses the Lawrencean "unconscious" as part of a binary: the self, thrown up against technology, discovers its difference

through its capacity to innovate. He explores the history of “disconnection and automatic writing” at the turn of the twentieth century and suggests that Lawrence participated in an overall trend that valued “a second consciousness” which “is mobile and fluctuating, often incorporating oppositional impulses” (189). Armstrong recognizes in Lawrence’s focus on affective networks a kind of spontaneity, insofar as those impulses produce unexpected innovative outcomes, that he takes as representative of a core of selfhood. The aspects of spontaneity that the Lawrentian unconscious represents, therefore, are for Armstrong reducible to a return to a Romantic sense of a “true self” (190). But Armstrong’s binary offers a limited means of understanding the relationship between the spontaneous self and the technologies that Lawrence will encounter. Moreover, Armstrong’s association of Lawrence’s axiomatic style and its implications with automatic writing and its purported expression of the true, unconscious, or core self suggests that the authenticity of the self is measured by its irrationality or automatism, and consequently implies that rational, direct action is inauthentic. By deeming conscious actions inauthentic, however, Armstrong implies that Lawrence is somehow suspicious of all conscious action. Despite these claims, while Lawrence might value the role that the “blood” plays, he does not dismiss the prospect of mental consciousness directing it to productive ends.

In *The Poetry of the Possible: Spontaneity, Modernism, and the Multitude*, Joel Nickels occupies a position that is somewhat similar to Armstrong’s, but Nickels offers a shift of perspective when he interprets “spontaneity” not as the authentic product of opposition, but as a process of subjectivation. Nickels identifies a characteristic modernist tendency to “locate spontaneity less in isolated, individual minds than in sites where individual impulses overlap with modernity’s large-scale mechanisms of public contestation and common life” (2). Describing these sites as “networks of human faculties, energies, and affects” that he comes to

refer to as a “virtual public” (2-3), Nickels claims that the individual is thoroughly enmeshed in and dependent upon the relationships that constitute these networks. Thus, rather than viewing the individual or self as the source of spontaneity, he insists that it exists in and through its participation in the networks that constitute this “virtual public.” It is precisely these interactions that allow access to what he describes as “a vast reservoir of untapped energy—a wellspring of creative spontaneity from which the modernist must continually derive impetus and direction” (3). In this sense, Nickels does not so much describe a “self” as a network of relations. Though he does not discuss Lawrence directly, his clarification of the evolving concept of spontaneity identifies a trend in modernist literature that other scholars have found in Lawrence’s prose, albeit to different effect. Nickels allows us to understand spontaneity not as a simply irrational or unplanned action, but as a process that has an inherently social function. In conceptualizing the self, Lawrence favors a model that emphasizes mutual affect. Consequently, it is more productive to insist that Lawrence’s conception of the self cannot be reduced to any essential core; it is by necessity a part of relations that are in a continuous process of change. For Lawrence, whose focus seems to be on the ways in which relation can be wrought between members of a community, the contours of any ostensible “core” seem almost deliberately shrouded, as though they are intentionally superseded by relation.

Moreover, Lawrence is suspicious of a conception of the self that proposes limitless relation with the external world, such that it could be considered universal—the implicit aim of Walt Whitman’s “core self.” In the final essay in *Classic*, Lawrence critiques Whitman’s poems on the grounds that they may appeal to a universal whole; as Mark Kinkead-Weekes argues, “the idea of a Whole, of which each human consciousness is part, can lead to a desire to extend consciousness to embrace the whole” (524). Lawrence seeks to quell this desire, as we have seen

in his rejection of Roderick's impulse to "merge" with all that he can identify. Lawrence has reservations about whether the human consciousness is capable of understanding all; he insists that "the incomprehensible ... primal morality of nature or of life itself" can "surpass human consciousness" (*Study* 28; 29). As we have seen, Lawrence uses the phrase "little morality" to connote the morality of the world ("A Propos" 329), with its restrictions and conventions, whereas the "primal" or "deeper morality" precedes consciousness (329; *Study* 28). As a result, his writing remains faithful to the possibility of generative indeterminacy; "morality," as he conceptualizes it, includes a form of ethical relationship to others and the environment that might supplant the conventional morality that merely seeks to preserve the status quo.

Through his discussion of Whitman, Lawrence expands on the critique he has offered of Roderick's "merging." He has two key reservations about Whitman's conceptualization of the self: first, Whitman celebrates a kind of relationship that Lawrence has elsewhere called "merging"; and second, Whitman understands "sympathy" in ways that fail to recognize the mutually affective qualities of relation. On the first point, Lawrence has strong reservations about "Song of Myself" because it celebrates emotion—which, we might recall, are the learned or acceptable emotions that could "kill all capacity for feeling" ("A Propos" 311). Lawrence claims that Whitman has "mentalized your deep sensual body, and that's the death of it" (*Classic* 165). As we have already seen, Lawrence rejects "mentalizing" because it is one of the performances of the "rich emotional life" ("A Propos" 311), in which cognitively available emotional content is celebrated as evidence of inner richness. Lawrence, therefore, reads Whitman's famous verse, "I weave all things into myself," not as a valuation of difference or acceptance, but as the self assuming that its perception can actively incorporate all things. To illustrate his critique of that assumption, Lawrence uses the extended metaphor of Whitman's

“self” as driving an automobile at night with bright headlights on. The self believes that “he [sees] everything” (167), but Lawrence claims to be observing the scene among the roadside bushes, outside the range of Whitman’s headlights, and thinks to himself, “What a funny world that fellow sees!” (167). The “funniness” of the world to which Lawrence refers suggests, of course, the delusion involved in mistaking a limited and particular point of view for a totalizing gaze. By reducing the scope of “everything” to a single road illuminated by headlights, Lawrence mocks the sense that one could universalize one’s own experience, or believe that a “self” could account for every point of view.

Beyond this particular correction, Lawrence is suspicious of the idealism that Whitman’s metaphor of an all-consuming self introduces. He argues that the goal of this kind of self is a fusion with all exists into what he calls “One Identity” or “Allness”—an aspiration that is at once technically unattainable and effectively fatal (167). “God help me,” Lawrence exclaims, “I feel like creeping down a rabbit-hole, to get away from all these automobiles rushing down the ONE IDENTITY track to the goal of ALLNESS” (167). To Lawrence, this fusional aspiration is an idealistic form of merging that apotheosizes subjective perception: it attempts to fuse all that exists into a single concept that can be contained and understood. Moreover, Lawrence’s description of merging or fusion as an idealistic impulse connects these forms of relation to an implicit fear of other subjects. As Lawrence writes in “A Propos,” “It is a curious thing, but the more mental and ideal men are, the more they seem to feel the bodily presence of another man a menace, a menace, as it were, to their very being” (332). Lawrence thus claims not only that idealism is another means by which the mental consciousness attempts to “know” everything, but also that this same mental consciousness will consider relation an existential threat. In this sense, the distributed agency that Lawrence imagines in the perfected relation is in fact painful or

frightening to the “ideal men.” The criticism Lawrence levels at Whitman is therefore that his concept of the self is self-protective rather than open to relation; not only does it fear the agency of others, but it also attempts the impossible task of cannibalizing otherness: Whitman’s self becomes, for Lawrence, “myself monomania” (*Classic* 174). The result of this conception of self for Lawrence is death: “Death, the last merging, was the goal of [Whitman’s] manhood” (170).

If Whitman’s embrace of idealism in “Song of Myself” leads him to reject otherness, Lawrence finds more openness to relation in Whitman’s “Song of the Open Road.” In this poem, Whitman offers a conception of the “Open Road of the soul” that Lawrence values highly (172). He writes that Whitman’s road was to be trod “on two slow feet,” and that on it, one could “meet ... other wayfarers along the road ... with sympathy” (172). As opposed to what he finds in “Song of Myself,” Lawrence values the “Open Road” for articulating the idea of a dynamic soul that recognizes both its singularity and its capacity to be affected by its encounters. It does not, that is, assume that it can see and become “everything.” He also praises the idea that this soul cannot know its direction or purpose, but pushes forward despite its lack of knowledge. Its intentions, so far, are sound. The soul on the “open road” does not seek the fatalistic “death” of merging, but rather a “Sympathy. Feeling with. Feel with [the others on the road] as they feel with themselves” (172). Lawrence agrees with this sense of an open-ended goal for relation (rather than merging), as it offers him a metaphor through which to represent the unexpectedness and lack of control that comes as a result of meeting sympathetic others—a metaphor to which he will return in *Women in Love*. This qualifies Lawrence’s understanding of relation: it is an approach or a sense of direction rather than a goal. Its aim is not to reach an end, but to emphasize that an unpredictable outcome opens up more spaces of possibility.

Furthermore, the understanding of affective experience articulated in the open road helps Lawrence redefine morality so that it might better account for feeling. Specifically, Whitman emphasizes that the experience of the body must have a say in what morality means, an observation that forces him to resituate the “soul.” Lawrence celebrates Whitman as “the first heroic seer to seize the soul by the scruff of her neck and plant her down among the potsherds. ‘There!’ he said to the soul. ‘Stay there!’ ... Stay in the flesh” (172). Whitman’s embrace of the embodied soul, he argues, challenges the “old moral conception” that the soul was transcendent and separate from the earthly body (171), replacing it with what Lawrence calls a “passionate, implicit morality” (171). In this regard, he aligns moral purpose with bodily experience and passion. Contra the constraints to which the passionate individual is subject in Lawrence’s account of Hardy, American literature holds promise for Lawrence because it simultaneously insists that “the essential function of art is moral” (171), and that morality must be understood in the passionate, embodied terms that Whitman proposes. Because Whitman understands affective experience as part of the progress of life, and so understands it as part of the soul, the morality here is one that is born of *feeling*.

Even as he hails Whitman as a “pioneer,” Lawrence believes that there remains a significant point on which he is “fearfully mistaken” (171). Whitman has revitalized American culture and art and participates in the “new era” in which moral purpose can be newly aligned with a celebration of the body in literature (viii), but he has failed to consider “What next”: he neither accounts for the fullest expression of the self, nor the body’s striving to both discover and *be influenced by* the unknown or the other. He has pioneered “a morality of the soul living her life, not saving herself” (173). Because American literature promises “freedom over mastery,” the freedom Whitman celebrates is the freedom to further isolate oneself: by celebrating the

conscious self's desire to "weave all things into" the self (Whitman, qtd. 166), Whitman revels in "self-conscious sensuosity" rather than "go[ing] beyond" (171). Even the "Song of the Open Road" offers little direction for what comes next. The "sympathy" Whitman entertains, Lawrence argues, is a sympathy indistinguishable from the "love" that lusts for merging (as we have discussed through Poe's "Fall"). Lawrence therefore asks: if we can now conceive of a new morality that includes the body, why then is it not a morality of the body that also works to promote a sympathetic *community*? Lawrence wants Whitman to advocate "feeling with, not feeling for" (174). He insists that "the American continent speak[s] out in" Whitman (173), but it proclaims its message as one of individualism at the expense of relation. It also leaves the soul to its own devices, at times at the expense of others. Imagining Whitman meeting another on the open road, Lawrence complains, "If Whitman had truly *sympathized* ... he would have said: [...] if I can help him I will" (175). Whitman's new conception of morality offers Lawrence a productive framework, but he remains dissatisfied with the extent to which, despite being ostensibly freed from its constraints, Whitman's passional self seeks only self-aggrandizement.

Badiou once again provides a helpful lexicon within which to understand Lawrence's objection to Whitman's understanding of the self and the soul, and to discern how "feeling with" others on the Open Road employs an evental logic. In this section of *Classic*, Lawrence performs the operations that Badiou claims are the hallmark of the faithful subject: "every faithful subject can also incorporate into the evental present the fragment of truth whose bygone present had sunk under the bar of occultation" (*Logics* 66). In other words, Badiou argues that "a fragment" of the event, which we have already seen him call a trace, has been obscured somehow, and it is the chosen duty of the "faithful subject" to wrest it from obscurity. Indeed, that choice ultimately determines and creates the faithful subject, as we will see. The event could be obscured by agents

in the world who deny or otherwise ignore the event's occurrence. For example, Badiou's "obscure subject" has a unique way of denying the creative power of the event: he negates the existence of the event and instead celebrates an obscure fetish, and declares an event that "attempts to justify itself through the ineffable" (*Saint* 52). In this way, the truth that the event discloses is merely subject to the "transcendent power" of that fetish (*Logics* 60), meaning that the evental trace "is under the effect of a violent negation" (67). The obscure subject offers no alternative than to accept, for example, the transcendent power of an obscurantist version of "Allness," Love, or the Self. But Badiou's faithful subject, like Lawrence, emphasizes and repeatedly asserts the existence of a universal truth that has emerged. The faithful subject not only works faithfully to adhere to a truth newly disclosed by the event, but also works to advertise an evental truth by exposing the strategies and aims of other subjects (particularly the obscure subjects) who seek to occlude the trace of the event.

In this regard, Badiou's understanding of the subject is crucial to understand how Lawrence understands the self. The self, for Lawrence, is not amenable to being singled out as a stable "core" or centre that operates independently within a network of relations. Lawrence seems consistently to point to ways in which subjectivation occurs while refusing a stable definition of an individual or a self. So, Lawrence emphasizes the ways in which a subject becomes a subject through relation: van Gogh is changed through his encounter with the sunflowers, Roderick is changed through his attempts to merge with his environment, and Whitman is changed, and changes others, through his conception of monomaniacal selfhood or sympathy. Each of these instances do not precisely define the self, but exemplify different modes of subjectivation. In this regard, Lawrence emphasizes subjective positions that one can occupy.

This emphasis is more closely aligned with Badiou's conception of the subject than to the idea of a core or center, for the subject is always and only produced in the process of declaring the event.

So, when Lawrence clarifies that "freedom" should not necessarily involve conscious choices that are self-serving, but should function instead in the service of a kind of sympathetic community, he critiques the purpose or aim of Whitman's subject, whose duty should be to maintain the clarity of the trace by declaring the event as open to everyone. In place of the celebration of the body at the expense of community and relationships, Lawrence wants to propose a celebration of the body that still values the network of affective relationships that influence the self. We can, therefore, infer in *Classic* an oblique theory of a subject that is almost precisely what Badiou articulates in *Saint Paul*: a subject is produced through his declaration of, and faithfulness to, an event that enables him to remain faithful to the truth that the event discloses. The faithful subject, where faith is defined as "the declared thought of a possible power of thought" (8-9), is also militant in its expression of that truth: he or she firmly believes that the power of that truth is only powerful if it is offered through a "universal address" (90). For Lawrence, the truth that he reveals in this section on Whitman is that each individual must seek his or her soul's aims, where those aims are productive and founded in the body. Whitman's version of the self does not permit the truth through universal address: it rather "isolates" the self from others, rendering the truth subjective and ultimately personal—in a gesture that Badiou would characterize as an operation of the "obscure subject." Indeed, Lawrence is suspicious of the "freedom" that rejects an old morality or state of the situation, and installs in its stead a false conception of particular individuals like Whitman, who "becomes in his own person the whole world, the whole universe, the whole eternity of time" (166). This version of selfhood has no need for otherness because it depends on being able to already recognize and identify with that

which it can include. Lawrence reminds us that the body cannot be effaced, and its particularity must be accounted for even in conceptions of a transcendent self.

Lawrence's work in *Classic* thus demonstrates that he wants to conceive of a self that retains its particularity, keeps open the road to relationships with others, and has as its guiding moral paradigm the figure of the passionate individual who dares to encounter potentially painful experiences (now that morality has been redefined to include the affective experience of the body). For Lawrence, it is essential to attend to how one develops the kind of community in which this kind of self participates. Lawrence believes that one means of doing so is by getting back to relation and attending to "novel feelings." But Lawrence also implies that there is a specific role to be played by literature in the process of getting back into relation: by the end of *Classic*, Lawrence singles out Whitman as a kind of prophet of American literature. An artist, Lawrence's "great soul" or influential human agent par excellence (177), can influence the consciousness of other human agents in the world to "help" them, and Whitman seems to be just that. Although Lawrence's conception of the artist is that he is necessarily imbricated in the networks of influence to which all are subject, he still values the ways in which the artist may do some justice to an evental trace.

What Next? The Artist and the Unknown

Given that we now have an account of how Lawrence understands forms of relation in which agency is distributed, and a sense of the kind of subjective position he values, we can evaluate how he figures human agency amidst this network of concerns. Both *Study* and *Classic* demonstrate how Lawrence understands agency, and the subject, functioning in the context of literary works. Because he sees literary works serving a kind of "sympathetic community,"

Lawrence argues that they operate according to what I have been naming an evental logic. This evental logic is apparent when the state of the situation is challenged by that which is excluded from knowledge—a function, Lawrence asserts, to which the novel is particularly well suited. Lawrence maintains that there are unifying forces of social and psychic organization that could inspire a “feeling of oneness and community with our fellow men” (“A Propos” 109), but only if novels begin attempting to represent forms of relation that might introduce new modes of feeling.

In *Classic*, Lawrence follows a pattern that is similar to that in *Study*: he recognizes the extent to which the state of the situation constrains the individual, then he identifies moments in that literary work that might reveal a trace. In *Classic*, however, he focuses less on the constraints to which Hardy attends than the tension between the form of “consciousness” that American literature represents and the “old consciousness” of Europe (*Classic* 65). Here, he does not so much describe a subjective position as an orientation toward relation. He claims, at the start of *Classic*, that American literature foregrounds the need to dispose of old forms that are no longer able to build a community: “the rhythm of American art-activity is dual. 1) A disintegrating and sloughing of the old consciousness. 2) The forming of a new consciousness underneath” (65). We have already seen Lawrence’s distinction between “mental consciousness” and feeling—the former associated with readily assimilable emotional content, and the latter now aligned with the “new consciousness” that he declares nascent in American literature. The new consciousness, also described as the “dark under-consciousness” (26), forms in response to decay and disintegration. The “under-consciousness” is thus part of a dual process of decay and growth, where Lawrence stresses the simultaneous operation of these two competing forces. The participial verbs with which these processes are described—“disintegrating” or “sloughing” and

“forming”—signal Lawrence’s perspective on change: while they are opposed in terms of their association with destruction and creation, respectively, they are both equally active. Importantly, neither depends exclusively on the will of a human agent.

In this context, the new form of consciousness—to which Lawrence refers when he discusses this “new era”—appears to have been inspired by artistic activity. The new consciousness cannot be conflated with static understandings of innateness, instinct, and other concepts stemming from materialist conceptions of the “natural” body. Instead, we know that Lawrence values the sense that the art object, like van Gogh’s *Sunflowers*, can equally affect the artist, the sunflowers, and the viewer of the artwork. Therefore, the new consciousness which is formed, and the shedding of the old consciousness, applies equally to the consumer of art. This shift of focus—from the human agent to the agency of literary works—suggests that Lawrence understands the artwork as having influence on a reader’s understanding of what is possible in feeling and relationships. He critiques the assumption that the mental consciousness might be able to “weave all things into itself,” and holds fast to the idea that the future is unpredictable, but then places the artist and author at the forefront of the “work” that is necessary to productively guide that future.

Lawrence values the artist because he inhabits a form of consciousness that does not resist an encounter with the unknown. In *Study*, Lawrence praises literature as a manifestation of the consciousness that could assist man in “perceiv[ing] and know[ing] that which is not himself” (42). But, he adds,

we imagine we must live by knowledge. [...] We start the wrong way round: thinking, by learning what we are not, to know what we as individuals are: whereas the whole of the human consciousness contains, as we know, not a tithe

of what *is*, and therefore it is hopeless to proceed by a method of elimination; and thinking, by discovering the motion life has made, to be able therefrom to produce the motion it will make: whereas we know that, in life, the new motion is not the resultant of the old, but something quite new, quite other, according to our perception. (44-45)

Here, Lawrence defines a mode of consciousness that does not attempt to live by a “method of elimination.” He repeatedly asserts, against the idea that we could “live by knowledge,” that there is a vaster array of that which is not included in knowledge: “the more extended knowledge of that which is not myself” (43). Essentially, the knowledge possessed by individuals cannot grasp the excess that is proper to life. Lawrence claims, therefore, that knowledge is yet another manifestation of the state of the situation. Moreover, he rejects the notion that knowledge, because it is gleaned through understanding the past, can predict new outcomes, and asserts that it could only predict “motion” that is similar to those motions which have already occurred. For Lawrence, the absolutely new is not contained within knowledge of what has already occurred, but it might be found within “the whole of human consciousness” precisely because we do not know what it contains. In this regard, Lawrence turns to literature as a medium through which some of that wholeness might be introduced to knowledge.

For Lawrence, artworks are the domain of “feelings” (“Funk” 60). Because novels have a particular power to represent the excess of “life” that can assist one in acknowledging new or unassimilable possibilities (*Study* 31), he argues in “Why the Novel Matters,” that “To be alive ... is the point. And at its best, the novel, and the novel supremely, can help you. It can help you not to be a dead man in life. [...] You can develop an instinct for life, if you will, instead of a theory of right and wrong, good and bad” (197-98). “Life,” in its form as excess, can, therefore,

inspire modes of feeling that can challenge the little morality—and if artworks accurately represent “life,” they can “help” in the shaping of new consciousness. He suggests, in “A Propos,” that although emotional content might originate in the body, it can perhaps be misinterpreted or misunderstood by the mind: “the body’s life is the life of sensations and emotions. [...] All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognized by the mind” (311). “The life of sensations and emotions” that is prior to and often supersedes the “mental consciousness” is a condition of human life, and modes of feeling must be “recognized” in order to determine one’s capacity, or even one’s likelihood, to act in the face of change or crisis.

The novel can also provide “a new access of life” (“Why the Novel Matters” 196). Because the novel can inspire new forms of connection through its excess, Lawrence writes, in “Morality,”

The novel has a future. It’s got to have the courage to tackle new propositions without using abstractions; it’s got to present us with new, really new feelings, a whole line of new emotion, which will get us out of the emotional rut. Instead of sniveling about what is and has been, or inventing new sensations in the old line, it’s got to break a way through, like a hole in the wall. (117-18)

According to Lawrence, the novel represents new modes of feeling, and can represent the individual who recognizes the importance of relation and is therefore inspired by the “excess” of life (*Study* 31). Lawrence hopes that readers might recognize literature’s representation of a transformative relation, so that they, too, might become faithful to the evental trace. He believes that that recognition, absent the imposition of individual will or the subservience to convention, could generate new forms of relation.

But, as we have seen, new modes of feeling are not represented in a vacuum. When *Classic* explores the question of American “freedom” and its effect on the American psyche, Lawrence identifies an ideological obstacle to his understanding of literature. If, for Americans, freedom is believed to be innate, unquestionable, and limitless, then in reality, the ideal of freedom results in a conservative, self-protective ideology that prescribes action and encourages isolation. So, when he critiques the authors in *Classic*, he does so because, as Lydia Blanchard points out, “American writers have penetrated history and isolated cultural characteristics that direct our actions” (171-72). He assesses the celebrated characteristics of Poe’s stories and Whitman’s poetry as neither commensurable with affective relationships, nor evidence of distributed agency. For this reason, there are multiple obstacles to relation that Lawrence believes might be mitigated by repositioning the novel to better represent them.

Lawrence, therefore, celebrates the desire for friendship and community when he sees it represented in literature. In his discussion of *The Last of the Mohicans*, for example, Lawrence praises James Fenimore Cooper’s “dream”: “[Cooper] dreamed of a new human relationship. A stark, stripped human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex. Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love. So deep that it is loveless” (*Classic* 54). This “deeper” relationship is one that Lawrence illustrates on his own terms in *Women in Love* through two of its central characters, Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich. Their relationship, for Lawrence, has the generative potential for the radically new community and collectivity that he seeks to foster in his criticism. Their “deeper” relation is not bound by conventional morality, nor by a shared sense of innate direction; it is instead a possibility opened up by “the morality of nature and of life.” But novel forms of relationship cannot be realized by sheer force of individual will; this desire encounters the resistance of the social order. In this

regard, these forms of relationship are only possible when new modes of feeling—the affective relationships that challenge the social order to change and adapt—are recognized in their excess as the foundation of a new form of community in which individuals recognize a truth that the event discloses.

CHAPTER 2: *Women in Love*: “To Make a World”

As I have suggested, the evental logic that Lawrence develops in his critical writing places particular importance on the language of affect—what he frequently refers to as *feeling*. When, in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, he seeks to diagnose the limitations imposed by the state of the situation, feeling becomes the crucial index. The constraints under which Hardy’s characters suffer, he argues, become apparent in the ways their affective register is confined to a set of pre-fabricated feelings, with affective response that challenges the state of the situation (“passion”) becoming the harbinger of literal or figurative death. Similarly, when *Studies in Classic American Literature* tries to imagine an evental disruption to the state of the situation, affective freedom lies at the heart of the argument. Given the centrality of affect to this aspect of Lawrence’s thought, it is perhaps unsurprising that an affective mode to which he devotes particular attention (especially in his fiction) is *love*. “Why the Novel Matters” demonstrates why he focusses on love as an example of the transformative power of affect:

If the one I love remains unchanged and unchanging, I shall cease to love her. It is only because she changes and startles me to into change and defies my inertia, and is herself staggered in her inertia by my changing, that I can continue to love her. [...] In all this change, I maintain a certain integrity. But woe betide me if I try to put my finger on it. If I say to myself: I am this, I am that!—then, if I stick to it, I turn into a stupid fixed thing like a lamp-post. I shall never know wherein lies my integrity, my individuality, my me. (196-97)

Here, Lawrence emphasizes the importance of the subject to his evental logic. In particular, this passage emphasizes that the subject does not so much experience love as come into existence when it participates in love as a sort of truth procedure. Whereas the individual is constrained by

the state of the situation (and exists in a sort of stasis), the subject emerges from that constraint to the extent that it remains faithful to the object of affection (who is also dynamic). In effect, “Why the Novel Matters” argues that love confronts the individual with the degree to which the integrity of the self, “my me,” is not merely dependent on the mutually affective relationship in which it participates, but is produced by it. The “me” does not exist except in the dynamic process that relationships compel—if the process of love ends, then the individual is doomed to a kind of deadly stasis. In this sense, as we will see, Lawrence suggests that love is not merely interpersonal, but also has social implications.

In *Women in Love*, Lawrence explores the transformative potential of *love* as an affective mode. Indeed, Lawrence pursues similar ideas in both his fictional and critical writing in the early 1920s; as David Seelow suggests, he “worked on *Studies [in Classic American Literature]* and *Women in Love* ... more than any other of his published books and he considered *Studies*, *Women in Love*, and *The Rainbow* as his dearest and most dangerous books” (89). Lawrence outlines in his criticism that the social and moral structures that he finds represented in others’ novels exacerbate the difficulty of producing change, and so characters find it difficult to remain faithful to their feelings and to sustain their relationships. In *Women in Love*, he not only emphasizes how his characters encounter and react to conflict, pain, isolation, and death, but also emphasizes the uncertainty of their futures. The affective relationships in *Women in Love* therefore read as a deployment of his theory of evental agency. In general terms, the novel asks what generative possibilities emerge through the exploration of new affective modes, and, in times of crisis, which new modes of relation generate productive subjective and social transformations?

Lawrence's understanding of the subject and its agency is not a new area of inquiry. As Bruce Clarke has argued, Lawrence's opposition to the Egoist group is based on his insistence on "another ego ... according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable" (qtd. in Clarke 74). Clarke explains that "Egoism *per se* came to epitomize for Lawrence the corruptions of modern humanity: the fixed idea, the assertive will, the deadening mechanisms of self and society" (75). In short, Lawrence's suspicion of egoism is premised on his interpretation of the ego as "an inflexible shell" (76), rather than an active and fluctuating individual consciousness. His emphasis on actions that an individual might undertake in the process of performing his or her freedom are important in this context: for Lawrence, the ego is a "fixed" idea, in that it can only be identified in a static state. The ego's agency would therefore be expressed through the will. Lawrence objects to the undesirable fixity of this form of individualism, and to its implied understanding of agency as the unidirectional imposition of the self upon others. For Lawrence, actions and reactions in social space shape and reshape the ego, to the extent that the ego is effectively created by the mutually affective relationships in which it participates. In this sense, Lawrence's key criticism of egoism focusses on its inability to account for the extent to which individuals are affected by their environment, and he instead proposes a kind of agency that would recognize individual participation in a continuously fluctuating network of relationships.

Working in a similar vein, Michael Levenson contends that during this period, intentionality came to be understood through an opposition between liberalism and egoism: "where liberal ideology had made the individual the basis on which to construct religion, politics, ethics, and aesthetics, egoism abjured the constructive impulse and was content to remain where it began: the skeptical self" (*Genealogy* 68). He defines the latter tendency as a kind of "extreme egoism" that became popular after Max Stirner's *Ego and Its Own* was published in England in

1910 (68). This opposition between subjectivity and agency, then, becomes an important one, not only for Lawrence, but for modernist writers generally. Rachel Potter, for example, insists upon the intentional element of egoism when she defines it as “a theory of human agency” that “focuses on the rampantly wilful, self-oriented nature of human identity in the context of the breakdown of the cohesive ideological norms of religion and modern politics” (88).¹³

Lawrence’s connection to these trends of modernist individualism and egoism is unique. For one, Lawrence appears to be more interested in feeling, affect, and sensation than he is in the kind of “impersonal” distance valued by modernist egoists. The combination of an apparent dismantling of norms and the promise of egoism also appears to have offered Lawrence the opportunity to engage with the “corruption of modern civilization” by promoting “energetic action” (Green 141; 160); rather than a retreat into a Stirnerian extreme of individual, sensuous feeling, Lawrence disposes of the notion that feeling is wholly within the realm of the absolutely subjective. The affective experience in which Lawrence is interested is explicitly affective relation. Stirner offers the possibility of retreat, but affect for Lawrence is precisely the experience that reveals the extent to which the subject is inextricably tied to its environment. Indeed, the idea of individual retreat is nonsensical for Lawrence. The subject’s environment is precisely the space in which the subject, produced in mutually constitutive relationship to others, comes most to the fore.

¹³ Interestingly, Potter develops this in the context of female writers of the period, such as H.D. as Dora Marsden, and she finds that, generally, egoist writers aim to demonstrate their autonomy by distancing themselves from social and political realities (18). She argues that the egoists’ “masculine impersonality” requires that female writers suppress their expression of political opinion in order to emphasize that their skill in literary production is at least equal to their male peers (88).

As for Lawrence's position in the modernist canon, Potter asserts that modernist writers whose interests aligned with egoism and valued willful action often worked either in service of, or in reactionary response to, the more disruptive aspects of liberalism and socialism that began to take shape in the 1910s. She places Lawrence firmly within the latter reactionary camp along with Ezra Pound.¹⁴ I seek to argue, however, that the particularly striking perspective on agency in *Women in Love* suggests the necessity of reconsidering the claim that his interests are essentially reactionary. The reasons for Lawrence's inclusion in the camp of affirmative modernist writers will become especially clear when his view is juxtaposed with another supposed egoist of the period, Wyndham Lewis, in the next two chapters. But I hope to clarify in the pages that follow that Lawrence's *Women in Love* dramatizes the difficulty of agency precisely because some of the methods of its deployment lead to individual isolation, and the concomitant exclusion and dismissal of others' voices, lives, or their experience of feeling. In that context, I argue that Lawrence's novel ultimately draws the reader's sympathy toward those characters who do not exclude others from shared discourse.

In this chapter, I suggest that there are some elements of Lawrence's discussion of agency that need further exploration, especially when viewed in light of his insistence on the importance of feeling. The conversations and relationships fictionalized in *Women in Love* significantly change the way we might understand his theory of "another ego" that seeks to better account for agency and action in a democratic or shared space. As in his questioning of Pound's version of egoism, Lawrence repeatedly demonstrates a suspicion of theories of subjectivity that do not thoroughly account for change. My discussion will adapt the works of Alain Badiou to

¹⁴ See Potter's discussion of the intersections between egoism and democracy in particular in Chapter 1 of *Modernism and Democracy* (pp. 12-48), and her discussion of *Women in Love* as an example of modernist resistance to the suffragette movement (pp. 113-15).

allow us more easily to focus on important intersections between the event and the emergence of the subject, for he also contributes to this discussion by writing extensively on the subject with which *Women in Love* is ostensibly interested: *love*, and its relationship to living in common.

Love as Evental Site: The “Two-Scenes” of Ursula-Birkin and Birkin-Gerald

While Lawrence warns that emotions can sometimes become “pet” emotions that are robbed of their power when they are coopted by social norms (“The Novel and the Feelings” 202), he suggests that *love* in particular should be rehabilitated, as it elucidates what he understands to be the process of subjectivation. For this reason, *love* offers a productive place to narrow our discussion in order to flesh out the implications of specific, local relationships, and their impact on selfhood. In his essay, “Love,” Lawrence introduces what he takes to be the commonplace perception that “Love is a progression towards one goal. Therefore it is a progression away from the opposite goal” (8). He is, however, ultimately dissatisfied with this understanding. He therefore proposes that “Love is not a goal; it is only a travelling” that is potentially “infinite” (8), and thereby emphasizes process, progress, and time as the characteristic elements of love. In much the same way, Badiou calls upon a vast array of philosophical positions with which Lawrence was familiar when he writes that love is, in effect, a devotion to a process of change, occurring over time: “The enigma in thinking about love is the duration of time necessary for it to flourish” (*In Praise* 32). In this sense, one of the key areas that Lawrence investigates in *Women in Love* is how, and why, love develops, and I will argue that in *Women in Love*, *love* is a key evental site in that it generates active agents whose decisions are based on the initial experience, or scene, of love.

On its surface, *Women in Love* signals that love often exists in tension with marriage. Ursula claims that, for her, “marriage is the end of experience” (7), and to Birkin it is “a binding contract” and therefore “repulsive. *Égoïsme à deux*” (289; 352). Love, meanwhile, for Ursula, is “freedom” (152), and for Birkin it is merely an emotion like the others, and therefore “a direction which excludes all other directions” (152). Despite the ease with which characters in this novel identify the social and legal restrictions of marriage, they nevertheless understand love through the lens of marriage. They participate in some of its key rituals—proposals and weddings—and Lawrence repeatedly frames the novel’s events through a theatrical lens, as though to emphasize the importance of the scene or site of a declaration of love.

At the point at which *Women in Love* was composed, Avrom Fleishman argues, marriage as the centerpiece of a novel was almost a thematic cliché (qtd. in Sotirova 54); in this context, Lawrence’s decision to include the story of marriage has been taken either as a modernist critique of the traditional marriage plot, or as an ironic reversal of the implication that marriage is the site of domestic and social stability (54). But Lawrence’s novel narrows the scope of his discussions of both marriage and love from those he undertakes in *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature*—moving from the spiritual and social to the more individual level, such that the focal point of marriage serves as a point of convergence between two of his central themes: that of social pressure and morality, and that of individual freedom. In *Study*, marriage mainly serves a spiritual function. Even though he criticizes its social function as part of a process of socialization that has negatively affected both women and men, he argues that marriage is ultimately an achievement of balance between seeming opposites: it is a “marriage of body in body, of spirit in spirit, and Two-in-One” (*Study* 87). In *Classic*, however, Lawrence intimates that there is a possible relation that is “deeper than marriage” (54). For this

reason, when Lawrence's central couples in *Women in Love* discuss marriage, they do so as part of a network of feeling and acting individuals, each contained within a social system that has predefined marriage as the goal of sexual relationships. All the while, however, Lawrence's assertion in *Classic* that there a "deeper" relation is possible looms over the text. In this sense, marriage comes to represent the effects of traditional social systems upon individual behavior, despite the possibility of forms of relation that are not accounted for in the social system as it stands. In other words, his characters interact not only with each other but also the social institution of marriage as the state that governs the eventual site.

Women in Love opens by reflecting on the institution of marriage and its ambivalent associations in the minds of the novel's main female characters, the sisters Ursula and Gudrun. The two opening chapters in which marriage is discussed are occasioned by the marriage of Gerald's sister, Laura, in Beldover—an event that might conventionally signify a coming together of two families and a reinforcement of social bonds. In a reversal of the wedding's traditional social function as the celebration of new connections and the consolidation of community, the sisters view the wedding as a confirmation of their separation from community, in terms both of class and personal expectations. Referring to their appearance and manners, Gudrun remarks that the people of Beldover were not "ashamed of it all" (11), in a comment that simultaneously dismisses their dress and their enthusiasm about the wedding. They discuss Ursula's pronouncement that marriage will be "the end of experience" (7), and her assertion that she is not "tempted" by marriage (8). Although their conversation falters when they reach agreement on that subject, they nonetheless decide to go to Beldover to "look at that wedding" (10). This scene is significant as an opening gambit. As Earl Ingersoll argues, some aspects of Freudian psychology, particularly the theory of the gaze, are evident in the sisters' desire to both

watch and be watched, and in the connection between visual spectacle and objectification that spurs a desire for mastery of the gaze, even if that mastery entails consciously presenting oneself as an object of the gaze (273). While this is true for both sisters, Ursula is more acutely affected than Gudrun. The novel also highlights the ways in which both spectacle and love celebrate what Badiou calls “embodied thought: that moment when thought and body are in some way indistinguishable” (*In Praise* 85). Indeed, Ursula puts herself in the bride’s place and feels anxious for her: she “watch[es] with fascination” and worries about whether the groom will arrive on time, “she fe[els] almost responsible” and “troubled, as if [the wedding’s success] rested on her” (18; 15). Complicating her initial aversion to the institution of marriage and to the lower-class women of Beldover, Ursula projects herself onto the spectacle that she had earlier claimed would result in an “end of experience.”

It is in this mindset that Ursula notices Birkin in the groom’s party. She recalls past encounters with Birkin, as though constructing a narrative of their interactions. She thinks that “he seemed to acknowledge some kinship between her and him, a natural, tacit understanding, a using of the same language. But there had been no time for the understanding to develop” (20). Even though “he piqued her, attracted her, and annoyed her,” she concludes that “she want[s] to know him more” (20). Her impulse to pursue him despite his irritating personality demonstrates that she thinks through her experience in the body, and wants to test her mastery over the spectacle into which she has projected her desire. The narrative repeats, “yet she wanted to know him” (20), despite his arriving at the wedding with Hermione. This brief scene thus introduces the reader to Ursula’s motivations throughout the novel. The wedding seemingly reshapes Ursula’s thoughts; even though she feels that marriage would be “the end of experience,” she reveals that she is nonetheless open to being “tempted” as she begins to consider Birkin as a

potential partner. From an encounter in which the state of the situation is defined by the conventional understanding of marriage (which is unattractive to Ursula) emerges the possibility of *love* as a mode of feeling. This constitutes an evental disruption: the event disrupts a previously held belief in and understanding of a social institution, and Ursula is spurred to action as a result.

The eventual sequence of actions that Ursula undertakes not only retroactively indicates that this encounter constitutes an event, but also generates one of two kinds of relationship that Lawrence will explore in the novel. In service of Ursula's goal to secure "time ... for the understanding to develop" between herself and Birkin, she accepts the invitation to visit Birkin and Hermione at Breadalby despite her awareness of their romantic entanglement (43). She attempts to monopolize Birkin's affections when she demands that he cut all ties with Hermione, so that Hermione cannot furnish his rooms (133), she repeatedly insists that Birkin declare his love for her (154; 251), and finally tells him that she "want[s] him to serve [her] spirit" (249). At each point in this sequence, Ursula is met with Birkin's resistance, but she is nonetheless compelled by her original experience while viewing the wedding procession: she wants to "know him better" so that she can "have him, utterly, finally to have him as her own" (264).

As we follow Ursula's pursuit of a relationship with Birkin following the wedding, we learn that she imagines a form of relationship that is not merely exclusive or monogamous, but that tends to erode the distinctness of the relationship's participants. The kind of relationship Ursula imagines is a merging of two individuals—into one relationship, certainly, but also into one "love" in "absolute surrender" (264). In Chapter XXIII, "Excuse," we learn that she rejects Birkin's rationalizations about his continued relationship to Hermione—that he sees himself as "her opposite [and] counterpart" (306)—because she thinks that the explanation is a "dodge,"

and that Birkin “belong[s] to Hermione” (306). Accurately assessing that Ursula seeks to force him to choose between herself and Hermione, Birkin rejects not only the ultimatum, but also what he takes to be Ursula’s form of love:

Fusion, fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman, and most men insisted on, was it not nauseous and horrible anyhow, whether it was a fusion of the spirit or of the emotional body? [...] Why could they not remain individuals, limited by their own limits? Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge? One might abandon oneself utterly to the *moment*, but not to any other being. (309; original emphasis)

Although this passage focusses most immediately on Birkin’s frustration, it also demonstrates that Ursula comes to represent a form of love that is associated with the absorption, melting, or merging of two beings. In a sense, Ursula persists in the work inspired by her original impression of a relationship with Birkin—that they “shared a tacit understanding”—even when she meets his resistance to the form of love that she draws from that understanding.

Birkin’s resistance to Ursula dramatizes the conditions for an ideal relationship that Lawrence calls the “Two-in-one,” in which two unique and separate individuals pursue the work of being together without sacrificing their individuality. This second type of relationship stands in tension with the fusional, merging relationship that Ursula represents. He writes in *Study of Thomas Hardy* that the “Two-in-One” signifies “complementary” elements that “act” together but are often seen as separate and autonomous entities: one example of the Two-in-one is the human body and the mind (125). These elements, however, must resist one another: Lawrence claims that the goal of desire is to become Two-in-one, “the achieving of which, frictionless, is

impossible” (56). As Michael Bell argues in *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being*, “one of Lawrence’s most important recognitions, psychologically and ontologically, is the complementarity, rather than opposition, of relation and otherness” (87-88), which resituates the “friction” and resistance of the two complementary elements on a plane so that it does not suggest complete opposition, but rather simple difference. The focus on relation in Lawrence’s novels therefore explores the difficulty with ontological sameness and difference that is then reflected in his novels’ structures (Bell 88). Distinct from a binary system of mutually negating opposites, Lawrence’s conception of the Two-in-one highlights the affective connection between characters in his novels—characters who, despite exhibiting marked differences, form a singular social unit through their relationship. As Lawrence repeats in “Love,” a couple in love “must be two complete in opposition, neither one partaking of the other, but each single in its own stead” (9), so that they might become “two in one” (11).

The trouble with following this path of Lawrence’s logic, as it runs through *Women in Love*, may be a product of both the initial reception of the novel and of the subtle accomplishments of Lawrence’s character pairs. As some of Lawrence’s contemporaries such as E.M. Forster, Norman Douglas and Rebecca West influentially remarked, the characters in *Women in Love* can often be read as types, as they could represent divergent points of view on cultural changes that affect interpersonal relationships.¹⁵ This critical trend continues to make itself felt in recent criticism, as when Anne Wright claims that this “small group of characters [is to be] taken as representative” of a class segment of contemporary society (129). Rachel Potter argues that in the novel, “single characters embody universal human drives and epochal shifts in

¹⁵ As a representative of this analysis of *Women in Love*, West argues that Lawrence’s characters act in exaggerated ways, as though they “exis[t] permanently in the throes of hyper-aesthesia” (qtd. in Pilditch 101-02).

terms of cultural organization” (112). The tenacity of this reading is partially due to the grain of truth it contains: characters such as Ursula and Birkin often make claims that seem to be representative pronouncements from very clearly differentiated, and therefore antipathetic, points of view. In this way, Ursula is often read as embodying a bourgeois critique of marriage and social norms, in that she eventually sees the benefits of marriage as outweighing her initial repulsion, but only if Birkin will render himself subservient to her. Other effects of this type of critical approach include suggestions that the novel’s pairings are set up to contrast ideological points of view.¹⁶

Whereas there is no shortage of critical accounts of the novel that suggest that its characters should be understood as individual types or representatives of particular political positions, the characters must also be counted as fluctuating *combinations* of ways in which to view the world, in that their relationships effect changes to their conceptions of themselves, their social environments, and their beliefs. Lawrence represents the impact of beliefs on relationships through the character pairs in the novel, but he also dismantles the pairs in order to represent the effects these pairings have on individual characters. As Bell argues, the importance of the pairings cannot be overstated: he considers *Women in Love* as the site of Lawrence’s most obvious emphasis on the necessity of “having a properly responsive interlocutor” (*Language and Being* 101). Similarly citing the novel’s strong characterization, Bridget Chalk argues that Lawrence uses character pairs “not to propagate a pre-determined, relational construction of identity, but [to] demonstrate the multitude of potential directions and affiliations that might

¹⁶ See, for example, Vincent Sherry’s discussion in *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Radical Modernism*. Among the ideological positions he sees the novel contrasting are liberal democrats versus authoritarians, critics of egoism versus individualists, and industrial capitalists versus members of the artistic class (pp. 65-68).

structure a life” (63). Thus, while the novel focuses on characters’ encounters, arguments, and relationships, the importance of their convergence must be considered as part of the novel’s general commitment to exploring how Lawrence’s “Two-in-one” might play out. More specifically, the framework provided by the Two-in-one suggests that relation itself is the main goal—consciously or unconsciously sought—of each character.

In this context, the “Two-scene” as described by Alain Badiou might shed some light on my understanding of the novel’s character pairs, and what they might accomplish beyond representing essential human impulses or cultural shifts. In defining the evental site of the encounter, Badiou writes that the “Two-scene” is the space and duration of an encounter between two individuals. In his discussion of love as a crucial affective site within which evental dynamics emerge, the “scene” is both the local *situation* in which the lovers find themselves—a world, a space, a place—and the temporal sequence that elapses during the encounter. He thus insists that we take into account the real set of environmental influences that the two experience. Much like a scene in a play, any “Two-scene” happens within a context of other causally related moments: it is both an outcome of duration and the beginning of a process whose creativity is not fully constrained by the causal sequence from which it emerges. Badiou repeatedly emphasizes the Two-scene as a space of creation, in which “love” inspires a process of work:

Love ensures that two figures, two different interpretive stances are set in opposition. In other words, love contains an initial element that separates, dislocates and differentiates. You have *Two*. Love involves Two. [...]

The encounter between two differences is an event, is contingent and disconcerting, “love’s surprises,” theatre yet again. On the basis of this event, love can start and flourish. It is the first, absolutely essential point. This surprise

unleashes a process that is basically an experience of getting to know the world.

Love isn't simply about two people meeting and their inward-looking relationship: it is a construction, a life that is being made, no longer from the perspective of One but from the perspective of Two. And that is why I have called it a "Two scene." (*In Praise* 27-29)

Badiou efficiently summarizes the ways in which an affective experience like love can motivate and suggest a sense of purpose, in much the same way that Ursula makes the decision to "know [Birkin] better" and thus begins to imagine constructing a life with him. In this sense, there are aspects of the Two-scene that take place between Ursula and Birkin, but it remains incomplete as it unfolds in the novel's first few chapters. She wants to know him *better*, for the encounter at the wedding has had an additional influence on her desire. We also know that the encounter foreshadows her future plans: in the first chapter, she projects herself into the scene of the wedding, thereby signaling that she wants to participate in a "Two-scene." Despite the fact that Birkin's presence is disconcerting, his difference from Ursula "piqued her," inspiring her to ask whether an "understanding [could] develop." Her desire for an "understanding" between them is deliberately foreshadowed to highlight the difference between their interpretive stances, a difference of which she seems aware, and which attracts her. In this regard, Lawrence uses Ursula to gesture to the desire for a Two-scene—Ursula introduces us to the desire that differentiates her from Birkin, and yet draws her toward him. However, Lawrence represents Ursula's attraction to Birkin in a way that emphasizes the extent to which this attempt to reconceptualize love initially remains constrained by the normative structures that govern marriage, and by its associations with fusion and merging.

