

D. H. LAWRENCE AS A CRITIC OF BLOOMSBURY

by

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ABSTRACT

In the early years of this century a group of Cambridge graduates began meeting in the London district of Bloomsbury. For a period of time extending from the beginning of the second decade until well into the thirties, the Bloomsbury group, as they became known, was a powerful cultural establishment in England. A number of the major creative talents of the period were excluded by Bloomsbury, and, in turn, it was criticized by them. D.H. Lawrence was associated with Bloomsbury and he criticized it discursively. He also wrote a novel about it. Bloomsbury, as a concern in Lawrence's thought, and as a subject of what has been recognized by many to be his major novel, Women in Love, is the concern of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

In the second decade of this century the term "Bloomsbury" came to mean something more than just that part of London lying "to the north of New Oxford Street, between Tottenham Court Road ... and Gray's Inn Road."¹ It was used to distinguish a certain group of individuals sharing a common ethos, and constituting a literary and political hegemony in England. As soon as D.H. Lawrence was recognized as a literary talent, it became necessary for him to relate to this, the cultural establishment of the day. His relation with Bloomsbury, and his criticisms of it, culminating in his major novel Women in Love, provide the material for this thesis. In later chapters more will be said about the Bloomsbury ethos, but it is necessary first to provide a short account of the group's formation and also of the people to whom the term 'Bloomsbury' applies.

Cambridge University has always occupied a position of central importance in the formation and shaping of the emotional, intellectual and social ethos of the English ruling classes. It is the Cambridge of the years immediately before and after the turn of the century to which we must turn to trace the earliest friendships which became the seeds of what later developed into the Bloomsbury Group.

In the year 1899, the sons of some of the best known families in England met at Cambridge. Lytton Strachey was a member of a family whose activities in letters and in public affairs can be traced back to the sixteenth century. His mother, Lady Strachey, friend of the Huxleys and of George Eliot, was devoted to literature, and Lytton grew up reading Elizabethan and French literature from an early age. His father, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Strachey, a man of scientific interests and a Fellow of the Royal Society, was an influential public administrator. Lytton entered Trinity College and was soon on good terms with a small number of talented undergraduates. They formed one of those societies which generations of undergraduates at this, one of the oldest and most respected universities in England, have invented in order to differentiate themselves from all the other young men from equally good homes and schools. To dramatise their originality, they met every Saturday night at twelve o'clock and called themselves the Midnight Society. After reinforcing themselves with whisky or punch, they would spend hours reading such 'trifles' as Prometheus Unbound, Bartholomew Fair, or Comus, and as Strachey recalled,

as often as not it was dawn by the time we had done; and sometimes we would issue forth to perambulate the courts and cloisters, halting on Hall steps to spout passages of familiar verse...²

The other members of the Midnight Society were Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Saxon Sydney-Turner, and Thoby Stephen. It will be helpful to give a brief characterization of each of them.

John Maynard Keynes in later years recalled Clive Bell as "a gay and amiable dog." A member of the affluent hunting and shooting set, he added a more 'worldly' touch to the excessively literary atmosphere of the group. At his best when discussing the complexities of riding and hunting, he seemed to the others a little pretentiously ridiculous when he assumed the role of literary gentleman, and spoke of his plans to compose a magnum opus to deal with no less than every significant aspect of the culture of the age. This, he modestly believed, would lead to a new enlightenment, as shown by the title he proposed to give the work, The New Renaissance. Bell shared with Lytton Strachey an interest in the visual arts, and it was as an art critic that he later became known. With Thoby Stephen, Bell found himself most at ease, for Stephen was an athlete of some prowess and was equally as comfortable in the saddle as in the rooms of his friends where the literature of the past would be discussed with much solemnity. Thoby was the oldest son of Sir Leslie Stephen, editor of The Cornhill Magazine and also the Dictionary of National Biography. He was one of the most influential of the Victorian intellectuals, and numbered among his friends, Mill, Darwin and Huxley. Strachey gave Thoby Stephen the nickname "The Goth" because of his immense size, and all the others saw him as something of a heroic figure, Strachey going so far as to ask Woolf:

Don't you think that if God had to justify
the existence of the world ... it would be done
if he were to produce the Goth?

(Holroyd, Vol 1, 107)

Leonard Woolf, the son of a successful Q.C. brought into the group an air of puritan self-discipline which offered a contrast to the high spirited behaviour of the others. His powers of rational thought soon made him a trusted confidant of Strachey and the others. Sensitive to the injustices of British society, Woolf later became involved in Liberal-Fabian politics, but his lack of passion seemed to lend "his humanitarianism ... a social, economic, or political emphasis which effectively divorced it from the immediate affairs of the individual human being" (Holroyd, Vol 1, 108). Saxon Sydney-Turner, the last member of the group, was scholarly, well-read, and at first, a lively and animated undergraduate. Later, he suddenly seemed to lose all interest in his life, and began a slow process of withdrawal from active participation in any of the activities which had once moved him. On graduating, he entered the Treasury where he continued to stifle himself in a routine of uncaring monotony, and to many he seemed an unutterable bore, but he remained on good terms with his Cambridge friends and was a welcome if taciturn guest at their gatherings.

After three years, the Midnight Society disintegrated, but, for the purposes of this history, another society of greater importance becomes the centre of focus. "The Apostles," or the "Society" as it was also known, was founded in the eighteen twenties by F.D. Maurice and John Stirling, and while it included among its members Tennyson and later, Walter Raleigh,

it was exclusive enough to refuse admittance to Thackeray and Edward Fitzgerald, other undergraduates of note. Its members were sworn to secrecy and the five or six acolytes who were accepted each year, would undergo elaborate and careful scrutinization by the existing members before they would be told of their acceptance. The society offered its members a sense of brotherhood and an atmosphere of intimacy in which "absolute candour was the only duty that the tradition of the society enforced" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 160). No subject was too profound to come under the scrutiny of the group; abstract contemplation was developed into an art, and when each member would present a paper on a chosen subject, it would be discussed and evaluated by the others. "Truth" became the highest goal and absolute integrity was something each privileged Apostle prided himself on. As Roy Harrod, Keynes' biographer has commented, "There was certainly a feeling that Apostles were different from ordinary mortals,"³ and, by providing the young undergraduate with a forum for exhibiting his prowess, it contributed greatly to the intellectual arrogance which was customary among members. Unlike the other undergraduate societies, members continued to play an active role after they had graduated or had left the university. Because of this, the most important philosophers of the day, Alfred Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, J.E. McTaggart, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, and G.E. Moore, all members of the sacred brotherhood, continued to concern themselves with the affairs of the Apostles. Early in their undergraduate careers Lytton Strachey and Leonard Woolf

were approached with offers of membership.

Harrod has written how John Maynard Keynes, an undergraduate in his first year, responded to a knock at his door, to find Woolf and Strachey, strangers to him at that time, come to pay a call. It appears that Keynes was sufficiently impressive during this mysterious visit, for he too soon became one of the select few whose mission it was "to enlighten the world on things intellectual and spiritual" (Harrod, 74).

John Maynard Keynes was the son of well-to-do parents of some intellectual eminence. His father was an ardent Nonconformist, and a Cambridge lecturer in logic and political economy. His mother, a power in her own right, in the course of her public activities became Mayor of Cambridge. Although Maynard Keynes later became the most influential English economist of the century, he continued to play an active part in running the Society, and remained a close friend of many of the Apostles whom he met as an undergraduate. He became an intimate friend of Lytton Strachey, who gave him the nickname, "Pozzo", not only after the Corsican diplomat Pozzo di Borgo, a schemer and man of many facets, but also because of the word's other, less political, associations.

The importance of G.E. Moore's philosophical influence on the members of the Society will be made clearer in a later chapter, but what must be mentioned here are the names of certain of the other Apostles with whom Keynes, Strachey, and Woolf began life-long friendships. Bertrand Russell, Desmond MacCarthy, and E.M. Forster, were all former undergraduates who regularly came

up to Cambridge from London to attend meetings of the Society. MacCarthy had a public school background, and he was known to all as an entertaining raconteur and a fine speaker. He became literary editor of such influential weeklies as the New Statesman, The Speaker and the New Quarterly, and as a literary critic he vociferously defended the many works of his friends. Bertrand Russell, son of a distinguished and titled family, was a brilliant mathematician and co-author of Principia Mathematica. He became intensely involved in the pacifist activities to which many of his friends gave their support during the 1914-18 War, and he later turned from mathematics towards the writing of philosophical-political works. E.M. Forster was "the elusive colt of a dark horse" as Keynes recalled. Of retiring personality, he seemed to combine the "bashful demureness of a spinster with the more abstract preoccupation of a don" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 130), and he chose to remain at Cambridge for the whole of his adult career, teaching English literature and writing novels and shorter pieces. When, as was inevitable, the different individuals mentioned, finally left the secluded atmosphere of intellectual brilliance and superiority, they did not separate and become swallowed up by the greater world of political, administrative, or creative activity. Because of a number of circumstances, this group spirit of security and superiority was perpetuated in the heart of London itself, and finally brought into being what we know as the Bloomsbury group.

On the 22nd of February, 1904, Leslie Stephen, Thoby's father, died, leaving his sons Thoby and Adrian, and daughters, Virginia and Vanessa, in a financially comfortable position so that each was able to choose in what manner best to further his or her career. Like their father, the boys had been educated at Cambridge; the girls received their training at home, where they had the benefit of Stephen's fine library and his personal tuition. It is an indication of their leisured-class background that Virginia, on her father's death, could consciously decide that she would become a writer, while Vanessa proposed to become a painter. The four Stephens moved from their old home at 22 Hyde Park Gate, to 46 Gordon Square, in the heart of the London district of Bloomsbury. To this house came Thoby's friends from Cambridge, bringing their acquaintances too, and although Thoby died of typhoid fever in 1906, the beginnings of Bloomsbury proper had already become established. Clive Bell, Thoby's closest friend, married Vanessa in 1907, and the couple took over 46 Gordon Square, while Virginia and Adrian moved to a nearby house at 27 Fitzroy Square. Clive Bell had decided to devote himself to writing on art, Vanessa, to her painting, and soon both Bloomsbury houses became the focal point of gatherings of the old Cambridge friends.

Lytton Strachey referred to the three Stephens as the "Visigoths" after the memory of their brother Thoby, the "Goth," and he soon became a close friend of the sisters, at one point even proposing marriage to Virginia. She accepted; he realized his dreadful mistake; a few hours later rushed back to apologize,

and all was well once more. That Virginia and Vanessa were the centre, as it were, of what became known as the Bloomsbury group, has been recognized by Clive Bell when he wrote, "If ever such an entity as 'Bloomsbury' existed, these sisters, with their houses in Gordon and Fitzroy Squares, were at the heart of it."⁴ Duncan Grant, a neighbour and close friend of the Bells and Stephens also wrote, "It was there that what has since been called 'Bloomsbury' for good or ill came into being."⁵ Duncan Grant was the son of Major Bartle Grant, Lady Strachey's youngest brother who spent most of his career administering the Empire in India. Duncan spent most of his youth under the care of his aunt, and when she recognized his artistic talents she persuaded his parents to allow him to study art. When Lytton met his cousin during his last years at Cambridge he had his first 'glimpse of heaven' and wrote to Clive Bell, "I have fallen in love hopelessly and ultimately" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 265). The love affair fizzled and dragged on until it came to a sudden end when Grant met Keynes, 'eloped' with him, and set up house together in Bloomsbury. Grant became one of the regular members of the group meeting at the Gordon and Fitzroy Square houses, and he has recalled the long evenings, with guests dropping in from ten o'clock and seldom leaving before three in the morning. "Conversation; that was all. Yet many people made a habit of coming, and few who did so will forget those evenings." (Virginia Woolf, Horizon). The atmosphere at the gatherings was, in a sense, an extension of that of the Cambridge discussion groups, and Virginia Woolf remembered

those early days spent in

talking, talking, talking -- as if every-
thing could be talked -- the soul itself slipped
through the lips in thin silver discs which
dissolve in young men's minds like silver, like
moonlight. Oh, far away they'd remember it, and
deep in dullness gaze back on it, and come to
refresh themselves again

(Holroyd, Vol. 1, 408).

It was Molly MacCarthy, the wife of Desmond MacCarthy, a welcomed visitor in Bloomsbury, who first described the Stephen family and their circle as "Bloomsberries", and the name stuck, and has been used ever since. When Leonard Woolf returned to London after seven years of administration in Ceylon, he reunited with his old friends, and it was not long after that he married Virginia. The old Cambridge fraternity continued its affairs, unbroken by the oldest Stephen girl's marriage to any stranger. But, to the list of names we have already mentioned, must be added a number of others who became intimate members of the group meeting in the salons of the Stephen girls, and to whom the term "Bloomsbury" equally applies, Roger Fry, some fifteen years the senior of many of the others who began their Cambridge careers in 1898, was the son of an austere Quaker judge, Sir Edward Fry, and a contemporary of Apostles like McTaggart and Lowes Dickinson. After completing a science degree, Fry studied painting in Italy and France, and in 1910, on returning to London, became "a member of the Bloomsbury family"⁶ Sharing his interest in the visual arts with many of the others, Fry became the most influential art critic, aesthetician, and arbiter of public taste in the second decade and after. He organized the first exhibitions showing the French Post-Impressionists,

started the Omega Workshops to employ young artists and to bring 'beauty' into the homes of the enlightened, and very often his approbation was indispensable if a young artist exhibiting his work was to win the approval of the public. Lady Ottoline Morrell, wife of Philip Morrell, a Liberal member of parliament, was a neighbour of the Bells at 44 Bedford Square. Escaping from her aristocratic upbringing, she became interested in the world of art and the intellect and she became a regular guest at Virginia Stephen's Thursday evenings on Fitzroy Square. She later made her own house a salon and meeting place for the others, and when she moved to her country house, Garsington, Bloomsbury would often spend weekends there. A close friend of Lytton Strachey, and later, Bertrand Russell's lover, she became a hostess famous for the disparate celebrities she would herd together under one roof.

To this original nucleus of the group, certain others became attached and may be mentioned in passing, for their names will appear in the later chapters. Lytton Strachey introduced a number of new members to the group, the two closest to him being Dora Carrington and Ralph Partridge. The former, a Slade art student, idolized Strachey, became his inseparable companion and dedicated her life to serving him. Ralph Partridge, an Oxford graduate, later married Carrington, but moved into the Strachey home, assisting his wife in her efforts to make the eminent biographer as comfortable as possible. He helped organize Strachey's financial affairs, and later, worked with the Woolf's at their

Hogarth Press. When Carrington committed suicide after Strachey's death, Partridge married Frances Marshall, who soon became another intimate of the group. Francis Birrell, son of the Liberal cabinet minister and writer, Augustine Birrell, was one of the later Cambridge undergraduates brought into the group by Maynard Keynes. His closest friend, David Garnett, son of the well-known editor and publisher, Edward Garnett, was another. He was first a friend of Adrian Stephen, but later became an intimate and devoted friend of many of the others, later marrying Clive Bell's daughter, Angelica. He became known as a writer of fantasies and enjoyed some popularity as a writer. Clive Bell has also recalled that "immediately after the war by a stroke of good luck, I made the acquaintance of Raymond Mortimer" (Old Friends, 131), and this literary critic was later "fully adopted by Bloomsbury"; with his "advantage of years" Mortimer "carried forward some of its traditions into a generation that knew it not" (Harrod, 187). The group spirit among them all was strong, and there is some truth in the criticism that Bloomsbury became something "in the nature of a mutual admiration society" (Harrod, 187), for, although they may have criticized each other mercilessly in private, in print an amazingly large number of Bloomsbury reviewers praised the assorted and varied works of other Bloomsbury contemporaries.

Keynes was an important economist; Russell a noted political philosopher; Roger Fry and Clive Bell were the most influential critics in the visual arts; Leonard Woolf was a political psychologist; Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster were well-known

novelists; Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell were noted painters; Lytton Strachey, the most-read biographer of the century. What was it, apart from the fact that they were close friends, that distinguished them as a group, and gave rise to the influence that Bloomsbury has had on English culture? Although Clive Bell has protested, somewhat hysterically, that "no two witnesses agree on a definition of the 'Bloomsbury doctrine'", therefore we are bound to doubt "whether 'Bloomsbury' every existed" (Old Friends, 137), it is possible to distinguish certain traits, a definite ethos which gave Bloomsbury substance, and its influential role in the cultural history of England this century. The following chapters of this thesis deal with the most significant of these in greater depth, but it is possible here to hint at some of its characteristics before we pass on to a fuller discussion.

Bloomsbury was "a world within a world" (Harrod, 187). All its members belonged to a privileged social class, and many were descendants of the most intellectually noted families. Noel Annan, Leslie Stephen's biographer, has written that Bloomsbury, like the Clapham Sect of the 19th century, "was a coterie ... It was exclusive and clannish... It regarded outsiders as unconverted and was contemptuous of good form opinions."⁷ Evidence of the snobbishness is found, for example, in Virginia Woolf's writings, and as we shall see in the following chapter, in her attitude towards other creative talents of her time. Although Vanessa Bell was a member of this "determinedly enlightened set of artists and writers," she still was guilty of segregating

the human race into two elementary classes
-- those who basked within the charmed circle
of her youthful friends, and those who,
possibly through no fault of their own, had been
born into a less privileged stratum of society.
(Holroyd, Vol. 1, 396).

Reacting strongly against the Victorian age, most of Bloomsbury
attacked the philistinism of their fathers' period, but were
ultimately unable to confront the challenge of the changed world
which the war of 1914 presented. J.K. Johnstone has written,
"All Bloomsbury believed in reason, and this belief was
leavened or balanced by sensitiveness and a love of beauty"
(The Bloomsbury Group, 17). When the world became too threatening,
they were able to retire into their cult of personal relationships
which began during their Cambridge days, and

because Bloomsbury loved beauty, and found
conversation to be of great value, conversation
became an art in its midst and was more important
than it had been, perhaps, since the days of
Dr. Johnson (The Bloomsbury Group, 17).

They all emphasized friendship and aesthetic experience in their
ideal of the good life, and Bell, in his book Civilization, wrote
of the necessity in a society of an intellectual elite free
from material struggles. Sharing with many of the others this
ideal of cultivated leisure, as found especially in 18th
century France, Bell wrote of the salon as the enlightened
core of civilization, "a nucleus from which civilization spread[s]
outwards." He went so far as to add,

The poor ... are concerned actively with
civilization only in so far as by their labours,
they make it possible, and passively, in so far
as their manners, habits, opinions and sentiments
are coloured by it.

In Books and Characters, Strachey also praised this concept taken from 18th century France, where,

The circle of one's friends was, in those days, the framework of one's whole being; within which was to be found all that life had to offer, and outside of which no interest, however fruitful, no passion, however profound, no art, however soaring, was of the slightest account...

When Virginia Woolf voiced her belief in the necessity of five hundred pounds a year and a room of one's own, she had no fears concerning publication, for her husband's press, The Hogarth Press, was set up to print her work and work by others whom they knew. Ultimately, as I hope to show, their aestheticism, and their detachment, reflected also in their political activities by a certain deficiency in emotional timbre, severed them from the "deeper sources which stem out of a vital, raw, and vulnerable contact with reality" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 422), and resulted in their acceptance only of the second best in literature and art.

From 1914, Bloomsbury became the self-confident literary and artistic establishment in London, attacking the philistinism of public taste and redirecting it towards the particular revolutionary orthodoxy which it represented. Bloomsbury helped introduce the English public to modern French painting, the Russian novel, the Russian ballet, and other aspects of European culture, but they were unable to divorce themselves from the inherited traditions which made them, in reality, the tailpieces of the Whig aristocracy of the Victorian age. T.S. Eliot, commenting on Virginia Woolf, wrote,

her position was due to a concurrence of qualities and circumstances which never happened before, and which I do not think will ever happen again.

His following words apply equally to the whole group.

It maintained the dignified and admirable tradition of Victorian upper middle-class culture -- a situation in which the producer was neither the servant of the exalted patron, the parasite of the plutocrat, nor the entertainer of the mob -- a situation in which the producer and the consumer of art were on equal footing, and that neither the lowest nor the highest.⁸

Because of this, Bloomsbury became a force actively opposed to the most vital and truly revolutionary innovations in English art and literature. In the next chapter, evidence will be given of Bloomsbury's harmful influence on the development of English culture in the earlier decades of this century.

CHAPTER II

Chapters three, four and five will offer a detailed study of Lawrence's relationships with Bloomsbury, but in this chapter it will be useful to make shorter mention of certain other major creative artists of the modern period who were also radically critical of the Bloomsbury ethos.

Evidence will be given later to support the view that Bloomsbury was a group of literary and artistic dilettantes who arrogated to themselves the position of the avant garde in matters of artistic taste. Self-consciously intelligent, sharing the privileged culture that many had obtained at Cambridge, Bloomsbury represented "the culmination and ultimate refinement of the aesthetic movement" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 423). Their aesthetic views were a reaction against the orthodoxies that England had inherited from the Victorian age, and as Fry came to recognize, they were "the last of the Victorians." Because of this, the Bloomsbury aestheticians, critics and reviewers were equipped better to criticize their fathers (Strachey did this with much popular success in his Eminent Victorians), than to appreciate and evaluate the artistic creations of those men who were introducing new directions in the painting, sculpture, poetry and novels of the early years of this century. Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, Desmond McCarthy and others were all influential critics in the best weekly reviews in England at the time, and

when, in 1923, The Nation and Athenaeum came under the control of a new body of Liberals, the Grasmere Group, with Maynard Keynes as chairman of the board, Bloomsbury was provided with, what many observers described as their own "special pulpit" (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 352). These outlets gave Bloomsbury an important influence over public taste in the arts. Yet their inability to respond to the best and most significant innovations made them a harmful inhibiting force in the dissemination of the new. There is even evidence to show that Bloomsbury consciously attempted to suppress or denigrate those artists who presented a threat to the aesthetic assumptions and values they held, and in this, their influence must be seen as ultimately pernicious.

John Rothenstein, as art critic and director of the Tate Gallery has written that

few of those who were impressed by the openness of mind and the humane opinions proclaimed by 'The Nation', afterwards 'The New Statesman and Nation,' their parish magazine, suspected how ruthless and businesslike were their methods. They would have been surprised if they had known of the lengths to which some of these people -- so disarming with their gentle Cambridge voices, their informal manners, their casual unassuming clothes, their civilized personal relations with one another -- were prepared to go in order to ruin, utterly, not only the 'reactionary' figures whom they publicly denounced, but young painters and writers who showed themselves too independent to come to terms with the canons observed by 'Bloomsbury'. ... If such independence was allied to gifts of an order to provoke rivalry, then so much the worse for the artists. And bad for them it was, for there was nothing in the way of slander and intrigue to which certain of the 'Bloomsburys' were not willing to descend. I rarely knew hatreds pursued with so much malevolence over so many years....¹

The pages of The Nation, The New Statesman, London Mercury, and other weeklies bear witness to this accusation. Bloomsbury reviewers would often praise the paintings or writings of close friends in the group, a practice which gave rise to the view that Bloomsbury was in a way, a self-congratulatory clique. As one example, one can cite the excessive praise that Roger Fry and Clive Bell heaped on the paintings of Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell. In May, 1934, The New Statesman and Nation carried an article by Bell praising Grant's "genius". Bell wrote that Grant was "the living artist whom many good judges consider the best," and that his work was to be compared favourably with that by Constable, Gainsborough and Picasso. In The Athenaeum of February 6, 1920, he also wrote that Duncan Grant was in many ways even greater than William Blake or Hogarth. Accompanying this uncritical admiration of the work of a close friend went the violent attacks on the work of modern English painters such as Wyndham Lewis, who were continually and unfavourably compared with the French painters Bloomsbury voiciferously advocated. "To talk of modern English painting as though it were the rival of French painting is silly," wrote Bell in the Athenaeum of March 5, 1920, and in France the modern paintings he was attacking would "neither merit nor obtain from the most generous critic more than a passing word of perfunctory encouragement."

