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ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE POLITICS OF WORKING-CLASS IDENTITY:
FROM MODERNISM TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF THE 1950S

By

Kevin G. Asman

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ABSTRACT

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE POLITICS OF WORKING-CLASS IDENTITY: FROM MODERNISM TO THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF THE 1950S

by

Kevin G. Asman

By studying the complex utopian longings of literature, one can understand the actual social contradictions that texts attempt to resolve imaginatively, and in turn, can discern the contradictions that structure the limits of real experience. Reality does not emerge in the text as a one to one correspondence with the sequence of events expressed in the narrative. However, all texts are realist in that they are tied to the real social contradictions of the historical moment in which they were written. The competing utopian longings of working-class and bourgeois literature yield insight into the real conflicts that defined British society in the twentieth-century. In particular, it is evident that English literary Modernism is a reactionary entrenchment against the socialist and working-class forays into culture that had been increasing since the latter decades of the nineteenth-century. The Modernist moment in England is more expansive than is commonly supposed. Its reactionary entrenchment continued uncontested into the 1950s, when it faced its first real challenge from authors and critics of working-class background. During this moment of cultural revolution, working-class writers challenged Modernist assumptions about working-class subjectivity, and working-class academics gave the working-class a scholarly legitimacy that the Modernists had sought to deny it.

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For Mary, Sydney, and Desdemona

and

In memory of Duster-

we miss you

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CHAPTER ONE: THE MARXIST LACUNA

At Brighton in May 1940 Virginia Woolf read her essay "The Leaning Tower" before the Workers' Educational Association. She said to the assembled workers, "Take away all that the English working class has given to literature and that literature would scarcely suffer; take away all that the educated class has given, and English literature would scarcely exist" (Woolf, "Leaning" 137). If what Virginia Woolf identifies as "English" Literature does not, at least in part, represent the multiplicity of "English" society and, in particular, does not reflect the views and conceptions of the working-class majority in that society, then one might argue that it is problematic to call it "English" literature at all. To do so is to suggest that an elite minority of "educated" writers have been responsible for the creation of a literary canon that is somehow quintessentially representative of the values of an entire society in which most people, by Woolf's standards, would qualify as uneducated because they have not been to public schools and universities. Woolf's characterization of "English" literature says more about her ideological assumptions than it does about her knowledge of the English working-class and its contributions to literature.

Quinten Bell notes in his biography of Woolf that "she felt so little love for the proletariat that she wanted to abolish it and in abolishing it to abolish the class society" (Bell 2: 220). Though her desire to abolish capitalism is laudable, her

reasoning is suspect. She derives her "lack of love" for working-class people from a conviction that they are incorrigibly obtuse. In January of 1905, Woolf accepted a teaching position at Morley College, a night school in the Waterloo Road for working men and women, what Bell calls her "social inferiors" (Bell 1: 105). In a report on her teaching experiences at Morley that was edited and transcribed by Bell for his biography's appendix, Woolf says that she delivered eight lectures " . . . to people who [had] absolutely no power of receiving them. . ." (Bell 1: 204). This characteristic disrespect for working-class intellectual capabilities underlies her assumption that working-class people have contributed nothing to "English" literature. As Woolf suggests, much of the English working-class majority has been silent, and critics need to interrogate the material circumstances which have prevented the working-class from contributing proportionately to "English" literature. However, this working-class has not been entirely silent. Working-class people have been producing the types of works that literary critics often define as literature, although it is rare for working-class writing to be associated with the term. Scholars of all theoretical positions also need to reflect on the practices and assumptions that have kept working-class writers from receiving acknowledgment for their efforts, that have kept them, in other words, from being identified as part of "English" literary culture by most of academia.

The British Marxist critic Carole Snee says Woolf's

assertion that the working-class has produced almost nothing literary (or should it be Literary?) is "the one about our literary history which will gain almost unanimous support from critics, irrespective of their ideological position" (165). Snee even contends that "there is an implicit general agreement between Marxists and other critics as to which authors and works are 'great', and therefore worthy of study" (165). She correctly notes that "literature" is not a "neutral body of imaginative writing," but rather an ideologically constructed, and therefore politically invested, corpus of texts (Snee 166). English literature has historically been the literature of what Woolf calls the educated, and what I would call the bourgeois, class because it has historically been the prerogative of this class to define English literature. While much effort has been exerted by racial and ethnic minorities and women toward challenging the ideological assumptions underlying the creation (and recreation) of the English literary canon, the one group which has not figured substantively in the academic debate over the redefinition and expansion of that canon is the working-class. There have been studies of working-class literature that have contributed significant insights and have aided in the recovery of lost and co-opted texts, and since the 1950s, working-class literature and history has had an academic legitimacy thanks to the efforts of scholars like Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, and E. P. Thompson. Nonetheless, in the years since Woolf's address to the Workers' Educational Association, most of the British critical establishment,

including its more radical elements, has paid little attention to English and other forms of British working-class literature. The American critical community has virtually ignored it. Though not all, most Marxist critics have constructed complex theories of capitalist culture from which working-class people are absent as discursive agents.

To ignore the discursive output of working-class people is to work within long established traditions of Marxian analysis and is to accept, without interrogation, Marx's declarations about the state of working-class consciousness. Marx's discussion of alienation is foremost a characterization of working-class intellectuality and its stagnation under capitalism. He argues in The Manifesto that "owing to extensive use of machinery and the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine . . ." (479). The worker must exist according to the sale of his labor power, which becomes a commodity that he exchanges in order to obtain the means of subsistence, and "it is a bit of luck for him if he can find a buyer" (Marx, Economic 65). His capacity to work, then, becomes something outside himself and is actually turned against him as the means of his oppression. To understand the tragedy of this commodification, one must consider Marx's theory of "species being." As he argues in The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, "Man therefore also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty. . . . This production is his

active species life" (114). Humans create, and that they create the means of their subsistence in highly organized ways separates them from all other natural entities. The ongoing process of creation and human interaction is what Marxists identify as history. Through history, according to Marx, human beings have evolved so that they find pleasure and meaning in the act of creating beautiful things.

The tragedy of working-class existence for Marx is that the vast majority of the population cannot create in accordance with the laws of beauty. They are alienated from this defining element of their species and are, therefore, alienated from themselves. The lives they lead are less than human. Marx speaks forcefully about this degradation, and my point is not to refute his claims about alienation. His insights into the exploitative mechanisms of capitalism are profound, and he is worthy of the homage that people bestow upon him by using his ideas. Nonetheless, Marx's assessment of the working-class is one from which they are intellectually absent because he presumes that they do not have intellects worth exploring. He says in the Manuscripts that, under capitalism, "man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions--eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal" (Marx, Economic 111). Yet, Marx provides no evidence to support his generalization as to how a working-class individual might "feel" about the effects of capitalistic social relations, and nowhere

in his major writings does he acknowledge that working-class people are capable of speaking for themselves about their own feelings. He is, as a non-worker, speaking for and about others, which can be dangerous if the "other" is silenced in the process. Linda Alcoff's cautions us that social ". . . location is epistemologically salient, [and] certain privileged locations are discursively dangerous. In particular, the practice of a privileged person speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons . . . [can result] in increasing or reinforcing the oppression of the group spoken for" (Alcoff 7). Marx is not individually responsible for perpetuating working-class oppression. This oppression is the direct result of extensive social mechanisms over which Marx had no control, and a better foundational study of how those mechanisms function has yet to be written. Nonetheless, one can argue that Marx fetishizes the working-class as the idealized embodiment of all that is wrong with capitalism and presents working-class people as homogenous. Despite his sympathies and life long commitment to working-class liberation, Marx establishes an interpretation of the working-class as intellectually bankrupt and does so from a position of almost unquestionable authority. So discursively privileged is Marx that generations of Marxists have not felt compelled to ask whether his representations were accurate, whether the individual proletarian, that human appendage to the machine, had really become the "mentally and physically *dehumanized being*" with which Marx links him in the tropological discourse of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts (121). In short, most

Marxists have not felt compelled to listen to working-class voices because they have presumed that Marx was accurate in speaking for them. Therefore, if Marx did not help to perpetuate working-class oppression, one can make a convincing case that he at least helped to perpetuate working-class silence.

Even sophisticated Marxist literary critics such as Frederic Jameson develop their studies of capitalist cultures on terrains from which the working-class is generally absent in intellectual terms. In a thoughtful study of late capitalism, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," Jameson compellingly observes that one must "read high and mass culture as objectively related and dialectically interdependent phenomena, as twin and inseparable forms of the fission of aesthetic production under late capitalism" ("Reification" 134). This dialectical approach to modes of literary expression that are generally regarded as anathema is a considerable advancement over many approaches to high and mass culture in that it challenges both the exclusivity of high art and the still prevailing assumptions about the obtuseness of mass culture. Jameson correctly argues that both emerge from the same cultural milieu of ever-increasing commodification and must, therefore, be considered dialectally as interrelated aspects of late capitalism and not as hierarchically ordered forms of expression in which high art reflects a moral imperative to negate mass culture. In these terms, he is challenging the very valuation that emerged with Modernism, especially as it was articulated by

those such as F. R. Leavis and T. S. Eliot. For all that this is a valuable contribution, Jameson's tacit assumption is that one can adequately understand late capitalism and in particular reification as its defining element by studying exclusively literatures that emerge either directly from the bourgeoisie or from bourgeois controlled institutions that exist, in his terminology, for purposes of ideological "manipulation and containment," terms that he seems to borrow from Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man ("Utopia and Reification" 144).¹ Nowhere does he suggest that reification can be best understood by examining the living discourse of the exploited, whose lives represent the most complex manifestation of capitalistic modes of reification.

To his credit, Jameson does mention that there are modes of "authentic cultural production" over which the hegemonic class does not exert *total* control. He concludes that "the only authentic cultural production today has seemed to be that which can draw on the collective experience of marginal pockets of the social life of the world system: black literature and blues, British working-class rock, women's literature, [and] gay literature . . . " (140). Using ideas from Guy Debord's The Society of the Spectacle, and perhaps from Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" as well, Jameson contends that most art has attained commodity status, disconnected from the particular historical situation in which it was created ("Reification" 131). Authentic art, including "British working-class rock," has evaded this commodification, but Jameson's study of late capitalism does not include a

rigorous consideration of this "authentic cultural production" which has "not yet been fully penetrated by the market and by the commodity system" ("Reification" 140). How this literature has managed to avoid total penetration by the commodity system is never explained. Neither does Jameson argue for the value of such literature in a world where "mass culture" so effectively works to manipulate and contain the sentiments of "marginalized" peoples, who would otherwise be engaged in totally "authentic" modes of expression. In fact, when Jameson wants to understand something of the nature of these people, he attempts to do so not through a study of their "authentic" cultural expression but rather through a "close reading" of mass produced texts. In an undeveloped argument that anticipates the more fully considered positions of Michael Denning's book Mechanic Accents, Jameson intimates that ". . . [one must] grasp mass culture not as empty distraction or 'mere' false consciousness, but rather as transformational work on social and political anxieties and fantasies which must then have some effective presence in the mass cultural text in order subsequently to be 'managed' or repressed" ("Reification" 141). In Jameson's system, one can understand something of the anxieties of the oppressed by performing a sort of archeology on those mass produced texts that speak to those anxieties and attempt to manipulate or contain them.

Although Jameson's method might yield important evidence about the assumptions of those who control the production of mass culture, the ability of these texts to say anything about

the complex and real anxieties of those who are subject to strategies of containment is highly suspect if the mass produced texts are studied in isolation, which is what Jameson does. Making such assessments is problematic without a direct consideration of texts that contain the "authentic" expressions of those anxieties. Jameson does not consider "authentic" texts, and one can only assume that he finds the texts that contain these "authentic" expressions inadequate to the task of revealing the anxieties of "marginalized" peoples, who as it happens, constitute a majority in late capitalism. Within Jameson's system, it is reasonable, for instance, to say that one can understand the anxieties of women by studying in isolation cosmetic advertisements that play on those anxieties. Though such a study might produce valuable insights about the strategies of containment practiced on women's behavior, it could not do justice to the ontological depth of women's anxieties, certainly not to the degree that a consideration of writing produced by women could. Despite his acknowledgment that "marginalized" people have voices, Jameson sees no particular need to include their cultural production in his analysis of late capitalism, even though he is describing the mechanisms through which capitalistic institutions work to control and shape (manipulate and contain) their voices. They have no intellectual presence in his formulations, and one can only wonder how his assumptions about containment, which also circulate in The Political Unconscious, might differ if they were informed by a consideration of texts that are produced by

those who are in a social position to contain nothing and who are, at least in part if never absolutely as Lukács reminds us, shaped by the containment strategies of others. Instead, texts from people on the "margins" of society are given the surprisingly simplistic categorization of "authentic," as if they are the organic creations of collective spirits which have, somehow, avoided the pitfalls of capitalism. They do not get the rigorous analysis that Jameson usually reserves for Modernist texts that are supposed to be the products of individual authors. To be clear, I am objecting to Jameson's analysis of high and mass culture only to the degree that he virtually ignores other modes of cultural production that are also distinctive aspects of the late capitalist epoch in which we live. Nonetheless, much of what he argues in this essay and subsequently in the Political Unconscious will inform my study of working-class literature, which starts with the declaration that working-class texts deserve the same analytical scrutiny as all other texts that have emerged within capitalism.

Jameson fetishizes the working-class and other marginalized groups because he sees them, categorically, as the idealized other, as organic formations that signify the negation of reification rather than its most complex embodiment. Yet, he is merely continuing a pervasive tradition of Marxism, one which has its origins in the writings of Marx and finds its expression in virtually every school of Marxist thought. It is a tradition that sees in the working-class a potential for the liberation of all (i.e., the potential for something authentic in a world of

decontextualized commodities). At the same time, this tradition disregards the complexity and diversity of the working-class intellect. Even the radical anti-humanist Louis Althusser, for instance, relies on a characterization of working-class consciousness in his often quoted theories of ideology. In his landmark essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser's concern is that Marx under-theorized the relationship between the base and superstructure by not adequately explaining the dialectical relationship of the two. Althusser never challenges that basic Marxist assumption "that it is the base which in the last instance determines the whole edifice," but he does want to move beyond the limitations inherent in the spatial metaphor of base/superstructure ("Ideology" 135-36). He concludes that ". . . the reproduction of labour power takes place essentially outside the firm" ("Ideology" 130). According to his system, though it is true that a superstructure of state and social institutions is created from the labor process (which is how I translate "firm"), it is also true that these institutions, Ideological State Apparatuses, recreate the dominate relations of production and do so through the discursive dissemination of politically invested systems of thought, what he calls ideology. Ideologies exist to maintain the status quo, but unlike those who work within the humanist traditions of classical Marxism, Althusser challenges the belief that ideology is a type of false consciousness or mere illusion because this view implies that the false can be negated simply by a correction of

consciousness, that is, by learning what is real and what is not. To maintain the argument about false consciousness is, by Althusser's standards, to ignore the epistemological depths to which ideology reaches. He argues that "there is no practice except by and in an ideology" (Althusser, "Ideology" 170). The subject is hailed, or interpellated, by ISA's, and the ideologies that these ISA's disseminate constitute the subjectivity of the individual thus hailed. Our very identities are constructed by the ideologies which call out to us. They are not false because they constitute our reality, even if they exist to disguise the real nature of the circumstances in which we live.