Consequently, Lawrence turns to the relationship between Birkin and Gerald as a means of taking some distance from the conventional understanding of love. The contours of Lawrence's Two-in-one are more obvious when Birkin becomes a part of a Two-scene with Gerald rather than with Ursula. In contrast to Ursula, who could be "tempted" by marriage, Birkin finds traditional modes of social organization baffling, and his response is to distance himself from others under the sign of misanthropy. For example, following the initial wedding scene, Birkin attends the wedding reception at the Crichs' house, where the mother of the bride welcomes him. In response to the performance of this common social obligation, he exclaims, "I myself can never see why one should take account of people, just because they happen to be in the same room with one" (24). His attempts at self-isolation are made explicit at the outset: we are told that he believes "people don't really matter" (24), and that he "detest[s] ... mankind altogether" (30). By the end of the chapter, however, we learn that Birkin and Gerald share "a strange enmity ... that was very near to love" (33). Despite Birkin's initial posturing, the narrative suggests that Birkin and Gerald share a mutual attraction:

It was always the same between them; always their talk brought them to a deadly nearness of contact, a strange, perilous intimacy which was either hate or love, or both. They parted with apparent unconcern [sic], as if their going apart were a trivial occurrence. And they really kept it to the level of trivial occurrence. Yet the heart of each burned from the other. They burned with each other, inwardly. They intended to keep their relationship a casual free-and-easy friendship, they were not going to be so unmanly and unnatural as to allow any heart-burning between them. They had not the faintest belief in deep relationship between men and men,

and their disbelief prevented any development of their powerful but suppressed friendliness. (33-34)

Despite Birkin's misanthropic pronouncements, we see him struggling, along with Gerald, to suppress feelings of connection and intimacy precisely because they breach the norm: the "heart-burning" is "unnatural," so at this point they avoid it as a point of affective connection. The second chapter ends with the narrator claiming that Birkin and Gerald's true obstacle is a question of belief: "their disbelief prevented any development of their powerful but suppressed friendliness" (34). The phrasing complements Ursula's earlier claim that she needed time for "the natural, tacit understanding to develop" between herself and Birkin (20), and thereby signals the contrast between Ursula's and Birkin's experiences: unlike Ursula, whose connection to Birkin seems in part justified by its "natural" contours, Birkin and Gerald's friendship is curtailed by their "belief" that it might be "unnatural."

The sequence presented in the novel's opening chapters thus introduces a tension that becomes apparent through the comparison between the Ursula-Birkin and Birkin-Gerald scenes. The novel's introduction of these three central characters signals the similarity of their motivations: like Ursula, Birkin is observed and observes, rejects social norms and yet participates in them, and feels motivated by desire to pursue a relationship with an object of interest to whom he feels an attraction and onto whom he projects his own feelings. Thus, Birkin mirrors Ursula's experience: the "understanding" that attracts Ursula to Birkin in the first chapter becomes a "perilous intimacy" that attracts Birkin to Gerald in the second (20; 33). Both Ursula and Birkin are, at the outset, compelled to pursue relationships which could be developed, over time, into understanding or love—or, in Lawrence's terms, into scenes in which "two in one" might negotiate life together. The stark contrast between the Two-scenes, however, reveals that

the state of the situation disproportionately values and encourages one relationship over the other.

These moments are worth inspecting because, while seemingly “trivial occurrences,” they constitute the Two-scene that is a foundation for subjectivity. In these encounters, seemingly inconsequential meetings take place that compel agents to act through the production of what Badiou calls a “supplement to the situation” (*Inaesthetics* 55)—a new suggestion, inspired by the event, of what might be possible. Although *Women in Love* is at times denigrated for being less interested in offering complexity through its setting than it is in exploring its characters’ heights of emotion (Eagleton 212), it excels when it emphasizes seeming minutiae precisely because these are the sites from whence active subjects emerge. The development of relationships or pursuit of “forms of relation,” as Lawrence would put it, is inspired by the desire that manifests in these scenes, and takes shape depending on the state of the situation that both limits and defines future action. Moreover, it is precisely the triviality of the initial occurrence that compels action: characters are, in part, compelled to imbue the encounter with an importance that meets the intensity of their feelings. Answering a question about why the Two-scene is vital for subjectivity, Badiou asks: “How can something basically unpredictable and seemingly tied to the unpredictable vagaries of existence nevertheless become the entire meaning of two lives that have met, paired off, and that will engage in the extended experience of the constant (re)-birth of the world via the mediation of the difference in their gazes?” (*In Praise* 40-41). In a sense, Badiou asks us to consider whether mundane experience positions us to view subjectivation and the future as products of the very experience that is generally unexamined. In so doing, he frames the encounter as either affirming the possibilities of the future, or confirming the maintenance of the status quo. I want to argue that *Women in Love* anticipates Badiou’s question, framing its

response in terms of the characters' ability to imagine possibilities that exceed the norms of the present, and demonstrating the extent to which their actions are determined by their capacity to invest such possibilities with a form of belief. As we have seen, Lawrence is suspicious of worldviews that may limit or prescribe outcomes for the future; it is, therefore, no surprise that this novel frequently reiterates Birkin's rejection of social norms in the service of keeping the future open and unknown. Lawrence is interested, as are some of the novel's characters, in what might be imagined in human relationships, even if imagination cannot yet name what the characters desire—and for this reason, he presents through Birkin a second form of love that might present a challenge to the normative, fusional form of love that Ursula comes to represent.

Belief in a “New World”: the Mobilization of Affect

In *Women in Love*, the languages of love and belief often overlap, and are mobilized in service of the pursuit of a “new world.” Birkin experiences a “Two-scene” with Gerald in the twentieth chapter's “Gladiatorial” encounter, and thereafter believes in the possibility of new forms of social organization that might facilitate his desire for increased amatory freedom. The failure to realize this new world is the source of the novel's unresolved tension, which suggests that one's *belief* in a particular form of relation is crucial in the pursuit of changes to the organizing features of social life—where *belief* can be briefly understood as either the acceptance of conventionally recognizable forms of love, or the confidence and persistence required of affirming an alternative form of relation. The novel's focus on Birkin allows Lawrence to ask us whether and how traditional modes of social organization can inspire new forms of relation between individuals. In that context, he suggests that isolation becomes a

question of one's belief or disbelief in the possibility of alternatives to the organizing features of social life.

We have seen that Lawrence values feeling as a potentially motivating force that could “carry us” through crises. In that light, we might ask how, precisely, he figures feeling as the foundation for action. Critical accounts of *Women in Love* seem to agree that the novel stages itself against the backdrop of a world in crisis. Ford Madox Ford, for example, famously describes it as a novel about “how civilizations die, or might die” (qtd. in Stelzig 95). Similarly, Eugene Stelzig argues that in *Women in Love*, Lawrence “imaginatively reworked the apocalyptic motif in the context of the Great War” to present the reader with both the crisis of the situation and the irony of trying to find resolution through a neo-Romantic aesthetic experience (95).¹⁷ For other critics, the novel's emphases on death, decay, and dissolution—most frequently figured in critical accounts via Birkin's infamous argument that “humanity is a dead letter” (Lawrence, *Women in Love* 59)—and its inability to articulate convenient solutions to the problems the characters identify render it dystopian. In contrast to critics who emphasize broad social crisis, Millicent Bell shifts the focus to instead consider the novel's emphasis on characters' affective crises: Birkin's critical outlook may be largely motivated by his dissatisfaction with existing forms of social organization, but the crisis he embodies is less social than affective. As Bell suggests, the “longing is really for a freedom to be unrestricted by social forms of all sorts, to be free of prescribed roles, to be inexhaustibly potential and unbounded by

¹⁷ In characterizing Lawrence's impulse as “neo-Romantic,” Stelzig suggests that he takes part in a tradition of English Romanticism. He claims that there is evidence of both Wordsworth's and Shelley's influence in *Women in Love*; argues that Birkin exhibits “the neo-Romantic poetics of misanthropic separateness” (96); and points out that the novel presents Birkin's experiences with nature with an “over-the-top rhetoric of mystification” only to “ironically deflate” their portent through Birkin's over-rationalizations (96).

relationships or possessions or conventional rituals” (“Flight” 612). When Birkin argues with Gerald and claims that “the old ideals are dead as nails” and that “humanity is a dead letter” (59), he does identify signs of societal decay. The context narrows his scope significantly, however, when he voices the reasoning behind those broad proclamations: “there remains only this perfect union with a woman—sort of ultimate marriage—and there isn’t anything else” (58). The yearning for change that Lawrence emphasizes through Birkin is prompted by Birkin’s desire to have a relationship with Gerald, when social norms only sanction his monogamous relationship with Ursula.

As I have suggested, the institution of marriage draws together a number of the novel’s central concerns: questions of affect and love, relationships, social norms, and belief. In contrast to love, marriage is persistently figured as one of the “old ideals” (58) that serves either to deaden experience (as the sisters claim in the novel’s opening chapter), or limit a life’s potential outcomes. If marriage traditionally presents an idealized embodiment of social stability, then for some of Lawrence’s characters, it represents an ideal that is “dead as nails” (58). Explicitly exemplified in chapter titles such as “Marriage Or Not,” in which the paratext questions the framing of marriage as an either-or proposition, the more local discussions between the characters redefine “marriage or not” in terms of either social decay or social renewal. For most characters, marriage’s position as the “ultimate” social ideal of sustainability, exclusivity, and permanence imbues it with finality (58), as marriage effectively severs them from their participation in the world. For Birkin, marriage is “repulsive” because it is “cowardice” to segregate oneself in a couple (352), and he suggests that “this is where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency comes in” (352). Gerald figures the permanence of marriage with deadening finality: as a “doom” he likens to “becom[ing] like a convict condemned to the mines

of the underworld, living no life in the sun” (353). In Gudrun’s case, she claims that “there are thousands of women who want [marriage], and could conceive of nothing else. But the very thought of it sends me mad” (374). The language of fixity and enclosure emphasizes the extent to which the characters view marriage not as a means of changing or evolving human relationships, but as a way of maintaining the limitations under which they operate. Furthermore, while most of the characters discuss their perceptions of the insufficiencies of marriage, they are frequently unable to articulate alternative relational arrangements that are socially acceptable.

In light of those limitations, the novel’s attempt to imagine a future in which social renewal is possible lies with Birkin’s *belief* that a radical alternative to marriage might be realized. The language of belief becomes particularly important to the novel’s characters when they encounter the possibility of a “new world,” in service of which alternatives to marriage are discussed. The infamous “Gladiatorial” scene, in which Birkin and Gerald wrestle, is the most suggestive example in this regard. It stages the Birkin-Gerald Two-scene, and sets up the template for an affective sequence that unfolds throughout the novel: the encounter, the acknowledgement of an affective disruption, and the questioning of whether there is “another world” in which new modes of feeling could be counted.

Lawrence uses the Birkin-Gerald Two-Scene to fictionalize what he calls, in “Morality and the Novel,” the “perfected relation” (109). After Gerald announces that “the possibilities of love exhaust themselves,” Birkin reminds him that in addition to love and labour, there is the option to “fight” (267). Unlike other fights in which Gerald participates—such as the scene in which he whips a horse in order to “forc[e] her back” [110], or the scene in which his fight with Loerke is transferred to strangling Gudrun, taking her throat between his “indomitably powerful”

hands (471)—Gerald’s gladiatorial encounter with Birkin is less quickly won. This is partly because Birkin enters Gerald’s very “being”:

They seemed to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper into each other, to each other’s rhythm, as if they would break into a oneness. [...]

So the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer. Both were white and clear, but Gerald flushed smart red where he was touched, and Birkin remained white and tense. He seemed to penetrate into Gerald’s more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic foreknowledge every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some hard wind. It was as if Birkin’s whole physical intelligence interpenetrated into Gerald’s body, as if his fine, sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into the very depths of Gerald’s physical being. (270)

At this point in the gladiatorial scene, the two characters struggle with each other physically—we see Birkin’s body and the bulk of Gerald’s physical being through a narrative voice that can clearly differentiate them—but the narrative focusses on Birkin as the more active of the two. He seems to be winning the match because he is able to “penetrate” and “interfuse” Gerald’s body.

As the fight continues, however, it becomes less clear which figure is penetrating which:

So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless at last, two essential white figures working into a tighter, closer oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus-like knotting and flashing of limbs in the subdued light of the room; a

tense white knot of flesh gripped in silence between the walls of old brown books. [...] Often, in the white interlaced knot of violent living being that swayed silently, there was no head to be seen, only the swift, tight limbs, the solid white backs, the physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness. Then would appear the gleaming head of Gerald, as the struggle changed, then for a moment the dun-coloured, shadow-like head of the other man would lift up from the conflict, the eyes wide and dreadful and sightless. (270)

In short order, the struggle seems to have shifted as the narrative moves away from its focus on Birkin. Body parts cease to be described by personal pronouns and therefore seem to become the impersonal property of the collective entity constituted by the struggle—as in “the swift, tight limbs,” “the shadow-like head of the other man,” and “the eyes” (270). Thus, although this scene seems to begin with two differentiated individuals tending toward a kind of fusion, reminiscent of the fusion or merging that Birkin believes Ursula desires, it ultimately emphasizes the process of a different kind of encounter.

In this regard, the passage suggests that Lawrence’s understanding of subjectivity depends upon a stage during which differentiation is difficult, but not impossible, to discern. The description relies on figurative language to demonstrate the characters’ own confusion, to the point of the characters’ “unconsciousness” or “half-consciousness” (271). Indeed, the repeated use of the metaphor of a knot also signals that this encounter emphasizes the creation of an inextricable *relationship* rather than the creation of a singular entity. The knot metaphorizes not the merging of two individuals, but the notion of a self that is created by, and therefore dependent upon, these kinds of interactions. Thus, the knot, the octopus-like mass, and the indistinctness of the limbs represent not the merging of the two, but the notion of self as

produced in the process of these interactions. This sequence is ultimately revealed to be a metaphor for the creation of the subject when the struggle ends. We are told of the pounding of Birkin's heart, which seems to operate outside of him:

[Birkin] came to consciousness again, hearing an immense knocking outside.

What could be happening, what was it, the great hammer-stroke resounding through the house? He did not know. And then it came to him that it was his own heart beating. But that seemed impossible, the noise was outside. No, it was inside himself, it was his own heart. And the beating was painful, so strained, surcharged. He wondered if Gerald heard it. (271)

The gladiatorial encounter has produced an understanding of individuality that emphasizes the self outside of itself. In other words, the struggle between Birkin and Gerald has produced a sense of self that is externalized; what might be considered the core of the self—the heart—is here experienced as external to the body that houses it, to the extent that it seems to be part of the environment in which it participates. It was “as if [Birkin's] own spirit stood behind him, outside of him” (271). This gladiatorial scene thus dramatizes the form of love for which Lawrence argues in his essay on “Love”—a form of love in which the integrity of “my me” is found only in the dynamic and mutable process of a mutually affective relationship, but is lost as soon as it is fixed, unmotivated to change, and therefore impervious to affect. Thus, the way in which the encounter is presented reveals that the scene is not so much about two individuals wrestling as it is about the form of relationship that it seeks to convey.

Moreover, this scene depicts an “encounter” like that which Badiou describes, in which love manifests in the conditions of the Two-scene. It is not, however, an encounter that should be unduly reduced to an overtly sexualized scene: the vaguely Cubist tableau is one of objects,

organs, limbs, and flesh. Distinguishing this fine point, Badiou argues, “while desire focusses on the other, always in a somewhat fetishist manner, on particular objects, like breasts, buttocks, and cock ... love focuses on the very being of the other, on the other as it has erupted, fully armed with its being, into my life thus disrupted and re-fashioned” (*In Praise* 21). In this light, the gladiatorial scene takes the shape of a disruptive, rather than a fetishized, encounter:

Lawrence’s narration emphasizes and reiterates how each character’s “being” has been affected, unlike other scenes in which Lawrence composes the erotic experience of lust. This scene is a tangle of limbs, shadows and beings, not of the “keen animal breasts” and “rounded buttocks” one finds in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (221). It is therefore no accident that Gerald and Birkin contemplate love in the aftermath of the encounter. With Birkin, Gerald experiences something that makes him aware of a lack. He tells Birkin, “I’ve never felt *love*. I don’t believe I’ve ever felt as much *love* for a woman, as I have for you—not *love*. You understand what I mean?” (*Women in Love* 275; original emphasis). The exchange which follows, as they struggle with the expression of the new feeling, indicates the extent to which the encounter has disrupted their understanding of love.

“I can’t express what it is, but I know it. [...] You see, I can’t put it into words. I mean, at any rate, something abiding, something that can’t change—”

His eyes were bright and puzzled.

“Now do you think I shall ever feel that for a woman?” he asked, anxiously.

Birkin looked at him, and shook his head.

“I don’t know,” he said. “I could not say.”

Gerald had been on the *qui vive*, as awaiting his fate. Now he drew back in his chair.

“No, he said, “and neither do I, and neither do I.”

“We are different, you and I,” said Birkin. “I can’t tell your life.”

“No, he said, “no more can I. But I tell you—I begin to doubt it.”

“That you will ever love a woman?”

“Well—yes—what you would truly call *love*—”

“You doubt it?”

“Well—I begin to.”

There was a long pause.

“Life has all kinds of things,” said Birkin. “There isn’t only one road.”

“Yes, I believe that, too. I believe it.” (275-76)

Both Birkin and Gerald recognize that they have encountered a problem; their experience has led them to consider whether at some point they will be able to be “fulfilled” (276). Their reactions to their encounter demonstrate how the event—in this case, the encounter between two lovers, in Badiou’s sense—reveals “a void in the situation” (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 55), or a sense that there is something missing that is not (yet) included in the state of the situation. After his encounter with Birkin, Gerald realizes that he has not “felt *love*” similar to that which he feels with Birkin. In this sense, he identifies a lack, and his inability to articulate precisely what he is feeling demonstrates one of the local impacts of the Two-scene: the situation, which dictates and encompasses the knowledge and experiences of those included within it, is revealed to be insufficient to the “supplement” that the Two-scene creates (55). That which is excluded from the situation—in this case, the form of love that this encounter embodies, and the very idea that there are multiple forms of love—is also excluded from language; the situation impacts how forms of feeling can be discussed, and the narrative thereby reveals the situation’s insufficiency.

The significance of the encounter is drawn into relief by the context in which it occurs: the fact that both Birkin and Gerald have recently felt compelled to propose marriage to their partners, Ursula and Gudrun. The description of Gerald as seemingly “awaiting his fate” implies that he feels Birkin might either diagnose or condemn him for questioning affective modes that are normatively confined to heterosexual relationships. But they cast off their shared “doubt” about their newly-discovered mode of feeling by replacing doubt with the “belief” that there are other “roads.” For both characters at this point, their encounter motivates them to consider an alternative to the affective constraints embodied by the institution of marriage. But more importantly, their relationship has led them to consider whether they are “different”—which, in one of Lawrence’s many fascinating double-meanings, could be taken to suggest either that they understand themselves as different from others, or that the way that they conceive of themselves has changed because of their combative encounter. Either interpretation of this line of dialogue, however, suggests that both characters have experienced a perspective shift as a result of the encounter. For Gerald, the struggle with Birkin has resulted in a shared understanding that the situation did not suffice. He is confused by the new mode of feeling, but also about the lack of fulfillment that apparently lies along the “road” he currently travels. In this sense, this is the only conflict Gerald experiences that results in a seemingly changed perspective that brings him closer to a new form of relation, and it further inspires Birkin to continue pursuing Gerald.

It is also significant that this conversation takes place when both consider marriage an affective limitation. Birkin has just awkwardly proposed marriage to Ursula, and Gerald is contemplating Gudrun as a potential fiancée. So, this encounter between the two men suggests that the remaining scenes between Birkin and Gerald might lead to their mutual pursuit of the alternative form of love that the gladiatorial encounter has introduced. After asserting that

marriage should be taken down “from its pedestal,” Birkin mentions to Gerald that he “believe[s] in the *additional* perfect relationship between man and man” (352). Throughout the novel, Birkin suggests that his relationship with Gerald is not merely an outgrowth of homoerotic desire, but an opportunity to pursue a form of relationship with a man that was neither supplementary to nor a negation of his relationship with Ursula—which may be his attempt to resolve his earlier complaint that, within the terms of the “old ideals,” “there remains only this perfect union with a woman” (58). If Ursula represents the form of relation associated with marriage, convention, exclusion, and “fusion, fusion, this horrible fusion” (309), then the form of relation Birkin experiences with Gerald offers an alternative that is, in contrast, mutually affecting, and which offers the creation of a subject who participates independently and actively in the social world.

Because Ursula wants to “have him as her own” (264), and believes that he should be “quaffed to the dregs with her” (265), when the novel ends, it ends with an argument that demonstrates the tension between the two different forms of love to which they are devoted. This strained conversation between Ursula and Birkin is often read by critics as an example of an “unrealizable hope” for the kind of future world in which Birkin is interested (Eldred 293). While this may be the case, the novel’s final conversation seems less like an aporetic balance of opposing points of view than a celebration of Birkin’s newfound, alternative form of love. It demonstrates that Birkin’s belief in the possibility that was inspired by his experience with Gerald remains, despite Gerald’s death:

“Aren’t I enough for you?” [Ursula] asked.

“No,” [Birkin] said. “You are enough for me, as far as woman is concerned. You are all women to me. But I wanted a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal.”

“Why aren’t I enough?” she said. “You are enough for me. I don’t want anybody else but you. Why isn’t it the same with you?”

“Having you, I can live all my life without anybody else, any other sheer intimacy. But to make it complete, really happy, I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love,” he said.

“I don’t believe it,” she said. “It’s an obstinacy, a theory, a perversity.”

“Well—” he said.

“You can’t have two kinds of love. Why should you!”

“It seems as if I can’t,” he said. “Yet I wanted it.”

“You can’t have it, because it’s false, impossible,” she said.¹⁸

“I don’t believe that,” he answered. (481)

Birkin, on the one hand, remains faithful to his sense that new affective possibilities have been disclosed through his experience with Gerald—he uses the language of belief and affect. Ursula, on the other hand, communicates her rejection of Birkin’s perspective as “false” or “perverse” with the language of social and moral conservatism, and questions not only the morality of the kind of relationship in which Birkin is interested, but also its existence. The conflation of the two adjectives, “false, impossible,” indicate that, for Ursula, both are somehow coextensive, which renders Ursula the representative of the “conservative” impulses in the novel, as some critics have argued (Eldred 284). But Ursula’s conservative impulse has other effects: when Ursula asks

¹⁸ A textual variant in *TSII*, the Oxford World Classics’ edition of *Women in Love* based on publisher Thomas Seltzer’s 1920 private run of the novel, to some extent informs my reading of Ursula’s use of the word “false” (in the Cambridge edition, from which this chapter draws). The edition *TSII* reads “because it’s wrong, impossible.” See John Worthen’s outline of the scholarly dispute between concerning authoritative editions of the novel (“Restoration,” pp. 1-26), and Eldon S. Branda’s argument for *TSII*’s inclusion in academic discussion (321).

that Birkin curb his commitment to this “kind of love” because it is false, she insists that Birkin’s desire cannot be understood in the terms of the situation. Birkin responds to Ursula’s assertion by simply negating both terms with a collective pronoun. In stating that he does not believe “that,” Birkin both rejects the implication that his feelings for Gerald are wrong, *and* that the realization of a “separate world” in which they might be included is “impossible.” The desire is a reality to Birkin, and the “many roads” he thinks are available to him are not dispelled by Ursula’s dismissal and rejection of an alternative form of affective relationship. Rather than represent Birkin’s form of love as absolutely impossible, this scene instead demonstrates Lawrence’s ability to convey both the difficulty with which a new encounter is expressed, and the resistance it might undergo.

Up to this point, I have suggested that *belief* functions to mark the anticipation of alternative possibilities in love and in relationships, but it is useful to clarify that Lawrence’s use of the words “belief” and “disbelief” do not necessarily attach themselves to a particular creed or doctrine in *Women in Love*. In Lawrence’s other writings (in *Apocalypse* and elsewhere), as in *Women in Love*, belief and faith are expanded and revised from their potential origin in Christian theology. Lawrence claims in “Hymns in a Man’s Life” that “by the time [he] was sixteen [he] had criticized and got over the Christian dogma” (“Hymns” 8), but what he “permanently value[d]” in his experience of the Protestant faith resided in his childhood response of “wonder” at the “mystery” of Protestant nonconformist hymns (7; 9). Thus, when Birkin and Gerald have a sense of “wonder” for, and appreciate the “beauty” of, one another (*Women in Love* 274; 273), the narrative does not qualify these terms in religious language, just as “belief” is never qualified by theology. As Eugene Stelzig argues, the idea of “wonder” and awe could equally be drawn from the English Romantic tradition, in which authors imbue experience with the “sense of

cosmic connectedness and affective participation ... beyond the mere physical or material reality” of a situation (Stelzig 93). Lawrence’s use of the language of belief expresses the importance of sublime and disruptive experience as a component of the encounter’s process. It “clarifies where the novel’s true affection belongs” (Seelow 92): namely, the ways in which characters recognize that feeling does not fit neatly into recognizable forms of relation.

Badiou’s formulation of a “fidelity to the event” allows us to conceptualize precisely this insight. By acting on one’s fidelity to the event, one undertakes a process of work. In the context of this novel, based on the belief that is generated through an encounter, an agent like Birkin is mobilized in the service of finding a “road” that will account for his feelings, even though, as Gerald demonstrates, their relationship is nearly unthinkable. “Fidelity to the event” is essential to understanding the transgressive and radical qualities of art, as artworks take events and organize them into forms that make the event accessible to others. For Badiou, an “event” is an occurrence that manifests the unthinkable. It “reveals the void of a situation” (55), which is to say that an event reveals the limits to what is thinkable within a given situation, and renders intelligible the fact that there *had been* a gap in knowledge. For example, a sublime experience may *become* an “event”—but Badiou insists that an event must be recognized as the beginning of a process, and not as an “experience” that can be contextualized or discounted (*In Praise* 24). By declaring the event, the subject begins a process that lends meaning to an otherwise fleeting moment in time, and thereby also begins a process that subjectivizes (or renders them subject to the event). In Badiou’s formulation, the event is coterminous with the subject who experiences it, with the process the subject undergoes, and with his or her actions. What follows is the sense that “fidelity to the event” allows for the possibility of embodied thought—an individual begins the process of living and thinking through “truths” that had been previously unthinkable. Indeed, this

formulation is, properly speaking, tautological. Truth, as Badiou defines it, is a hole in knowledge, so to live according to a truth is to bear witness to the possibility that is offered by that which is unthinkable within the current state of the situation. This is what pulls Badiou's "fidelity" away from the more colloquial sense of "faith"—whereas faith could be taken to imply unjustified belief, an act of fidelity to the event reveals a truth, the latter defined not as something utterly unthinkable, but as something unthinkable within the terms that govern the situation. Fidelity to the event is constituted, in part, by the subject's repeated attempts to realize what the truth has made possible.

In other words, agency begins in an affective connection that leads to the recognition of an exclusion, followed by the desire to make a world that would accommodate that which has, hitherto, been excluded. Indeed, Lawrence produces an analogue of this aspect of Badiou's project when he represents Birkin's encounter with Gerald as one of "wonder" (274), and has Birkin declare that there must be an alternative to the "ultimate marriage" between a man and a woman (58). Birkin cannot name this alternative, and Ursula confirms its exclusion from the situation when she declares its impossibility—but Lawrence supplies the reader with Birkin's position and how he got there: through his "really new feelings" ("Morality" 117). Lawrence uses Birkin's relationship to Ursula to thematize the norms governing conventional relationships in contrast to Birkin's relationship to Gerald, which seems to function as an evental disruption. This raises the question of the extent to which Lawrence is contrasting heteronormative relations to homoerotic or homosexual relations. I want to suggest, however, that it is not so much the homoeroticism of the relationship in which Lawrence is interested, but the affective relationship that it embodies. Because Birkin overwhelmingly associates his relationship with Ursula as one of merging or fusion, which, as we have seen, Lawrence decries in *Classic*, Birkin's encounter

with Gerald in “Gladiatorial” makes available the possibility of understanding the relationship as a dynamic affective mode that transforms the relationship’s participants. Moreover, his final conversation with Ursula suggests that Birkin believes the encounter with Gerald might be extended to include all relationships. Indeed, Mark Kinkead-Weekes argues that the novel’s “point is less to distinguish ‘homosexual’ from ‘heterosexual’ relationships than to begin exploring the difference in *both alike* between relationships that can transfigure, and those that are deathly because they disintegrate the self and destroy the other” (330; original emphasis). The emphasis through repetition falls on the novelty of the Birkin-Gerald relationship—not for its sexual novelty or titillation, but for the formal novelty of the affective mode it presents—as an alternative to the form of relationship that he has with Ursula, which Birkin associates with conventional marriage. Birkin’s rejection of Ursula’s demands is not due to the fact that their relationship is heterosexual; rather, he rejects the implications of the kind of relationship he believes Ursula demands—one based on fusion and stasis. As Birkin makes apparent, the form of love to which Ursula subscribes, and the institution of marriage that governs its regime of thought, does not adequately reflect his affective relationship with Gerald. His belief, then, mobilizes into an attempt to have “fidelity to” the feeling that emerges in his relationship with Gerald, which simultaneously reinvents his conception of himself, reconfigures his relationship with Ursula, and suggests the beginning of a process in which he understands his feelings in the context of “another world” that would allow him to follow one of the many roads that love has mapped for him.

“Love Includes Everything”: Resistance, Individuality, and Other Forces against Change

Birkin's desire for “another kind of love,” evoked by his relationship with Gerald, suggests the basis upon which Birkin can express his fidelity to an event: he believes in the possibility of a community of those who feel “really new feelings” that cannot be understood within the current situation. Fidelity to the event thus bridges from a local intensity to its broader social implications. With Gerald, Birkin argues, “two exceptional people make another world. You and I, we make another, separate world” (205). However, the event does not necessarily have any enduring effects: the effects could remain local, or could be subsumed back into the state of the situation. In this regard, Birkin's new mode of feeling is not solely the way in which affective experience leads to world-making, but his feelings have inspired him to believe that a Two-scene is the foundation on which another world is “made.” The other central characters in the novel seem also to encounter experiences of radical and transformative love or attraction, but, unlike Birkin, they understand their responses in the terms of the situation. What they ultimately represent, by excluding Birkin and Gerald's Two-scene from acknowledgement, is the precarity of the event.

The distinguishing and unique mark of Birkin's decisions, therefore, is that in comparison to other characters, the other “world” to which Birkin refers does not exclude others from participation, and, moreover, he seeks to universalize its local effects. He claims, despite Ursula's objections, “I always imagine our being happy with some few other people—a little freedom with people” (363), to which she replies, “Why would you *need* others?” (363). Unlike Hermione or Gerald, Birkin does not seek to force social uniformity on others: he asks, “Why this dreadful all-comprehensiveness, this hateful tyranny? Why not leave the other being, free, why try to absorb, or melt, or merge?” (309). His position on the matter, however, develops only

over the course of the novel. At the start of his character arc, we find Birkin arguing that “People only do what they want to do—and what they are capable of doing. If they were capable of anything else, there would be something else” (55). At its extremity, as in an early conversation with Gerald, this sort of amoral individualism leads him to bizarrely claim that if individuals always do what they “want” and are “capable” of doing, then in a murder, there must be a murderer and “a man who is murderable” (33). His early point of view is further characterized by his sense that isolation from others might be the most logical position to take, given that others’ actions could be fatally consequential to those who encounter them. This position, as we will see, changes after he speaks with Ursula about his encounter with Hermione. Birkin therefore initially seems aligned with a kind of laissez-faire individualism, in which each person must do as is right for them, and it is on this basis that he originally founds his sense that another world is possible. However, when this form of individualism plays out in social space, it meets various forms of resistance. The novel consistently dramatizes the extent to which social life requires a certain degree of conformity in order for it to function, which brings Birkin into conflict with other characters in the novel and challenges his assumptions. His interactions with Ursula and Hermione serve as significant points of resistance to his point of view, and his final interaction with Gerald suggests that *Women in Love* wants to represent this issue as one requiring urgent attention.

As we know, Lawrence is suspicious of universals that suggest uniformity through “merging”; his concern with Whitman’s sense of “Allness” in *Studies in Classic American Literature* is that Allness suggests a conception of the self that seeks to include all things and all possibilities (167). In *Women in Love*, Birkin demonstrates instead a kind of universal declaration: not a universal to which all *must* be subject, but an address to all that “another

world” is possible. For Badiou, this is precisely the definition of the faithful subject. The faithful subject recognizes that a post-evental effect of the encounter for the subject “is not the only possible one” (*Saint* 88), but the subject nonetheless “declares a *possibility* for everyone” (88). The goal of this universal applicability is, first, that it opens up the space for change: “Faith says: We *can* escape powerlessness” (88). Second, it suggests a goal, or the utility of belief, in the real world: “On the one hand, the evental declaration founds the subject; on the other, without love, without fidelity, the declaration is useless” (89). Finally, it is universal, because it does not exclude: it exists for all, “without exception” (76). These qualities of the faithful subject do not suggest, however, a kind of messianism. Badiou is careful to note that the faithful subject’s very existence constitutes “a new present” (*Logics* 52): the present, and the state of the situation that governs it, *now newly includes* the subject who declares that something is changed. To deny that, essentially, is to deny the reality of the present. Badiou identifies these important elements in order to rework how revolutionary action emerges, but in doing so, he also outlines how the embattlement of the event takes shape: the subjective declaration is only one possibility among many others, and there are other subjects, equally a part of the social world, who have a vested interest in denying any sort of “novelty.” In our discussion, Birkin is an especially apposite example of a “faithful subject” of the event, but Ursula, Gudrun, Hermione, and Gerald are not. In exploring how these characters reject the event (and the present, in the process), we will address in *Women in Love* the conditions that Badiou calls the “materiality” of universalism (92), or the ways in which a subject’s actions either reinforce the state of the situation, or insist that another possibility is open to all. This section will explore the implications of obscure and reactive subjects in order to contrast Birkin’s experiences, and reactions, with theirs.

While the question generally pursued here is what happens when a subject excludes others from an event, to posit the question in this way reframes Lawrence's intuitive projections of how individual freedom and egoism have effects in the real world. I will demonstrate how characters' exclusionary tactics work in opposition to the requirements of revolutionary action that Badiou describes, and how Lawrence fictionalizes their negative impact to show how his contemporaries' concepts of individualism and egoism have material effects that deny the affirmation of change. Each character in this novel undergoes disruptive affective experiences, but for various reasons, they do not all equally recognize in those experiences the possibility for radical change, or they are not equally capable of consenting to it. With the single exception of Birkin, the characters fail to recognize the "void in the situation": Ursula unflinchingly insists on understanding marriage as dependent on a rigid moral framework, and defensively dismisses others' perceptions of love; Gudrun revels in aesthetic distance, and so insists upon isolation; Hermione fights for control over others, and violently protects that freedom of control; and Gerald believes that he is doomed, and so he rejects Birkin's suggestion of a hopeful future. Each character is figured as a representative of an existing, and nameable, way of being in the world. It may be that Birkin is an exception in this regard—his ability to perceive the possibility of "something else" and remain faithful to it could be because, as a "foreigner" notes, he is "a changer" (92). The examples provided by the other main characters reinforce Birkin's claim that structuring a new world depends on peoples' ability to imagine a society that is radically changed from what is, and is "something else." The question, to reference Lawrence's writing on the subject of world-building, is "What next?" rather than "What now?"¹⁹

¹⁹ See Lawrence's views on this with respect to his diagnosis of the modern novel in "Surgery for the Novel—Or a Bomb" (117).

Although the narrative mirrors Ursula's original scene at the wedding with Birkin's original evental experience, she does not recognize her experience, or the emotions it produces, as part of a *radically* transformative event. Although she claims, in her conversation with Birkin regarding commitment and love, that "love includes everything" (152), we have seen that her understanding of love refuses to include the love between Birkin and Gerald. We learn, instead, that "everything" means, for her, those elements recognized by the current social order, or state of the situation. In an exchange with her sister, Ursula suggests that her experience with Birkin has led her to believe that marriage is not the isolating, deadening enterprise she imagined at the start of the novel, but she does not consider her specific relationship with Birkin as a radical break from the current state of the world. Gudrun emphasizes this fact when she asks Ursula: "spiritually, so to speak, you are going away from us all? [...] [D]on't you think you'll *want* the old connection with the world—Father, and the rest of us, and all that it means, England and the world of thought—don't you think you'll *need* that, really to make a world?" (437), finally insisting, "*I* think that a new world is a development from this world, and that to isolate oneself with one other person, isn't to find a new world at all, but only to secure oneself in one's illusions" (533). While Ursula does not always agree with her sister (she often mentions how insufferable she finds Gudrun's "pronouncements" [21]), she demonstrates that Gudrun has accurately assessed her position: Ursula states, twice in the novel, that she is "not sure" that the relationship with Birkin is the "kind of love" that she wants (249; 265). As we learn in the final scene, Ursula neither accepts the radical change in which Birkin continues to believe, nor does she consider her experience as one that is born of a transformative event. Her experience of love is, to her, already contained within the situation (the love-totalized "everything"). If one is generous, Ursula's reaction to her experience can be read as her understanding that the social

order is irreplaceable but tolerant, as a viable conservative counterpoint to Birkin's desire for the radically "separate world" in which he could realize "another kind of love" (205; 481). But given their exchange in the final lines of the novel, Ursula's desire, inspired by her experience with Birkin, eventually sides with social norms and emphasizes their rightness over his feeling.

Ursula's experience in *Women in Love* traverses the duration of an evental process, but leads to conservatism and moralism, or, in Lawrence's terms (as we have seen in our discussion of Hardy in the previous chapter), to stasis and tragedy. Perhaps Ursula here is intended as a warning: that a blind pursuit of one's feelings, without regard for the way in which they might curtail the personal freedom of another, can both exclude and deny the evolution of the social body. While Ursula remains dedicated to pursuing her feelings, she attempts to chastise Birkin to have him conform to what she sees as the correct path. Birkin resists because he has experienced an event that has demonstrated that Ursula's worldview—and the state of the situation by it is governed—is limited, or limits his potential experience of the world and of relationships.

Women in Love therefore dramatizes the convergence of two problems: exclusivity, and individuality that is founded on a retreat into private space. Although Ursula acknowledges that Birkin believes in "another kind of love," when she dismisses Birkin's belief by deploying the terms of the situation, she suggests that she will exclude his declaration of the event from the possibilities for their future. Therefore, Ursula is not "faithful" to an event, in Badiou's terms, because she repeatedly excludes others from her worldview, preventing the sharing of the evental process. In Chapter XXX, "Snow," Ursula tells her sister that she and Birkin will leave because they have been inspired to find "something else" (438). When pressed to explain the "something else" they will seek out, she elaborates: "one can see it through in one's soul, long enough before it sees itself through in actuality" (438). Her language here is that of private experience. But

Gudrun has trouble understanding, and claims that simply changing location will not assist Ursula in her quest for “something else.” “You above everybody,” Gudrun asserts, “can’t get away from the fact that love, for instance, is the supreme thing, in space as well as on earth” (438). Ursula counters that her sister cannot understand what she means by “something else” because Gudrun has not experienced a kind of love that is ideal for her, and so she “can’t get beyond” the ostensible limitations of her inexperience (438). Ursula’s response suggests that she dismisses Gudrun’s relationship with Gerald as a kind of “counterfeit love” (“A Propos” 311), which becomes empty once it is experienced, and so Gudrun cannot share in the eventual process that Ursula is undertaking. Ursula’s lack of interest in sharing her perspective with Gudrun, and Gudrun’s inability to understand, present us with the problem of how a new world may not be communicable to others who have not had similarly affecting individual experiences. Moreover, Ursula’s posturing in this scene suggests that even when individual characters might acquire a kind of knowledge that can inspire change and a desire for a new world, they might nonetheless retreat with that knowledge into private space. In the space of uncertainty (which is exactly the space of the new), the “obscure subject” emerges, as Ursula has, to participate in “the occultation of the present” (Badiou, *Logics* 60): she asserts the importance of the event only to obscure its importance and relevance to anyone else.

Gudrun also desires a “separate world,” but hers is a world that traffics in the exclusivity of the individual, to the extent that she will exclude herself from social life (and its relationships). She values a world in which her private life supersedes intimacy with Gerald. As Ursula cogently points out, Gudrun is “of another world,” which she inhabits by “making herself the measure of everything, and making everything come down to human standards” (*Women in Love* 264): her art-world depends on its elitism, its distinction from a world that already exists,

and her feelings cement her belief in her separateness from others. She is a modernist artist (she is “drawing on a board” in the opening lines of the novel and goes to London to “have a little show of her work” [7; 277]), whose cosmopolitanism and penchant for travel is partially a function of her desire to see herself as separate from others. She distances herself from her home, and when the sisters encounter the local characters in Beldover, we learn that she also distances herself from Beldover’s inhabitants. The common qualities of the place and the behavior exhibited by its people repulse Gudrun; she is appalled at the fact that “No one thought to be ashamed. No one was ashamed at all” (11), and she uses that repulsion to confirm her separateness from them, both in behavior and position. More importantly, however, she revels in her separateness because it allows her to view the locals aesthetically: each one is “like a character in a book, or a subject in a picture, or a marionette in a theatre, a finished creation” (14). Ironically, Gudrun must encounter these characters in order to produce the aesthetic distance that pleases her; her aesthetic distance is formed by her understanding of the other observers of the wedding as a part of a community from which she excludes herself, based on her own preconceptions of how she views herself in opposition to the world.

Her epiphanic moment at Innesbruck also reinforces her sense of separateness, not only from Gerald, but from the world. Unlike the intimacy produced by Birkin and Gerald’s “wondrous” experience together in the gladiatorial scene, when Gudrun takes in the view from her window and is “filled with a strange rapture” (401), she becomes “divorced, debarred, a soul shut out” (403). Gudrun’s experience leads her to respond to the world with detachment. By the end of the novel, she breaks with Gerald, departs with her newfound lover, Loerke, and severs communication with her sister—which is, if we recall, how the novel begins (with her return from travelling abroad). Gudrun’s experience does not drastically alter her sentiments that open

the novel—that she is an outsider with an aesthetic eye—and her relationship with Loerke enables her to continue to “place art above life and community” (Eldred 290). She also seems drawn to a cycle of encounters in which she “just *recule[s] pour mieux sauter*” (Lawrence, *Women in Love* 10), which, in the context of her final elopement with Loerke, suggests that she continues to respond to resistance by establishing negative forms of self-identification. She rejects Gerald and distances herself from her hometown and family in the service of her “separate world” and the “strange religion” in which she remains indoctrinated (431). In this sense, Gudrun, too, obscures the reality of the present by fetishizing the iconoclasm of the artist.

Because their separateness is dependent on their private experience, Gudrun and Ursula demonstrate how the “obscure subject” operates (*Logics* 61). According to Badiou, if an event is interpreted as exclusive or wholly private, the subject “misses” the reason it was such a disruptive force in the first place (*Saint* 91): it is only significant if it has public and material ramifications.²⁰ Because the subject has interpreted the event as a private phenomenon, the subject “obscures” the truth that the evental trace contains, which disposes of the event’s revolutionary potential by suggesting that the truth is only accessible to a singular, unique person, for example. As he puts it, the subject claims a “subjective voicelessness” that renders the declaration inapplicable to anyone else (52). Badiou is just as forceful in condemning this form of subjectivity as Lawrence: Badiou considers it “nothing more than narcissistic pretension” to jealously guard the creative power of the event (90), and for Lawrence, “myself monomania” and its symptoms, as well as his critique that Whitman should be “feeling with, not

²⁰ “Public” in this sense is opposed to the altogether private, but also carries with it the suggestion of thoughtful political organization. Badiou argues that to indicate something as “public” is to consider it in the space of the *politeia*, of “collective existence” (*Inaesthetics* 16).

feeling for” (*Classic* 174), are signs that he shares this commitment to the public nature of the declaration.

The lack of “feeling for” others characteristic of the obscure subject is not the only obstacle to Birkin’s process of subjectivation. Hermione’s motivations are quite similar to Ursula’s and Gudrun’s in that they attempt to reconfirm the state of the situation so as to block potential changes from occurring. But Hermione also reintroduces the problem of personal freedom that Lawrence discusses in *Studies in Classic American Literature*. In *Classic*, he argues that false “freedom” values a conservative, self-protective ideology that proscribes action and encourages isolation, even as it claims to operate under the banner of a new kind of freedom inaugurated by the new world. With Hermione, Lawrence explores some of the convergences between this critique and his suggestion that individuality founded on ostensibly limitless freedom leads to a world in which “men only know one another in menace”—a problem that he claims appears most often among the cultured classes (“A Propos” 332). Hermione functions as a representative of that cultured class and its associated self-protective menace: Lawrence characterizes Hermione in a way that associates her with old ideals—from her residence at Breadalby in the “Georgian house with Corinthian pillars” to her “shabby” clothes and her love “of things concluded, in the past” (*Women in Love* 82; 83; 86). So, when Hermione confronts Birkin, she is not content with being a “voiceless” subject—she is the most extreme example of the obscure subject in *Women in Love*, and Lawrence allows us to see precisely why the obscure subject is a serious obstacle to change.

Hermione is clearly capable of debate, but the importance of her character rests in her unconscious desire to maintain the status quo, despite her professed desire for social equality. She is deliberately set up as a conservative foil to Birkin’s free thinking; the narrator tells us that

she “hate[s]” Birkin because, during a dance, he exhibited “irresponsible gaiety” to which her other guests react by commenting that Birkin is a “changer”—“not a man, [but] a chameleon, a creature of change” (92). She is finally affronted when Birkin rejects her claim that “the rest wouldn’t matter” if we realized that we are “all [are] equal in spirit” (103). In response to his rejection of her ideas, in the privacy of her study, Hermione strikes Birkin twice on the head with a paperweight made of lapis lazuli and experiences “a perfect, unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction” (105). The violence of this episode serves to confirm her conviction, upon awakening from a heavy sleep, that “she had done what must be done. She was right, she was pure” (106). It is probable that she understands the rightness of her feelings in terms of social codes—her retributive violence is essentially presented as a response to Birkin’s repeated breaches in decorum. Her insistence on propriety, and Birkin’s continuous challenge to it, render her unable to experience her seemingly epiphanic moment as anything but self-confirming catharsis.

Nonetheless, Hermione is a more interesting case than, say, Ursula or Gudrun, because her actions serve as a significant challenge to Birkin—she both confirms and significantly alters his understanding of personal freedom. She is a representative of the kind of individualism that, as Lawrence argues in *Study of Thomas Hardy*, emerges as the result of isolation and functions only through an individual’s separation from others. Much as Lawrence claims in *Study*, Hermione’s individuality is dependent on knowing and identifying “what [she] is not” (44). The narrator tells us that Hermione is one of the “cultured” class (*Women in Love* 300), forging her identity through the acquisition of knowledge that she knows distinguishes her from others. She “gained so slowly and with such effort her final and barren conclusions of knowledge, [so she] was apt ... to wear the conclusions of her bitter assurance like jewels which conferred on her an

unquestionable distinction, established her in a higher order of life” (292). She uses her station and her accumulated knowledge as a means to distinguish and protect herself. At the wedding with which the novel opens, Hermione emphasizes her willful isolation and its self-protective contours:

Hermione knew herself to be well-dressed; she knew herself to be the social equal, if not far the superior, of anyone she was likely to meet in Willey Green. She knew she was accepted in the world of culture and of intellect. She was a *Kulturträger*, a medium for the culture of ideas. With all that was highest, whether in society or in thought or in public action, or even in art, she was at one, she moved among the foremost, at home with them. No one could put her down, no one could make mock of her, because she stood among the first, and those that were against her were below her, either in rank, or in wealth, or in high association of thought and progress and understanding. So, she was invulnerable. All her life, she had sought to make herself invulnerable, unassailable, beyond reach of the world’s judgment. (16)

Hermione’s sense of self depends on being “equal, if not far the superior” to others, either to save face or to protect her sense of self from incursions. Even the relatively egalitarian claim that she “stood among the first” must earn the qualification “among, if not above.” We learn from other characters that her desire to “mak[e] herself invulnerable” often entails the need to control others: for example, Ursula remarks that despite feeling a slight connection to Hermione, “she felt herself recoiling from [her]” (142), musing that her dislike derives from the sense that Hermione exudes an “oppressive” air of control over others (83). Indeed, the narrator’s dissection of Hermione’s demeanor at the wedding lays bare the foundation of her reliance on

this “oppressive air.” When she enters the church, Hermione expects to see Birkin inside, but he is not there waiting for her. Consequently, she feels “a terrible storm [come] over her, as if she were drowning” (18). At first glance, it might seem that this emotional extreme is unmoored from its context. However, as Terry Eagleton astutely points out, Hermione’s reaction emphasizes how “feeling is abnormally inflated because the capacity adequately to realize its ‘objective correlative’ in the public world has significantly diminished” (213). Lawrence emphasizes that Hermione’s sense of self is built on a foundation of knowing-all and anticipating all, and he builds in a swell of emotional reaction precisely because this novel is supremely interested in how the unexpected challenges this foundation for individualism.