Jacob Epstein, another major young talent of the period, recalled later that in London he was

to meet for the first time in [his] life the hostility of a leader of a clique of artists who arrogated to themselves the sole possession of a superior taste in matters of art.

Writing about Roger Fry and his friends, Eptstein added,

These gentry never hesitate to go out of their way to damage and undermine an artist, even if he is only a beginner. They use the press, especially the weeklies; and their social activities naturally help them to influence people. They are adepts at organization and never lose opportunities. People are not generally aware that these amateurs and busybodies are often dealers, using their homes to show off and to sell works on commission.²

In the following pages of this chapter examples will be given of Bloomsbury's inability to appreciate the truly revolutionary works in poetry, painting and literature to which the apocalyptic state of England and Europe in the second decade of this century gave rise.

Ezra Pound, born in Idaho and spending the first twenty one years of his life in the United States, obtained his M.A. at the University of Pennsylvania in 1906, and arrived in London in 1908, after publishing his first poems in Italy. From then until 1921 when he finally left England in disgust, he tirelessly worked to improve not only English poetry, but the condition of all art in the country, and through his efforts, he came to recognize that Bloomsbury was a major factor in inhibiting the changes the cultural conditions necessitated. If we recall that even after the 1914-1918 war, the poetry of Kipling, Noyes, Newbolt and others pandering to the Imperialist and public school sentiments was still very popular, we are able to see how Pound's theorizing and practise in his own poetry assume a position of

significance in the history of English poetry. As an American, Pound was felt by many to be a "provincial cowboy," and as his biographer noted, "like Whistler and many another, Pound was not to find the American artist or intellectual much respected in London."³ Pound was fortunate in meeting Ford Maddox Hueffer (later Ford) soon after he settled in London, and from Ford he learned to "register his own times in its own terms" (Hutchins, 117), and to redirect his attention in poetry from the archaic provincial to the need for a fresh approach to the verse which was to express the second decade of this century. Under the editorship of Ford, The English Review appeared in December 1908, and new life was injected into the dissemination of modern literature. The Review printed two schools of contributors; the older, more established talents like Yeats, Conrad, Meredith, Hardy, Wells and Bennett; and "les jeunes," the men of the second decade, Pound, James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis and D.H. Lawrence. About the latter, Pound later wrote, "as a prose writer I grant him first place among the younger men" (Letters, 22),⁴ and that, "I think he learned the proper treatment of modern subjects before I did" (Letters, 17). When the periodical folded from a lack of funds, Pound wrote

The EVENT of 1909-10 was Ford Maddox (Hueffer) Ford's English Review, and no greater condemnation of the utter filth of the whole social system of the time can be dug up than the fact of that review's passing out of his hands.
(Hutchins, 102).

Through Ford and the Review, and later, by his own efforts, Pound came into contact with the most important creative talents of

his time; D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Jacob Epstein, Wyndham Lewis, and T.S. Eliot. As he later revealed,

The sacks of pus which got control of Brit. pubctn. in or about 1912 or '14 and increased strangle hold on it till at least 1932 have done their utmost to keep anything worth reading out of print and out of ordinary distribution.... You have only to note that the best work by Joyce, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis.... have only got into print via specially started publishing ventures... (Letters, 239).

Pound quite clearly included Bloomsbury in the above attack. To Patricia Hutchins who was writing an account of his London years, he wrote, insisting that she regard him as a "Kensington-man", to distinguish him clearly from Bloomsbury which he described as "hostile" (Hutchins, 20).

Pound has written, concerning his monumental poetical work, The Cantos, that "the Hell Cantos are specifically LONDON, the state of English mind in 1919 and 1920" (Letters, 239). While Bloomsbury ignored or poured scorn on the genuine new talents of the time, Pound was critically perceptive enough to recognize that "Lawrence and Joyce are the two strongest prose writers among les jeunes, and all the rest are about played out" (Letters, 34); that "Epstein is a great sculptor" (Letters, 26); that T.S. Eliot was one of "the promising young" (Letters, 40); and that "Wyndham Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska are great artists though their stuff is still so far from the public comprehension" (Letters, 57). The work of Virginia Woolf was referred to, however, as the "½ masted slime" of "the weakminded Woolf female" (Letters, 272). Pound worked energetically to have their work (not Virginia Woolf's!) published or exhibited and to get their importance

recognized. In the course of his efforts, he was instrumental in giving birth to the only two purely English movements of the early 20th century -- Imagism and Vorticism. It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss these movements in full, but it may be noted in passing that Imagism was the name given to that new poetical concern with the precise, the intellectual, the "definite image and clear speaking in a contemporary idiom" which has characterized much of the best English poetry this century. Imagism also attacked the conventional clichés of the poetry of the time; it was an attack on the poetic dilettantism of Bloomsbury who received the verse of Rupert Brooke with appreciation. When T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land appeared, Clive Bell wrote in his review (The Nation and Athenaeum, September 22, 1923) that the poem was a failure in comparison to Eliot's earlier and lighter efforts, and that Eliot's greatest fault was that "he lacks imagination". Bell also complained of Eliot's "indiscreet boasting of the insignificant ... and the lamentable Ezra Pound." Vorticism was, in a sense, an extension of Imagism, offering an aesthetic which attempted to comprehend all the arts, and was an alternative to the Futurism of the Italians, and the Cubism and Post Impressionism of the French. Pound wrote that "Vorticism is the use of or the belief in the use of, THE PRIMARY PIGMENT, straight through all of the arts" (The New Age, Jan. 4, 1915), and Imagism was related to Vorticism in that "the primary pigment of poetry is the IMAGE." (Blast, no. 1, June 20, 1914). What concerns us here is that

it was Wyndham Lewis who collaborated with Pound and who explained in the pamphlet, Notes and Vortices II in 1914, just how Vorticism differed from the foreign art movements for which Bloomsbury proselytized so vigorously in England. Lewis' paintings and drawings have now been recognized as a major influence on the work of English artists this century, and while Bloomsbury concentrated on the Post-Impressionism of Cezanne and others, believing they were directing English taste to that which was most modern, Lewis and others were progressing beyond the French movements which Bloomsbury critics wished to see English artists imitate.

Bloomsbury's attitude to Lewis will be treated more fully later in the chapter, but it is necessary here to show how important Pound's actions were in giving the public the works of those artists Bloomsbury could not appreciate. He worked ceaselessly to get the works of Lewis, Joyce and Eliot into print. He spent months convincing Harriet Monroe, the American editor of the magazine Poetry, to publish the poetry of T.S. Eliot. As the critical force behind Harriet Weaver's The Egoist, edited first by Dora Marsden, then later by Eliot, he saw that Lewis' novel TARR was serialised, together with Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. He was also instrumental in starting the Egoist Press, to publish in book form the last mentioned two works, when no other publisher would accept them. When he became London editor of the American The Little Review in 1917, he wrote to the editor that he hoped to

use the Review as "a place where I and T.S. Eliot can appear once a month.... Where Joyce can appear when he likes, and where Wyndham Lewis can appear if he comes back from the war" (Letters, 107), and to America he also sent works by Yeats and D.H. Lawrence. He persuaded the American collector, John Quinn to buy the works of Lewis and others, and to hold a Vorticist exhibition in New York at a time when it was increasingly difficult to find buyers in England. His letters to T.S. Eliot testify to the help he gave the poet in producing The Waste Land, and it was Pound who arranged that the first publication of some of Joyce's Ulysses should occur in the pages of The Egoist, in London, and The Little Review in New York. The Egoist Press were also the first to attempt to publish the work in book form.

The mention of James Joyce brings us to Bloomsbury's attitude towards his contributions to literature, and a study of this will throw light on the central concern of this chapter. That Bloomsbury were unable to appreciate or perceive the major creations in the literature of their time, is obvious from Virginia Woolf's essay "How It Strikes a Contemporary", published in 1925. It is only sufficient to recall that both Ulysses and Women in Love had already appeared in print when she wrote on the condition of literature in her time:

It is an age incapable of sustained effort,
littered with fragments, and not seriously to be
compared with the age that went before.

She dismisses the work of Lawrence and Joyce, mentions only the poetry of Yeats, De la Mare and Davies, and further exposes her want of critical awareness by adding that

with the whole weight of the English language at the back of them, they timidly pass about from hand to hand, and book to book only the meanest copper coins.⁵

In 1919, when Pound was one of the few to recognize the importance of Ulysses, and when he and Harriet Weaver were vainly trying to persuade publishers to print the book, Harriet Weaver approached Virginia Woolf, who, with her husband, Leonard, had formed the Hogarth Press in 1917 to print only the "best" works of modern literature. Virginia Woolf recalls in her diary:

I remember Miss Weaver, in wool gloves, bringing Ulysses in typescript to our teatable at Hogarth House.... Would we devote our lives to printing it? The indecent pages looked so incongruous: she was spinsterly, buttoned up. And the pages reeled with indecency.⁶

The manuscript was refused, and it is of some importance to note Virginia Woolf's reactions to the work. She wrote in her diary, after reading one third of the work, that she was

puzzled, bored, irritated and disillusioned by a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples. And Tom [T.S. Eliot], great Tom, thinks this is on a par with War and Peace! An illiterate, underbred book it seems to me; the book of a self-taught working man, and we all know how distressing they are, how egotistic, insistent, raw, striking, and ultimately nauseating
(Diary, 47).

The violence of the snobbery in this passage should be recalled in reading the later chapters of this thesis, for we cannot but associate them with another "underbred" working-class writer, D.H. Lawrence, who came into direct social contact with Bloomsbury. To Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf wrote,

We've been asked to print Mr. Joyce's new novel, every printer in London and most in the provinces having refused. First there's a dog that p's -- then there's a man that forths, and one can be monotonous even on that subject -- moreover, I don't believe that his method, which is highly developed, means much more than cutting out the explanations and putting in the thought between the dashes. So I don't think we shall do it.⁷

When she also noted that the book was

diffuse... It is brackish. It is pretentious. It is underbred, not only in the obvious sense, but in the literary sense. A first rate writer, I mean, respects writing too much to be tricky; startling; doing stunts. (Diary, 49),

it becomes necessary to protest that these accusations fit better her own work, and Mrs. Dalloway, written after Virginia Woolf had read Ulysses, is the proof of this. In 1934, Wyndham Lewis was one of the first to notice the obvious plagiarisms of Joyce in her work. He wrote that there was

none of the realistic vigour of Mr. Joyce, though often the incidents in the local 'master-pieces' are exact and puerile copies of the scenes in his Dublin drama. (cf. the Viceroy's progress through Dublin in Ulysses, with the Queen's progress through London in Mrs. Dalloway. -- the latter is a sort of undergraduate imitation of the former, winding up with a smoke-writing in the sky, a pathetic 'crib' of the firework display that is the culmination of Mr. Bloom's beach-ecstasy.⁸

By mentioning Wyndham Lewis, we come to one final case of an important creative artist who experienced the enmity of Bloomsbury. His reactions to the group have given rise to some of the most uncompromisingly powerful satires expressing the abuses in art and literature politics of the period. Like Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis was born in North America in the 1880's. After his early schooling in England, he studied art, first at

the Slade, then in Germany, France, and Spain, and he returned to London in 1909. As an up and coming young talent, it was not long before Lewis came into contact with Roger Fry, the most influential art-critic of the day. In July, 1913, the Bloomsbury artists opened the Omega Workshops at 33 Fitzroy Square, with Fry, Vanessa Bell, and Duncan Grant as its directors. A watered-down continuation of William Morris' concern with the handicrafts in the 19th century, the Omega Workshops employed young artists to design and produce textiles, dress fashions, furniture and pottery, "substituting wherever possible the directly expressive quality of the artist's handling for the deadness of mechanical reproduction."⁹ Among those invited to work for the Workshop, were Wyndham Lewis and his friend, the sculptor, Gaudier-Brzeska. Bloomsbury's stated aim was to educate the public's taste to what they felt were radically new aesthetic ideas, but in reality, the Workshop produced 'pretty' articles, pandering to the 'arty' rich who could afford to buy the fashionably aesthetic creations. It was not long before Lewis and the Bloomsbury aesthetes separated, and the incidents leading to this break reveal that it was the vindictiveness of Fry and his group, which caused the break. Through these experiences, Lewis came to see Bloomsbury as enemies of everything but the sham and pseudo-modern. The facts can be presented as follows.

Lewis had shown a painting and a number of drawings at Fry's Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in October 1912, and when the exhibition was moved to

Liverpool, Lewis' was the only work excluded, while all the rest was automatically re-exhibited. Lewis wrote Fry a cordial letter asking for an explanation and told Fry that he was

animated by the most cordial sentiments as regards yourself and your activities. But to continue in an atmosphere of special criticism and ill-will, if such exist, would have manifest disadvantages as well as being distasteful to me. (Letters, 47)¹⁰

He also explained that his very livelihood depended on the sale of his pictures, and hoped that Fry would accept his concern as being sincere. Before Fry attempted to give any satisfactory explanation, a more important incident occurred. Both W.K. Rose, editor of the Lewis letters, and John Rothenstein have written fully on what happened,¹¹ which can be briefly summarized here. The Daily Mail was to hold an Ideal Home Exhibition in London in October 1913, and P.G. Konody, the newspaper's art critic, having recognized Lewis' talents, wished him to design a Post-Impressionist Room with the help of another artist, Spencer Gore. Fry's Omega Group were to help by providing the furniture, but the decorating and designing of the room would be completely in the hands of the two painters. Not finding Lewis at the Omega Workshops, Gore who had brought the news of the offer, left a message with Duncan Grant. The message reached Fry, but was never passed on to Lewis, who was later told by Fry that the Omega Workshops had been given the commission, and that Lewis, no sculptor, could contribute by carving an overmantel. Later, Lewis met Konody, and the truth was revealed. Lewis discovered Fry's "piece of pitiable chicanery" (Letters, 50),

and further, that a letter from Frank Rutter, art critic, editor, and curator of the Leeds Art Gallery, written to Lewis asking for examples of work for an exhibition at the Doré Gallery in Bond Street, had been "accidentally" opened by Fry, and given to Lewis only ten days later when it was too late for any paintings to be exhibited. As a result of these shabby performances, Lewis and a number of others left the Omega group, and to protest Fry's actions, Lewis composed a "Round Robin", copies of which were sent to the press and friends of the Omega. In this document the facts of the above case were revealed, and then Lewis proceeded to attack the Omega's abuse of the arts. "As to its tendencies in Art", he wrote,

they alone would be sufficient to make it very difficult for any vigorous art-instinct to long remain under that roof. The Idol is still Prettiness, with its mid-Victorian languish of the neck, and its skin is "greenery-yallery", despite the Post-What-Not fashionableness of its draperies. This family party of strayed and Dissenting Aesthetes, however, were compelled to call in as much modern talent as they could find, to do the rough and masculine work without which they knew their efforts would not rise above the level of a pleasant tea-party, or command more attention (Letters, 49).

Lewis became the leader of those rebellious young artists not prepared to accept the dictates of the Bloomsbury aestheticians, and in his reaction against them, Lewis helped create the Vorticist movement which gave a virile impetus to English painting at a time when Bloomsbury was praising only the French painters and their English copyists. As Lewis wrote,

Listlessness, dilettantism is the mark of studio art. You must get Painting, Sculpture, and Design out of the studio and into life somehow or other

if you are not going to see this new vitality
deseccated in a pocket of inorganic experimentation.¹²

In chapter four, Bloomsbury's aesthetics will be studied in full, and we shall see that this statement by Lewis is a direct reputation of them.

On leaving the Omega, Lewis formed the Rebel Art Centre, a venture providing classes, lectures, and exhibitions of the new directions in English art, and to this he attracted such important names as Gaudier-Brzeska, Jacob Epstein, C.R.W. Nevinson, David Bomberg, T.E. Hulme and Ezra Pound. The financial backing received from Kate Lechmere enabled him also, with Pound, to publish their periodical "Blast" from the seat of "The Great London Vortex", the Rebel Art Centre. John Rothenstein has written that after Lewis' break with Bloomsbury, and his refusal to keep silent on what he felt was gross injustice by those with power in the art world, he was

traduced when he could not be ignored. In view of the pervasiveness of 'Bloomsbury' influence his activities were therefore ignored often.

(Modern English Painters, 15).

In 1937 Lewis wrote to a correspondent who was seeking information on his work.

In the many institutions for the encouragement of art in this country¹³-- such as the Contemporary Art Society, the numerous public galleries, in London and the Provinces -- I am unrepresented ... The great influence of Roger Fry in the past militated against my pictures being bought institutionally. On account of his dual role of critic and dealer he exercised a great deal of power, and as you know he did not care for me, on personal grounds.
(Letters, 243)

Lewis did not allow this to influence the production of his art, but throughout his literary career he remained

conscious of

the really malefic "Bloomsburies", who with their ambitious and jealous cabal have had such a destructive influence upon the intellectual life of England.¹⁴

He recognized that "rich empresarios, like Roger Fry", had a great deal of power in promoting works of art --

The wealthy promotor collects together a few favourites and creates a little nuclear society of his own. Roger Fry for instance, invented Duncan Grant -- a little fairylike individual who could have received no attention in any country except England. He and Vanessa Bell ... were two of his closest friends.

But he was also perceptive enough to realize that "No artist possessed of much talent makes a very good protege: the result is that support of this kind goes invariably to the second rate" (Letters, 412).

In many of his satiric works, Lewis pounded Bloomsbury mercilessly. In his first novel, Tarr, published in 1918 with the help of Pound and the Egoist Press, the central character Tarr, while in the artist's section of Paris, meets Hobson, in whom "the art touch, the Bloomsbury technique was very noticeable."¹⁵ Hobson is revealed as the "crowd-man" -- "you could not say he was an individual, he was in fact a set" (Tarr, 11), and the pseudo-artist is exposed in this dilettante. From "an aristocratic educational establishment" he has bought "a complete mental outfit, a programme of manners," and the Cambridge set he represents is, "as observed in an average specimen, a hybrid of the Quaker, the homosexual and the Chelsea artist" (Tarr, 17). Tarr's final disgust at his inability to rouse Hobson by his scathing words, finds its comic outlet when he knocks

Hobson's hat off his head and jumps on it, in a bathetic sublimation of the violence which the Hobson's of the world arouse in him. Large sections of Lewis' Apes of God satirize Bloomsbury characters again. The figures inheriting the title of the novel are those ape-like impersonator's of the god-like artist, the dilettantes who pose as creative artists, and his exposure is an attack on the rottonness of much of the intellectual life in England, "the social decay of the insanitary trough between the two great wars."¹⁶ In the novel, Lewis attacks especially the homosexuality and the revolutionary orthodoxy of Bloomsbury, that "lettered herd" as he described it. Matthew Plunckett is a recognizable comic distortion of Lytton Strachey; many of his physical characteristics are similar and one is the famous Bloomsbury 'voice' which is mocked by Lewis. Plunckett uses two distinct voices, one a piping shriek (a characteristic that Lytton Strachey often emphasized to add a bizarre quality to his speech), and the other, "a nasal stammer modelled upon the effects of severe catarrh". Plunckett is interested in the modish psychology of the day (Strachey's brother James was a pupil of Freud and translated some of his writings), and from his psychiatrist he learns that his feelings of inferiority "may result from an actual superiority! The handicap of genius, isn't it?" With many of his Bloomsbury grotesques, Lewis emphasizes their snobbish feelings of superiority, and with Plunckett the comic distortion from inferiority to superiority emphasizes Lewis' lack of sympathy for the type of snobbishness we have seen in Virginia Woolf's diary.

Plunckett's psychiatrist advises him to "choose your friends small! ... believe me, you cannot choose your lady friend too small..." As a result of this, he chooses a diminutive, doll-like woman whose resemblances to Strachey's Dora Carrington (who will be described in the next chapter) are recognizable. The comedy is continued when Plunckett, feeling a sudden lust for his doll, struggles to raise her and staggers with her in his arms to his bedroom, only to drop her on discovering his ex-boyfriend curled in the bed.

The fact that Lewis continually satirized Bloomsbury, often with uncompromising violence, must be taken, at least, as an indication that there was something definitely wrong with "the moneyed throng of the 'revolutionary' High Bohemia" (Wagner, 248), as he described the group, in the early decades of this century. In the next three chapters, using Lawrence's involvement with Bloomsbury, I hope to define more precisely those aspects of this coterie which led many of the important artists of the time to see them as one aspect of the decadence of society, and also as harmful to the spread of the best in art and literature.

CHAPTER III

The second decade of this century saw D.H. Lawrence, the son of working-class father and lower-middle class mother, meeting and fraternizing with the sons and daughters of some of the most noted intellectually aristocratic families in England. His contacts with Bloomsbury influenced him profoundly; his criticisms constitute viable alternatives to what he concluded was a decadent "civilization". Two names are important in a study of how Lawrence explored this influential sector of English life: David Garnett and Lady Ottoline Morrell.

Edward Garnett, editor and reader for Gerald Duckworth, Ltd., and helper and friend of writers such as Joseph Conrad, became interested in Lawrence's work and began a friendship in 1911 which soon saw him Lawrence's confidant. The following year, the young writer met and eloped to Germany with Frieda, the wife of Professor Ernest Weekley, and while in Meyrhoven, received a letter from Edward asking him to invite his young son David to meet him. The latter, a twenty year old student at the Royal College of Science, who was in Munich for a course of botony lectures, duly received an invitation to visit the couple at Icking. David had already begun a friendship with Adrian Stephen which was to result in his later marrying Angelica Bell, daughter

of Clive and Vanessa, and some of the attitudes which endeared him to Bloomsbury can be discerned in the tone of his recollections of his first meeting with Lawrence. Lawrence, as he stood on the German Station waiting to greet the son of his friend, had hair that was "incredibly plebian, mongrel and underbred"¹. He was

"the type of the plumber's mate who goes back to fetch the tools. He was the weedy runt you find in every gang of workmen: the one who keeps the other men laughing all the time; who makes the trouble with the boss and is saucy to the foreman; who gets the sack; who is 'victimised'; the cause of a strike; the man for whom trade unions exist; who lives on the dole; who hangs round the pubs; who bets on football and is always cheeky, cocky, and in trouble. He was the type who provokes the most violent class-hatred in this country: the impotent hatred of the upper classes for the lower"

(The Golden Echo, 242).

Despite his stereotyped class-prejudice, David Garnett was attracted by Lawrence's warmth and vitality, his "Chaplin-like" art of mimicing, his gaiety, and above all, by his shared love of nature, and a friendship developed which was to last a number of years.