The problem that remains for Althusser is how one goes about changing an ideology from a position that has been constructed within that ideology. The unsatisfactory way in which Althusser answers this question has largely been disregarded by the post-structuralist theorists who have co-opted his ideas and accorded him the status of primogenitor of their tradition. Chris Weedon argues that Althusserianism marks "a crucial break with humanist conceptions of the individual" because it does not presuppose that the individual has a coherent and fixed essence, a position which many post-structuralists attribute to humanist modes of Marxist thought (32). It is in language, according to Weedon, that "our sense of ourselves" is constructed; the self is "an effect of ideology" (32). Logically, there is no way to move beyond ideology to change a world, the reality of which, even in

Althusser's terms, is hidden by the very ideology which constitutes our individual subjectivities. Post-structuralists believe that we cannot know reality objectively and that we can only perceive it subjectively through an ideological filter. They tend to miss that, even if his theories are not clearly developed or explained, Althusser does allow for the possibility that the epistemological hold of ideology can be broken. It is not even stretching the matter to say that he is counting on it.

Althusser admired Marx because he had gone through an "epistemological rupture" which freed him from the limitations of the German ideology. He says in For Marx, that Marx's "retreat from ideology towards reality came to coincide with the discovery of a radically new reality of which Marx and Engels could find *no echo in the writings of 'German philosophy'*" (For Marx 81). He adds, "In France, Marx discovered the *organized working class*, in England, Engels discovered *developed capitalism and a class struggle obeying its own laws and ignoring philosophy and philosophers*" (For Marx 81). Marx and Engels encountered realities that the traditions of German philosophy could not explain or disguise. The observation of behavior beyond the boundaries of their culture, in turn, gave them the tools "to break" with the prevailing epistemology. The German ideology could not disguise the reality of France and England. Seeing that reality, Marx and Engels found a way outside of the ideology that had been interpellating them. This epistemological break allowed them to construct a science, historical materialism, that also expressed a "new practice of

philosophy" grounded in real history, not ideology (Althusser, "Lenin before Hegel" 107). Ideologies might present themselves as totalizing, but they can never disguise reality in its totality, an implied position for Althusser but one that he shares with Georg Lukács and Raymond Williams.

Althusser also allows for the possibility that ideologies can be subverted from the inside by some aspect of consciousness that, somehow, and he is vague as to how, avoids the pressures of being hailed. He argues:

It is because bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectuals have a bourgeois (or petty-bourgeois) 'class instinct', whereas proletarians have a proletarian class instinct. The former, blinded by bourgeois ideology which does everything it can to cover up class exploitation, cannot see capitalist exploitation. The latter, on the contrary, despite the terrible weight of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology they carry, cannot fail to see this exploitation, since it constitutes their daily life ("Preface to Capital" 100).

At some level of the proletarian consciousness there will be perceptions, what he calls instincts, that evade the tremendous pressures of bourgeois ideology and allow the proletariat to see the reality of human relations under capitalism. Like most other Marxists, Althusser pins his hope for the liberation of society on the consciousness of the proletariat, but he never feels compelled to address that consciousness directly in his study of ideology. Instead, like Jameson, he looks for manifestations of proletarian "instincts" in the writings of those who are not of that class. He says, for instance, that "Lenin adopted a proletarian *class viewpoint*," and Althusser makes this claim after just having said that this would be impossible for someone of Lenin's class based alignment

(Althusser, "Lenin before Hegel" 107). Lenin did not, after all, directly live the exploitation that leads to the necessary perseverance of proletarian instincts, and Althusser never explores what made his epistemological break with bourgeois ideology possible. Nor does he explain which of Lenin's viewpoints were specifically proletarian except to say that historical materialism itself is the manifestation of the proletarian viewpoint (Althusser, "Preface to Capital" 100). The relationship between Marxism and proletarian consciousness is one that I will explore in more detail later, but suffice it to say for now that Althusser's equation of proletarian instinct and Marxism is altogether unsatisfying and based on a wishful thinking that is generally associated with the most reprehensible moments of Stalinism. Bertel Ollmann notes that Marxists are, too often, guilty of making the leap from the belief that working-class consciousness is the effect of capitalistic modes of alienation to the view that Marxism is itself working-class consciousness without interrogating the contradictions between these two positions (7). Althusser's theories of revolution rely almost exclusively on a conception of working-class consciousness, and yet, like so many other Marxists, he does not turn to actual working-class discourse for an understanding of what that consciousness might be able to express instinctually. He claims, instead, that the working-class intellect finds its best representation in the writings of Lenin, a petty bourgeois intellectual who did not share his faith in working-class instincts and who did not equate his own

writing with working-class consciousness. In What is to be Done? Lenin argues that revolution must be brought to the proletariat from without by bourgeois and petty bourgeois intellectuals who, working within the discipline of a party, can see beyond the immediate demands that proletarians are likely to make in a revolutionary scenario (82). In the end, like Jameson, Althusser presents an analysis of capitalism from which its most significant creation, the proletariat, is absent except as an idealized other capable of expressing something instinctual or authentic despite the crushing weight of capitalist ideology. Althusser both simplifies the working-class and, by default, presents it as simplistic.

At a foundational level, Marxism is predicated on the assumption that working-class consciousness has the most revolutionary potential. Yet, Althusser never adequately explained how this consciousness progresses from a state of animalistic or machine-like dehumanization with which it is often associated in Marxist literature, even though an instinctual manifestation of proletarian awareness is so central to his thinking. Ironically, because Althusser and he are diametrically opposed as anti-humanist and humanist within the traditions of Marxist thought, Georg Lukács did theorize this progression in History and Class Consciousness (1923), forty to fifty years before Althusser presented his theories. In his 1967 Preface, Lukács declares that he had two major objectives in writing this text. The first is to "chart the correct and authentic class consciousness of the proletariat, distinguishing

it from 'public opinion surveys' (a term not yet in currency) and to confer upon it an indisputably practical objectivity" (Lukács, History xviii). Lukács sets out to retrieve from bourgeois theories of sociology and psychoanalysis the notion of consciousness, which is central to the early works of Marx, those that most reflect an Hegelian influence. In the above passage, the word "practical" is key because Lukács is responding to the bourgeois ossification of consciousness. It exists objectively, but consciousness is never static and should not be treated as such. If we can for a moment discuss the opinions that circulate widely within a given group, these opinions are in no way adequately representative of a class that is continually changing as history progresses. Within Lukács's system, there are no fixed ideas that are representative of the consciousness of a particular class. When Lukács refers to the class consciousness of the working-class, he is not referring to a world view, static or otherwise. As he says, "Thus only when the theoretical primacy of the 'facts' has been broken, only when every *phenomenon is recognised to be a process*, will it be understood that what we are wont to call 'facts' consists of processes" (History 184). In his effort to break the "theoretical primacy of facts" that predominates in bourgeois thought and that distinguishes it from historical materialism, Lukács sought to reinvigorate Marxism (his second major objective) by bringing back to it the Hegelian notion of the process, which he felt had been lost from the theories of all but the very best Marxists. We talk about the working-class as

a fixed entity. However, Lukács reminds us that we need to consider the working-class as a living process, even if our use of the term working-class for "terminological convenience" makes it appear static (Fuss 34).² A theory must be accompanied, in other words, by an application of its ideas to the real world, which evolves. Lukács calls this marriage of theory and application "praxis" (History 126). Only by re-emphasizing the notion of process, according to Lukács, can Marxism overcome its "rigidity dialectically and take on the quality of [a theory of history in a state of] Becoming" (History 203). In his study Walter Benjamin, Terry Eagleton wrongly suggests that the Hegelianism of Lukács entails a return to Hegelian idealism, which is based on the Kantian concept of the monad, the human subject as an independent and ahistorical essence. He categorically rejects Lukács as a result of this perceived backsliding into liberal humanism (Eagleton, Walter Benjamin 83-84). It appears that Eagleton uncharacteristically ignores the deeper implications of Lukács's arguments. Lukács's professed Hegelianism is a "neo-Hegelianism." If he sees value in recovering the notion of process from Hegel and bringing it to a Marxism which has left it behind, this does not then imply that he also brings with him the Hegelian conception of the subject as it is articulated by Hegel. Lukács's theory is centered on the subject. He is a humanist, as was Marx. It does not, thus, follow that he is a liberal humanist. His subject is not trying to achieve an awareness of and unity with a platonic (fixed and eternal) essence from which it has been separated. For Lukács,

the subject is striving for an historically necessary "class consciousness."

Class consciousness does not entail what the term seems to imply logically. Often, critics, especially practitioners of American neo-Marxism, use it to refer to the collective consciousness or the shared views and conceptions of a given class. This use of the term is endorsed by some prominent Marxists, notably the sociologist Erik Olin Wright (Class Counts 384). For Lukács, the term class consciousness is not, however, synonymous with this abstract notion of a consistent and pervasive world view. In History and Class Consciousness, "class consciousness implies a class-conditioned unconsciousness of ones [sic] own socio-historical and economic conditions. . . . Everything hinges on the extent to which [the members of a given class] can become conscious of the actions needed to obtain and organise power" (52-53). Like Hegel and, for that matter, Louis Althusser, Lukács emphasizes "awareness." Whereas Hegel is looking for the awareness of a liberal humanist essence, Lukács suggests that what is needed by those who are oppressed is a conscious awareness of the nature of their oppression. Again like Althusser, he argues that the potential for this awareness arises out the very experience of exploitation that defines working-class existence. The oppressed have a "class conditioned unconsciousness" of their own oppression that manages to exist despite the degradation that reification entails. Lukács's thinking follows closely the ideas of Marx, with the exception that he gives a more complete

account as to how revolution will occur. For Lukács, the very experience of proletarian existence is dehumanizing as well, but this process of dehumanization is also planting the seeds of its own destruction. Reification might degrade the intellect, but it does not do so to the extent that this intellect becomes completely devoid of analytical capabilities. Awareness of oppression, an awareness that develops within the intellect of the working-class, is not only possible within Lukács's system, it is imminent. When the individual proletarian sees the nature of his reification, it will enable him to see its pervasiveness under capitalism. The worker will then be able to see capitalism as a "totality," understanding how it functions on a macrocosmic scale. This awareness will ultimately lead to the demise of capitalism (Lukács, History 29).

Even though its outcome is desirable, Lukács's "objective" study of proletarian consciousness is problematic because it is one which ignores proletarian consciousness as it objectively exists. Lukács does not ossify working-class consciousness. He presents a theory of that consciousness as a process, albeit an abstract one that never touches upon an actual discursive manifestation. He does, unfortunately, see proletarian consciousness as homogeneous. Though his very argument recognizes its evolutionary character, Lukács still fetishizes that consciousness as the ideal other. The importance he places on conscious intellectual awareness implies a recognition of working-class intellectual capability, but he offers a teleological theory of working-class thought that does not take

the practical step of subjecting that thought to direct scrutiny. In these terms, Lukács's own study falls short of achieving the praxis that he called for in others. He centers his theory of capitalist development on the evolution of the working-class mind, but the working class intellect exists in his texts only as an absent presence, something that is described with a definitive authority but that also never makes an appearance. Like Jameson, he constructs a theory of reification that ignores the voices of those whose lives, and therefore, consciousnesses constitute reification's most complex manifestation. Like Marx, he is still speaking for others in a way that perpetuates working-class silence.

In addition to those who ignore it, there are those Marxists who adamantly refuse to acknowledge that working-class culture has any value whatsoever. In fact, they are often hostile to the idea that a meaningful working-class culture exists, even if they do concede that isolated moments of creativity occur. In Literature and Revolution, for instance, Leon Trotsky does not disavow the existence of working-class authors, nor is he blind to the reality that, on occasion, working-class authors have overcome the enormous obstacles placed in their paths by the hegemonic forces of bourgeois society that work to deny them discursive agency. In these terms, he goes one step beyond the Marxist theorists discussed thus far. Trotsky even applauds those "talented and gifted" workers who have managed to produce poetry because they are laying the foundations of revolution by breaking out of the

strictures and limitations that have been imposed on their class (200-01). He does argue, however, that these texts, which he sees as isolated historical phenomena, do not constitute a "literature" because "the work of the proletarian poets lacks an organic quality, which is produced only by a profound interaction between art and the development of culture in general" (Trotsky 200). He contends further that this "organic quality" (a phrase which he never adequately defines) can only come about with the emergence of a proletarian culture. His understanding of "culture" needs explication because he is not using the term in the sense that contemporary leftists engaged in cultural studies do. He does not see culture as the site of conflict, class or otherwise. His use of the term is much more Arnoldian. Matthew Arnold writes in Culture and Anarchy, perhaps the most important expression of British bourgeois literary politics, Culture "consists in becoming something rather than having something, in an inward condition of mind" (Arnold 477). For Arnold, Culture is monolithic, something to be defended. Having the capacity to produce what looks like art does not mean that one contributes to the development of Culture unless one possesses the proper sensibilities, usually by virtue of birth. Trotsky does not regress into this essentialism, but like, Arnold he also sees Culture as coherent and monolithic, accessible only to the dominant few, though through political conquest and not right of birth. He says, "One cannot turn the concept of culture into the small change of individual daily living and determine the success of a class culture by the

proletarian passports of individual inventors or poets. Culture is the organic sum of knowledge and capacity which characterizes the entire society, or at least its ruling class" (Trotsky 199-200). A proletarian culture, and thus a proletarian literature, can exist only when the proletariat has become something, when it has seized for itself control of the means of the production and distribution of knowledge within a given society. A culture for Trotsky is, thus, a unified body of knowledge that conveys the views and conceptions of a dominant class that has successfully absorbed the culture of previously dominant classes. There is an intellectual complexity to the dominant class that allows it to organize the whole of society in its interests. Until the working-class reaches this stage in its development, the literary works produced by members of that class must necessarily be regarded as a degraded aspect of bourgeois dominated culture. Works by "talented and gifted" working-class writers are the by-product of social relations that have been organized under capitalism and must, therefore, reflect the objective reality of bourgeois hegemony, rather than the complexity and specificity of the working-class mind.

Trotsky sees the eventual domination (the term he uses is dictatorship) of the proletariat as the inevitable result of the class conflict, but he does not see the existence of a proletarian culture as inevitable as well. He proclaims repeatedly in Literature and Revolution that "it is fundamentally incorrect to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art"

(Trotsky 14). His argument is grounded in the traditions of Marxism, which in this case, does not make it sound. He concludes that, as a necessary condition of its hegemony, the bourgeoisie, through its century and a half of predominance, had absorbed and appropriated older forms of culture and had, in turn, created its own culture, the sole purpose of which was to reinforce its dominance. Even when it comes to power, the proletariat will be unable to duplicate this process of cultural hegemony because, whereas bourgeois culture exists for the ongoing maintenance of bourgeois domination in class based society, the dictatorship of the proletariat will exist only in the brief interlude between the demise of capitalism and the emergence of socialism. Proletarian literature will never exist "because the proletarian regime is temporary and transient. The historic significance and the moral grandeur of the proletarian revolution consist in the fact that it is laying the foundation of a culture which is above classes and will be the first culture that is truly human" (Trotsky 14). The proletariat, he contends, must still master and absorb Pushkin if it hopes to develop the "organic" quality which defines culture. In his view there simply will not be time for this absorption to occur. During the short transitional period of its dictatorship, the proletariat must necessarily concern itself with building the institutions of socialism (Trotsky 130). When these institutions come into existence, the proletariat will cease to exist. The proletarians engaged in the struggle for their own liberation from the alienating effects of capitalism will

eliminate their existence as proletarians, a view shared by every thinker discussed thus far. Trotsky sums up his argument by saying that the culture which follows bourgeois culture will "be, happily! Socialist and not 'proletarian'" (201).