As Michael Levenson argues, for Lawrence, “a conception of humanity can never emerge from within the self; it can only derive from our participation with others in a common life” (149). Hermione thus functions as a reminder of the violence nascent in the kind of individuality that isolates rather than participates. She therefore represents a strong challenge to the sense of individuality that Birkin supports. When she strikes Birkin on the head with a rock, Birkin is unable to respond with a simple “I don’t believe that,” as he has with Ursula’s moralizations. The sequence of events after he is struck outlines some of the reasons why his encounter with Hermione is significant. Birkin contemplates disconnecting from the world, retreating to the forest to “saturate himself with the touch” of the trees and bushes (106). In a bizarre scene described by way of third person sensations and bodily experience, he nearly copulates with a tree. “Its smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and ridges,” we are told, “this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying. Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtleness of vegetation travelling into one’s blood” (107). The grove to which he retreats then becomes his “marriage place” (108), which suggests that Birkin, whose aversion to

marriage compounds his misanthropy, has performed in a scene that symbolizes his rejection of society in order to “marry” the natural world.

Perhaps surprisingly, this strange encounter makes a real intervention into the philosophical discussion that Badiou schematizes through his notion of obscure and faithful subjects. While Hermione’s actions could be interpreted psychologically as a means of demonstrating the impact of rejection, or psycho-socially in the vein of “hell hath no fury,” it is equally fair to interpret Hermione’s actions as signifiers of privilege that is confronted with a threat to its established power. Indeed, as Ursula astutely remarks to Birkin, Hermione “wants petty, immediate *power*” (307; original emphasis). Badiou suggests that the obscure subject is particularly interested in power—whether conferred by status, knowledge, or political party—and its attempts to reaffirm the status quo can either be anodyne (as in Ursula’s case) or “malevolent”: it can act for “an abolition of the new present, considered in its entirety as malevolent and *de jure* inexistent” (*Logics* 59). Lawrence offers an implicit critique of the ways in which some forms of individualism are born of a vested interest in the past, and the extremes they often reach in order to protect it. In his violent encounter with Hermione, Birkin reacts not merely to a blow to the head, but also to the reminder that human society is necessarily a space in which power is often wielded against those whose very existence constitutes a threat to the status quo from which power is derived.²¹

Inspired by the violence of Hermione’s actions, Birkin’s experience in the Breadalby woods demonstrates the impact of Hermione’s form of individualism. Birkin feverishly rejects the human world and instead “rejoiced in the new-found world of his madness” (108). However,

²¹ For examples of how the obscure subject often features in positions of social, religious or political power, see in particular “The Formal Theory of the Subject” in *Logics of Worlds*, p. 61.

the interlude is brief. He eventually concludes that “it was necessary to go back into the world” (107), although he suffers “for a week or two afterward,” feeling “ill” and “sick” (108). The repercussions for Birkin of Hermione’s violent episode might signal to the reader that his subsequent experience was physically painful and destructive, but “necessary” to convalesce. In this sense, Hermione is an opposite to Birkin, but is, in some ways, a necessary opposite—she infects him with the isolationist strain of her individualism, which precipitates the complete rejection of society he had threatened in the opening chapters of the novel. Ultimately, however, he determines that it is necessary to return to society and recover from this affliction, as though from a disease of the mind. She has thus, in a sense, corrected the residual misanthropy that characterized him at the start of the novel. He convalesces from the “illness” that Hermione spreads, forges a relationship with Ursula in its wake, and still remains faithful to his idea that “another world” is possible. Lawrence therefore presents this encounter between Hermione and Birkin as a corrective to isolationist versions of individualism, and as a corrective to the retreat from participation in social life.

In her immediate effect on Birkin, Hermione performs the function of what Badiou will call the obscure subject. As a representative of the rationalist and egoist activists of Lawrence’s past, Hermione provides serious resistance to his proposals for a “new world.” Birkin’s persistence after his encounter with her embodies what Badiou calls an operation of “hope,” which is “the ordeal that has been overcome” in the service of fidelity to the event, despite predictable resistance (94). But Badiou is careful to maintain that hope is not simply perseverance, for a subject will necessarily encounter other subjects who resist the declarative power of the event. Hope, instead, is what emerges when the subject is “traversed by the hatred of others” (94), such as obscure subjects, and discovers a “fidelity to fidelity” without promise

for future outcome (95). In this way, obscure subjects are significant barriers, but they also can be catalysts; they flesh out the ways in which agency manifests in the service of the status quo, but they also indicate the importance of immediate, local instances of fidelity that do not have a direct connection to the eventual procedure. In this context, Birkin's continued fidelity to the event, which has nothing to do with Hermione at this point (their relationship having already dissolved), remains and is strengthened. To maintain hope in the face of that kind of resistance, therefore, is a universalizable "victory for everyone" in which subjects act in a moment when the "future outcome" is unclear (95).

Birkin's contrast with Gerald will clarify the importance of Badiou's conception of hope here, and will suggest ways to reframe the "unresolved argument" that supposedly underpins the climax of this perplexing novel (Bell, *Language and Being* 99). Beyond the possibility of there being other agents, or obscure subjects, who reject or otherwise resist the universal nature of the eventual process, there is always the possibility that the truth of the event is simply rejected. In the first sections of this chapter, I have argued that Gerald and Birkin come close to an understanding that a new world is possible. But whereas Birkin successfully convalesces from Hermione's malevolent actions and hopes for a future with Ursula and Gerald, Gerald, by contrast, remains shackled to the past, and does not recover from his interactions with Gudrun and her new love interest, Loerke. As a result, he loses hope—or, in Badiou's terms, he becomes a "reactive subject," who, like Ursula, Gudrun, and Hermione, "denies the creative power of the event" (Badiou, *Logics* 58).

Gerald resists Birkin's appeals for another world, but his resistance manifests as the loss of faith and hope. Whereas Gerald's relationship with Birkin initially promises to become "something else," by the final chapters of the novel he rejects that promise in favor of a

conventional relationship with Gudrun. This is partly because his gladiatorial encounter with Birkin has plunged Gerald into doubt. In Gerald's last exchange with Birkin before his death, Birkin tells him, "I've loved you, as well as Gudrun, don't forget," to which Gerald replies, "Have you? [...] Or do you think you have?" (440). Although Gerald had previously told Birkin, "part of me wants something else" (97), he denies his experience with Birkin precisely *because* it has become something else. In Badiou's terms, a reactive subject is characterized by his denial, which is always based on a sense that the present has only changed slightly: he therefore inhabits "a negative present, a present 'a little less worse' than the past, if only because it resists the catastrophic temptation which the reactive subject declares is contained in the event" (55). In terms of how this plays out in *Women in Love*, Gerald's belief rests in the social order, as he thinks, "as far as the world went, he believed in the conventions" (337). Like Birkin, Gerald reacts to the possibility of a new world, but unlike Birkin, Gerald responds by understanding himself as inextricably a part of the social order that has structured his life and his profession.

The novel demonstrates the repercussions of this rejection, in that his trajectory ultimately leads to his death. Gerald's actions and movements are figured in terms of mechanical force and industry, and he is also frequently figured as tending toward death. Gerald is the "industrial magnate" of a mining company, we are told in the eponymous chapter. He is described as having "an almost mechanical relentlessness" (111), and he believes that "work, the business of production, held men together. It was mechanical, but then society [*is*] a mechanism (102). This essentially associates him with a closure of possibility insofar as Lawrence claims, in *Classic*, that the "mechanical quality ... never sees anything in terms of life" (69). Gerald is therefore presented as an antagonist to life; Lawrence's criticism persistently sets up "mechanism" and "life" in a binary opposition, and suggests that predictable, causal outcomes

are only possible in mechanical systems. “The exponent of mechanical order” (Mensch 72), Gerald is thus comfortable understanding society as mechanical and industrial—he will remorselessly describe the industrial future to which he believes he belongs as “strict, terrible, inhuman, but satisfying in its very destructiveness” (Lawrence, *Women in Love* 231). The association of his character with the “dead” or deadening institutions and ideals against which Birkin proselytizes foreshadows this symbolism of death.

Indeed, we are informed that Gerald “was ready to be doomed” when he accepts that he will marry Gudrun (353). The frequency with which he is associated with death accelerates toward the end of the novel, when, having had her epiphanic experience of separateness, Gudrun begins to distance herself from him. He perceives Loerke as a threat to both himself and his relationship with Gudrun: he disliked Loerke’s “figure ... exceedingly, he wanted it removed” (470). Acting on his dislike, he strikes Loerke, but Gudrun “raised her clenched hand” and struck him in response (471). After a brief struggle, he stumbles up the mountainside, and then slips down to the location where, we learn in the next chapter, he freezes to death. But, the narrative tells us, “it was bound to happen. To be murdered!” (473). Gerald’s death therefore betrays that, despite his encounters with Birkin, he is not able to change or understand himself as part of a changing environment, but is rather more fundamentally attached to a resigned sort of fatalism. Gerald’s death thus demonstrates his incapacity to recognize a future, or the transformative and relational form of individualism that Birkin proposes, in the social environment in which he finds himself and to which he feels bound.

While Lawrence obviously brings this sentiment to its extreme, Gerald exemplifies the “reactive subject” and his “resist[ance to] the call of the new” (54). Despite Gerald’s feelings for Birkin, he does not understand them in the context of a future that might “carry [him] through”

the crisis he experiences with Gudrun and Loerke—allowing Lawrence to identify one way the reactive subject forms when Gerald demonstrates that he does not understand his own feelings. If his gladiatorial encounter with Birkin has made available a new mode of affective experience, he wants to understand it in the terms of the situation. This drive to foreclose the possibility inspired by the encounter is figured in part through a conversation with Birkin about death. Gerald suggests that he considers death the inevitable end point of a singular direction that all people follow:

“You don’t care if you die or not?” asked Birkin.

Gerald looked at him with eyes blue as the blue-fibred steel of a weapon. He felt awkward, but indifferent. As a matter of fact, he did care terribly, with a great fear.

“Oh,” he said, “I don’t want to die, why should I? But I never trouble. The question doesn’t seem to be on the carpet for me at all. It doesn’t interest me, you know.”

“*Timor mortis conturbat me*,” quoted Birkin, adding: “No, death doesn’t really seem the point any more. It curiously doesn’t concern me. It’s like an ordinary day to-morrow.” [...]

“If death isn’t the point,” [Gerald] said, in a strangely abstract, cold, fine voice, “what is?” He sounded as if he had been found out.

“What is?” re-echoed Birkin. And there was a mocking silence.

“There’s a long way to go, after the point of intrinsic death, before we disappear,” said Birkin.

“There is,” said Gerald. “But what sort of way?” (204)

Birkin and Gerald diverge significantly on this point, and have one of the few moments in which they talk at cross-purposes despite their “unspoken understanding” (204). Although Birkin echoes Gerald’s thoughts, he silently “mock[s]” the finality with which Gerald sees death—in Birkin’s echo of “what is,” he suggests an alternative to Gerald’s worldview: the lack of closure. For Gerald, however, death is the ultimate closure of possibility.

As this passage exemplifies, Gerald’s attitude is consistently cast in terms of action in a single direction, ending with death. Later in the scene, Birkin observes that there was “a strange sense of finality in Gerald, as if he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness. [...] He had a clog, a sort of monomania” (207). The monomania to which Birkin refers is Gerald’s sense that he must follow a singular direction. In keeping with this, even in Gerald’s final movements, he is “vaguely wandering forward, his hands lifted as if to feel what would happen, he was waiting for the moment when he would stop, when it would cease” (473-74). This is also the reason for which many critics cast Gerald as a “tragic hero” or as “hopeless” (Wright 147); despite Gerald’s closeness, relative to the other characters, to accessing the affirmative sense of hope for a future in which he could participate, he nonetheless believes that all action ends in death as its goal or “point.” Anne Wright argues, for example, that Gerald in particular is the focal point of what she calls the thematic “end-anxiety” that characterizes the novel; he is the central character who “actively mov[es] toward an ending” (151), and through whom we see one half of the “tension between going on and finishing, between continuance and finality” (151). This aspect of Gerald’s character also emphasizes the tragic nature of a thinking that is bound to the knowable. There is only “one road,” and one’s only choice is to follow it, reject it, or die, rather than dispose of those destructive options and

entertain alternatives that might not yet be known or imaginable within the current frame of understanding. Birkin offers this alternative to Gerald, but Gerald cannot confirm it.

The conflict in which Gerald finds himself at the end of the novel is therefore not between himself and another character's ineffable experience or their pressure of will; it is between Gerald and the opening of possibility. For Badiou, death is the ultimate closure and is the only "enemy" of hope (96). Perhaps even more acutely than Ursula and Gudrun, Gerald experiences a kind of transformative event that would inspire him to rethink his point of view, but the truth the event discloses ultimately conflicts with his instrumentalist ideals and leads him reactively to foreclose its transformative potential. It also brings his death closer to Birkin's experience with Hermione—but, even though the Birkin-Gerald Two-scene was a significant experience, death is what Gerald accepts, unlike Birkin, whose interest lies consistently in forming "another world."

Fidelity to "Another World"

Lawrence's emphasis on "new world[s]" and the emergence of "something else" are repeated in numerous places in his critical writing and fiction. Critics such as Axel Stähler, Fredric Jameson, and others argue that the "prophetic" qualities of Lawrence's writing suggest that he participates in the "utopian" strain of modernist fiction. E.M. Forster claims, in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), that Lawrence is the "only prophetic novelist writing today" who is not beholden to a "particular view of the universe" (99; 86). Rather, "what is valuable about him cannot be put into words: it is colour, gesture and outline in people and things ... evolved by such a different process that they belong to a new world" (100). To paraphrase Forster, Birkin is a character whose "different [evolutionary] process" can be conveyed in the novel form. But the

kind of optimism that Lawrence employs in *Women in Love* lacks some essential elements of prophecy: the prediction of what the future will hold, what shapes it will take, and so on. It more closely anticipates Badiou's formulation of the purpose of any activist or revolutionary: he claims that, if you are pessimistic, "the situation suffices," but if one is optimistic, one attempts to undertake the work of ensuring that another world remains possible ("On Optimism," 1:15-2:06). To some extent, for both Lawrence and Badiou, the work involves an adherence to belief, but it also entails thinking through the ways in which literature opens up gaps in knowledge and in the social order.

Women in Love presents us with a compelling quandary: despite the fact that a number of characters experience moments that dramatically change the courses of their lives, thoughts, or actions, no character will fully realize that radical change—one that suggests a break from the social order, or that suggests the social order does not include or cannot anticipate their feelings—might have been possible. Many characters experience an event that suggests that there is, for them, a "new world," but for the majority of the novel's characters, what they perceive as a new world only reinforces their existing worldview. Gerald sees in the mining industry a "new world" where he has created a "wonderful and delicate system"; the miners, however, predictably fail to recognize the beauty of his mechanical utopia: "it destroyed them" (231). Ursula marries Birkin despite her reservations about marriage in her search for "something else." She emphasizes the importance of being "enough for" Birkin at the end of the novel, thereby dismissing the impact that Birkin's feelings for the late Gerald had on him and his point of view. Hermione and Gudrun similarly experience transformations, in Hermione's violent reaction to a perceived insult, and in Gudrun's "new world of reality" that reinforces her aesthetic, and ultimately social, distance (410), but their experiences do not take into account the

necessity for relation with others. They understand themselves and their feelings in terms of the situation in which they find themselves, in line with their original worldviews, and they exclude others as a result. Even Birkin, who consistently maintains that there must be another possibility for how to live, is far from being a “revolutionary” in the sense that we might understand the term.

Birkin’s interpretation of his experience, and his “belief” in it, insists that it holds the possibility to make “a separate world” that he cannot always articulate because of its affective foundation (205). For this reason, although Birkin, too, seems to negate Ursula’s “belief” that what he wants is “wrong, impossible,” he is nonetheless the most open of the characters. The others do not understand their experiences in the same way that Birkin does—as a means by which they could begin to discuss, if not conceive of, a different or novel way of being in the world—and, as a result, *Women in Love* suggests the belief that there may come to be radically new social organizations that are inspired by individual experience. The separate world towards which Birkin works is not envisioned, articulated, or understood by other characters in the novel—and yet it represents a radical break from the current situation, and suggests that the conditions in which the event was disclosed could have inspired the same belief for others. If the other characters cannot, or will not, remain faithful to an event that is universal (and recognize it as such), then the “something else” will not be collectively realized.

Despite its virtuality, Birkin’s “something else” remains a hopeful statement at the novel’s close, for Birkin remains faithful to the event even after Gerald’s death. In Badiou’s terms, this is the essence of a hopeful posture: “Hope is ‘enduring fidelity,’ the tenacity of love through the ordeal, and in no way vision of a reward or punishment. Hope is the subjectivity of a victorious fidelity, fidelity to fidelity, and not the representation of its future outcome” (*Saint*

95). Furthermore, Birkin's understanding of the event differs from that of others because he does not deny its universal possibility. The "separate world" that he wishes to create is not a world from which others will be excluded, nor one that forces others to be subsumed in a merging mass; rather, it is the creation of a world in which new feelings would be counted as part of the present of experience. As a result, his desire itself is a trace of the event, showing that those who might appear to be free in their social environment have some possibilities that are excluded by the norms that govern their situation. He tells Gerald, "Instead of chopping yourself down to fit the world, chop the world down to fit yourself" (*Women in Love* 205).

For Lawrence, newness, and the creation of new worlds, is influenced by the relationships characters have with others, each of which has a serious impact on the kind of "something else" that might be produced. While Badiou's thought is useful in offering a kind of structure for Lawrence's thought, here is where Lawrence has more particular insight: the kind of productive relation in which Lawrence is interested is inspired in part by the relation—by the "sympathy" found with others on the "Open Road" that Lawrence values in Whitman's poetry. Particularly in this novel, the characters share experiences, but they understand them in different ways; as a result, they understand themselves differently. Dialogue between characters who discuss and consider concepts also later impact their decisions. These are precisely the moments in the novel in which Lawrence represents an economy of ideas—ideas are exchanged, and worked through individually, and then exchanged again with others. As Levenson argues, in Lawrence's writing, "a character is described in a self-contained proposition; the proposition is reformulated; an alternative is offered; and then the alternative is restated. Lawrence makes no effort to work these elements into a coherent progression" (152). Although the repetition can be

interpreted as mere repetition to no effect, in some cases, the repetition becomes a means of establishing a connection that forms out of recurrence.

In this sense, Lawrence offers us an opportunity to understand literature as sharing what Levenson calls a “proposition”: it is a representation of a feeling born of fidelity to an event that can reshape the situation. The control over the interpretation of this novel’s ambiguous meaning is, then, at the discretion of its readers. This is perhaps most keenly felt when critics consider how and why Birkin’s ideas, his “separate world” for example, are not conveyed with a “norm of rational consistency” (Levenson 148). The conclusion tends to be that Birkin articulates an “unrealized and unrealizable hope that the conclusion [of *Women in Love*] could have been different” (Eldred 293). Birkin’s “hope” is indeed unrealized: his “separate world” is not a “proposition” in the sense that it is not prescriptive for all, and so perhaps it is not realizable for all. When Gerald compels Birkin to elaborate on what it would mean to “smash up old idols” (54), Birkin only responds with frustration. Gerald asks,

“And how do you propose to begin? I suppose you mean, reform the whole order of society?” he asked. [...]

“I don’t propose at all,” [Birkin] replied. “When we really want to go for something better, we shall smash the old. Until then, any sort of proposal, or making proposals, is no more than a tiresome game for self-important people.”

(54-55)

The resistance to proposing the reformation of society—to fully articulating its contours and producing a vision of it—is Birkin’s reaction to the “tiresome game” of participating in a discussion that attempts to produce universalized visions of the future. A radically different future cannot be accurately predicted, and proposing it would merely reflect the present (in form

or in practice). As Birkin notes sarcastically, “We have an ideal of a perfect world [...]: your collier can have a pianoforte in his parlour, and you can have a butler and a motor-car in your up-to-date house” (55). Birkin maligns the “ideal” world that he might propose or imagine because he, and Gerald, might only be able to visualize improvements that are a continuation of the materialistic world that they both currently inhabit. Birkin believes that until they “smash the old,” collectively, the conditions under which a new world might be *proposed* do not exist. Utopian formations, particularly those that appeal to radical novelty as their generative principle, must be discontinuous with the conditions from which they emerge.

Nonetheless, Birkin is surprisingly inarticulate about the forms of relation in which Lawrence was interested. In other works, Lawrence describes “man to man” relationships as the last step in an evolutionary ladder toward a new world; he writes that a “bigger life” could be achieved through the evolution from relation to the living universe, “then comes the relation of man to woman. Then comes the relation of man to man” (“A Propos” 108). Birkin, however, does not discuss his “friendship” with Gerald with that kind of processual clarity. As Michael Bell notes, paradoxically, “in *Women in Love*, the characters are highly articulate so that speech and consciousness become ... problematic in their own right” (*Language and Being* 114). Lawrence clearly seems interested in the difficulty of expressing an absolutely new thought: the characters will encounter conflict with their own ability to communicate precisely because the situation does not include the language with which to communicate that which is “really new”—resulting in the kind of situation Bell notes in his discussion of language in the novel, such that even the most articulate characters remain strangely incapable of speaking about the issues that cause them the most emotional turmoil. Although Birkin remains optimistic about his

“something else,” he does not describe what that might be, and how it might be enacted, despite Ursula’s frequent invitations to do so in her recurring role as Birkin’s interrogator.

This novel generally focusses on representing the conditions for “new feelings” against the backdrop of social and cultural crisis, and focusses particularly on how characters navigate that crisis, either by accepting its presence, obscuring it, or rejecting it entirely. As Anne Wright points out, “Birkin’s climactic inner debate, in particular, conflates the crisis of civilization with the scope and limitations of personal relationships” (129). Birkin’s last words remain faithful to his optimism for a future in which his desire for “something else” would be fulfilled. Birkin and Gerald’s relationship is represented in the novel as a new relation—a relation that holds the most possibility for growth and change. Gerald’s and Birkin’s “deeper” relationship comes to its climax in “Gladiatorial,” after which Birkin opts to remain faithful to that moment and to recognize it as an event. In each declaration of his belief in a world in which the affective dynamics they experienced might be recognized, Birkin “makes use” of the event (Badiou 140), or, in other words, makes it useful, if only to declare that an alternative should, or could, exist. But not all characters share his optimism. The characters who live in coded spaces (Hermione in ancient, traditional Breadalby, Ursula and Gudrun in common Beldover) seem to be engaged in a battle for control over the kinds of affective relationships that are possible, but their reactions to conflict merely reconfirm their ideological biases. They do not remain faithful to their experiences *as* events, precisely because acknowledging a new present would make them lose social footing, and would require negotiating with a new understanding of individuality. Birkin, however, remains the single character in the novel for whom an “event” remains compellingly significant.

The novel's ending does not offer "a solution for the dying culture from which [Birkin and Ursula] must extricate themselves" (Stewart 119), unless we take Birkin to represent the solution. Birkin, however, is by no means a revolutionary. He is persistent in his misanthropy, and averse to the "sordid scrambling conflict of the present" (154); if he represents modern culture for Lawrence, he represents cultivating the illusion of his separateness. However, the narrative allows the reader to remark that his actions consistently betray his persistent engagement in the social world, as Ursula points out when she brings him close to admitting that he loves humanity after all (129). He returns to the world, and to people, despite his misanthropy. Through Birkin, this non-representative, *Women in Love* emphasizes the *possibility* that might emerge in the ambiguity and upheaval caused by the event. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing feeling, such that one can maintain "fidelity" to the affective dynamics an event inspires and continues to inspire. The belief that persists beyond the novel's ending is expressed through Birkin. To recognize an event's significance, as Birkin has, is to recognize in an event its potential to develop new ways of thinking and being in the world, despite his inability to fully comprehend what that world will look like, or how he will be.

Lawrence's *Women in Love* offers us an opportunity to grasp how affective concepts might be fertile ground for a form of subjectivity that would allow, and even encourage, revolutionary action. In "Morality and the Novel," Lawrence writes, "the novel is a perfect medium for revealing to us the rainbow of our changing relationships. The novel can help us to live, as nothing else can" ("Morality" 113). Because life and feeling are so closely connected, Lawrence conceives of the novel as not only revelatory, but also as a means by which one could begin to address the experience of "new, really new feelings." By investigating and announcing the affective experiences that are collected and conveyed in novels, we might recognize the

“thinking through [of] a form of thought” which is embodied in the novel’s characters (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 9). In this regard, *Women in Love* demonstrates that Lawrence believes art has a social function; F.R. Leavis famously valued Lawrence’s criticism because he believed that its aim was to find a social purpose for art. But unlike Leavis, whose “whole method presupposes, in fact, a morally and culturally unified audience” (Anderson 52), Lawrence proposes that the novel could assist in mapping the space in which readers might understand an open road—leading not to unity, but to cultural and social relation, even if that means enduring conflict, the hatred of obscure subjects, and the rejection of reactive subjects. In any world, there are a number of active subjects, each of whom have an understanding of their own individuality that manifests, at times, in their inability to recognize when “really new feelings” actually emerge. For Lawrence, it is not enough that an individual negotiates with new ideas, and with morality, to “expose truths” that a novel represents as possible (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 14). *Women in Love* serves as an example of how individuals may not even acknowledge change and crisis when it occurs, and of why it is essential to consider feeling as the ground on which individuality is built even as it is necessarily shaped by the circumstances of living in common. Badiou suggests that “love is the *becoming* of the couple and not the mere satisfaction of the individuals that are its component parts” (*In Praise* 90; my emphasis), and Lawrence would similarly claim that “it is the *relation itself* which is the quick and the central clue to life” (“Morality” 113; original emphasis). New feelings that value relation—as the foundations upon which Birkin believes a new or separate world might be formed after a crisis—are the points of focus that, for Lawrence, both criticism and the novel should pursue if the goal is to remake the world. Birkin, at least, offers one example of how Lawrence envisions an encounter with change that emphasizes optimism for the future.

CHAPTER 3: *The Enemy's Approach*: Wyndham Lewis against "Revolution" in Literary Modernism

In the previous chapters, we explored how Lawrence understands subjectivation through relation, how he assesses differing subjective positions, and how he understands the operations of the faithful subject. Lawrence explores an evental procedure. He argues that attending to affective relationships, or feeling, can offer an opportunity to newly understand how culture and social organization might be reformed by a subject who is constantly aware and in dialogue with his surroundings. As I have argued, Lawrence performs the operations of the faithful subject, in that he attempts to find a means by which literature reveals traces of the event that could be seized upon for further consideration. While Lawrence's novelistic exploration of the limits to relation further outlines his understanding of the evental logic, his concerns are framed as the perspective of one who views responses to the event as fundamentally charged by one's affective orientation toward the other and toward the unknown. In this regard, his perspective differs from that of Wyndham Lewis in significant ways, not least of all because Lewis is wary of deploying the affective register at all in the service of an argument. He argues, by contrast, that the conditions in which the event takes place often code the affective register; he believes that the event's potential for change may not, therefore, be noticed, or may be noticed but ignored, by many active participants in social and cultural spaces. While Lawrence explores an evental procedure (in which we see characters thematizing modes of affect that have an impact on their processes of subjectivation), Lewis will explore the evental logic that underpins this project. In other words, Lewis's focus on the state of the situation and its ineffective agents is organized by a persona that is deliberately crafted to represent what the situation lacks, even though it avoids expressing that rationale in the terms that would reproduce an ineffective state of the situation.

Lewis casts human relationships and subjective orientations, such as those to which Lawrence attends, as fundamentally shaped by an increasingly commercialized social and cultural environment. The state of the situation, as Lewis configures it, has commodified subjective experience such that individual expression is imagined to be inextricable from ready-made options that homogenize individuals rather than differentiate them from one another. For Lewis, understanding the state of the situation is paramount to rethinking the way in which a subject might operate in that space at all. If we recall, the state of the situation is a set of historical and material conditions that produce a kind of stasis for the regimes of thought that bolster it. Whereas Lawrence focuses on how individuals might attend to affective and personal relationships in this state of the situation as part of a procedure of fidelity to the event, Lewis asks how artistic production—distinct from the intentions or orientations of the artist—might express fidelity to the event, even if the choices artists make are coded by the situations they inhabit. In this chapter, I will argue that *how* Lewis understands the situation in which literary production takes place is key to discerning his argument concerning the event and the subject's recognition thereof.

If we understand agency as a choice dependent on the operations of the subject, Lewis allows us to explore how the situation can affect the subject's available choices, limiting them to those which deny or obscure the declaration of the event. Broadly speaking, this chapter will trace Lewis's version of evental logic through his critiques of subjective positions as they are featured in literary works: it will review his understanding of the state of the situation, which he conveys through his criticism of some contemporary artists' and editors' "revolutionary" approaches to literature. I will demonstrate how Lewis understands the operations of the subject by focusing on his critique of the modernist avant-garde artist—a critique which identifies a

trend of attempting to produce novelty *ex nihilo* or from the depths of an authentic, inner self untouched by ideological influences. Lewis is suspicious of some artists' and editors' attempts to experiment and challenge literary forms, for, he claims, the conditions of the literary marketplace will always value the reproduction of past forms that pacify the readership and promote a sense of homogeneity in literary space. Despite his pessimism concerning the market's dilution of experimental work into meaningless copies, he nonetheless argues that change and novelty can emerge if individuality is conceived of as a method of playing with the conditions that surround us, particularly if the mode of "play" both appeals to the so-called authenticity of personality *and* simultaneously develops a critique of it. In the final chapter, I will turn to Lewis's work in *Tarr* and suggest that it asks whether the event can be perceived at all when we are imbricated in the social structures that satiate the need for change by commodifying it, and thereby distort our understanding of effective agency.

This chapter is therefore organized to cover several major areas of Lewis's thought, all of which are either nascent or explored in his little magazine, *The Enemy*. The general focus of the first section of this chapter, on the "'Effective' Persona," falls on the ways in which a persona features prominently in Lewis's understanding of what he calls "effective" criticism (*Enemy* 3: 53). For him, the problem of agency is bound up in how individuality is *popularly* understood as an extension of a genuine or authentic self, the simple recognition of which is problematically taken to be "effective" in itself. In so characterizing the problem, he demonstrates his understanding of the state of the situation, as it appears to the modernist writer: the writer works in a necessarily public space demarcated, and at times defined, by the conditions of the marketplace, which denies the assumed agency of the individual by applying conditions to public expression, such as those entailed in the demand for a potentially saleable, reproducible product.

Furthermore, Lewis argues that the market encourages an understanding of agency or efficacy that values inward exploration rather than social critique. In this sense, Lewis's persona is a challenge to the state of the situation embodied by literary culture. The use of a persona is essential for enacting a criticism that he will ultimately define as actually "effective," for it accepts the conditions of the marketplace, and yet does not succumb to self-analysis as the foundation of agency and effective criticism, nor does it permit itself to be desirably reproducible.

In the second section of this chapter on the "High Bohemian Utopia," I will turn to a discussion of how Lewis understands the regime of thought which governs his situation as it is exemplified through modernist literary trends that employ representations of authenticity. Insofar as Lewis understands the notion of the "authentic" self in literary work as a reproducible (and therefore defacto inauthentic) product in the marketplace, which is deployed for strategic or cynical reasons, I will explore his comments on other modernists' choices, not as an assertion that his analysis of other modernists' works is thorough or fair, but in order to follow Lewis's logic on this subject. As I will discuss in detail, what he calls the "false 'Revolution'" that he believes some of his contemporaries perpetuate is a form of utopia celebrated by groups of cultural elites. The "High-Brow High-Bohemian" utopia (2: xi), he claims, is actually the reverse of what it purports to be: it is superficial, regressive, and exclusionary—and he orients his critique to effectively argue against their "false" idea of revolution. In the following companion section on the "Romantic Self," I will argue that he focusses on two particular authors, who he claims promote a passive, unquestioning, and self-conscious individual who values his own past so much that he is distracted from the social present. James Joyce's writing strategies and Gertrude Stein's techniques, he claims, exemplify the tendency to promote a popular sense of the

individual as a type who could be as reproducible as the “ready-made” characters who, according to Lewis, populate these authors’ texts (*Enemy* 1: 115). In responding to these authors’ techniques, he provides examples of the state of the situation and its emergent evental processes. While Joyce and Stein are the focus of his critiques, Lewis nonetheless analyzes their works, and their popular reception, to disclose the ways in which the event could be declared if the subjective position is reoriented. In his view, Joyce’s and Stein’s work engages in modes of artistic production which deploy a commodified and reproducible “personality” that stands in for a subject. Their work therefore contributes to a discourse of revolution that functions in a substantially anti-revolutionary fashion, where lived conditions are not substantially changed.

A newly fashioned subjective position, we come to learn, is what his *Enemy* review intends to demonstrate. In the penultimate section, “Versus *transition*,” I will discuss how the *Enemy* explores the impact of techniques of writing on the literature of his period—which is an effect of the regime of thought: he considers the central problem that of “groups” of artists who share or mimic writing techniques, and who thus demonstrate that they are unable to rescue individuality from the pull of a collective. For Lewis, a “mistake” has altered the way literature has come to be understood (*Enemy* 2: xxxvii), and by extension, the same mistake has altered the popular understanding of individual agency. The mistake involves the editorialization of literature to suit the taste of a homogeneous group that has embraced its part in a commodity economy, and has benefited from it. In reviewing Lewis’s focus on a particular group of editors for the magazine *transition*, I will discuss moments in *The Enemy* in which Lewis investigates how the operations of a commodity economy have made literary experimentation itself suspect; experimentation, he argues, is no longer “revolutionary” precisely because the authors who participate in artistic collectives and groups have co-opted the revolutionary and the avant-garde

as marketing strategies. His critique focuses on these editors because their manifestos permit Lewis to clearly identify how their position participates in the status quo that they seem so devoted to rejecting. The group, he argues, is a powerful force bolstered by the operations of capital, and so they implicitly support it. His overarching concern with *transition* in particular is that, despite their claims to the contrary, the editors of the little magazine attempt to obscure difference in the group of artists who contribute to their magazine by attributing to their literary works a specific vision. Lewis interprets their desire to organize their magazine's submissions under a unified voice as a threat to artists everywhere: he argues that the erasure of artistic autonomy for the sake of their collective vision will further degrade readers' critical ability and artworks' capacity to disclose truths about the state of the situation.

The final section of this chapter, "The Enemy as Subject," draws together each preceding thread. The issues Lewis attacks—the commodity economy, literary and stylistic techniques, and the involvement of heavy-handed editors—are intertwined, and in response, he develops a strategy for artistic agency in an increasingly commodified world. In so doing, Lewis navigates the difficult waters that Badiou identifies when he outlines some of the impact of the "state of the situation" and how it operates to establish and continuously re-establish its hegemony. Unlike Lawrence, for example, whose interest in the event is focused on how it might impact affective relationships and the capacity of feeling to disclose the truth of the event, Lewis's focus is slightly narrower in that it isolates, as he claims in *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), the conditions in the "temple of art" (8). But the implications of Lewis's concerns with writers' strategies, and with the ways in which groups participate in the commodity economy, have a serious impact not only in the way we should understand his project in *The Enemy*, but also on how he conceives of a modern individual's agency. We start to see Lewis's concerns in the

clearest light once we are able to decipher the myriad connections between his conception of criticism, of literature, and of how his contemporaries have figured the individual in their fictional work.

As a final introductory note for this chapter, I want to emphasize that *The Enemy* is a significant and thoughtful work in its own right, and deserving of more focused discussion than it has been afforded. Far from being a mere starting point to the more elaborate and expanded *Time and Western Man* (1927), the three issues of *The Enemy* explore Lewis's views on modernist literature and criticism and how they are connected to his concerns about agency and personality. Although studies of Lewis's writing have had a resurgence since 2007, when major retrospectives of his works and portraits were presented (for example, at the National Portrait Gallery in London, 2008), there remains little investigation into this "little magazine" and its relationship to Lewis's larger body of critical thought. Scholarship often focuses on *Time and Western Man* as his magnum opus, and studies Lewis's assessment of the popular impact of Henri Bergson's vitalist philosophy in cultural studies, or Lewis's understanding of "flux" and its relationship to a popularized, Bergsonian concept of time. I will only discuss this undeniably important work in passing, when it relates directly to the subject under discussion. As a starting point for the development of Lewis's later philosophical work, *The Enemy* explicitly focusses on literature, which offers a restriction of focus that gives Lewis an opportunity to delve into critical detail, where *Time* often retains a level of generality due to its focus on popularized forms of philosophical trends.

The Enemy also demonstrates how Lewis makes use of his most well-known writerly device: the persona. The Enemy is only one among many of Lewis's personae; his tendency to use a character or persona as a figurative representation of himself is a significant feature of his

work in general, for personae feature in his fiction, playwriting, and painting, as well as in *The Enemy*. The many manifestos in *Blast!* produce the sense of a passionate and often humorous spokesperson for young British men, but emerge from fragmented and disorienting points of view. The discontinuity is also present in Lewis's short fiction, where it often implies the celebratory result of a character's response to his circumstances; a single story, for example, could contain multiple fictional voices or "puppets," while its protagonists eschew the social contract and ironically extol the virtues of personal fulfilment (Kenner 97). The "characters" that voice the texts in Lewis's memoir and critical writing are avowedly constructed in ways similar to his fictional characters (*Blasting* 15): cast explicitly as "characters," these past versions of himself are described in the third person, for example as "the author of *Tarr*" or "Lewis the Bombardier" (*Blasting* 87; 15). Similarly, his second little magazine *The Tyro* (1920-1) describes the facsimiles of portraits contained therein as "pictures of several very powerful Tyros" and includes Lewis's self-portrait, *Mr Lewis as a Tyro* (*Tyro* 2). Even his painting career included a self-described "blue period" in a supposedly ironic response to Picasso's period with the same descriptor (Edwards 76). Amidst this litany of examples, *The Enemy* should be understood as the prototype, insofar as it emphasizes the extent to which all of these personae are defined in aggressive opposition to the context in which they are deployed.

Lewis therefore makes no secret of this artifice. Any reader of Lewis's fiction will note his emphasis on the mutability of appearances: narrators describe characters' faces as "masks"; characters' faces and bodies change shape, or are described in "cubist" or fragmentary ways; and the narrative voice will often refer to them sneeringly as "puppets." Jessica Burstein argues that these elements of artifice in Lewis's work—which she calls "prosthetics" to emphasize the extent to which Lewis describes them as "inauthentic" or synthetically attached substitutions for

living organic bodies (94)—call attention to readers’ inferences about the characters’ personalities, for in Lewis’s fiction inference is all the reader is afforded in the absence of more authentic-seeming internality. Lewis’s consistent emphasis on shifting appearances implies that he is more than casually interested in calling attention to the artifice and technique of writing. Personae are employed in many of Lewis’s other works, which suggests a sustained critical interest in deploying this as a meaningful strategy. When, in *Fables of Aggression*, Jameson discusses Lewis’s fiction, he aptly points out that Lewis seems to “remain on the surface of things” and thus remains “resolutely social” (135). Jameson’s seminal work on Lewis opened doors for new criticism on Lewis’s seeming aversion to internality. Lewis’s tendency to offer up this “surface” through a series of different personae constitutes his attempt to focus the reader’s attention on the persona, and on the reasons for which artifice is deployed. In the editorial to the second volume of *The Enemy*, for example, Lewis reminds the reader that it is “the paper” and “its policy” that is “The Enemy” (2: xxxiii). Lewis’s *Enemy* emphasizes the artifice itself; in this regard, “one way to understand the prosthetic is as a corrective, and another way is to see it as something which makes available new options” (Burstein 85).

Lewis sets up his magazine as a kind of preamble to his later works, and argues that the issues he will later expand upon are the most urgent to address first for literature and literary production: Lewis writes, “Before [attacking flux as a concept] in its home-waters, it is my plan to show it powerfully operating ... [in] literature, because in the nature of things such a concept has more leverage upon literature than upon” philosophy and other forms of art (Lewis, *Enemy* 1: 46). His concern in *The Enemy* is to prioritize and rescue literature from what he saw as a damaging regime of thought, which has the tendency to seek refuge in a blind belief in authentic selfhood, and to celebrate change and innovation for their own sake, rather to reflect critically,

watch, and wait for the slow cultural changes that could be made possible when artwork is designed to effectively reach its readership.

The Enemy in Review: Lewis's "Effective" Persona

In May 1932, three years after Lewis published the last issue of his little magazine, *The Enemy*, the *Daily Herald* published a brief article entitled "The Art of Making Enemies" by French novelist Maurice Dekobra. The article features a photograph of *The Enemy*'s author, under which he is described as "a writer with such barbaric force that his work has earned him a host of enemies" (Dekobra 8). But Dekobra's article itself extolls the virtues of "making enemies," and offers pithy advice to its readers: "Always say what you think"; "Invariably tell people what others think of them"; and, finally, "Live dangerously!" (8). He finally writes that to be an enemy of this kind is to be "the salt and pepper on the cutlet of life" (8).

Dekobra's half-laudatory, half-sarcastic essay was representative of his readers' perception of Lewis. Lewis's reputation had suffered since his publication of the ill-advised *Hitler* in 1931, not only because of his controversial and, in hindsight, wildly myopic comments on Hitler's pacifism, but also because of Lewis's tendency to break, frequently and publicly, with other celebrated writers and artists. So, in reply to Dekobra, Lewis wrote an essay of his own, which he submitted just a week later. In "What it Feels Like to Be an Enemy," Lewis expresses discomfort with the editorial choices for Dekobra's article (such as the inclusion of his photo), and writes as a warning to those who might dare take Dekobra's advice: "If a man gives himself a bad name, he is not hanged, but he lives a dog's life ever afterwards" (8). Lewis's warning is inspired by Dekobra's demonstration that the enemy is now a reproducible type—one that his article easily replicates and encourages further iterations of, but has no substantial

purpose other than finding amusement in being needlessly critical of others and participating in gossip. In a now oft-cited section of Lewis's article, he provides a satirical account of the daily routine of a commodified, Dekobrian enemy:

I often ring up an enemy at seven or eight a.m. to have a row. [...] After breakfast, for instance a little raw meat, a couple of blood-oranges, a stick of ginger, and a shot of Vodka—to make one see Red! I make a habit of springing up from the breakfast-table and going over in a rush to the telephone-book. This I open quite at chance, and ring up the first number upon which my eye has lighted. When I am put through, I violently abuse for five minutes the man, or woman of course (there is no romantic nonsense about the sex of people with an Enemy worth his salt), who answers the call. This gets you in the proper mood for the day. (8)

This scene persists in the modern imagination as a humorous account of a day in the life of Wyndham Lewis,²² but the context of this response to Dekobra's article reveals that it is, rather, a sarcastic reflection on how commodity culture has interpreted one of Lewis's authorial personae. Dekobra's suggestion that an enemy is "the salt and pepper on the cutlet of life" is answered here by Lewis's thematic extension of the original gastronomic metaphor. For Lewis, the "enemy" provides this savory addition to life only once he has gorged himself on hearty and spicy foods, meaning that the enemy is himself a gluttonous consumer who is sustained by more of the same: the implication is that you are what you consume. But rather than promote the reproduction of enemy personae, which Dekobra encourages, Lewis's response sends up for

²² See, for example, Jon Day's relatively recent article in the *London Review of Books* in which Lewis is introduced to the reader via this passage.

ridicule the idea of an enemy who indiscriminately tells others what he thinks by producing an absurd account of finding his enemies at random from a telephone book. Still, despite what seems to be an obviously sarcastic response, Lewis's reply appears to have been accepted at face value. If Dekobra's article reflects in some small way the contemporaneous popular understanding of Lewis's career, the description of the Lewisian "enemy" had gained contours and assumptions that Lewis did not originally intend, nor convey, in the little magazine persona that came to define his work.

Dekobra's article thus offers us an example of how strongly *The Enemy*, the little magazine published in three issues between 1927-1929, has been associated with Lewis as a writer and cultural critic, to the extent that Lewis was years later still distancing himself from the publication. Following the publication of *The Enemy*, Lewis began to experience the problems he had anticipated and critiqued in its three issues: problems with reputation, advertisement and cultural influence, he had argued, would distract readers from the content or substance of a critique. As he argues throughout the magazine, Lewis's Enemy persona was the expression of a personality, but the reader's tendency to conflate author and persona can hamstring attempts to explore writerly techniques that pivot around a point of view. This readerly tendency also concerns Lewis because criticism, he claims, is often taken "personally" (1: 53), by which Lewis means that the words on the page are understood as the true and fair representation of the author, not as a formal experiment with a point of view. He also complains in concurrent publications that critical personae were not understood as a "play" with personality ("Fictionist" 574)—an essential element of fiction, as he will claim—but were instead beholden to a sense that critical work is an expression of an unquestionably authentic speaker.

Lewis's reflections on the Enemy persona comment on agency, insofar as *The Enemy* explores how a literary critic inhabits an influential role in an increasingly commodified space. Writers' choices, including those that involve self-representation, will be tainted by their imbrication in a commodity culture. Lewis's bitter response to Dekobra in a popular newspaper suggests that he objects to the fact that his reputation had been inextricably bound up with this particular character in the popular imagination. He comprehensively addresses this conflation in *The Enemy*: the difficulty he wanted to navigate is that consumerism has surreptitiously replaced an individual's "personality" with a marketable product in its stead: he argues, for example, that one believes one is acceptably "unique" if one is wearing the "complicated attire" of the latest fashion of hats and buttons (*Enemy* 1: 101). In the same way, he argues, commodity culture blinds us to writers' strategies and techniques; what is accepted as unique or revolutionary writing is merely the "complicated attire" of a reproducible writerly persona, character, or technique. Moreover, that blindness pacifies readers into thinking that commodities are replacements for the expression of personality.

For Lewis, this "ready-made" personality was omnipresent in many of his contemporaries' works, so it is likely that Dekobra's advice to readers to reproduce Lewis's Enemy persona was particularly irritating. His displeasure with the idea is evidenced by his insistence on separating the persona from its author even six years later. In the introductory section of his 1937 memoir, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, he complains that his critical work in *The Enemy* did not meet the rigid criteria for fiction in the "commercial machine" (94): "it treated of topics which only a handful of people in England know or care about. [...] I might as well have been talking to myself all that time" (5). Not only was the work esoteric, misunderstood, and "unlucrative" (96), but he also implicitly acknowledges that *The Enemy* and

its persona had become associated with himself. Assessing his work as a failed experiment, at least commercially, he describes himself as having been a “literary militant” (6), and dedicates a few pages to a kind of disingenuous “apology” for his “disinvolution in the temple of art” (8). More importantly, however, he also makes several attempts to clarify that the characters he produces, in both fiction and in his critical work, are not genuine representations of his point of view: “Need I repeat that this hero of mine is not to be identified with me?” (84). Such statements underline his concern about the extent to which *The Enemy*—in which he outlines the myriad ways in which the commodification of literary work has promoted a misunderstanding of authenticity—failed successfully to convey his contention that a persona is a strategically deployed construction rather than an authentic representation.

Indeed, Lewis’s short response to Dekobra quickly hints at some of the major points that make up the focus and central argument of *The Enemy*. In the magazine’s three issues, Lewis endeavors to produce a persona that could explore the problem of agency in literary production. As an artist and fiction writer himself, Lewis is keen to develop a character through whom he could articulate an effective critique concerning the popular appeals to authenticity that he argues characterize the period’s worst literary tendencies. This Enemy persona is oppositional, and allows Lewis to attack the state of the situation while he finds a way to understand a form of agency that neither retreats from public life nor produces a typified set of personal ideals in a desirably reproducible form. In so doing, Lewis takes on a persona that effects the kind of “fidelity to the event” that Badiou describes: it declares that there is a “hole in knowledge” that he will identify by critiquing how literature and criticism is produced and distributed in ways that obfuscate the revelation of new forms of knowledge (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 10).