In August 1912, David and a friend, Harold Hobson, joined the Lawrences at Meyrhofen, on their way to Italy, and after parting, a steady and continuous stream of letters passed between them. Frieda wrote to the young man to whom she could turn for sympathy when she pined for her children, and Lawrence would scrawl "stinker," "balls-aching rot," "bitch", and "arse-licking" over her more self-pitying remarks. While the Lawrences settled down in Italy and D.H. began to complete Sons and Lovers, Garnett, or

Bunny as he was nicknamed, returned to England where his relationship with Bloomsbury broadened. He played poker with Adrian Stephen in Brunswick Square, met Duncan Grant, Virginia Stephen, Leonard Woolf and others, and began a close friendship with Frankie Birrell, son of Augustine Birrell, a member of Asquith's Liberal cabinet.

In 1914 the Lawrence's returned to England for the finalisation of Frieda's divorce, and in July after they were married, David held a "marriage dinner" in Soho so that Lawrence could meet some of his friends, among them Birrell and Adrian Stephen. The Lawrences were unable to leave England after war was declared, and this act, led to Lawrence's introduction to the whole of Bloomsbury culture, after his more trivial contacts with only some of David Garnett's friends.

Francis Birrell introduced Bunny to Lytton Strachey in December 1914 when he was invited to spend the Christmas weekend with the Strachey party at a country cottage near Marlborough, and this extended his ties with Bloomsbury. Strachey wrote to his brother James six months later (11 June 1915)

"No, the world is not agreeable -- And then again I think of dear Bunny -- the fact that such a person should exist in it fills me with delight. Charming! "2

The mention of Strachey is a good point at which to say something more about Lady Ottoline Morrell. She and Strachey had begun a friendship in 1908 which was to follow its erratic course until

his death in 1931. For a number of years she was also an important figure in Lawrence's life .

The daughter of General Arthur Cavendish-Bentinck and Lady Boldover, she spent a frustrating youth searching for an escape from a dull life of debutante conformity, and finally married Philip Morrell, a Liberal member of parliament. She first met many of the Bloomsbury group at Virginia Stephen's Thursday evenings in Fitzroy Square, but she soon decided that she was better suited to play the role which became her ideal; that of the 18th century French hostess of the salon. Here, she would be able to surround herself with the flower of the nation's politicians, aristocrats, painters, sculptors and men of letters. At 44 Bedford Square, in the heart of Bloomsbury, she would invite a select company once a week to indulge in the subtle art of good conversation and music, and here politician would meet painter, and poet would argue with philosopher. The idealised picture of eighteenth century France, which most of the Bloomsbury group held, was never a reality. The salon was more often a place of vicious political intrigue than a centre for civilized, sophisticated gentility, and the huge variety of people she accumulated over the years at her house parties seemed to spend more time slandering each other when backs were turned, or maligning each other, with varying degrees of subtlety, in conversation.

Many people have written about Ottoline. Everyone she

met was sure to feel the impact of that strange, and ultimately pathetic woman. Garnett remembers her as "extremely handsome: tall and lean, with a large head, masses of dark Venetian red hair... glacier blue-green eyes, a long straight nose, a proud mouth and a long jutting-out chin" (Holroyd, Vol 2,6), a woman whose worst quality was "meanness and the love of power" (37). Osbert Sitwell saw her as "a rather oversize Infanta of Spain or Austria", Virginia Woolf, as a "mackerel" in an aquarium.³ Lytton Strachey often described her scurrilously in his letters to friends while he was visiting her, and Stephen Spender recalled her walking through the streets of Bloomsbury, followed by a pack of Pekinese dogs attached to her shepherd's crook by coloured ribbons. Leonard Woolf described her as "not unlike one of her own peacocks", as she floated about her house "in strange brightly coloured shawls and other floating garments, her unskillfully dyed red-hair, her head tilted to the sky at the same angle as the birds" He describes her as she looked when he accompanied her through the streets of Bloomsbury one evening.

"Her hat, hair, and clothes flopped and flapped around her; she looked like an enormous bird whose brightly and badly dyed plumage was in complete disarray and no longer fitted the body. Almost everyone turned to stare at her as she passed.../workmen/...roared with laughter, and whistled and catcalled after her. She walked on absolutely oblivious and impervious"⁴.

As eccentric or grotesque as she appeared, through the doors of her salon passed most of the best known artists of the

day; Nijinski, Picasso, Augustus John, Charlie Chaplin, Arnold Bennett, and dozens of others, including Mark Gertler and Gilbert Cannan who were to become friends of Lawrence. But what concerns us most is the fact that all of the Bloomsbury group were regularly gathered, both in Bedford Square, and later, from 1915, at Garsington, her country house. Her husband's role in Bloomsbury, though minor, helped many to escape active service during the war. Philip Morrell was one of the very few members in the Commons who protested the declaration of war in 1914, an act for which he lost his active role in the politics of his country. He helped many of the conscientious objectors of Bloomsbury by speaking for them at the tribunals (Bunny was one), and then employed them as farm labourers at Garsington to exempt them from military service.

David first met Ottoline at a party at 46 Gordon Square, the home of the Bells. It was at this point in his career, he writes in his autobiography, that he finally found himself on warm terms with Duncan Grant, Maynard Keynes and the Bells. When he later visited Ottoline at Bedford Square she asked him about his friend D.H. Lawrence, whom she wished to meet, but before he could arrange it, Ottoline took the initiative and made herself known to Lawrence. Lawrence had begun to come to the attention of literary England already. His poetry had appeared in the English Review, in Edward Marsh's Georgian Poetry 1911-1912, a number

of his short stories were in circulation, and three of his novels had appeared, causing some excitement.

The young D. H. Lawrence was not only becoming known as a writer; he was also the son of a miner who had stolen away the wife of a professor, and she a German baroness, no less! Here was a rare specimen, indeed, one worthy of display in the drawing rooms of Bloomsbury. This literary "wild man", from the proletariat was at first, quite naturally, impressed by the attention that the urbane salon hostess paid him. To Gordon Campbell he wrote (2 Feb 1915)

"Yesterday Lady Ottoline Morrell came down -- she is going to bring Bertrand Russell, the philosophic-mathematics man. I talked to her about you, and she said she would ask you to go and see her. Don't refuse, because she is really nice -- somebody to know in this scant world: though I don't like her parties."⁵

Lawrence would not judge her hastily, but from the first he was unhappy with the type of gatherings she held.

At Ottoline's gatherings Lawrence was immediately introduced to the regular members of the Bloomsbury group, and when she talked about Duncan Grant's paintings and Lawrence asked to be able to see them, she arranged that he, Frieda, E. M. Forster and Bunny should visit Grant's studio the next day. Garnett gives us a vivid picture of the encounter as Lawrence became more and more disapproving as Grant presented one painting after another. The writer's innate honesty would never allow him to give the insincere praise found in many of the letters exchanged in Bloomsbury.

He liberally criticized the paintings, much to the discomfort of the others, and wrote Ottoline (27 Jan 1915)

"We liked Duncan Grant very much. I really liked him. Tell him not to make silly experiments in the futuristic line, with bits of colour on a moving paper. Other Johnnies can do that."

He then stated his objections to Grant's attempts to

make a picture out of geometric figures...One can only build a great abstraction out of concrete units....The way to express the abstract whole is to reduce the object to a unit, a term, and then out of these units and terms to make a whole statement. Do rub this into Duncan Grant and save him his foolish waste"

(Letters, 308)

In this can be seen Lawrence's earliest reactions against the "significant form" concept which Bloomsbury emphasized in its paintings in an effort to escape from representational art. This criticism did not endear him to Grant.

Ottoline's relationship with Bertrand Russell gave her the "assurance" she felt she had lacked, and she and the Cambridge-based mathematician would spend hours in the woods at Garsington reading Plato, Spinoza and Shelley. By bringing Russell and Lawrence together, she was instrumental in introducing Lawrence to one of the men who epitomised Bloomsbury's political and emotional timbre during the crucial war years. Lawrence's relationship with Russell and the issues this involved will be studied in the next chapter. For our immediate purposes, it will suffice that from early 1915 Lawrence began an intense and important friendship which lasted only a year, and which made so strong an impact on Russell that at one point he meditated suicide, and then, nearly forty years later, still reacted so

strongly that he accused Lawrence of Nazi beliefs which "led straight to Auschwitz", and of a "hatred of mankind," this last a reversal of the very charge Lawrence himself had made against Russell.

E.M. Forster, one of those he met at Ottoline's, spent a few days with the Lawrences at Pulborough, and Lawrence afterwards wrote (24 Feb. 1915), "We had E.M. Forster here for a day or two, I liked him, but his life is so ridiculously inane, the man is dying of inanation," and then ironically added, "He was very angry with me for telling him about himself" (Letters, 322). To Russell, he wrote (12 Feb. 1915)

"We had E.M. Forster here for three days. There is more in him than ever comes out. But he is not dead yet....He is much more than his dummy-sucking, clever little habits allow him to be."

He then analyses Forster's "inanation", and this becomes a fine diagnosis of the powerlessness of the Liberalism of war-time England when confronted with the new age of destruction which had begun.

"Forster is not poor, but he is bound hand and foot badly. Why? Because he does not believe that any beauty or any divine utterance is any good any more....Forster knows, as every thinking man now knows, that all his thinking and his passion for humanity amounts to no more than trying to soothe with poetry a man raging with pain which can be cured. Cure the pain, don't give the poetry. Will all the poetry in the world satisfy the manhood of Forster, when Forster knows that his implicit manhood is to be satisfied by nothing but immediate physical action. He tries to dodge himself -- the sight is pitiful....But

why can't he act? Why can't he take a woman and fight clear to his own basic, primal being? Because he knows that self-realisation is not his ultimate desire. His ultimate desire is for the continued action which has been called the social passion -- the love for humanity -- the desire to work for humanity that is every man's ultimate desire and need....So he remains neutral, inactive. That is Forster."

(Letters, 316)

In the philosophy he was working on with Russell, Lawrence believed that man had to rediscover himself, "realize" himself, so that he could move on to destroy the rotten social framework as it stood, so that all men could become free to act. The Liberal stance of Forster was now an anachronism; the idea of an ordered, sane society to which he devoted his faith and his "social passion", had been made irrelevant by the changes that had made Germany outproduce England for the first time, by the war itself, and by the political decadence represented by the machinations of the Tories and Lloyd George in Parliament.

Russell invited Lawrence to visit him at Cambridge where he could meet some of his friends, and the novelist wrote

"I feel frightfully important coming to Cambridge -- quite momentous the occasion is to me. I don't want to be horribly impressed and intimidated, but am afraid I may be....I am afraid of concourses and clans and societies and cliques -- not so much of individuals. Truly I am rather afraid"

(March 2, 1915)

Lawrence was preparing to meet Keynes and G.E. Moore, who with Russell, were the three most important of the Bloomsbury philosophers, and it is not surprising that he felt a little awed and apprehensive as he looked forward to meeting the men with whom he hoped to join forces to create a revolutionary philosophy

which would revitalise England. To David Garnett he later wrote it was "one of the crises of my life."

During the weekend of March 6-7 Lawrence met the Cambridge phalanx of Bloomsbury. John Maynard Keynes has described the encounters in Two Memoirs,⁶ and he recalls Lawrence at the evening party sitting next to G.E. Moore in stony silence, but talking amiably with the lecturer in mathematics, G.H. Hardy. The next morning at a breakfast in Russell's rooms, both Keynes and Russell are described as trying to draw Lawrence out, but he was "morose from the outset and said very little". As he told Frieda, the men "walked up and down the room and talked about the Balkan situation and things like that, and they know nothing about it."⁷ To Russell he wrote

"It is true Cambridge made me very black and down. I cannot bear its smell of rottonness, marsh-stagnancy. I get a melancholic malaria. How can so sick people rise up?"

(Letters, 330)

As Keynes wrote "it is impossible to imagine moods more antagonistic than those of Lawrence and of pre-war Cambridge." Hoping to find men to join him in a movement to bring about an emotional and political rebirth in England, he found only a homosexually oriented society, cut off from the realities of the war and the changed England, a brittle intellectualism and a puerile optimism. Lawrence came, ready to be impressed by the academic intelligensia of England, and left a bitterly disappointed man.

Keynes admits, that they were "disastrously mistaken" (Two Memoirs 98) in the "18th century heresy" which they upheld, that by rational control England could be changed. "We completely misunderstood human nature, including our own. The rationality which we attributed to it led to a superficiality, not only of judgement, but also of feeling" (Two Memoirs, 100).

"We lacked reverence, as Lawrence observed, and as Ludwig /Wittgenstein/ with justice also used to say -- for everything and everyone.... There may have been just a grain of truth when Lawrence said in 1914 that we were 'done for'" (Two Memoirs, 103).

In April 1915, while he was living in the Meynel's cottage at Greatham in Sussex, David Garnett and Frankie Birrell visited Lawrence. Garnett's account of this weekend is important, for after this weekend he broke off his friendship with Lawrence and became one of those Bloomsbury figures who reacted against Lawrence because he lacked "what are called the instincts of a gentleman" (The Golden Echo, 254)

Birrell was known to all for his "bumptious chatter" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 139) and Garnett, in what purports to be a defence of his friend, unconsciously condemns him as well.

"He was constantly saying slightly malicious things, and he could wound people without being aware of it -- usually by being unaware of them - but he was incapable of wishing to hurt or wound as he was of wishing to take advantage of anybody on earth" (Flowers of the Forest, 55)

The chattering friend who also "dismissed all contemporary writers with contempt, and had not embarked on either French or Russian

Literature" was brought as a guest to the Lawrence's cottage, and not surprisingly, Garnett noticed that after a number of hours of Birrell chatter, the host became withdrawn and angry. Garnett surpasses credulity, though, when he continues that Lawrence "was in the throes of some dark religious crises" which later that night resulted in Birrell's overactive tongue swelling to painful and enormous dimensions.

"There was a quiet, triumphant certainty in Lawrence's manner. He had prayed for deliverance to his Dark Gods and they had sent this mysterious sign, blasting his enemy in what had hitherto seemed his strongest organ"

(Flowers of the Forest, 53).

Lawrence wrote to Otoline after this weekend (19 April 1915),

"We have had McQueen and David Garnett and Francis Birrell here for the weekend. When Birrell comes -- tired and a bit lost and wondering -- I love him. But, my god, to hear him talk sends me mad. To hear these young people talking really fills me with black fury: they talk endlessly, but endlessly -- and never, never a good or real thing said. Their attitude is so irreverent and blatant. They are cased each in a hard little shell of his own, and out of this they talk words. There is never for one second any outgoing of feeling, no reverence, not a crumb or grain of reverence."

This is a judgement which, we have seen, Keynes endorsed some thirty-four years later. To Garnett, Lawrence wrote telling him never to bring Birrell again and urging him to break with people like him. "You must leave these friends, these beetles, Birrell and Duncan Grant are done forever".

"Lawrence had really forced me to break with him because

of his dislike, and perhaps jealousy of my friends. He hated their respect for reason and contempt for intuition and instinct" (Flowers of the Forest, 55). How much truth there is in this accusation of jealousy seems obvious from what has already been written. Lawrence was unable to compromise with people he felt lacked reverence for life and preferred to make his feelings known.

"I like David, but Birrell I have come to detest. These horrible little frowsty people, men lovers of men, they give me such a sense of corruption, almost putrescence, that I dream of beetles....

(Letters, 333).

The beetle becomes an important motif later for sexual and moral corruption in Women in Love.

While Lawrence continued his recoil from members of Bloomsbury, his relationship with Ottoline developed. He accepted her patronage at face value, felt he could trust her, and at first even saw her as a "special-type" of woman, not the salon lady and the blue-stocking but someone like Cassandra, "the great media of truth" (Letters, 326). He felt she could "form the nucleus of a new community which shall start a new life amongst us -- a life in which the only riches is integrity of character" (Letters, 311), and later, when he perceived more clearly the condescending patronage at the heart of her friendship, he continued still to visit and write to her, and feel a sympathetic liking for her.

As he wrote, referring to Russell and Ottoline,

"They come to me, and they make me talk, and they enjoy it, it gives them a profoundly satisfying sensation. And that is all. As if what I say were meant only to give them gratification, because

of the flavour of personality, as if I were a cake or a wine or a pudding. Then they say I, D.H.L., am wonderful, I am an exceedingly valuable personality, and that the things I say are extravaganzas, illusions. They say I cannot think.....The result is for them a gratifying sensation, a tickling, and for me a real bleeding

(Letters, 362).

What Lawrence thought, felt, or believed wasn't of significance; he was a 'personality', and this gave him his value at the gatherings Ottoline held.

In the middle of 1915 the Morrells moved to Garsington Manor, a beautiful old Tudor house set in five hundred acres of ground near Oxford. For months Ottoline supervised the refitting of house and planting of garden, converting a pond into a swimming pool, adding peacocks to the lawns, painting the old stained woodwork in greens and blues, filling the rooms with boxes of incense, paintings by her friends, coloured cushions, lush silk drapes, a pack of pugs, and various other bric-a-brac, which gave the house her distinctive character. Here, during the weekends, Bloomsbury could escape from the pressures of war-time London, and her close friend, Lytton Strachey, believed that in this Arcadian environment she could recreate the atmosphere of Sceaux and other country houses which flourished during the reign of Louis XIV.

At Garsington Lawrence was to meet not only the regular Bloomsbury menagerie, but would hear Keynes and the prime minister, *Menagerie* Asquith, on one of his occasional visits, being announced as 'Mr.

Keynes and another gentleman" (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 154). Under the watchful eye of Ottoline, bohemian artist would be induced to discuss his work with diplomat or aristocrat. Sometimes the guests were compelled to paint landscapes on a white-washed wall so that Ottoline could choose the best. "Those who came often dressed themselves up in gay Persian, Turkish, and other Oriental clothes, of which I had a store",⁸ and at Ottoline's suggestion, enact charades or dance to the music of Philip on the pianola. Among her guests were Mark Gertler, the painter, and his Slade Art School companion, Dorothy Carrington, known to all simply as Carrington. Lawrence had met Gertler earlier in 1914 at the novelist Gilbert Cannan's house, and they had begun a friendship which was to continue until Lawrence left England for the last time. The painter, from a poverty-stricken Jewish East-End home, was, like Lawrence, never seduced by the glitter of Garsington, and Lawrence was a sympathetic confidant during the turbulent romance which Gertler had with Carrington. The latter had a strange and perverse career until her death in 1931. She had earlier met Lytton Strachey, and seemed from then on to dedicate her life to him. She lived with him, attempting to continue her relationship with Gertler by lies and evasions, finally broke with the latter, later married Ralph Partridge who then joined her at Mill House where they both continued to serve Strachey, and when he died, she attempted suicide, failed, and then on a later attempt,

finally succeeded in carrying out her threat that without Lytton she would not live.

Lawrence was repelled by the slave-like worship she gave to Strachey, a man incapable of returning any woman's passion, and also by the cruelty with which she toyed with the inflammable feelings of his friend Gertler. "She was always hating men, hating all active maleness in a man. She wanted passive maleness," though "it was only in intimacy that she was unscrupulous and dauntless as a devil incarnate." (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 157). When Gilbert Cannan later published his account of the Carrington-Gertler affair in the novel Mendel, Lawrence wrote,

"I looked into Mendel. It is, as Gertler says, journalism: statement, without creation. This is very sickening. If Gilbert had taken Gertler's story and re-created it into art, good. But to set down all these statements is a vulgarising of life itself"

(Letters, 485).

This letter becomes a significant statement, when in chapter 5, I shall show how Lawrence "re-created" many of his Bloomsbury-Garsington experiences, and made of them a work of art.

Gertler's paintings had already come to the appreciative notice of Clive Bell, Roger Fry, and Duncan Grant, hence his acceptance by Bloomsbury. One particular painting, The Merry-Go-Round, which he finished in the last months of 1916 influenced Lawrence so strongly, that it was transformed into one of the important symbolic scenes of Women in Love. The letter to Gertler (9 Oct. 1916) can be quoted at length for it is a comment to which later reference

will be made.

"My dear Gertler, Your terrible and dreadful picture has just come....it is the best modern picture I have seen. I think it is great, and true. But it is horrible and terrifying. I'm not sure I wouldn't be too frightened to come and look at the original.

If they tell you it is obscene, they will say truly. I believe there was something in Pompeian art, of this terrible and soul-tearing obscenity. But then, since obscenity is the truth of our passion today, it is the only stuff of art -- or almost the only stuff. I won't say what I, as a man of words and ideas read in this picture. But I do think that in this combination of blaze and violent mechanized rotation and complete involution, and ghastly, utterly mindless human intensity of sensational extremity, you have made a real and ultimate revelation. I think this picture is your arrival -- it marks a great arrival. Also I could sit down and howl beneath it like Kot's dog, in soul-lacerating despair. I realize how superficial your human relationships must be, what a violent maelstrom of destruction and horror your inner soul must be....You are all absorbed in the violent and lurid process of inner decomposition.... it would take a Jew to paint this picture....you are of an older race than I....these pictures are its death-cry....the Christians are not reduced sufficiently. I must say, I have, for you, in your work, reverence, the reverence for the great articulate extremity of art....Get somebody to suggest that the picture be bought by the nation --it ought to be -- I'd buy it if I had any money..."⁹

Later, he wrote Gertler (5 Dec. 1916) "In my novel there is a man -- not you, I reassure you -- who does a great granite frieze for the top of a factory, and the frieze is a fair, of which your whirligig, for example, is part" (Letters, 489).

Bloomsbury, as the intellectual centre of the day, attracted to itself many of the artists, poets, musicians and mere frequenters of studios, who together constituted London Bohemia.

The Café Royal, off Piccadilly in London, was for almost ninety years a Bohemian haunt, and the too-rich gilding of the mirror-covered walls, the plush artificiality of its interior, were well known by regulars who included amongst their numbers, Oscar Wilde, Frank Harris, Whistler, George Bernard Shaw, Aubrey Beardsley, and scores of others. The authors of the history of the Café Royal have described it as an "unreal, dreamland place for people who lived dreamland lives."¹⁰ The Bloomsbury group were regular visitors and it was in the Café that they would meet their Bohemian acolytes. Another reason given for their meeting in the rapidly fading splendours of the Café was that "They were secretly hankering for the past, these would be decadents; they were Chekhov characters in search of a cherry orchard" (Café Royal, 125).