Although he grounds his argument in a logic shared by many Marxists, Trotsky gets it wrong because he does not allow the working-class an appropriate degree of agency. He sees the working-class as the out-come of bourgeois social relations and thus as a part of bourgeois culture rather than as a class whose interests are antithetical to those of the bourgeoisie. They are antithetical, even if the very existence of the working-class depends on its inability to recognize this antagonism. The proletariat is, as Georg Lukács reminds us, a specific economic articulation of the bourgeois epoch, one of its "pure" and defining classes (Lukács, History 59). The working-class is not, however, (merely) a specific articulation of the bourgeoisie. If the proletariat does not have interests that are antithetical to the interest of the bourgeoisie and if they are incapable of expressing those interests, even in a literary capacity, then there would be no need for the existence of a bourgeois culture. The entire process of hegemony that Gramsci defines so thoroughly would be meaningless if the existence of what Raymond Williams calls a "counter-hegemony" were not possible (Williams, Marxism 118-19). The bourgeoisie would not need to work toward the "spontaneous consent" of the proletariat to its own oppression if the latter were incapable of inscribing its own interests and concerns, both resistant and collusive,

into a discourse that forms the basis of a counter-hegemonic working-class culture (Gramsci 12). For too long, critics have confused the ongoing attempt to suppress working-class discourse with its actual suppression and have, in turn, accepted at face value claims, such as those by Virginia Woolf, that working-class texts and, by extension, working-class cultures do not exist. In short, working-class culture, art, and literature do exist. If one hopes, as most Marxists suggest they do, to understand the interest and concerns of the majority class in society, a class which the mechanisms of the bourgeois state work so hard to manipulate and contain, then one must also understand where these concerns and interests are being expressed in their complexity.

More disturbing than the neglect of committed Marxists is the lack of working-class advocacy within academia for the curricular inclusion of working-class literature. In Britain, working-class culture has had an academic legitimacy of sorts since the fifties, but that there is a long way to go even there is suggested by the dearth of criticism on working-class literature over the last forty years. The cumulative number of critical studies on working-class literature does not compare to the quantity of material that scholars of Virginia Woolf produce annually. There are multiple and complex reasons for why working-class people who enter academia, unlike people from other "marginalized" groups, have not been struggling for the academic legitimization of their own art. The most significant reason is that working-class consciousness, as depicted by the

hegemonic ideologies of western capitalism, has come to symbolize a negation of intellectuality. By silencing working people, influential Marxists such as those I discuss have by default been responsible for propagating this negative valuation of working people, even if their motives were different from those of the capitalists and their desires for working-class liberation were sincere.

In their book the Politics and Poetics Transgression, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White contend that the ideological devaluation of the working-class intellect has its historical roots in the political and economic ascendancy of bourgeois industrialists and their subsequent need to legitimate their control of cultural and material production. Stallybrass and White suggest that this urgent need gave rise to the mind/body split which underlies western liberal humanism and, therefore, bourgeois philosophical and political thought. They describe how the ideological distinction between embodiment and rationality was the result of a deliberate bourgeois political strategy to develop a discursive system which it could use to distinguish itself bodily and intellectually from the working-class. They argue that "the creation of a sublimated public body without smells, without coarse laughter, without organs[, or uncontrollable openings,] separate from . . . the ['grotesque' proletarian body of the] market square, alehouse, and street . . . was the great Labour of bourgeois culture" (Stallybrass and White 93-94). The bourgeoisie claimed for themselves a particular type of embodiment, one which

Stallybrass and White describe as "classical" because it is best exemplified by the ideals of classical sculpture: "The classical statue has no openings or orifices whereas the grotesque . . . emphasize[s] the gaping mouth, the protuberant belly and buttocks, the feet and the genitals . . ." (Stallybrass and White 22). As part of this ideological agenda, the bourgeoisie, in turn, projected onto the proletariat all undisciplined bodily expression, and the laboring classes became associated with the grotesque in the artifacts of bourgeois culture (Stallybrass and White 201). Most significantly, Stallybrass and White further suggest that, the bourgeois identification with the classical had real political consequences because ". . . the classical body was far more than an aesthetic model. It structured, from the inside as it were, the characteristically 'high' discourses of philosophy, statecraft, theology and law, as well as literature as they emerged from the Renaissance" (Stallybrass and White 22). The end result was that "these protocols of the classical body came to mark out the identity of progressive rationalism itself" (Stallybrass and White 22). Within the context of this ideology, the bourgeoisie have claimed for themselves the realms of reason and intellect and denied the working-classes any such associations.

Thus, working-class people who have entered academia have done so generally on the condition that they divest themselves of a socially acquired identity which the hegemonic group has deemed intellectually worthless. Such a divestment is never in itself possible and attempts to do so usually result in a sort

of self loathing which can become debilitating. Joanna Kadi argues as much in an autobiographical account of her struggles, as a working-class woman, to find acceptance in an academic world that *pro forma* dismisses those aspects of working-class culture in which she finds pleasure. She says that "beginning and continuing through my twenties and early thirties, middle-class and upper-middle-class people let me know, in no uncertain terms, that my feelings for country music were suspect and shameful" (Kadi 94). For her, these signals "reinforced internalized self-hatred and community hatred" to the point that she "stopped listening to country music," a mode of expression which she defines as authentically working-class because it communicates, to use Jameson's terminology, the anxieties of working-class people (Kadi 94-95). The devaluation of working-class culture, a devaluation which, as I argued above, is implicit in the writings of many Marxists, had the effect of silencing a scholar who saw philosophical complexity in working-class modes of expression. Like most working-class people, Kadi was coerced into perpetuating an ideological perspective of the dominant class that, as Stallybrass and White note, denies working-class people and working-class cultural artefacts intellectual legitimacy. Through no fault of her own, she colluded in her own oppression by conceding to the devaluation of her own culture. As her book Thinking Class indicates so forcefully, she has since refused to be an accomplice in this process.

CHAPTER TWO: THE REDEMPTION OF REALISM

To their credit, some Marxists have been calling for the academic legitimacy of working-class literature, but few critics have approached this issue with the rigorous inquiry common to Marxist thought. Through an application of an eclectic Marxism, one which draws on the best of many schools but is not insensitive to conflicts, I propose to resolve the major issue facing those who are proponents of working-class literature. I applaud their advocacy and join them in their insistence that working-class people have the right, ability, and perhaps even the responsibility, to speak out about their own culture. Few have attempted, however, to define what working-class people and those committed to working-class liberation should be advocating. In its broadest sense, the purpose of what follows is to provide a Marxist definition of working-class literature that foregrounds working-class experience.

Too many critics use the term "working-class literature" without identifying its parameters because, apparently, they are unwilling to approach the theoretical complexities of class. Unlike those who deal with gender or race, critics who wish to discuss issues of class have not been accorded the tenuous luxury of relying on the grosser biological features of an author to understand what Raymond Williams calls "alignment" (Marxism 199). While this has caused many to question the validity of class as a methodology for categorizing human experience, it has also meant that those concerned with class

have never been able to rely for long on what appears natural, such as physical appearance. In the long run, this works to the advantage of theorists genuinely interested in class because their adversaries have urged them continually to re-evaluate the commonalities that have led them to classify people in expansive groups. Those commonalities change as history changes. The working-class is, as Lukács argues, in a "continual state of becoming." Many who interrogate class have not approached it with the critical rigor necessary to understand how those commonalities change. People are "aligned," and the commonalities that determine the nature of that alignment exist. In saying so, I am merely expressing what most accept tacitly. Even if they appear to be elusive, the commonalities that we rely on to identify class alignment are as real, if not more so, than those that are taken for granted by theorists who concern themselves solely with issues of gender or race.

In defining alignment, Williams claims that people exist in particular historical situations, and that they have achieved politically situated views and conceptions because of specific historic, and in Marxist terms, class relations (Marxism 199). Anthony Appiah notes that the grosser physical features that we commonly use to identify differences in race and gender signify very little actual difference in biology and are altogether unreliable as signifiers of the social relations which people have experienced, except in the most general and abstract terms (31). If class is to be a meaningful categorization of human experience, then it must be informed by actual human relations

to the continually evolving organization of a society's material and ideological production. To argue otherwise, is to dismiss that central tenet of Marxism which distinguishes it from bourgeois philosophy. A Marxism which is not continually re-evaluating itself in terms of the material forces that drive human experience ceases to be Marxism. As Paulo Freire says, "The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it" (21). To enter into reality in Marxist terms is to concern oneself, on some level, with the organization of the labor process in a given society. While many so-called Marxists would call such a claim the crassest sort of economism, they often continue to use class as a means of identifying certain types of human experience.¹ They reduce the concept of class to a meaningless abstraction, one which is unquestioned because it is presumed to be commonsensically logical. The primary importance attributed to the economic as an identifying determinant distinguishes class from other methodologies. Nonetheless, the economic cannot be separated from the ideological forces that work to perpetuate it. The relationship between the two is, as Althusser claims, dialectical. Adorno is correct to remind us that "a dialectical theory which is uninterested in culture as a mere epiphenomenon, aids pseudo-culture to run rampant and collaborates in the reproduction of the evil" ("Cultural Criticism" 28). The

converse is also true. A theory that professes the economic to be unknowable because of the ideological opacity of culture is not in the least bit dialectical.

Class is a methodological signifier of how real people live and express real lives. Marx says in The German Ideology, "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production" (43). The most significant, and certainly the most contested, claim of classical Marxism involves the primacy of the labor process as a formative determinant of consciousness and class alignment. As Marx argues in The Manifesto, "Our epoch, the epoch of the Bourgeoisie . . . has simplified the class antagonisms: Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (Marx and Engels, Manifesto 480). A widely held misconception about Marx, even among many Marxists, is that he acknowledges the existence of only two classes. He does not, but he does claim that, with the continuing predominance of the bourgeoisie, other classes are being absorbed into and eradicated by a system in which most people belong to either the bourgeoisie or proletariat, two classes dialectically opposed in their relationships to the labor process. It might seem pedestrian to point this out, and I risk being redundant. Regardless, many self-professed Marxists would benefit from being reminded of the note that

Engels appended to the 1888 English edition of The Manifesto:

"By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour, by proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live" (473). A working-class individual necessarily obtains, or is dependent on someone who obtains for them, the means of their subsistence through the sale of their labor power.

Class alignment is not, therefore, dependent on the material circumstances of the individual but rather the degree to which the individual possesses power within the labor process. It usually follows that those who are virtually powerless possess no material wealth of consequence. Though his argument about "contradictory class locations" are unsatisfying because they do not take into ideological factors that compel people to commit to a class with which they are not aligned, in formulating his position, Erik Olin Wright correctly cautions us to consider that there are varying degrees of empowerment within a given class (Classes 42).² Thus, even within the working-class, there is no homogeneous level of disempowerment, which, in turn, implies that there are varying degrees of alienation. The manager of a pizza parlor may possess more power within the labor process and feel less alienated than the unfortunate man whose job it is to put the pizza into a raging oven, but that manager still works for a wage. The degree to which he or she possesses power does not compare to the power possessed by the

majority share-holder of the multinational corporation that owns the pizza parlor. The manager's power exists at the discretion of the owner, and whether the manager uses this power for his own benefit is debatable. One could argue that by using it, he is, in fact, separating himself from those with whom he is most closely aligned and, therefore, contributing to his own continuing disempowerment on a more complex level. One must also consider the extent to which his own sense of empowerment is illusory. This feeling of empowerment might be the result of an ideology that tells him he has power because his employers want to keep him from seeing the stronger commonalities between himself and his fellow wage-earners. Tom Bottomore points out that the division of a class into "divergent interest groups at one level does not preclude the existence at another level of important *common* interests and aspirations" (71-72). Following Bottomore's thinking, one could also argue that the manager and his fellow employee are merely competing factions of the same wage earning class, vying for whatever modicum of control the employer is willing to grant them.

Despite its centrality, power is Marxism's most under-theorized concern, and at the heart of many squabbles amongst Marxist theorists is a tacit difference in approach to the issue of power. Erik Olin Wright notes that sociologists who preoccupy themselves with class are in disagreement as to whether class is descriptive of relations of domination or of exploitation. He prefers to define class in terms of exploitation because, "'Exploitation' is thus the key concept

for understanding the nature of *interests* generated by the class relations" (Wright, Class Counts 10). Though Wright's reasoning is sound, economic exploitation is only half of the equation. If we are not to be guilty of economism, and we should not be, we must take into account the hegemonic that also emanates from within the cultural realm and has the function of ideological domination. The hegemonic ensures that existing practices of exploitation will continue. In what seems to be a definitive stance against the French New Left, Raymond Williams argues that "hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology,' nor are its forms of control only those 'ordinarily' seen as manipulations or 'indoctrination'. It is the whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living. (Williams, Marxism 110). Economic exploitation and ideological domination are part of the same integrated hegemonic process. It is impossible to discuss the deterministic effects of one in isolation because one cannot be separated from the other. Those who pursue the cultural and disregard the economic are probably sufficiently removed from economic exploitation that they can neither see nor feel the real effects of this pervasive capitalistic practice, which takes place in realms outside of language even if describing it is a linguistic act. The expropriation of labor-power is a practice. It is something that people *do* to each other. Exploitation could not exist without the ideological domination necessary to ensure its continuance, though Williams compels me to consider how practices might be structured in such a way as to be self-

perpetuating. The negative effects of exploitation are real and discernable. People are, in Althusserian terms, "overdetermined" (Poulantzas 14). Though I will not employ this Althusserian term because it invites confusion and associations with Freudian thought, I will concede to the thinking that informs it. Social determinants arise from numerous sources, and out of any of these sources a contradiction might emerge that will spark revolutionary change. A pre-occupation with the economic as the only determinant is reductive. Nicos Poulantzas argues that "a historically determined social formation is specified by a particular articulation . . . of [the] economic, political, ideological, and theoretical"(15). The economic maintains primacy "in the last resort," as Engels famously says in Anti-Dühring (104). This does not mean that all determinants come directly from the economic, but neither does it mean that their relationship to the economic is irrelevant or indiscernible. The determinants of class alignment are knowable and can be found in a complex hegemonic process that is characterized by the continually evolving inter-relationship of (economic) exploitation and (ideological) domination.