To begin discussing how Lewis's employment of the persona is directly connected to his argument in *The Enemy*, it is first important to address one of the most obvious aspects of Lewis's prose writing: its argument is almost inevitably inextricable from polemic, as Lewis scholars will understand too well. It is almost impossible to find a critical analysis of Lewis's work that does not, at least by way of introduction, mention the unavoidable experience of reading an author who makes no attempt to hide his aggressive, distancing, and often bitterly ironic tone. Lewis's contemporaries also understood him to be volatile: W.H. Auden, for example, once described him as "the lonely old volcano of the right" (Auden 198). Early biographer Geoffrey Wagner was the first to note that Lewis's employment of aggressivity in some of his critical prose was the hallmark of a passingly useful "alias or alter ego" (22), one which was identifiable precisely because of its exaggerated polemics. In 1979, Fredric Jameson famously analyzed "aggression" as the identifying characteristic of Lewis's nonfiction (*Fables* 126). The aggressiveness is indeed at its most prominent in Lewis's prose, which is often read as relentlessly critical; Alan Munton characterizes Lewis's criticism succinctly as "an act of sustained condemnation" ("Imputing" 5). While this tone is indeed notable and consistent in his writing in the twenties and thirties, there are indications that Lewis's famous provocativeness is, particularly in *The Enemy*, an intentional performance that bolsters his critique of the homogenizing effects of mass culture, and an ironic metacommentary on what he sees as a popular valorization of subjective experience.

Like other cultural critics in the early 1920s, Lewis's prolific work ethic earned him multiple publications in little magazines, pamphlets, and other ephemeral pieces, which demonstrates his commitment to speaking to a particular moment's audience, regardless of whether that moment's declarations might at some point be overtaken by a completely different,

or even opposite, position. But this wavering of positions is not a sign of inconsistency. The “Enemy,” the most prominent example of his use of a persona, is an incongruous and oppositional voice that was deployed not only in the little magazine, but also in several articles published between 1927 and, I would argue, 1934 (when “‘Detachment’ and the Fictionist” appears). His work throughout this period is connected by his concern with how individual agency is demonstrable in the form of written work—whether by way of style, tone, or “personality.” Unlike Lewis’s other work in little magazines such as *Blast!* or *The Tyro*, which collected the manifestos and essays of a number of modernist writers, the three issues of *The Enemy* are for the most part written entirely by Lewis. Because of his decision to author *The Enemy* solo, the magazine appears to be Lewis’s first concerted effort to develop and sustain an authorial position that he calls “the principal vehicle of [his] criticism” (*Enemy* 3: 1), a vehicle through which he hoped to argue for the protection of creative personalities so that they might “finally be effective” (3: 53).

There are two identifiable reasons for Lewis’s employment of an Enemy persona, each of which can be outlined through Lewis’s understanding of “effectiveness.” First, Lewis believes polemics are inherently beneficial for a thriving intellectual community. In the second issue of *The Enemy* in June 1927, Lewis argues that criticism’s intellectual rigor is damaged by the compulsion to be “friendly,” which he characterizes as a feature of European criticism in general. “What many people wish you to believe,” he claims, “is that all debate ... claims a peace, and a calm (ugh!) which ... is not only farcical but criminal. That, of course, would dispose at once of all such disagreeable things as systems of criticism, or indeed criticism at all” (xii). Of course, he goes on to identify the “many people” to whom he refers as “the Powers that Be of the High-Brow High-Bohemian World” (xi), in whose interest it is to maintain peace at the cost of

intellectual debate. In that context, the purpose of his polemics is not only to challenge those powers, but also to find some benefit in engaging with them.

This benefit is also explicitly referenced in the epigraph to *The Enemy*, published in each issue. A translated excerpt from Plutarch's *Moralia* describes the function of enemies as beneficial for their targets: "A man is to benefit from his enemies [and] have the skill to draw some commodity from them" (qtd. in *Enemy* 1.ii). The inaugural editorial of the magazine and the recurring epigraph suggest that Lewis saw *The Enemy*'s purpose as both beneficial and productive. He therefore implies that the Enemy persona is a way of producing the interlocutor necessary for a person—a reader, writer, or editor—to display his or her ability to participate in an economy of ideas. The interesting implication here is that Lewis is not trying to reject or otherwise elide his own participation in a commodity economy; while he asserts that commodification negatively affects literature, as we will see, he knows that commodification is inescapable. The Enemy therefore seeks to "benefit" by extracting a commodity—a useful or valuable thing that embodies a concrete use-value—from the interaction. Note that "commodity" here is employed to demonstrate its variability: the Enemy's opposition is not deployed to win an argument and therefore profit from winning (i.e., by increasing capital), but to extract something critically useful. In other words, Lewis does not reject the commodity economy, but directs ways to *participate in it* without perpetuating the problems that the Enemy will address. In this regard, the Enemy's effectiveness is intended to be practical rather than abstract.

The second reason that Lewis deploys a persona is tied to his view that effectiveness depends on asserting an individual point of view that either explicitly or implicitly conflicts with the demands of the market. The Enemy persona is, for Lewis, "an outsider" (*Enemy* 3: 14), who stands in opposition to market forces that encourage individual authors to model themselves after

other successful artists—a strategy which, to his mind, is part of a “great mistake” in literary production (2: xxxvii). Like Lawrence, Lewis is interested in the revolutionary potential of novelty and experimentation in modernist literature, but Lewis is more forceful in his assertion that novelty is threatened by powerful organizations that he calls “the great Capitalist Trusts” (3: 80), under which heading he groups writers, advertisers, publishers, and even editors of literary magazines. These “groups,” he argues, buttress the state of the situation—a situation that values profitable past iterations of cultural production—and are powerful enough to influence those who might otherwise disagree with the group’s point of view. By thus characterizing the state of the situation, Lewis argues that groups’ affiliations also quash the potential for novelty in literary work. He diagnoses popular authors and publishers as having a serious case of the group: the first issue of *The Enemy* takes this subject as its main focus in the long essay, “The Revolutionary Simpleton,” which outlines Lewis’s concern with the effects of mass culture on literary production. One such effect, he argues, is the sense that the artist can only be successful when he is a part of a group. To Lewis, a group is less a collection of artists who share a common goal than a reflection of the power of a ruling class that has deployed commodity culture to their ends: he writes, “the group-phenomenon in art is, where found, a political reflection” (*Enemy* 1: 49).

The connection between Lewis’s suspicion of groups and his political concerns has a direct influence on his decision to articulate this critique through an Enemy persona, which through its aggression and polemics excludes itself from participation in these groups. As Paul Edwards argues, Lewis’s conception of collectivist politics in general was pessimistic. The outcome of the General Strike in 1926 convinced Lewis that revolution by the mere assertion of personal rights was ineffective, for he viewed the Strike as a firm reminder that the ruling class

had become hegemonic. As a result, Lewis “had more or less given up the idea that contemporary politics would lead to anything but more of the same” (Edwards, *Wyndham* 304). Tyrus Miller agrees with Edwards’ assessment of Lewis’s motivations, and emphasizes Lewis’s characterization of the General Strike as a great failure that signaled an effective end to traditional techniques of civil participation for workers’ rights (75). Lewis’s disappointment in mass political action is also evidenced in a number of claims throughout *The Enemy*, such as in his assertion that “we are creatures of a certain kind, with no indication that a radical change is imminent” (1: 130). But despite Lewis’s skepticism regarding the potential for sudden revolutionary change, *The Enemy* suggests that Lewis still believes action in its service is possible: he argues that “the present state of inaction” must be countered by demonstrating *individual* dissent against groups that seek to organize or otherwise influence others (1: 53). Although he might have been pessimistic about the prospect of *political* revolution, I argue that he nonetheless sees in literature a means of critiquing the status quo in the hope of opening cultural space to the cultivation of novelty—a project he undertakes by trying to rescue a sense of individualism that must be forged in fire against influential groups.

The *Enemy*’s effectiveness, then, is dependent on its rejection of forms of thought that have been popularized and reified in the public imagination. Lewis frequently criticizes “groups” in *The Enemy* and elsewhere; however, this does not reflect a wholesale belief in the individual, but rather his concern that groups offer limited resources if one seeks to reframe the situation because they colonize cultural space in ways that limit the effectiveness of thought. In the third issue of *The Enemy*, for example, he opines that groups’ claims of progressiveness can quash potential creative output, and suggests that

If the creative minds of the world are indeed for ever cancelled and rendered ineffective by the agency of the “unprogressive” mass of men, then they should be protected and rescued. [. . .] The more we “advance,” the more we shall lose ground. In the ultimate interest of all of us we should sacrifice anything to the end that this most priceless power of any (the intellectual power by which, as a kind, we express and illustrate ourselves, precisely because of which we are conscious of our poor organization and the fatuity of our record up to date) be put in a position finally to be effective. (*Enemy* 3: 53)

Lewis argues that debate must prioritize “intellectual power,” over which force and aggression have no dominion. Advancing in this context is not a question of simply vanquishing a foe on the field of battle; instead, he suggests that the ground on which effective agency might be rescued is precisely the ground on which expression and self-representation is founded. Advancing, in that context, would have a colonizing effect and homogenize expression rather than free it. Intellectual power, for Lewis, is effective only when deployed to reject the regime of thought within which one understands creativity.

It is worth pausing briefly at this point to consider both the ways in which Lewis relies upon something like the notion of the “regime of thought,” and the extent to which that concept allows us to assess his deployment of an eventual logic. As we have seen in our discussion of *Women in Love*, a “regime of thought” is a byproduct of the state of the situation. The regime is a reification of ideological supports in a particular discourse; for example, there are regimes of thought in art, science, politics, and love (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 9). In brief, it is important to note here that the origin of the phrase in antitotalitarian philosophy refers to a sense that the very

conditions of thought are themselves bound up in the state of the situation.²³ To analyze how those conditions can develop into ideological movements is therefore to expose how certain subsets of situational conditions (regimes, and agents within those regimes) work to organize thought. In this context, Lewis insists it is necessary to critique identifiable regimes of thought within the state of the situation, and identifies groups as the organizers of the regime of thought that governs the modernist literary world.

In the context of the *Enemy* magazine, Lewis's strategy is to oppose these groups and the ways in which they perpetuate a regime of thought that supports the state of the situation. "Intellectual power is always power, is it not," he writes to the American editors of *transition* literary magazine, "and you wish to make it your monopoly" (3: 23). He establishes his critique by exposing the commodification of avant-garde and experimental literature. When he claims that creative minds are "for ever cancelled and rendered ineffective by the agency of the 'unprogressive' mass of men," he situates his contemporaries' efforts, insofar as they are members of "groups," as potential workers in that unprogressive camp. His declared concern in *The Enemy*, therefore, is that in popular literature, the diversions of the market have come to replace the desire to support both creativity and intellect, which renders those implicitly essential elements of literary production "ineffective." To oppose the workings of the market, even at great cost to oneself, is therefore one of the measures of "effectiveness" for Lewis. Doing so, he

²³ The "regime of thought" was originally coined by French antitotalitarian philosopher Claude Lefort; the full extent of his understanding of its operations in totalitarian regimes is too vast to cover here, but has a clear connection to Badiou's work. Lefort argues that a society's condemnation or approbation of a regime often depends on that society's acceptance of the regime's first principles and its extrapolation of a moral code on those bases (Poltier 124). In contrast, therefore, a new thought is thinkable only if the regime of thought has first been identified, and its network of political agents and ideologues exposed as immoral. For a longer introduction to Lefort and his influence on contemporary French political philosophy, see Poltier.

hopes, will deny the monopolization of intellectual conversation. Again, Lewis is concerned that the individual can no longer *effectively* operate amidst larger organizations that attempt to obscure and “monopolize” thought, but he does not pretend that his stratagem of opposition will allow his own escape from the limitations of the commodity economy. If these organizations are a serious impediment to effective agency, particularly in artistic production, then they render the individual less influential, and thereby less capable of publicly declaring the event, than the collective. Thus, the oppositional persona, a commodity itself, is one means of resistance to monopolization that Lewis wants to explore; it is an attempt to develop a unique and unreproducible product that could trouble or disrupt the logic of the market.

This brings us to one of the crucial implications of Lewis’s deployment of a persona: in calling attention to itself, it also draws attention to the commercial tendencies of literary criticism during this period. For it is no accident that Lewis’s targets are often trends in literary criticism, philosophy, and sociology. He argues in *The Enemy* that enthusiasm for novelty, and revolutionary fervor, can be co-opted in the service of political ideologies such as communism or capitalism—political ideologies that, he believed, function in no small part by celebrating individual subjective experience as the sole conceptual foundation of revolution. He therefore asserts that the reading public should be better equipped against this threat of ideological incursion via literary production, and encourages differentiation between the *appearance* of revolutionary activity and the real thing. In the central essay of his first issue of *The Enemy*, entitled “The Revolutionary Simpleton,” Lewis outlines his concerns with a number of connected concepts that he calls a “philosophy” which he feels is “misleading” the public (*Enemy* 1: 27). One concern, he argues, is that literature employs a method he calls “telling from the inside” (1: 110), which explores subjective experience in a way that promotes the

authenticity of the self. For him, authenticity is often conveyed through a representation of subjective experience (as in a novel that purports to detail the inner thoughts of an individual, for example), and is the hallmark of an escape from political realities. In the deep exploration of the private self, which is altogether “personal” (1: 177), Lewis observes the acceptance of passivity and conservatism in public life. In short, Lewis argues for a version of subjectivity that would evade the problem of inactivity; in this sense, using the persona in his literary criticism intends to distance the reader from the impression that subjective experience provides the foundation for critique. He has, furthermore, crafted an intentionally polemical persona that draws attention to the issue in which he is interested.

In calling attention to the construction of the persona, Lewis also implies that personality, or the social self, is an instance of public appearance that one could be “detached with” (“Fictionist” 572). The Enemy persona thereby demonstrates a way of declaring the event by critiquing the state of the situation: the declaration does not obscure the conditions under which the event presents itself; instead, it demonstrates what kind of subject a commodity economy produces. The questions that Lewis raises in this little magazine are not only aggressive objections, but also considered analyses of what he saw as the cultural impact of unconsciously-acquired ideological pursuits. In performing the analyses through a persona, Lewis presents us with a kind of subject who declares the event: a subject whose involvement and participation in the commercially-driven literary system nonetheless critiques its central ideas.

Finally, and most importantly, the persona and its effectiveness, defined through opposition in this context, demonstrates Lewis’s version of individual agency. By polemicizing its arguments, the persona establishes its contrast to the kinds of subjective representation that Lewis sees as available in the literary marketplace. The groups that attempt to represent an

authentic personality as the basis of their “philosophy” or ideology, he argues, are in actuality self-serving and isolationist—a part of the “High Bohemian” elite (71)—and will therefore employ the operations of capitalism (such as advertisement) to achieve personal goals rather than to improve social systems. In Lewis’s estimation, novelty, change, and revolution are often deployed as bywords in advertisement for groups’ political ideologies. He further views advertisement—one of the mechanisms of consumer culture—as a means by which groups’ ideologies are distributed and absorbed by an unthinking readership, and are the centerpieces around which hegemonies are installed. He describes advertisement of this sort as a “method of mass-suggestion” that produces a “uniformity” similar to a hypnotic trance, or sleep (50). Not only does this impact the way that individual action can be imagined, it also affects a subject’s capacity to innovate on a societal level: he argues that it is “impossible to point to any one of the many ‘revolutionary’ movements of to-day that are not conscious returns to former, more primitive, conditions of society” (58-59). In this context, Lewis uses the term “Romantic” to define the regressive qualities he identifies in his contemporaries’ works: if they appeal to the primitive or child-like, or appeal to a sense that there is a pre-social self that is ostensibly authentic, then he characterizes them as “Romantic” and attacks them for what he sees as an anti-revolutionary position.

Thus far, I have summarized Lewis’s understanding of his “effective” persona, and the reasons for his rejection of authenticity, by focusing primarily on his point of view. One might think that Lewis’s employment of a persona at arms’ length is a surprising move, however, because he is commonly understood as a staunch supporter of a core, authentic or essential self (Sicari 94), or as “one of modernism’s most vocal advocates of the static, self-contained ego” (Nickels, “Anti-Egoism” 347). But this is why the issues of *The Enemy* are particularly fruitful

texts in which to study Lewis's thought: his version of subjectivity is premised on the idea that a public persona is not a representation, for there is no authentic core to be found or to which one can safely return in an effort to escape political and social realities. It is, instead, an artefact that participates in a network of social, political, and cultural realities, and what demonstrates its authenticity is its very deployment. Therefore, the Enemy persona is not a retreat into subjective inwardness or depth, but is a means of setting subjective biases up for analysis by creating an objective form of them. In this sense, Lewis presents a formal solution to the problem he sees at work in modernist literary production and its critical apparatus. With this persona, Lewis also devises a version of agency for literary critics and producers: by declaring the event, which in this case is the identification of market forces and the impediments to change, the event founds the persona as a subjective position.

So, when Lewis characterizes his contemporaries' positions to set them in opposition to his Enemy persona, he also formally represents the state of the situation: a set of socio-economic and literary-critical conditions that both identify and limit an environment and the actors within it. Bound up in contemporary issues of capitalist ideology, consumer culture, and the invocation of popular trends as a means of advertising oneself, the individual, as Lewis sees it, is under ever-increasing pressure to conform and to accept the conditions in which he finds himself. He is concerned, like Badiou, that the state of the situation influences agents such that they are unwilling to support or even acknowledge changes to the state of the situation. In the arts, this can take the form of a reactive approach to literary production, by which authors essentially replicate past forms of art at the expense of innovation and novelty. Badiou argues that even if artists recognize the event, they nonetheless might "react" to its portent by accepting the conditions of the state of the situation and acting as though the situation suffices. For example, in

Badiou's discussion of a "configuration" (e.g., a novel), he describes one of the ways in which an artist might be a "reactive subject" with regard to the event:

From the interior of a configuration, the reactive subject organizes the denial of that configuration's formal novelty, treating it as a simple de-formation of admitted forms, rather than as a dynamic broadening of in-formation (*mise en forme*). It is a mixture of conservatism and partial imitation, as in all the impressionists of the twentieth century or the cubists of the thirties; this mixture will be referred to as *academicism*, noting that every new configuration is accompanied by a new academicism. (*Logics* 73, original emphasis)

In other words, Badiou suggests that a reactive subject is one who denies the novelty of his work by suggesting that it reorganizes more traditional forms. Badiou's point about "academicism" suggests that avant-garde art, which exists outside the academy, becomes something academies adopt and thereby rob of its novelty, in much the same way that Lewis argues literary work is handled by the educated elite. To apply Badiou's model to the modernist literary magazine, we might attend to instances wherein a modernist artist suggests that novelty merely "de-forms" rather than creates, or appeals to the authority of the past either by imitating or making slight changes to traditional forms. Whereas the reactive subject recognizes the revolutionary potential of the event, it nonetheless reacts to the potential for change by resisting it, opting instead for imitation, and thereby reifying the new present using the previous regime of knowledge. The reason the reactive subject emerges, Badiou claims, is that the risk of novelty without "de-formation" far outweighs the reward: the reactive subject, in this example Lewis's fellow literary modernists, might be understandably be concerned with the ways in which his or her livelihood would be threatened by rejecting tradition and opposing the state of the situation. Furthermore,

accepting the event's revolutionary potential would also necessarily mean rejecting any benefits that the situation bears for those who support its continuation. Therefore, Badiou argues that those most invested in the continuation of the status quo will "obscure" or reject the event and revolutionary thought (*Being* 61). In the context of literary production, Badiou might suggest that the "reactive subject" denies novelty in the implications of his or her work, which, if it follows the logic of "de-formation," relies on imitation and tradition as the foundation of literary production. Therefore, by introducing the persona as the means by which he articulates a critique of the state of the situation, Lewis avoids the issue that Badiou identifies as the problem with the reactive subject. The reactive subject merely "de-forms" traditional forms of literary production; Lewis instead produces an effective "in-formation" of the traditional form of literary critical work with a novel deployment of a technique, the persona, that asks us to reject its implicit objectivity and authenticity.

Being "effective" in this context therefore also carries the weight of the evental logic. Lewis's "effective" intellectual power declares that the state of the situation is insufficient, and allows that declaration to found the subjective position. In this regard, Lewis's central focus on revolution further sets the stakes for what it means to be effective. For Lewis, revolution was "the will to change and to spiritual revolution" (*Enemy* 1: 41), or "the will ... to pass from one epoch to another and better" (135). Revolution, he argues, is not a superficial refashioning or reinvigoration of values that enable the continuation of the status quo, for he finds examples of "false revolution" in most of his contemporaries' works. Instead, he argues, Revolution is a movement in parallel with the technological and scientific advances that both destroy old ways of being and doing, and create new methods and means in the process. It is, in effect, an acceptance of the "rapid development" that he believes characterizes his age (139), and a

willingness to participate in that development. For this reason, when Lewis identifies groups as hegemonic, or as appealing to traditional or “Romantic” art forms, he also associates them with regression. According to Lewis, groups dissuade potentially revolutionary activity, especially when the individuals that make up the groups self-advertise as revolutionary. They only replicate old forms, he argues: it is “the imitation of the old (always hand-in-hand with a strident claim to the ‘new’) that characterizes this society” (54). Techniques that seek to apotheosize subjectivity fall firmly in this camp, as well. The group is often founded on an inducement to individual self-expression, as though such expression were an inherently liberating or radical performance, when it is in fact an act of imitation that simply inserts the individual into the ready-mades provided by his or her culture.

The Enemy persona is itself a contrivance, and a deliberate one, but it addresses only one part of the debate in which Lewis wants to participate: a debate about the way in which agency, as embodied in the subjective position of the author, should be deployed in the literary field. In the next section, we will turn to Lewis’s characterization of the other side of the debate in order to establish the contrasting point of view against which his opposition will take shape. His choices of interlocutor are deliberate: when the Enemy engages with James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and the editors of *transition*, the persona engages with some of the most popular writers and most successful editors of the late twenties. In characterizing his literary-critical interlocutors, however, Lewis is much more aggressive than Lawrence in rejecting the demands of faithfully representing the authors with whom the Enemy engages. He focuses instead on what they represent about the state of literary production, and what their popular reception suggests about the possibility for experimental artwork.

Opposing the “High Bohemian” Utopia and their “Revolutionary Simpletons”

Because Lewis’s approach uses the tactics of opposition and aggression, and claims that it plans to lay out a “destructive criticism” (*Enemy* 3: 25), it is often understood as a conservative reaction to change, or as inspired by Lewis’s “reactionary politics” (Edwards, *Wyndham* 305). Lewis frequently focuses on the popular reception of ideas, and describes as “ideologies” those strands of popular reception that come to take on a relatively stable form of mass cultural significance. In order to better understand why Lewis’s criticism so often grapples with the implications of the popular understanding of ideas in the literary sphere, I will turn first to the connection Lewis forges between ideologies and ideas—the former the domain of “politico art-men” (*Enemy* 3: 24), and the latter the domain of artworks. With this important clarification in mind, this section of my argument will address why Lewis develops the idea of the “millionaire ‘revolutionary’ Utopia” to characterize the group that organizes and influences the state of the situation and its governing regime of thought (*Enemy* 1: 55). More specifically, I will suggest that Lewis’s concern with the popularization of “revolution” is not merely a complaint about the misapprehension of novelty or of change, but an indication that he understands false “revolution” as support for the state of the situation, which functions via ideological influence through artists who claim that their projects are revolutionary.

Lewis sought to explore social hegemonies that contribute to abuses of power, and examine how those abuses feature in literary production. For example, in *Blasting*, Lewis argues that while celebrating a *carte blanche* revolution might suggest a celebration of new ideas, an uncritical acceptance of superficial revolutionary postures opens up the space for unscrupulous political leaders who might “‘rule’ [us] off the face of the earth” (*Blasting* 339). In *The Enemy*, Lewis’s concerns are for the artist in particular: he argues that artists are being mobilized,

perhaps unknowingly, in the service of these political leaders, and are being organized by a type he calls “the politico art-man” (*Enemy* 3: 24). To that politico art-man, he offers this ironic advice, for transparency’s sake:

“I am a politician,” you could say, “disguised as a poet. (A politician has to disguise himself as much as a detective or actor.) As I have no respect for art or for the artist except in terms of his political or economic usefulness, it is natural that I should use him as a broom to *balayer* that portion of the political field allotted to me. [The artist’s] violences of self-expression, the more tortured the better as far as I am concerned—all the romantic storm and stress in brief—can be made to second the political interests I serve and, further, into this feverish chaos of his thought I am enabled to insinuate as a subject-matter, or what not, ideas and tendencies that are congenial to me as an agent of catastrophic political reform.”

(24)

Here, Lewis claims to reveal the true intentions of the politico art-man, whose utilitarian perspective seeks to capitalize on the chaos of experimental and self-expressive literature to serve his “catastrophic” ends. Lewis conveys the extent to which political agendas can be organized and deployed through art in ways that the artist does not always anticipate. The cynicism of the politico art-man, and his cavalier attitude, are represented with deep suspicion, for here is an actor who might use artwork for political gain. Moreover, the politico art-man is not even a free agent; he “serve[s]” a political agenda, and is therefore mired in an obscure and seemingly underhanded network of other political agents and powers. Through this characterization, Lewis suggests that a political agenda, when used to organize artwork, will only cater to the “romantic—sensual average—majority, and must sooner or later, as night follows the

day, betray the artist whom they use to that majority” (26). The aim of the political agent, in other words, is to earn and maintain popularity rather than to promote artistic endeavors or new ideas.

In this regard, the “ideas and tendencies” that the politico art-man disseminates are particularly suspicious, as they serve neither the needs nor aims of the artistic class. Lewis also finds this politico art-man’s project dangerous not least of all because it has the potential for success. In the central essay of *The Enemy*’s first issue, “The Revolutionary Simpleton,” Lewis considers the evolution of an idea, particularly in art, as one means by which hegemonies establish themselves; they take advantage of the unconscious way in which ideas supplant the artistic process. Lewis first offers the example of Einstein’s theory of relativity, and claims that “when such a dominant theory is *applied* in literature or in art, then certainly, even less, does anyone grasp the steps by which that theory has entered the mind of the author or artist” (1: 108; original emphasis). Lewis then traces those steps by explaining his understanding of how ideas become ideology:

The psychological history of the triumph of an idea is interesting to follow; and it is necessary to acquire some knowledge of those processes. To understand how ideas succeed you must first consider what that “success” implies, especially with reference to this particular age. You would have to ask yourself who those men are who profess them, the manner in which they get advertised, the degree of orthodoxy imposed, and by what means, at the moment. Then, behind that professional and immediate ring of supporters, the mass of people who blindly receive them on faith—as helpless, confronted with the imposing machinery of

their popularisation, as new-born children—they, too, would have to be studied, and their reactions registered.

Some such analysis of the domination achieved by an idea and how it ceases to be an idea, and becomes an *ideology*, as Napoleon called it, an instrument of popular government—has to be undertaken before you can hope to be in a position to meet on equal terms, without superstition, such prevalent intellectual fashions. (1: 106-07)

Lewis here describes familiar elements of ideology: ideas are often pre-valued by the ruling class (in that their “success” is dependent on buy-in from “those men”), the values that underpin ideas are then adopted by the masses “on faith,” and then they become conquering ideologies.

Considered in combination with the cynical stratagems of the politico art-man, Lewis’s perspective on ideological influence shares much with the Frankfurt school’s theorization of how the masses can be swayed by propaganda, and how art can also be deployed in service of that propaganda. But Lewis has a specific focus here: he is interested in how these ideas become “intellectual fashions” that support the “millionaire-Bohemia” (55), as he will come to call the ruling class. Lewis therefore articulates not only a warning about the potential for propagandism in the state of the situation, but also the social phenomenon it makes visible in the context of the literary economy. In this regard, his concerns with what might seem at first glance to be minor trends or popular fashions are to his mind the visible elements of a functioning ideology.

The final sentence in the quotation above contains the phrase that suggests Lewis’s orientation toward ideology. He “hope[s] to be in a position to meet [intellectual fashions] on equal terms”—which echoes his claim that he wants criticism to be “in a position finally to be effective.” Given that Lewis is evidently concerned with how one might be able to be both

effective against, and equal to, the ruling ideological powers that he believes control a situation, his own procedure of fidelity to the event imagines a position that might challenge those powers. His procedure, an attempt to “meet” the challenge, follows several identifiable steps. First, he identifies the ways in which the state of the situation is not merely a state in which people are governed, nor a space in which certain norms and behaviors are acceptable while others are not. Instead, he identifies the state of the situation as the reification of an ideology, in which many people participate, often unknowingly. Second, he points out that the state of the situation is bolstered by an idea that a small segment of a population has wrought into a means of influencing others. By positioning his argument in *The Enemy* in this way, Lewis suggests that there is a “hole in knowledge” (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 10), by which I mean that he identifies how those not subsumed by the dominant ideology—those who are least likely to benefit from it—are in a position to recognize the exclusivity on which the situation is founded. If the state of the situation is supported by regimes of knowledge that determine the bounds of the knowable within that situation, Lewis wants to identify those who might challenge the situation by voicing truths that are unknowable within the governing regimes—indicating or substantiating “holes in knowledge.” In Lewis’s view, understanding precisely how ideologies operate is key to recognizing the exclusions that support the situation. This is not merely to oppose the existing order, but to suggest that the ideological order itself is fashioned in such a way as to benefit only some members of a social class.

In order to understand Lewis’s refusal to “buy in” to the High Bohemian ideology, I would suggest that Badiou’s differentiation between “belonging” and “inclusion” is useful. When Badiou discusses how the situation is organized, he argues that it is not possible merely to consider oneself independent of a situation: the situation already includes every element within

it. A *state* of the situation is how we might discuss the arrangement, or organization, of those elements. Badiou identifies two types of organization, which can be codified as either the “belonging” or “inclusion” of its elements (*Being* 81). On the one hand, when an element within the situation “belongs” to the situation, it is “one of the elements [the situation] structures” (102). This much is evidently true: in Lewis’s case, he does not oppose his own belonging to the situation; he is aware of his imbrication in networks of commodification, influence, and ideological interpellation. “Inclusion,” on the other hand, “is to be counted by the state of the situation. [...] Inclusion is thus equivalent to representation by the state” (102). In this regard, Lewis’s “enemy” refuses to accept his exclusion by the elite in a negative affirmation of the dominance of the regime of thought that governs the state of the situation. Badiou’s framework allows us to interpret Lewis’s Enemy persona as a means of marking his exclusion in the *state* of the situation—while he necessarily belongs to the situation, the Enemy seeks to make a space that the *state* of the situation does not include. His opposition is therefore an attempt to demonstrate that the operations of the state of the situation, which have largely benefited those “politico art-men” and the “High Bohemians,” are not operations from which he benefits. For Badiou, this is one of the key ways in which a subject might actively signal the situation’s insufficiency: the state of the situation depends on its ability to *include* all elements that belong to it through representation, so to mark oneself as *excluded* from the state of the situation is to indicate that it fails to represent all of its elements. Badiou’s distinction between inclusion and belonging thus allows us to see how Lewis’s operations as The Enemy do not superficially oppose the positions he identifies. Lewis argues: “This essay [provides] an adequate conspectus of the positions and source of the issue involved, [and is not] an arbitrary or frivolous statement, nor one that can be represented as put forward just in order to be ‘contrary’” (*Enemy* 1: 182).

Evidently, Lewis admits that objections, oppositions, outsiders and radicals form positions that could be dismissed as arbitrary reactions to a situation, and that may not be counted as a result. But he claims that by effectively analyzing “the domination achieved by an idea,” one could nonetheless develop a point of view that could challenge that which currently organizes the regime of thought.

Badiou’s theory thus offers us a productive angle through which to reassess some of the early scholarship on Lewis’s work, and to reconsider some of that scholarship’s inferences. Much of the scholarly conversation on Lewis is shaped by Fredric Jameson’s seminal *Fables of Aggression*, in which Jameson argues that much of Lewis’s formulation shares ground with a Marxist dialectic. Jameson’s careful summary of how the dialectic functions clarifies some of Lewis’s work in *The Enemy* and elsewhere; and, while it may be surprising to associate Lewis with the employment of a Marxist dialectic, the expansion of the dialectic to a discursive program is apposite for the evaluation of Lewis’s oppositional approach. In brief, Jameson argues that to merely oppose, or to offer a negative version of the social order, will result in the absorption of that opposition, at which point the social order will be reified. While opposition in itself is not properly dialectical, the attempt to overcome oppositions by way of mediating between two formally opposed positions is. As he puts it, the dialectical approach is a means of maintaining opposition for a purpose: “the elimination of the opposition as such is not always desirable in situations in which it is somehow the dissymmetry itself which is productive and which is to be preserved” (21). In this regard, modernist authors like Lewis who employ what Jameson identifies as a “dialectical approach” contribute to a utopian project insofar as they find productive ways to challenge, adopt, and reenvision literary conventions and forms. To wit,

From a formal perspective, modernism itself is dialectical to the degree to which it is obliged to posit its own formal oppositions and to navigate them by way of invention and differentiation. Still, in that dismantling of convention we call modernism, certain artists have been more keenly aware of the dialectical nature of the process than others, thereby producing what it does not seem abusive to call a properly dialectical aesthetic program. (33)

According to Jameson, modernist authors' and artists' production of experimental and innovative forms is partially cast as opposition between the conventional and the new. In that opposition, they employ a dialectical process, which necessarily entails the investigation of the reasons for which conventional approaches were conceived, and the ways in which experimentation can be understood as a formal, oppositional response to those premises. As Jameson argues, the dialectic therefore contributes to a utopian project, even when it takes the form of negative dialectics—per Theodor Adorno, “a movement of negation that can never reach a synthesis, a negativity that ceaselessly undermines all the available positivities until it has only its own energy to promote. [T]his dialectical process is meant to do something to our very sense of reality itself, along with that reality's former truths” (56).

If Jameson generally assesses Lewis's fictional work in this context, then he takes a surprising turn when he assesses Lewis's criticism. When Lewis's critiques take the shape of a persistent challenge to the organizing features of cultural space (such as groups and ideologies), he identifies the ways in which this “reality” might in fact be constructed by a combination of political agents, politico art-men, and artists. Attempting to clarify how the opposition itself operates, he adopts a tone of opposition without suggestion of positive solution, and thereby contributes to a utopian modernist project, insofar as his work attempts to arm artists with the

means by which to assess and respond to ideological influence. Jameson, however, underlines the ways in which Lewis casts ideological influence as controlled by the “millionaire-Bohemia,” writing, “his dramatic account of ideological production, unable to be grounded and completed by a vision of the total social process of which ideology is a part, finds itself deflected into conspiracy theory” (135). For this reason, Jameson and other scholars have frequently cited Lewis’s concerns with ideology as taking part in a “self-mocking study in urban paranoia” (Pero 11), or as an ultimately unfocussed attempt to deride his contemporaries; in short, much of the critical response suggests that Lewis’s ambitious critical project is often not ambitious enough to offer a complete world picture of the far-reaching effects and influences of the ideology it purports to expose.

But as we have seen, in *The Enemy* at any rate, Lewis explores how popular ideas, or ideologies, can limit thought by establishing an exclusive regime of thought. In that context, Lewis provides an account of ideological production that encapsulates the state of the situation *because* he includes in his analysis identifiable elements like the Bloomsbury group, the “high Bohemians”, and so on, who perpetuate the state of the situation rather than challenge it. By critiquing these identifiable elements and affirming the ubiquity of their ideological influence, and yet not proposing what or who he would place in their stead, Lewis participates in what Badiou calls thinking through “an unthinkable thought” (*Inaesthetics* 19). This phrase accounts for the effects of the state of the situation upon the way ideas are conceived and understood, for the “unthinkable” indicates that which is not included in the situation. Rather than to correct or redefine the “revolutionary,” Badiou suggests that the declaration of the event entails arguing that previous forms of knowledge are no longer relevant to the situation. So, when Lewis places his *Enemy*’s point of view in opposition to others who he finds representative of a controlling

idea, Lewis implies that there are elements in the situation that are no longer included in it, the prime example of which is his own Enemy persona. They are signs of the situation's lack of justification, and thus might be understood as Lewis's version of a declaration of the event.

Consequently, Lewis's engagement with his contemporaries is an exercise in articulating and rendering visible the terms of his opposition to a ruling ideology, rather than in articulating a fully-developed vision of the total social process of which it is a part (*pace* Jameson). Lewis is clearest, in fact, when he claims that he is focussing on a particular portion of the cultural sphere. Perhaps the most forceful example of Lewis's attempt to expose and understand the machinations of ideology appears in his persistent critique of the popularization of "revolution" in advertisement. "The Revolutionary Simpleton" explores the ways in which some artists have used the idea of "revolution" to capitalize on a popular trend. The "Simpleton" of the title is the revolutionary who neither understands, nor cares about, the kind of revolution he or she is producing artworks for. Lewis's contention in this essay is that some critics and artists were at best squandering, and at worst actively hampering, the truly revolutionary potential of art. He argues that work which advertises itself as "revolutionary" often has the effect of mere "change"; by this, he means that artists exaggerate the value of minor formal experimentation in literature. Artwork of that kind, he argues, merely produces "change-for-change's" sake (*Enemy* 3: 81). The resulting "falsified artistic invention" (*Enemy* 1; 189), and its advertisement, further confuses the meaning of "revolutionary" art and contributes to the cultural chaos Lewis sees. It ultimately undermines potentially practical revolutionary action, insofar as it muddies the waters and reduces readers' capacity to recognize and expose ideologies. In this confusion, ideas that merely celebrate a ruling class—and thus hinder the possibility of a dialectical process that could

undermine or challenge the dominant regime of thought—result in artworks that support the status quo and provide amusement for the ruling class.

Lewis argues that the kind of “revolution” offered by many of his contemporaries works in unspoken service of the status quo. According to Lewis, the ruling class has adopted a kind of utopian “millennium” as its expressed goal, the actual function of which he seeks to expose:

A sort of neglected bride, her nuptials long overdue, Art remains waiting and watching, in the company of her other disappointed entities—such as the “proletariat”—for the millennium, of course, which never comes. But as its once great sentimental part in the great revolutionary programme progressively shrinks, it passes over, silently, but bag and baggage, to the same place to which “the proletariat” has gone—namely, to the volatile “revolutionary” millionaire-Bohemia. That is probably the only millennium that either the artist or ‘the proletarian’ will ever see. The artist, on account of the nature of his calling, is nearer to this ill-smelling pseudo-Paradise than are most “proletarians.” If he is an artist with any taste he will find it difficult to believe, in contemplating this millionaire “revolutionary” Utopia, that it justifies its paradisal claim. (55)

Here, Lewis implies that artworks are deployed as a means of indefinitely delaying revolutionary action. For Lewis, the language of the millennium, or of utopia, has been evacuated of its meaning by the “millionaire-Bohemia,” a group he will directly associate with the Bloomsbury group of writers in *The Enemy*’s second issue. He argues that the revolutionary potential of artwork, its “great sentimental part” in realizing a utopian future, has been translated into the terms that benefit these “volatile” few. As long as this “ruling” artistic class is able to coopt the language of the millennium without opposition, the vision of a possible future no longer includes

artists who might challenge this privileged bohemian elite. Unfortunately, he claims that artists are particularly vulnerable to the appeal of their utopia (as though nearer to it by “smell”).

In his attempt to understand different approaches to literary production, Lewis spends a substantial amount of space in *The Enemy* discussing how his contemporaries participate in the literary economy. In so doing, he identifies two kinds of artists: those who choose to participate in what he understands as faux-utopian propaganda, and those who are adopted or duped by its propagandists. Both kinds of artists are the “revolutionary simpletons” at whom he directs his critique (1: 52). The first species of revolutionary simpleton chooses to capitalize on the advertisement of particular trends in literature (for example, that of revolutionary literature). While one might view opportunists of this sort as innocuous, Lewis outlines some of their negative impact on the cultural field when he discusses their artistic approaches. He calls their works “*partial*” efforts to produce revolutionary art (1: 48). A partial effort “looks novel because it is attempting to get back to standards or forms that are very ancient, and hence strange to the European” (1: 48), but their approaches actually lack novelty when understood in the context of literary history. In the section of “The Revolutionary Simpleton” in which Lewis responds to the critical tendency to praise poets based on their ability to represent music in poetry, Lewis offers this illustration of how those partial efforts compare to the work of the “complexly talented” artist:

Let us imagine a person so complexly talented that he could with equal effect express himself in musical composition, painting, sculpture, or writing. [...] I think then that we should find that that person’s writing would show little tendency to divest works of their symbolism, or to distort them, nor to do imitational or “literary” music, nor to tell stories in paint. The rather shallow

“revolutionism” that consists in a partial merging of two or more arts would be spared him. He would achieve such a complete revolution every time he dropped from one of his accomplishments into the other, that he would have no incentive to hybrid experiment. He would be the purest possible artist in each of his arts. It is even quite possible to affirm that no artist with only one art in which to express himself, can keep that one art entirely intact and pure. (167-68)

In short, Lewis argues that a talented artist would have no need to perform a “partial merging” of two art forms if he were already talented enough—and implies that only weaker artists would seek to do so. On the one hand, the “impure” artist fails, or does not care, to recognize the unique qualities of each art form, and instead produces superficially experimental literature (in the sense that it is only a formal experiment). On the other hand, the “purest possible artist” would recognize the historical values of the different arts and would not attempt merely to combine two forms for the sake of combining them. So, the revolutionary simpleton who is a “hybrid art[ist]” is not only ineffective by virtue of a seeming lack of talent, but also because his work derives forms of art that already exist, such that the hybrid artist is “lost halfway between one art and another” (1: 167).

In criticizing the hybrid artist, Lewis does not promote a siloed approach to literature, in which each art form is considered autonomous and distinct; rather, he wants to distinguish between technical craftsmanship and experimentation. The distinction is paramount, for, as Paul Edwards argues, Lewis “wants a revolutionary art that genuinely revalues the modern world” (*Wyndham* 305), and not one that merely reflects the world’s values back to itself. “Partial efforts” such as those performed by the hybrid artist are cynically produced artworks that do not participate in a radical revaluation of the conditions of artistic production; instead, they actively

participate in the conditions that seek to further commodify art. Lewis argues that he rarely sees popular artists producing artwork that conveys “a truly revolutionary order, into an order of things radically different from the ‘capitalist state’” (*Enemy* 3: 25). Although he does not define a truer revolutionary art, or a “pure” artistic achievement, he does imply that an artwork that simply reflects the state of the situation is not revolutionary. In identifying what he sees as a growing cultural trend toward art’s embrace of the status quo, Lewis argues that revolutionary artists should express a desire to challenge the situation, rather than to replicate it.

The problem that the hybrid artist presents is not one of artistic integrity. While quality is necessarily impacted by the vast number of “superficial” attempts at revolutionary art (*Enemy* 1: 189), the valuation of the itself superficial is also a sign that the era of “permanent revolution” inaugurated by scientific and technological advance has been interpreted, in literary modernism, simply as an era of “permanent novelty” (189). Lewis, however, is rankled by this misapprehension of the cultural impact of new technologies. As Heather Fielding argues, Lewis perceived the cultural environment of the 1920s as moving in parallel with technological advance; he often discusses “the revolutionary logic of progress: we constantly seek new advancements, and whatever machine is in place now must be superseded” (132). While this might at first appear to be a logic of planned obsolescence, Lewis instead claims that without the cultural urgency inspired by technological advance, “men would have ceased to criticize life, perhaps, and a sad stagnation would have been the result” (*Men Without Art* 23). Therefore, he writes, “To be able at last to have a technique that enables men to regard life itself as something *imperfect*, like a machine to be superseded, should outweigh any temporary inconveniences” (23). In this way, Lewis makes a connection between technological advance and critical

thinking; and just as he believes that “machines” will eventually be replaced, he considers the “technical” innovations in literature as similarly obsolescent.

When we look closely at Lewis’s desire to figure revolution in literary form as techniques that are continually superseded and replaced, we see why he is resolutely interested in the popular reception and dissemination of ideas: whereas machines are eventually replaced through the evolution of industry, for Lewis, the *popular* imagination advances or changes literary techniques. He writes, in *The Enemy*, “Whereas it is generally Industry that betrays and distorts scientific invention in the course of its exploitation, it is usually in the distorting medium of social life that artistic invention is falsified” (1: 189-90). Consequently, when Lewis critiques “hybrid art,” he confirms that he is not promoting the creation of new techniques for their own sake; this would imply that he wants to participate in the era of permanent novelty that turns literature into a version of an industrial assembly line. The problem with machines, as Lewis often points out, is that they are reproducible and predictable; they are designed, deployed or implemented to achieve predictable goals (Gasiorek, “Lewis and Technology” 170). The difference with artwork is that artists cannot plan nor predict their artwork’s impact, particularly in such a “distorting medium” as the public imagination. We thus arrive at the kernel of Lewis’s critique of ideology; if “partial efforts” to produce artwork contribute to the problem of change-for-change’s sake or perpetual revolution, then the impact of the hybrid artist’s decisions is felt primarily by the public. When “partial efforts” are cynically advertised or celebrated as “revolutionary,” their success essentially depends on the public’s inability to recognize old forms, or the public’s lack of awareness and lack of historical knowledge. Thus, when Lewis argues that the impact of a work must be “popularly accessible” to its readers, and that the

novelty of an artwork must still be recognizable or “concrete” (*Enemy* 1: 27), he argues that revolutionary art must have a local impact in order to be effective.

In short, he understands the influence of literature as working backwards: the popular impact is the message. At this point, unpacking Badiou’s conception of the universal quality of the evental address is crucial in order to understand two important underlying points in Lewis’s discussion: the way in which he critiques an audience’s perceived homogeneity, and the way in which he understands the hybrid artist’s commercial motivation. On the former point, Lewis’s persistent concern with the popular understanding of artwork partially focuses on the way in which some artists and artist-groups assume a kind of uniformity in the reading and consuming public, which Lewis demonstrably refuses through the very creation of The Enemy persona. Badiou suggests that the universality of the evental address is dependent on a firm belief in difference: “in the situation (call it: the world), *there are differences*. One could say that there is nothing else” (*Saint* 98). Lewis’s effective subject therefore must produce a universal declaration that celebrates difference, not only in the immediate or local sense of a celebration of differing points of view, but in its declaration of belief in artwork’s capacity to introduce difference in an otherwise mechanical (or predictable) and profit-driven industry. The declaration Lewis makes is therefore also a non-totalizing form of address: by assuming a multitude of differences in an audience rather than a sustaining homogeneity, he accepts “a succession of problems requiring resolution, rather than ... an amorphous synthesis” (99).

Lewis’s characterization of the hybrid artist’s motivation for producing commercially viable goods can also be illuminated by Badiou’s theory of universalism in the evental logic. Artwork, in Badiou’s and Lewis’s formulation, might transcend the state of the situation to introduce revolutionary ideas. As we have seen, in Lewis’s thinking, if artists align themselves

with commercial forms of art, both in artistic production and in its advertisement, then they implicitly support the state of the situation and cannot produce revolutionary artwork—they only produce “hybrid art”. In this regard, each hybrid artist’s statement could be effectively read as a moral justification for commercial art. Here, too, Badiou’s understanding of the declaration of the event clarifies how Lewis goes from point A to point B: Badiou argues that for the eventual declaration to be universal, it must be non-moral; morality or immorality would be determined by the state of the situation. Therefore, a universal address is an “indifference that tolerates differences” (99); it both notes the consequences and proceeds in expressing a point of view that nonetheless challenges the status quo, as its effective goal is to “search for new differences, new particularities to which the universal might be exposed” (99). In this sense, Lewis’s comments on the “sad stagnation” of critical thought (*Men Without Art* 23), born of the homogenizing forces of cultural and technological activity, imply his agreement with experimental literature’s role in repeating the status quo’s exposure to difference.