It was in the Café Royal that Lawrence met the composer Philip Heseltine (who used the pseudonym of Peter Warlock), a man who had inherited enough money to allow him to entertain lavishly and finance numerous artistic schemes which caught his eye. Moore describes Heseltine as "an Eton-and-Oxford Aesthete, with grandiose ideas, chewed nerves, and violent affections and antagonisms." (The Intelligent Heart, p. 269). Heseltine had read some of Lawrence's work and had praised him in a letter to Frederick Delius as "perhaps the one great literary genius of his generation," and their meeting made it possible for him to offer Lawrence assistance in publishing the suppressed Rainbow. Heseltine was a regular guest at Garsington and Lawrence, soon after meeting him, wrote to

Ottoline, "I hear Philip Heseltine /is/ coming to you tomorrow. Heseltine's a bit backboneless and needs stiffening up, But I like him very much..." (Letters, Vol. 1, p. 396) Heseltine was strongly attracted to Lawrence and followed him to Cornwall and spent two months living near the Lawrence's cottage. The highly strung young man brought with him a young model, nicknamed the Puma, with whom he shared an antagonistic love affair, and Lawrence wrote Ottoline after one of Heseltine's numerous fights with the Puma,

"I think Heseltine will go first, back to his Puma (the girl, the model) He says he despises her and can't stand her; that she's vicious and a prostitute, but he will be running back to her in a little while, I know. She's not so bad, really. I'm not sure whether her touch of licentious profligacy in sex isn't better than his deep-seated conscious, mental licentiousness."
(Letters, 414)

Heseltine also began a relationship with another woman, and oscillated between her and the Puma, and Lawrence described this to Ottoline as his movement between a desire for companionship on the one hand, and for sensuousness on the other. "Perhaps he is very split, and would always have the two things separate, the real blood connection and the real conscious or spiritual connection always separate" (Letters, 427). Ottoline, a ready mischief maker, showed these private letters to Heseltine at Garsington and the latter accused Lawrence of treachery, and began a vindictive campaign against his ex-friend, which reached its climax in the Café Royal where the two had first met.

Lawrence's collection of poems, Amores, had just been published, and Heseltine, entertaining a group of friends to free drinks at the Cafe, read a number of the poems aloud, assuming a mock-pontifical tone with malicious vigour. Katherine Mansfield and Mark Gertler, both good friends of Lawrence, heard the recital, and the former crossed to Heseltine's table, took the book from his hands and left the Cafe before the astonished group could recover their wits. When Women in Love appeared in 1920, Heseltine recognized a scene similar to the above, and applied unsuccessfully to the Purity League to have the novel suppressed, and then threatened Lawrence's publisher, Martin Secker, with libel proceedings. Lawrence wrote to a friend,

"Secker wrote in a great funk because Heseltine is threatening a law-suit against Women in Love, for libel. He says, Halliday is himself and the Pussum is his wife. Well, they are both such abject shits it is a pity they can't be flushed down a sewer. But they may try to extort money from Secker."

(Letters, 673)

Lawrence's fears were not ungrounded, for a frightened Secker finally agreed to pay Heseltine fifty pounds, but Lawrence to show his contempt, changed only the colour of Halliday and the Pussum's hair in the novel. Heseltine's reaction to the novel is a justification for reading Women in Love, in part, as a roman-a-clef, but I hope to show that is much more than just this. To show, finally, how vivid a part his Cafe Royal encounters played in Lawrence's memory, this simile which appeared in a letter to Katherine Mansfield in 1916 may be quoted:

"The world is gone, extinguished, like the lights of last night's Cafe Royal -- gone for ever. There is a new world with a new, thin unsullied air and no people in it but new-born people; moi-meme et Frieda... No return to London and the world, my dear Katherine -- it has disappeared like the lights of last night's Cafe Royal"

(Letters, 411).

Lady Ottoline Morrell's attempts to be the catalyst, the central figure in an environment in which "those difficult arts which make the wheels of human intercourse turn smoothly -- the arts of tact and temper, of frankness and sympathy, of delicate compliment and exquisite self-abnegation" (Holroyd vol. 2 154) would combine, were a failure. She admits that it is "greedy love" which consumes her life.

"I don't want simply to look and admire, to be a mere spectator; I want to absorb, have such a complete contact and union with what moves me that I should for ever possess it within my being"

(Memoirs, 218).

Her possessiveness and will-to-power "embroiled at one time or another almost everyone, and grew into a poisonous obsession that hung over Garsington like a storm cloud." (Holroyd, vol. 1, 155). Garsington, at its worst, became rather, as Leonard Woolf recalls

"a framed picture of society and life unlike any which I have ever met anywhere else in the real world; but in the world of fiction I recognized its counterpart; for the people in Crotchet Castle, Headlong Hall, Nightmare Abbey, and Gryll Grange would have felt quite at home and have fitted in beautifully at Garsington Manor."¹¹

Lawrence wrote to Ottoline after he heard that Maria Nys, Ottoline's Belgian-refugee niece who was living under her wing, had attempted suicide, and with his usual forthright honesty

pointed out what he felt was her responsibility in the affair.

"I am not sure whether you aren't really more wicked than I had at first thought you." It is as if Ottoline,

"with a strong, old-developed will had enveloped the girl, in this will, so that she lived under the dominance of your will: and then you want to put her away from you, eject her from your will.... Why must you always use your will so much, Why can't you let things be, without always grasping and trying to know and to dominate."

Then, diplomatically, he added "I'm too much like this myself."

(Letters, 334-5).

By the time Lawrence moved to Cornwall early in 1916, he had severed nearly all his ties with the Cambridge-Bloomsbury-Garsington world, though he still communicated with Ottoline, from whom he received a copy of Thucydides in April. To Barbara Low he wrote, "I read Thucydides too, when I have the courage to face the fact of these wars of a collapsing era, of a dying idea."

(Letters, 454), and to another friend,

"The Peloponnesian war was the death agony of Greece, really, not its life struggle. I am just reading Thucydides -- when I can bear to -- it is too terrible to see a people, adhering to traditions, fling itself down the abyss of the past, and disappear."

(Letters, 466)

The experiences of the past year and a half had been among the most important in his life. His contacts with Bloomsbury-England had convinced Lawrence that there was

"no use adhering to that old advanced crowd -- Cambridge, Lowes Dickinson, Bertie Russell, young reformers, Socialists, Fabians -- they are our disease, not our hope. We want a clear sweep

and a new start, and we will have it...."
(Letters, 491).

What he felt was the most "dreadful and unbearable part of it" was the fact that he had been "born into a decadent era, a decline of life, a collapsing of civilization." (Letters, 383), and Women in Love, completed in November, 1916 was in great part the fruits of his experiences since the beginning of the war.

Lawrence sent his manuscript to Catherine Carswell to read, and soon he heard from Ottoline, "I heard from Ottoline this morning, /27 Nov. 1916/ saying she hears that she is the villainess of the new book. It is very strange, how rumours go round -- So I have offered to send her the Mss...". Another justification for reading the novel as a roman-a-clef, then, is Ottoline's reactions to reading the manuscript. She felt she recognized herself in the character of Hermione Roddice, and Lawrence wrote, "The Ott. is really too disgusting, with her threat of legal proceedings, etc. She is really contemptible. We have flattered her above all bounds in attending to her at all." (Letters, 508). Lawrence's last connection with Bloomsbury was severed. Moore writes, "By making himself a leper to its citizens, Lawrence severely harmed himself, for this group dominated a large part of British Intellectual life and maintained representatives on important journals. They kept Lawrence down for a generation, belittling when not ignoring him..." (The Intelligent Heart, 245).

An example of this can be seen in David Garnett's comments

in the third volume of his autobiography.

"With the exception of Conrad and of Henry James, he /George Moore/ was the greatest prose writer that I have known. It is the writers who preach a gospel who excite the enthusiasm and hero-worship of their generation and the one which comes immediately after it. But sooner or later the message becomes boring and their reputations fade. This happened to Carlyle and Kipling and the same process will overtake D. H. Lawrence. Long after Women in Love has become unreadable, The Lake and A Letter to Rome will preserve their flavour unchanged"¹².

Lawrence himself wrote in a letter /3 April 1917/, "Did I tell you George Moore read Women in Love, and says it is a great book, and that I am a better writer than himself. That is really astonishing", and posterity and literary criticism have endorsed Moore's judgement.

For four years Lawrence attempted, in vain, to have Women in Love published, and an indication of the obstacles he found in his way is this letter to Koteliansky (6 Jan 1919) in which he mentions the Prince Bibesco who at one point was willing to help publish the novel privately.

"I knew that it was Desmond MacCarthy who had put a stopper on Prince B., moaning on Ottoline's outraged behalf. I knew that, and I know that Prince B. had not the courage to say a word either to me or to Cynthia Asquith, but returned the MS. wordless. And I know that Desmond MacCarthy was quite pleased with himself for having arse-licked Ottoline and the Prince both at one, both of them being pretty-sound benefactors of Desmond, who rather enjoys his arse-licking turns."

(Letters, 575).

Lawrence's relationship with Bloomsbury was not restrictedly social; his disagreement with them went deeper, and he found himself at variance on a number of fundamental issues of life and art, and it is to these we now turn in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Lawrence's differences with Bloomsbury were not merely social, they also involved fundamental issues of thought and feeling. These can be divided into three major categories: the political Liberalism of the group; their cult of personal relationships; and their aesthetic values. With regard to the first of these, Lawrence's dialogue with Bertrand Russell will provide ample material to reveal the basic conflict between his views, and what must finally be seen as the bankrupt Liberalism of Russell and Bloomsbury as a whole.

The attitudes of Bloomsbury were shaped by nineteenth century liberalism and humanism,¹ and it was at Cambridge that men like E.M. Forster, J.M. Keynes and Bertrand Russell continued to imbibe the liberal-humanism of their Victorian fathers. Bentham's Utilitarianism was central to 19th century Liberalism and proposed political freedom for the rising middle class in their struggle against the privileged aristocrats of England. Laissez-faire economics saw the growth of middle-class capitalist interests and was a rationale for free-trade and economic imperialism. Once the middle-class had won its struggle against the landed interests, John Stuart Mill recognised the need for changes in the conception of utilitarianism and his emphasis became directed to the need to preserve the rights of the individual or minorities against the existing democratic state.

Russell, in his autobiography,² writes that at Cambridge he was "a Liberal Imperialist" (p. 177) and "believed in ordered progress by means of politics and free discussion" (86). He was a "passionate Free-Trader" (202), a concept central to the Liberal Party of his day, but his readings of his godfather Mill, whose 'disciple and friend' Russell's father had been, interested him in that side of Liberalism which was concerned with the ideal freedoms of the individual, rather than with the larger concerns of economic and social organization. G. Dangerfield has described the latter as having become based on "an almost mystical communion with the doctrine of laissez-faire, and a profound belief in the English virtue of compromise."³

Russell admits that "before I went to Cambridge I had not read much except Mill" (Autobiog. 82), and it may be said with justice, that Bloomsbury represented that branch of Whig Liberalism which turned away from utilitarianism and a concern with the greater good of the numerical majority to a concern with the protection of the individual, and Mill's new emphasis on the "culture of the feelings". This, in effect, was the Coleridgean concept of "cultivation", the "harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity."⁴

The history of Liberalism in England in those years immediately preceding 1914, has been admirably covered by

George Dangerfield. He discusses the death of the political party which men such as Gladstone had made effective in the days of economic expansionism, and shows how "it died from poison administered by its Conservative foes, and from disillusion over the inefficiency of the word 'Reform'" (p. 72). The outbreak of the first World War postponed the turmoil and unrest which was about to result in the first great general strike in the country's history, and to certain civil war in Ireland, but was the final nail driven into the coffin of Whig Liberalism. Russell was aware of the debilitation of Liberal England, and his desire for reform convinced his lover, Lady Ottoline Morrell, that he would find an ally in her friend D.H. Lawrence, who was equally concerned with the fate of the country. For a little over a year the two met and communicated, planning a series of lectures and a new philosophy which would offer an alternative to the chaos into which the country had plunged.

Those who have commented on this venture⁵ have simplified the final opposition between the two by describing Russell as "disembodied mind" and Lawrence as "mindless." A closer study of their interchange of ideas will show that there is more to the matter than this, and that, what was finally in radical opposition, were two different and mutually exclusive traditions.

It has already been shown how disappointed Lawrence's expectations were when he visited Russell and met Keynes and others at Cambridge. Keynes has complacently described Lawrence's reaction as jealousy....

Lawrence was jealous of the other lot, and Cambridge rationalism and cynicism, then at their height, were, of course, repulsive to him. Bertie gave him what must have been, I think, his first glimpse of Cambridge. It overwhelmed, attracted and repulsed him -- which was the other emotional disturbance. It was obviously a civilization, and not less obviously uncomfortable and unattainable for him -- very repulsive and very attractive.⁶

The self-congratulatory tone is typical of Bloomsbury, and to ascribe to Lawrence feelings of jealousy and overwhelming attraction to a "civilization" which Leavis has described as

articulateness and unreality cultivated together; callowness disguised from itself in articulateness; conceit casing itself safely in a confirmed sense of high sophistication; the uncertainty as to whether one is serious or not taking itself for ironic poise,⁷

is to be ignorant of Lawrence's intelligence, of his fine education and of his wider experience of life.

In a letter to Ottoline (p. 351) Lawrence described what he felt to be Russell's problem and ultimately, all of Bloomsbury's. "What ails Russell is in matters of life and emotion, the inexperience of youth. He is, vitally, emotionally, much too inexperienced in personal contact and conflict, for a man of his age and calibre. It isn't that life has been too much for him, but too little." Lawrence was barely thirty, Russell in his mid-forties, but the latter's autobiography lends support to Lawrence's judgement. The callousness of many of Russell's emotional relationships resulted from "the kind of fear", which, for many years led him "to avoid all deep emotion, and live, as nearly as I could,

a life of intellect tempered by flippancy" (p. 106). In the cloistered atmosphere of Cambridge, where first as a student, then as lecturer, Russell and others were protected from many of the economic and emotional realities of everyday England, whereas Lawrence had been born into a workman's home and had experienced the struggles that countless others were experiencing.

Russell employed the same rational, logical and scientific approach to social questions that he had used in the successful mathematical masterpiece, Principia Mathematica. Like Mill he believed that by the exercise of the powers of reason and rational thought, men could be persuaded to lead better lives. Keynes, commenting on their group and Russell, wrote that there was "no solid diagnosis of human nature" underlying their views.

Bertie in particular sustained simultaneously a pair of opinions ludicrously incompatible. He held that in fact human affairs were carried on after a most irrational fashion, but that the remedy was quite simple and easy, since all we had to do was to carry them on rationally.
(Two Memoirs, 102).

In his first letter to Russell, Lawrence wrote

I write to say to you that we must start a solid basis of freedom of actual living -- not only of thinking. We must provide another standard than the pecuniary standard, to measure all daily life by. We must be free of the economic question. Economic life must be the means to actual life. (Russell Letters, 29).⁸

He believed in

a revolution in the state.... We shall smash the frame. The land, the industries, the means of communication and the public amusements shall all be nationalized. Every man shall have his

wage till the day of his death, whether he work or not, so long as he works when he is fit,

and the same would apply for women. "Then, and then only, shall we be able to begin living" (p. 35).

In this, Lawrence can be placed in that tradition of radical English thought which found its strongest expression in the 19th century in the work of Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle in the 19th, and Lawrence in the early 20th century, responded directly to the industrialism which they saw changing not only the physical but the spiritual lives of the English. They both recognized the effect the mechanical age was having on the values of people.

Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also.... The same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand ... their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character. (Williams, 91)

Lawrence responded in a similar way.

When pure mechanization or materialism sets in, the soul is automatically pivoted, and the most diverse of creatures fall into a common mechanical unison. This we see in America. It is not a homogeneous, spontaneous coherence so much as a disintegrated amorphousness which lends itself to perfect mechanical unison.⁹

Carlyle attacked the "cash nexus" of society, which had been set up as "the sole nexus between men and men", when "there are so many things which cash will not pay" (Williams, 89); similarly, Lawrence felt that "the industrial problem arises from the base forcing of all human energy into a competition of

mere acquisition."¹⁰ Therefore, "it is towards a higher freedom than mere freedom from oppression, by his fellow-mortals, that man dimly aims." (Williams, 88). Both believed that all men should be given the opportunities for an equal share in the economic gains of the society, but that a democracy based on the laissez-faire spirit, in which each individual was free only to follow his own interests was not enough. Carlyle wrote

all men may see, whose sight is good for much, that in democracy can lie no finality; that with the completest winning of democracy there is nothing yet won -- except emptiness, and the free chance to win (Williams, 92).

The economic equalities were not enough; spiritual values were of central importance, and it is on this issue that sometimes basic disagreement with Russell occurred.

Russell worked on his manuscript for a "Philosophy of Social Reconstruction," and discussed his ideas with Lawrence either at Garsington, or by correspondence. These lecture plans were finally published as Principles of Social Reconstruction in 1916, and won approval from a large reading public. The Nation reviewed the book favourably and stated, "We question whether a more brilliant statement of the Liberal philosophy has been written since the last world war created Liberalism." In this work Russell presented a system in which he attacked what he called the "possessive" impulse, and called for a move towards the "creative." He expanded his belief that "the only thought which is genuine is that which springs out of the intellectual

impulse of curiosity, leading to the desire to know and understand,"¹¹ and the pages contain his highly cerebral attack on the abuses he clearly perceived in English society. He felt that "socialism as a panacea seems to me to be mistaken... since it is too ready to suppose that better economic conditions will of themselves make men happy" (P.S.R., 43), and in this he was in no disagreement with Lawrence. Later in the book, he went on to place his faith in "the ideals which inspired liberalism" and wrote of his concern with "the problem of combining liberty and personal initiative with organization" (P.S.R., 71), a concern his mentor Mill had written on. Russell believed that the State should have powers mainly to arbitrate in conflicts both within and outside the country, but that the ideal of "syndicalism is valuable as a check upon the tyranny which the community may be tempted to exercise over certain classes of its members." He felt that

all strong organizations which embody a sectional public opinion such as trade unions, co-operative societies, professions, and universities are to be welcomed as safeguards of liberty and opportunities for initiative. (P.S.R., 73).

For Russell, "the only powerful political force from which any help is to be expected in bringing about such changes as seem needed is Labour" (P.S.R., 242), and he concluded with the reminder that other changes had, in the past, originated from "a few impracticable idealists -- Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley, John Stuart Mill," and that

the power of thought, in the long run, is greater than any other human power. Those who have the ability to think, and the imagination to think in accordance with men's needs, are likely to achieve the good they aim at sooner or later.... (P.S.R., 226).

Lawrence wrote over Russell's manuscript "this which you say is all social criticism; it isn't social reconstruction" (Russell Letters, 77), and what he found lacking in Russell's views was a "sense of the absolute." Russell believed that

if a majority in every civilized country so desired, we could, within twenty years, abolish all abject poverty, quite half the illness of the world, the whole economic slavery which binds down nine tenths of our population; we could fill the world with beauty and joy, and secure the reign of universal peace.¹²

As he wrote later, "I remain an unrepentant rationalist",¹³ and his sanguine views were too much a simplification for Lawrence, for they ignored that most important of elements, the nature of the human being.

Lawrence, like Carlyle, did not believe in the type of democracy that Russell envisioned, where each individual would be free to follow his "creative interests", or each group, protecting its own interests, could confront any other group threatening these. He wrote to Russell (p. 50),

you must drop all you democracy. You must not believe in 'the people.' One class is no better than another. It must be a case of wisdom or truth.

For Lawrence, the

societal instince [was] much deeper than the sex instinct -- and societal repression much more devastating. There is no repression of

the sexual individual comparable to the repression of the societal man in me, by the individual ego, my own and everybody else's.
(Letters, Vol. 2, 990),

It was this instinct of community which he felt so strongly, and he attacked Russell's liberalism, for its concern with the freedom of the individual ego, and not with the individual's need for a sense of community with others.

Primarily, you must allow and acknowledge and be prepared to proceed from the fundamental impulse in all of us towards the Truth, the fundamental passion also, the most fundamental passion in men for wholeness of movement, unanimity of purpose, oneness in construction. This is the principle of construction. The rest is all criticism, destruction. (Letters, Vol. 1, 354),

He told Russell that the war was "going to develop into the last great war between labour and capital," and that instead of attacking society in his criticism -- "You are too old-fashioned. The back of your serpent is already broken" -- Russell should "work out the idea of a new state." (53)

Carlyle believed that

surely of all 'rights of man,' this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be gently or forcibly held in the true course by him, is the indisputablest.... if Freedom have any meaning it means enjoyment of this right, wherein all other rights are enjoyed,
(Williams, 93),

and a belief in a governing body truly responsible to the people was something which Lawrence confessed to Russell. "I don't want tyrants ...", and "the electorate should be based on an 'organic' conception of society, each group electing its immediate representatives, and so on upwards." For this, he was attacked by Russell for being anti-democratic. To Lady Cynthia Asquith, Lawrence

wrote this important letter concerning Russell,

He sent me a synopsis of the lectures, and I can only think them pernicious. And now his vanity is piqued, because I said they must be different. I am so sick of people: they preserve an evil, bad separating spirit under the warm cloak of good words. That is intolerable in them. The Conservative talks about the old and glorious national ideal, the Liberal talks about this great struggle for right in which the nation is engaged... Bertie Russell talks about democratic control and the educating of the artisan, and all this goodness is just a warm and cozy cloak for a bad spirit. They all want the same thing; a continuing in this state of disintegration wherein each separate little ego is an independent little principality by itself. What does Russell really want? He wants to keep his own established ego, his finite and ready-made self intact, free from contact and connection. He wants to be ultimately a free agent. That is what they all want, ultimately -- that is what is at the back of all international peace-for-ever and democratic control talks, they want an outward system of nullity, which they call peace and goodwill, so that in their own souls they can be independent little gods, referred nowhere and to nothing, little mortal Absolutes, secure from question. That is at the back of all Liberalism, Fabianism and democracy. It stinks Russell says I cherish illusions, that there is no such spirit as I like to imagine, the spirit of unanimity in truth, among mankind

(Letters, Vol. 1, 362),

Lawrence desired a new spirit in opposition to the "separating spirit" which existed in English society, and which Russell's liberalism perpetuated.

The spirit of the war is, that I am a unit, a single entity that has no intrinsic reference to the rest: the reference is extrinsic, a question of living, not being. In war, in my being I am a detached entity and every one of my actions is an act of further detaching my own single entity from all the rest

(Letters, Vol. 1, 374),

He believed, not in a fascist dictatorship, but in a democracy in which "the living self has one purpose only: to come into its own fulness of being" (Phoenix I, 714) and in a purpose which would realize the greater potentialities in all human beings which the liberalism Russell advocated would narrow.

The first great purpose of Democracy is that each man shall be spontaneously himself -- each man himself, each woman herself, without any questions of equality or inequality entering in at all; and that no man shall try to determine the being of any other man, or of any other female.

(Phoenix I, 716).

What had to be recognized was the "otherness" of others. To Russell he wrote,

the drama shall be between individual men and women, not between nations and classes.... and the great living experience for every man is his adventure into the woman .. and the ultimate passion of every man is to be within himself the whole of mankind -- which I call social passion -- which is what brings to fruit your philosophical writings. The man embraces in the woman all that is not himself, and from that one resultant, from that embrace, comes every new action

(p. 36-37).

This was a statement of central importance which Russell was unable to appreciate. Lawrence believed that until there was an acceptance of basic 'otherness' and reverence between individual men and women, a recognition that the mind is not the only seat of the consciousness, and that "blood consciousness", just another term for the more intuitive forms of knowledge we all have, is equally important, there could be no radical changes in the organization of society. Change would have to come from within, and with human beings we could not use concepts such as equality.

We cannot say $A = B$. Nor can we say that men are unequal. We may not declare that $A + B = C$ one man is neither equal nor unequal to another man. When I stand in the presence of another man, and I am my own pure self am I aware of the presence of an equal, or of an inferior, or of a superior? I am not. When I stand with another man, who is himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of otherness. There is me, and there is another being there is no comparing or estimating ... Comparison enters only when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material mechanical world. Then equality and inequality starts at once.