Since this deterministic hegemonic process is not static, class is not static either. Everything is derivative of this dialectical movement of history and is in a continual state of becoming (Lukács, History 203). The term working-class is not descriptive of a particular fixed set of beliefs. Class is a methodological categorization of human experience based on the recognition of commonalities. Since all the people of a given

class cannot and do not experience the same social relations in the same historical context, the members of that class will not possess the same views and conceptions. There will always be regional variations, and working-class people will even have views and conceptions that will conflict. Trying to develop a theory of class based on a commonality of viewpoint has never been a satisfactory means of approaching the issue. It is, nonetheless, one that is common among Marxist organizations that engage in facile appeals to the "average worker" and that try to validate their authenticity by claiming to understand what such people feel. Often, their rhetoric is so far removed from what the "average worker" feels that it alienates rather than inspires. I reiterate Lenin's admonition: "You, gentleman, who are so much concerned about the 'average worker' . . . rather insult the workers by your desire to talk down to them about working-class politics and working-class organisation" (What is to Be Done? 82). Unanimity of belief among working people simply does not exist, and claims that rely on a presumption of unanimity are reductive and simply provide support for those who categorically reject Marxism without knowing its complexities and subtleties. Marxists genuinely committed to ending exploitation must not confuse their desire for a unanimous revolutionary sentiment with the actual state of the working-class. Doing so subsumes the reality of the present in a desire for the future and, ultimately, makes the attainment of that future less and less likely. Like Bottomore, Nicos Poulantaz also reminds us that classes are divided into competing

factions, and though he applies this observation mostly to the ruling class, it pertains equally to the proletariat (73). It is absurd not to expect people to struggle for the meager scraps of power and wealth that trickle to down them. These struggles pit worker against worker, but their existence does not erase deeper commonalities, even if they prevent the workers from seeing them. One must also account for the contentious co-existence of such antithetical political perspectives as trade unionism and fascism because, though they are justifiably unpalatable to Marxists who regard them as forms of false consciousness, their existence is a real part of working-class existence. Such variations and conflicts do not, however, negate the methodological use of class in associating individual experience with expansive groups. If they did, then the same criterion of negation would have to be applied to all other forms of group categorization as well. Grouping people into categories such as "women" and "Blacks" would be equally unjustifiable because political variations and conflicts are not rendered meaningless by apparent biological commonality. Variations and conflicts are real aspects of class identity, just as they are with gender and race. They in no way undermine the fact that people are subjected to the same far reaching modes of economic exploitations and methods of ideological domination that require them to engage in similar, if never identical, social relations that, in turn, force similar contradictions upon them.

Because working-class people are subject to similar

mechanisms of economic exploitation and ideological domination, they are also subject to similar determinants that, given the uneven development of history, are likely to produce different results in different historical contexts. Their viewpoints are never homogeneous, but their alignments do belong, to borrow a concept from Georg Lukàcs, to the same "social typology" (History 51). In an attack on bourgeois philosophers in History and Class Consciousness, Lukàcs claims, "However much detailed researches are able to refine social typologies there will always be a number of clearly distinguished basic types whose characteristics are determined by the types of position available in the process of production" (51). It is only on the basis of this typological categorization of determinants that one can make the theoretical and methodological leap from the individual to the broader social context of class.

Marxism is, of course, predicated on the assumption that everything, but most especially human consciousness, is socially determined. Marx asks in The Manifesto, "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and his social life?" (Manifesto 492). Despite its importance to Marx's thinking, the most nuanced explanation of how determination functions is in Williams's Marxism and Literature. He argues that "a Marxism without some concept of determination is in effect worthless. A Marxism with many of the concepts of determination it now has is quite radically

disabled" (83). It is difficult to tell from this passage which conceptions of Marxism have disabled it by offering reductive theories of determination. There is of course the theory that is "systematized" in the writings of Plekhanov, who, in Art and Social Life, attempts to demonstrate the direct correlation between the social organization of production and the meaning of art (52). Williams does mention Plekhanov in his introduction as a formative influence on his Marxism (Marxism 3). One may reasonably conclude, therefore, that much of what Williams argues in Marxism and Literature is at least a qualification of Plekhanov's positivistic cause and effect formulations.

Williams also notes in the introduction that he is attempting to bridge the gap between the classics of Marxism that he read in his youth and the very different Marxism that was coming from the continent (Marxism 4). Given his apparent attack on the Althusserians for limiting their theory of hegemony to the upper levels of conscious articulation, one may also conclude that he is objecting to their equally fatalistic theory of determination, which as expressed by Althusser in his theories of interpellation, does not allow for human agency, an essential concept in Williams's thinking. You are hailed by Ideological State Apparatuses, but there is not allowance for you to hail back, unless you can somehow effect an epistemological break. As I say above, Althusser is unclear about how this break will develop, though his theory relies on belief that it necessarily will. Williams begins his discussion of determination by rejecting those positivistic formulations that reductively offer

"the 'laws' of an objective external system of economy" (Williams, Marxism 85). Williams thinks that such a position does not honor the subtleties of Marxist thinking. He begins his argument by quoting (actually misquoting) Engels from a "Letter to Joseph Bloch" where Engels says, "We make our history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite assumptions and conditions" (761). According to Engels, the economic is one of these assumptions and conditions, but it is not the only one. He wonders if Marx and he have been remiss in not making this point clearer ("Letter to Joseph Bloch" 761). The self-criticism of Engels aside, Williams sees that this statement from Engels "restores . . . the idea of direct agency: 'we make our history ourselves'. [These] assumptions and conditions are then the qualifying terms of this agency: in fact 'determination' [needs to be understood] as 'the setting of limits' [on this agency]" (Williams, Marxism 85). People act, and they make choices, something difficult to see from the confines of Althusserian thought. Their actions and choices are "limited" according to the historical situations that confront them. People make their history, but their history also makes them. The relationship is a dialectical one. If people have the capacity to act, then they also have the capacity to think about that action and to imagine themselves defying the limitations that they face. As Williams says, "New social relations and the kinds of activity that are possible through them, may be imagined but cannot be achieved unless the determining limits of a particular mode of production are

surpassed in practice, by actual social change" (86).

Imagination by itself cannot bring about a change in the limits that individuals encounter, but it can serve as an actuating factor in change. When the individual tries to move beyond the limits he or she faces within bourgeois social relations, they are likely to encounter reactive "pressures" that exist to reinforce the status quo. Williams adds that ". . . in practice determination is never only the setting of limits; it is also the exertion of pressures . . . derived from the formation of a given social mode: in effect a compulsion to act in ways that maintain and renew that mode" (Marxism 87). Pressures both reinforce and change the limitations according to the circumstance. Analytically, we can distinguish pressures from limits, but in practice the two are indissoluble. Limits and pressures are complementary parts of the same complex process that Williams calls determination. Capitalistic systems of exploitation and domination attempt to organize the whole of society in the interest of those who profit from them. People who occupy similar positions within these systems confront limits and pressures that are similar as well, though never homogeneous or ahistorical. These limits and pressure structure experience. Williams gives us the language to develop a theory of class that recognizes the pervasiveness of certain limits and pressure in the experience of people at a given point in history.

While most critics of working-class literature are in tacit agreement that a working-class text is one that has some

relationship to the experiences of working-class people, important theoretical distinctions have not yet been made between texts which relate to that experience differently. For instance, "popular" texts are mass produced for working-class consumption are significant in working-class life and play an important role as bourgeois tools in the shaping of working-class consciousness. I do, however, only accept with reservations Michael Denning's assertion that "while they [mass produced texts] do not present accurate pictures of workers' lives, they can . . . give valuable insight into workers' thoughts, feelings, and doings" because "workers made up the bulk of the dime novel public, [and] their concerns and accents are inscribed in the cheap stories" (4). On the one hand, Denning's assertion about working-class reading habits--he is talking about the working-class in several countries--provides me with critical ammunition. If the majority of people in British society, do not read what Virginia Woolf calls "English" literature, if it is not pervasive on all levels of that society, then once again, it is inaccurate to call it "English" literature without additional qualification. On the other, Denning's major conclusion is problematic. He contends that one finds working-class consciousness, which is how I interpret "thoughts," "concerns," and "accents," "inscribed" in the texts of a literature mass produced under the auspices of a class, the bourgeoisie, whose existence of privilege and dominance is predicated on the continuing exploitation of working-class labor-power.

Working-class people do internalize many, if not most, of the ideological assumptions expressed in this literature, and it would be absurd to claim that popular literature is not consumed on a massive scale by working-class people. As Jameson suggests in his essay "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," to be appealing to working-class people, mass produced literature must, on some level, speak to the anxieties of working-class people. Yet, if mass produced literature anticipates those anxieties in some way, it can only, as Denning himself argues, represent them partially and imperfectly. One should also consider that this literature appeals to working people because it presents them with fictive social relations in which they may vicariously escape their real anxieties and imagine themselves in situations free of the conflicts imposed by the limits and pressures of capitalism. One could then argue that mass produced texts appeal because the "cares" and "concerns" of working-class people are not inscribed in them. These cares and concerns may relate to the artefacts of mass culture only as structuring absences, the discernability of which is not impossible but does present analytical difficulties. To me, it seems more profitable to search for the "cares" and "concerns" of working-class people in the literature which they produce themselves. Even if this literature reflects the internalization of the values expressed in mass culture, it will do so in a way that reflects the particular philosophical complexities of the working-class mind.

My argument is based on a recognition and qualification of

Paulo Freire's assertion that "[the oppressed] are at once themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (31). This claim has been made by others in different forms. In One Dimensional Man, Herbert Marcuse, for instance, also suggests that "in speaking their own language, people also speak the language of their masters, benefactors, advertisers. Thus they do not only express *themselves*, their own knowledge, feelings, aspirations, but also something other than themselves"(193). Many of the ideas circulating in the working-class originate in the ideologies of the bourgeoisie. If working-class people did not internalize such ideas, they would not concede to their own oppression. However, the process of internalization is one of both adoption and adaptation. An objective exchange of ideas is never possible, even unconsciously. Though the internalized views and conceptions may ultimately have the desired effect of causing workers to adapt to exploitation rather than to confront it, working-class people do not, because they cannot, internalize bourgeois ideology exactly as the bourgeoisie would have them. As Terry Eagleton argues, "No value is extended to the masses without being thereby transformed" (Walter Benjamin 135). The working-class is, after all, differently aligned, and the nature of their internalization of what are initially bourgeois views and conceptions will be determined by that alignment. The internalized will, as a result, become a distinctive, though possibly oppressive, aspect of working-class consciousness. The other is collusive, but it is not a pure manifestation of

bourgeois thought in the proletarian mind. My concern with Michael Denning's contention is that those who do not possess working-class consciousness cannot produce anything which bears the mark of its inscription with the same ontological depth that can be found in working-class literature. It minimizes the formative importance of working-class experience to suggest that people from beyond this experience can do so.

In an essay on the fiction of British miners, Graham Holderness discusses another issue facing critics of working-class literature: "Necessary theoretical distinctions have been attempted but not yet carried through: between working-class and proletarian literature; between class-conscious and politically committed socialist literature . . ." (19-20). Most critics have failed to acknowledge that there are substantive differences between texts by people capable of "inscribing" working-class consciousness and authors who advocate the end of working-class oppression and fictively explore its consequences but have never been subjected to the mechanisms of capitalist labor exploitation. No matter what an author's political commitments, I would not, as many critics have, define as working-class a socialist text written by a bourgeois artist about the proletariat just as I would not define a nineteenth-century American abolitionist tract written by a white northerner as African-American literature. There is value in texts about the working-class by bourgeois writers. Trotsky reminds us in Literature and Revolution that "revolutionary art [is] not produced by workers alone" (215).

In fact, one could argue convincingly that very little revolutionary art has emerged directly from the working-class. Whether socialist or not, politically motivated novels have the ability to elevate consciousness and to help people understand the exploitative nature of capitalistic social relations. It is, nonetheless, important to distinguish between texts by bourgeois and working-class writers because the consciousness that they inscribe in their respective works must necessarily reflect different alignments. Being sensitive to this distinction is all the more urgent when the subject of the text in question is the working-class. Only by acknowledging this qualitative difference in alignment can critics begin to appreciate fully both the particular qualities of a working-class inscription of working-class consciousness and the struggles that most working-class authors have gone through simply to make their voices heard in a world which, too often, still associates literature exclusively with the institutions and intellect of the bourgeoisie.

The relationship between socialist and working-class consciousness and the degree to which one should make distinctions between them have been preoccupations of Marxists for a long time. Lenin argues that working-class consciousness by definition, "cannot be genuine [ie., socialist] political consciousness" (What Is to Be Done? 42). A socialist consciousness is a revolutionary "class consciousness," and as Lukács notes, this entails a self-conscious awareness of the nature of one's own oppression (History 52-53). Were the

working-class to possess this self-conscious awareness as a group, it would cease to be the working-class and would transcend itself. The working-class's continuing existence as an oppressed group depends on the effectiveness of those hegemonic forces in making the capitalist system seem natural and beneficial. As I indicated in my reading of Trotsky's Literature and Revolution, the working-class is a particular creation of capitalistic social relations, but not a creation of the bourgeoisie. Though ideologically coerced to do so, it does consent to its own exploitation. Karl Kautsky reminds us that socialism " . . . has its roots in modern economic relationships, just as the class struggle of the proletariat has. . . . Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions" (Lenin, What Is to Be Done? 28).³ The working-class does have revolutionary potential. At moments, elements of the working-class have embraced revolutionary ideals by refusing to concede to their continuing exploitation, but not on the scale needed to effect real revolutionary change. The working-class is not alone in having this potential. There are committed elements of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who, despite their positions of privilege, are also committed to the causes of working-class liberation. Marx and Engels fall into this category. The socialism that Marx envisions would, in Lukács's terms, require the annihilation of the working-class as it now exists. We should not confuse the potential to revolt for the act of revolution, nor should we confuse the potential to

develop class consciousness with its actual development, which has yet to occur on a wide scale.

A working-class author necessarily inscribes working-class consciousness in a text. This definition privileges authorial experience because it supposes that a working-class author is, to quote Raymond Williams, either "born or still living in the . . . working-class" (Williams, "Working-Class" 114). While it may seem obvious, the definition precludes writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell from being identified too closely identified with the working-class, which happens when critics like Mary Eagleton and David Pierce suggest that she conveys "some indication of working-class values" in Mary Barton (34). This statement on its own seems innocuous, but it becomes dangerous when they claim that Mrs. Gaskell "is objective and meticulous in her description" (Eagleton and Pierce 35). There must necessarily be qualitative differences between the consciousnesses that working-class authors inscribe and those inscribed by authors not of that class. To return to Freire and Marcuse's idea, the working-class is at once itself and a collusive other, formed by that which has been internalized and adapted. No matter how much working-class consciousness is shaped by bourgeois ideology, there will always be "a class-conditioned unconsciousness" that is specific to the working-class and arises out of its experiences (Lukács, History 52-53). Hegemony seeks to totalize but is not total. The moment that it achieves complete penetration of the human consciousness is the moment that it renders itself superfluous. For all that the

working-class colludes with the bourgeois system, part of working-class consciousness is capable of imagining relations beyond the immediate oppression of real life. Hegemonic pressures exist to keep the imagined from becoming the real and to keep the working-class from expelling the limitations that they have adopted through years of prolonged exposure to bourgeois ideological forces. Authors exist in particular social situations, and their narratives cannot be told in a manner which is inconsistent with the views and conceptions which they have achieved as a result of specific historic, and in Marxist terms, class relations. Raymond Williams argues in The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence, the fictive "knowable community" of "people and their relationships" in a given text is always, no matter how fantastic, in some way a reflection of an author's "known community," the actual community known experientially from direct interaction (15, 138-39). What we write, on every level, is informed by who we are and what we have done. In arguing this I am reopening, and taking a position that is currently unpopular in, the most contentiously debated issue in the history of Marxist literary theory. In short, literature reflects the reality out of which it arises, and working-class literature, in particular, reflects the contradictions of a bifurcated consciousness, at once collusive and resistant.