With these two points in mind—Lewis’s demonstration that the readership is varied and differentiated, and his drive to understand artwork as potentially revolutionary in its desire to make present oppositions and difference—we can understand his argument against “partial effort” in art as more than an attempt to separate pure forms of art, which we must note he does not define, from generic experimentation or non-traditional writing styles. A “partial effort” is instead an artwork that is born of a desire to capitalize on a potentially lucrative trend; its very production implies an acceptance of a commercially indiscriminate and homogeneous readership, and its circulation would dilute the local impact of revolutionary artworks by oversaturating the market with reams of reproducible hybrid art. For Lewis, this “greater mass of work” contributes to the readership’s inability to sense the impact of innovation, as the

superficially or fashionably experimental presents an illusory sense of progress which can overwhelm and impede the potential for the public to access, and understand, revolutionary art (1: 48). Lewis's desire to differentiate between "revolutionary simpletons" and "pure" revolutionary artists therefore works in concert with his critique of "hybrid" art: he articulates the possibility that both revolutionary simpletons and hybrid art function to "remov[e] something necessary to life and put an ideologic simulacrum where it was" (100). The popularization of ideas in "intellectual fashions" is therefore extremely significant to Lewis: when the ideas in the cultural marketplace support an ideological system that insists on a kind of cultural hierarchy, it negatively affects the public—whose "life" or real, lived experience might be ameliorated by radical changes to that hierarchy—because they are inundated with the evacuated sense of the "revolutionary" in its consumable, reproducible form. There is a symmetry to Lewis's argument: here is another space in which Lewis notes that something the public is induced to do ostensibly for its ameliorative or liberating effects—such as the haberdashery of self-expression or the consumption of so-called revolutionary art—is in fact anti-revolutionary. His argument consistently identifies a structure that makes us blind to the fact of its looping us back into ideological imbrication.

Lewis's general remarks on this hybrid artist cum opportunistic revolutionary singleton are interesting in themselves, but it is also crucial to note that they are frequently articulated with an emphasis on popular reception precisely because Lewis wants to understand how art objects affect the real world. As Andrzej Gasiorek argues, Lewis staunchly defends literature's role in promoting a readership's "capacity to be trained, exercised, and developed" ("Critique of Modernism" 41). Indeed, Gasiorek's position is the consensus of the vast majority of Lewis scholars. Paul Edwards also writes that

[Lewis's] insistence on the need for a cultural and economic infrastructure to support a new movement is particularly telling. Without an educated public willing (and financially able) to sustain the innovators, their efforts take on the fitful status of publicity stunts instead of that of a renaissance. Lewis's own career is a prime example of this, and he was adept at exploiting the brief moments of publicity he managed to engineer. But there was serious purpose and real artistic achievement behind his own publicity, and he was always able to tell whether anything of comparable weight lay behind anyone else's. ("Introduction" 19-20)

Edwards' goal here is to provide a possible (psychological) motivation for Lewis's work: because Edwards' work is largely biographical, it outlines the extent to which Lewis is concerned with the public's ability to recognize new movements, or novel experimentation, with an edge to Lewis's dependence on his work's financial success. While this may be true (Lewis suffered financial difficulties throughout his career), the critical discussion of the "serious purpose" behind his concern with public buy-in for artistic works is somewhat underdeveloped.

Indeed, the lack of extensive discussion of Lewis's interest in popular culture is something of a troubling trend in Lewis scholarship, as Alan Munton has also noted.²⁴ One can find innumerable mentions of Lewis's "inconsistent" or "contradictory" statements concerning the role of the artist, the individual, and artwork, each of which rests on the claim that Lewis appears to be only opportunistically involved in some of the central debates in modernist literary culture. Contra this critical trend, Lewis is devoted, across a number of works, to emphasizing artwork's instructive or recuperative quality, particularly when it concerns the reading public. More specifically, he consistently chooses to discuss popular forms or techniques of literature in

²⁴ See Munton's "'Imputing Noxiousness,'" pp. 5-20.

order to emphasize 1) the extent to which art is dependent on and born of commodity culture, and 2) the negative consequences of commodity culture. He also refers to the deleterious effects of the embeddedness of hybrid art. Given his critique of how ideology operates, his focus on these issues is certainly not the result of mere opportunism. As he himself claims, his commitment to “opposing” ideology has more to do with the way in which an idea comes to perform work for a ruling cultural class.

When Lewis describes the repackaging of old forms of art in order to produce a seemingly new or “hybrid” form, he argues that artists have succumbed to a commodity culture that essentially disposes of the dialectic that Jameson describes: production of this hybrid art generally replicates old but saleable art forms, rather than produces challenging points of view that both oppose the reified state of the arts and introduce new ideas to the reading public. Commodity culture, Lewis argues, compels artists to advertise superficial work as “revolutionary” in order to remain current and provocative, and “regard[s] all creative work in opportunist terms” (1: 52). This “shallow revolutionism” to which an “impure” artist appeals, he argues, is a “delusion, which makes a non-sense of our continued civilised advance (unless you repudiate the idea of *advance* and substitute that of mere fashionable *change*” (102, original emphasis). Again, Lewis follows the same thread: he critiques the superficial cycle of permanent novelty represented by “change” by arguing that its fundamentally cyclical character renders nonsensical the “advance” it claims to achieve. Lewis’s sense of authentic revolution, therefore, is predicated on a kind of movement or progress that breaks from that cycle: it is, for him, an advancement that passes from one epoch to another, which requires popular buy-in for the revolution to be successful. Encapsulating the error he sees in the production of superficial

novelty, Lewis argues that if the state of things does not change, “Romance and scholarship plus advertisement, take the place of really new creative effort” (60).

Lewis’s second type of revolutionary simpleton also presents an interesting case; this type of artist is not as cynically motivated as the hybrid artist, and so he has the disturbingly effective quality of being perceived as “authentic” (52). This “authentic” revolutionary simpleton is so devoted to his work that he is unaware of the ways in which his work is, or can be, mobilized in the service of an ideology. To Lewis, the authentic revolutionary simpleton is like a mascot for permanent novelty:

He *opens* all doors, as it were—whether there is anything inside or not. He exclaims; he points excitedly to what he believes to be the herds of wild horses that are constantly pouring out of the doors flung dramatically open by him. We look where he points, and occasionally observe a moke or an old hack crawling forth. He serves at least to advertise our terrestrial emptiness. Everything which is described as “radical” or “rebel” ... excites him. (51; original emphasis)

Lewis regards this kind of artist with more contempt than he does the opportunistically-minded hybrid artist. To his eye, the revolutionary simpleton is “not the enthusiast of the will-to-change at its source, but only of its surface-effects, on the plane of vulgarization” (51). He serves, then, as a means of popularizing an affective response: he “opens doors” for the sake of opening them, and his seeming genuineness makes his excitement contagious. This “authentic revolutionary simpleton” is therefore “always with the majority without being aware of it” (52). As a result, this participant in the dilution of revolutionary activity is more damaging than the hybrid artist; because revolution, for Lewis, occurs at the local level, the popularity of the “authentic” simpleton’s position makes it more urgent to address.

Given that Lewis's animus toward the "High Bohemia" implies that literary production is structured by those who benefit most from the state of the situation, the "authentic" revolutionary simpleton's approach is not one with which he wants to be aligned, as it, too, participates in supporting the state of the situation. Instead, he cautions that it is best to be more instrumental about the way in which experimentation in literature might be imagined. He claims that "Revolution-for-revolution's sake appears to me irrational—or change-for-change's: for is it not the fashionable philosophy of the worst sort of 'bourgeois'?" (3: 81). In so doing, Lewis provides us with some of the scaffolding for the critiques that follow. Now that we have identified two of the ways in which Lewis believes artists occupy subjective positions that are detrimental to the revolutionary potential of art, I will delve into detail in the following section: James Joyce and Gertrude Stein serve as examples of Lewis's authentic revolutionary simpleton, and Lewis sees them participating in undermining the revolutionary potential of art. In his critique, Lewis attempts to highlight differences, and therefore suggests a universal form of address that disposes of the implicit homogeneity of audience that is implied by commercial forms of art.

The Enemy Versus the "Romantic Self"

We have covered some of the more ambitious claims in Lewis's *Enemy* review: Lewis argues that most popular and accessible artwork is mobilized by "politico art-men" who serve a shadowy political agenda that intends to influence popular ideas, while the "High Bohemia" which benefits from that agenda appears to have a stake in maintaining an ideological hierarchy. Lewis's concerns seem to pivot around the problem of "inclusion" in the state of the situation—an inclusion that he denies in practice by deploying his "oppositional" Enemy persona, but which

he sees replicated in the spaces of literary production. Up to this point, these concerns have been fairly abstract, mainly due to Lewis's oblique and inferential writing style. However, when he discusses how the state of the situation recruits particular authors as "revolutionary simpletons," we find clearer examples that illuminate how Lewis understands the operations of ideology at the level of artistic production and the implications of different subject positions in that context.

When Lewis turns to his contemporaries, Ezra Pound, James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, he claims to be exposing the "tricks" that they have performed for the public (3: 13), in the hope that their exposure might reveal some of the more insidious ways in which ideology operates through popular literature. Because Lewis treats Pound largely as a passing example of ideological reproduction rather than a case of artistic production to which he devotes substantial attention, this section will focus primarily on Lewis's reading of Joyce and Stein.

Lewis's complaint concerning all three of these writers is the extent to which the concept of the authentic self can be mobilized in the service of an ideology. To illustrate this point, Lewis claims that he is intent on exposing their membership in what he calls the "Time-cult." Although he discusses the Time-cult in more detail in *Time and Western Man*, in *The Enemy* he focusses on how followers of the "time-doctrine" have promoted an insular idea of the self; in his terminology, this idea of the self is its "personality," but with one important qualification. For adherents of the "time-doctrine," "'you' become the series of your temporal repetitions. [You are] a cumulative personality of *all the past*, all your time-appearances and past sensations, all at once. You are not based upon a Present; you are based *nowhere*—you flow out in a self-transcendence, mingling and merging with everything" (147). Lewis refers to this version of selfhood via accumulation when he claims that Pound is a "little crowd" (89); by contrast, Lewis

strongly rejects the notion that the self is an atemporal aggregate of past selves, claiming that this atemporal self serves the needs of the market that has produced it.

For Lewis, this conceptualization of the self implicitly supports a variation of the cycle of “permanent novelty” (189). Lewis views the “symbolic eternity” produced by the atemporal self as an attempt essentially to promote a “continuous present” that has similarly atemporal properties (*Enemy* 1: 151; 172). Therefore, he argues that this cycle produces a problem unique to artworks: as the “historical view par excellence” (169), the time-doctrine imbues even ephemeral objects with a sense of permanence, which he believes renders their local impact irrelevant in the same way that the individual is rendered irrelevant in the vast annals of “history” (*Time* 442). The time-cult redefines novelty as the repetition or recycling of moments that occurred in the past. The effects of this position, he argues, are wide-reaching: the time-doctrine increases the potential for artworks to be assessed based on the artist’s faithful or faithless representation of himself, given his past representations: it works to “oppose the *living person* to the *image* or *representation* into which he or she projects himself or is projected” (164). It effectively chains the artist, and the self by extension, to the past, thereby making novelty or radical experimentation impossible.

Whereas Lewis’s concerns about ideology can often veer close to questions of political and social influence, here Lewis explains that his concern is a personal one. Where the time-doctrine is in force, Lewis argues, artwork can never be differentiated from the artist who produces it; artworks would then logically be valued based on whether or not they conform to what can roughly be described as an artist’s “brand.” Crucially, Lewis thus appears to reject the suggestion that artworks are always an attempt to generate the truest expression of an authentic

self. In this context, he claims that a vast number of authors have turned, as a result of the influence of the time-doctrine, to the “Romantic.”

Taking “Romance” in its generic sense, Lewis contends that “Romance, as currently used, then, denotes what is unreal or unlikely, or at all events not present, in contrast to what is scientifically true and accessible to the senses here and now” (1: 36). Romance thus suggests a retreat into subjective space that Lewis extends when he claims that the time-cult uses Romance to produce an idealization of the past in order to “distract people from a living Present” (172). What he means by this, essentially, is that the material world is obscured in this conception of time. “The Romantic time-sense” values the retreat into the self, and thereby encourages the retreat from the social and political environment in which the author lives. For Lewis, an author’s turn to the “Romantic” is therefore an indication of a particular kind of insular politics; one that attempts to clothe itself in representations of intellectual genius that are achieved through self-analysis, or representations of an idealized past that deny the importance or power of novelty in the present. Furthermore, for Lewis, the work of “Romantic” writers primarily values the uncritical self above all other perspectives.

With Lewis’s definition of the “Romantic” in mind, we will look closely at how Lewis understands one of his contemporaries, James Joyce, as supporting this idea of the Romantic, time-cultist self. Despite using this recognizable author as an example, Lewis repeatedly insists both that “the object of our interest here is very strictly things, not people” (1: xiv), and that “it is more the period, its infections, and the action of those infections within the tissues of [authors’] work, than the individual energy they may possess, at which criticism is directed” (x). So, Lewis presents his critique of Joyce as an example of an author who participates unknowingly in supporting the status quo. But Joyce is not merely a sounding board against whom Lewis will

stake a number of claims; rather, his work is essential to Lewis's definition of individual agency. By rejecting qualities of the self that he believes are valued in Joyce's version of subjective representation, and by connecting those qualities with the "time-cult," Lewis begins to demonstrate how he understands the subject as it is represented in literary works.

In "The Revolutionary Simpleton," Joyce represents the extent to which ideology influences even the most skilled authors' literary production. One way in which the influence of the "time-cult" is apparent, Lewis argues, is in the tendency to celebrate "telling from the inside" (*Enemy* 1: 110). Lewis argues that Joyce is an excellent example of this phenomenon because reading *Ulysses* "takes you inside [Joyce's] head [and] absorbs you momentarily into himself" (121). Joyce therefore employs "the method of confining the reader in a circumscribed psychological space into which several encyclopedias have been emptied" (110). While this method might otherwise be celebrated as thorough character development, Lewis instead argues that in *Ulysses*, "what in fact you are given there, in the way of character, is the most conventional stuff in the world" (115). Lewis amplifies this claim when he compares the characters in *Ulysses* to "ready-mades," contending that Joyce adopts "such a cliché as is represented by a stage Jew (Bloom), a stage Irishman (Mulligan), or a stage Anglo-Saxon (Haines)" (115). Despite the reference to Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, which critique and celebrate the incursions of consumerism in gallery culture in the twenties, Lewis points to Joyce's method in this way because his ready-made characters appear to celebrate the incursion uncritically. Joyce's method therefore follows the pattern that Lewis has identified in the time-cult: retreating from the realities of life into the enclosure of subjective experience, which is an experience represented using familiar character types.

Moreover, Lewis finds Joyce's employment of ready-made characters especially troubling in the context of Joyce's popular reception as a "revolutionary" artist; because conventional types of characters are implicitly present in a number of works, reproducing them in a character's "inside" suggests that his *mind* is populated with *commercial products*. Lewis claims that this is one way in which the interpellation of ideology works: it encourages us to "develop [our] personality" while only offering endlessly reproducible products in the place of personality (100). Again, the same logic of ideological interpellation comes up: products that purport to offer a means of expressing a unique point of view or one's unique self function instead to support the state of the situation. But in Joyce's case, Lewis makes an important addition: the market generates the desire to individualize. Lewis claims that the tendency to "tell from the inside" indicates that Joyce is unconsciously complicit in ideological operations that "seduce the sensitive little intelligence" into believing that it is developing its personality (108). To illustrate his claim, he uses a broader social analogy: "the more a woman complicates her attire, the more she 'develops her personality.' [When more women do this, more are] dressed in this 'personal' way, and so more and more are differentiated from each other" (100). This differentiation is not an expression of personality as Lewis understands it—as he indicates through the use of quotation marks—rather, the market induces the desire to be unique. The market also generates the ready-made forms through which the "personal" is made manifest. Thus, insidiously, it "train[s] people to be satisfied to be just like their neighbours, hat for hat, and button for button, and finally to be *active*, so that they can *work*" (101; original emphasis). Thus, consumerist differentiation of this kind produces only homogeneity. It encourages the individual to turn inward, but effectively renders that process ineffective: one can dress oneself according to one's desires, but the desire itself is generated by a commodity culture that

encourages dress as the means of expressing one's personality, and so one's personality is never quite developed. Instead, the process "is guaranteed to strip a person bare of all 'personality' in a fortnight" (100). As Lewis's analogy suggests, Joyce's strategy of "telling from the inside" is a kind of author-apparel that celebrates the differentiation of each character—insofar as they differ from one another in recognizably typified ways—but this differentiation only serves to highlight the novel's repackaging of "conventional" forms in the same way that the women in Lewis's example might celebrate the haberdashery of self-expression by choosing different hats or button styles. For Lewis, Joyce's method of character development analogically aligns with the women who dress themselves in order to feel as though they are "active," even though their activity is confined to the choice of the minor differences presented to them in a consumerist culture.

We thus arrive at another crucial point of Lewis's analysis. Underpinning his desire to protect artistic integrity and innovation against the incursions of the group and the interpellation of ideology is his drive to maintain some form of individual agency within these networks of influences. As Andrezej Gasiorek argues,

Lewis' view of agency was pessimistic, but the reverse of naive. The Individual—understood as a thinking, purposive and autonomous agent—was at the heart of his conception of what made life valuable, but he didn't envisage the subject as a freely self-determining and asocial entity. He defended, rather, the possibility of at least partial self-knowledge and cognition of reality, maintaining that these had to be fought for if humans were to have any chance of freeing themselves from solipsistic fantasies and political ideologies. ("Wyndham Lewis on Art" 211)

Gasiorek's position here, although something of an outlier in Lewis scholarship, aims to make the necessary distinction between the Lewis who might appear to be a proponent of an ultimately

autonomous individual who is “free and independent of all culture” (Sicari 99), and the Lewis who seeks to articulate the ways in which “partial self-knowledge and cognition of reality” are possible within increasingly insidious networks of influence.

The refusal to participate in the state of the situation plays out in terms of a refusal of self-expression that is conditioned by ready-made personalities. Lewis’s argument for the self is essentially founded on the right *not* to be included, in Badiou’s sense of the term as it refers to the state of the situation’s coercive inclusion of all of its elements (*Being* 107). Indeed, when Lewis repeatedly raises concerns about “uniformity,” the “majority,” the “mass-average” and “democracy,” he does not claim to be arguing against democracy per se. Instead, he follows a line of thought that Badiou outlines when he claims that to be “included” in the state of the situation is essentially to be “mastered” and thus effaced by the state’s representation (109). On this subject, Lewis is clear about the ways in which this mastery and erasure occurs: Lewis argues that the masses, as they are popularly conceived, function as a kind of uniform mass of indistinct consumers—as he claims in his example of women differentiating themselves through consumptive excesses of dress. We might also recall his warning about politico art-men: they would betray the artist for the sake of the majority (of consumers or voters). Likewise, he contends that the revolutionary simpleton is “always with the majority” (*Enemy* 1: 52). Thus, when Lewis critiques the commercial tendencies of art, he essentially argues for the maintenance and encouragement of unique voices in the cultural field. He writes that an artist who is an “individualist” is “not moving in perfect unison with his neighbours, if even eccentric. The uniformity aimed at by the method of mass-suggestion is, as an ideal, only a counsel of desperation. Any man of intelligence must be instinctively against it” (50). In this regard, Lewis does not argue that there are particularly gifted or unique individuals who are able to bootstrap

themselves from the constraints of ideology; instead, he argues that it is necessary to reject the repeated injunction that one's individuality be effaced in the "uniformity" of the multitude by consuming reproducible commodities. The "uniformity" against which Lewis argues is effectively the result of being "included" in a situation: the state can only represent sets of elements that belong to it by erasing the distinction that is proper to each element.

In this context, Lewis's main complaint regarding Joyce is his inability to recognize the implications of his novelistic commitment to the representation of interiority. Lewis argues that the quality that Joyce shares with the revolutionary simpleton is that he excitedly opens doors for the sake of opening them, without regard for how their opening might be instrumental to an agenda. He writes, "What stimulates [Joyce] is *ways of doing things*, and technical processes, and not *things to be done*. [...] He is become so much a writing-specialist that it matters very little to him *what* he writes, or what idea or world-view he expresses, so long as he is trying his hand at this manner and that, and displaying his enjoyable virtuosity. [...] He is only a tool, an instrument, in short" (109). Like the "tool" of government that ideology can become, Lewis pictures Joyce as a contributor to an ideological project of which he may not be entirely aware. Although Lewis places Joyce at the vanguard of experimental literature, he argues that Joyce's form of experimentation has consequences that he does not realize.

While Lewis seeks to identify the ways in which consumerist ideology is implied in, and could be valorized through, Joyce's work, he also turns to how artists reject their inclusion in the state of the situation in ways that he considers inherently regressive. To pursue this second problem, Lewis turns to Gertrude Stein, whose method also appeals to the concept of an authentic self that Lewis sees as ultimately supporting the status quo. To explore this line of argument, I will turn to Lewis's analysis of Stein's writing style in her "Composition as

Explanation.” In the sections of *The Enemy* in which Lewis comments on this work, he argues that it is an example of one extreme to which modernist literature has tended in its efforts to rescue agency and artistic autonomy from the incursions of capital. He claims that Stein promotes a “Utopia of childhood” in reaction to the social environment in which people live (75); her work therefore exemplifies “the instinctive recoil of the stricken system” (75). But Lewis sees that recoil as regressive rather than progressive and revolutionary.

Lewis claims that he holds Stein in high regard, but he objects to Stein’s writing style; for him, the text intends to “explain” something “clearly and simply” (71), but it does so under the false pretence that her character is “cut off from the rest of the world entirely by an exclusive and peculiar sensibility” and is thus unable to perform that explanation (72). He argues that she writes in “the language of childhood” (74), which he identifies by referencing Stein’s use of repetition, idiosyncratic spelling, errors in grammar, and so on. He identifies two faults in this technique. First, it values a version of the subject that appeals to the incommunicable as the ground of its authenticity: in the attempt to communicate an explanation, it can only offer reasons for which communication is impossible, and thereby confirms the subject’s absolutely singular point of view. As a result, Lewis insists that this persona is anti-intellectual, for “the meaning [of the text] is recognized to be negligible” (3: 45). Second, and more importantly, he argues that Stein’s strategy is deliberately obvious: he recognizes her style as an experiment in voicing a “naïf,” but the reader can recognize that Stein’s work is purposely written in a style that is not a reflection of the author’s intellect or personality. The persona is “*faux-naïf*” (1: 73), or a style that “enjoy[s] any disguise that reverses and contradicts the personality” (1: 71). Her style of writing suggests that the naïve subject is a personality or persona worth exploring, for it appeals to naïveté as a measure of its authenticity. The fact that it is an intentional strategy of an

author who is not naïve, however, does not make it less likely to be understood as authentic—in short, although the faux-naïf is not intended to be a believable representation of Stein, it is a technique that uses the faux-naïf as a kind of technical experiment for authenticity at a remove from the author. In short, Lewis sees the fundamental purpose of this technical experiment as an attempt to value an unintelligible or unintelligent subjective experience.

Moreover, Lewis raises concerns about Stein's strategy because it might be useful for the reproduction of existing commodities, specifically in the literary marketplace. The "sensationalism" or emotionality of the style appeals to a reader's pathos and renders logic and rational communication less important than the expression of the self. But this is not the only concern: Lewis worries that the "child-like" aspect of Stein's style intends to appeal to, and stand in for, all readers: "the child shall be a child of the people, with the pathos of the illiterate added to the pathos of the child" (79). In this sense, Lewis sees Stein as producing "an epic contribution to the present mass-democracy" (83), where mass democracy is an edifice designed to produce and promote homogeneity. In this case, Lewis sees Stein as attempting to credit a sensibility that devalues intelligence for the sake of homogeneity. He argues that the style appeals to a typical version of the public, as it is an example of a "*plainmanism*" that "adopt[s] the simplicity, the illiterateness, of the mass-average" (82). He argues that a text written in this style will attempt to convey the authenticity of the "personality" that speaks by representing it as having anti-intellectual (which he reads as anti-rational) and pre-social characteristics: "a pure sensational expression is what it naturally clothes itself in; it is essentially hostile to the arts of the intellect" (167). Even if we accept that version of a self, Lewis argues, we would attribute value to anti-intellectualism and actively flatten expression of personality to that of the mass average, rather

than promote the expression of unique or revolutionary voices that might stand in opposition to the status quo.

Lewis's critique of Stein's writing style also extends to how it participates in the literary economy for the same reason that he critiques Joyce's use of ready-made character types. The opening gambit of his section on Stein claims that this style of writing is easily reproducible: he considers this "child-like" subject one example among many that participates in what he calls the trend of the "primitive" in literary works (1: 75).²⁵ He will discuss the "primitive" at length in the second issue of *The Enemy*, where he argues that an author who composes a "primitive" subject intends to present it as though it were somehow more authentic than a modern, rational subject. The "primitive" persona, here instantiated by Stein's faux-naïf, is able to convey a self that nostalgically turns to a pre-social form of subjectivity, and suggests that simplistic or ungrammatical communication is the clearest expression of an authentic self. For Lewis, the problem with primitivism and the Child-cult, as extensions of what he calls the "Romantic" in literature, is that it turns to the past rather than to the present, and values a version of subjectivity that is untenable in the present. Lewis ventriloquizes the public's reception of this tendency as follows: "All these primitives have had, like children, the same difficulty: they have not been able to spell! And yet how expressive their little faults of orthodoxy can be! What a nice archaic feeling it gives one to see *tries* spelt *trys*!" (67). In this regard, that primitive persona implicitly satisfies the author's and reader's "superiority complex" (2: 10), and thus adds yet another mollifying product to booksellers' shelves.

²⁵ While Stein is in focus for the purposes of this section, Lewis's concern with the "child-like" extends to include Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Edgar Allen Poe, H.L. Mencken, and others who, he reasons, similarly employ child-like, "baby-man" and even "moronic" styles. See his critique in the second issue of *The Enemy*'s central essay, "Paleface" (*Enemy* 2: 24; 22).

Lewis not only focuses on Stein's participation in this literary trend, but also asks how literary techniques such as the "faux-naïf" might be imitated and adopted by literary amateurs who either unknowingly participate in an artistic movement that does not clearly articulate its intentions, or participate purely for financial gain. When a respected author such as Stein uses a technique that can be imitated, he argues, those who want to participate in the publishing economy will replicate it. He jokingly opines that "everyone, I think, should have to pay a fee for using [Stein's trick]" because it has been imitated by a number of other authors (73). Of these members of the "cult of the Child" (75), Lewis singles out Anita Loos, who he claims is "engaged in the same literary game, and is employing the same method" as Stein (80). But unlike Stein, Lewis argues, Loos does not intend to explore subjectivity through the use of this faux-naïf persona, presenting instead characters that are quaintly risible. He writes that Loos and other "small mercenary practitioner[s]" of the Child-cult abandon the experimental quality of the work that Stein has undertaken (81), and "[make] fun ... for the benefit of the middle-class public who can spell, and who say 'intriguing' and 'divine', and who therefore are able to chuckle over the dish of bad grammar and naughtiness to their heart's content" (81). In other words, Lewis finds in the reproduction of Stein's technique the degradation of a stylistic experiment into lower-quality products designed for passive consumption by a well-educated readership.

The examples of Joyce and Stein both speak to Lewis's more general concern regarding self-expression in a cultural environment that encourages and values expression made in the form of reproducible and therefore commodifiable characters and personalities. While Lewis explores the way in which authenticity is often deployed to bolster the value of those commodifiable personalities, he also argues that self-expression that is not believable as an extension of an author's personality will encourage the reproduction of lower-quality versions of

that expression. These techniques actively work against efforts to revolutionize literature, and retain a “concrete” understanding of revolution in the public imagination. His critique implies that Joyce’s and Stein’s approaches to literary production seductively cloak—in the guise of individual “authenticity”—the mass-production of personalities (as with the hats and buttons of consumerist self-differentiation) whose readerly consumption leads to homogeneous response to lived experience.

The Enemy Versus *transition*

In the previous sections, I have outlined the ways in which Lewis establishes an Enemy persona with the aim of being “effective” in a public debate, and discussed how his focus on writing techniques and styles situates his argument regarding the deleterious effect of market conditions upon literary production. For Lewis, the problem lies not exclusively with any particular author, but extends to the ways in which the business of literary publication itself impacts upon the popular understanding of literature. In this section, I will turn to Lewis’s discussion of literary groups in the second issue of *The Enemy*. If the “politico art-men” seem like a shorthand bogeyman for Lewis, then his discussion of the little magazine *transition* offers his more concrete analysis of why group influence, combined with the operations of the market, is especially damaging to artistic production.

To situate Lewis’s argument in some context, it is important to note that Lewis was not uniquely perceptive in identifying the problem with literary groups in the late twenties, and in accounting for the consequent pressure to conform to marketable styles and forms. Laura Riding and Robert Graves’ *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), for example, identifies this issue in some of the same terms that Lewis will employ in *The Enemy*. Riding and Graves argue that the

pressure to achieve popularity forces writers to consider themselves a part of a group, imitate others' works, quash their own innovations, and participate in a culture industry that affects their ability to take risks. They contend that

For an individual poet to achieve the smallest popular reputation to-day he must, indeed, have a certain "groupish" quality, or, to put it differently, he must suggest a style capable of being imitated, or he must be a brilliant group-member or imitator. Otherwise he is likely, as one of the consequences of the diversification of poetic activity, to be lost to the literary news-sheets of every critical colour and not even to occur as a subject of the plain reader's suspicion or the critic's caution: to exist, in fact, only unto himself. (Riding and Graves 222)

The critique here is that the potentially imitable qualities of an author's writing determine whether he or she is recognized and recognizable, and Riding and Graves even suggest that to be unrecognizable, or unpopular, is tantamount to simply not existing in cultural space. As Lewis does, they essentially pose the problem of "outsider" writers' "inclusion" in the state of the situation. This awareness of the power of popular recognition therefore prompts a number of literary imitations that, according to Riding and Graves, are of a "groupish" sort that lack "genuine" quality, however difficult it may be to precisely identify that quality (218).

Importantly, Riding and Graves do not suggest that the poet *must* have a "'groupish' quality," nor do they wholeheartedly advise the poet to "drive him[self] further into obscurity" (222). They do, however, warn that the public's recognition of a writer's consistent style or "reputation" often plays a substantial role in a writer's success. In short, they argue that the popular recognition of an author depends on both stylistic repetition and group affiliation.

Broadly accepting the terms of Riding's and Graves' argument in this regard, Lewis's *Enemy* sets up as its premise an opposition to groups, declaring himself a provocative "outsider" or rebel in comparison to a group like the one that collected itself around *transition* magazine (*Enemy* 3: 13).²⁶ He does so on the basis that group involvement produces potentially stultifying effects on truly creative or revolutionary artists: "No collectivity ever conceives, or, having done so, would ever be able to carry through, an insurrection or a reform of any intensity, or of any magnitude. That is always the work of individuals or minorities" (1: 49). The group, he argues, valorizes mediocre artists; it can be "an organization of nothing but inferior artists, directed, sometimes by means of specific propaganda, against *the idea* of individual talent altogether" (*Enemy* 1: 49). In a group, an amateur artist comfortably lives an unconscious (or, in Lewis's terms, "mechanical"), life. Lewis therefore implies that mediocre artists, encouraged and supported by groups, flood the market by virtue of their advertisement by the groups in which they participate, and thus force independent artists into obscurity. The revolutionary simpleton is always a member of a group, Lewis claims, for he is "very much the creature of fashion, reverencing the fashionable fetish of the 'group' or of any collectivity" (1: 52).

Later, in *Doom of Youth* (1932), Lewis will write that "the very notion of the 'group' must be suspect" (142), but the tenacity of Lewis's suspicion is demonstrable throughout his career. Lewis's abandonment of Roger Fry's Omega Workshop, his break with Vorticism, and

²⁶ The *transition* literary magazine, which ran from 1927-1939, published experimental and surrealist literature and had expansive circulation in both Europe and the United States. Americans Eugene Jolas and Elliott Paul edited the magazine from Paris for most of its run. Whereas Celine Mansanti argues that "*transition* deserves a special mention for presenting itself not only as a great cosmopolitan magazine open to international writers and avant-gardes, but also as an internationalist publication advocating a transnational union of humanity across state boundaries" (728), Cathryn Setz argues, in contrast to Mansanti's valuation of the magazine's openness, that the magazine trafficked instead in a kind of "carefully designed exclusivity" (72).

his refusal to be involved with his friend Ezra Pound's Imagist movement, all demonstrate his persistent suspicion of artist-groups and movements, at times with good reason.²⁷ The statements that Lewis makes in *The Enemy* that attack both friends and enemies therefore demonstrate his commitment to being a "deliberate outsider" (3: 13), even at the expense of the connections he breaks in the process.

So even while Lewis seems to accept the importance of popularity, reputation, and networking, his commitment extended even to the magazine's material production; I argue that this reveals the lengths to which Lewis is willing to go to deny his inclusion in the state of the situation. Lewis's *The Enemy* was deliberately a solo enterprise, which was a risky choice during a period in which periodicals and little magazines famously failed if they lacked frequent (and exclusive) contributions from other authors who could better promote a publication's visibility.²⁸ Moreover, in comparison to other little magazines and reviews of art and literature, *The Enemy* more resembles a substantial pamphlet. For instance, *transition* had contributions from more than 25 authors in its first issue in April 1927, among whom were Pound, Joyce, and Stein, and also circulated nearly four times the number of copies of an average review (Mansanti 718). Relative

²⁷ Lewis's resignation letter in 1912, also signed by Edward Wadsworth, Cuthbert Hamilton and Frederick Etchells, claims that although the *Daily Mail* had approached these artists for a commission, the administrators of the Omega Workshop removed them from the project without their knowledge, completing the commission and pocketing the funds in the process. Their letter also expresses serious concerns about the group's organization, claiming that the Omega's "own shows are badly organized, unfairly managed, closed to much good work for petty and personal reasons, and flooded with the work of well-intentioned friends." (See Lewis's "Letter to G.B. Shaw" f. 93.)

²⁸ See Philpotts, who argues that the "charismatic form of editorship" in literary journals was essential in attracting contributors and securing pre-publication purchases from readers, even though by itself, this form of editorship was often unsustainable (42). Philpotts claims that these methods alone might have been successful were they not typically combined with a lack of professional capacity (in the form of a lack of new networks from which to acquire contributions and potential readers), as he finds evidenced by Ford Madox Ford's short-lived work with *The English Review* in 1910 (49).

to *transition*, *The Enemy* was commercially unsuccessful, and therefore was less likely to attract more various submissions. By way of explanation or apology, Lewis writes in the Notes to the second issue: “We have received many very interesting contributions, stories, poems, and articles. But this paper is primarily a critical organ” (*Enemy* 2: viii). Although the first issue of *The Enemy* includes essay contributions from T.S. Eliot, J. W. N. Sullivan, and W. Gibson, the second issue contains only one essay from Henry John, while the third contains a meager two poems from Roy Campbell and Laura Riding. Despite Lewis’s claim that there were a large number of contributions submitted to the review, the review may have suffered from Lewis’s reputation as an “Enemy” by the publication of its third issue—a reputation that may have impacted his social capital, or his ability to attract contributors. Lewis’s desire to maintain complete control of the publication and to be its sole editor also had a practical impact on the editorial process: despite declaring, in the first issue of *The Enemy*, that the review would be a quarterly, Lewis was unable to produce a consistent publication timeline; the length of time between the second and last issue is over a year (September 1927, then January 1929). The pressure of maintaining the review independently clearly had a negative impact on his output: he writes in the editorial to the final issue, “The long interval between nos. 2 and 3 of *The Enemy* was a consequence of the editor’s inability, owing to pressure of work, to put aside the few weeks necessary to attend to the exacting task of publication” (*Enemy* 3: 90).

These practical difficulties are important to note because they outline the conditions under which Lewis levies his criticism of groups. When Lewis criticizes “groups,” he takes aim at an essential component of producing and maintaining a successful little magazine in the 1920s. Having a reputation for being collaborative in early twentieth century literary circles was often the means by which writers cultivated not only an audience, but also their livelihoods

(Brooker 3). As Lawrence Rainey outlines in *Institutions of Modernism*, the success of literary modernists depended on being “adept at melding together workable niches into a sustainable submarket” (170), and the assembly of writers who could cater to these niches depended on editors’ networks of authors, publishers, critics, and readers who might band together for mutual benefit. In some cases, the success of periodical publications was due to these networks, and in particular on the “volume of social capital possessed by the editor” of the magazine (Philpotts 45). Some editors also formed groups of their own for the distinct purpose of bolstering the success of a magazine: for example, Ezra Pound strongly encouraged the formation of a group for his magazine, *The Exile*. As an explanation for this necessity, he wrote to Louis Zukofsky in 1928: “What group shd. mean is: convenience of literature, i.e, faculty for printing and distributing without too much damnd bother, secondly, as accessory, fight against impingements on vie litteraire [sic]” (“Letters” 15). Pound highlights how groups were formed and fostered by a desire for better access to the means of publication and distribution than an independent author might find.

But Lewis argues that little magazines and reviews did far more than streamline the distribution process for a group of writers. He claims in *The Enemy* that publications like *transition* use the literary works submitted to their magazine to advance their own agenda, or, as with *transition*, a doctrine: he writes that “no equivocation is possible as to the main principles of their doctrine—repeatedly they have underlined and formulated them. When they print a piece by Joyce, Fargue, Lautreamont, La Rochelle, or Sternheim, they often accompany it with a special mention, wax eloquent about it, and explain it to their readers” (*Enemy* 3: 30). This strays somewhat from the practical reasons for group-formation that Pound describes, and instead takes the shape of a heavy-handed form of editorship.

Editorial explanation that renders experimental works accessible to readers is a common tactic in the modernist period. The proliferation of literary anthologies and guidebooks in the 1920s cemented authors' cultural significance and literary status, but the ever-growing divide between the readership and modernist writers revealed a need to bridge this gap, inspiring the production of differing methodological approaches with which to negotiate the problem.

Although reviews and magazines such as *The Egoist* and *The English Review* were initially prepared for an esoteric audience of a few literate elites, the circulation of some of the longest-running little magazines in the 1920s demonstrates that they were widely read. By the early 1930s, as T.S. Eliot put it, the cultural marketplace was "a mass of criticism" in the form of review publications, anthologies, book-length critical works, and shorter pamphlets, in which editors offer to guide or instruct the public on ways of reading (Eliot, *Use of Poetry* 20). The period also saw the proliferation of "provocative" criticism that promoted a sense that there was extreme opposition between intellectual figures.²⁹ In effect, literary criticism at the time of *The Enemy* was simultaneously intellectual debate, instructive guide, and public spectacle.

So, when Lewis examines *transition* magazine in the third issue of *The Enemy*, his argument is preceded not only by his review of Joyce and Stein in the first issue, and his suspicion of the editors' cultivation of a "group" surrounding the publication in the second, but also by his outraged reply to the editors' assertion, in an article that directly responds to Lewis, that their intention is to "purely and simply amuse ourselves" (Jolas et al, "First Aid" 175). To Lewis, their work is made possible (and made lucrative) by the conditions of publication and

²⁹ One advertisement for John & Edward Bumpus booksellers exemplifies this desire to promote critical works as oppositional: it provides a list of books and advertises, "the anodyne and demulcent book has still a vogue among those who prefer the happy ending and 'all's right with the world.' For others, to whom the problems of life are affairs to be faced and studied, we present the following suggestions..." (*The Enemy* 2).

networking that he highlights as a problem in literary production. As we have seen, he repeatedly argues that the inducement to self-expression is often a marketing strategy that effectively ensures the ongoing homogenizing effect of mass consumer culture. In the case of *transition*, the form that self-expression takes is that of “amusement.” The representation of subjective experience is an expression of one’s autonomy for the editors of *transition*, as though one could remove oneself from the social world in which compromising features such as politics, propaganda, and social hierarchy might influence one’s expression. As Céline Mansanti argues, *transition*’s editor-in-chief, Eugene Jolas, “insisted on the necessity for the poet to express the chaos of his inner self” (727).

Lewis’s engagement with the *transition* editors therefore follows one of the same lines of argument he deploys against Joyce and Stein, but with one important difference: if he grants that Joyce and Stein may be unaware of how they participate in the promulgation and reproduction of regressive ideas, he insists the *transition* editors are well aware of what they do. Whereas “the magazine’s internal structure [relied], more often than not, on the mere juxtaposition of texts and documents” (Mansanti 722), *transition*’s editorials nonetheless claim that the magazine’s contributors participate in a common goal, even if that goal was sometimes obscure to its contributors (Hatch 61). Therefore, when Lewis analyzes what he believes to be the implicit goal of *transition* and its editors, he argues that groups replicate the process of “inclusion” that he sees operating on the level of the state of the situation.

Lewis reviews *transition* not only as a representative publication in encouragement of grouplike behavior, but also as an exemplar of the literary elite who influence and guide mass culture. He writes, “in the influence they exert it seems foolish to deny them ‘importance’” (*Enemy* 3: 14). *transition* also serves as an illustration of a particular kind of “false

revolutionary” magazine which appeals to some of the same “Romantic” tendencies he describes in the first issue. Lewis’s antagonism toward the *transition* group is therefore based less on professional jealousy than on a concern about the reach of its editors’ influence. He claims the review targets some segment of the educated readership that he describes in the first issue of *The Enemy*:

Such a paper as *transition* is aimed of course at a select audience of “intellectuals.” Because that audience is numerically small and is “intellectual” it is not therefore politically unimportant: quite the contrary. If you can gain the “intellectualist” minority—just as if you can destroy it, when that is advisable—you have accounted for a very important component of revolt, or on the other hand of resistance to oppression. (3: 47)

Lewis therefore understands *transition* as not only a trend-setting publication, but also one that has wider-ranging influence. Because he believes that the intellectual minority has some sway in assisting the conditions of revolution, he sees the magazine’s vision—that they “purely and simply amuse [them]selves”—as calculated equivocation.

Examples that speak to Lewis’s concern with the editors’ influence are also found in the content of their magazine. In the introduction to their first issue, the *transition* editors’ stated aim is to offer American and international writers the opportunity to “express themselves freely ... and to avail themselves of a ready, alert, and critical audience” (Jolas and Paul 137). Although the editors claim that they will apply “no rigid artistic criteria” while choosing pieces for publication—“originality will be [the work’s] best recommendation” (135)—the editors wish to express an overall vision with their review. They briefly describe their perspective on what literary works with requisite “originality” might look like: they write, “Primitive people and the

most thoroughly civilized have always had, in common, a thirst [sic] for beauty,” and “the tangible link between the centuries is that of art. It joins distant continents into a mysterious unit, long before the inhabitants are aware of the universality of their impulses” (135). *transition*’s editors therefore express an interest in a “transnational” literature that bases itself on a belief in purportedly shared, cross-cultural and transhistorical values in art (Mansanti 728); one such value, they claim, is that beauty is accessible through primitivism. While this suggests that they have a rather specific point of view through which to access beauty, the editors nonetheless argue that their values are based on a common desire, and on the universality of artistic impulse. Their editorial therefore claims that the *transition* review offers a selection of works by writers who share the editors’ expressed vision. They praise their contributors for “cooperat[ing] in a most courteous and generous fashion” with their contribution requirements (Jolas and Paul 137), and celebrate the degree to which their magazine is exclusive to authors who express the “tangible link” that reflects their idea of art. Finally, the editors claim in their introductory note that the critical readership they imagine is “a homogeneous group of friends, united by a common appreciation of the beautiful, —idealists of a sort” (138).

Lewis objects to much of this editorial vision, not least of all the homogenizing impulse that seems to animate the editors’ selection process. For Lewis, “a homogeneous group of friends united by a common appreciation of the beautiful” embodies the conformity that groups foster, and would certainly curtail attempts to innovate that do not seem amenable to a shared idea of “beautiful” artwork. The implications are serious for Lewis: the public accessibility of artworks becomes a function of homogeneous collective opinion. As he sarcastically comments, “we know that few people have anything at all worth saying (though that, for me, is not a reason to destroy them, as it would be for Paul or for Jolas)” (3: 45).

We have already seen Lewis castigate the “politico art-man” who uses artistic work as propaganda, but here Lewis is concerned with how editors use a similar strategy to implicitly support the standardization of literary work, even as they champion the virtue of revolutionary self-expression. He points out that the *transition* editors’ enforcement of homogeneity reflects the extent to which the literary marketplace works to limit artistic variety. When Lewis asserts in the second issue of *The Enemy* that “we should be able ... to recognize the process of standardization that has occurred in the world of ideas” (*Enemy* 2: xxxvi), he suggests that groups surreptitiously enforce generic or saleable forms of artwork and thereby standardize literary work. The tendency for authors to associate themselves with others whose thoughts are similar, the formal repetition of past innovative approaches to literature, authorial complacency, and the cultural unwillingness to implement (rather than merely suggest) radical changes for the future were all symptoms of social influence and commercialism that would result in stagnation. For this reason, Lewis argues that cultural arbiters, particularly the producers and distributors of literary reviews, need to reassess artistic approaches that value “‘radical’ or revolutionary” work (2: xxvii), even if they do not fit within an editorial vision.

Lewis also argues that *transition* is a key magazine through which to address the issue of publishing access for new and experimental authors, for it represents one of the few places that “an adventurous, enterprising artist” can go to publish their work (2: xxvi). But, Lewis argues, the little magazine and its editors have unduly limited the scope of what can be presented as “adventurous” or even “revolutionary” due to its editors’ declared politics. He writes that author-contributors are “forced, by circumstances, into that one orthodox, ‘radical,’ ditch” (xxvi). The “radicalism” that Lewis sees in *transition* is not the kind of radical reenvisioning of values that he believes characterizes revolutionary art. He argues that *transition* is “a political paper

essentially” because it is produced by a “*communally-run* organization” (xxvii). The “political” aspect of the paper, Lewis writes, is “not the dogma, but the *aroma*, the *tempo*” of the review (xxvi). That tenet, smell and sound is similar to Soviet leaders who “employ ‘advanced’ artists to advertise their regime, and make it look very ‘new’” (xxvi). Here, Lewis draws a connection between *transition*’s editorial vision and a history of politico-art-men co-opting the abstract ideals of an artist collective to serve the state.

In describing *transition*’s version of radicalism as “political,” Lewis seeks not to address a particular form of political organization, but instead a collapsing of the word “politics” into a reverential or spiritual attitude. He writes:

When I say that this is “an intensely political age” I mean quite simply that politics, in their fascist or socialist form, take on a religious tone, and tend to establish in our life the sort of spiritual ascendancy formerly exercised by the Roman Church: and the religious emotion that has evaporated from the dogmatic worship of the Christian cult has reincarnated itself in that way. I am not hostile to that faith, I need hardly say, but it must be recognized as a dogmatism. Further, I believe that the sceptical spirit of Western democracy is capitulating to those more emotional forms; and, as it is unlikely that the Church will revive, that it will ultimately, in consequence, accept them. So by “politics” I mean something very much wider than what was formerly meant by that. (138)

transition’s “politics” are therefore not necessarily direct associations with political organizations, but Lewis argues that they have popular appeal because they mobilize affect. In the same way that the “authentic” revolutionary simpleton will excitedly open doors, and encourage others to do so, heedless of consequence. Lewis fears that the “emotional forms” of

this kind of ascendant politics will also encourage ineffective public support. Furthermore, they “exact a *kind* of extremism, a *convulsive* tendency, that is the enemy of art, and that is the outcome of a dogmatic sensationalism, and not of the vital qualities that make the artist” (xxvii). In other words, Lewis believes that *transition* intends to employ artists to work in ways that conform to the editors’ pseudo-religious appeal, which is in this case a reverential attitude toward “beauty.” This kind of ideological extremism, Lewis argues, will not only damage the literary works contained in the review by association, but will also demonstrate the editors’ inability to have learned from recent history: he claims that *transition* has not “had the lessons of War and Revolution burnt into it” (xxviii)—lessons that, to his mind, should make the editors more wary of employing the propagandist’s methods.