(Phoenix I, 715).

What civilization had done was to "almost destroy the natural flow of common sympathy between men and men, and men and women. And it is this that I want to restore into life."¹⁴

He came finally to recognize that there was no way he could introduce his changes into the sick society of wartime England, and he wrote Russell, towards the end of their correspondence, that

one must be an outlaw these days, not a teacher or preacher What's the good of sticking in the damned ship and haranguing the merchant-pilgrims in their own language. Why don't you drop overboard clear out of the whole show?
(70)

It is interesting that in his autobiography, Russell attacked Lawrence's withdrawal and used it as "evidence" that Lawrence "had no real wish to make the world better," for as Holroyd writes,

towards the end of 1917 Russell himself decided to withdraw from active pacifist agitation, believing that it was by then more important to wait and work for a constructive post-war peace.
(Vol. 2, 174).

Russell's hectic activities as pacifist organizer

were seen by Lawrence as a type of hypocrisy. Recognizing the natural aggression which lies in all human beings and in himself, he wrote to Russell, asking,

Do you still speak at the U.D.C. of the nations kissing each other, when your soul prowls the frontier all the time most jealously, to defend what it has and to sieze what it can. It makes me laugh when you admit it ¹⁵ (43),

and later, concerning an article that Russell had sent him,

I hate it ... you in the Essay are all the time a lie. Your basic desire is the maximum of desire of war, you are really the super-war-spirit. What you want is to jab and strike, like the soldier with the bayonet, only you are sublimated into words. ... You are satisfying in an indirect, false way your lust to jab and strike. Either satisfy it in a direct and honorable way, saying 'I hate you all, liars and swine, and am out to set upon you,' or stick to mathematics, where you can be true -- But to come as the angel of Peace -- no, I prefer Tirpitz a thousand times in that role. You are simply full of repressed desires, which have become savage and anti-social. And they come out in this sheep's clothing of peace propaganda. As a woman said to me, who had been to one of your meetings: 'It seemed so strange, with his face looking so evil, to be talking about peace and love. He can't have meant what he said....' It is the falsity I can't bear. I wouldn't care if you were six times a murderer, so long as you said to yourself, 'I am this' ... It is not the hatred of falsehood which inspires you. It is the hatred of people of flesh and blood. It is a perverted mental blood lust. Why don't you own it.... (59-60).

Lytton Strachey's letter to Vanessa Bell (17 April 1916)

lends credence to Lawrence's perception.

Bertie has been here for the weekend. He is working day and night with the N.C.F., and is at last perfectly happy -- gloating over all the horrors and the moral lessons of the situation. The tales he tells makes one's blood run cold.... (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 174).

Russell's tragedy, Lawrence wrote, was that his "mental and nerve consciousness exerts a tyranny over the blood-consciousness" (Letters, Vol. 1, 63). This is a restatement of what we have read of Keynes' views and Russell in his own words earlier in the chapter. In his autobiography, Russell admits that "I desired the defeat of Germany as ardently as any retired Colonel. Love of England is very nearly the strongest emotion I possess," the latter a telling self-condemnation if we compare it with Lawrence's respect for the individual's integrity during the war which saw tens of thousands slaughtered uselessly in trenches for a 'love of England.'

Russell's response to Lawrence's charges -- "for twenty-four hours I thought that I was not fit to live and contemplated suicide" -- is an indication of the power of the accusations, and his later reactions, which can be seen as the ego protecting its vulnerability by projection, are further confirmation of this. "At the end of that time, a healthier reaction set in", and Russell, in what is his strongest and most hysterical attack against anyone, accused Lawrence of having "developed the whole philosophy of Fascism before the politicians had thought of it," and that "he had no real wish to make the world better," that "he was his wife Frieda's mouthpiece," and from her "imbibed prematurely" the ideas afterwards developed by Mussolini and Hitler, and, what is the ultimate irony, that "he had such a hatred of mankind."¹⁶

A fairer appraisal would be that Lawrence, firmly rooted in a vital democratic tradition, was a living comment

on the superannuated liberalism of Russell and others in the Bloomsbury group. His response to the brittle rationalism which attempted to revive a philosophy which the war and the changing conditions of society had made an anachronism, must be seen as that of an intensely concerned and extremely sane social commentator.¹⁷

The second main point of disagreement between Lawrence and his Bloomsbury contemporaries involved the question of personal relationships. For, despite Lawrence's criticism of Russell's insistence on thinking in terms of unreal political and social abstractions instead of recognizing specific and individual human contact, the Bloomsbury group as a whole was very much preoccupied with the nature of personal relationships. Nevertheless neither the theory nor the actuality of love and friendship in Bloomsbury were at all acceptable to Lawrence. To understand his position in this particular matter it will be necessary to return briefly to the origins of Bloomsbury. As was mentioned in chapter one, the coterie began at Cambridge University. Keynes, Strachey, Bell, Woolf, Forster, and others have all stressed the importance in their development of their days at Cambridge. Forster's The Longest Journey contains one long section lauding Cambridge, and his

hero, Rickie Elliot, is a confused young graduate with latent homosexual feelings. The Life of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson that Forster wrote was also, indirectly, a hymn of praise to Cambridge. The Bloomsbury undergraduates, all from the intellectual aristocracy, came from a privileged class which gave them freedom from the economic hardships of life, and at Cambridge they were removed from the everyday matters to an even more rarified intellectual atmosphere. To add to their feeling of exclusiveness their shared membership in smaller societies like the Midnight Club and especially, the Apostles, further removed them from their fellow men. Holroyd writes "above the splendour and prestige of political advancement they venerated self-development, and held abstract contemplation to be of more value than direct action" (Vol. 1, 161), and as they withdrew from the main stream of political liberalism, individual relationships of a particular kind became their pre-eminent concern.

Forster wrote

what is good in people... is their belief in friendship and loyalty for their own sakes... Personal relationships [are] something comparatively solid in a world full of violence and cruelty.¹⁸

It is to an aristocracy that one must turn --

an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, the plucky...they represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of the queer race over cruelty and chaos. (Two Cheers, 82).

This belief that the life of affectionate personal relationships between an aristocracy of the sensitive was the good life, was shared by the members of the Apostles, and later, by all of

Bloomsbury. Virginia Woolf, in her biography of Roger Fry, wrote,

a time had come when a real society was possible. It was to be a society of people of moderate means, a society based on the old Cambridge ideal of truth and free speaking, but alive, as Cambridge had never been, to the importance of the arts.

The young English artist, she felt, tended to become "illiterate, narrow-minded, and self centred" because he lacked the advantages of "any society where, among the amenities of civilization ideas were discussed in common and he was accepted as an equal."¹⁹

Strachey wrote to Keynes, exclaiming, "Oh dear me! When will my heaven be realized -- My castle in Spain?" (Harrod, 115), and went on to sketch his dream -- rooms for his closest friends in which they would live, writing tragedies, composing poetry, painting pictures and discussing and criticizing their work with ardour.

When a fellow Apostle, the philosopher G.E. Moore, published his Principia Ethica in 1903, its impact on people like Keynes, Strachey, Bell, and Woolf was tremendous. The most important section of the work, for them, was the final chapter, "The Ideal". Moore, in the earlier sections of the book concerned himself with the concept "good", and showed it to be indefinable. He then asked, "what things have intrinsic value," and by applying the method of "reflective judgement," a mixture of reason and intuition, he provided a means of recognizing that which is intrinsically good. He came to the following conclusion:

By far the most valuable things, which we know or can imagine, are certain states of consciousness which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects ... personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments include all the greatest, and by far the greatest, goods we can imagine.²⁰

More will be said later in the chapter about "aesthetic" enjoyments, but the discipline of "personal affections" is what concerns us at present. Personal affections, to have the most value, must, like aesthetic appreciation, contain "appropriate emotion, cognition of truly beautiful qualities; and true belief". The mental qualities of a person are a part of his beauty, and so the nature of the ideal, or the greatest good, will consist in states of mind. Moore believed that, in action, a person should be "guided by a correct conception of what things are intrinsically good or bad," and not follow rules of conduct, for

the extreme improbability that any general rule with regards to the utility of an action will be correct, seems, in fact, to be the chief principle which should be taken into account in discussing how the individual should guide his choice.

As J.K. Johnstone comments, "conduct will look after itself to a large extent if men know what is good."²¹

Two things only are good in themselves, the enjoyment of beautiful objects and the pleasures of human intercourse, but as Harrod exclaims,

What a world is left out!... Moore's list of 'goods' is cloistered and anaemic.... Moore's book only comprises a fragment of the moral story....

and it ignores "social obligations on which a civilized society rests" (80). Keynes wrote to a friend, "I have just been reading Moore's Principia Ethica, which has been out a few days -- a stupendous and entrancing work, the greatest on subject" (Harrod, 75), and later to Strachey, "It is impossible to exaggerate the wonder and originality of Moore" (114). Because of Moore, he later wrote "we were amongst the first of our generation, perhaps alone amongst our generation to escape from the Benthamite tradition" (Two Memoirs, 96). Clive Bell wrote that they had been "freed by Moore from the spell of an ugly doctrine in which we had been reared; he delivered us from Utilitarianism."²² Leonard Woolf recalled that "Moore had the most tremendous, permanent effect upon our minds and upon our lives, and indeed, upon the minds of many older men."²³ Strachey wrote to Moore,

I think your book has not only wrecked and shattered all writers on Ethics from Aristotle and Christ to Herbert Spencer and Mr. Bradley, it has not only laid the true foundations of Ethics, it has not only left all modern philosophy bafouee.... It is the scientific method deliberately applied, for the first time, to Reasoning. ... The truth, there can be no doubt, is really now upon the march. I date from Oct. 1903 the beginning of the Age of Reason. (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 180).

Russell's comments on his friend Moore's book are important if we are to have a clearer understanding of his impact on the men, who, on leaving Cambridge, were to continue the "religion" they felt Moore had given them.

Moore's ethical doctrines were taken up and, I think, considerably distorted by his immediate successors at Cambridge. Keynes wrote an

account of what his contemporaries derived from Moore's ethics, and from this account, it would seem that they noticed only what he said about intrinsic excellence and ignored altogether the more utilitarian aspects of his doctrine.²⁴

Russell concludes his statement on Moore's followers, by writing,

they aimed ... at a life of retirement among fine shades and nice feelings, and conceived of the good as consisting in the passionate mutual admirations of a chique of the elite. This doctrine, quite unfairly, they fathered upon G.E. Moore, whose disciples they professed to be.... (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 207).

Moore gave them a philosophically respectable justification for doing what they would have done on other grounds, and his methods of philosophical enquiry, questioning all assumptions, became a part of the group's conversational tone. Keynes saw Russell's Principles of Mathematics which came out in the same year as Moore's Principia Ethica as furnishing "a method for handling the material provided by the latter." (Two Memoirs, 86). It was "under the influence of Moore's method. ... a stringent education in dialectic," that any subject would be attacked in conversation, using the tools of "logical and analytical technique," and the question, "What exactly do you mean?" would be "most frequently on our lips" (88). Added to the delights of friendship, then, was the art of conversation, in which, what would be valued most was "the play of intelligence" (Anna, 126), and from Cambridge, these values were taken to the houses in Bloomsbury in London. Clive Bell recalls their shared taste for "discussion in pursuit of truth.... and a contempt for conventional ways of thinking and feeling --

contempt for conventional morals, if you will" (Old Friends, 132).

Strachey gives an example of a typical evening in a letter to a friend.

As you may imagine, in such company, there has been no deficiency in conversation. We totter to bed at two o'clock in the morning, having arranged at large over the characters of our friends and the constitution of the universe, and still uncertain as to the value of representation in art.... (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 527).

Keynes, writing about Moore's work later, had this to say, "What we got from Moore was by no means entirely what he offered us ... We accepted Moore's religion, so to speak, and discarded his morals." (Two Memoirs, 83). The religion of the Apostles was that "nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's of course, but chiefly our own" (83). He admitted that they

repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term, immoralists.

Keynes' use of the term "immoralists" must be taken in the 'strict sense' that Gide used it in his novel of the same name; the immoralist as homosexual. What Keynes and Strachey saw in Moore's writings was a rational justification for their own feelings and emotional relationships. Moore himself, an innocent and basically naive man, was unaware of the personal interpretation that many Apostles placed on his book. Strachey wrote Keynes that

our great stumbling-block in the business of introducing the world to Moorism is our horror of half measures. We can't be content with telling the truth -- we must tell the whole truth; and

the whole truth is the Devil. Voltaire abolished Christianity for believing in God. It's madness of us to dream of making dowagers understand that feelings are good, when we say in the same breath that the best ones are sodomitical

(Holroyd, Vol. 1, 185).

Russell recalled that "after my time the Society changed in one respect.... homosexual relations between the members were for a time common, but in my day they were unknown." But Strachey, after reading through the papers of the Apostles, became convinced that many members of the generations before his had been non-practising homosexuals, and because of the unenlightened times were forced to live lives of "miserable, twilight celibacy Now, in the new, uninhibited age of reason heralded by Moore, all this was to be altered." (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 208).

It would not be unreasonable to state that the prevailing emotional tone of the Society and of much of Cambridge was homosexual, though this is not to infer that all of Bloomsbury was homosexual, and this fact, in itself, implies no adverse moral judgement. Lawrence, an amazingly perceptive evaluator of human character, was able to recognize what, in fact, was the moral decadence of the men he met at Cambridge, and later at Garsington and in Bloomsbury itself. The correspondence between Strachey and Keynes during their years at Cambridge when the control of the Apostles fell into their hands, reveals the physical and erotic basis of their interest in many younger undergraduates who captured their attention. In vying for the

attentions of numerous blonde-haired youths whom each wished to sponsor as initiates to the Society, both men revealed an intensity of lust which would be equally condemnable in heterosexual love. Their friendship was strained to its limits when Strachey discovered, after revealing his love for Duncan Grant to Keynes, that Grant and Keynes had gone off to London to set up house together. It is in these letters that Strachey expounded the particular virtues of homosexual love, and it is the immorality of this justification which Lawrence was to recognize and condemn.

Holroyd writes, summarizing the argument,

Its superiority to the humdrum heterosexual relationship lay, so he believed, in the greater degree of sympathy and the more absolute duality which it could command. Between opposite sexes there must always be some latent residue of doubt, ignorance, perplexity; so often intelligence was matched with stupidity, talent paired off with mediocrity. But through homosexual love, which aimed at duplication or replacing the self rather than complementing it, one could inhabit the body and assume the personality of one's choice. And so, instead of extending, unsatisfactorily, the burdens of adulthood, one escaped into a vicarious existence at once stimulating to the intelligence and imagination, and nourishing for the imprisoned, frustrated will. (Vol. 1, 208-9).

Strachey's attitude to women is made clear in this letter to his brother ...

when it comes to a creature with a cunt, one seems to be immediately desorienté. Perhaps it's because cunts don't particularly appeal to one. I suppose that maybe partly the explanation. But -- oh, they coil and coil; and on the whole, they make me uneasy. (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 198).

In one of his earliest letters to Russell, Lawrence expressed what is a direct condemnation of the above. He believed that what a man loves in a woman should be her "intrinsic" 'otherness.'

Love is, that I go to a woman to know myself, and knowing myself, to go further, to explore into the unknown, which is the woman, venture in upon the coasts of the unknown, and open my discovery to all humanity. (32)

"The source of all life and knowledge is in man and woman, and the source of all living is in the interchange and the meeting and mingling of these two" (Letters, Vol. 1, 280). To Russell he explained that if a man, after he has come to know himself, in his contact with a woman, does not continue into his exploration of the unknown, but repeats this experience, that is sensationalism. "When a man takes a woman, he is merely repeating a known reaction upon himself, not seeking a new reaction, a discovery. And this is like-self abuse or masturbation." (33). In Sodomy, "the man goes to the man to repeat this reaction upon himself. It is a nearer form of masturbation," and towards the end of the letter he expressed both his respect for Forster, whom he differentiated from the rest of Bloomsbury, and his conclusion of what he felt was Forster's impotence.

A man of strong soul has too much honour for the other body -- man or woman -- to use it as a means of masturbation. So he remains neutral, inactive. That is Forster. (34).

Strachey's prim introduction into Bloomsbury conversation

of what Keynes's called "certain Latin technical terms of sex" (Holroyd, Vol. 1, 206) as a revolutionary measure, their use of a dead language to discuss the most vital of activities, would also certainly have offended Lawrence, who belonged to the tradition of English writers who believed in using the virile Anglo-Saxon terms.

Keynes admitted that

We completely misunderstood human nature, including our own. The rationality which we attributed to it led to a superficiality, not only of judgement, but also of feeling. (Two Memoirs, 100),

and it was this superficiality of feeling that Lawrence recognized in the personal relationships of Bloomsbury. "Our comments on life and affairs were bright and amusing, but brittle -- because there was no solid diagnosis of human nature underlying them" (102). The lack of "reverence" underlay what Lawrence felt was the great emotional failure of Bloomsbury. Although he recognized that Forster's liberalism and humanism was more humane than the more brittle attitudes of the rest of the group, the cult of personal relationships was for Lawrence an indication that the group was bankrupt emotionally, and it was this that led to the ultimate decadence which Bloomsbury represented.

In Moore's Principia Ethica, many of the Bloomsbury group also found a philosophical justification for their further retreat from the world of action and political movements to an aesthetic world of pure forms and "the enjoyment of beautiful objects." Keynes recalled that "one's prime objects in life were love, the creation and enjoyment of aesthetic experience, and the pursuit of knowledge," and when during the war he continued his active role in Liberal politics, which made him somewhat suspect in Bloomsbury, he was "given complete absolution and future crimes also forgiven," (Harrod, 226) in a letter from his Bloomsbury friends when, at their suggestion, he bought a number of modern French paintings for the National Gallery.

Secure from economic concerns, dissatisfied with what it felt to be the uncivilized wartime activities of the Liberal party, already self-consciously aware of its superiority after the Cambridge years, the Bloomsbury group believed that they were the "aristocracy of the sensitive", that Forster had written of, and they became the purveyors of aestheticism in the early part of this century. D.S. Savage has interpreted aestheticism as

a malady of the spirit in which the poverty of a meaningless and static life is compensated by the transposition into living of properties borrowed from the artistic sphere.²⁵

It remains now to show how this judgement fits the Bloomsbury aesthetes, and why Lawrence felt their aesthetic principles to be life-denying and decadent.

E.M. Forster wrote that whereas society promised order, but only delusively,

works of art, in my opinion, are the only objects in the material universe to possess internal order, and that is why, though I don't believe that only art matters, I do believe in Art for Art's sake (Two Cheers, 104).

Clive Bell and Roger Fry were the major aesthetic theorists of Bloomsbury. Moore had written of the search for the intrinsic good; Bell wrote that "art is not only a means to good states of mind, but, perhaps, the most direct and potent that we possess."²⁶ and also that, "Creating works of art is as direct a means to good as a human being can practise" (ART, 84). Art is a religion,

it is an expression of and a means to states of mind as holy as any that men are capable of experiencing, and it is towards art that modern minds turn, not only for the most perfect expression of transcendent emotion, but for an inspiration by which to live (ART, 81).

For Fry, "art is one of the chief organs of what, for want of a better word, I must call the spiritual life."²⁷

The creation or contemplation of art was removed from the realms of everyday life by both Bell and Fry. They simplified what they took to be the common assumptions of all those who attempted to appreciate art in the second decade of this century. Perfect representation, they felt, was what people wanted in a picture; the more photographically clear a painting, the more exciting the scene depicted, the happier would be the spectator. In their reaction against representation in the arts, they themselves simplified and moved to an equally extreme position. Bell

wrote that works of art provoked a particular emotion, the "aesthetic emotion." If we could "discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of aesthetics" (ART, 17). The answer to this question was simply -- "significant form". What was the quality shared by all works of art?

In each, lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call 'Significant Form'; and 'Significant Form' is the one quality common to all works of visual art.

(ART, 18),

Representation became quite unimportant; "it is fatal to sacrifice significance to representation (Art, 26), and to appreciate a work of art,

we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. Art transposes us from a world of man's activity to a world of aesthetic exaltation.

(ART, 27).

Art then becomes "something" above morals, or rather, all art is moral because ... works of art are immediate means to good " (ART, 24).

Fry differentiated between the emotions of life and art.

Art... is an expression and a stimulus of [the] imaginative life, which is separated from actual life by the absence of responsive action. Now this responsive action implies in actual life moral responsibility. In art we have no such moral responsibility -- it presents a life freed from

the binding necessities of our actual life
(Vision and Design, 26).

Art, then, "appreciates emotion in and for itself," whereas morality "appreciates emotion by the standards of resultant action" (31). What we have to give up, then, is "the attempt to judge the work of art by its reaction on life, and consider it as an expression of emotions regarded as ends in themselves" (32). Representation is therefore unnecessary, for it is the discovery of "the principles of structural design and harmony" (19), that appreciation that "each successive element is felt to have a fundamental and a harmonious relation with that which preceded it" (35), which are of importance in the aesthetic appreciation of art.

Bloomsbury turned to France for its inspiration in painting, just as it turned to it for its concept of the civilized salon. It was Fry who arranged the first Post-Impressionist exhibition at the Grafton Gallery in November, 1910, and it was here the English public were first introduced to "plasticity" in painting. In Cezanne and others, Fry felt that he had found painters who "do not seek to imitate form, but to create form; not to imitate life, but to find an equivalent for life" (190), and in his appreciation of their work he again expressed his belief that "all art depends upon cutting off the practical responses to sensations of ordinary life" (192), and that "formal design" (207) was what characterized the modern movement.

An important consequence of their aesthetic principles was their appreciation of primitive art. The Impressionists, Post-Impressionists and Cubists in France were the first to utilize the more formal aspects of design, though they did not attempt to divorce themselves completely from representation. Ladislas Segy has shown that Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," painted in the spring of 1907, was one of the first of the modern paintings to reveal the artist's awareness of primitive African art. For over a century African carvings had been kept in museums, and because of the new aesthetics introduced by Cubism, these became finally appreciated as works of art.

This would indicate that it was not the African work that defined the new plastic principles, but that it was the new concept of art that allowed the artists to discover the plastic constructions of African sculpture"²⁸

The new primitivism of painters such as Picasso, was taken in, at second hand by Bloomsbury just as the equally modish Russian ballet which visited London was adopted by Bloomsbury. (Keynes later married Lydia Lopokova, a member of Diaghilev's group.) A cult of sham primitivism began, in which it became respectable for the highly sophisticated bourgeois dilettantes to collect African sculptures and carvings; and the pseudo-primitive works of those artists who used the 'plastic constructions' discovered in African art to produce mentally conceptualised paintings purporting to represent primitive intuitions.

Bell wrote that

as a rule primitive art is good.... for, as a rule, it is also free from descriptive qualities. In primitive art you will find no accurate representation; you will find only significant form (ART, 25),

and we must remember that it is "the contemplation of pure form" which will lead "to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life." (54). What makes the Post-Impressionists (Bell mentions Cezanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, and two Bloomsbury artists, Duncan Grant and Roger Fry, among others) so important, is their "simplification," a process which in the past had "produced primitive art" (159), and in what he called "Negro Sculpture", Fry discovered "complete plastic freedom" which is lost when art "has attained a high degree of representational skill " (Vision and Design, 87).