In a little known but exceptional study called Pictures of Reality, Terry Lovell argues that Marxism is a realism that accepts "that there exists an objective and independent social

world, which can be known" (23). Lovell treats realism as a philosophical problem rather than a formal one. I explore in the next chapter why it is reductive to equate the concept of realism with a particular type of literature. For the moment, I want to suggest that Lovell reclaims the term and considers the deeper complexities that most others ignore when using realism to describe a particular form. In the process, he reminds us that Marxism is a philosophy of reality. A basic position of Marxism is that all literature has arisen out of class based societies because ". . .all history has been the history of class struggle," (Marx and Engels, Manifesto 472). If we accept this observation as true, then we must also conclude, as Marx does in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, that "[the producers of literature] do not get beyond the limits which the [members of their own class] . . . do not get beyond in life, that they are constantly driven to the same problems and solutions to which material interests and social position drive the latter practically" (51). According to Marx, literature can be used as a means for understanding the "problems" (or as I prefer "contradictions") which arise in capitalist societies. Many Marxist critics have taken this to mean that literature is, therefore, an unproblematic reflection of a real against which it can and should be judged. In his literary criticism, which he wrote later in his career, Lukács expressly values literature that allows the reader to "re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality" (Historical Novel 42). He is not suggesting

that a text needs to be "historical" in the sense that it should reproduce the actual events of history. He is, however, saying that a novel should, in order to be of value, contain within it the prevailing contradictions of real history. Lukács's argument is problematic because his process of valuation is in conflict with his attempt to be descriptive. While he concludes that all literature reflects reality, he also wants to assess the value of texts according to how well they reflect that reality.

Within Lukács's system, a literary text is held against a conception of history to which it is expected to conform. If it does not, it is deemed to be the inferior product of an historical moment in which the major conflicts of society have not risen to the immediate consciousness of the people (Lukács, Historical Novel 209). Despite his attempts not to do so in History and Class Consciousness, in his later works on realism, Lukács treats history as a static abstraction, and it is against this abstraction that literary texts are valued. Pierre Macherey says that this mode of literary analysis relies upon the "Normative Fallacy," where the relationships that are expressed in a given text are held against another model to which they are expected to conform (17). In Lukács's realism, "the work's solution also entails its disappearance" (Macherey 23-24). The text is subsumed by a reality that is outside itself and that, according to Macherey, is something very different from the version of reality which it expresses within the process of its own unique configuration. For Macherey, a

text "is the product of a rupture, it initiates something new" (51). He argues that a text, at most, contains a refracted image of the reality out which it emerges, and he concludes that this refraction is so great that one cannot discern with certainty the complete nature of the reality in question by reading this uniquely configured text: "the text is not directly rooted in historical reality, but only through a complex sequence of mediations" (118). The text "does not reflect everything," but even Macherey cannot ultimately conclude that it does not reflect (120). If a text is a unique configuration, something new, its synthesis still occurs within the confines of real limits. The text may have, "its own logic," as Adorno claims, but it is a derivative logic, structured by existing modes of thought ("Spengler" 72). What structures the text must be visible, even if the image is a partial one as Macherey suggests it must be. Ultimately, if the reality of history is not visible through a text, then it is not visible at all.

Macherey's error is that he consciously dismisses realism even when he makes concessions to it. Lukács's mistake is that he unconsciously ignores the structuring reality of a literary text in favor of the idealized historical reality that emerges from the textual traditions of Marxist thought. Though I disagree with Macherey's arguments about configuration and the inaccessibility of the real, he does give us the language to see a lacuna in Lukács's writing. Lukács never identifies the origins of his "historical" knowledge, and one could argue that his assumptions are derived from the very texts which he judges

against his own, probably unconscious, extrapolations. To be fair, this is not a dismissal of Lukács's claims about realism; it is only a qualification based on a complexity to which Lukács seems oblivious. All texts are realist texts, a point explicit in his argument. However, it is only through texts that a knowledge of historical reality is possible. As Jameson argues in The Political Unconscious, "History . . . is essentially a narrative problem . . ." (49). All history presents itself in narrative, and all narrative presents to us history, that is, the story of real human relations.

Marx disapproved of this position. He claims in The German Ideology that historical materialists "do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men" (Marx, German Ideology 47). The problem is that once agency has been carried out, once an activity is no longer in a "state of becoming," it becomes historical, and is, therefore, only accessible through narrative. I may observe, for instance, that I ate a banana for breakfast, which in fact I did on the day that I am writing this. If you accept that statement as true, then implicit in your acceptance is the idea that narrative conveys and is shaped by reality as a structuring determinant. Regardless, the only way that you can know the reality of my morning is through the narrative that I construct. You have no other access to this moment of real history. As a matter of routine within literary studies, certain texts are accepted without question as

reflections of real life. I have, for example, never been involved in a course dealing with African-American literature where African-Americans were not arguing for the authenticity of certain texts and for their prerogative to speak with authority about the correlation between those texts and real experience. Claims of authenticity by their nature rely on the Normative Fallacy, and claims of authority generally amount to a gate-keeping that stifles real critical discourse. Therefore, I make no claims for the authenticity of working-class texts, nor will I acknowledge the interpretive authority of anyone on the basis of class origins. Above I warned of the problem of speaking for others and accused Marxists of doing so in a way that unjustly silenced those who are capable of speaking for themselves. I advocate an awareness for the discursive agency of others but also contend that the discourse in question should be subjected to outside interpretative perspectives. By disavowing authentication, I am not dismissing realism. Realism cannot be taken for granted, as it most often is. Critics who work under the assumption that it exists need to approach realism with the same care with which it is attacked by its detractors, one of the most articulate of whom has been Terry Eagleton.

In Criticism and Ideology, Terry Eagleton argues that literature retains a high degree of "relative autonomy" from knowable reality, and in particular, from the economic as a determinant of that reality in the "last resort". Eagleton argues that, if a society can be said to have a General Mode of Production, then it also has a Literary Mode of Production which

may or may not bear a resemblance to what he calls the "GMP" (Criticism 49-51). He argues that the GMP produces a General Ideology, or "a relatively coherent set of 'discourses' or values . . . which reflect the experiential relations of individual subjects to their social conditions as to guarantee those misrepresentations of the 'real' which contribute to the reproduction of the dominant" (Criticism 54). In these terms, Eagleton's definitions of ideology is not that far removed from the classical Marxist one of false consciousness. Both entail a belief that bourgeois thought contains within it conscious misrepresentations of real human relations. Where classical Marxism presumes an ability to identify ideological conceptions as false, Eagleton, following in the traditions of Althusserian Marxism, suggests that we cannot identify as false that which structures our very understanding of reality. Like Macherey, Eagleton argues that a literary text goes through several layers of aesthetic mediation that remove it even further from the General Mode of Production. The Literary Mode of Production also involves the articulation of an Aesthetic Ideology which may or may not resemble the General Ideology (Eagleton, Criticism 60). A literary text within Eagleton's system is a "multiply articulated structure, determined only in the last instance by the contemporary GI" (Criticism 62-63). A text is so far removed from the General Mode of Production that this aspect of reality remains, according to Eagleton, "by necessity empirically imperceptible," unknowable through an examination of literary texts, the study of which can only yield information

about the modes of ideological production (Criticism 69). This ultimately leads to the problem of how Eagleton can even bring the concept of the General Mode of Production as something historically real into his discussion. In essence, Eagleton argues that we have nothing outside of the text against which we can verify its claims except other texts, and to this position I concede. When I say that I ate a banana, if you doubt the veracity of my claim, you can only judge its validity against the content of another narrative (someone confirming that I did indeed do so). Rather than reducing this to the absurdist position that we cannot know reality, I am arguing that this is only way in which reality, as an historical manifestation, presents itself to us. If we argue that we cannot know it in these terms, then we are saying, in effect, that we cannot know it at all. Marxism is a "realism" in that it presumes objective reality to exist and to be knowable (Lovell 23). There is no point in trying to change something that we cannot know.

My argument is that we can extract a sense of the working-class from the working-class literature that consciously reflects on working-class experience. On a superficial level, my project bears a resemblance to those of Lucien Goldmann. He says that " . . . any scientific study of a literary work . . . must involve linking it with the social, economic and political life of the group whose world view or vision it expresses" (99). Goldmann's dilemma is the same as Lukács's, for he too is guilty of the Normative Fallacy (Macherey 17). His argument relies on an abstract and static conception of a shared vision, the

identity of which in his system characterizes a particular class. That which does not conform to his expectations is deemed unrepresentative. Acknowledging the diversity and contradictions of working-class consciousness is a necessary step toward understanding the nature of working-class epistemology. The working-class is neither static nor homogeneous. There is a distinct, ever changing, and contradictory epistemology which is unique to working-class writing and which cannot be inscribed by someone from outside of that class, no matter what that person's sympathies are. Working-class people do not necessarily share specific cares and concerns, though the pervasiveness of certain values is inevitable in a group which is subject to the same far reaching systems of economic exploitation. Working-class people do, nonetheless, confront similar philosophical and political crises on an ontological level as a result of these systems of economic exploitation. It is the commonality of these crises, or what I call contradictions, rather than the uniformity and consistency of the cares and concerns which are responses to them, that allows one to make Lukács's methodological leap from the worker as individual to the worker as a "social typology" of capitalism. Using Williams's terminology, it is these crises of the known world of actual human experience which inform and shape the fictive, knowable communities of working-class literature.

Marx argues in Capital that "the poorest architect is categorically distinguished from the best of bees by the fact

that before he builds a cell in wax, he builds it in his head" (Marx and Engels, On Literature 54). Human beings have the ability to imagine. Before they attempt to move beyond the limitations of their circumstances, people must first imagine what other circumstances might look like, and yet, imagination functions within determining limits as well. "The utopian claims of imagination have become saturated with historical reality," says Marcuse in Eros and Civilization (156). One might be able to imagine a new world that signifies the negation of current modes of oppression, but the imagined will also be grounded in the known. Revolution begins with an imagined utopia in which the contradictions of capitalism have been resolved. Working-class literature is a conscious, imaginative construct that articulates multiple and contradictory desires. These desires emerge in utopian longings that are often "silently contained" in working-class texts (Adorno, "Spengler" 72). The utopian longings reflect the bifurcated nature of working-class consciousness, both collusive and resistant. It is the intersection of these contradictory longings that gives working-class thought one aspect of its complexity. Jameson argues that ". . . the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable [?] social contradictions" (79). Why Jameson sees these contradictions as unresolvable is unclear, but like Marcuse, he is arguing that reality enters into a text through its imagined negation. Marcuse cogently concludes that this is

where the student of reality should focus his attention. He says, "The true judgment judges this reality not in its own terms, but in terms which envision its subversion. And in this subversion reality comes into its own truth" (One-Dimensional Man 131-32). Thus, the contradictions to which these fictive utopian longings are a response serve as the structuring element of working-class fiction in the same way that they structure working-class life. It is in these terms that literature becomes an articulation of the real.

Reality does not emerge in the text as a one to one correspondence to the sequence of events expressed in the narrative. Yet, most who have defended realism have attempted to establish just such a relationship, or failing to do so, they have thrown up their hands in exasperation claiming, as Terry Lovell does, that it is better to look for reality in the "univocal language of science and history rather than the polysemic language of art" (91). Science and history merely present narratives with different formal considerations. They are neither more nor less attached to reality than fiction, even if they are usually read with the tacit belief that they reflect the real without refraction. All texts are composed within limits determined by the reality of a given historical moment. No matter how much it is accepted to be a truthful depiction, an individual scientific or historical text cannot say all that there is to say about that moment. Likewise, no single work of fiction can contain all of the social contradictions that working-class people feel compelled to resolve imaginatively.

There will be "certain absences," aspects of reality that the authors could not know because they were not subjected to the conditions that produced that knowledge (Macherey 85). A reader can only recognize an absence in one text if he or she notices its presence in another, and so by exploring the absences as well as the commonalities, a partial but meaningful understanding of working-class reality is possible for the reader of working-class literature.

This is not to say that we can extract a coherent historical narrative of working-class life by reading a multitude of working-class texts. But the more works that we consult the more complex our understanding of real structuring contradictions becomes. Working-class cares and concerns find their most complex expressions in literature produced by working-class people. Studying this literature is necessary if we hope to understand both the working-class and the profound impact that capitalism is having on real human beings. This becomes all the more urgent because we have assigned the working-class such a prominent role in bringing capitalistic exploitation and domination to an end. However, I do not propose to study working-class literature in isolation because it, like the working-class, does not exist in isolation. In saying this, I am not suggesting that we should disregard the distinction between working-class and other forms of expression. Culture is a site of conflict, and the contradictions that working-class texts propose to resolve imaginatively emerge from conflict. Thus, I am concerned with the way that working-class

people represent themselves, but also with how they have been represented by others. We can gain a deeper understanding of English literary politics in the twentieth-century by studying the competing representations of working-class people. When we consider the utopian longings of working-class literature in relation to the literature of other classes, we can begin to develop a more complete knowledge of the real political contradictions that have shaped both English literature and the lives of those who have produced it.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LONG REACTION

In his posthumously published book The Politics of Modernism, Raymond Williams defines Modernism as both a "movement" and a "moment," as a movement because one can identify shared, though not pervasive, aesthetic practices and as a moment because the term, in one of its manifestations, describes the literature that was produced from approximately 1900 to 1940 (32). Yet, the conspicuous diversity of aesthetic practices makes it difficult to see any rationale for the collective identification of the authors who produced literature during this period. In his immense survey of the British novel in the twentieth-century, Malcolm Bradbury points out that "the modern novel came, but the Victorian novel did not entirely go away . . ." (Modern British 5). During the "moment" of British Modernism, as Bradbury usefully reminds us, many texts were produced that, formally and politically, look more like the Victorian or Edwardian works that the Modernists were supposed to have rejected. A critical approach that defines Modernism by its rejections, that is, merely by the formal experimentation that marked an apparent movement from Victorian and Edwardian "realism," confines the concept of Modernism to a small number of texts produced mostly during the 1920s.¹ Most critical studies of the Modernist movement focus exclusively on this decade, even when the critic is in fact generalizing about the first half of the twentieth-century. Though this approach makes it easy to find continuity, it does not answer the theoretical

difficulty of how to account for those authors who were not engaged in formal experimentation, nor does it resolve the question of whether non-experimental works are Modernist, merely modern, or somehow untouched by the historical developments that drove the Modernists into their positions. This latter point is altogether unsatisfying because it suggests that authors can somehow write with a detachment from the limits and pressures of their historical moment.