As I suggested earlier, Lewis criticizes the hybrid artist’s work because it promotes a sense of homogeneity in the audience and thereby elides the differences that make revolutionary art possible. In the *transition* editors’ celebration of a homogenized Western community, Lewis finds some of the same dangers. To Lewis’s mind, *transition*’s strategy excludes, rather than seeks out, difference. In this sense, *transition* is Lewis’s representative example of a publication that cloaks itself in inclusivity while it manufactures an incoherent sense of exclusivity. As a result, the editors praise the authors included in their publication, assuring them of the uniqueness of their self-expression, even though their editorial vision homogenizes their efforts. Casting this as an intentional choice, Lewis claims that the editors “exult in the romantic chaos around them and seek to intensify it” (3: 47). In sum, for Lewis, *transition* demonstrates the “transference” of the desire for difference into a commercially viable illusion of radicalism (2: xxix). Moreover, *transition* is guilty of assuring both contributors and readers that self-

expression for the sake of profit (advertised as “revolutionary” literature) is an acceptable replacement for the avant-garde (xxix).

Ultimately, *transition*’s “politics” lead Lewis to expose the magazine as a vehicle of a kind of literary modernism that traffics in an empty notion of revolution, even as its editors disavow any purpose beyond “purely and simply amusing [them]selves.” For Lewis, the editors present themselves as arbiters of literary quality, but claim to be unaware of how their editorials convey a message that is neither anodyne nor objective. “The Diabolical Principle,” the central essay of Lewis’s third issue of *The Enemy*, responds to Paul and Jolas’s “First Aid to the Enemy” ostensibly because it is “one of their best manifestoes (a most awfully interesting one, beautifully written)” (13). Despite his passing approval of their manifesto, he argues that the editors’ position on radical or revolutionary writing is “false,” in the same way that he argues one can “falsify” artistic production by advertising it as revolutionary or outrageous before it has had the opportunity to have an impact on a reading public. Lewis claims that writers who wish to submit work to *transition* must declare their political allegiances;³⁰ in so doing, Lewis argues that the *transition* editors’ position as amusement-inspired arbiters of art and literature is a sham, even though they declare themselves independent and interested only in promising new authors’ experimental literature. Lewis concludes by writing,

The main trouble with all persons like these nothing-if-not “independent” editors, however, is surely that of the nature of their partnership. *At all costs* you must be made to believe that (1) they none of them have any connection with any of the

³⁰ Lewis claims that “a solemn question from Jolas, sent out from Transition to english and american writers (one of them showed me a copy) [was] ‘Are you favourable to Communism?’ (or something to that effect)” (*Enemy* 3: 13). Evidence supporting Lewis’s accusation is admittedly scant, and the document to which Lewis refers is not included in any copy of *transition*, nor in its paratextual apparatus.

others; and that (2) they are all semi-miraculously “detached” from everything but the purest interests of the mind.

The specific cant of “detachment” (the attitude stolen by art, journalism, advertisement, etc., from Science) the twin of “anonymity,” is the arch-fraud; it is one of the routine tasks of the *Enemy* to explain it. (16)

We arrive, here, at an important point for Lewis: the concept of “detachment” becomes one of the prime reasons for which he finds the *transition* editors’ stated vision unsatisfying. We will need, momentarily, to return to Lewis’s attempt to rescue this concept, but Lewis’s more immediate concern is that the editors’ vague reference to “purely and simply amus[ing] ourselves” is the result of an approach to literature that appeals to Victorian ideals of aesthetic value, and is therefore far from revolutionary. For Lewis, “weeding out the rank and sterile growth” in literature is not an amusement (Jolas et al., “First Aid” 175), but rather a necessity. He clarifies further in a subsection entitled “The New Philistinism”:

They are, for me, false revolutionaries, and they wish for a *transition* into a New Philistinism (smeared over with a debased intellectualist varnish) and ... not a *transition* of a more truly revolutionary order, into an order of things radically different from the “capitalist state.” (*Enemy* 3: 25, original emphasis)

The New Philistinism, a term Lewis adapts from Jolas’s commentary on the “bourgeois philistine,”³¹ promotes a commercialized version of change without the potential to reorganize the “order of things.” In this context, the charges Lewis levels against *transition* represent what he sees as a pervasive problem in modernist literary criticism.

³¹ See Jolas’s “Revolt Against the Philistine,” pp. 176-79.

Being “Detached with Yourself”: the Enemy as Subject

Thus far we have followed Lewis’s argument through four main phases. We began with his critique of the commodification of ideas, before turning to the question of how that commodified process of popularization functions in service of the cultural status quo. We then turned to the problem of the socio-cultural pressure faced by artists to seek inclusion within that status quo (often by way of group affiliation), and finally considered how the group works within the culture industry to limit revolutionary artwork’s potential to disrupt the socio-cultural situation from which it emerges. What remains consistent throughout *The Enemy* is that Lewis’s work is intensely devoted to pointing out the ramifications that each of these processes have on our understanding of subjectivity. With his line of thinking and its connections in mind, we can now finally ask why his persona as The Enemy circles back on his already ambitious effort to provide an answer to the question: how can one participate in the marketplace of ideas without potentially replicating the very problems he identifies?

Our starting point in seeking his answer to this question can be found in how Lewis articulates his understanding of “personality” in his 1932 essay, “‘Detachment’ and the Fictionist” (hereafter, “Fictionist”). “Detachment” designates, for Lewis, a crucial subjective position, for it is through his particular understanding of “detachment” that we might understand the Enemy as a “critical project” that aims to reimagine agency (*Enemy 2*: xi). Lewis’s redefinition of “detachment,” most famously deployed by T.S. Eliot, seeks to convey how a critic can participate in the commodity economy of letters, yet still avoid the difficulty that might be presented if his work is popularly understood to be an expression of an enduring or authentic point of view. “Fictionist” was written as a meta-commentary on the state of critical writing during the period; in this context, I will discuss how T.S. Eliot deploys the term so that we can

then see how Lewis assesses its value for literary criticism, and for the understanding of the Lewisian subject. Finally, I will argue that his assessment of “detachment” clarifies the frame of his *Enemy* project by articulating an eventual logic: *The Enemy* is Lewis’s attempt to declare the possibility of a subjective position that can effectively participate in a commodity economy without “falsifying” the artistic quality of its work.

The notion of “detachment” that Lewis wishes to define entails multiple qualities articulated over the course of “Fictionist.” Most fundamentally, the term denotes an objective position, figured as a kind of independence and distance. Lewis’s version of detachment posits “an absence of system or independence of any system” (444), and he associates it with the objectivity and rigour required of scientific method. The effect of this approach has implications for the individual: “the handling of the material of art or of science ... does ‘detach’ a man from his personality” (570). In other words, Lewis claims that a performance of objectivity produces a rift between the individual and his personality, which leaves us with “personality” as a kind of social construct. Rather than argue that the critic presents a public face of an essential self, Lewis claims that a seemingly authentic personal reflection is in actuality a persona that is presented to the public—a persona that is a product of detachment rather than a reflection of an authentic self. Thus, Lewis concludes that in order to perform the detached critic, one must employ one’s personality in a “deliberate fashion” and render public a set of ideals in the process (572). “Detachment” in Lewis’s sense is therefore not a gesture of objective removal from the subjectivity of experience, but an *effect* of the distance that a writer could produce between himself and his public persona.

In arguing for this somewhat idiosyncratic version of detachment, Lewis engages in a debate with one of his major modernist contemporaries, T.S. Eliot. Although it is likely that

Lewis sought to take Eliot's ostensibly friendly advice to distinguish himself from other writers,³² or to distinguish himself from other critics when he conceived and published *The Enemy*, it is notable that Lewis anticipated, or was aware of, Eliot's argument that appears in the 1932 Charles Eliot Norton lectures. Eliot, who found Lewis "a great comfort intellectually" (qtd. in *Letters* 404), and discussed much with him in conversation, argues in his lectures that a "detached" perspective was necessary to combat the chaos of a literary critical field that was fraught with dilettantism.

Eliot's lectures represented a firm consensus on the methods and applications of criticism, which sought to maintain the autonomy and integrity of criticism as a distinct genre allied with philosophy (Eliot, *Use of Poetry* 21). The central feature of his lectures is an examination of how one could retain objectivity in writing; in the pursuit of this goal, Eliot explicitly avoids introducing new or experimental ways of reading literature, which are potentially debatable subjects: in the introduction to *The Use of Poetry*, he suggests discomfort with "dissenting" from any contemporary critical positions (25), and asserts, "I have not made this brief review of the progress of criticism in order to lead up to associating myself with any particular tendency of modern criticism" (27). In this essay, Eliot seeks neither to break from traditions of criticism, nor to suggest that he advocates for any particular methodology. The argument extends to his advice to authors as well as critics. In a letter to Mary Hutchinson, Eliot suggests that "cold detachment" from one's own written work is necessary for the production of intelligent literature—a detachment that he feels Hutchinson was unable to achieve:

³² In 1921, Eliot wrote to Lewis suggesting that he "ought to emphasize [his] isolation" from "inferior artists" (*Letters* 445). While this suggestion may seem friendly enough, the sentiment behind it may have other interests at heart; writing a year prior to Sydney Shiff, Eliot reveals his opinion that Lewis "ought to devote himself to painting" rather than to writing (375).

The only fault I find [is] that you had got thoroughly *inside* the feelings, but hadn't quite got *out* again. I like to feel that a writer is perfectly cool and detached, regarding other peoples' feelings or his own, like a God who has got beyond them; or a person who has dived very deep and comes up holding firmly some hitherto unseen submarine creature. But this sort of cold detachment is so *very rare*—and *stupid* detachment is so much the rule, that it may be only a particular taste. (*Letters* 197)

Eliot defines as “stupid” those forms of detachment that value a particular taste based on personal or affective response—although it performs a kind of deep dive under the surface, it fails to extract a living relic from the work that could be observed by the coldly objective critic.

Eliot's observations about “cold detachment” identify the tendency in modernist criticism to accept and participate in the connection between objectivity and competency. As many modernist critics have noted, in the 1920s Eliot struggled to reconcile the goals of literary criticism in “the heyday of impressionistic criticism ... and of ideological criticism” (Liebman 198), and wrote several lectures and articles in the attempt to bring about a resolution.³³ The problem Eliot identifies, and attempts to mediate, is that criticism could be generally grouped into two opposing camps: criticism that was personal, enthusiastic, and “purely literary” (Marshall 620); and criticism that was less interested in the study of literature than with the deployment of “moral, social, and political readings (which he then considered ‘extra-literary’)

³³ Although Eliot's writing during this period includes a number of contradictions, to the extent that some claim Eliot will altogether abandon this project of reconciliation in favour of articulating the poet and critic's “belonging to a tradition of literary artists and critics” (Marshall 609), his argument in *The Use of Poetry* outlines a number of decisions that exemplify the efforts that were made in the late 1920s to maintain literary criticism's status and improve contemporary understanding of the evaluation of literature.

(Marshall 609). Indeed, following the division between belletristic literary reviews and careful analyses of artworks, Eliot's *The Use of Poetry* sets the terms "taste" and "detachment" in opposition as representatives of the opposing camps (153). To the Eliot of *The Use of Poetry*, it is possible and necessary to set aside one's personal response to an artwork, or one's "taste," to remain coolly "detached" in order to appreciate an artwork's merit. In this sense, the critic's competence is demonstrated by his ability to set aside his biases. For Eliot, detachment also includes the refusal to discuss what was "extra-literary" in critical work because doing so would distract attention from the genius of truly great writers (Gorak 1076). In this way, Eliot frames the reader as free to engage in the "purely literary" activity of appreciating a literary work based on taste and personal preference, but the writer is most useful when he "destroys the surface of things—and thereby both liberates deeper dimensions of the self and opens up deeper levels of experience" for the public (Liebman 208).

Lewis's "critical system" in *The Enemy* can therefore be read as a development of Eliot's model (*Enemy* 2: xi). It is impossible to overemphasize Eliot's influence on the critical scene in general, as Rod Rosenquist has argued,³⁴ but Eliot's influence on Lewis in particular is apparent: Lewis reclaims the terms "detachment" and "(im)personality" as a starting point for his essay.³⁵ Whereas Eliot values the "detachment" of objectivity or nonparticipation, and wants to avoid that which is "extra-literary," Lewis seems convinced that this form of detachment is impossible, for

³⁴ In *Modernism, Markets, and the Institution of the New*, Rosenquist argues that many authors and artists who attempted to enter the literary critical scene were "struggling with Eliot's reputation" in their attempts to realize any degree of engagement with their work (81).

³⁵ Lewis repeatedly adopts and then redefines terms used by other critics and authors; Andrezej Gasior's brief summary of Lewis's rejection of Eliot's "impersonality" in "Lewis and the Critique of Modernism" is especially relevant in this context ("Critique" 41-3). Heather Fielding also discusses Lewis's idiosyncratic use of terms like "technology" and "the machine" in her analysis of Lewis's "redefinitions" in "How the Taxi-Cab Driver Reads" (130).

as he argues with respect to Joyce, Stein, and the editors of *transition*, the critic is always imbricated in a social situation that determines and limits his capacity to perform Eliot's "deep dive." Lewis therefore asserts that detachment, which he claims has historically meant a methodological commitment to the scientific approach, must be "saved" or reinterpreted for fiction (448), because a writer's impartiality and objectivity are just as difficult to maintain as they are in the disciplines of science. Lewis disagrees with Eliot's version of detachment because it implies that objectivity is a subjective removal by fiat from the social world in which one participates. As Lewis argues, "Even in scientific investigation, the intellect of a Faraday or an Einstein works of necessity in a very biased fashion. [...] What a man leaves and what he takes (of all things that in the natural order offer themselves to his interest) reveals a bias, a part, at least, of which is the bias personal to his race and time" (570).

Lewis sees the desire to sustain an *absolutely* unbiased or objective perspective as impossible, and argues that objectivity must be understood as relative to the writer's and critic's context. Moreover, it is "passion," he writes, that indicates an intellect at work in the literary field. Passion is not only the antithesis of being "impatient of anything that looks at all like an ivory tower" (448), but also a sign of an inventive and inquisitive mind: "for a god would not be particularly interested in 'discovery' at all; there would be nothing to discover; there would be no incentive to all this mechanical application; if you were not mortal, if you were not in the dark, you would not be so spurred" (570). In effect, Lewis argues that objectivity is detrimental both to the work of a literary critic and the understanding of the critical position itself.

We now arrive at another defining quality of Lewis's notion of detachment, which is the recuperation of the elements of bias or passion that he feels are important for critique. Lewis suggests that when both belletristic and "scientific" criticism insists on a separation of the subject

from the artwork, the question becomes on what side of the divide the critic will focus. He wants to do away with that divide and reframe “detachment” as something that comes from the cultural relays in which the self participates. He calls this participation “play”:

If it is, as has been said, the sign that you are by nature a philosopher, if you are inclined to doubt the reality of the world, it is equally the sign that you are an artist if you recognize that the struggles you engage in are a game, in which vous jouez votre personnalité. You play at being yourself—and so you are yourself; it is quite unnecessary to play at being anybody else to be completely the artist. If you cannot be “detached” with yourself, there is nothing you can be detached with!

(572)

Lewis’s point here is that the writer’s “play” will simultaneously define that writer’s personality. Lewis is not using “detachment” in a traditional sense, which is to eliminate subjective biases. Instead, to remain detached is to recognize that selfhood comes into existence through the production of the artwork. He argues that the “extra-literary” world Eliot would bracket is actually the space in which to be “completely the artist”: the artist plays, textually, with social and cultural events in a public “game” (570), and through that performance, makes an objective form of his thoughts, reactions, and behaviors that then creates the self: “you play at being yourself—and so you are yourself.” The artist is uniquely associated with play; he argues in *The Enemy* that “although there are great forces at work in the world to-day, their power is very fluid and by no means secure; and they have no time for play” (*Enemy* 1: 139). An artist, for Lewis, is someone who is able to be “detached” with that performance of himself, and is able to recognize that feelings of alienation (to “doubt the reality of the world”) can be deployed to increase self-awareness and further inspire the creativity of the artist (by “playing”). Therefore, Lewis argues

that criticism performs a similar operation: it equally produces personae that are the object of play. The self does not pre-exist that activity, but comes into existence through it. According to Lewis's logic, the critic celebrates the disorienting variety of his positions, as they are evidence of a play with his personality, and of his ability to remain "detached from himself."

The process of "playing at being yourself" that Lewis proposes is therefore an alternative to a black and white fallacy of choice—the choice, as Eliot has organized it, between cold detachment on the one hand and retreat into subjective experience on the other. We have already seen how the second of these two poles orients much of Lewis's critical apparatus. As I have argued, the aspects of Joyce's work that are most objectionable to Lewis are those in which he diagnoses an attempt to "tell from the inside" for the sake of engaging the reader in a process of exploring intensely subjective perception. However, this overweening subjectivism does not lead to its polar opposite. As Lewis clarifies in "Fictionist," the imperative is neither to retreat from subjectivity itself nor reject it, but to strike a balance between self-expression and rational activity while remaining vigilant about the ways in which ideology operates to determine what one *could* say and how. Claiming that telling from the inside can quickly become a self-obsession that effectively closes one off from the social world, he writes, "The less you are able to realise other people, the more your particular personality will obsess you, and the more dependent on its reality you will be. The more you will insist on it with a certain frenzy. [...] You will have achieved a fanatical hegemony with your unique self-feeling" (*Enemy* 1: 34). Furthermore, the valorization of subjective experience dangerously implies "an instinctive solipsism" (34). The exploration of incommunicable subjective experience embraces the kind of Romanticism that separates the writer, and the critic, from the social world, as though it were in some sense inherent to the work of an artist. In this sense, to Romanticize detachment is not only

to turn toward the past (as it features in his critique of Joyce), but also to accept “the personal rhythm, the obvious bias, [which is] of a *particular* rather than a universal nature” (84; emphasis mine). The gesture of turning inward serves merely to establish the particularity of a single individual, rather than to promote the revolutionary activity in which it purports to participate: in “Fictionist,” Lewis claims, “if you give yourself up entirely to subjective judgment and subjective methods, [your] one-sided vision will lose all its edge” (570). Lewis has already identified a situation in which subjectivity comes to be the consumption of an ideological structure, but the possibility that he recuperates here is that in critical activity, we produce a subjective position that is not predetermined by the ideological constraints of the state of the situation. Additionally, Lewis’s negative critique of modernist inwardness implies that he is more interested in methods, rhythms or biases that have broader significance.

Lewis thus establishes an evental logic when he claims that despite the passion that he wants to reclaim through “play,” the declaration of the detached critic would have significance for others, insofar as it has an “edge,” and, potentially, popular accessibility. As his critique of *transition* shows, Lewis is uninterested in art for its own, or for amusement’s, sake, but wants to retain a sense of particularity for one’s participation in a public debate. In this way, he deploys a similar operation to that which Badiou celebrates in *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism*. Because, Badiou writes, “no truth is ever solitary, or particular” (90), and is always universally true, the problem becomes how one conveys that truth. To convey truth to others in a subjective declaration, and to retain its universal property in the process, is a difficult task, for many of the reasons that we have already seen Lewis explore: we have the problems of ideological and group influence, of the retreat into subjective particularity, and of groups that operate in service of the state of the situation to bar any inconvenient truths from their declaration. In brief, Badiou argues

that “Paul’s unprecedented gesture consists in subtracting truth from the communitarian grasp, be it that of a people, a city, an empire, a territory, or a social class” (5). He argues that while the evental site is always local, the declaration itself is at its most effective when an individual secures the power of universal address. In this sense, Badiou sees an operator like Paul as one who participates in “restoring the universal to its pure secularity, here and now” (5); in other words, universal address is dependent on the operations of the subject who chooses to identify a truth as sensible, and in declaring the truth, the subject tethers it to a present and to the subject’s particularity. Consequently, when Lewis outlines a subjective position that both values “passion” and insists that this form of non-objective criticism can still declare a truth, he tethers that truth and its potential for universal address to his particular moment and to his unique declaration.

Furthermore, Lewis’s notion of play anticipates much of the same ground that Badiou describes when he claims that “the evental declaration founds the subject” (*Saint* 91). For Lewis, instead of the subject’s being constituted by the conditions under which he writes, the subject is here constituted precisely by the way in which he pursues his “detached” critique. For Lewis, the play at being yourself offers the opportunity to become yourself. In his terms, the declaration is the product of a personality, deliberately deployed in order to articulate a critique; once declared, that personality defines the subject. Instead of conceiving of the subject as an essential entity that is limited in some way by its conditions, Lewis wants to imagine the subject as something that is produced by its affectedness. Lewis’s aim is not to disavow, but amplify that affectedness.

If his logic in “Fictionist” is to be followed to its formal end, then Lewis’s presentation of *The Enemy* is his response to the problems he assesses in modernist literary production. Playing with personality effectively introduces a strategy that retains individual agency: it is a doubling down on the representations that a writer produces, for it simultaneously expresses a “particular”

or subjective personality and renders visible the ways in which that personality is *subject to* his or her social context and ideological influences. To be able to be detached from one's personality, for Lewis, is a preferable version of objectivity that is available to both critic and writer, particularly when, as he claims in *The Enemy*, it has become more and more difficult to "grasp how [a dominant] theory has entered the mind of the author or artist" and formed a "hegemony" (1: 108). Lewis's Enemy enables him to engage with the problems he identifies in context: as a seeming editor and cultural arbiter, the Enemy is the voice for a little magazine or literary review that identifies trends, celebrates artistry and revolutionary art, discusses and reveals the emergent problems in the publishing world, and critiques passé and regressive artistic forms. In so doing, however, the Enemy is itself an object circulating in the commodity economy that is the culture industry, and is just as open to criticism by virtue of his appearance on the public scene. The important difference for Lewis is that the Enemy is resolutely individual.

CHAPTER 4: *Tarr's* Enemy: How the Group Limits Agency

The Enemy and *Tarr* share many of the same concerns. Both explore the question of how, under capital, groups function to limit individual agency, and more specifically the impact of those limits upon the production of art. We have seen that, in *The Enemy*, Lewis demonstrates how the deployment of a persona could rescue artistic agency from groups' ideological influence: by refusing inclusion in the state of the situation, and by "play[ing] at being yourself" or inhabiting a persona that is neither unlikely nor disavowed ("Fictionist" 574), artists might retain some of the agency he believes is afforded to them. Moreover, Lewis's method does not require acceptance of the persona as a manifestation of an authentic core self. If, as Fredric Jameson notes, Lewis tends to remain "on the surface of things" (*Fables* 135), I argue that he does so not to celebrate an underlying authentic core of the self, but instead to redefine individuality to allow an artist to "play" with a number of "surfaces" that acknowledge social and cultural influences. In so doing, Lewis proposes a conception of the self that looks outward rather than inward, and toward the influences of relationships rather than individuals' inner drives. While Lewis consistently draws our attention to surfaces, appearances, and representations, he does so to demonstrate that social space and its ideological and social pressures are as responsible for the manifestation of the self as is individual will and choice. Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that the self does not merely look outward, but that it is fundamentally constituted by the relationships in which it participates. As *The Enemy* demonstrates, in Lewis's view selfhood is manifested in the public presentation of selves; the moments and texts for which authors might construct a public self, or a persona, are evidence of their agency.

Lewis's concerns about selfhood and its interrelationship with agency in *The Enemy*, prompted by his desire to diagnose cultural trends and establish himself as a literary critic as well as an artist, are anticipated by his earliest and most celebrated novel, *Tarr*. However, whereas both *The Enemy* and "'Detachment' and the Fictionist" offer up the notion of "play[ing] at being yourself" to explore how the artistic self emerges and is constituted through the production of personae (572), the focus in *Tarr* will be different, and will instead explore the constraints that limit that play. *Tarr* exemplifies Lewis's understanding of the limitations of agency, and of how strategies and decisions can be shaped and determined by one's social and economic context. Thus, while the novel's main character, Frederick Tarr, might gesture toward the "play" that Lewis will later expand, the main focus of *Tarr* is on how a dominant social group functions in myriad ways to determine precisely what forms of play, and what effects, are conceivable—and how the group plays a key role in encouraging conformist behavior.

In this chapter, I focus on the group because scholarly analyses of *Tarr* often focus on characters as pairs or "doubles" who function as contrasting sets (for example, in the "dualism" of Tarr/Kreisler or Bertha/Anastasya).³⁶ These analyses provide evidence of characters behaving as representatives of either generic convention or as typified points of view. This critical orientation thereby empties characters of their realism, in what Paul Edwards will call "a

³⁶ Paul Edwards summarizes this scholarly trend by referring to several examples in *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer*, pp. 47-48. Indeed, still more scholarship reflects different interpretations of the doubles or pairs: Toby Foshay argues that *Tarr*'s "dual characterization is a concretization of a primary and abstract dualism" in *Wyndham Lewis and the Avant-Garde* (48), but focuses primarily on how Tarr and Anastasya represent opposite poles of individualism. Alan Munton suggests that *Tarr*'s characters can be allusively paired with characters from Theodor Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, at least textually, and cites numerous passages from *Tarr* that parallel *The Double* directly ("Relation between the Theory and the Fiction"). Paul O'Keeffe also suggests, in the biographical *Some Sort of Genius: a Life of Wyndham Lewis*, that Lewis's dualism in *Tarr* is a continuation of ideas that were nascent in *BLAST!* (pp. 49-77).

deformation of reality” (*Wyndham* 48). I focus instead on how the novel explores its characters’ adoption of stereotypical behaviors as a kind of agency, but at a satirical remove. Insofar as social groups limit the range of acceptable actions in the characters’ social milieu, the novel’s approach to the question of agency consistently emphasizes the limits of autonomy. While the artist class of characters in *Tarr* may conceive of themselves as free agents, operating “outside” of the influence of the group that binds together their social and financial lives, their efforts to wilfully deny group influence and to thus assert their autonomy are continuously thwarted. In this sense, this novel explores forms of *ineffective* agency. *Tarr* repeatedly stages the encounters between characters who intend to “revolt” against the social group that embodies and enforces cultural norms; however, instead of producing social change, even in the relatively small environment in which these ostensibly “revolutionary” characters live, the social system in which they find themselves can include only those who ultimately conform to the status quo.

Tarr also remains a unique and difficult text in the modernist canon because it suggests that representations of subjective experience are massively determined by social influence, a position which offers little to scholars who mine the text for a decontextualized definition of individuality or interiority. The novel’s strategy in character development stands in tension with the firmly established modernist propensity to experiment with representations of subjective interiority. *Tarr* resists providing access to interiority through its seemingly unsympathetic narrator—characters’ motivations and thoughts are often rash and reactionary, and their behaviors are consequently presented as thoughtless or risible. In one example of a reading that contends with *Tarr*’s slipperiness with respect to individuality, Stephen Sicari argues that the ideological elements of the novel and its “puppet”-like characters reveal the tendency in Lewis’s early novels to represent characters as “limited, paralyzed playthings” (Sicari 93). Others find

that Lewis's handling of interiority in *Tarr* "helps to articulate the historical continuities between modernism and postmodernism, particularly in respect to a discussion of identity formation" (Kley 535), where identities are understood as a kind of cultural and historical pastiche of memories and images. For still others, Lewis's intentional evasion of what is generally understood as "interiority" is a sign of his commitment to the "philosophy of the eye" that he expounds in *Time and Western Man*; that is, his philosophy of the inherent value of the objectively observable in contrast to the internal or private (Edwards, *Wyndham* 440). The common feature of these representative analyses, succinctly summarized by Fredric Jameson as Lewis's desire to remain "on the surface of things," is that they shift focus to the result of a character's actions, rather than the motivations or strategies that a character develops in response to their immediate environment.

As a result of this shift of focus—to interiority as an *effect* rather than a *cause* that can be counted as the ground of agency—*Tarr* formally depicts effective agency as hamstrung by its foundations in the self. The assumption that the self, and the self alone, qualifies and determines personal choice is repeatedly countered in this text. Lewis constructs this possible reading in part by making certain generic choices in his representation of these characters. *Tarr* draws from popular and generic stories about the "*Vie de bohème*,"³⁷ in which characters' personalities and mannerisms are associated with stereotypes of nation-states. Jameson suggests that *Tarr* appears to be a "national allegory" because it presents characters as having "abstract national characteristics" (*Fables* 94; 90), and he argues that Lewis thereby reflects a world in which one's subjectivity is understood as dependent on (and subject to) one's nation-state of origin.

³⁷ As Lise Tickner notes, there were numerous and popular mid-nineteenth century stories of the lives of "the Parisian underclass" that were all inspired by "the founding text of literary bohemia," Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie de bohème*" (49).

According to Jameson, however, the use of “national allegory” as an organizing feature of novels was drawing its last breath at the time this novel was composed. In *Cold Modernisms*, Jessica Burstein productively argues that Lewis frequently employs various strategies (such as stereotype, which she more generally calls an example of the use of “prosthesis”) to create characters that lack depth so as to render “access to interiority ... impossible” (77). But Lewis’s national types in *Tarr* are more than surface-level stereotypes: they explore how ready-made roles are often uncritically adopted and performed as though they are reflections of personal identity. Thus, *Tarr* does not fully develop its characters so as to identify a positive definition of subjectivity with psychological depth; rather, the novel seeks to address how characters who inhabit mechanistic roles—or prescribed behaviors—tend to be those who participate in a social group that has come to value “surface” over autonomous identities. If *Tarr*’s central characters, Tarr, Bertha, and Kreisler, are presented as though they are *types*, or easily accessible simulacra of persons, it is precisely because the novel wants to figure their conflicts, thoughts, and relationships as a narrative to which they have been yoked.

The “surface” that Lewis depicts in *Tarr* repeatedly stages the conflict that arises precisely because of readers’ limited access to characters’ interiority, even while the novel satirizes those characters for their seeming lack of self-awareness. The narrator’s presentation of the characters encourages readers to understand them through their concern with what other characters think of them. This suggests that the novel also critiques the obstacles that social groups present to individual agency. For this reason, I argue that these “puppet-like” characters are in the throes of precisely what Lewis understands to *be* identity formation, or the manifestation of subjectivity. In this regard, the moments that concern the group and its influence on the novel’s central characters are crucial to explore. *Tarr* stages the problem of how social

actors and groups can undermine the subject's already limited capacity to recognize ideological constructs, and condition individuals to act in ways that further entrench the existing social order. The novel thereby suggests that identity formation and agency are inseparable from those ideological constructs.

To anticipate the structure of the argument, I will first turn to how *Tarr* explores the question of whether individuals can truly understand the limitations to their agency, as they are determined by systemic machinations seemingly beyond their control. This reading is facilitated through the main character's conception of himself as made up of "innumerable painted [mummy-]cases" (46), which establishes a model of selfhood that values the superficial and representational. These are precisely the categories of value that are both reflected in the environment in which the main characters reside and promoted by the social group of which he is a part. To fully explore this value system, I will then discuss Lewis's representation of "The Liepmann" group, a coterie of cosmopolitan "bourgeois-bohemians" (*Tarr* 110). This group traffics in its collection of eccentric artistic friendships, but compels the tacit acceptance of their code of social behavior, and thereby establishes the novel's hegemonic vision of social acceptability. Their value system's implications are developed most forcefully through Bertha, who plays with appearances but seems to believe that she is the agent who exists beneath, and manipulates, the appearances. The problem, as we will see, is that Bertha cannot control the appearances, for they form the self. By way of counter-example, I will then examine how Lewis figures the rejection of the Liepmann's value system, primarily through his characterization of Kreisler, who embodies the rejection of the world of appearances on the grounds that it does not align with the essential or "authentic" self. Even though Kreisler is presented to the reader as the only character who rejects the influence of the social group, his actions ultimately demonstrate

that opposition to social forces does not constitute independence from them. In this sense, *Tarr* investigates the “domination achieved by an idea” that has gained ascendancy in the novel’s world (*Enemy* 1: 106). This chapter therefore focusses primarily on characters who labour in various ways under the misapprehension that representation is separate from, and controlled by, a kind of self that is internal or core. While Lewis arrives at a fuller imagining of an anti-essentialist self in later works such as *The Enemy*, because it is only a gesture in *Tarr*, I will explore how representation is the creation of selfhood—a reality that the characters all fail to apprehend in various ways.

This chapter will conclude by turning to how and why *Tarr* leaves us with the suggestion that reproducible ways of understanding and employing agency are ultimately ineffective. As Jessica Burstein points out, this novel presents us with a “story of four characters in lieu of a protagonist, or four things that look like characters and nothing that looks like a protagonist” (36). The lack of a clear moral centre that would otherwise be provided by a protagonist is precisely what makes *Tarr* a version of the “non-moral” satire that Lewis values (*Men Without Art* 103). The characters’ perceived lack of alternative ways of responding to the insufficiency of the state of the situation leads either to their passive acceptance of group influence, or to reactionary self-destruction. It is as though Lewis’s goal is to present *Tarr*’s characters so that they might illustrate how ideologies form the basis of most actions. While his illustration might encourage us to see these characters as needing to “share the common burden of ignominy” that is theirs (*Tarr* 19), their satirical presentation should also lead readers to consider how agency could be made more effective in these conditions, and to speculate on what—if any—other options might be made available.

A Cartonnage of Selves: Surface and Representation in the Vitelotte Quarter

Tarr explores how self-conception and self-description often exist in conflict with the social reality that individual characters inhabit. For Scott Klein and Paul Edwards, the discrepancy can be explained as a means of valuing intellect over interiority. Where Klein argues that Tarr “suppress[es] the world of feeling beneath an all-powerful intellect” (Klein xxviii), Edwards claims that the characters in the novel “are all incessant chatterers, perpetually expounding their own rationalisations with a force that protests too much. And we find that they are all actually involved in stories that reveal their ideas to be inadequate in the face of what life turns out to be” (Edwards, *Wyndham* 181-82). In an extension of this argument, Antje Kley argues that the novel sets social custom and personal motivation at odds in order to exhibit its characters’ lack of agency, the result of which is that readers are constantly confronted with characters’ struggles for control over their environment. Kley stresses that “while the protagonist Tarr strives for control and mastery of the self’s multiplicity, if not for a unified and detached artistic identity, the text *Tarr* as a whole reveals the protagonist’s project as intangible and brand-marks the rational dream of control as misguided” (534). The struggle for rational, or intellectual, control over the irrational—which is figured in the novel as physical and sexual desire, bodily needs such as food and shelter, and individual characters’ thoughts that often betray their actual behaviors—is indeed notable throughout *Tarr*. But the opposition between intellect and body tends to be staged between the extremes of a conscious, authentic, stable self and an irrational body or social system that compels specific behaviors. My interest here is in how Lewis’s conception of individual agency, understood as the putting into play of personae, might be best grasped in terms of interactions with other agents in a field of affective relations which is overshadowed by the workings of a particular version of class ideology.

Tarr suggests that agency must be considered through an acknowledgement of the individual's relation to its social environment, and a further consideration of the ways in which performance, play, and compromise form the basis of social interaction. This is partially due to the novel's consistent demonstration of the ways in which individual agency is often sidelined as less important than social performance, and designed for a particular audience to the exclusion of others. In *Tarr*, individuality or selfhood is not an intrinsic quality; instead, the self is the product of a social act, or an act of representation. As a result, agency is defined in the novel by how its characters perform and are recognized in public spaces. The narrative frequently figures characters as wearing or making use of "masks," or being "puppets" in the drama of their lives, and thus figuratively sets up individuality in terms of the use and manipulation of artifacts.

While these figurative terms place emphasis on the characters' concern with artifice in their social environments, the artifice extends to their conceptions of individuality and selfhood. For example, for Frederick Tarr, even subjective interiority is radically artifactual. When he embraces Bertha, he thinks:

The husk [of Bertha] he held now was a painted mummy-case, say. He was a mummy-case, too. Only he contained nothing but innumerable other painted cases inside, smaller and smaller ones. The smallest was not a substantial astral baby, however, or live core, but a painting like the rest. —His kernel was a painting, in fact: that was as it should be! He was pleased that it was nothing more violent than that. (*Tarr* 46-47)

Tarr understands the self as cartonnage; the "husk" of the body contains images or representations, like a Matryoshka doll, and to delve deeply into the self would only uncover more artifacts rather than a more authentic core. For Tarr, the smallest container is still a

“painting like the rest.” In this sense, Tarr emphasizes that the self is, at bottom, representational rather than more or less authentic than the outside “husk” that protects its layers. Thus, the question is not one of authenticity, nor of further inner exploration, but of understanding that representation (or, more appropriately perhaps, public presentation) is the foundation of the self.

At this stage, Tarr’s understanding of the “cartonnage of selves” might appear to align with the eventual logic according to which Lewis operates in *The Enemy*. Indeed, the conception of the subject in both texts share similar qualities. While Tarr is undeniably satirized, his conception of the self here is constituted precisely by its public presentation, which bears a family resemblance to Badiou’s conception of subjectivation: the subject manifests concurrently with the subject’s declaration of the event, a process which includes the production of artworks that bear a “trace.” Like Lewis’s later Enemy persona, the self is only perceptible as a series of representations, and contains no static core of authentic selfhood to which one can appeal in a retreat from social life. Where *Tarr* differs from Badiou’s foundation of the subject, however, is in its insistence that the self is only manifest *through its representation* rather than through its declaration of the event. In this regard, Tarr’s cartonnage of selves takes on an objective and passive form. It is not grounded by a sense that there is a willful agent beneath the cartonnage of selves. Instead, the self seems to exist only in the play between the superficial qualities of its various surfaces and the elements of the environment with which they interact. Moreover, as the reader comes to learn, the artist-figures who populate the novel tend to inhabit roles that are easily recognizable “types”—to extend Tarr’s metaphor, they are more likely to hang someone else’s portrait on themselves than compose a “painting” that is unique to them.

Tarr’s conception of the “cartonnage of selves” thus clarifies that the novel’s resistance to interiority is its way of highlighting how superficiality comes to take the place of individuality.

We are introduced to this focus early on, through Tarr's interactions with Hobson, Butcher, and Lowndes, each of whom Tarr understands based on the ways in which they present themselves. Tarr comments that Hobson appears to be part of the "Cambridge set" (21), a conclusion he supports with reference to a number of superficial observations. Hobson, he tells us, sports long "Walt Whitman" hair (9), possesses a "fine baritone" voice that Tarr attributes to the employment of a "voice-culture practitioner" (20; 15), and attires himself in purposely dishevelled clothes (20). Butcher, meanwhile, is the "sham tough guy" (23), but his mode of interaction is to reflect the personality of those with whom he is in contact: "[Butcher] talked to Tarr, when a little worked up, as Tarr talked to him, but he did not notice that he did" (31). Lowndes, too, inhabits a persona: he presents himself as an artist in demand, in that he is too busy to leave his studio, and when he is "interrupted" there (32), he is found "rapidly sucking a pipe, blinking, flushing, stammering the rakish locutions of an inexpensive almost nameless second-rate Public School" (33). None of these characterizations attempt to define the authentic selves of each minor character; rather, they emphasize how each character in the novel cultivates the presentation of a recognizable type. For these minor characters, the narrative does not provide evidence of their own self-perception, but suggests at the outset that self-perception is second to public performance and appearance.

The "cartonnage of selves" is then reflected in the social context in which Tarr finds himself: a France overrun, culturally and economically, with artist-figures who are intent on cultivating their educated-Whitmanesque or exaggeratedly working-class styles. If the foundation of the self is its presentation as a recognizable type in *Tarr*, then the novel presents us with the extreme effects, on a cultural scale, of this understanding of the self and its valuation of

superficiality. The novel's characters, who are expatriate artist-visitors, are not flatteringly sketched:

[The Vitelotte Quarter's] rent is half-paid by America ... [and] you have the clap-trap Campagnia tribe outside, in the Café twenty sluggish commonsense Germans, a Middle West group or two, drinking and playing billiards. They are the most permanent tableaux of this place, disheartening and admonitory as a Tusseaud's of the Flood. (7)

The novel immediately directs readers to understand this wax museum of flâneurs as part of the reason for the survival of the quarter. In so doing, it introduces its readers to a social situation that is explicitly marked by its economic changes. The artists, dancers, and models who socialize in this space pay its "rent"; they are the reason for the existence of the Vitelotte Quarter's present culture (or they are the reason for the formation and persistence of the culture that now exists). The novel repeatedly reinforces the importance of the economics underpinning the events it records, and implies that its main characters are a part of a progressive invasion of these areas of Paris.

Notably, there seem to be few Parisians present in Lewis's fictionalized Montparnasse—most of the figures peopling the scene are described via their country or region of origin, emphasizing their lack of native connection to the place. For example, Tarr takes up residence in "the Place Clichy, in what had been a convent" (173-74). Their appearance on the scene has not, however, had an ameliorative effect: they reside in a Quarter that is described as plagued by "hideous ennui" and by people who "responded with their personalities on the Café terraces to the emptiness of the Boulevard" (174; 175). The fixity of these wax figures is further reinforced by the environmental "emptiness" that the Café-goers mirror—the people of the Vitelotte and

Clichy quarters are static, bored, and temporary residents, to the extent that they are presented as artifacts emptied of any interiority, such as when Kreisler is “confronted by a fellow statue” (102). As Tarr’s convent-room suggests, these visitors have a significant impact on the Quarter, altering it into a series of spaces in which artists, pseudo-artists and socialites work, live, and socialize. Tarr’s conversion of convent to studio-space is also not accidental: the suggestion is that the space of religious piety has been replaced by a new form of lived ideology—that of the indifferent, cultured bourgeois.

The expatriate characters’ influence is further emphasized by the ways in which Parisian culture has been affected by their presence. When Kreisler is introduced in Part II, the novel first dedicates an extended section to the changes that the Restaurant Vallet has undergone since the arrival of the “bourgeois-bohemians.” The restaurant serves as the setting of distractingly significant encounters between Kreisler and Anastasya, and then between Tarr and Anastasya, but in passing asides, the novel offers a brief history of the space itself:

[It] had been originally a tranquil little creamery ... then one after another its customers had lost their reserve: they had asked, in addition to their daily glass of milk, for cotes de pré salé and similar massive nourishment, which the decent little business at first supplied with timid protest. But perpetual scenes of unbridled voracity, semesters of compliance with the most brutal appetites of man, gradually brought about a change in its character; it became frankly a place where the most full-blooded palate might be satisfied. As trade grew the small business had burrowed backwards into the ramshackle house: bursting through walls and partitions, flinging down doors, it discovered many dingy rooms in the interior that it hurriedly packed with serried cohorts of eaters. It had driven out

terrified families, had hemmed the apoplectic concierge in her “loge,” it had broken out onto the court at the back in shed-like structure: and in the musty bowels of the house it had established a broiling luridly lighted roaring den, inhabited by a fierce band of slatternly savages. (81-82)

The original café setting of the novel, replete with its human wax statues, is revisited here in terms of its place in a timeline, as the result of a progression of events that are represented by the creamery’s metamorphosis into a Restaurant. The demand for more “massive” and luxurious menu items, with their connotations of gustatory excess, is followed by the influx of demographic excess, as ever more numerous outsiders encroach on the small creamery. Although this passage does not explicitly state that the customers who begin to make these demands are visitors, the novel supplies us with enough information to infer that they were—the persistence and the unusual quality of the customers’ requests consistently transgress the culinary and cultural norms of the space they have come to occupy.³⁸ The result is the creamery owners’ slow acquiescence (after “timid protest”) to these demands, even as the business’s expansion threatens their domestic space. Those who inspired this “progress” are described as “brutal” and “unbridled”; they are “slatternly savages.” Meanwhile, the owners and locals are depicted as though they are on the retreat, literally hiding from the growing swarm of cultural invaders.

The sections of the novel in which Lewis calls attention to the setting—to Montparnasse and to its workers, who become the backdrop to the expatriate artists’ drama—highlight the

³⁸ The excess of the interlopers is underscored in Lewis’s edits to the 1928 Chatto and Windus edition of the novel (from which this chapter draws), where he adds the “cotes de pré sale” (or salted lamb)—a textual variant from the 1918 edition which lists “beefsteak and spinach” in its place on the restaurant’s menu. Both of these would be odd features on a creamery’s menu, which would normally offer light refreshments of coffee or iced cream. The characters’ persistence in requesting them at a creamery suggests that their ostentatious pretension runs roughshod over cultural norms.

cultural contrast between the native Parisians and the main characters' self-perception. Because the central characters are unaware of the discord that they sow, the sequence of events that has changed the Vitelotte Quarter and its cafés is not experienced as such. Through the novel's setting, Lewis repeatedly offers a cutting contrast to the surface that the characters value, and invites us to view with suspicion the main characters' awareness of their social milieu.

Tarr's main characters demonstrate that they share the same behaviors—of disaffected flânerie, aggression, and overwhelming appetites—as the customers described in the passage above. Tarr and his early acquaintances in the novel, Hobson and Butcher, spend lengthy periods staring at the street, with the same ennui as those of the crowds who frequent the cafés, while they speak to one another. To give but one example of this comical phenomenon, Tarr and Hobson meet in the introductory scene of the novel and sit across from each other “with a stately discomfort of self-consciousness, staring in front of them” (8). Most of the novel's encounters between characters take place in the cafés in which they spend entire days—the passage of time measured only by the mention of the approaching mealtimes of lunch or dinner. They also exhibit excessiveness in their tastes: Tarr and Hobson drink wine and beer for breakfast (9-10); Tarr covers the bill for “a considerable pile of saucers, representing a considerable bill” for a meal he shares with Kreisler (198); and when Kreisler first meets Anastasya at the creamery, he orders the lobster salad, which he claims represents one of the most “evolved” options on the menu (84). Tarr himself also appears to have devoured at least three lunches (or a first, second, and third breakfast) before joining Bertha for lunch in the first section of the novel. Finally, although most of the characters exhibit aggression with one another, Kreisler in particular seems to be the representative of a certain kind of “bohemian” aggression that frequently affects the local shop-owners. He menaces a server in a café (104), and, in the anteclimactic scene of the

novel, he causes a stir that forces the waiters to quell the crowd's panic by "engag[ing] in their usual police work on such occasions" and by "evict[ing]" him from the café (214; 222). As Rachel Murray argues, the numerous scenes of eating in this novel are indications of characters' sublimated desire to gain "mastery over external surroundings" (5), and acts of consumptive excess or of "being fed" are signs that characters are "relegate[d] to a passive receptacle, subject to the vicissitudes of production and consumption" (9). Indeed, the scenes in cafés and restaurants in Paris are not only coded by Lewis's persistent association of eating, indigestion and hunger with passivity and automatism, but also by the overarching conditions of economic and cultural incursion that are implicit in the novel's opening scenes.

Crucially, the setting of the novel mirrors the characters' distorted understanding of themselves, revealing the blind spots and contortions of logic to which they succumb. Through a kind of cognitive dissonance, the main characters do not recognize that they are a part of a crowd that the people of Paris barely tolerate. Only Tarr seems to exhibit a kind of "partial self-knowledge" about his relationship to the local scene (Gasiorek, "Wyndham Lewis on Art" 204), insofar as he describes the artists of the Vitelotte Quarter—amongst whom he counts himself—as a "crowd" (Lewis, *Tarr* 16; 202). He recognizes his participation in the crowd, but that recognition itself becomes muddled by his assertion that he is not truly part of it: Tarr typifies himself as "an artist" who is defined by his separateness and exceptionalism (16). To account for his participation in crowd-like behavior despite his ostensible separateness, he argues that an artist's duty is nonetheless "to go and find [the best things in the world] in the crowd" (202). Although Tarr argues that the artist and the crowd should be altogether separate entities (203), he concedes that the crowd is "too exciting" to ignore (202)—a claim he demonstrates repeatedly through his actions in the novel. His hypocrisy, which he reveals to be the necessary

maintenance for his artist persona or “type,” *must* misinterpret the significance of his presence.

This ideological blind spot extends to his understanding of the city itself. When Anastasya Vasek, a Paris newcomer, asks him if he “likes” the city, Tarr responds by figuring the city as “the creation of the crowd” (203), and claims, “Paris works so that other countries might live and create; that is the rôle France has chosen” (202). He interprets the economic and domestic changes in Paris as a national choice, even though the historical relationship between French residents and their immigrant newcomers was not as symbiotic and peaceable as Tarr supposes.³⁹ As the disruption of the Restaurant Vallet shows, the locals are “terrified” and the operators of businesses are stressed by the invasion to the point of neurological crisis (as evidenced by the “apoplectic concierge”).