Bloomsbury aesthetics allow one to escape from life, to a purer, finer world of abstract geometrical concepts. Fry, writing about Cezanne, the most important of the Post-Impressionists, epitomises this approach to art in the statement, "all is reduced to the purest terms of structural design" (208), and he later concluded that the value of the aesthetic emotion, "remote from actual life," gave those who experienced it, and they were naturally a select few, "a peculiar quality of reality which makes it a matter of infinite importance in their lives " (237). Clive Bell also concluded that "only artists and educated people of extraordinary sensibility and some savages and children" (62) could appreciate the aesthetic value of form. This aestheticism

also appears as the greatest weakness in the novels of Virginia Woolf. She believed that "the mind receives myriad impressions.... from all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms ..." and that it was the novelists task to

record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall ... [to] trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.²⁹

This passive reception and recording of impressions, without the intelligent discrimination between what is important and what is trivial in life, a moral act in itself, led to the spuriousness of so many of the incidents in her novels, the forcing of "significance" onto trivialities, and to a concern with form as opposed to content.

Lawrence wrote to a friend, "these modern artists, who make art out of antipathy to life, always leave me feeling a little sick." (Letters, Vol. 2, 959), and this will be seen as a clue to his reaction against Bloomsbury aesthetics. In Art and Morality Lawrence stated his belief that the artist had a moral obligation to life, and could not be divorced from it.

What art has got to do, and will go on doing, is to reveal things in their different relationships The true artist doesn't substitute immorality for morality. On the contrary, he always substitutes a finer morality for a grosser

(Phoenix I, 525).

Morality is not, as Nietzsche saw it, "the idiosyncrasy of the decadents actuated by a desire to avenge themselves successfully upon life" (Ecce Homo), but a recognition that nothing is fixed,

and a recognition that "nothing is true, or good, or right, except in its own living relatedness to its own circumambient universe." Design in art

is a recognition of the relation between various things, various elements in the creative flux. You can't invent a design. You recognize it. ... with your blood and your bones, as well as with your eyes

(Phoenix I, 525).

The fault with modern civilization, he felt, was that "all our emotions are mental, self-conscious. Our passions are self conscious. We are an intensely elaborate and intricate clockwork of nerves and brain. ... a mechanism" (Phoenix I, 767), and his article, "Introduction to these Paintings" was written as a direct refutation of the aesthetics of Fry and Bell.

Lawrence, in this work, describes how, over the centuries man's consciousness had become crippled because the intuitive awareness had been replaced by purely cerebral consciousness. The movement against the instincts and intuition had led to a suppression of the "more powerful responses of the human imagination; the sensual, passional responses" (561), and been replaced by a sense of self righteousness which led artists to escape from the instincts and sensual awareness in their work. The Impressionist's discovery of light and use of colour was just such another escape from "the dark procreative body which so haunts a man" (563), but this escape was only an illusion, and the Post-Impressionists, and Cezanne in particular, brought art back from the Impressionist's escapist world of "shifting lights and shadows." Still hating the body, they had at least admitted

its existence and painted it "as huge lumps, tubes, cubes, planes, volumes, spheres, cones, cylinders, all the 'pure' or mathematical forms of substance " (565), and had exploded the Impressionist's "oneness of light."

The resulting chaos gave rise to the need for new apologists, and Bloomsbury appeared, to "discover" once more that "the aesthetic experience was an ecstasy, an ecstasy granted only to the chosen few, the elect, among whom said critics were, of course, the arch-elect " (565). Mockingly, Lawrence described their religious renunciation of "subject" in pictures, as they called on the faithful to take

the one supreme way, the way of Significant Form. I am the revelation and the way! I am Significant Form, and my unutterable is reality. Lo, I am Form and I am Pure, behold, I am Pure Form. I am the revelation of Spiritual Life, moving behind the veil. I come forth and make myself known, and I am Pure Form, behold, I am Significant Form!
(566)

Lawrence recognized the question-begging cant behind the belief in Significant Form and Pure Form --

they are just the magic jargon of invocation, nothing else. If you want to invoke an aesthetic ecstasy, stand in front of a Matisse and whisper fervently under your breath: 'Significant Form! Significant Form!' -- and it will come. It sounds to me like a form of masturbation, an attempt to make the body react to some cerebral formula.
(567).

To call the common denominator in all works of art, "significant form" or "plasticity" was just to attach a label to an unknown quantity. Bloomsbury aesthetic ecstasy was just another "apotheosis of personal conceit." The jargon is used to escape

from the physical world to a "pure world of reality existing behind the veil of this vulgar world of accepted appearances," and was another instance of advertising "one's own self-glorification" (566).

Lawrence goes on to say that man had been occupied with denying the existence of matter for centuries and both philosophy and religion had tried to show that matter was only a form of spirit, an escape from the body, but Cezanne's art had taken the first step back towards real, objective substance. Cezanne's apple was an attempt to "let the apple exist in its own separate entity," without using mental cliches that the viewer had come to expect in painting. By refusing to accept Cezanne's realism, his intensely honest striving

to displace our present mode of mental-visual consciousness, the consciousness of mental concepts; and substitute a mode of consciousness that was predominantly intuitive, the awareness of touch, (578)

the Bloomsbury aesthetes once more turned him into an abstraction, "abstracted his good apple into Significant Form, and henceforth Cezanne was saved" (570). Bloomsbury felt the production and appreciation of art to be cerebral, whereas Lawrence was convinced that

any creative act occupies the whole consciousness of a man.... instinct, intuition, mind, intellect, all fused into one complete consciousness, and grasping what we may call a complete truth, or a complete vision (574).

The aesthetic ecstasy of the over-mental critics who renounced reality by escaping into an ideal Platonic world of significant

form, proved only that "the mind can assert anything, and pretend it has proved it." Cezanne's request to his models to "be an apple," showed his awareness that the moment the model began to intrude "her personality and her 'mind', it would be cliché and moral and he would have to paint cliché" (575). His was the struggle in the artist between the ready-made mental self ... and his other intuitive self," and his triumph was that he managed, in some of his paintings, to break through "the concept obsession to get at the intuitive awareness" of his model. Cezanne escaped from the "Kodak" concept of representation, not to an ideal world of design and form, but to the substitution of "a finer morality for a grosser" by showing his apple's "living relatedness to its own circumambient universe" (525).

Bloomsbury's celebration of art, its self-conscious primitivism, and its denial that art was an expression of the artist's intensely moral concern with reality, were all felt by Lawrence to constitute "an antipathy to life," as did their cult of personal relationships and their defunct Liberalism. For Lawrence's most sustained and intensive critique of Bloomsbury "civilization," we must now turn to the novel Women in Love, in which Lawrence's experiences during the years he was in contact with Bloomsbury were transmuted into a work of art.

CHAPTER V

Unlike The Rainbow, to which it is a sequel, Women in Love does not offer a historical treatment of three generations of Brangwens; rather it presents a more static but ultimately more profound and more extensive exploration of one phase of an entire society. As F. R. Leavis has written, the novel

contains a presentation of twentieth century England -- of modern civilization -- so first hand and searching in its comprehensiveness as to be beyond the powers of any other novelist....¹

Lawrence ranges, in his study, from the miners in the industrialized countryside, to the artists in London Bohemia, to the aristocrats, intellectuals, and M.P.'s close to the prime minister in parliament. Leavis writes that

The problem of discussing Women in Love is that the organization is so rich and close. From the moment the Brangwen girls begin their conversation about marriage, the dramatic poem unfolds -- or builds up -- with an astonishing fertility of life all significant life; not a scene, episode, image or touch but forwards the organized development of the themes.

(D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, 158).

My concern will be to study certain sections of the novel which show most clearly how intimately Lawrence's Bloomsbury experiences were integrated into his fictional portrayal of the disintegration of English society. I also hope to show the significance of

these sections to the novel as a whole. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 28, which are concerned with Breadalby, the country house, and London's Bohemia, are the most important for my purposes. In talking about these important chapters, I will inevitably be talking about the rest of the novel as they are just one part of what is a compact and symbolic whole. H.M. Daleski is one of the few critics who has recognized that one structural principle of the novel is locative, and that each of the five foci in the novel is "a representative unit in the social organism... serving as the focus of a local significance."² Daleski defines the five locations as Beldover, home of Ursula and Gudrun, and of the miners; Shortlands, the Crich home; Breadalby, Hermione's country house; the Cafe Pompadour, London Bohemia's gathering place; and the Tyrolese hostel where the novel comes to its close. As Daleski suggests,

the places are related to one another, not merely through a juxtaposition which yields a comprehensive view of the social scene as a whole -- but -- so to speak -- through their common location on volcanic soil

(The Forked Flame, 128).

The Bloomsbury sections of the novel begin with Chapter 5. In the preceding four chapters we are shown the four major characters in their native milieu in industrial Nottinghamshire. Ursula Brangwen has been a class mistress at the Willey Green Grammar School for some years, and she loathes the sordidness of Beldover, the "amorphous ugliness"³ of the mining town. She

spends her days in something "like a trance" (38), and "her active living /is/ suspended" (10) as she waits for something to happen so that her "life, like a shoot that is growing steadily, but which has not yet come above ground" (57) can assume some meaning. Gudrun Brangwen, a year younger than her sister, is an artist who has returned to Beldover after her sculptures have received some success in Chelsea and also in the international Bohemia of Europe. Like Ursula, she too is confronted by "a void, a terrifying chasm" (11), as she finds herself existing from day to day in the drab and barren atmosphere of the mining town, and when Lawrence skilfully introduces the two major male characters in the first chapter, it is soon made apparent that it is in their relationships with Gerald Crich and Rupert Birkin that Gudrun and Ursula will seek fulfillment. Gerald Crich, the oldest son of the chief mine-owner of the district, and later, the master of the mines which he completely reorganized, is referred to by his mother as "the most wanting" (28) of all the Crichs, although externally, he is like a "smiling wolf" with a "sinister stillness in his bearing" (15). Rupert Birkin, is an articulate intellectual, who throughout the novel verbalizes and makes propositions which are betrayed by the realities of experience. Although he works as a school inspector, he has close ties with both London Bohemia and Breadalby, the gathering place of England's intellectuals. When we first meet

him it is to witness his incipient attempts to discontinue his love-affair with Hermione Roddie, the hostess at Breadalby.

Chapter 5, "In the Train", is a good point to begin our discussion of the novel, for a number of the issues central to the novel are here introduced. Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich happen to travel together from rural Nottinghamshire in to the city of London, and a newspaper article leads to a discussion on the state of the society. Gerald questions Birkin on his views. Birkin states his belief that to change society, "we've got to bust it completely, or shrivel inside it, as in a tight skin". (60). However, he adds that he has no proposals for the reforming of the whole order of society, because until people themselves really want something better, "any sort of proposal", or programme, "is no more than a tiresome game for self-important people" (60). Gerald's idea that the purpose of life is "to work, to produce" (61), is dismissed by Birkin, for it offers no values apart from the merely material, and he recognizes the "malice" which glistens "through the plausible ethics of productivity" (62). Gerald admits that his life is "artificially held together by the social mechanism" (64), and Birkin then introduces for the first time his belief in the need for "one really pure single activity," and offers the

unstartling solution of love, "this perfect union with a woman", (64). This solution, as we shall see, ultimately assumes a position of central importance in the novel, for all the other relationships explored reveal either a sexual or a moral corruption which is an indication of the decadence of the entire civilization. Birkin talks later of the only possible escape from the corruption which surrounds him and from which he himself suffers, "the way of freedom" (287). In the "perfected relation" (356) between man and woman, each accepting and respecting the other's individuality without attempting to dominate, man and woman accepts responsibility to the other, and finds a freedom together. In Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, Lawrence explained more explicitly the difficulty of this relationship which had become so imperative in a society of material and mechanical values in which individual was prepared to use individual for his own gains.

The amazingly difficult and vital business of human relationship has been almost laughably underestimated in our epoch. All this nonsense about love and unselfishness, more crude and repugnant than savage fetish worship. Love is a thing to be learned, through centuries of patient effort. It is a difficult, complex maintenance of individual integrity throughout the incalculable processes of interhuman-polarity. (45).

At the point in the novel at which Birkin tentatively offers Gerald this alternative to "the old ideals /which/ are dead as nails" (64), he is only beginning his rejection of his lover

Hermione, and her world; when he boards the train, we are told "his life seemed uncertain, without any definite rhythm, any organic meaning." (58).

As Birkin sits musing, the apocalyptic theme which runs throughout the book reveals itself for the first time. He thinks about races being destroyed "like Sodom", and feels that

mankind /is/ but just one expression of the incomprehensible...and if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done....There will be a new embodiment, in a new way... (65).

At different points in the novel, allusions are made to the cataclysmic end of a civilization in its last stages of decay, as it fast approaches the end of a millenium. The image of decadent Sodom is broadened by a number of references to flood, and also to a whole society hurling itself down the slope to destruction like the Gadarene swine; the swinishness itself a fine allusion to the sexual decadence presented later in the novel. One of Lawrence's earlier titles for the novel, "Dies Irae", Day of Wrath, emphasized this apocalyptic concern, and the change to "Women in Love," can be seen as an indication that Lawrence wished to show that there was still some hope amidst the destruction. In this respect Birkin's concern with the "perfect union with a woman" becomes the moral centre in the novel. The Spenglerian idea of the decline of civilizations was central to much of the literature of the time. This fact

reminds us that Lawrence's apocalyptic vision in Women in Love is far from being eccentric. W.B. Yeats recognized that new meanings in life would have to replace those which were dead, and he visualized the inevitable change as being, quite possibly, some "rough beast, its hour come round at last," with "gaze blank and pitiless as the sun", moving its slow thighs" as it slouched its way to Bethlehem "to be born" (The Second Coming). T.S. Eliot graphically portrayed his vision of the Waste Land, and Ezra Pound described the hellish decadence of the England he knew in Cantos 6 and 7.

It is fitting, then, that Birkin's reverie on the train should be interrupted by Gerald's asking where he would be staying in London, for Birkin's reply introduces the reader to London Bohemia, a world which Lawrence, in his contacts with Bloomsbury, had fully explored. He tells Gerald ... "I don't care for it much. I'm tired of the people I'm bound to find there." (65). He then passes a judgement on the group with which he has spent much of his time in the past --

"London Bohemia -- the most pettifogging calculating Bohemia that ever reckoned its pennies... They are really very thorough rejecters of the world -- perhaps they live only in the gesture of rejection and negation -- but negatively, something, at any rate (65).

He then describes who the people are --

Painters, musicians, writers -- hangers-on, models, advanced young people, anybody who is openly at outs with the conventions, and belongs to nowhere in particular. They are often young fellows

down from the University, and girls who are living their own lives, as they say.... (66).

Gerald's response to the latter -- the "flame of curious desire" Birkin recognizes in his eyes, is a hint of the sexual perversity Gerald reveals in the next chapter, a perversity which counterpoints that to be found in Bohemia. Mention is also made of the Cafe Pompadour in Picadilly Circus where the two arrange to meet, and as the train approaches the "disgrace of outspread London" (67), Birkin, like a man "condemned to death" (66) murmurs lines from Browning's Love Among the Ruins. This analogue is one of many contributing to the thematic richness of the novel, for the poem recalls the speaker who is about to meet his loved one awaiting him in the ruins of a tower in what was once "a city great and gay". Against the backdrop of a great civilization, now in ruins, the poet celebrates the speaker's love as he hastens to his woman. Browning's final line, not quoted in the novel, is "Love is best", and in the grim context of what follows in the novel, this platitude assumes greater force and interest.

Chapters 6 and 7, "Creme De Menthe" and "Totem" which immediately follow, take the reader into the heart of London Bohemia, one of the most important centres of dissolution in the novel. Later, Bohemia is described as a "small, slow central

whirlpool of disintegration and dissolution...." with an atmosphere of "petty vice and petty jealousy and petty art..." (429)

The Cafe Royal in London was famous for its creme de menthe frappeés and Lawrence's particular choice of chapter title reinforces the view that this section of the book is a close account of the actualities of the time, and as H.M. Daleski suggests, the name Cafe Pompadour reminds the reader of that other age, swept away by the French Revolution, and of the Marquise de Pompadour's words to Louis XIV, "Après nous le deluge!" With a few deft strokes Lawrence describes the Cafe as Gerald enters:

Gerald went through the push doors into the large, lofty room where faces and heads of the drinkers showed dimly through the haze of smoke, reflected more dimly, and repeated ad infinitum in the great mirrors on the walls, so that one seemed to enter a vague, dim world of shadowy drinkers within an atmosphere of blue tobacco smoke. There was, however, the red plush of the seats to give substance within the bubble of pleasure. (68).

This is a world of shadowy unreality, vague and dim, like some mythical underworld of licentious souls. The reflections in the mirrors emphasize the unsubstantiality of the under-world, in which only the red plush of the seats gives artificial "substance" to this "bubble" of pleasure. We are reminded of Coleridge's Kubla Khan which also evoked an artificial dream world beneath a "pleasure dome" which becomes threatened by a violent and seething chasm. This telling image is repeated later when Gerald's lack of a core of belief in life is illustrated by the description

of his feeling "more and more like a bubble filled with darkness" (364), and when he admits to Gudrun that he fears his "brain would burst" (372).

In order to fully understand the characters Gerald meets in Bohemia, and their significance to the book as a whole, it is necessary to mention certain clusters of symbols which Lawrence uses throughout Women in Love to contribute to the poetic unity of his material. As has been shown in earlier chapters, Lawrence believed that one major reason for the corruption of the individual, and hence the society, was the break in "the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind." (285). As he wrote in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious,

the individual psyche divided against itself
divides the world against itself, and an
unthinkable progress of calamity ensues unless
there be a reconciliation (41).

In Women in Love Lawrence uses two major motifs to represent this loss of balance within the individual. One is represented by the African civilizations of the past, when

the desire for creation and productive happiness
must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse
for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive
knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested
and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge in
disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such
as the beetles have, which live purely within
the world of corruption and cold dissolution. (286).

Once an individual lapses "from pure integral being", he falls into the long "African process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution" (286). We recall the

letter Lawrence wrote concerning Frankie Birell and others in Bloomsbury, in which he mentions his disgust at the corruption of those he has met by invoking his nightmare of beetles. Throughout the novel the beetle is used as an indication of sexual corruption and appears often with reference to many of the characters. The other notion of dissolution Lawrence evokes is that which he associates with "the white races". Whereas the African process results in purely sensual, mindless knowledge, "the white races, having the Artic North behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfil a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation." (286). Here, the loss of balance between mind and senses results in a destructive emphasis on purely cerebral activity and the allusions to icy and Polar qualities convey very neatly the cold abstracting quality of this sort of mind.

When Gerald is introduced to Minette, Miss Darrington, or the Pussum, as she is variously known, it is possible to see her resemblance to Carrington, the strange companion of Lytton Strachey. The "bobbed, blonde hair, cut short in the artist fashion, hanging straight and curving slightly inwards to her ears" (68) suggest physical similarities, though this is not to deny that she has her significance as a fully created character in her own right. A certain attractive "grossness of spirit" (68) immediately attracts Gerald to her, and he experiences "an awful, enjoyable power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to

cruelty....for she was a victim." (71); the same will-to-power Gerald displays in his callous and inhuman policy towards his miners, as will be shown later. It is made clear that Minette's expressed fear of "black beetles" (76) is a luxuriating in her own responses to arouse a pleasurable shudder in herself and a sexual response in Gerald. We read of the "film of disintegration" which floats on her eyes, and of Gerald's response when he laughs "dangerously, from the blood" (76). Minette's fear is really her recognition of the beetle-corruption within her, the "knowledge in the mystery of dissolution," and she responds to the insistent jeering of the Cafe Royal lout by suddenly "jabbing a knife across his thick, pale hand." (78). This "dreadful knowledge" (79) is also shared by both Gudrun and Gerald as shown in the chapter "Rabbit", when the two become "implicated with each other in abhorrent mysteries" (272). Minette's violence in the Cafe indicates that reciprocal relationship between willing victim and attacker, which is later reversed that night when she gives herself to Gerald to be "violated". (83).

Minette acts not only to reveal the corruption and violence of Bohemia, but her relationship to many of the other characters contributes to our fuller knowledge of them. Physically, she is of fair colouring (a change Lawrence made after Heseltine's threat of libel proceedings), and has "shiny yellow hair" (71). She is described as a "fair ice-flower" (76), and her fairness and the ice-imagery associated with her (she withers Halliday

with an "ice-cold look") connect her to one pole of the destructive imagery in the novel. Gudrun, Hermione, Gerald, are all blonde and 'cold' in their use of destructive will in relationships with others.

Aspects of the Pussum continually connect her with Gudrun and Hermione. She has a "curious walk, stiff and jerking at the loins" (431), while Hermione is seen to move with a "peculiar fixity of the hips, a strange unwilling motion" (16). What appears in muted tones becomes major when we move from Minette to Gudrun. The latter is described by Birkin as a "born mistress" (419) and Ursula sees her sister at one point, as "really like a little type" (427), and her relationship to the Pussum is made clear in the similarity in attitude towards marriage and child-bearing, revealing the sterility of their lives. Gudrun thinks "one needs the experience of having been married" (7, the verb tense here is important), and the pregnant Minette tells Gerald emphatically she wants nothing to do with having a child. Both Minette and Gudrun show similar sado-masochistic traits in their relationships with men, revealing again, the violater-victim complex which Lawrence sees as recurring throughout a sick society. Minette, before the more powerful Gerald, becomes "profane, slave-like" (73), just as Gudrun, meeting her superior in Loerke in the Tyrol, looks at him "with a certain supplication, almost slave-like" (483), and Gerald accuses her of being ready "to fall down and kiss the feet of that little insect." (511).

Finally, Minette's promiscuity prefigures Gudrun's ultimate promiscuity with Gerald when she rejects him for the further decadence that Loerke offers.

Minette is also very clearly associated with the reductive-sensual African way of dissolution. We have seen her eyes described as "stagnant pools" (88), and the "curious iridescence, a sort of film of disintegration" (71) which floats on them. Later, as we shall see, Gerald gazes at the carved figure of a savage woman, with small, "terrible face, void, peaked, abstracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensation beneath," and he recognizes "Minette in it" (87). There is a "certain smell" about the skin of Minette "that is sickening beyond words" (like Lear's "the sulphurous pit; burning, scalding, stench, consumption...." (IV, 6)), and her immersion in this process of corruption makes her indeed, a "flower of mud" (433). By the time we read the narrator's remark that "there was something curiously indecent about her small, longish, fair skull, particularly when the ears showed" (432), we have seen enough of Miss Darrington not to feel this an unjustified intrusion, but a confirmation of our own responses. The passage recalls Lawrence's use of animal allusions in the novel to add to our understanding of characters. Gerald tells her she is "like a cat" (79), and we contrast the Pussum with Birkin's cat, the Mino's "bit of fluff", the promiscuous cat that needs to be brought under control if she is to be saved. But, Minette's fulfillment "lies in her further and further violation" (88), and as

she has no Birkin, but a Gerald who glories in the domination of his subject, she is damned. Our knowledge of Birkin and Gerald is further extended, too, if we compare their very different attitudes to Minette, and her whole Bohemian milieu. Gerald is excited by, and very much attracted to this world of sensual disintegration, whereas Birkin is shown as "abstract", "aloof", "somehow evanescent", looks "as if he were displeased" (79), in his process of withdrawal from a past which he now begins to reject.