In The Modes of Modern Writing, David Lodge argues that Modernist fiction has definable formal attributes. He says that "Modernist fiction, then, is experimental or innovatory in form, displaying marked deviations from preexisting modes of discourse," and he adds that a Modernist text deals with the "unconscious workings of the human mind," has "no clear 'beginning' since it plunges us into a flowing stream of experience," and tends to eschew "the chronological ordering of experience" (45-46). In the place of chronology, Modernist fiction retreats into the ego and organizes events in the narrative according to refracted perceptions, where past and present, memory and immediate sensory experience, are indistinguishable. If these are defining aspects of Modernist fiction--and it is safe to say that most critics would concede that they are--then the problem of how much one must be invested in these attributes to be considered a Modernist remains unresolved. Lodge argues that Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf wrote fiction that reflects an investment in all of these concerns but that he can only "tangentially" link D. H. Lawrence

and Ford Maddox Ford to the Modernist movement because their narratives follow more conventional patterns (46). On the other hand, Randall Stevenson argues that Ford's Parade's End is a Modernist text because it yields the narrative to Christopher Tietjens's uneven perceptions and "moves through Free Indirect Style and interior monologue into the interior space of characters' minds" (98). When discussing his future with Valentine Wannop in Some Do Not..., Christopher Tietjens engages in dialogue that mirrors the muddled state of his consciousness. He says, "And I wanted to get some thinking done. It hasn't been often as of late that one has had a quiet room with a fire and . . . you! To think in front of! You do make one collect one's thoughts. I've been very muddled until to-day . . . till five minutes ago" (Ford, Some 239). His speech suggests that he is still muddled. He has thoughts that he cannot verbalize because he cannot place them within a clear chronological narrative. He pauses and selects. The reader must then ponder at the workings of his unconscious mind and its impingement on his conscious thoughts.

Through this concern with the mind, Ford does share a preoccupation with many of his contemporaries, and one could argue that Stevenson's assessment of Ford is more plausible than Lodge's. However, Ford also has written a novel that is more than the exploration of one person's consciousness (Bradbury, Modern British 169). As Bradbury says, "Ford uses modern methods, but he sustains many of the nineteenth-century interests of fiction: in public life, the social web, [and] the

state of the nation" (Modern British 165). In that same exchange with Valentine Wannop, Tietjens defends his patriotism in a rare moment of coherence. He says of England, "I Love its fields and every plant in the hedgerows" (Ford, Some 238). Ford's concern with such "conventional" issues has led Bradbury to conclude that he is the representative of a particularly British manifestation of Modernism, one that is "indirect yet social, complex yet accessible, [and that contains] large cultural histor[ies] as well [as]. . . work[s] of consciousness" (Modern British 169). This expansive view draws attention to the problem that continues to plague scholars of British Modernism. Working with a narrow definition of Modernism, most critics--Lodge and Stevenson are examples--agree about its (formal) practices and aesthetic assumptions. These critics, however, leave themselves no room to discuss texts that reflect different aesthetic concerns, so they ignore them. Increasingly, because of this critical myopia, the history of British literature in the first half of the twentieth-century is becoming a history of experimentation, even though few critics agree who the English experimenters actually were.

If one confines oneself to a consideration of narrative form, which Stevenson and Lodge do, it is difficult see that there was a substantive Modernist movement in English literature at all. Malcolm Bradbury and Keith Tuma both note this problem in their respective studies of Modernism (Bradbury, Modern British 34; Tuma 245). Bradbury even says of British literature in the first half of the twentieth-century that "it is a

literature that has been lit by lights from modernism, rather than a modernist literature" (Modern British 34). This inability to associate most texts with the principles of Modernism is, perhaps, one of the reasons that Raymond Williams found it inadequate to define Modernism merely as a movement. In relation the expansive vision that his brand of "cultural materialism" demands, conventional approaches to Modernism based on generalized notions of technical experimentation disregard too much English writing from the first half of the twentieth-century. In fact, Virginia Woolf is one of the few English writers who produced works that generally follow Lodge's pattern for the Modernist text. This observation even needs qualification because much of her writing, especially but not exclusively the earlier novels, does not fit Lodge's model. Still, Hugh Kenner cannot concede that Woolf is a Modernist writer: "No 'modernist' save in sharing certain assumptions with Lawrence, Virginia Woolf is a . . . classic English novelist of manners" (Kenner 175). Terry Eagleton remarks in his introduction to Exiles and Émigrés that "with the exception of D. H. Lawrence, the heights of modern English Literature have been dominated by foreigners and émigrés: Conrad, James, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Joyce" (9).² Within the context of British literary history, those most closely linked to the international Modernist movement were not English, even though James and Eliot spent much their of lives in England. By the commonly applied standards of experimentation, "Modernism seems hardly to have happened in Britain" (Tuma 245). This assertion is not to

minimize the influence of James, Eliot, or Joyce on English writing in the twentieth-century, nor am I challenging the notion that English was the language of international Modernism, as Hugh Kenner reminds us (3). Eliot in particular was instrumental in articulating the political positions that came to dominate English literary Modernism. However, any claim that Joyce was part of the English tradition is tenuous. He was, after all, an Irish writer living in self-imposed exile in Europe, and as Kenner says, "Ulysses . . . , published in Paris, does not ask for admission to the canon of English fiction" (Kenner 176). Modernism was international, and authors such as Ezra Pound readily crossed borders. Nonetheless, we should not overemphasize European or American Modernism's influence on the English tradition by confusing writing in English for English literature. There was an English literary Modernism, and it was "lit by the lights" of other Modernisms. American expatriates did exert influence on it, but its aesthetics and politics were distinct.

This is not to say that English Modernism shared nothing with other Modernisms, but we cannot be insensitive to differences. Often, the movements of international Modernism contradicted one another, but even in doing so, they were just as often responding to the same far reaching social and economic forces. Fritz Lang's Expressionistic film Metropolis (1927), represents twentieth-century urbanization and industrialization as a post-apocalyptic hell where human beings are literally tied to the mechanism of industry. Conversely, the American Futurist

Joseph Stella saw the creations of industrial society as the apex of human achievement. His painting Brooklyn Bridge (1917) highlights the beauty of the symmetry in its lines and arches. The British Vorticists, who were first organized by Wyndham Lewis with the help of Ezra Pound, celebrate violence and brutality in art and define the image as a vortex, a never static swirl of ideas (Zach 237). In his Vorticist sculpture Torso from Rock Drill (1913-14), on display at the Tate Gallery, the American born Jacob Epstein presents a machine-like human figure composed of sharp angles and geometric shapes with a softly curvaceous human embryo growing in its abdomen. The head of the mechanical figure projects forward threateningly on an elongated neck, and its trapezoidal arm has the appearance of an unsheathed weapon, poised and ready. Epstein draws our attention to the modern symbiosis between the human and the machine, and he celebrates the power that this symbiosis entails. Such contradictory stances among the Modernists have led many to suggest that Modernism is ultimately undefinable. Arnold Kettle and P. N. Furbank make this claim in their study Modernism and Its Origins (6). Unfortunately, Raymond Williams echoes their sentiment in the Politics of Modernism (34). Yet, the three artists that I discuss here are all responding to the same socio-political phenomenon of industrialization, and the fact that they respond differently, with dystopian and utopian visions, in no way undermines the notion that Modernism existed. It does suggest, however, that scholars could define Modernism, in all its manifestations, more accurately by looking at what is

being responded to rather than dwelling on the diversity and apparent discrepancies of form. Such an approach will yield, first, a better understanding of the structuring real contradictions that the Modernists attempted to resolve imaginatively and, second, an awareness of how historically distinct variations in these contradictions have led to the diversity of Modernism's movements.

The lack of English conformity to David Lodge's model implies that the model is too restrictive. One can even make a compelling case that Lodge's idealized model of the Modernist text is European or American in origin and that he bases it more on the writings of Proust, Joyce, and Stein than he does on the British writers who are the focus of his study. In fact, its application to English writing results in a type of Normative Fallacy, where the English literature of the twentieth-century is contrasted with the idealized conception of what Modernist fiction should look like (Macherey 17). As Pierre Macherey says, this critical stance results in the disappearance of the text being studied. So much British writing--Ford, Lawrence, Forster--only tangentially relates to Lodge's model, although critics have become adept at finding relationships and drawing evidence from an apparent pre-occupation with the human mind, which I would argue is possible to find in almost any text.

Leon Edel argues that a concern for the workings of the human mind and the experiment with stream of consciousness by Henry James provided the impetus for English literary Modernism. He states specifically that The Ambassadors was the first Modern

novel (xi). Working with the same assumption, Malcolm Bradbury notes that for James "the observed reality was no longer that of a moral community, an agreed common culture" and that the world of James's fiction became a "refracted thing, seen through angles of vision, through the evolving consciousness of its perceivers" (Modern British 29). However, Bradbury also argues that much of James's writing was still saturated with the conventions of Victorian fiction, which the later proponents of Modernism supposedly rejected in their application by the Edwardian writers Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy. Like the work of these Edwardians, The Ambassadors is largely chronological in structure, even if it does dwell on Lambert Strethers' evolving angles of perception. Bradbury usefully reminds us that much of the English writing most closely associated with the Modernist movement barely passes the acid test of form that critics rely on to assess whether a work is indeed part of that movement.

Keith Tuma suggests that "any effort to identify an English or British Modernist [literature] will eventually have to confront the possibility that one's claims about the nature of that [literature] are the product[s] of the [texts] chosen to represent it" (244). Most critics have yet to discuss the particular attributes of English Modernism because they are caught in a "circle of certainty" where they presume to know what a Modernist text should look like. They have yet to develop a critical language to account for that which does not fit the model except to call it traditional or realist. Even Bradbury confines himself to a consideration of form that is not

very satisfying because he never moves beyond the dichotomy of experiment and tradition. The conventional division in theories of Modernism between experimenters and traditionalists reinforces distinctions derived from conceptions of form and ignores the possibility that there are deeper connections between the two types of writers.³ Lodge acknowledges the dilemma that this distinction entails when he says that "we have no term for the kind of modern fiction that is not modernist except 'realistic' (sometimes qualified by 'traditionally' or 'conventionally' or 'social'). It makes a confusing and unsatisfactory antithesis to 'modernist' because the modernists often claimed to be representing 'reality' . . ." (46). Bernard Bergonzi argues that much Modernist writing represents a culmination rather than a negation of traditional realism (18). In addition, those who wrote in a "traditional realist" manner did not always claim to represent reality. In Aspects of the Novel, Forster says, "When we try to translate truth from one sphere into a another, whether life into books or from books into lectures, something happens to truth, it goes wrong . . ." (106). It is, however, irrelevant whether Forster believed that a text could represent truth or not. All texts are realist in that they are tied to the limits of the historical reality in which they were written. As I indicate in the last chapter, my approach is to treat realism as a philosophical rather than a formal concern. To equate realism only with what is commonly called the "realist text" is to accept without interrogation the ideologically significant "wish-images" that those texts project

and is to ignore the structuring social contradictions that these imaginative constructs attempt to resolve. The notion of a "traditionally realistic" text comes from an idealized model of what that text should look like. Much--really too much--critical energy has been exhausted debating the degree to which various texts do or do not fit the idealized model for a Modernist or "traditionally realistic" text.

Such a fate usually befalls the writing of E. M. Forster, who published his last novel, A Passage to India, in 1924, two years after the first English edition of Joyce's Ulysses and three years before the publication of Woolf's To The Lighthouse. One would have a difficult time finding critics who feel comfortable linking Forster to the same Modernist tradition in which they might otherwise place Joyce and Woolf, unless of course the critics are merely using the term Modernism as descriptive of a moment that includes all writing of the first half of the twentieth-century. Some critics have developed clever ways of explaining Forster's relationship with the Modernist movement. Brian May, for instance, describes Forster as an "anti-antimodernist" who saw "modernism in ideological terms, as antimodernists do, and yet [sought] something auspicious in it as antimodernists do not" (May 10). Malcolm Bradbury does not see Forster as an antimodernist, and his argument is less convoluted and more convincing than May's. He sees in Forster a move away from a humanist tradition toward an incipient Modernism that never reaches full development because Forster abandoned fiction after A Passage to India (Bradbury,

Social Context 34). In support of Bradbury's point, one can make a case that there are Modernistic elements in Forster's A Passage to India because, to a degree, it deals with the unevenness of perception and fluidity of memory.

When, for instance, Dr. Aziz's and his guests first enter the Marabar caves, there is a retreat into the mind, and the narrative follows the erratic perceptions of Mrs. Moore: "She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. . . . For an instant she went mad . . ." (Forster, Passage 141).⁴ At this point, the reader gets no other perspective of the Marabar cave. We are locked into the consciousness of Mrs. Moore. The cave becomes a symbol for the mind, and our introduction into the first real Marabar cave has everything to do with the topology of Mrs. Moore's psyche and nothing at all with the cave's geology. However, Forster does not allow his reader to stay in Mrs. Moore's consciousness for long. Though not immediately, the narrator soon qualifies her perceptions, and the reader learns that the naked thing that struck her was in fact a "poor little baby astride its mother's hip" (Forster, Passage 142). Forster momentarily places everything in the mind of his character but then overrides it with the objective perceptions of his narrator.

In A Passage to India, the omniscience of the narrator and the chronological flow of the narrative might be disrupted, but they are never broken. When Fielding asks Aziz for an account

of Adela Quested's disappearance from the expedition, the latter extracts a narrative from his memory. He says, "We were having an interesting talk with our guide, then the car was seen so she decided to go down to her friend" (Forster, Passage 152). The narrator immediately tells us that these events were "inaccurate," and unlike Ford or Woolf, who might invite us to consider the psychological factors that led the character to construct such a narrative, Forster tells his reader that Aziz "already thought that this is what had occurred. He was inaccurate but sensitive" (Forster, Passage 152). He readily believes these inaccuracies because they are less painful than remembering that Adela had asked him if he had more than one wife. The narrator divulges the unconscious rationale for his perceptions. For Aziz perception becomes reality, and in these terms, Forster drifts close to a position held by those more commonly associated with Modernism. However, he does not allow his reader to forget that Aziz's perception is false and that there are concrete facts against which his account can and should be judged.

The rest of A Passage to India functions as a corrective of the false perceptions that have become reality to the perceivers. When Adela Quested tries to work through the details of the alleged assault at the Marabar caves, she says to Rony Heaslop, "Aziz . . . have I made a mistake?" (Forster, Passage 196). The elliptical dialogue parallels that of Christopher Tietjens in Ford's Some Do Not..... Adela cannot present her thoughts in a coherent chronological narrative, and

with the ellipsis, Forster invites us to consider the un verbalized thoughts that motivate the question. He does not give the reader a detailed account of what actually happened to her in the Marabar cave. It is a metaphor for her mind, and when she enters the cave, we enter her psyche. Forster is less explicit about her unconscious motivations than he is about Mrs. Moore's or, later, Dr. Aziz's. Nonetheless, the narrator does indicate that her initial representations of the event are incorrect. Even if he does not give us the details of her unconscious mind, he never allows us to question that her perceptions are not reality. He refers to her initial accusation against Dr. Aziz as "Miss Quested's mistake," and the subsequent retraction of her claims remains unchallenged through the rest of the novel (Forster, Passage 288). Similarly, at the novel's end, Dr. Aziz renounces his friendship with Mr. Fielding because he assumes that Fielding has married Miss Quested. He later learns that Fielding has, in fact, married Mrs. Moore's daughter Stella. The narrator remarks that he had "built his life on a mistake," one that was born out of a growing contempt for all things English (Forster, Passage 296). Forster indicates that Aziz's perceptions are mistakes, and he is explicit about their psychological underpinnings. At infrequent intervals, Forster does yield the narrative to individual perception, but then he pulls back and nullifies it with the certainties of an objective narrative voice.