Tarr thus invites us to consider how each character in this novel is part of the Parisian “artist” crowd—a crowd that the novel subtly depicts as propagandists for “bourgeois-bohemian” economic and cultural expansion. Each character presents him or herself as an artist who is unique and separate from the crowd, even though he or she is a part of the bourgeois crowd that has descended upon Paris. As Tarr points out, their purpose and presence in France is encouraged by the ways in which Parisian culture has changed to meet the newcomers’ needs. The ends, as Tarr explains by suggesting that France has “chosen” this role for itself, justify the means. The narrator’s description of the crowd’s impact on Paris, on the other hand, produces a disjunction between Tarr’s perspective and the perspective of the Restaurant Vallet’s owners, thereby highlighting the opposition created by the incursions of capital, and not by the agency of

³⁹ Ihor Junyk’s *Foreign Modernism: Cosmopolitanism, Identity, and Style in Paris* argues that while Paris was widely considered to be the “centre of European (and possibly world) culture” in the 1910s (13), there was nonetheless a “tense gap [that] was forming between the emerging culture of bellicose nationalism and increasingly large transient or immigrant populations” (16).

the characters themselves. Tarr's logical acrobatics demonstrate the heart of the problem of individual agency as Lewis presents it: agents are unaware of how their actions are mapped by ideological structures that define and limit their perception. In this regard, *Tarr* demonstrates not only how its characters' misapprehension of their surroundings reflects their ignorance, but also the ways in which their understanding of representation becomes conflated with a value system—in this case, a system which emphasizes a kind of consumerist tourism that comes to be aligned with capitalist expansion.

Lewis's ostensibly differentiated characters thus present the reader with variations of a travelling "artist-type" that suggests, in a more general sense, that together each character becomes recognized as a singular, undesirable group of cultural tourists. Thus grouping his characters into a band of uniformly "slatternly savages," Lewis suggests a critique of "internationalism." To explain this phenomenon, David Ayers studies a suspicion, shared by Lewis's close contemporaries, of an emerging internationalism introduced by the League of Nations. He writes, "the internationalist theme ... dominated many of the 1917 issues of the *New Age*" (*Western* 166), a periodical to which Lewis and others contributed; for Ayers, the periodical's thematic interests exemplify how modernists understood the capitalist-imperialist paradigm that cloaked itself in the vestments of "international brotherhood" (T.S. Eliot, qtd. in Ayers 169). Ayers explains,

While early discussion of the League created great expectation in the minds of socialists and anti-imperialists such as Leonard Woolf [and] Pound, Eliot and Lewis frequently made hostile and dismissive remarks about it. Hostility to the League quite often represents not an assertion of an old-fashioned nationalism ... but severe doubts about the capacities of supra-national organisation as such, and

an assumption that such an organisation, supported in Britain by socialists and pacifists, might in its universalising tendency side somehow with the masses and against the particularistic individual. (Ayers 163)

Thus, Lewis was not alone in his suspicion of this universalizing and homogenizing political superstructure. He also later follows a critique similar to that which was levied against the League of Nations when, in *The Enemy*, he argues that internationalism and its “transnationalist” variant in literature instigates the formation of groups that flatten individual agency and “cut up” parts of Europe in order to insulate artists from their participation in the dirty work of propaganda (2: xxvi). His focus in *Tarr* remains, however, on how these larger structures might produce homogenizing effects that manifest through groups in a much more immediate and local environment.

Indeed, for Lewis, groups evoke local instances of the same sort of questions cosmopolitanism raises on a larger scale. As Andrew Goldstone notes, “On one hand, cosmopolitanism bespeaks a high-minded idea of global community, a wide range of cultural reference, and an ethically even-handed interest in people of many kinds and places. But the word also indicates a leisurely, uncommitted, ‘rootless’, and, indeed, aestheticist mode of life: a ‘lifestyle’ in the pejorative sense that word sometimes implies, with its ties to consumerist superficiality” (Goldstone 114). Given that Lewis’s concerns with “internationalism” closely align with the characterization of “cosmopolitanism” that Goldstone provides, it seems clear that *Tarr* presents a critique of some of the pejorative connotations of the cosmopolitan lifestyle. The scene in which Tarr proposes that Paris is the “creation of the crowd” thus contrasts Tarr’s implicit support of cosmopolitanism with Anastasya’s claim that Paris has been relegated instead to the position of “the mother-drudge” (*Tarr* 202). Anastasya’s reaction to Tarr’s position

suggests that the characters who unknowingly participate in the Parisian crowd (including Tarr) will reason after the fact that their presence is justified, and even welcome. But when the narrative description of the novel's setting reveals that their actions are suffered as incursions in the city's public spaces, and embody international capital's demands, the characters' unawareness of the scale and depth of their imbrication in an ideology is revealed to be due to their lifestyle of superficial excess.

In the context of this excess, it is no accident that the novel's titular character announces the "cartonnage of selves" as the foundation of his self-understanding. The novel tells us through its contextual contrast that a series of representations both determines and limits characters' perception: they cannot see Paris through their masks. If their understanding of themselves is facilitated by their inhabitation of ready-made types, then their selfhood is predicated on a lack of agency, even as they spend inordinate amounts of time cultivating what they believe is their artistic self-presentation. In sum, *Tarr* uses the "cartonnage of selves" to emphasize that processes of representation can sometimes function to misdirect characters' attention toward surface as a *replacement* for subjectivity. This unconscious replacement is, in effect, ideology at work. Indeed, even if Lewis will recuperatively return to a version of the cartonnage of selves in *The Enemy*, *Tarr* instead emphasizes that its characters fail to see representation as the means of producing the self, and instead develop pacifying self-delusions in response to the constraints and inequities of their situation. In this vein, we will now turn to how *Tarr*'s characters provide us with counter-examples rather than developments of the evental logic.

The Liepmann Influence: Group-characterization, Bertha, and Individual Agency

The setting that *Tarr* emphasizes is not the novel's only means of demonstrating its central characters' ignorance concerning their ideological imbrication. Social organization, too, becomes a factor in denying characters' subjectivation, and Lewis's critique is clearest when we focus specifically on the Liepmann group, which collectively personifies the reasons for his concern with cosmopolitanism and internationalism. This group of characters represents more than the sum of its national parts; although the Liepmann group includes the novel's main characters, its core revolves around the eponymous German, Renée, the Russian Anastasya Vasek, the English Miss Bennett, the Viennese painter Eckhart, the Baltic von Arnim sisters, the Dutch Countess von Bencke, the Polish Soltyk, and so on (119). Each of these individual characters are referred to, and become known as, a collective character called "the Liepmann": a single, "indivisible body" (92). This collective character is the force that motivates most of the novel's plot: their operations and influence impact the other characters even when those other characters choose to disassociate themselves from the group. The Liepmann is Lewis's means of demonstrating how ideological influence operates indirectly and insidiously: the group has the ability to harness and mobilize objectification, which it understands as a measure of value, for the purpose of pacifying the otherwise active or subversive members of their society. I will begin by describing the Liepmann group and how it operates before turning to Bertha as a case study in how Lewis understands the group's influence on individual agency. Bertha, in particular, recognizes the dominance of objectification and representation over subjective experience, but labours under the illusion that she has the ability to resist.

We have seen how the group effaces individuality and discourages uniqueness in artistic production in the previous chapter, but the Liepmann here personifies the difficulty with which

actions can be fully or objectively *understood* by any of the agents within the group. In this regard, the Liepmann is Lewis's strongest satirical representation of the dangers of group participation, even for the most well-meaning or thoughtful artists and subjects. Lewis's concerns about groups abound in his later critical writing, as when he writes that "the very notion of the group ... must be suspect" (Lewis, *Doom* 142), and when he argues that authors such as Joyce are unwittingly used as pawns in a hierarchical commercial game. In *Tarr*, the suspicion concerning groups is more local, and has to do with the way in which characters *think*. The Liepmann is therefore also an ever-present threat to characters' senses of agency; as Kreisler tells us, the Liepmann group is "the Invisible Audience haunting life" (132). Like a kind of gossipy panopticon, the Liepmann is not only a warning against the dangers of group participation, but is also Lewis's means of demonstrating the fragility of a subjective declaration when it is exposed to an audience of ideologically-blinded participants.

The Liepmann operates in the somewhat murky territory of social interaction: this crowd functions indirectly and punitively through rumor and the threat of withdrawing social capital. Broadly speaking, the reader often only learns *after* narrated scenes or events that the Liepmann group introduces much of the novel's conflict. For example, the first section of *Tarr* is propelled by the aftermath of a rumor the Liepmann has circulated: Tarr converses with Hobson and Butcher in order to control the rumors of his (secret) engagement to Bertha. He heatedly argues with Hobson, then with Butcher, in an abortive attempt to dispel by proxy the rumor of their engagement.

The Liepmann group's indirect centrality also extends to the formal qualities of the novel; the narrator's descriptor for the group is the "bourgeois-bohemians" (110), and as Scott Klein discovered in an early letter between Lewis and a prospective publisher, one of *Tarr*'s

original titles was *The Bourgeois-Bohemians* (Klein x). The title was eventually demoted into the more subtle role of chapter title. Its shift from title of the novel to one of its middle chapters seems to be a strategic one; while the reader focusses on the personal dramas of the novel's individual characters, the Liepmann group is the obscure mechanism that influences or coerces their actions. As a result of its ostensible shift from titular concern to local point of focus, the group's influence on every character in the novel is sublimated. The group's eventual foreshortening to "The Liepmann" further indicates that the group has definite, although implicit, power and influence, as though the narrative acknowledges that their "group-ness" can be redacted and remain unstated (*Tarr* 151). Moreover, the group thus represented comes to signal the collapse of difference into a homogeneous multitude: "The Liepmann" names the lack of distinction between members of its collective.

The Liepmann is a group with which the main characters (Kreisler, Tarr, and Bertha) do not particularly want to associate, but the friendships that it facilitates have value because they produce a kind of artistic network. The Liepmann's salon is "the only place of comparatively public assembly in the quarter" (91-92), and yet it is also a space that our main characters indicate is undesirable. As the narrative focuses on Kreisler, it clarifies: "no pleasure resulted on either side from [his visits with them], yet they doggedly continued. [...] They would have been forever discontinued except for a sudden necessity to reopen that channel of bourgeois intercourse" (81). The nature of this "sudden necessity" ranges from Kreisler's desire to see his object of infatuation, Anastasya, to the demands imposed by his habitual impecunity. Other characters are not as compelled by a singular goal, but they are similarly compelled to socialize with the Liepmann despite their mutual dislike. For example, Bertha "always considered herself a little without the circle" but is nonetheless preoccupied with their impression of her (122). Tarr,

too, expresses confusion about his motive for socializing, but he has a vague notion that the Liepmann will assist him in further understanding himself: the narrator tells us, “it was rather as if he had been an official despatched by the Tarr Society to find where Tarr had slept, or taken his meals, with a view to putting up medallions or brass-plates: also for the collection of data for the Society’s archives” (179). Whereas Kreisler seems to participate in the socialite culture in which the Liepmann traffics for cynical and practical reasons, Tarr and Bertha indicate that the Liepmann offers them the opportunity to experience their own objectification, insofar as the novel portrays their concern with appearances and surface as a means of understanding themselves.

Indeed, the Liepmann is primarily interested in surface and appearance. Its members are frequently cast as distant observers and adjudicators of all that is superficial; they interpret and chastise behaviors, propriety, and dress: we are informed that “politeness reigned” at their social events (74), and that metaphorically “each new pupil [is shown] his locker, where the rulers were put and where, when he got them dirty, he could wash his hands” (112). Those who do not conform to the Liepmann’s “dress and manner” are ostracized (112), and Tarr, we are told, was once “excommunicated” because he did not properly bow upon meeting them on the street (122). The Liepmann’s vague association with education and religion imply that they are a kind of punitive colonizing force in Paris that is broadly associated with Western institutions. Notably, however, the group is less concerned with proper hygiene or manners than the representation of those elements: even though Kreisler rejects their requirements for clean attire, they include him at their events because he flatters them with polite banter (111). Similarly, Tarr is suffered once again as part of the group when he “treated his hosts with a warm affability which sought to make up for past affronts” (182). The Liepmann therefore values the appearance or

representation of cultural values rather than the values themselves—which is, in essence, a celebration of objectification. Consequently, our central characters’ also come to view objectification as a means of establishing value. But when the novel’s main characters focus on this group and what it deems to be important, they seem compelled to explore the ways in which they can rally against the group as an expression of their individuality.

In this regard, the Liepmann’s power is seemingly ideological. As Hugh Kenner argues of Lewis’s version of ideology,

those who possess power (and power has many disguises) are, solely for the sake of exercising it, herding the rest of the population hither and thither, and performing on them every operation that will make them easier to herd. This has always happened; the peculiar feature of the twentieth century is that no one knows it is going on. (72)

The ideological power that the Liepmann wields is one in which social capital is currency: in short, if they were unable to provide a social network, they would be unable to influence others. Because networking spaces are valuable to the novel’s characters in myriad ways, the Liepmann can demonstrate its power by threatening to exclude others from the group, which, as Kenner suggests, is one of the ways in which they will “herd” the other characters. They endure the presence of almost every character in the novel, but their inclusiveness has a judgmental edge: they observe and comment on the behavior and attire of newcomers in their crowd, and, if they notice anything awry, “put a little spiteful mark down to each of their names” (77). They have a history of excluding potential members from their group, as in the case of a young woman who is at one point invited to a Liepmann gathering by a professor, but is subsequently snubbed because “her finances were inadequate” (121). Thus, even if none of the main characters seem to

appreciate the group's company, the Liepmann is seemingly able to enforce the rules of their social circle without much resistance. The characters all recognize the power inherent in social exclusion; for many of them, in addition to being the access point for a social network, the Liepmann is also a means of separating people. For example, Ernst Vokt, an erstwhile friend of Kreisler's who had once loaned him large sums of money, introduces Kreisler to their circle. The introduction is Vokt's inept means of extricating himself from his friendship with Kreisler—a fact that Kreisler understands immediately and unhappily. Tarr experiences this operation, too; he thinks that the group members are “partly induced to continue their friendship with Bertha through the hope of rescuing her from her fiancé, or doing as much harm to both as possible” (122). In this sense, Tarr understands the implicit threat of exclusion as one of “harm,” which suggests that the Liepmann's power rests on far more than mere sociability or elite access.

This general outline of this crowd's operations—and the consequences of rejecting the group—suggests that the Liepmann represents a force that influences other characters. This is an influence that is largely felt rather than observed, so the novel appears to represent the group as a stand-in for an ideological, rather than merely a social, influence. To fully illustrate this point, I will more closely analyze the scenes in which this collective character's influence becomes most apparent: in Part IV, entitled “A Jest Too Deep for Laughter,” Bertha's interactions with Kreisler explore the extent of the Liepmann's influence while it tests Bertha's attempt to challenge their collective power. Unlike the other characters in the novel, Bertha is keenly aware of the kind of objectification on which the Liepmann's power rests, and yet still accepts it with the belief that she might be able to harness the power of representation herself.

Although critics such as Ivan Phillips have argued that female characters in Lewis's works often represent at best a kind of passivity, or at worst a grotesque celebration of

physicality (118), Bertha is a comparatively more active and thoughtful outlier in terms of this fairly uncomplicated view. If, as Valerie Parker has argued, Bertha is exceptional precisely because she “escapes” the bounds of these stereotypical forms of characterization in Lewis’s early fiction (216), then her position is important to consider. Despite Tarr’s much-discussed impression of women as hosts for a “very substantial astral baby” that designs and compels movements and decisions (*Tarr* 46), the novel demonstrates that Bertha’s decisions are much more importantly and directly influenced by her social environment, and by the appealing power that reputation and social involvement offers her. Acknowledging a more complex view of gender in Lewis’s works, Erin G. Carlston argues that Lewis has a “surprising[ly] astute” criticism of “those social formations that feminist modernists like Virginia Woolf did not hesitate to call patriarchy” (775)—going so far as to identify it as a vaguely poststructuralist critique of gender. In this regard, and because Lewis dedicates much of the early section of *Tarr* to Bertha’s experience, I will extend Carlston’s argument by exploring how Lewis demonstrates that some subjective positions—particularly one inhabited by a female character—are limited by the choices that are made available in a particular social context. In doing so, I will suggest that this is how Lewis sees ideology functioning on the individual or local level, filtered in this novel through the group-character of the Liepmann.

Bertha’s narrative arc in *Tarr* is an unhappy one, to put it mildly; she demonstrates that objectification affects the formation of the subject and any decisions the subject might make. The problem, as we shall see, is more precisely that Bertha mistakenly believes that objective representations of the self can be effectively deployed and manipulated. Bertha’s narrative begins in earnest with her attempt to gain her own sort of social influence. In a scene preceding the Bonnington Club dance, she recognizes the potential power of having the Liepmann as an

ever-present, yet distant audience, and attempts to harness the implications of social appearances so as to distinguish herself from the crowd. At this point in the novel, the Liepmann knows that Bertha's and Tarr's engagement has been broken—a serious debit on Bertha's social balance sheet. Seeking to overcome this deficit, Bertha believes that by socializing with the unpredictable outcast, Kreisler, she might “destroy that subtle advantage, now possessed by her friends” (154). To destroy their advantage and thereby gain her own, she replicates a seemingly successful gambit that Fräulein von Bencke had recounted a week prior (130): von Bencke had reported that she had kissed a young painter in order to “help” him through his difficulties (130). Performing a similar scene, Bertha believes, would solve both of her problems: that of the embarrassing rumor of her broken engagement which had further unsettled her precarious social position in the Liepmann network, and that of her uncertain relationship with Tarr. Her successful replication of von Bencke's plot would, she believes, inspire decisive action on Tarr's part: “Tarr wished to be released; he did not want her, was embarrassed. [...] Somebody else—and a somebody else who was at the same time *nobody*, and who would evaporate and leave no trace the moment he had served her purpose—must be found” (124-25). It would also, to Bertha's mind, permit her to play the “noble role” of a woman pitying a “luckless” man in subsequent meetings with the Liepmann, a role that would further increase her social capital. “One against him,” she thinks, “two for her!” (130). The Liepmann, of course, would play an important role in her scheme, for through them, Tarr would discover her interactions with Kreisler; the group would serve as the audience needed to confirm her altruistic behavior, and might facilitate a *rapprochement*. As Bertha demonstrates, although the group's influence is partially objective, it quickly becomes internalized. If the group promotes the public perception of behavior over the reality of a situation, then Bertha tacitly agrees when she plans to capitalize on their interest in appearances.

Implicit in this plan is Bertha's understanding of her decision to deploy appearances as an expression of her agency: she inhabits a persona in order to achieve her "purpose," which is arguably to inspire both Tarr's jealousy and the Liepmann's admiration. In this persona, she enacts a scene with Kreisler that the narrator describes as "like a stage-kiss: the needs of their respective roles had been satisfied" (125). Bertha chooses Kreisler because she believes that he is "a nobody" who will "evaporate" once she accomplishes her goal (124)—he is an "outsider" who is already excluded, and thus wields no influence (122). In Bertha's estimation, the true players in her strategic game are only herself, the Liepmann, and Tarr. As a result, her plan and actions hinge on understanding both herself and Kreisler as little more than actors on a stage, or as representations of persons: again, objects rather than agents.

The novel, however, introduces a wrinkle in Bertha's plan: her role, first performed by von Bencke, proves not to be reproducible in a new context. When she and Kreisler are surprised by the Liepmann, who have been watching them from a distance, Bertha realizes that she is not exactly following the script that von Bencke had written—von Bencke had performed her kiss out of public view (131), only publicizing her actions later through a narrative she controlled. In Bertha's case, she only belatedly comes to understand the difficulty of controlling the interpretive latitude afforded an audience able to create their own narratives. The Liepmann observes the scene but does not draw the conclusion that she had hoped; rather, they decide that Bertha has merely exercised poor judgment (148). In an attempt to rescue the scene from this interpretation, Bertha then performs a conventional sign of distress—feigning dizziness—and her act momentarily works, after a fashion: "hypocritical concern soon superseded the masks of scandal" that her audience had worn a moment ago (126). Her deployment of a second persona, and of the conventional behavior in keeping with her newly-imagined role, is her attempt to

establish control over her own objectification, and thereby regain a sense of agency. The catch, of course, is that the Liepmann have matched her change of costume with one of their own. Rather than genuine concern, the masks they now wear barely disguise their underlying hypocrisy.

Just as the novel presents Bertha's ability to fleetingly harness the group's power through rumor and scandal, it introduces the difficulty she encounters in sustaining her version of the "story" and its publicly shared "Versions" (158). The days following the fateful kiss reveal that the Liepmann's concern with appearances compels Bertha to continuously work to control their interpretation of her actions. She feels that the group must accept her version of events and her fictionalized intentions, so she must provide a believable scenario that explains her decision to continue socializing with Kreisler, even though she has no interest in him other than as an actor who could perform a role. Although Bertha repeatedly refers to Kreisler as an "enemy" (159), she feels that the Liepmann's acceptance of her version of the story is "a vital matter" (158), for Kreisler had already "told [Renée Liepmann] a pack of lies" about the aforementioned kiss (148). Bertha's desire to guide the Liepmann's interpretation persists for days after the scene: she thinks that "her friends must at once ratify their normal view of this little occurrence" (126), so she tells "this story of hers" (157): she had been "mauled by a brute" (150). The Liepmann encourages her story, insofar as they feel that "she had been putting in her little bit of abuse of the common enemy" (151). However, whereas Bertha's intention is not only to attack Kreisler, but to repair her reputation, the Liepmann has already judged Kreisler a "hopeless brute" and the kiss unworthy of further discussion (156). The narrative thus reveals that the group has very little concern for Bertha herself—they are markedly absent, for example, from Bertha's private life and experiences (147)—but Bertha invests them and their assumed perception of her with

importance. She believes that “to go on with her daily life as though nothing had happened [was] out of the question. A series of demonstrations were called for, of a fairly violent order” (152). Upon deciding that she would revolt against the Liepmann through her private strike, with what the narrative describes as “the contempt of the workman” (158), Bertha decides to meet again with Kreisler—which compels her to “wallow still more in this unbecoming situation. [...] *They had driven her to this—they were driving her!*” (163; original emphasis). In short, Bertha’s actions are governed by a mistaken perception of the Liepmann’s perception of her action. When Bertha is unable to demonstrate her agency by working with the social forces that govern the space she inhabits (in this case, by participating in storytelling and rumor-making), she attempts to express her agency by revolting against their impression of Kreisler as a brute who is unworthy of further discussion. But she struggles to erase the taint of a kiss that already been discounted as inconsequential.

The novel thus emphasizes that Bertha understands control over social representation to be of paramount importance, and it does so through the analogy of a worker on strike. Because the Liepmann understands appearance or representation as the dominant paradigm of social life, Bertha seems compelled to reclaim and rehabilitate her social mask. Consequently, Lewis suggests that the subjective position Bertha inhabits is one which seeks to regain agency over her own “cartonnage of selves,” and the option available to her is to produce yet another “painted mummy-case” like the rest of her social selves. This is not to say that Bertha produces a persona that is entirely artificial; to recall a moment from Lewis’s “Fictionist” essay, Bertha’s recrafting of a social self is in line with his sense that one must develop a believable persona in order to “be on the side to which you belong” (571). Even if it involves risks and “demonstrations of a fairly violent order,” Bertha persists.

This often-overlooked setup for Bertha's actions, in which the Liepmann's influence plays a key role, sets into relief the fourth section of the novel, "A Jest Too Deep for Laughter"—the turning point for a number of characters. In this section, Kreisler has asked Bertha to sit for a portrait, and the narrative indicates through flashback that he has raped her. The scene is represented through "multiple strata of objectification" (Burstein 43), or, in other words, through a number of writerly strategies: indirectly through flashback, through fragmented and jarring first person recollection, and through the use of metonymic objects. Kreisler becomes an inhuman "it" in Bertha's recollection of the experience, and the rape is elided in the narrative as Bertha sequesters it behind "an iron curtain [which had] rushed down upon that tragedy" (*Tarr* 167). The scene is then described through metaphors and similes: Kreisler is replaced by "an uncontrollable satyrlike figure," the rape is personified as "the appetite of hatred [that] spat and gobbled," and he and Bertha are figured as "rolling ... like confederates" and behaving "like snarling animals" (164). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this traumatic scene comes to be figured, with brutal irony, in the same terms that have governed Bertha's earlier interactions with the Liepmann. Just as the Liepmann cares about appearance to the exclusion of substance, the narrative renders Bertha's experience of the rape as a sort of tableau that relentlessly directs the reader's view exclusively to the surfaces presented by a series of images. The novel therefore demonstrates through metonymic language how ideological influence alters even perception: for the Liepmann, and to some extent to Bertha, the person is a thing, and so the confusion between the two, in their worldview, is not a confusion at all, but a reconciliation of that value with a state of being. At this point, the novel therefore formally demonstrates through Bertha how appearance, once understood as a measure of value, becomes a way of interpreting experience.

This episode not only features as a moment of crisis for Bertha as a character, but is also a rare moment in which Lewis's novel indicates a certain degree of "sympathy" for a modern female character (Mitchell 227). In short, Lewis depicts Bertha's experience as a tragic one precisely because Bertha attempts to retain control over her public persona, but her plan leads her to an even more violent objectification. Her objectification, Judith Mitchell argues, is evidence of Lewis's "dislik[e of] the exploitation of women by their division into robot-classes, the feminist class on one hand and the feminine class on the other" (231). Mitchell's argument, however, does not suggest the particular significance for Lewis of the aftermath of Bertha's experience beyond the suggestion that it is described in an atypically "sincere" way (Mitchell 227). Jessica Burstein offers more insight when she argues that this scene is a "moment when objectification meets objectification. [Bertha] had mistaken her objectification as either harmless or 'natural'; in fact it is neither" (44). Burstein's argument hinges on the impression that *Tarr* primarily concerns "the confusion between a person and a thing" (44), or the confusion between reality and appearance. These critics' works exist in conversation with one another, but the important point of connection is not Lewis's concern with objectification or class division *per se*; while the novel highlights class hierarchization *and* objectification as subjects of critique, it does so through the group character of the Liepmann, for these are precisely the structures through which the Liepmann functions.

This crucial scene thus demonstrates how Bertha's attempt to gain power over the Liepmann, and by extension, over appearance, reaches an apotheosis of objectification. To extend Burstein's argument, I would suggest that the scene is figuratively presented through objects that *stand in for* the active agents in the scene. In so doing, the novel demonstrates the problem that emerges for those who choose to deploy their agency in the terms provided by the

situation they want to control: the agents are imbricated in that situation, and therefore can fully control neither its mechanisms, nor its impact upon them. Despite Bertha's attempts to harness objectification—exemplified through the play of appearances, the desire to control and adapt her own narrative, and the assignment of roles to others—she cannot escape the fact that she, too, is an object in her scheme. Her reclamation of her agency results in the situation demonstrating that her agency was always coded by the terms in which she lives, and to which she is already subjected. This is the paradox of Bertha's plight: the Liepmann's valorization of appearances, which Bertha understands and tries to mobilize, becomes literally transcribed as a play of objects or surfaces in which Bertha is always only included *as an object*, and not as an agent. Thus, although the novel explores the effects of superficiality, it also addresses a deeper problem by demonstrating that the agency that Bertha believes underlies her representations, and that directs her intended narrative, is illusory.

Lewis does not rest here in recounting Bertha's tragic arc of objectification. The novel suggests that despite the horror of the event, Bertha's experience marks—if only through negation—an eventual process. The narrative concludes that “the moral of the late event had had its chance of influencing her radically but it had not succeeded: nothing *radically* was changed” (168; original emphasis). The suggestion, here, is that there was a radically paradigm-shifting moment during which a perceptual change was possible; Kreisler has momentarily changed Bertha's estimation of the world into “a wild world, not of uniform men and women, but of very divergent and strangely-living animals” (170). The peaceful uniformity Bertha had believed to govern the state of the situation has been destroyed by Kreisler's violence. But the limitations produced by Bertha's imbrication in her social circle's ideology leads her to the conclusion that she must continue on as usual, as though “It was nothing actually, nothing in fact had happened”

(167). When the ramifications of the rape accumulate, the Liepmann's influence conditions not only Bertha's account of it, but also her reaction to it. Rather than attempt to find a way to reconstruct the narrative, Bertha understands the event as having signaled "an end of all explanations" (165). Whereas, in the earlier scene with the Liepmann, Bertha is able to tell, reformulate, and retell fictionalized versions of her stage-kiss with Kreisler to craft the appropriate version that would be the most convincing, in this case she feels forced into silence. She thinks: "not to tell this experience of hers to *anybody* would be shutting her in with Kreisler," but telling would "contaminat[e] [her] with that abominable little attic of his" (168). Her thinking, once again, focuses on how the Liepmann must be included in her choice of actions: "Kreisler she had set up as a 'cause' against her friends: in a manner peculiar to himself he had betrayed her and placed himself in the ranks of her critics. [...] So Kreisler had acted satanically on behalf of her friends" (169). The slide between friends and critics here indicates that this group of ostensible "friends" works to promote homogeneity of action and response by criticizing those who fail to conform, and Bertha's thinking demonstrates that, indeed, she still clings to the assumption that she might be able to devise a strategy that could rescue her from her situation.

In the traumatic situation in which Bertha finds herself, the Liepmann's ideology, which affords value and social importance only to appearance, strangely offers her a "reactionary novelty" (Badiou, *Logics* 54). A reactionary novelty is an opportunity to explain the event, and its introduction of a novel paradigm through which to see the world, through the terms offered by the situation. However, the method with which she processes this inexplicable and unrepresentable event is to instead ignore its existence: "nothing in fact had happened" (167). Bertha's resistance and silence, and her dismissiveness concerning the event that has occurred, is

further indication of her imbrication in a crushingly limiting state of the situation. Bertha's silence is, therefore, Lewis's prescient fictionalization of the plight of the "reactive subject" (*Logics* 55): when an event occurs that does not fit within the current regime of thought, it could be dismissed as not having happened at all. Badiou argues that the reactive subject "denies the creative power of the event in favour of a deleted present" (*Logics* 58); in other words, this subject often works through an understanding of the event, but the end result of the subject's work is to reinstate the status quo. This is not precisely to condemn this subjective position, particularly as it is embodied by Bertha. Instead, it is an acknowledgement of the "catastrophic temptation which the reactive subject declares is contained in the event" (55); in short, the catastrophic temptation is to accept the now perceptibly insufficient state of the situation. The problem that Lewis explores in *Tarr* is that the reactive subject is bound to the state of the situation in ways that delimit her ability to *act* on the truth that the event discloses—particularly when that truth suggests the need for a "catastrophic" reevaluation of the social order. The sympathetic quality Lewis lends to this form of subjectivity is striking. Although Bertha declares that "nothing in fact had happened" (167), as a reactive subject, she does not cynically declare that the state of the situation is sufficient; rather, she declares that to dismiss the event is more acceptable than the alternative, even if it means enduring a world in which the violence of her objectification remains permissible.

In this regard, *Tarr* demonstrates through Bertha that the play of appearance cannot be reliably controlled by an autonomous, willful self. Rather than attempt to understand the event and declare it, which could damage her further, Bertha relies on the ideological structure available to her. Because her assault occurs out of public view and was thus not represented in her social milieu, she sublimates it into "nothing." She restores normality to the situation through

inactivity rather than through further scenes, roles, or personae. In short, the novel demonstrates that her efforts to gain control over representation were in vain, and that her agency is illusory. The violent event therefore does not result in radical change of any measurable kind to the social system that each character inhabits, and the hegemonic power of the Liepmann crowd remains.

This sequence underscores the serious consequences of the seemingly anodyne conversations and conventional social appearances in which the Liepmann traffics, and shows how Lewis links them to the value systems that explicitly deny agency. To be clear, this is not to say that the novel figures the Liepmann as the cause of the rape, but it does suggest that the Liepmann features as a symbolic social force that both influences the perception and limits the potential actions of the characters in its “vortex” (108), as evidenced by Bertha’s thoughts and actions in the rape’s immediate aftermath. As I have outlined, *Tarr*’s characters dislike, but are inexorably bound to the Liepmann; consequently, Bertha’s example shows that even the attempt to break with the Liepmann—a potential effect, as Bertha understood it, of meeting with Kreisler again—must still be negotiated on their terms. In this sense, Bertha’s agency is always bound to the social forces that determine it. Furthermore, whereas the narrative shows that tragic events *could* inspire radical change, the scenes in which the narrative is focalized through Bertha demonstrate that the possibility for change remains virtual—as evidenced by the novel’s brief mention of the moment in which the aftermath had a “chance” of “influencing [Bertha] radically.” What might have otherwise been an event, in its radical sense, becomes unrepresentable in Bertha’s social milieu. Individual reactions to traumatic events, the novel seems to claim, are thereby coded in and determined by their social context. When that context encourages passivity, complacency, and most importantly, silence—particularly if the reaction or the event would require a radical reconceptualization of the ideology of the dominant social

group—the options for agency become much more complicated and limited than to simply declare the event.

Furthermore, Bertha's experience treads some of the same ground Lewis will explore in *The Enemy* when he claims that Gertrude Stein's "trick" is reproducible and therefore loses some of its initial significance. But through Bertha, Lewis adds complexity to this later and more generalized version of his argument; he suggests that the desire to retain individual control over representation and appearance is ultimately unsuccessful when the medium for agency is an already codified representation. In other words, Bertha's attempt to recreate von Bencke's gambit is unsuccessful partly because it is one that has been successfully advertised before. While Bertha understands and accepts the central value of appearance in her social sphere, and intends to capitalize on a previously successful role by reproducing it, she fails to recognize that an individual agent cannot willfully position herself to control the scene as a director or author might. Moreover, the objectification of her experiences can only be achieved by becoming an object herself, which is precisely the reverse of what individual agency promises.

Although *Tarr* introduces us to the concept of a personality that is partly produced through its participation in the public sphere—insofar as the self is only manifest in relation to its environment—it also suggests that if all you have is nested representations, then no willful deployment of those representations can take place. To accept Tarr's understanding of the "cartonnage of selves" is to accept that no agent exists behind (or under, or within) the self's endless series of representations. Bertha understands the role played by artifacts or representations of the self, but maintains that she is the agent of those manifestations. As Bertha makes clear, in this novel's world that is constituted by the play of representations, one is mistaken if one maintains that something like an inner self could control them. In this sense,

while the Liepmann is the catalyst for Bertha's attempt to generate a scene or "story" with Kreisler, Bertha eventually recognizes that she is subject to processes beyond her control. Consequently, she demonstrates that agency is not something that one owns, but is an unpredictable irruption in the situation.

Kreisler, the "Revolutionary" as "the Common Enemy"

On the one hand, Bertha recognizes the play of representations but retains a belief in a kind of control over them; Kreisler, on the other hand, rejects Tarr's view entirely and instead supports the classic autonomous self. Kreisler thus represents the extreme end of the spectrum in his absolute refusal to recognize the Liepmann's values. Generally, the characters in *Tarr* view themselves as free-acting participants in an unconventional lifestyle, even though they frequently comment, with varying degrees of credulity, on how "conventional" their actions actually are (Lewis, *Tarr* 126). This includes their awareness that their reactionary rejection of conventional behaviors is itself conventional. As we have seen, even Bertha's designs to "revolt" against the Liepmann are self-consciously based on actions that have worked well within the social system in the past. Rather than trace the ultimately inactive path of compromise that Bertha follows, Kreisler will present his opposition, without qualification, as "revolutionary." Kreisler believes that his opposition to the Liepmann is revolutionary because it is sincere, or born of an authentic self. In this sense, the novel presents Kreisler as a precursor to the "Romantic" and the "false revolutionary" that Lewis will explore more fully in *The Enemy*, and emphasizes the extent to which the assumption of having a "core" to the self damages the subject's potential for effective agency. Kreisler seeks to demonstrate his freedom from the social environment in which he is involved, and does so by performing precisely the version of revolution that Lewis critiques. To

explore the impact of Lewis's choices, and how they reveal more about the state of the situation that he wants to critique, I will first discuss how Kreisler figures his opposition to the Liepmann before turning to why Lewis figures Kreisler's "authentic revolt" as yet another representation that offers the illusion of agency.

Whereas Bertha recognizes the Liepmann's representational games and attempts to locate agency by manipulating her available roles, Kreisler rejects the Liepmann's values outright, in a gesture he sees as revolutionary. The narrator, however, quickly disabuses readers of any hope for Kreisler's effectiveness. In a scene in which Kreisler invites himself to the Café Bonnington, he arrives at Renée Liepmann's house without his "frac" or morning coat, and the narrator observes, "Finding himself unconventionally dressed, he felt in fact a sort of outcast. He entered thoroughly into the part his situation and appearance suggested. [He] was the true revolutionary, since he was the perfect snob" (120). Despite his pretensions to revolution, which are here cast as qualities of a role that he chooses to play, he also makes excuses for his disheveled appearance. He does so by name-dropping the respected Master Lowndes, who he falsely claims permitted him to appear without appropriate dress (113), and decides to "use this fictitious license and authority to its utmost limit" (114). Throughout this scene, we have the ironic tension between Kreisler understanding his social discomfort as the sign of revolution, and the narrator's repeated demonstration that it is merely a sign of his exclusion, absent any particularly revolutionary implications. Even Kreisler recognizes that his unconventional attire is the costume of a fairly conventional "part" of a bourgeois-bohemian play. Moreover, he develops a narrative that renders his lack of "frac" socially acceptable. Thus, although Kreisler understands his risibly insignificant nonconformity as revolutionary rather than as public performance, the narrator evokes the irony with which that assessment is freighted by describing how quickly Kreisler has

concluded that he is “revolutionary” simply because he is not wearing a jacket at a social club. In this sense, the novel presents us with a character who claims to revolutionize a particular social situation, but instead experiences a kind of cognitive dissonance in his misunderstanding of how his method of opposition is coded by the situation.

If Tarr’s “cartonnage of selves” assumes that appearance and personae are how one communicates individuality and selfhood, Kreisler provides the novel’s counterpoint, insofar as he understands his self-conception and his public persona as necessarily at odds. Kreisler cultivates the “habit” of being alone (78), even though this choice makes others view him with suspicion (78). His self-presentation is that of a “devout recluse” (64), but he frequents the social events held by the Liepmann group, at first out of a need for friends who would lend him money, and eventually because the Liepmann are intermediaries through whom he might encounter Anastasya. Although it may have been necessity that brought him out of isolation, his actions demonstrate that despite understanding social norms and cues, and using those norms to involve himself in the Liepmann’s network, he firmly rejects them as antithetical to his sense of self. As we learn, Kreisler’s conception of individuality is founded in an effort to retain or protect a sense of his “early self” (103)—an idealistic schoolboy—and he considers the memories of this early self the “foundations of his personality” (103). He repeatedly experiences “home-sickness for his early self: like the knack of riding a bicycle or anything learned in youth, this character was easily resumed” (103). What makes Kreisler a particularly interesting contrast to Tarr, therefore, is that Kreisler’s personality manifests in an attempt to reclaim his private past, often at the expense of his present. Consequently, Kreisler works under the assumption that he retains his individuality only insofar as he rejects conformity with a group and remains faithful to the long-established foundation of his self.

We see Kreisler's rationale for his authenticity most clearly when we encounter him in a moment of personality panic, as it were. He is confronted with his poverty in the Vitelotte Quarter, and with the fact that others such as Soltyk seem far more socially adept than he. For a moment, he can "detach" himself to see his actions objectively, but this so disturbs him that he is unable to act: "[he was] always up till then immersed in that self, now for the first time he stood partly outside it. This slight divorce made him less sure in his touch in everything" (78). Kreisler's self-confidence, and his ability to work and operate in the world, are dependent on his being able to conceive of himself without pretense, and when he looks at himself objectively, he is overcome with "inertia and phlegm" and "moody wastefulness and futility" (78). In this state, which lasts "several days" (80), he avoids cafés until he "recover[s]" (80), never allowing a more socially acceptable persona to emerge. As a result, when Kreisler returns to social life, he reverts to those previously unsuccessful patterns of participation; he continues to perform his "authentic" self rather than navigate and correct the causes of his discomfort and alienation.

The novel reveals, however, that despite Kreisler's assumptions about his authenticity, his conception of selfhood still leads him to play a role in much the same way that most of the characters do. For example, at the Bonnington Club, described as "a place where the english [sic] *Société* permanent in Paris meet" (113), he imagines himself to be "the vein of scandal running through an otherwise dull performance" (132), and "invented outrage that was natural to him" by repeatedly and rudely forcing women to dance with him (132). He seeks to reproduce the dramatic arc of a half-remembered play that he saw as a schoolboy; the play ended with "the image of a bloodstained hand, furiously martyred. But [Kreisler] could not recall to what the hand belonged" (109). Kreisler intends to "humiliate" himself in order to cause outrage and insult (108), but he does not know how humiliation might translate into more than a passingly

remembered image of martyrdom. The novel not only describes his goal as seemingly only self-destructive but also casts doubt on Kreisler's belief that his behavior stands in opposition to the Liepmann's superficial world of appearances and representations. Here, his "authentic" revolt replicates another representation, for he literally performs a role from a play.

If the novel punctures the first step in Kreisler's logic—that he is a singularly unique individual who rejects the inauthenticity of social performance—by revealing that he performs a role like the others, then it also undermines his second step, which is believing that he is so singular that he presents a cognitive challenge to the Liepmann's social scene. He gleefully anticipates "see[ing] their faces in fancy" (108). But the novel deflates his sense that he is a mysterious and incomprehensible figure as the Bonnington Club scene ends: Renée is the only one present to hear his departing epithet, "common-old-sow" (140), and the scandal he desires does not come to pass—nor does it have any lasting public impact, for Renée keeps it to herself (148). Other characters also simply explain his unusual behavior by surmising that he is drunk (114; 135). Similarly, his other violent actions in the novel—such as his rape of Bertha—are quietly suppressed, and offer Bertha and Tarr the opportunity to come to a mutually acceptable arrangement to marry. Whereas Kreisler might believe that he is an incomprehensible exception to the situation, the other characters in the novel understand his actions all too well—but as examples of violent brutishness (150). Rather than being perceived as a martyred, reclusive eccentric, as he would like, the other characters instead fully understand him as violent, impoverished, reclusive, and rude, which are traits that we can safely say are firmly included in the bounds of intelligibility. His behavior is uncouth, not incomprehensible in the terms established by the situation.

While Kreisler seeks to understand himself as someone whose unique individuality does not translate, he is further excluded due to his attachment to an earlier social code. For example, he is generally associated with the artistic financing of a bygone era that valued aristocratic connections and patronage. This system of patronage, we learn, has been supplanted by the social network facilitated by the Liepmann: other characters, such as Soltyk and Anastasya, demonstrate this art world's means of ensuring artists' financial stability, which appears to consist of engaging brokers who could "put the thing through" in international markets (252). Kreisler's desire to retain his now-antiquated social and financial position while also being understood as an avant-garde artist also demonstrates his appeal to the past. He "arbitrarily revive[s] his title of Freiherr" to allude to his right, as an educated member of the German aristocracy, to be understood and treated as more than "a sack of potatoes" in this new social circle (236): he "recalled that he was a german gentleman, with a *university education*, who had never worked, *a member of an honourable family!*" (230; original emphasis). His sense of "honour" likewise compels him to instigate a duel with Soltyk, an action that is simultaneously inspired by childhood memories and stunningly outmoded. In this regard, Kreisler anticipates Lewis's conception of the "Romantic" and the "false revolutionary" in *The Enemy*. Kreisler's character exhibits many "romantic" qualities that imply a nostalgic return to an earlier era in which an ostensibly authentic inner life is the marker of personality. His ostensibly authentic inner life, however, is revealed to be a collection of ready-made roles or external values—a play he sees as a child, or his title, education, and family honour—rather than an expression of his inner self.

His sense of individuality is predicated on a nostalgic return to a phantasmatic version of an earlier era, and his delusional belief in being revolutionary. The advertisement of a

“revolutionary” subject position, we might recall, claims liberation from the social order but is entirely contained within its terms. As we come to learn in *The Enemy*, the social system cements those who occupy that “false revolutionary” position ever more firmly in the situation by offering them a commodified “revolutionary” position through which they might consider their regressive actions in terms of an illusory freedom. Kreisler occupies precisely this position. He believes himself to be outside of the constrictions of society because he is an authentic, egoic individual, without recognizing that this self-conception has been made available to him by the situation. It is no more or less “authentic” than Bertha’s attempt to perform the conventional fainting woman. The novel reveals, therefore, that when Kreisler instigates crises in *Tarr* through his ostensibly “authentic” opposition to cultural norms, he demonstrates that social exclusion in no way challenges the situation that he believes himself to be revolting against, and inadvertently reveals the ultimately empty nature of his opposition. Thus, when Kreisler links his behaviors to the ideal of a “romantic” and incommunicable self, wishing to be recognized as an enemy, his perspective is that he is an enemy to those who challenge the values on which his sense of self depends, but the novel’s other characters simply do not recognize these values at all. *Tarr* suggests, therefore, is that Kreisler seeks to position himself in the more abstract role of an enemy who is *not included* in the situation, which would imply, if true, the greatest threat to the social order. But the novel reveals the emptiness of his position, instead demonstrating that the position of revolution or liberation that he believes he occupies is in fact a ready-made role, created in the situation as a simulacrum of individuality.

Indeed, the novel seems almost systematically to dilute and dismantle the very notion of enmity through the sheer ubiquity of its usage. While Kreisler uses “enemy” as an epithet to describe almost all of the main characters, the reverse is also true, in that the Liepmann considers

him the “common enemy” (151). The text consistently deflates the actions through which Kreisler attempts to manifest his heroic enmity. Whether we consider his attempts to frighten Tarr or insult the Liepmann, his duel with Soltyk or his assault of Bertha, none of these actions seem to be received even as provocation. The other characters simply dismiss him as unworthy of their trouble, despite his disruptive actions. Bertha contemplates “dramatic revenge” on him (169), but asks, “what was the good ... of storming against this person?” (167). The Liepmann similarly considers Kreisler “unworth[y] of discussion” (151). Tarr offers a slightly more considered perspective. He contemplates retaliation for Kreisler’s insults: “To stop and fight with Kreisler, what objection was there to that, he asked himself? It was to take Kreisler too seriously? But what [is] less serious than fighting?” (208). What might initially appear to be simply Tarr’s witty aphorism, “what is less serious than fighting,” in fact brutally undercuts the entirety of Kreisler’s position. Kreisler’s authenticity is almost entirely tied to the perpetual struggle in which he engages—the fight that Tarr laconically renders trivial. In the end, however, Tarr arrives at the same conclusion as the other characters: “in allowing the physical struggle any importance he allowed Kreisler an importance, too,” and so he would not be “so weak-minded as to care what trash like Kreisler thought or felt” (209). The duel scene is therefore the only scene in which another character allows Kreisler importance; Soltyk’s literally fatal error is that he accepts Kreisler as an enemy. As one of Soltyk’s unnamed friends asks, “You are surely not so mad as to take this German seriously?” (228), and in so doing, deflates Kreisler’s sense of himself as the heroic individual who stands against the predations of the oppressive social system. As the reactions of other characters reveal, Kreisler only imagines himself to be the enemy of the social situation of which he is a part; he fails, however, to recognize the degree to which his attempts to participate in social life, on his terms, are not only ineffective, but also

already accounted for by the situation. He is simply an anachronism that is socially excluded for his boorish behavior. So, the ideology against which he purports to revolt is revealed as having offered Kreisler the illusion of his exceptionalism—his “authentic revolt” is, in fact, a type, like the others in the novel. The disruptions only have an impact in his own mind.

Kreisler is not immune, therefore, to ideological influence. When he perpetrates the Bonnington Club debacle, at which he drinks to excess and behaves rudely, the absurd qualities of his efforts, and the fact that they are ignored or dismissed by virtue of his rudeness (148), reveal that, far from encountering him as “revolutionary,” the social environment he inhabits has simply explained his actions through his inability to conform. In this sense, Tarr is again on the mark when he says that Kreisler’s “contempt” for everyone else seems to stem from “the Cynic’s dishonourable condition” (209). The narrator, too, mirrors this perception of Kreisler and his ineffectiveness. When Vokt abandons Kreisler to the Liepmann’s hospitality, Kreisler continues to visit them for the sole purpose of “sneering” at them, “as though the aimlessness of his visits were an insult that had at last been taken up” (81). As a result, Kreisler’s opposition to the Liepmann is merely the presentation of a negative version of what the dominant culture represents, which is too easily resolved as his simple inability to participate in social life. What we find, once again, Kreisler believing that he is transgressing social codes in a kind of heroic opposition that challenges the coherence of the situation, even as the narrative makes clear that his exclusion is all too comprehensible.