Philip Heseltine's recognition of similarities between Julius Halliday and himself is only a matter of passing interest when we respond fully to the skilfull way in which Lawrence has created Halliday as an indispensable unit in the close-knit complexity of the novel. When Gerald first meets him in the Cafe Pompadour he seems at first to be "naive, and warm, and vapid" (72), but Gerald soon recognizes something "rather degenerate" (74) in the face of the young man who "squeals" with horror at Minette's violence. Gerald has the impression that Halliday is terrified of Minette, but that "he loved his terror. He seemed to relish his own horror, and hatred of her, turn it over and extract every flavour from it, in real panic" (76). Gerald is responding to the masochistic trait in Halliday, that degenerate self-indulgence in pain and self-torture which characterises many of the characters who live "only in negative rejection of life." Heseltine's relationship to Gerald in the novel is important, and their similarities, at first not obvious, show Lawrence's skill in using minor characters to direct our

attention to traits in the major. When he is later confronted with the complete emptiness of his existence, Gerald chooses death. "The Diver" of chapter four, Gerald takes the plunge into extinction by choosing to go out into the snow and perish; Halliday, weaker, prefers death-in-life. In his masochistic subjection to Minette, he is "the pure servant" who has the craving to "throw himself into the filth" (106) of Minette. We recall Lawrence's letter to Ottoline Morrell in which he discusses Heseltine's oscillation between his Puma, the sensual prostitute figure, and his other love, the virginal mother figure to whom he turned in reaction. Halliday is the "perfect baby" (74), who depends on Minette and revels in the punishment she inflicts. He has a "broken beauty" like a "Christ in a Pieta", the Christ figure without any strength who is a guilty party in the victim-murderer relationship treated in the novel. Just as Gudrun's struggles against the iron-grip of Gerald's strangling fingers is described as "the reciprocal lustful passion in this embrace" (531), so Halliday lays himself out as a sacrifice before Minette, who is "hard and cold, like a flint knife" (89). Both Gerald and Halliday are involved with Minette, and Gerald is triumphant here, but when he is confronted by the stronger-willed and more corrupt Gudrun, he too is likened to "a child at the breast", and an "infant crying in the night" (524) in his utter dependence on her. When Gerald moves towards the "navel of the world" after his defeat by Gudrun, he feels a dread of being murdered, and when he sees the "half buried crucifix" (533), we feel the poetic justice

of his self-murder. The man that Birkin has earlier accused of having "a lurking desire to have /his/ gizzard slit" (37), escapes his own crucifixion in life, being drawn between the Minettes and the mines, with nothing positive to fill the 'void' between these two symbols of destruction.

When the party leaves the Cafe Pompadour, they move to Halliday's apartment, and it is in this important section of the novel that we are introduced more explicitly to the pseudo-primitivism which Lawrence so greatly despised in Bloomsbury. In the flat are several "statues, wood carvings from the West Pacific" and Africa, and on the walls hang "one or two new pictures....in the Futurist manner." (82). We are immediately reminded of the pseudo-primitivism of the paintings of Klee, Gauguin and others which Bloomsbury helped make so modishly popular in England in the second decade. One statue in the flat is of "a woman sitting naked in a strange posture, and looking tortured, her abdomen stuck out" (81). "The strange, transfixed, rudimentary face" of the woman in labour conveys to Gerald "the suggestion of the extreme of physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness" (82), and the reactions of the different men to the statue are important for they add to our knowledge of each. Gerald is both

fascinated and repelled and asks Birkin about it. Birkin explains that it is art; that "it conveys a complete truth", that it represents a pure culture in sensation, a "culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual." (87). Gerald is strongly attracted to the statue. In this he is similar to many other highly cerebral characters in the novel, who, because they are "nerve-worn" with living from the mind only, turn to the sensuality the carvings represent for relief. But this relief is false, for Gerald and the others act only in reaction against their own mentally dominated lives. Gerald wishes to keep certain sentimental "illusions, certain ideas like clothing", for he is not prepared to recognize his attraction to the carving, which is one aspect of his vicious desire for sexual dominance, but he is correct when he tells Birkin that "you like the wrong things...things against yourself." (87). This is made clearer in a later chapter, 'Moony', when Birkin sits considering his past and his efforts to foist certain "ideas" of the relationship he wants onto Ursula. He recalls one of the "African fetishes" he had seen in Halliday's flat, and he sees for the first time the extent of his past immersion in corruption by recognizing the statue as "one of his soul's intimates" (285). The woman's body, he recalls,

was long and elegant, her face was crushed tiny like a beetle....He remembered her, her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished beetle face, the astonishing long elegant body, on short ugly legs, with such protuberant

buttocks so weighty and unexpected below her
slim long loins." (285).

Here, the face is crushed tiny, like a beetles, and diminished, the loins are weighty and emphasized, for the statue represents a process of mindless sensuality. It has been thousands of years since her race had died, since "the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind has broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual." (285). As he muses about the beetle-like face of the carving, Birkin feels that "this was why the Egyptians worshipped the ball-rolling scarab; because of the principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption" (286). In passing, we note Lawrence's skill in using the minor character of Halliday's servant to contribute to the thematic richness of the novel. The Arab servant is a living example of the primitivism to which the group consciously aspires. He is "half-savage", fixed and "statically the same", associations which link him with the fixed expressions of the African carvings and also the fixity of Egyptian statues in tombs. It is Birkin, the only one aware of the corruption of Bohemia, who feels a "slight sickness" with the "aristocratic inscrutability of expression", and at what he feels to be the "nauseating, bestial stupidity" (89) of the real primitive.

Birkin's self-recognition leads to panic. He recognizes with horror that what has taken place centuries before in the woman represented by the carving, is now "imminent" in himself. He realizes that he too has lapsed from "pure integral being"

(286), from that difficult state of balance between the creative aspect of both mind and the senses, and has joined Halliday and the others in this regressive process of corruptive sensuality, regressive and corruptive because they are anything but mindless in their willed efforts to escape consciousness. He is "so nearly dead" (416) in his immersion in the corruption of his past that, in desperation, he turns too hastily, too suddenly to Ursula, his only hope for new life. He hurries from his rooms to Beldover, "half unconscious of his own movements" (287), and reaches Ursula's home to find she is not yet in. With consummate skill Lawrence handles the tragi-comic aspects of the fiasco as the antagonism grows between the uncomfortable father and the bemused Birkin. When Ursula finally arrives, the scene reaches its climax when she accuses both men of attempting to bully her, and Birkin rushes "blindly away from Beldover in a whirl of fury" recognizing that his hurried proposal has been "a farce of the first water" (300). The humour of this particular episode can be seen as Lawrence's implicit judgement on improper irrationalism in the conduct of life.

In Halliday's group we find the conscious effort to return to the pre-phallic primitivism of the African carvings, something which perverts sex finally into a "reducing agent." Halliday's desire for his "ecstasy of reduction with Minette" (433) emanates cerebrally; their sensuality is not spontaneous, it is a consciously willed effort to escape from their individual

integrity. The deliberate nudity practised in the flat is a further indication that Halliday's desire "to live from day to day without ever putting on any sort of clothing whatever," in order to feel that he has really "lived" (86), is just a pathetic mental desire, for he is described as having "a rather heavy, slack, broken beauty...the animal was not there at all" (85). His companion, Libidnikov, on the other hand, is seen by Gerald as the "human animal" (85), the libido perverted into the pseudo-primitivism of Bohemia, and he is significantly described as a "water plant" (87), a fleur du mal, as the group stands around the statue. When Gerald strips off his clothing to join the others, he does it defiantly, enjoying the "full outrageousness" of it, and this exposes most clearly the self-consciousness which lies behind the primitivism of all these highly sophisticated people. Birkin, significantly, appears clothed in white pyjamas, "aloof and white, and somehow evanescent" (86) in his withdrawal from this world which excites and stimulates Gerald.

Just as the intellectual-industrialist Gerald is shown to be attracted to the primitivism which, in reality, gives him licence to practice the violent domination he desires over his love-partner, so does Hermione Roddie, the central figure in this group of intellectuals, profess to support the spontaneity of the primitive. If we move back to chapter 3, "Class Room", her attitude is made clearer, and we discover how closely re-

lated Bohemia and country house attitudes are. Ursula is giving her class a botany lesson when Birkin, the school-inspector and Hermione, his lover, enter. Hermione mentions Gudrun's art, which she feels is "full of primitive passions" (42), and this leads her on to a discussion of the implications of education. She tells Birkin that Perhaps the children should not be "roused to consciousness" (43), and for example, should "remain unconscious of the hazel" that Ursula has been describing to her class, so that they would then be able to see it "as a whole" (43), rather than pull it to pieces by analysing it. Birkin begins to feel angry and explains that children are not "roused to consciousness", that it comes to them "willy-nilly" (43), and that Hermione's argument is invalid as "knowing is everything" for her. She ignores this and asks whether the children should not be left "untouched, spontaneous" (44). She asks,

Hadn't they better be anything than grow up crippled, crippled in their souls, crippled in their feelings -- so thrown back -- so turned back on themselves -- incapable...of any spontaneous actions, always deliberate, always burdened with choice, never carried away. (44).

She feels that young people are "over-conscious, burdened to death with consciousness" (45), and completes her plea for a spontaneous primitivism by adding, "when we have knowledge, don't we lose everything but knowlege?" (45). The hypocrisy and irony of this rhapsodic gush is not missed by Birkin who knows Hermione well and recognizes that behind her call for spontaneity,

"is the mind....and that is death." We note that it is Hermione who later says, "To me the pleasure of knowing is so great, so wonderful -- nothing has meant so much to me in all life, as certain knowledge --" (95). It is Hermione who believes that "The will can cure anything, and put anything right.... If only we could learn to use our will....we could do anything." (155), and her talk of spontaneity, of the noble savage, of a sort of Blakeian innocence, is only the romantic concept of pseudo-primitivism so modish among the highly cerebral intellectuals of Bloomsbury. Birkin reacts strongly against this view. He feels that children are growing up "really dead before they have a chance to live", not because they have too much mind, "but too little" (45); that they are "imprisoned within a limited, false set of concepts" only. He attacks Hermione because, as he tells her,

even your animalism, you want it in your head.
You don't want to be an animal, you want to
observe your own animal functions, to get a
mental thrill out of them. (45).

This, he recognizes, is

more decadent than the most hide-bound intellectualism,
What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism,
this love of yours for passion and the animal
instincts? Passion and the instincts -- you
want them hard enough, but through the head,
under that skull of yours (45).

Hermione wants "to go back and be like a savage, without knowledge," she wants a "life of pure sensation and 'passion'". (46), but Lawrence has elsewhere described this as "sensational gratification

within the mind" (The Crown)⁴, and Birkin's attack on the self-conscious primitivism of Hermione is an attack also on the cerebral celebration of the notion of spontaneity that Bloomsbury held. Birkin sees the lie in Hermione's passion, for it is willed, not spontaneous; "you'd be verily deliberately spontaneous" (46) It is because she has no "dark sensual body of life." The description of Hermione in chapter one bears this out. The "peculiar fixity of her hips" with their "strange, unwilling motion", together with her "long-blanchéd face", uplifted in the "Rossetti fashion" beneath a huge hat, and the mention of the "strange mass of thoughts coiled within her" (17), emphasize the size of her head and the diminishment of her body, in opposition to the reversed disproportion we have found in the African statues. Just as Gerald turns in an unhealthy dependence to Gudrun, Hermione, to escape the "deficiency of being within her" (18), craves for Birkin.

"Life must be lived from the deep; self-responsible spontaneous centres of every individual in a vital, non-ideal circuit of dynamic relation between individuals." (Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 121) Because Hermione fails to do this, because she is mind or ideal dominated, her emotional relationships, like those of the people in Bohemia, become perverted. Living fully only in "the life of thought, of the spirit" (329), she turns in violent reaction to the opposite extreme of "Mammon, the flesh" (329), just as Gerald does to escape his nullity. Birkin

learns to fear the Mater Dolorosa in Hermione, the "claiming with horrible insidious arrogance and female tyranny" (224) of her man, which accompanies her slave-like "horrible desire to prostrate herself before a man -- a man who worshipped her, however, and admitted her as a supreme thing" (331). This is the same decadent mixture of sado-masochism that was found in Minette and Gudrun. Bohemia and Breadalby are found to suffer from the same sickness of spirit.

The last time we meet London Bohemia, this "menagerie of apish degraded souls" (429), is when Gudrun and Gerald pay a visit to the Cafe before they leave England for Switzerland. The actual incident in which Katherine Mansfield snatched the book of Lawrence poems from Heseltine, has been recreated into a scene having its necessary place in the thematic scheme of the novel. Birkin's letter that Halliday reads to his "tipsy and malicious" (431) party is a deliberate exaggeration and self-parody by Lawrence of his own doctrines, but once this is recognized, the importance of the words that Halliday mocks becomes evident. "There is a phase in every race....when the desire for destruction overcomes every other desire" (432). This, in itself, describes the central issue in Women in Love for the novel is a study of just such a civilization which has the "desire for destruction in the self" (432). When Halliday pontificates Birkin's belief that sex is now used

as a great reducing agent, reducing the two great elements of male and female from their highly complex unity -- reducing the old ideas, going back to the savages for our sensations"(433)

and giggles at Birkin's description of Minette and himself, in their participation in this process, as "fleurs du mal," the reader realizes the justification of the accusations. The vindictativeness of the performance is itself a recognition by the group that Birkin has escaped, in his marriage, the nullity and futility of their world, and the sterility of their existences.

Another skilful touch is to have Gerald and Gudrun witness this scene, for the words of the letter refer equally to these two and we remember that in the "Water-Party" chapter, Birkin described the two as "flowers of dissolution". Gudrun's response is therefore of importance:

Her eyes were flashing, her cheeks were flushed. The strange effect of Birkin's letter read aloud in a perfect clerical sing-song, clear and resonant, phrase by phrase, made the blood mount into her head as if she were mad. (434).

Bohemia's decadence is clearly related to the rottonness in human relationships that we find in the country house, Breadalby. The early 20th century cults of the primitive which Bloomsbury accepted so readily, Lawrence suggests, were equivalences of the general decadence of the group as a whole. Bohemia's rottonness in the novel is just one instance of the general disorder in relationships in the whole society, and the next major centre of study is the country seat of England's intellectual and political leaders.

The similarities between Breadalby and Garsington are more than evident in the novel. Breadalby, a Georgian house with spreading lawns, wooded park and fish ponds, is a meeting place for all that is most advanced in the thought of the society. We read that "there seemed a magic circle drawn about the place, shutting out the present, enclosing the delightful, precious past, trees and deer and silence, like a dream". Breadalby-Garsington are both places of retreat from the realities of the present, to the finished perfections of the past. Birkin, at Breadalby, finally realizes "what a snare and a delusion, this beauty of static things" (108), really is. "What a horrible, dead prison Breadalby really was, what an intolerable confinement, the peace!" (108). It should also be noted that Lawrence was not the only writer to identify the degeneration of modern England in terms of the cultural decadence of a great house; G.B. Shaw's Heartbreak House offers just such a parallel indictment.

Women in Love, is, in one respect, a novel of ideas; not the ideas of the novelist simply placed in the mouth of Birkin to stand as a norm against which we measure all other ideas expressed by the characters, but of ideas rendered in a

convincing dramatic form. Birkin himself verbalizes too much; Ursula quite rightly dislikes the priggish "preacher", and "Sunday school teacher" (283) in him, but it is from these various informal symposiums held at Breadalby and elsewhere that the reader is expected to form his judgements. Bloomsbury's love of discussion is here presented dramatically, and by responding to the tonal qualities as well as the propositions of the conversations, we discover the kind of moral sensibility which informs Bloomsbury's characteristic way with the language.

Hermione Roddice, whom Lady Ottoline Morrell recognized as a portrait of herself, is the centre of the group representing the most articulate thinkers, reformers, industrialists and politicians of the society. In the novel, perhaps more than any one else, she represents the Bloomsbury ethos, and it is in Hermione that its weaknesses are most rigorously analyzed and exposed. When she is first seen at the Crich wedding we are told she is "a woman of the new school, full of intellectuality, and heavy, nerve-worn with consciousness....passionately interested in reform." (17). As a member of the "slack aristocracy that keeps in touch with the arts" (17), she has met Gudrun, and others of Bohemia, and this leads to the sisters' invitation to Breadalby. Hermione is a "Kulturager, a medium for the culture of ideas" (17), and this places her squarely at the centre of the articulateness we find at Breadalby. Like Gerald, and so many of the others, she experiences "a terrible void", a

"chasm" within her. Her "aesthetic knowledge, and culture" (18) are defences against the nullity, just as Gerald's actions in the industrial world, "in applying the latest appliances" (53), are also defences against the threatened bursting of the bubble. Hermione is a woman who has "emancipated /herself/ from the aristocracy" (53). Although she has "a curious pleasure in treading down all the social differences, at least apparently" (133), we later find that she is "really so strongly entrenched in her class superiority she could come up and know people out of simple curiosity, as if they were creatures on exhibition" (178). (Another of her Bloomsbury characteristics is seen in the way she dresses. Bloomsbury was known for the informality, and often studied shabbiness of dress, and Gudrun remarks that Hermione "never looks fresh and natural", she is always "old, thought out" (56). The reason for this is given when Gudrun explains that "the really chic thing is to be so absolutely ordinary....that you are a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in the street actually, but the artistic creation of her --" (56).) What finally characterizes all her relationships is that desire to dominate which we have already noted in Gerald, Gudrun and Minette. When she fondles a deer on her estate, it is because he is male, "so she must exert some kind of power over him" (97), and we recall that earlier, Birkin has been characterized as "a deer" (26). Later too, in Birkin's rooms, she plays with the Mino and holds him in her power -- "it was always the same, this joy in power she

manifested, peculiarly power over any male being". (337). At Breadalby she marshals her guests "like prisoners" (97) when she takes them for a walk, and it makes "her blood run sharp, to be thwarted in even so trifling a matter." (97). Similar incidents have been cited in chapter three by many Bloomsbury members who were forced by Ottoline to undertake various amusements at Garsington. Ultimately, Hermione is shown to live only from the mind; she has lost all contact with the spontaneous and unwilling in life.

Among the other guests at Breadalby is Sir Joshua Mattheson," a learned, dry Baronet of fifty, who was always making witticisms and laughing at them heartily in a harsh, horse-laugh." (93), and in the portrayal of this "elderly sociologist" (93), the resemblances to Bertrand Russell are very evident. Alexander Roddice, Hermione's brother is a Liberal member of parliament, and with a few deft touches, Lawrence transforms Philip Morrell into a character having his place in the thematic scheme of the novel. When he enters, he strides "romantically like a Meredith hero who remembers Disraeli" (94), and in a perfect sentence Lawrence captures the Liberal M.P. who has been superceded by his age, and whose political ideals are no longer viable in the chaotic conditions of the changed world of the post-Meredith era . Alexander connects the house party with the wider world of public affairs;

at once the atmosphere of the House of Commons
made itself felt over the lawn; the Home

Secretary had said such and such a thing, and he, Roddice, on the other hand, thought such and such a thing, and had said so-and-so to the P.M. (94).

It is Alexander, "tall and the handsome politician, democratic and lucid" (100), who at the insistence of Hermione, sits at the piano, accompanying the mime that is enacted with the help of "silk robes and shawls and scarves, mostly Oriental things that Hermione, with her love for beautiful extravagant dress, had collected gradually" (101). We note, in passing, that Ottoline had just such a collection of robes, and that her husband Philip, would often sit at the pianola and accompany the mimes and dances at Garsington. That the "little ballet" the women present is, "in the style of the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky" (101), and the music Alexander plays is Hungarian, is another passing reminder of those continental art forms which Bloomsbury quickly imported into England and made modish. Alexander's presence starts one of the many intellectual conversations in the novel, this one on education, and in the contributions of each person, Lawrence furthers his explication of the themes running through the novel.

Gerald, as always, is delighted at the thought of a discussion; he "sniffed the air with delight" (95), as earlier we are told he has "a real passion for discussion" (30), pricking "up his ears at the thought of a metaphysical discussion." (35). Hermione, in a sort of rhapsody, for she is most happy in the

exercise of her mind, believes that "the greatest thing in life /is/ to know. It is really to be happy, to be free" (95), and Sir Joshua adds that "Knowledge is of course, liberty" (95). Birkin's, response to this is that one can only have knowledge of "things concluded in the past" (96), and that the famous sociologist's belief in knowledge as freedom turns him into a ridiculous flat bottle containing tabloids of compressed liberty.

Another discussion centres around the concepts of the nation state and equality, and we are reminded of an earlier argument at Shortlands in which Gerald defends patriotism as the right of the nation to protect itself and its "hat" from other nations which desire that hat. Hermione gives her intellectual assent to Birkin's contention that a man loses his individual freedom if he chooses to fight for his nation's possessions, or his neighbour's possessions, but the procrastination in this is seen in her response to the question "would you let somebody come and snatch your hat off your head?". With a low "inhuman chuckle", she replies, "No...probably I should kill him." (32). As with Gerald, behind the sophisticated facade of intellectual idealism and talk of reform, there lurks that same violent destructiveness which becomes more dangerous because it is repressed and not recognized. Birkin believes in the necessity "to act spontaneously on one's impulses", and that this is the most difficult of things to do, but Gerald responds that this would lead to anarchy. Birkin tells Gerald that "no man...cuts

another man's throat unless he wants to cut it, and unless the other man wants it cutting" (36), and we recognize that Gerald is only projecting his own desires in his belief. The argument at Breadalby continues the discussion of what kind of nation state is desirable, and Gerald presents the view that "only work, the business of production, held men together...society was a mechanism" (114), and apart from work, men are isolated and free to do as they liked. A closer look later at the effects of Gerald's practises in the organization of his mines, will show the destructive effect this view has on the individual human being. Sir Joshua, like Russell, argues that "the great social idea...was the social equality of man" (114), and Hermione adds another ideal in her belief that "in the spirit we are all one, all equal in the spirit, all brothers there..." (115). Birkin's reply to these broad abstractions is similar to the arguments Lawrence used to refute Russell's concepts of equality which ignored the individual's desire for a sense of community beyond that of material equality.

We are all different and unequal in spirit -- it is only the social differences that are based on accidental material conditions. We are all abstractly or mathematically equal, if you like. Every man has hunger and thirst, two eyes, one nose and two legs. We're all the same in point of number. But spiritually there is a pure difference and neither equality nor inequality counts. It is upon these two bits of knowledge that you must found a state. Your democracy is an absolute lie -- your brotherhood of man is a pure falsity, if you apply it further than the mathematical abstraction....In the spirit, I am as separate as one star from another....Establish

a state on that. One man isn't any better than another, not because they are equal, but because they are intrinsically other, that there is no term of comparison... (115-116).