Unlike the classics of Modernist fiction, the narrative flow of A Passage to India rarely follows the oscillating

perceptions of its central characters, but Forster's treatment of perception does indicate that he was concerned with questions pertinent to the age. His narrative, however, never breaks from its sequential unfolding of events, and its characters always remain within the epistemological grasp of the present. Randall Stevenson echoes the observations of David Lodge when he remarks that "Modernist fiction seeks to place 'everything in the mind': memory offers a means of including in it past and present experience" (92). For Forster, memory might distort the past, but it never impinges upon the present. Most important, he does not treat time or reality as the products of perception. Memory distorts, but its distortions are always overridden by the ceaseless chronological flow of an objective narrative. In Aspects of the Novel, Forster laments that his contemporaries treated time as an abstraction. He applauds Gertrude Stein's motives and points out that Proust was more successful in manipulating time, but he famously says of her that she "smashed up and pulverized her clock and scattered its fragments over the world" (Forster, Aspects 41). Forster concludes that, in her attempt to "emancipate fiction from the tyranny of time . . . [Stein] fails, because as soon as fiction is completely delivered from time it cannot express anything at all . . ." (Aspects 41). Ultimately, this need to communicate something concrete seemingly distinguishes Forster from those more closely associated with Modernism and, in the context of a purely formal analysis, justifies the claim that he should not be classified as a Modernist writer.

Nonetheless, formal differences do not necessarily undermine political similarities. If Forster's novels do not bear the formal hallmarks of Modernist fiction and if he only brushes against the more conspicuous philosophical concerns that are associated with Modernism, it does not mean that he cannot share political pre-occupations with those more commonly called Modernist. Form is ideological, but different forms can share the same ideological purpose, just as the same form can convey contradictory ideologies. Fascism and Marxism have both laid claim to the novel, but neither can claim it exclusively. An assertion, such as that made by Myra Jehlen, that the novel inherently conveys (petty) bourgeois values of individualism effectively invalidates the idea of cultural diversity and implies that subversion of the dominant aesthetic ideology, to use Eagleton's term, is impossible (Jehlen 599). If the co-optation of a form entails the adoption of the values that the dominant class normally conveys through that form, then counter-hegemony would be impossible and the dominant class would never need to defend the culture that it puts forth as universal. Forms exist and are real, but they can move across boundaries and can serve different political functions. Though formal experimentation was important, we cannot isolate it from the shared social and political contradictions to which the English Modernists were responding.

In the varying ways that it happened, the retreat into the mind was an organizing principle of Modernism's aesthetics, but it had a political rationale. The Modernists were placing

things in the mind, but they sought to validate only the perceptions of the bourgeois mind. Forster may have been appalled at the treatment of educated Indians like Dr. Aziz, but he could not conceive that Indians of lesser social standing had minds at all. Such people exist in the background as ciphers, and only once in A Passage to India does such a character receive narrative attention, the punkah wallah. He stands silent in the courthouse during Aziz's trial. His only task is to pull rhythmically on a rope attached to a fan, but Forster feels compelled to describe him, and more important, to convey that he is of the class for whom such a degrading and meaningless task is not an injustice. Like their British counterparts, Indians such as Aziz are "cultivated, self-conscious, and conscientious" (Forster, Passage 211). They read poetry, discuss politics, and show a sensitivity to the feelings of other. The punkah wallah does not possess such sensibilities: "he scarcely knew that he existed and did not know why the Court was fuller than usual, indeed did not know that it was fuller than usual, didn't know that he worked a fan, though he thought that he pulled a rope" (Forster, Passage 211). He does not deserve our empathy in the way that Aziz does because he does not possess self-awareness. His intellect is so low that he functions by animal instinct. What Forster objects to is not the exploitation of the Indians, but rather that sensitive and cultivated "Britishers" should treat sensitive and cultivated Indians so badly, that one dominant group with higher sensibilities should be incapable of seeing the same

sensibilities in another. Ultimately, A Passage to India expresses a utopian longing to see these two groups connect, and through this "wish-image," we can extract a conception of the real social contradiction that Forster hopes to resolve imaginatively. However, Forster's new order does not include the punkah wallah, who is already in his rightful place. Thus, A Passage to India may ask us to envision the abolition of certain colonial barriers, but it also projects the necessary maintenance of others because Forster cannot imagine a fundamental shift in the class structure. His utopian longing is that the class divisions of capitalism should be maintained because the worker is intellectually base and, therefore, only suited to manual labor. In these terms, Forster was very much an English Modernist because English Modernism was a cultural and political movement rather than a formal one. It is definable by its working-class subplot, the ideological thread that ties the experimenters and non-experimenters together.

English Modernism is an entrenchment against the socialist and working-class forays into culture that had been increasing since the latter decades of the nineteenth-century. The retreat into the bourgeois mind that became one of its organizing principles was also a retreat from the mind of anyone who posed a threat to the prevailing order. In asserting this position, I am adding my voice, and a consideration of class, to the observations of Gilbert and Gubar. They contend that the Modernists shared a "sense of literary apocalypse set in motion by the changing literary relations of the sexes" (Gilbert and

Gubar 133). The literary and social relations of the classes were changing as well, and there is ample evidence that the sense of apocalypse had as much to do with class as it did with gender. In her famous essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," Virginia Woolf argues that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed. . . . All human relations have shifted--those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children" (320-21). Woolf complains of servants coming into the drawing-room to borrow the Daily Herald, but a multitude of more significant historical events would support the claim that the history of the twentieth-century in Britain until Thatcherism was that of the working-class's incremental political and social enfranchisement (Woolf, "Mr. Bennett" 320). I base my contention that this so, however, by considering the contradictions that English bourgeois literature attempts to resolve imaginatively. There is, as Samuel Hynes argues in The Auden Generation, a discernible sense of "entropy" in the literature of the Modernist moment (32). A feeling that the known world was disintegrating is pervasive in bourgeois literature of the period. Rae Harris Stoll attributes this feeling of entropy to the increasing fetishism of commodities and to the subsequent fear of bourgeois authors that their positions of privilege would disintegrate under pressures from the market. Everything was becoming mass produced and mass consumed. He says that "fear of the growth of the anonymous crowd in which one loses individuality, thus being thrown into the extreme condition of anonymity was the common psycho-

political experience of . . . [the bourgeois writer in the early] decades of the century" (Stoll 29). For I. A. Richards and the practical critics, this disintegration was the direct outcome of the vulgarization of culture and the narrowing gap between the best-sellers produced for the masses and the highly valued aesthetic artifacts of bourgeois culture. Richards says that "for many reasons standards are much more in need of defense than they used to be. It is perhaps premature to envisage a collapse of values, a transvaluation by which popular taste replaces trained discrimination" (Richards, Principles 36). Yet, envisioning this "transvaluation" is precisely what Richards is doing and why he is calling for the defense of his standards. If the Modernists believed, as Ford Maddox Ford indicates, that they were living in "the last of England" as they had known it, they also had sense that the working-class was threatening the stability of the social pecking order (Some 218). To an extent, Stoll is right to point out the fear of the commodification that pervades bourgeois writing, but this fear rarely expresses itself in a resentment of those who control production and dissemination of mass culture.

In Fiction and the Reading Public (1932) Q. D. Leavis does concede that elements of the ruling class take part in this commodification. She says, "it is only a world run by Big Business that has produced a civilization whose workers must have recourse to substitute living" (Q. D. Leavis 168). Yet, she places the blame for the disintegration of standards on the reading public that consumes mass produced texts rather than

those who control the means of its production. By her account, "righteousness and goodwill are accordingly arrogated to the man who behaves like his fellows, the lowbrow, who accepts uncritically the restrictions imposed by the herds, while the highbrow, who does not, is vilified as a 'superior' or arrogant person" (Q. D. Leavis 157). Despite her own admission that big business produces the texts consumed by the masses, she asserts that the masses are corrupting the elite through the pressures of populism. She cautions her fellow critics that popular texts are increasingly being "read by the governing classes as well as by the masses, and they impinge directly on the world of the minority, menacing the standards by which they live" (Q. D. Leavis 65). Her great fear is that even the "educated [literary critics] are . . . tending to substitute the easier reading habit for that demanding a considerable effort" (Q. D. Leavis 150). The real danger is that mass produced texts pander to the sensibilities of the masses, and therefore, the tastes of the lower orders are likely to infect anyone who reads them. In Leavis's system, the lower orders represent the threat, not the ruling "Big Business" elite, whose only real fault appears to be that it is willing to pander to popular tastes. Her response is to advocate the entrenchment of the minority against the onslaught of the masses, and she specifically calls for the establishment of professionals who can educate the ruling elite and give them the panacea to defeat the cancerous effects of working-class aesthetics (Q. D. Leavis 214). Like I. A. Richards, Q. D. Leavis casually equates mass produced culture

with the sensibilities of the masses because she cannot see it for what it is, a tool for the manipulation and containment of the class upon whom she places blame for the degradation of her culture. Like Forster, she is not afraid of democracy, but she does fear that it will be extended to people who do not have the sensibilities to govern themselves.

Q. D. Leavis was not alone in seeing the working-class as a threat to the established order. Ford Maddox Ford has Christopher Tietjens, a member of the landed gentry which once "administered the world," suggest that "the lower-classes are becoming vocal. Why shouldn't they? They're the only people who are sound in wind and limb" (Some 3, 18). Likewise, Ezra Pound, who did more than anyone else to create an international Modernism, writes in one of his shorter poems that "round about there is a rabble/Of filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor./They shall inherit the earth" (Pound 93). Yet, neither Ford nor Pound can provide a rationale for why this should be so, because after all, a prominent feature of the Modernist text is that it tends to silence working-class people and denies them discursive agency, even when suggesting that they are on the verge of taking control. Forster's punkah wallah never talks, and in Ford's work, we never hear this "sound wind" that Tietjens mentions. The only working-class characters who appear in these texts are intellectually bankrupt and usually incapable of carrying out the menial tasks of their mundane lives without guidance from the members of the "administering class." Christopher Tietjens, for instance, must

tell Joel, the servant and carriage driver of Valentine Wannop, how to harness a horse (Ford, Some 109-10). Because of superior intelligence, he performs this task better than a man whose entire existence is based on his ability to do the job adequately every day. This is more than a declaration about the capabilities of two individuals. It is a justification of Tietjens' right to administer the working-classes. In Ford's imaginative world, the working-class may be bodily sound in "wind and limb," but like Forster's punkah wallah, they lack the intellect to administer themselves, and so the assertion that they shall inherit the world is necessarily an apocalyptic one.

As I argue in chapter one, Stallybrass and White see this recurring devaluation of working-class intellect as the basis of Bourgeois culture since the industrial revolution. What marks Modernism as a specific cultural and political development is the urgency with which the Modernists sought to emphasize the supposed inherent bankruptcy of the working-class mind. The tendency to retreat into the bourgeois mind, and then sometimes to use it as the organizing principle of their aesthetic, is part of this devaluation. Even those, such as Forster, who did not yield to the oscillations of perception still retreated into the bourgeois mind, if only because they were so vehement in pulling away from the minds of others. In the variety of ways that they did so, they were in effect pulling into a realm that was seemingly unassailable because only they could claim to know it. To equate art and artistic sensibilities exclusively with the bourgeois mind was to posit an essential relationship that

others could not challenge because they could not presume to have access to that mind. As Stallybrass and White establish, since the ascendancy of the mercantile classes, bourgeois ideology had been successful in asserting that those without intellect, those who were primarily embodied (usually grotesquely so), could not hope to access the minds of others with elevated sensibilities (Stallybrass and White 93-94). Forster's punkah wallah cannot even access his own mind and has little chance of understanding either the British or the Indian classes that administer his world. If you could not access the bourgeois mind, the English Modernists were asserting that you could not access culture because the two were synonymous. Thus, you had no right to ask for admittance to the arenas of culture, nor could you presume to produce anything of real value. You certainly could never hope to produce literature.

One should understand Virginia Woolf's assertion in "The Leaning Tower" that the working-class has contributed nothing to English literature in this context. Even Woolf, who represented herself as politically progressive, took part in an English Modernism that was decidedly reactionary, and perhaps reactionary in a way that other Modernist movements were not. Here, I am directly challenging Stanley Sultan's often quoted claim that Modernism was not reactionary (457). Sultan is correct to note that many Modernists were not reactionaries. Unfortunately, he uses socialists and progressives to generalize about Modernism, describing an expansive international movement in which he lumps everything pre-World War II. Brecht and

Pound, for example, are part of the same movement in his thinking. This is difficult to conceive. Yet, many critics cite Sultan when trying to justify the claim that equating English Modernism with fascism is facile, and to be fair, this equation is facile if we stick to convenient political language. Certainly Forster and Woolf were not "distinctly right-wing" in the way that Ezra Pound or Wyndham Lewis were, and Sultan is correct to make this qualification (459). Nonetheless, they were still reactionaries. Like Q. D. Leavis and I. A. Richards, Woolf reacted negatively to democratic changes in the culture. English Modernism in general is a reaction to threats posed by those who have been pushed to the margins of culture. Gilbert and Gubar are successful at demonstrating the gender politics of this reaction. Woolf certainly deserves to be read with this dimension in mind, but we cannot ignore her collusion in other forms of reaction as well.

Woolf sometimes enjoyed Ulysses, but she also fired at Joyce the most derisive criticism that she could come up with. In the August 16th, 1922 entry in her diary she says of reading the novel that she was:

. . . bored, irritated, & disillusioned as by a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples. And Tom, great Tom [T. S. Eliot,] thinks this on a par with War and Peace. An illiterate, underbred book it seems to me: the book of a self taught working-man, & we all know how distressing they are, how egotistic, insistent, raw, striking, & ultimately nauseating (Woolf, Diary vol. 2 188).

If nothing else, her statement that they are nauseating suggests that Woolf had read books by self-taught working-men.