Kreisler is often the lynchpin in arguments concerning *Tarr*’s ostensible conservativeness, particularly due to his death in the final section and the novel’s lack of satisfying closure (Wood 162). The social system is restored, the enemy’s incursions are ignored and suppressed, and the characters appear to continue to live in much the same way they did at

the novel's opening. Moreover, Kreisler demonstrates the kind of individualism that Lewis will critique in the literary marketplace in his later work. This character disavows social influence, and sets himself up as authentic in opposition to the superficiality of social life. Despite this outline of Kreisler's intentions, he nonetheless celebrates individuality even as the novel demonstrates that his actions ultimately serve to support and reestablish the status quo. Lewis therefore punctures the fantasy of an individual "outsider" incomprehensible to those within the system that he seeks to distress. Like Bertha, Kreisler sees the Liepmann as the bulwark against which he will test his agency. But even though both characters are motivated by a similar impulse, they demonstrate different modes of objecting to the state of the situation. Whereas Bertha sought to carve out a space of individual agency by manipulating the Liepmann's rules to her own ends, Kreisler seeks simply to consider himself outside their purview. Bertha wants to operate inside the system, but believes she has the ability to exert control over the way it functions, whereas Kreisler wants to disrupt it but reside outside of it. In both cases, their attempts fail. What the novel then exposes as illusory is their shared belief that their agency resides in a pre- or extra-social core of the self that grants them agency.

In sum, Kreisler causes crises for those with whom he interacts: he is the cause of social discomfort at the Liepmann's gatherings and at the Bonnington Club, he violently attacks Bertha, forces a mystified Soltyk into a duel, and wanders to the border of France and Germany where he is arrested by confused and annoyed German soldiers. If his histrionic trajectory suggests that his disruptions should lead to a novelistic climax, this conventional arc is never fully realized in *Tarr*. Moreover, his actions do not inspire other characters' outrage, but rather their desire to be rid of him. His eventual suicide is represented in factual detail, and the body the police officers find in his cell "vex[es]" them so that they "thrust it savagely into the earth" (251). Despite

Kreisler's dramatic actions, and the fact that he is the "common enemy" in *Tarr* (151), his gambits are ineffectual and cast him as the scapegoat that ensures that the social order will continue as is. The bitterly ironic moral—if there is one—of Kreisler's arc is that an "authentic" reaction to one's social situation misunderstands the extent to which ideology guides others' understanding of authenticity, and that the rejection of social reality is a naïve attempt to disavow the power of "the domination achieved by an idea" (*Enemy* 1: 106).

"Tragic Laughter": The Evental Logic of Lewisian Satire

What conclusions can we draw from *Tarr*'s focus on the problems with agency, if its central characters appear to demonstrate different but ultimately ineffective subjective positions? While *Tarr* presents the ways in which embattled individuals attempt, and fail, to work against the influence of groups, Lewis's *Tarr* is less about developing attempts to bootstrap oneself from the limitations of ideological imbrication than it is about exposing how group influence works on the subject in unconscious ways. Consequently, the novel demonstrates the evental logic of satire: while the characters seem to dedicate themselves to lost causes, *Tarr* does not fully embrace the pessimism that their failures might otherwise suggest. The absence of characters who can reevaluate their understandings of personality, agency, and choice reveals to the reader the insufficiency of the state of the situation. The solution that the novel presents, insofar as it is a solution, is that a "non-moral" satirical novel could present a critique of ideology that exposes the mechanisms by which ideology operates and thus point to the "hole[s] in knowledge" that the novel makes sensible.

Even if the novel's characters do not demonstrate how one could position oneself for effective individual agency, the novel itself formally demonstrates how an artist or author can

present a method by which one could criticize the lack of effective agency, and thereby open up alternatives, possibilities, or possible futures. While this is by no means a satisfactory argument for the individualist, or the individual revolutionary, it is the means by which Lewis reinforces his assertion that art and artists have an important part to play in cultural production. I will address how Lewis goes about doing this by first outlining some of the ways in which Lewis's criticism of the individual, the self, and agency has been discussed by scholars in the field, and to conclude this section, I will turn to his short essay from *Men Without Art*, "The Greatest Satire is Non-Moral," in order to explore how Lewis might understand the efficacy of *Tarr*'s satirical project.

For many contemporary critics, Lewis's conception of individual agency—as limited to the "play" of artifice, or to the realm of the author—leads them to consider his conception of individuality as unsatisfactory at best, or cynically avoidant at worst. This is partially due to the negative critique that functions through the satirical representation of every character—as no character stands for the positive assertion of free will, the argument seems to be that agency and autonomy are impossible. For Andrzej Gasiorek and Nathan Waddell, Lewis's employment of satire is therefore "Žižekian" ("Introduction" 3)—a shorthand reference to Slavoj Žižek's popularization of the concept of "ideological cynicism."⁴⁰ Ideological cynicism is the partial

⁴⁰ Although Žižek adapts the concept from contemporary German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk's *Cynical Reason*, Žižek's Lacan-inspired analysis of Sloterdijk's concept shows it operating in modern culture and media, from whence literary critics have found an opening through which to analyze works of literature that may also be classified under this tendency of thought. According to Žižek, the classical Cynic pretends to capitulate his or her place in society (or citizenship) in order to prove a point; however, all the while, the Cynic remains part of the society and participates in it. The most prominent example Žižek offers is that of a person who claims disaffection with his or her political status quo: she wears that "mask" of disaffection and is happy wearing it, and thereby finds what the socio-symbolic order "must repress to organize itself" (26), and employs it. This ironic "mask" merely identifies, and at times even implicitly supports, reasons to enable ongoing repression.

recognition that one is involved in a system that denies the potential for any alternative system: cynicism, flippancy, or self-serving pacifism are the individual responses that mark this essentially structural limitation in the plane of human behavior. But Gasiorek also argues that Lewis “defended . . . the possibility of at least partial self-knowledge and cognition of reality, maintaining that these had to be fought for if humans were to have any chance of freeing themselves from solipsistic fantasies and political ideologies” (“Wyndham Lewis on Art” 211). Gasiorek suggests that Lewis supported the view that, contra behaviorism, there remains the possibility for agency even within an ideology that resists granting it effectiveness. Allan Pero extends the argument for Lewis’s support of a kind of partial self-knowledge to the satiric form of his novels; when Lewis produces a “self-mocking study of urban paranoia” (11), he creates the conditions of not only satire, but also an ironic narrative voice that hints at the possibility of self-criticism and objective reevaluation. For many scholars, the concern is that there is a vast chasm between self-mockery and self-awareness; Lewis’s self-mockery appears to plague his readers with the voice of a cynic who revels in a state of unfocussed and ultimately aimless critique. Lisa Siraganian summarizes the problem succinctly: “Lewis’s (supposed) ignorance of his own critique’s totality, his supposed unconscious satire . . . presents problems. It is hard to make sense of a form of satire in which the writer is unaware of the current problem (or at least its effects) that he is diagnosing” (67). But, as we have seen, there is ample evidence that when Lewis identifies the problem of an individual who has become subject to, and subjectivized by, an ideological system in *Tarr*, his satire focuses not on the ideological system, but on characters such as Kreisler and Bertha whose behaviors demonstrate that their cynical rejection of that system ultimately serves to perpetuate it. The target of his *critique*, on the other hand, is

precisely the system that produces this response of cynical rejection, even if that system's mechanisms are not precisely identified. As he claims in *The Enemy*, his interest is in "things, not people" (1: xiv).

Critics who engage with Lewis's work often reach a theoretical impasse because of the lack of distinction between the object of Lewis's satire and the critique that it expresses. Those who ask whether Lewis wants to rescue or produce an account of agency that fully contends with the difficulty of challenging the status quo often conclude that Lewis lacks characters who might provide sufficiently successful examples of uncompromised agents. But perhaps the question is not *why* the characters in *Tarr* do not wrest themselves from ideological influence to alter the structure itself; as the novel demonstrates, the impact of "internationalist" tourism, and the ideological influence personified by the Liepmann, are in effect long before its cast of characters could recognize or act against them. Instead, the question *Tarr* implicitly poses is *how* each character negotiates with the state of the situation. Lewis's seeks to stage the moments in which characters are faced with events that force them to negotiate, minutely and at times in excruciatingly mundane detail, their ways of being in a social environment, even when changing the structure itself is impossible for them to conceive, let alone achieve. In every case, the method through which they negotiate with the social space is to inhabit a persona or a role that has already been crafted and reproduced, and is therefore included to perpetuate the state of the situation. What is crucial about this pattern is that the characters' actions are consistently satirized. *Tarr*'s narrator suggests that the novel's characters are complicit in the creation of their surroundings, are vaguely hypocritical because they cannot recognize their complicity, and are so engaged in the minutiae of their social lives that they do not acknowledge how their actions affect those around them.

Critics often seek to find the moral centre of the novel in its titular character, and too casually mention that Tarr features as a kind of mouthpiece for Lewis (Betsworth 741). But if Lewis shares Tarr's perspective on various subjects, we must remember that Lewis also satirizes Tarr's point of view: as Kevin Rulo cogently argues, a modernist such as Lewis "explores the limits of satiric rhetoric" by "involv[ing] himself within the orbit of attack (as a satire of moderns against moderns)" (266; 267). Indeed, Lewis is aware of his own inclusion in his satiric attacks. Evidence of this self-awareness can be found when Lewis writes, in the introduction to the 1918 edition of the novel, "I associate myself with all [Tarr] says on the subject of humour. In fact, I put him up to it. He is one of my showmen; though, naturally, he has a private and independent life of his own, for which I should be very sorry to be held responsible" ("Preface," *Tarr* 288). Although this admission aligns Lewis with *some* of Tarr's observations, when we look at Tarr's comments on the subject of humour, we discover that Lewis may have been slightly tongue-in-cheek: "The University of Humour—that is what it is—that prevails everywhere in England for the formation of youth, provides you with nothing but a first-rate means of evading reality. [...] It would be better to face our imagination and our nerves without this drug. [...] It has served English literary art in a marvelous way: but it is more useful for art than for practical affairs" (29). Tarr's proclamation initially seems to mirror Lewis's *Blast!*, in which he writes, "Blast HUMOUR/Quack ENGLISH drug for stupidity and sleepiness. Arch enemy of REAL, conventionalizing like/gunshot, freezing supple/REAL in ferocious chemistry/of laughter" (17). However, only three pages later in *Blast!*, he "blesses" humour as a "barbarous weapon" (26), and blesses "SWIFT for his solemn bleak/wisdom of laughter" (26). To parallel this example from *Blast!*, whereas Tarr mimics *Blast!*'s critique of humour as a soporific drug, Lewis maintains that a form of humour—wielded as a weapon—is worthwhile. This much is evident in

the novel: while Tarr expresses a concern with humour as “a means of evading reality,” the failure of his own attempts to evade reality (with Bertha, with Kreisler, etc.) is humorously portrayed, and reveals that Tarr is consistently imbricated in situations and relationships that cannot be avoided. In other words, where we see Tarr’s beliefs about humour undermined by his actions, we also see Lewis ironically presenting a weaponized, satiric critique of Tarr’s ignorance.

Thus, it might appear that the novel seeks to “evade reality” by staging the humorous disconnect between characters who seem unaware of the futility of their actions, yet perform them nonetheless. But when we look closely at the pattern of characters’ decisions, we see the extent to which the novel organizes their participation in their social milieu as inevitable, and that the novel stages these moments to highlight how social life often limits the effective choices an agent might make. As Roger Henkle argues, “Lewis believes ... that his protagonists’ comic behavior has a more fundamental implication; there is only the flimsiest correlation between outward behavior and the workings of consciousness” (100). While Henkle is slightly more unforgiving than I would like to be, his assessment of characters’ behavior suggests that the novel introduces the problem of ineffectual agency in a situation that does not permit other options.

For, if the reader might laugh at the characters in *Tarr*, who are bound to, and participate in, a seemingly conventional narrative that they can neither recognize nor escape, they laugh, too, at their own imbrication. Lewis’s target of critique is the context in which the individual acts—and not the absurdity of each character’s actions. For example, *Tarr*’s narrator frequently comments unflatteringly on Tarr’s actions in ways that highlight the irony of his behaviors: when Tarr resolves to break his engagement to Bertha, we learn during the argument that he “felt that

she must, naturally, be enjoying his points” (54). The narrator reveals that Tarr’s interpretation is wildly incorrect, and that instead, his points were leading to a conclusion that would be the “harrowing reality” of the end of their engagement (54). Not to let the error lie, the narrator tells us that although Tarr is unaware of it, Bertha is in fact more keenly alert and analytical than Tarr supposes, for she does not passively enjoy Tarr’s attempt at a clean break: she thinks that Tarr is “attempting to convince himself, heartlessly, at her expense. Whether he would ever manage to do so was problematic: there was no sign of his being able to do so more to-day than any other day” (55). The narrator’s omniscience, in contrast with Tarr’s belief in his own skill at mind-reading, reinforces the sense that Tarr’s behavior is part of a routine that he has followed day after day, and the contrast that the narrator offers with Bertha reveals that she, too, has been enduring Tarr’s repeated breakup attempts. The result is a satire that claims neither that Tarr is morally wrong, nor that Bertha is right; instead, the reader might laugh at Tarr’s and Bertha’s repeated performance of an unhappy routine, despite their awareness of it. We soon discover, however, that they are concerned with the after-effects of rumor in the Liepmann-ruled Vitelotte quarter, which values their presence only when they are an item.

Tarr’s perspective vis-à-vis Bertha’s in the aforementioned scene is important to note because their ironic contrast reveals the patterns of characters’ actions and their resulting ineffectiveness. By initially presenting the characters as laughably “mechanical,” the novel magnifies the degree to which unconscious influences work to limit effective agency. In this sense, Lewis’s argument in *Tarr* does not promote defeatism, but rather redirects our focus from the question of individual autonomy to the problem of how social and ideological influence operates, and how agency might be differently imagined within the boundaries that those influences might set. While characters cannot effectively disavow their imbrication in

constraining ideological and social systems, for Lewis, one form of effective agency available in this situation is through fictionalizing the problem and making its effects the object of non-moral satire.

Indeed, *Tarr* is a satire without a moral center, which is a literary model that Lewis describes in his essay, “The Greatest Satire is Non-Moral”. Without a moral center, or character that is free from satiric representation, *Tarr* suggests that navigating the difficult situations that its characters encounter will be risible when exposed to critique and observation. The key focus in *Tarr*, therefore, is on how its satirically-rendered characters are representative examples of common ways of responding to ideological and social influence. Tarr’s satire, in this sense, exposes the ineffectiveness of these responses. In this short essay in *Men Without Art*, Lewis argues that a “non-moral” satire does not seek to advance a moralistic view of individual characters (107), but to highlight how cultural or social activity results in characters whose habits he interprets as reminders of the power of routine:

For what else is a character in satire but [a machine]? Is it not just because they are such machines, governed by routine—or creatures that stagnate, as it were “in a leaden cistern”—that the satirist, in the first instance, has considered them suitable for satire? He who wants a jolly, carefree, bubbling, world chock-full of “charm,” must not address himself to the satirist! The wind that blows through satire is ... bitter. (113)

Although Lewis borrows “non-moral satire” from an English literary tradition associated with the “mockery” of lesser artists (Edwards, “Apes” 94), his fiction does not portray his subjects as extreme versions of the tendency he mocks (where the subject “stands confirm’d in full stupidity,” for example). We also know of Lewis’s readiness to lampoon his targets of critique,

which makes his description of characters in a satire—“machines” that “stagnate”—rather gentle by comparison. If *Tarr*’s characters are “suitable for critique” because they are engaged in a kind of struggle to make their choices effective in a life that is constricted by routine, this makes their “confirmation” of intellectual and moral inferiority difficult.

The reaction that this kind of satire evokes, Lewis claims, is “tragic laughter” (*Men Without Art* 113): “It is not a genial guffaw nor the titillations provoked by a harmless entertainer. It is tragic, if a thing can be tragic without pity or terror, and it seems to me it can” (113). Referencing Dryden’s rage against dullness and Pope’s and Swift’s objections to those who transgress against reason (107; 113), Lewis argues that non-moral satire tends to understand ethics in a broader social sense as the exercise of “excellent judgment” concerning issues of shared consequence in social life (109). By way of explanation, he claims that the non-moral satire’s evocation of “tragic laughter” in reaction to mechanical characters “possesses great powers of magnification” (109), which allows this form of satire to “ente[r] fields which are commonly regarded as the preserve of more ‘serious’ forms of reaction” (113). Although Lewis’s essay is brief on this subject, he suggests that “tragic laughter” can evoke an understanding of the state of the situation—and the concomitant tragic recognition that the situation does not suffice—even though the possibility of effectively acting on that recognition seems slight. In sum, Lewis seems to hope that the “excellent judgment” must be sought in the reader when it cannot be found in the moral center of the text.

“Tragic laughter” is therefore Lewis’s language for the evental logic. If “excellent judgment” is born of the “great powers of magnification,” these are both inspired by a sense that what needs to be magnified is an insufficient state of the situation. As Jamie Wood argues, Lewis’s form of satire is “a means of representing and, possibly, diagnosing a disordered world”

(93); it therefore offers readers a choice: “modern man can opt to use language to humanize or to dehumanize ourselves: we can either accept our reason as a ‘refinement, merely, of the mechanical animal condition’ or we can look upon it ‘as a *gift*’” (94; original emphasis). It is in this sense that Lewis does not offer a complete vision of the state of the situation—a quality that Fredric Jameson argues characterizes modernist utopian fiction. Instead, *Tarr* offers an objectification of the problem, which could suggest, albeit negatively, “what is not imaginable and not conceivable” (Jameson, *Valences* 413). In other words, the novel asks its readers to recognize a truth, despite its occlusions, for only then can the event be declared.

Tarr emphasizes ideologies that inform the social systems and conditions under which each character operates, and focuses on how the group functions as a means of enforcing and encouraging those conditions. The Liepmann might inspire the aggressive and oppositional moments in the novel, and it might inspire the tragic arc of the “Mephistophelean” Kreisler (135), but the group’s presence in *Tarr* represents more than the inconvenience of social exclusion. Through *Tarr*, Lewis explores enemies as though they are symptoms of a social situation that is in need of change. He also examines the difficulty of simply exposing that reality to public view; we see him demonstrate through characters like Bertha and Kreisler that consciously changing the system to which one is inextricably linked can often result in a repetitious, ultimately unsatisfying, and unresolvable cycle or pattern. To again cite Jameson, in *Tarr*, Lewis provides a “dramatic account of ideological production, unable to be grounded and completed by a vision of the total social process of which ideology is a part” (*Fables* 135); in other words, the characters’ lack of effective agency reveals their only partial vision of their social sphere—a partial vision that inspires the production of seemingly avant-garde or

revolutionary ways of being that are revealed to be rather conventional, both in thought and in (in)action.

There is “no outside” of ideology, *Tarr* shows, as it is the element within which each character operates. As Stephen Sicari claims,

Of all the modernists [...], Lewis shows the most awareness of the workings of ideology in the formation of attitudes, values, and identity. His novels often include depictions of individuals as mere puppets or mechanisms constructed according to national or political ideology. [...] No modernist artist seems more aware of ideology and its powerful claims in constructing the subject; yet none seems more adamant in insisting on the existence of an essential human self and its potential for agency. This is the paradox of Lewis. (93-94).

I hope, at this stage, that my argument has gone some way in challenging the paradoxical caveat that Sicari appends to his description here. While I obviously dissent from Sicari’s closing reversion to the now-canonical insistence on Lewis’s devotion to the essential or “core” self, I certainly concur with his emphasis on the persistence and pervasiveness of Lewis’s ideological focus in his critiques. The novel presents a number of satirized characters, all of whom share in common the inability to effectively employ their agency, or to reflect on how their motivations might be influenced by forces beyond their control. *Tarr* thus anticipates *The Enemy*’s attack on the avant-garde cultural class by including the Liepmann as its representative: in this novel, the group has an admonitory function, and will quash those who oppose their rigid worldview; they have a vested interest in the continuation of the status quo; and they will inspire conformity as the basis for ostensibly revolutionary action—selling “revolution” as one more ready-made space of identification wherein the individual can mistake accommodation for liberty.

Frederick Tarr's conception of individuality as a recursive series of representations therefore works to draw our attention away from the exploration of an inner life to instead reflect on social environments, influences, and behaviors that shape and produce that inner life. Bertha's adoption of the Liepmann's concern with appearances is revealed to be an abortive attempt to control interpretation within the system in which she is imbricated, which, she comes to understand, cannot be controlled. Kreisler's enemy-like actions are similarly ineffective, and are revealed to be merely reactions that support a negative version of what the Liepmann represents. Through its adherence to representation and appearance, the Liepmann is cast as a human, collective representative of ideology: one that determines the way in which characters see and understand themselves, their options, and the world around them. Characterizing the Liepmann in this way, *Tarr* stages the way in which the situation endures, and thus suggests that actions that intend to reclaim an authentic core to individual agency will fail. His goal, instead, is to satirize and critique the state of the situation in the hope of finding ways of understanding representation as the means by which to produce an active subject.

EPILOGUE: “Thinking Through a Form of Thought”

The preceding pages sought to pursue traces of the evental subject in order to locate agency in the constitutive affective and representational networks that D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis emphasize in both their critical and fictional works. In so doing, this study has argued that both authors attempt to re-understand the subject in processual terms: the subject does not pre-exist its participation in public space, but it instead comes to be as part of a dynamic affective field—a condition of subjectivity that is crucial to affirm before one can imagine how agency might manifest. They also predicate this understanding of the subject upon a notion of novelty that they conceive as an unpredictable and incommensurable encounter with the unknown. Consequently, this novel understanding of subjectivity implies that they also seek to re-understand modern agency.

My focus on the processual subject reconfigures analyses of these authors’ works. Although much of this study engages with some of Lawrence’s and Lewis’s understudied texts, such as *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *The Enemy*, it does so because these texts forcefully draw into relief important dynamics that they develop across their entire body of work. At a superficial level, however, the inchoate quality of these authors’ exploratory literary-critical work (a feature shared by much of the period’s literary criticism) is often more distractingly disorganized than readily accessible. Yet we must account for the necessarily obscure nature of expressing the kind of novelty in which they are interested—one that resists inclusion within the bounds of the intelligible—and, in so doing, account for the gesture underlying the critique, the directions to which it points, and the truths that their work makes sensible. In this regard, I have sought to produce an “applied thinking of the event” (as Bruno Bosteels puts it) that mobilizes Alain Badiou’s philosophical framework as a means of focusing our attention on the ways in which

Lawrence's and Lewis's work explores novel forms of subjectivity and their potential for agency.

Despite the fact that these authors are fairly divergent exemplars of modernism—Lawrence associated with affective networks on the one hand, and Lewis with autonomy and objective observability on the other—they have often been understood as sharing a commitment to an authentic, essential, or core self as the basis of subjective autonomy. Taking some distance from this characterization of their position, I have sought to emphasize their sustained attention, across a multitude of texts that span years of their artistic output, to forms of subjectivity that trouble precisely those notions of autonomy and essentialism. To this end, these authors emphasize the extent to which the subject is a dynamic and fluctuating site that exists only in the process of being continuously shaped and reshaped, limited by forces of social determination and yet capable of change.

The notion of the evental subject thus provides a way for us to think with Lawrence and Lewis as they think through two tensions in modernist thought: the mass cultural individual versus the autonomous self, and theories of social determination versus theories of radical novelty that seek to imagine an escape from the determining forces of social life. It retrains our understanding of Lawrence's and Lewis's work in a way that allows us to better assess the resources they have provided for an understanding of the subject that is *neither* bound fatalistically to the state of the situation *nor* the embodiment of a wilful individual autonomy capable of changing it. Instead, each author *both* challenges the existence of an instrumentalist agent who exists beneath, behind, or outside of the networks of affect and representation in which it participates, *and* insists that the subject has the capacity to participate in the introduction of radical novelty. The event—understood as an “irruption” of radical novelty that renders

sensible “hole[s]” in the systems of knowledge governing a given situation (Badiou, *Inaesthetics* 10)—does not predicate the emergence of novelty upon the suspension or occlusion of socio-historically determining forces. Instead, it affirms the subject’s role in an evental process that reconfigures the state of the situation. Particularly relevant in this context is the notion of fidelity to the event: the decision to participate, moment by moment, in the affirmation of a novel irruption that could reshape the state of the situation, which effectively ties radical novelty to the contingencies of human action in shared social space.

Understanding the subject and its agency in this way, Lawrence and Lewis evaluate the extent to which the individual is embedded within a set of social norms, and yet is not entirely limited by them. By critiquing *emotion* and *morality* or the authentic and egoic individual, respectively, Lawrence and Lewis demonstrate that social determinants and ideological influence have dominated the understanding of subjectivity. Indeed, they claim that determining forces have come to *replace* the understanding of subjectivity with ready simulacra of commodified affective and expressive modes—so much so that these simulacra come to be accepted as expressions of individuality or replacements for subjectivity. Thus, they critique culturally-sanctioned, mass-produced or ready-made emotions and personality types, and those who adopt them, to demonstrate that our understanding of this conventional emotion, or of that typified personality, is taken to be not only authentic, but also liberatory. The fundamental point of their critique is not merely that continued consumption and adoption of intelligible and reproducible modes of affect and other simulacra of subjectivity maintains the state of the situation, but that we are encouraged to misrecognize these simulacra as expressions of an authentic egoic core and its individual agency. Therefore, the internalization of these modes of subjective expression, and their celebration as “authentic” expressions of individuality, is precisely the mechanism by

which the situation reproduces itself. The irony to which they draw our attention is the extent to which the resistance of the authentic or egoic self is taken to be an antidote to the predations of socio-historically determining forces, when it is in fact the fundamental mechanism by which those forces operate. One of the more egregious effects of this mechanism, as Lawrence and Lewis exemplify through Birkin and Bertha, respectively, is that the individual becomes convinced that agency is something that one owns, and that its effectiveness is dependent on the subject's ability to instrumentally deploy elements that are already included in the state of the situation. In their fictional work, they confirm that agency deployed in this way will work to further entrench the subject in the situation as it stands—the status quo.

The evental subject is not an integral source of agency that is set apart or exempted from the social order; instead, its agency emerges through its re-understanding of the nature of its embeddedness. Thus, the labour of Lawrence's and Lewis's nonfiction writing confronts the difficulty of establishing a form of subjectivity that might sidestep the ideological circuit. Lawrence's insistence on *relation* and on the encounter with the unknown in *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *Studies in Classic American Literature* emphasizes the experience of a subject constituted by its engagement in affective networks. Similarly, the persona depicted in *The Enemy* stands in for the experience of influence in extremis, where the networks of self-representation within which the Enemy operates are analogous to the networks of affect that Lawrence describes. Thus, unlike Bertha, who remains committed to an ahistorical "soul" or core self that directs the play with representations or pre-exists its presentation in public space, the evental subject only comes into existence through its play with representation. Insisting that agency is a product of a process in which one is continuously affected and influenced, Lawrence and Lewis break the circuit of ideological influence that effectively eliminates the potential for

agency. They instead theorize a form of subjectivity that is constituted by its interactions with others, and refuses to insist on a controlling interiority or pre-existing authentic core that masters its public presentations and their effects. In this regard, in their nonfiction, they produce the *experience of a novel form of subjectivity*.

In other words, the evental site is, for Lawrence and Lewis, a fundamentally subjective space. Once we contest the notion of an essential core to the self that resides within, or that stands outside of our relationships and influences, our understanding of the subject ceases to be dominated by a simple reproduction of “authentic” personalities that enable a retreat to some sort of core that exists outside of ideology. The form of agency towards which Lawrence and Lewis work thus depends on the capacity to extricate the subject from the frames provided by notions of authenticity and essence. Thus, the event is an irruption from within the situation that, in the case of these modernists, produces an altered understanding of subjectivity: one that amplifies and affirms the agency of the subject who labours in the situation. Put another way, the *experience of this form of subjectivity is the event*, and the agency of the evental subject is its deployment of this form of subjectivity to declare, publicly, that something *happens* here, to our understanding of ourselves.

Works Cited

- Adamowski, T. H. "Self/Body/Other: Orality and Ontology in Lawrence." *D.H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 13, Fall 1980, pp. 193-208.
- Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated by Robert Huellot-Kentor, U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Anderson, Perry. "Components of the National Culture." *New Left Review*, no. 50, July/Aug 1968, pp. 3-57.
- Armstrong, Tim. *Modernism, Technology, and the Body: A Cultural Study*. Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Asher, Kenneth. *Literature, Ethics, and the Emotions*. Cambridge UP, 2017.
- Auden, W.H. *The English Auden: Poems, Essays, and Dramatic Writings 1927–1939*, London: Faber, 1977.
- Ayers, David. *Modernism and Race*. Edited by Len Platt, Cambridge UP, 2011.
- . *Wyndham Lewis and Western Man*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992.
- Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. Translated by Oliver Feltham, Continuum, 2005.
- . *Handbook of Inaesthetics*. Translated by Alberto Toscano, Stanford UP, 2005.
- . *In Praise of Love*. Translated by Peter Bush, Flammarion SA, 2009.
- . *Logics of Worlds*. Translated by Alberto Toscano, Continuum, 2009.
- . "On Optimism." *Youtube*, uploaded by TheNexusInstitute, 18 Dec. 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6O_d1DVk3U
- . *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism*. Translated by Ray Brassier, Stanford UP, 2003.
- . *The Century*. Translated by Alberto Toscano, Polity, 2007.
- Bell, Michael. *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.

---. *Primitivism*. Methuen, 1972.

Bell, Millicent. "D. H. Lawrence and the Flight from History." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 106, no. 4, Fall 1998, pp. 604-18.

Betsworth, Leon. "'A Serious Place': Wyndham Lewis, *Tarr*, and the Café." *Textual Practice*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2017, pp. 725-46.

Black, Michael. *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Philosophical Works*. Cambridge UP, 1992.

Blanchard, Lydia. "Lawrence as Reader of Classic American Literature." *The Challenge of D.H. Lawrence*. Edited by Michael Squires and Keith Cushman, U of Minnesota P, 1990, pp. 159-174.

Booth, Howard J., editor. *New D.H. Lawrence*. Manchester UP, 2009.

Bosteels, Bruno and Alain Badiou. "Can Change Be Thought?" *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions*. Edited by Gabriel Riera. State U of New York P, 2005, pp. 244-60.

Bosteels, Bruno. "Thinking the Event: Alain Badiou's Philosophy and the Task of Critical Theory." *The History of Continental Philosophy*. Edited by Todd May. U of Chicago P, 2011, pp. 69-87.

Branda, Eldon S. "Textual Changes in Women in Love." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 6, no. 3, Autumn 1964, pp. 306-21.

Brooker, Peter. *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism*. Palgrave, 2004.

Brown, Nicholas. *Utopian Generations: the Political Horizon of Twentieth-Century Literature*. Princeton UP, 2005.

Burstein, Jessica. *Cold Modernism*. University Park, Pennsylvania: UPenn UP, 2012.

Carlston, Erin G. "Acting the Man: Wyndham Lewis and the Future of Masculinity." *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2018, pp. 771-89.

Cavitch, David. *D.H. Lawrence and the New World*. Oxford UP, 1969.

Chalk, Bridget. "'I am Not England:': Narrative and National Identity in Aaron's Rod and Sea and Sardinia." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 31, no. 4, Summer 2008, pp. 54-70.

Clarke, Bruce. "D.H. Lawrence and the *Egoist* Group." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 18, no. 1, Winter 1992, pp. 65-76.

Crawford, Rachel. "English Georgic and British Nationhood." *ELH*, vol. 65, no. 1, Spring 1998, pp. 123-58.

Day, Jon. "At the IWM North." *London Review of Books*, vol. 39, no. 19, 5 October 2017.

Dekobra, Maurice. "The Art of Making Enemies." *Daily Herald*, 21 May 1932, p. 8.

Delavenay, Emile. *D.H. Lawrence: the Man and His Work: The Formative Years, 1885-1919*. London: Heinemann, 1972.

Eagleton, Terry. *Exiles and Émigrés*. New York: Schocken, 1970.

Edwards, Paul. "Introduction." *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change*, by Wyndham Lewis, edited by Paul Edwards. pp. 13-25.

---. "The Apes of God and the English Classical Tradition." In *Wyndham Lewis: a Critical Guide*. Edited by Andrzej Gasiorek and Nathan Waddell, Edinburgh UP, 2015, pp. 91-107.

---. *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer*. London: Yale UP, 2000.

Eldred, Janet M. "Plot and Subplot in *Women in Love*." *Journal of Narrative Theory*, vol. 20, no. 3, Fall 1990, pp. 284-95.

Eliot, T.S. *Letters of TS Eliot, Volume 1: 1898-1922*. Edited by Valerie Eliot, London: Faber and Faber, 1988.

- . *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. 1933. London: Faber & Faber, 1950.
- Fielding, Heather. "How the Taxi-Cab Driver Reads: Wyndham Lewis, Modernist Aesthetics, and the Novel as Machine." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 38, no. 1, Fall 2014, pp. 128-46.
- Fleishman, Avrom. "He Do the Polis in Different Voices: Lawrence's Later Style." *D. H. Lawrence: a Centenary Consideration*. Edited by Peter Balbert and Phillip L. Marcus, Cornell UP, 1985, pp. 162-79.
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. Edward Arnold, 1974.
- Foshay, Toby. *Wyndham Lewis and the Avant-Garde*. Montreal: McGill UP, 1992.
- Gasiorek, Andrej. "Lewis and Technology." Gasiorek and Waddell, pp. 159-172.
- . "Wyndham Lewis and the Critique of Modernism." *The Cambridge Companion to Wyndham Lewis*. Edited by Tyrus Miller, Cambridge UP, 2016, pp. 32-43.
- . "Wyndham Lewis on Art, Culture, and Politics in the 1930s." *Wyndham Lewis and the Cultures of Modernity*. Edited by Andrzej Gasiorek, Alice Reeve-Tucker, et al., Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, pp. 201-21.
- Gasiorek, Andrej and Nathan Waddell. *Wyndham Lewis: a Critical Guide*. Edinburgh UP, 2015.
- . "Introduction." Gasiorek and Waddell, pp. 1-5.
- Gibson, Andrew. *Beckett and Badiou: the Pathos of Intermittency*. Oxford UP, 2006.
- Goldstone, Andrew. *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to de Man*. Oxford UP, 2013.
- Gorak, Jan. "From Prodigality to Economy: T.S. Eliot on the 'Minor Elizabethans'." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 108, no. 4, October 2014, pp. 1064-85.

- Gregory, Rosemary, and Benjamin Kohlmann, editors. *Utopian Spaces of Modernism*. Palgrave, 2012.
- Green, Eleanor H. "Blueprints for Utopia: the Political Ideas of Neitzsche and Lawrence." *Culture, Theory and Critique*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1974, pp. 141-61.
- Harrison, Andrew. "Dust-Jackets, Blurbs and Forewords: the Marketing of Sons and Lovers." Booth, pp. 17-33.
- Hatch, David Allen. "Eclectic/Subversive Period: Eugene Jolas and the Modernist Laboratory of Transition." *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1-2, 2016, pp. 48-73.
- Henkle, Roger. "The 'Advertised' Self: Wyndham Lewis's Satire." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 13, no. 1, Autumn 1979, pp. 95-108.
- Herzinger, Kim A. *D.H. Lawrence in His Time: 1908-1915*. London: Bucknell UP, 1982.
- Hilliard, Christopher. "The Literary Underground of 1920s London." *Social History*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2008, pp. 164-82.
- Ingersoll, Earl. "Staging the Gaze in D.H. Lawrence's Women in Love." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1994, pp. 268-80.
- Jaillant, Lise. *Cheap Modernism: Expanding Markets, Publishers' Series and the English Avant-Garde*. Edinburgh UP, 2017.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist*. New York: Verso Books, 2008.
- . *Valences of the Dialectic*. Verso, 2009.
- Jolas, Eugene. "Revolt Against the Philistine." *transition*, vol. 6, September 1927, pp. 176-9.
- Jolas, Eugene, Elliott Paul and Robert Sage. "First Aid to the Enemy." *transition*, vol. 3, no. 9, December 1927. Kraus Reprint, 1967. pp. 161-76.

Jolas, Eugene, and Elliott Paul. "Introduction." *transition*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1927. Kraus
Reprint, 1967. pp. 135-8.

Junyk, Ihor. *Foreign Modernism: Cosmopolitanism, Identity, and Style in Paris*. U of Toronto P,
2013.

Kalaidjian, Andrew. "Positive Inertia: D.H. Lawrence and the Aesthetics of Generation." *Journal
of Modern Literature*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 38-55.

Kenner, Hugh. *Wyndham Lewis*. New York: New Directions, 1954.

Kinhead-Weekes, Mark. *D.H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922*. Vol. 1. Cambridge, 1992.

Klein, Scott. "Introduction." *Tarr*. Oxford UP, 2010. pp. ix-xxix.

Kley, Antje. "'keeping pace with the visual revolution:' Intermediary Reference in Gertrude
Stein's Prose Poems *Tender Buttons* and Wyndham Lewis's Novel *Tarr*."

Amerikastudien/American Studies, vol. 49, no. 4, 2004, pp. 515-38.

Kohlmann, Benjamin. "Introduction." Gregory and Kohlmann, pp. 1-19.

Lawrence, D. H. "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*." *Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos
of Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Edited by Michael Squires, Cambridge UP, 1993. pp. 305-35.

---. "Democracy." *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*. Edited by
Michael Herbert, Cambridge UP, 1997, pp. 63-83.

---. *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*. Ed. Harry T. Moore. Viking Press, 1962.

---. "Foreword." *All Things are Possible*, by Lev Shestov, translated by S. S. Koteliansky, Ohio
UP, 1977, pp. 3-5.

---. "Hymns in a Man's Life." *Late Essays and Articles*. Edited by James T. Boulton, Cambridge
UP, 2004, pp. 128-34.

---. "John Galsworthy." *Selected Literary Criticism*. pp. 118-31.

- . *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Cambridge UP, 1993.
- . Letter to S. S. Kotliansky. 15 Dec 1916. Kotliansky Papers, British Library, London, UK, f. 260-1.
- . "Love." *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*. Edited by Michael Herbert, Cambridge UP, 1988, pp. 7-12.
- . "Morality and the Novel." *Selected Literary Criticism*. 108-113. *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, pp. 171-6.
- . "The State of Funk." *Late Essays and Articles*. Edited by James T. Boulton, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 212-24.
- . *Studies in Classic American Literature*. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- . *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Edited by Bruce Steele, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- . "Surgery for the Novel—Or a Bomb." *Selected Literary Criticism*. New York: Viking Press, 1956, pp. 114-16.
- . "The Dragon of the Apocalypse." *Selected Literary Criticism*, pp. 153-66.
- . "The Novel and the Feelings." *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, pp. 201-05.
- . *Time and Western Man*. Edited by Paul Edwards, Black Sparrow Press, 1993.
- . "Why the Novel Matters." *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. pp. 193-98.
- . *Women in Love*. Edited by David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, Penguin, 2007.
- Lecerle, Arthur. *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*. Edinburgh UP, 2010.
- Lewis, Wyndham. *Blast!* 1914. Berkeley: Ginkgo Press, 2008.
- . *BLAST 2: War Number*. 1915. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow, 1981.

- . *Blasting and Bombardiering*. 1937. Berkeley: U of California P, 1967.
- . "'Detachment' and the Fictionist." *The English Review*, vol. 59, Oct/Nov 1934, pp. 441-52; 564-73.
- . *Doom of Youth*. 1932. New York: Haskell House, 1973.
- . *Hitler*. 1931. New York: Gordon Press, 1972 ed.
- . "Letter to G.B. Shaw." 1912? Shaw Papers: Series I, Vol. XXVII, British Library, London, UK, ff. 216.
- . *Men Without Art*. 1934. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964 ed.
- . *Tarr*. Edited by Scott W. Klein, Oxford UP, 2010.
- . *The Enemy: a Review of Art and Literature*. Nos. 1-3 (1927-9). Edited by Wyndham Lewis, New York: Kraus Reprint, 1967.
- . *The Tyro*. No .1. Edited by Wyndham Lewis. Brown University Library.
<https://library.brown.edu/jpegs/1160147035671014.jpg>
- . "What it Feels Like to Be an Enemy." *Daily Herald*, 30 May 1932, p. 8.
- Leys, Ruth. "The Turn to Affect: A Critique." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 37, no. 3, Spring 2011, pp. 434-72.
- Levenson, Michael. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of the English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*. Cambridge, 1984.
- Liebman, Sheldon W. "The Turning Point: Eliot's 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism'." *boundary 2*, vol. 9, no. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 197-218.
- Lucas, Duncan A. *Affect Theory, Genre, and the Example of Tragedy: Dreams We Learn*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

- Mackenzie, Iain. *Resistance and the Politics of Truth: Foucault, Deleuze, Badiou*. Transcript Verlag, 2018.
- Mansanti, Céline. "Between Modernisms: transition (1927-38)." *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Vol II: North America 1894-1960*. Edited by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 718-36.
- Marshall, Ashley. "T.S. Eliot on the Limits of Criticism: The Anomalous 'Experiment' of 1929." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 100, no. 3, July 2005, pp. 609-20.
- Massumi, Brian. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. MIT Press, 2011.
- Mensch, Barbara. *D. H. Lawrence and the Authoritarian Personality*. St. Martin's, 1991.
- Miller, Tyrus. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction and the Arts Between the World Wars*. U of California P, 1999.
- Mitchell, Judith. "Women and Wyndham Lewis." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, Summer 1978, pp. 223-31.
- Munton, Alan. "'Imputing Noxiousness': Aggression and Mutilation in Recent Lewis Criticism." *Wyndham Lewis Annual*, vol. 4, 1997, pp. 5-20.
- . "Wyndham Lewis: The Relation between the Theory and the Fiction, from his Earliest Writings to 1941." PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1976.
- Murray, Rachel. "'Diabolical Indigestion': Forms of Distaste in Wyndham Lewis's Body of Work." *Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies*, vol. 6, 2015, pp. 5-33.
- Myers, Jeffrey. "Thomas Hardy and the Warriors." *The New Criterion*, vol. 21, no. 1, Sept 2002, pp. 34-40.

Nickels, Joel. "Anti-Egoism and the Collective Life: Allegories of Agency in Wyndham Lewis's 'Enemy of the Stars'." *Criticism*, vol. 48, no. 3, Summer 2007, pp. 347-73.

---. *The Poetry of the Possible: Spontaneity, Modernism, and the Multitude*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

North, Michael. *Novelty: a History of the New*. U of Chicago P, 2013.

O'Keeffe, Paul. *Some Sort of Genius: a Life of Wyndham Lewis*. Counterpoint, 2015.

Parker, Valerie. "Lewis, Art, and Women." *Wyndham Lewis: a Revaluation*. Edited by Jeffrey Meyers. McGill UP, 1980, pp. 211-23.

Peppis, Paul. *Literature, Politics, and the English Avant-Garde: Nation and Empire 1901-1918*. Cambridge UP, 2009.

Pero, Allan. "Introduction." *Self Condemned*. Edited by Allan Pero, Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010, pp. 3-24.

Phillips, Ivan. "Political Incorrectness Gone Sane: Lewis, Race and Gender." In *Wyndham Lewis: a Critical Guide*, pp. 112-27.

Philpotts, Matthew. "The Role of the Periodical Editor." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 107, no. 1, Jan 2012, pp. 39-64.

Pilditch, Jan. *The Critical Response to D.H. Lawrence*, London, Greenwood Press, 2001.

Poltier, Hugues. "Qu'est-ce Que la Pensée du Politique?: Une Introduction au Projet Philosophique de Claude Lefort." *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, series 3, vol. 126, no. 2, 1994, pp. 119-41.

Potter, Rachel. *Modernism and Democracy: Literary Culture 1900-1930*. Oxford UP, 2006.

Pound, Ezra. "Letters February 1928-Aug 1928." *Pound/Zukofsky: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky*. Edited by Barry Ahearn, New Directions, 1987, pp. 6-15.

- Rainey, Lawrence S. *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1998.
- Riding, Laura, and Robert Graves. *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*. 1928. New York: Haskell House, 1969.
- Rosenbaum, S. P. *Aspects of Bloomsbury*. Macmillan, 1998.
- Rosenquist, Rob. *Modernism, the Market, and the Institution of the New*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2009.
- Rosenthal, Lecia. *Mourning Modernism: Literature, Catastrophe, and the Politics of Consolation*. Fordham UP, 2011.
- Rulo, Kevin. "Modernism and the Antimodern in the 'Men of 1914'." *Neohelicon*, vol. 43, 2016, pp. 251-78.
- Sayeau, Michael. *Against the Event: the Everyday and the Evolution of Modernist Narrative*. Oxford UP, 2013.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford UP, 1985.
- Seelow, David. *Radical Modernism and Sexuality: Freud/Reich/D.H. Lawrence and Beyond*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Setz, Cathryn. "'Transoceanic' transition's Anachronistic Zeitgeists." *Modernist Cultures*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2016, pp. 65-85.
- Sheehan, Paul. *Modernism, Narrative, and Humanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Sherry, Vincent. *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Radical Modernism*. Oxford UP, 1993.
- Sicari, Stephen. *Modernist Humanism and the Men of 1914: Joyce, Lewis, Pound, and Eliot*. U of South Carolina P, 2011.

Siraganian, Lisa. *Modernism's Other Work: the Art Object's Political Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.

Sotirova, Violeta. *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*. Continuum, 2011.

Squires, Michael. "Introduction." *Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. xix-lx.

Stähler, Axel. "Re-Conceptualization of Space in Edwardian Prophecy Fiction: Heterotopia, Utopia and the Apocalypse." Gregory and Kohlmann, pp. 159-76.

Stelzig, Eugene. "Romantic Reinventions in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*." *The Wordsworth Circle*, vol. 44, no. 2/3, Spring/Summer 2013, pp. 93-97.

Stewart, Jack F. "Primitivism in *Women in Love*." Pilditch, pp. 109-24.

Stevens, Hugh. "*Women in Love*, Psychoanalysis and War." Booth, pp. 80-97.

Stoehr, Taylor. "'Mentalized Sex' in D.H. Lawrence." *Novel: a Forum on Fiction*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1975, pp. 101-22.

Swigg, Richard. *Lawrence, Hardy, and American Literature*. Oxford UP, 1972.

Thurston, Luke. *Literary Ghosts from the Victorians to Modernism: the Haunting Interval*. Routledge, 2012.

Tickner, Lise. "Bohemianism and the Cultural Field: Trigby and Tarr." *Art History*, vol. 34, no. 5, 2011, pp. 49-99.

transition. Edited by Eugene Jolas, Elliott Paul and Robert Sage. Vols. 1-3, Issues 1-8. Kraus Reprint, 1967.

Waddell, Nathan. *Modernist Nowheres: Politics and Utopia in Early Modernist Writing, 1900-1920*. London: Palgrave, 2012.

Wagner, Geoffrey. *Wyndham Lewis: a Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy*. London: Routledge, 1957.

Weller, Shane. *Modernism and Nihilism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

West, Rebecca. "Notes on Novels." Pilditch, pp. 101-04.

Wood, Jamie. "Lewis, Satire, and Literature." Gasiorsek and Waddell, pp. 82-96.

Worthen, John. "D.H. Lawrence." *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 25 May 2006.

Retrieved 27 September 2019.

---. "The Restoration of *Women in Love*." *D.H. Lawrence and the Modern World*. Cambridge UP, 1989, pp. 1-26.

Wright, Anne. *Literature of Crisis, 1910-1922*. London: Macmillan Press, 1984.

Wright, Colin. "Resurrection and Reaction in Alain Badiou: Towards an Evental Historiography." *Culture, Theory, & Critique*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2008, pp. 73-92.

Wright, Terry. "D.H. Lawrence and John Cowper Powys." *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Keith Wilson, Blackwell, 2011, pp. 465-78.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso, 1989.