We recall Lawrence's letters to Russell which have been studied in chapter 4, and we note his central criticism of the plausible egalitarianism which turned the individual into a mechanical unit in a mechanical society concerned only with the ethics of production and consumption. Birkin is responding to the discussion, which is "on the whole intellectual and, artificial" (114) by pointing out the brittleness of the views the others hold, for they all fail to concern themselves with "the all-too difficult business of coming to our spontaneous-creative fulness of being" (Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, 45). Talk as they might about reform and equality, the individual is still ignored, and Birkin realizes that this leisure-class group are in actual fact living off the profits of the system, and by doing so, tacitly accept the system itself. The whole novel is a dramatic exposition of what this system does to its human beings, and the intellectual reformers in their emotional relationships, are conditioned by, and are ultimately subservient to, the system.

At Breadalby we find a

ruthless mental pressure, this powerful consuming, destructive, mentality that emanated from Joshua and Hermione and Birkin and dominated the rest" (101),

an attitude which is "mental and very wearying" (93). The quality of Bloomsbury conversations at Garsington is given in

Gudrun's responses, and the violence submerged beneath the polished manners is also hinted at.

The talk went on like a rattle of small artillery, always slightly sententious, with a sententiousness that was only emphasized by the continuous crackling of a witticism, the continual spatter of verbal jest, designed to give a tone of flippancy to a stream of conversation that was all critical and general... (93).

Whereas many of the others find this destructive criticism wearying, only Sir Joshua "whose mental fibre was so tough as to be insentient" (93), is thoroughly happy. Mattheson is a sociologist, as shown by the easy acceptance of categories into which human beings can be placed. His "eighteenth century appearance" (100) reminds us of the fixed, static quality of the knowledge to which he gives his faith, recalling that other optimistic age of reason. Birkin suddenly becomes aware of the group as petrified figures, like those in the Egyptian tombs.

How utterly he knew Joshua Mattheson, who was talking in his harsh, yet rather mincing voice, endlessly, endlessly, always with a strong mentality working, always interesting, and yet always known, everything he said known beforehand, however novel it was and clever. (110).

He also sees them as figures in a game of chess with "innumerable permutations that make up the game...but the game is known, its going on is like a madness, it is so exhausted." (110). When most of the party bathe, Gudrun's response conveys the most charitable judgement that is finally made on the people of Breadalby.

'Aren't they really terrifying?' said Gudrun.
'Don't they look saurian? They are just like great lizards. Did you ever see anything like

Sir Joshua? But really, he belongs to the primeval world, when great lizards crawled about'. (112).

The Bloomsbury-Breadalby group are like the monsters of the past; unable to evolve and change, they finally became extinct. The people are anachronisms, seeking to escape the realities of the changing world, but ultimately, are doomed because of their inability to adapt or change. If we recall J.M. Keynes's statement, that "there may have been just a grain of truth when Lawrence said in 1914 that we were 'done for,'" the full significance of Gudrun's words becomes apparent.

When Hermione recognizes that "the split was coming" (98), that Birkin has finally made the involuntary decision ("'That's enough', he said to himself involuntarily." (110)) to break with Hermione and her world, her hatred of him is "subconscious and intense" (98). When she finds Birkin copying a Chinese drawing of geese, his analysis of the picture brings her one step closer to her final breakdown. Her 'dreadful tyranny' to know, draws from Birkin his explanation that he is copying the drawing to know "what centres they live from", and what follows is a description of an "unknown mode of being", which, Hermione realizes, the tyranny of her mental consciousness can never allow her to share with Birkin. She cannot know what he knows, she cannot dominate him in his elusiveness (he is at different times described as a "chameleon", "quick", "vital", and "separate"), and she suffers "the ghastliness of dissolution, broken and gone

in a horrible corruption" (49). The seething violence and destructiveness that have always remained "coiled" within her, repressed by her excessively-willed consciousness, at last find their "voluptuous consummation" (117) when she smashes a ball of lapis lazuli down on Birkin's head. We notice a number of skilful touches in Lawrence's handling of the scene. The violence is a logical fulfillment to all that has gone before. Birkin uses a copy of Thucydides to protect his head from Hermione's next blow, and we recall that it was Ottoline who sent Lawrence his copy of Thucydides, and also that the volume is a history of the death agony of a civilization which, by adhering to its traditions, flings itself into the abyss of destruction. The violence of the act results in Birkin's final disengagement from Hermione and the Breadalby traditions, but his immediate reactions show how close Birkin is to being "so near gone with the rest of his race down the slope of mechanical death" (417), for he strips himself and rolls among the flowers and bushes in a primitive regressive communion with nature. It is only the power of Ursula, "a rose of happiness" (193) among all the flowers of corruption, which raises him from this nadir in his career, and saves him from the fate of the others by once more giving him faith in a true relationship with a woman. Turning from the decadent intellectual to a girl from a less corrupted milieu, Birkin later finds fulfillment. Like Lot's family, flying in the face of the civilization of Sodom, Birkin and Ursula leave England, and move off, not to any locality in particular, but in a "perfect relation -- so that we are free

together" (256).

Something must be said about the role played by Gerald Crich, a regular guest at Breadalby, for as powerful industrialist he reveals one important aspect of this society in dissolution. Gerald is born with Kiplingesque, heroic notions; as a youth he ignores the "industrial sea" which surges around Shortlands, and prefers to hunt, swim and ride in his woods. Later he escapes England by going abroad to a German university; after this, he "tries war", and then travels into "savage regions" in a never-ending search for adventure. When control of the mines passes from his father to Gerald, he inherits a situation in which personal heroism has no place, and he subordinates himself and becomes a part of the decadent capitalism which Lawrence realized was stifling British life. Like Sir Joshua, he takes hold "of all kinds of sociological ideas, and ideas of reform" (249). As a replacement for his father's Christian paternalism in industrial relations (which is shown to be a failure), he recognizes only the miners' desire "for equality of possessions" (253). He furthers the "desire for chaos" (254) which has arisen at this point in the history of capitalism, by carrying the idea of "mechanical equality" to its logical conclusion. In a passage of great intensity Lawrence describes the changes which the "destructive demon" (257) in Gerald, the high priest of the workers' new religion, introduces. Gerald introduces the "idea of mechanical equality" (255), the functional

importance of each man in the greater machine. He abandons the whole democratic-equality problem "as a problem of silliness"; What matters for him is "the great social productive machine" (255), and by ruthlessly reorganizing the mines, introducing the latest machinery, he subordinates the miners to positions of servants of the machine. The "butty system" is abolished, and the miners are "reduced to mere mechanical instruments" (259). But Gerald gives the miners what they want, "otherwise Gerald could never have done what he did" (260). This is the first great phase of chaos,

"the substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose." As Lawrence describes it, "this is the first and finest state of chaos" (260).

In his youth, Gerald has "accidentally" killed his brother; as an adult he is instrumental in murdering the souls of his brothers who work his mines. Boldover, home of the miners, is a town of the dead. "The people are all ghouls, and everything is ghostly" (12). Gudrun sees it as a "world of powerful, underworld men" (128), who have perverted their humanity by turning their destructiveness on themselves. Subordinating themselves to the machine principle, there is a sense of "inexpressible destructiveness; and of fatal half-heartedness, a sort of rottonness in the will" (131) in the men; and thus the Boldover-Shortlands world is directly linked with the same

rottonness we have found in Bohemia and Breadalby. Intellectuals, artists, industrialists, the working people; all partake of the same corruption. The failure of proper vitality which Lawrence identified as the major deficiency of Bloomsbury is seen to pervade the whole social order. In Women in Love this insight into the England of his time is transmuted by Lawrence into an apocalyptic vision of a society approaching its end.

One final point that has relevance to our discussion involves the departure of the two couples when they give up England and move to the Tyrolean Alps. "This was the centre, the knot, the navel of the world, where the earth belonged to the skies, pure, inapproachable, impassable." (450), and the valley is the final "great cul-de-sac" where Gerald finds the death he has been seeking, and Gudrun, further stages in the process of ice-like entropy when she turns to Loerke.

Throughout the novel, Lawrence has used biblical, historical, classical and non-classical analogues to further our comprehension of characters and themes. Loerke, his body unformed like that of a "boy", is seen sometimes as "a child", a "gnome", a "troll", and we are reminded of the Loki of Nordic

mythology. One legend tells how Loki, a dwarf and malicious spirit of evil, was chained to a rock by the Gods, and

will so continue until the Twilight of the Gods, when he will break his bonds; the heavens will disappear, the earth be swallowed up by the sea, fire shall consume the elements, and even Oden, with all his kindred deities, shall perish. (Brewers Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.)

Loki is also described as a "malicious Merlin", and these two allusions are blended subtly into the thematic complexity of Women in Love. Loerke is a European who heralds the apocalypse that ancient legend and the realities of the novel both predict. He is physically reduced to a dwarf and is shown as the lurking "rat"...gnawing at the roots of life." (481), the "wizard rat" [malicious Merlin ?] that swims ahead in the sewer of corruption into which mankind has slipped. This "mud-child" (480) is a "good many stages further" (481), in the dissolution, than anyone else, and there is "no going beyond him." (480). He is the completest portrait we have of that negation of life which has been explored throughout the novel. He is shown as almost attractive in his power to fascinate; he has the secret of sub-human "extreme sensation in reduction", that women like Gudrun, bored with the limitations of the Geraldts, crave. He is the ultimate in the process of reduction in which almost all the characters partake -- an "ultimate creature" (508). Even his hands, those of an artist, are "prehensile", like "talons", and "inhuman" (478), and we remember Sir Joshua (like Loerke,

associated with the 18th century), a great "saurian" lizard, also doomed to extinction.

Loerke is connected with many of the other characters in a number of finely drawn ways. His nostrils, "of a purebred street Arab" (478) recall the mindless sensuality of Halliday's servant. Like Minette, he too is contemptuously promiscuous, as shown in his treatment of his homosexual partner Leitner. Like Birkin, he rejects the commonly accepted concept of love, feels a similar distaste for contemporary society, (hence his joy in the "achieved perfections of the 18th century"); he is as articulate and uprooted as Birkin, and refuses to award Gudrun's feminine lure any of the traditional responses. But, beyond these superficial similarities, the radical differences are enormous. Birkin rejects the cynical nihilism of Loerke and strives for consummation with Ursula, whereas Loerke perverts both the natural instincts and the intellectual processes which Birkin attempts to bring into a balanced relationship.

Finally, Loerke's importance in the novel is that he is a member of the artistic Bohemia of Europe, and is both a popular and financial success as a sculptor. Bloomsbury associated themselves with this international Bohemia, as can be seen, for example, by their self-conscious attachment to Russian literature (a passing allusion is made to this at Breadalby when the Italian Contessa is found reading Turgenev's Fathers and Sons). They helped translate the works of Russian

novelists into English and the Hogarth Press published many of these. In her essay, "Modern Fiction", Virginia Woolf revealed Bloomsbury's exaggerated respect for Russian literature when she wrote, "English fiction can hardly avoid some mention of the Russian influence, and if the Russians are mentioned one runs the risk of feeling that to write of any fiction save theirs is waste of time".; and nearly all of Bloomsbury wrote at some time admiring the work of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Tchekov and Turgenev. We have already noted Bloomsbury's attitude to the Russian ballet (Keynes actually married Lydia Lopokova one of the dancers), and also their strenuous proselytising for French painting. Mention should also be made of Bloomsbury's interest in the bizarre, for Loerke shows a similar interest. The parties in Bloomsbury have been described by Holroyd as "very wild, unprincipled affairs" (Vol. 2, 89). Fancy dress was often worn; Strachey recalled one party at which Saxon Sydney-Turner appeared as a eunuch, Duncan Grant as a whore "great with child", and Strachey himself, as Sarastro. He would sometimes write one act farces, in the "fantastic manner of a Chekovian burlesque" (Holroyd, Vol. 2, 90) which Bloomsbury would enact. One such farce included Duncan Grant, playing a young boy disguised as a women, Clive Bell, as his homosexual lover, dressed initially as a male, Marjorie Strachey, a girl in the guise of a man, and Vanessa Bell, dressed misleadingly,

as a woman. All are finally revealed to be in double-disguise, men dressed as men later assume women's clothing, and vice versa, until finally, no actor could remember just what sex he or she was meant to be representing.

In Loerke's views on art which he shares with Gudrun, we find the affinity which is to result finally in Gudrun's "insidious and traitorous" rejection of Gerald. She is immediately attracted to Loerke's bizarre statuette of brute horse and exposed innocence, done in "green bronze", a colour associated with Gudrun throughout the novel. Loerke reveals his perversion in his attraction to only girls in their early teens -- "after that, they are no use to me" (487), and Gudrun is quick to recognize "the common callousness of it all, Dresden, Paris, or London, what did it matter? She knew it." (486). His theory of aesthetics, which appears when he explains his statuette, brings us directly back to those of Roger Fry and Clive Bell. He explains:

That horse is a certain form, part of a whole form. It is part of a work of art, a piece of form. It is not a picture of a friendly horse to which you give a lump of sugar, do you see -- it is part of a work of art, it has no relation to anything outside that work of art (483).

Like Fry and Bell, Loerke believes that, because

it is a work of art, it is a picture of nothing, of absolutely nothing. It has nothing to do with anything but itself, it has no relation with the everyday world of this and other, there is no connection between them, absolutely

none (484).

Gudrun's art is similarly reductive -- she does only small pieces often thought to be "savage carvings" (105). Loerke tells the group he "never did portraits" (482), for humanity is of no interest to him just as representation is not. "Art and Life were to them the Reality and the Unreality" (504), and as Gudrun and Loerke draw closer, primitive art (the pseudo-primitive art of Bohemia) becomes their refuge as does their shared "sentimental, childish delight in the achieved perfections of the past" (509), especially the late 18th century. Like the Bloomsbury aesthetes, their art is regressive, either in its reduction of the human to a concern with form, or in its sentimentalising of the past, found in representative works by Strachey and Bell who idealized 18th century French society.

Loerke also shows the others a picture of a frieze that he is doing for a factory in Cologne, and explains that "Art should interpret industry" and that there is nothing for the artist but the "serving a machine, or enjoying the motion of a machine -- motion that is all," because the machine is "extremely, maddeningly beautiful." (477). His frieze reminds us immediately of the painting "The Merry-Go-Round", done by Mark Gertler, one of the Bloomsbury artists.

It was a representation of a fair, with peasants and artisans in an orgy of enjoyment, drunk and absurd in their modern dress, whirling ridiculously in roundabouts, gaping at shows, kissing and staggering and rolling in knots, swinging in

swing-boats, and firing down shooting-galleries,
a frenzy of chaotic motion (476).

By rejecting Ursula's, "the world of art is only the truth about the real world" (485), and divorcing life from art, Loerke is willing to allow art to serve the mechanical nullity of industry as seen in this chaotic frieze in which humanity is reduced to an orgy of drunken, mechanical motion. In this, Loerke is Gerald's superior; Gerald has subverted the humanity of his miners to serve industry, and becomes himself a redundant piece of machinery, a "perfect instrument" (470). Loerke shares the same attitudes to human life, but is a good many stages ahead in the river of corruption.⁵ While he is prepared to remain swimming, "just where it falls over into the bottomless pit" (101), Gerald, "The Diver", takes the plunge into extinction. Loerke's dream of fear, "when the world went cold, and snow fell everywhere, and only white creatures, Polar bears, white foxes, and men like awful white snow-birds, persisted in ice-cruelty" (510), adds another apocalyptic note, and when he ominously tells Gudrun, "your fate and mine, they will run together till --" (517), we remember the fate of his young model. It is fitting too, that Loerke should cry, "Women and love, there is no greater tedium" (516), for Birkin and Ursula through their struggles, reveal the ultimate nihilism of this. Gerald's rejection of the slave-like Pussum was inevitable after he had had his full use of her. So will be Loerke's

rejection of Gudrun, later in Dresden, when she will be left with the nullity of her existence, to confront alone, the horror of "the mechanical succession of day following day, day following day, ad infinitum" (522).

Loerke's similarity to Mark Gertler, the Bloomsbury artist Lawrence felt to be immersed in the mechanical process of self-destruction (he finally committed suicide), finally, is of major significance. As a European, Loerke is shown to be more advanced in the process of corruption than any of those individuals we have met in England. Beginning his novel by revealing the disintegration of human life in England, Lawrence ends in the centre of Europe, with Loerke nurturing his secret of "reducing down, disintegration of the vital organic body of life" (508). The Bloomsbury attitudes which Lawrence found to be inimical to life were not just symptoms of the chaos in wartime England, but of the whole of European culture, and Women in Love remains the supreme artistic presentation of this vision.

FOOTNOTES

(CHAPTER I)

¹Frank Swinnerton, The Georgian Literary Scene (London: Hutchinson, 1935), p. 355.

²Michael Holroyd, Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography, Vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 103.

³Roy Harrod, The Life of John Maynard Keynes (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 73.

⁴Clive Bell, Old Friends: Personal Recollections (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1957), p. 130.

⁵Duncan Grant, "Virginia Woolf," Horizon, III (June 1941), p. 402.

⁶J.K. Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group (New York: Noonday Press, 1963), p. 15.

⁷Noel Annan, Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to his Time (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1951), p. 123.

⁸Quoted in William Van O'Connor's article, "Towards a History of Bloomsbury," The Southwest Review, XL (Winter 1955), p. 43.

FOOTNOTES

(CHAPTER II)

¹John Rothenstein, Modern English Painters, Vol. 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1952), p. 14.

²Jacob Epstein, Let There Be Sculpture (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), p. 34.

³Patricia Hutchins, Ezra Pound's Kensington: An Exploration 1885-1913 (London: Faber, 1965), p. 58.

⁴D.D. Paige, ed., The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950).

⁵Virginia Woolf, Collected Essays, Vol. 2 (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), pp. 157 and 160.

⁶Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), p. 363.

⁷Virginia Woolf, Letters to Lytton Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1956), pp. 73-74.

⁸Wyndham Lewis, Men Without Art (London: Cassell and Co., 1934), p. 168.

⁹Modern English Painters, Vol. 1, p. 26.

¹⁰W.K. Rose, ed., The Letters of Wyndham Lewis (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 47.

¹¹See Rose's Letters of Wyndham Lewis and John Rothenstein's Modern English Painters, Vol. 1.

¹²Wyndham Lewis, Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is Your Vortex? (London: The Egoist Ltd., 1914), p. 7.

¹³It can be noted that J.M. Keynes was the first chairman of the Art's Council.

¹⁴Wyndham Lewis, Blasting and Bombardiering (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), p. 279.

¹⁵Wyndham Lewis, Tarr (London: Methuen, 1951), p. 3.

¹⁶Geoffrey Wagner, Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 247.

FOOTNOTES

(CHAPTER III)

¹David Garnett, The Golden Echo (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953), p. 241.

²Michael Holroyd, Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography, Vol. 1 (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 139.

³Leonard Woolf, ed., Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey: Letters (London: Hogarth Press, 1956), p. 49.

⁴Leonard Woolf, Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918 (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), p. 198.

⁵D.H. Lawrence, The Collected Letters, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), p. 313. All future references in the text will be to Letters.

⁶John Maynard Keynes, Two Memoirs (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949).

⁷Harry T. Moore, The Intelligent Heart: The Story of D.H. Lawrence (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1960), p. 238.

⁸Robert Gathorne-Hardy, ed., The Early Memoirs of Lady Ottoline Morrell 1873-1915 (London: Faber, 1963), p. 280.

⁹Mark Gertler, Selected Letters, ed. Noel Carrington (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1965), pp. 129-130.

¹⁰Guy Deghy and Keith Waterhouse, Cafe Royal: Ninety Years of Bohemia (London: Hutchinson, 1956), p. 102.

¹¹Leonard Woolf, Beginning Again, p. 198.

¹²David Garnett, The Familiar Faces (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), p. 81.

FOOTNOTES

(CHAPTER IV)

¹Noel Annan's Leslie Stephen contains an account of Bloomsbury's antecedents.

²Bertrand Russell, The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell 1872-1913 (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 177.

³George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), p. 72.

⁴Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 80. Acknowledgement must be made to Williams' chapters on Mill, Bentham, and Carlyle for many of the quotations in this chapter.

⁵Both Harry T. Moore, in The Intelligent Heart, and James L. Jarrett, in his "D.H. Lawrence and Bertrand Russell," which appears in A D.H. Lawrence Miscellany, simplify the issues in this manner.

⁶John Maynard Keynes, "My Early Beliefs," in Two Memoirs (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), p. 82.

⁷F.R. Leavis, The Common Pursuit (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 257.

⁸Harry T. Moore, ed., D.H. Lawrence's Letters to Bertrand Russell (New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1948), p. 29. All future references to any letters by Lawrence to Russell will be from this edition.

⁹D.H. Lawrence, "Democracy," in Phoenix I (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 716.

¹⁰D.H. Lawrence, "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," in Phoenix I, p. 138.

¹¹Bertrand Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction (London: Allen and Unwin, 1916), p. 15. All future references in the text indicated by P.S.R. and page number.

¹²Bertrand Russell, Political Ideals (New York: The Century Co., 1917), p. 4.

¹³Bertrand Russell, Sceptical Essays (New York: W.W. Norton, 1920), p. 123.

¹⁴D.H. Lawrence, "The State of Funk," in Phoenix II (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 569.

¹⁵The U.D.C. was the Union of Democratic Control, formed by Liberals, such as Russell, in an effort to fight the new Universal Conscription Bill of 1916.

¹⁶Bertrand Russell, Portraits from Memory (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956).

¹⁷It can be noted in passing, that Keynes worked directly for the Liberal cabinet and helped organize the financing of the 1914-1918 war. E.M. Forster has admitted that "I belong to the fag-end of Victorian Liberalism" (Two Cheers, p. 56), and none of the Bloomsbury group could offer a political philosophy to meet the new demands of the age.

¹⁸E.M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy (London: Edward Arnold, 1951), p. 101.

¹⁹Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry (London: Hogarth Press, 1940), p. 26.

²⁰G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951). All future references to this work taken mainly from the final chapter, "The Ideal."

²¹The Bloomsbury Group, p. 29.

²²Old Friends, p. 133.

²³Leonard Woolf, and others, "The Influence and Thought of G.E. Moore," The Listener. LXI (April 30, 1959), p. 756.

²⁴Ibid., p. 757.

²⁵The Withered Branch: Six Studies in the Modern Novel (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1950), p. 157.

²⁶Art (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 83.

²⁷Vision and Design (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 51.

²⁸"African Sculpture and Cubism," Criticism, IV (Winter 1962), p. 287.

²⁹"Modern Fiction," in Collected Essays, Vol. 2 (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), p. 106.

FOOTNOTES

(CHAPTER V)

¹F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 155.

²H.M. Daleski, The Forked Flame (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 128.

³D.H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963). All future references in the text will be made to this edition.

⁴D.H. Lawrence, "The Crown," in Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 56.

⁵As H.M. Daleski has pointed out, Loerke's relationship to the mud-world of corruption is made clear when he is first seen in the icy cul-de-sac. His aesthetic views that art "has nothing to do with anything but itself" leads to another cul-de-sac, and because his art which is removed from life is 'disintegrative,' he is shown taking refuge in "the suggestion of primitive art," worshipping "the inner mysteries of sensation." (The Forked Flame, p. 151).

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