Therefore, her claim in "The Leaning Tower" that these books do

not count as literature is more an expression of valuation than ignorance as to their existence. Like Q. D. Leavis, she equated the working-class mind with illiteracy. She did not believe in the value of auto-didacticism for working-class people, but nor did she think that they could be educated by others. Quentin Bell relates in his biography that, outside of the domestic service they performed in her family's house, the only sustained contact that Woolf had with the working-class people came in 1905, when she took a teaching post at a private school (Bell vol. 1, 105). She resented the working-class women whom she taught there and lamented that her lectures were being dropped among those who did not have the "power of receiving them" (Bell vol. 1, 204). Alex Zwerdling remarks that for Woolf the working-class was "*terra incognita*" (97). The narrator says in Woolf's first "traditionally realist" novel The Voyage Out (1915), "Why do the lower orders do any of the things they do do? Nobody knows" (306). That Woolf, despite toying with socialism and progressive politics, was not sensitive to the plight of working-class women is also evident in Three Guineas (1938), where she suggests that the conflict of such women is not the same as that of the "daughters of educated men." She says, "Not only are we incomparably weaker than the men of our own class; we are weaker than the women of the working-class" because they are engaged in production and can stop the mechanisms of war by withdrawing their labor (Woolf, Three 12). The daughters of educated men cannot even do this, according to Woolf, because they are shut off from the modes of ideological

production that her class controls. It is important to note that Woolf is resisting an entrenchment against the women of her class. She wants equal access to knowledge and education, and her demand for it is an act of political resistance. As I suggest above, it is only fair to Woolf to acknowledge the legitimacy of her claim. Yet, to suggest that working-class women have such great power is to ignore the extreme deprivation and dehumanization that they face. They too are shut off from knowledge and education and have the added burden of often being shut off from adequate food and shelter. It is also extremely difficult to withdraw your labor when the sale of your labor power barely returns the resources necessary to keep you alive on a day to day basis. Quentin Bell says that Woolf actually received a response from a working-class woman named Agnus Smith, who informed her that, unlike the daughters of educated men, working-class women cannot, while living on subsistence wages, afford to turn down jobs in munitions factories on principle, which is what Woolf advocates in her book (Bell, vol. 2 205).

It does seem unlikely that Woolf could have anticipated such a thoughtful rebuke. As her criticism of *Ulysses* indicates, she did not associate the working-class with thoughtfulness. In the "Time Passes" section of To the Lighthouse, she says of Mrs. McNab, the working-class woman employed to care for the Ramsays' house, that "she was witless, and she knew it" (Lighthouse 148). In a novel structured around the deluge of meaningful perceptions, Woolf gives us a character

who stands out for her inability to think. Michael Tratner argues that Mrs. McNab's presence in the house signifies Woolf's desire to establish working-class unity with the upper-classes and that Mrs. McNab is a vehicle through which Woolf "construct[s] new selves" (Modernism and Mass Politics 65).⁵ Mrs. McNab is certainly a different type of "self," but she has no substantive connection with the Ramsays. She takes on thematic significance only in their absence and only when the family has been decimated by untimely deaths. In particular, she symbolizes the negation of the perceptiveness and bodily perfection that Mrs. Ramsay represents. Mrs. Ramsay is beautiful, and that is the extent to which Woolf describes her embodiment (Woolf, Lighthouse 74). In contrast, Mrs. McNab is grotesque. She is "toothless," and she "leers" and "lurches" like "a ship at sea" (Woolf, Lighthouse 148). The Ramsays and their guests read books and write dissertations. Mrs. McNab hums a tune but because of her limitations "robs" the music "of meaning" and turns it into "the voice of witlessness" (Woolf, Lighthouse 149). She represents intellectual decay, and under her care, the family's cherished books become moldy (Woolf, Lighthouse 150-51). Outside of her embodiment, Woolf gives her no identity. She either thinks about her body or about the Ramsays, and she, like Forster's punkah wallah, does not have real intellectual agency, even if Woolf does allow for "some cleavage of the dark . . . some channel in the depths of obscurity through which light enough issues to twist her face grinning" (Woolf, Lighthouse 149). Through Mrs. McNab, Woolf

constructs a dystopian vision of the decay that is likely to occur if those with real intellectual agency are no longer there, and it is significant that this decay stops only when there is a written direction from "one of the young ladies"--presumably Cam Ramsay (Lighthouse 158). Woolf constructs a complex "wish-image" in which she compels her reader to consider the importance of such people and, in so doing, projects the necessary maintenance of a social hierarchy in which the "visionary" with higher sensibilities maintains order, preserves established traditions of intellectuality, and explores profound philosophical questions such as "what am I?" (Woolf, To the Lighthouse 150). Woolf's stance here is all the more poignant because she wrote "Time Passes" during the General Strike of 1926 (Tratner, "Figures" 3). Far from forging connections, Woolf actually projects the necessity and inevitability of existing social hierarchies. In articulating this message consistently, she colluded in the reactionary politics of English literary Modernism.

Leonard Bast of Forster's Howards End is not the intellectual vacuum that Mrs. McNab is. In Marxist terms, Leonard is certainly working-class. He works as a clerk for the Porphyryon Fire Insurance Company, but Forster does not present Leonard as totally "witless." He actually has a wit that he attempts to cultivate. Despite his meager income, he spends his spare time going to concerts, and he attempts to teach himself the masterpieces of English literature. Yet, Leonard "knew that he was poor and would admit it: he would have died sooner than

confess any inferiority to the rich. This may be splendid of him. But he was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it" (Forster, Howards End 45). His inferiority manifests itself in several ways. He does not, for instance, trust people in way that the Schlegel sisters do. When Helen Schlegel runs away from the concert with his umbrella, he can only assume that she may have done so on purpose (Forster, Howards End 35-36). The sisters, on the other hand, see the event for what it was, an accident brought about because Helen is "enwrapped" in music (Forster, Howards End 32). Later, when they invite Leonard to tea so that they, following the advice of Henry Wilcox, can advise him to leave his current position, he can only assume that they have done so because they wish to extract commercial information from him (Forster, Howards End 143). He does not trust people because he had "been 'had' in the past--badly, perhaps overwhelmingly--and now most of his energies went in defending himself against the unknown" (Forster, Howards End 37). As we discover later, he was overwhelmingly had by Jacky, a former prostitute who compels him to marry her and takes advantage of his sense of fair play and moral obligation. If part of Leonard's inferiority to the rich is his fear of the unknown, Forster at least invites his readers to see that this fear comes from the circumstances of his life, and in this case, his exploitation at the hands of the unscrupulous "lower orders."

Leonard's real inferiority to the rich is his lack of intelligence. He may read Ruskin and Thoreau in the evening,

but he cannot see these texts for what they really are: "They mean us to use them for sign-posts, and are not to blame if, in our weakness we mistake the sign-post for the destination. And Leonard had reached his destination" (Forster, Howards End 120). His pursuit of beauty is ultimately meaningless to him because he does not possess the acumen to obtain what he desires. His discussions of art are uninformed and sound like meaningless cant to the refined Schlegel sisters because "his brain might be full of names. He might even have heard of Monet and Debussy; the trouble was that he could not string them together into a sentence . . ." (Forster, Howards End 40). Leonard's "wit was the Cockney's; it opened no doors into imagination" (Forster, Howards End 137). When Margaret Schlegel does make aesthetic observations in Leonard's presence, the narrator tells us, "For he did pursue beauty, and, therefore, Margaret's speeches did flutter away from him like birds" (Forster, Howards End 40). He simply does not have the sensibilities to enter the artistic world that the Schlegels occupy.

For Forster, the real injustice is that he should feel compelled to reach for the impossible. Leonard must maintain an air of gentility so he will not slip into the "abyss," where nothing matters (Forster, Howards End 45). He only strives for art because he has been displaced; he is "the third generation, grandson to the shepherd or ploughboy whom civilization had sucked into the town, as one of the thousands who lost the life of the body and failed to achieve the life of the spirit" (Forster, Howards End 115). His real connection is with nature,

though even that has been spoiled by soft city living. On his walking adventure, he only experiences hunger and depression. His imagination is not inspired because he has the Cockney wit to hold him back (Forster, Howards End 120). Leonard desires an intellectual union with the Schlegels, but connection between Leonard and them is impossible. He simply does not have the sensibilities to communicate on their level, and Forster's continual need to emphasize this lack in Leonard complicates the symbolic role of displaced worker that he assigns to him. Mary Pinkerton remarks that, in Forster's "efforts to elevate Leonard to mythic stature, he is undercut by his own assumptions" (245). On one level, Leonard becomes a symbol for the unfairness of modern commerce. His natural place in the order of things has been disrupted by the machinations of businessmen such as Henry Wilcox. Wilcox did not destroy Leonard with his careless advice that he should leave the Porphyryon. He and his kind had destroyed him long ago by pulling him into the city and exposing him to a culture of which he could only master fragments. Leonard simply is not suited for a life of the mind, and it takes such a person to find a meaningful existence in London, with its rapid change, relentless commercial activity, and unscrupulous poor. In Leonard Bast, Forster presents a character for whom he solicits both pity and contempt, and Pinkerton is correct to note that he is at best ambiguous about Leonard (237). Forster's liberalism demands that we pity the injustice of Leonard's displacement, but his elitism suggests that we should abhor his knocking at the gates of culture.

Whether Leonard intends it or not, he is an interloper in a world to which he does not belong and in which he can only feel pain. Forster is unequivocal in asserting this last point.

For the most part, Leonard Bast is an empty threat and minor annoyance to those with artistic sensibilities, and he is only this much because he lives in the upper echelons of the lower orders. He is a clerk and dresses like a gentleman even if he is inherently inferior and can only ever hope to work for a wage. Margaret Schlegel understands something of him because of his contrived mannerisms. Leonard's "class was near enough her own for his manners to vex her" (Forster, Howards End 37). Leonard was not "in the Abyss, but he could see it, and at times people whom he knew had dropped in and counted no more" (Forster, Howards End 45). Later, the narrator says of such people, "We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or poet. This story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlefolk" (Forster, Howards End 45). Yet, if people of the abyss do not count and are unthinkable, it raises the question of why Forster devotes so much narrative space to Jacky and goes to such lengths to establish her role of as the embodied other. If Leonard is comical in his contrivances, Jacky is merely grotesque. She "seemed all string and bell-pulls . . . a boa of azure feathers hung around her neck" (Forster, Howards End 51). More significant, her "throat was bare. . . and her arms were bare to the elbows, and might again be detected at the shoulder, through

cheap lace" (Forster, Howards End 51). Though she does not have the protuberant belly common to the grotesque, she, like Woolf's Mrs. McNab, does possess the usual gaping orifice: ". . . the teeth were not so numerous . . . and certainly not so white" (Forster, Howards End 51). As one might expect of such a character, Forster denies her any association with intellectuality. Leonard may have the "husks" of culture in his brain (145), but to Jacky the names of authors are meaningless. She hardly seems to know what a book is: "Then she said: 'Is that a book your reading?' and he said: 'That's a book'" (Forster, Howards End 52). Jacky's identity is that of sexualized predator. She entraps "Len," just as she had earlier enticed "Hen," Henry Wilcox, during a moment of weakness when he was separated from Mrs. Wilcox, the moral force in his life (Forster, Howards End 232). Mary Eagleton and David Pierce note that "Forster can barely credit [Jacky] with humanity and no sympathy is reserved for the misery of her life . . ." (126). Jacky may be the unthinkable extreme, but like the punkah wallah from A Passage to India, Leonard and Jacky are both primarily embodied. Interaction with them invariably--and necessarily--leads to sex. Ultimately, this dichotomy of embodiment and rationality forms the basis of Forster's class system, just as it forms the basis of the capitalist class system whose commercialism he mildly criticizes for its displacement of Leonard.

Although his maxim is "only connect," it is not part of his utopian vision that Jacky and Leonard should connect with anyone

(Forster, Howards End 187). Their brushes with the "gentle-folk" who administer their world only lead to their demise. Rationality and embodiment may unite in the form of Leonard and Helen's baby, but that baby will thrive only because it represents embodiment returned to its proper bucolic context and because it will develop under the auspices of artistic rationality. Forster constructs a "wish-image" in which he restores the natural order of rationality and embodiment. He also demonstrates that the Schlegels are at the pinnacle of that hierarchy because they have the sensibilities to make just decisions. They can liberalize Henry Wilcox and give him a sense of compassion and moral fair play that he had been lacking before the climactic events at Howards End. Although they can never bring Leonard into the realm of rationality, through their guidance and benevolence, it may be possible for his progeny to enter that world in a way that he simply could not. However, for this to happen the class structure must remain as it essentially stands. Though liberalized, capitalism is not to be abolished because the sisters need and deserve their incomes. Forster even projects that its abolition is impossible. When Helen tries to divest her income, she actually ends up becoming "rather richer than she had been before" (Forster, Howards End 256). She cannot help it. It is simply natural for her to do so. Any desire to disrupt this natural order at its core is futile because people such as the Schlegels are needed to "humanize the servants" (Forster, Howards End 262). Howards End is a reaction against the democratization of culture and

working-class demands for access to its institutions. In these terms, it presents an imaginative resolution to a real social contradiction. It projects the necessary maintenance of a social order that denies the majority of people access to intellectual arenas. Like Woolf, Forster needs to foreground the embodiment of others to make his own position as an intellectual arbiter of culture seem natural and unassailable.

Just as Forster and Woolf were defending their positions of privilege, D. H. Lawrence legitimated his role as artist by inscribing this ideology of rationality and embodiment into his work. In a short foreword for an anthology of criticism celebrating Lawrence's centenary, Raymond Williams argues that Lawrence "gives us the first major example of the English working-class novel, extending the boundaries of fiction to kinds of work and living conditions which the earlier tradition had been unable or unwilling to reach" (Foreword vii). I am baffled why Williams would call Lawrence's Sons and Lovers (1913) the "first" working-class novel when he knew of, and even wrote about, others that came before it. I am not disputing Lawrence's origins. He did grow up in a working-class home in the "Erewash Valley District" on the Nottingham-Derbyshire border (Sagar 10). I am only surprised that Williams, with his vast knowledge of the English tradition, places such importance on a text that was obviously not the first working-class novel, and more important, that spends so much time devaluing working-class experience and working-class intellect. The working-class is thematically central to Sons and Lovers only because Lawrence

attempts to demonstrate that individuals who are "essentially" not of this class can live among working-class people and remain free from the deterministic effects of working-class social relations upon their consciousnesses. The devaluation of working-class intellect and the dismissal of the formative nature of the working-class experience was part of Lawrence's attempt to legitimate his art in the dominant culture and to inscribe himself into the reactionary politics of English literary Modernism.

By cutting them off from formative social relations, Lawrence reifies his characters. They belong to certain classes not because of their relationships to the labor process, but because there are innate aspects of their identities that define class position. In Decay and Renewal, Jack Lindsay suggests that the creation of such characters in Lawrence's art is the result of his "metaphysical idiom" or his consistent ". . . treatment of the true being of a person as an absolute" (108). This reified conception of the self is one which emerges throughout Sons and Lovers but nowhere more clearly than in a conversation between Paul Morel and his mother. Paul begins by saying, "I like the common people best. I belong to the common people," and his mother responds by challenging this notion, suggesting that Paul "knows he is equal to any gentleman" (Lawrence, Sons 256). Paul's response to his mother is thematically significant because it indicates that an aspect of his subjectivity is not part of a socially determined identity: "In myself," he answered, "not in my class or my education or my

manners. But in myself I am," and he adds, ". . . the difference between people is not in their class, but in themselves" (Lawrence, Sons 256). Despite his apparent class status and his having lived his entire life in a working-class home, there is something in Paul, that which he identifies as "myself," that separates him from other members of his community and places him on intellectual par with the "gentlemen" who administer his world. The implication of this equation is that the formative social relations that have determined his class and educational status are irrelevant to both his meaningful self and to his social position. Consequently, Lawrence de-emphasizes Paul's relations with members of the working-class unless they are with people who are caught in circumstances similar to his. The only two women, other than his mother, with whom Paul shares any level of intellectual or emotional intimacy are Clara Dawes and Miriam Leivers. The narrator says of Clara that "she considered herself as a woman apart, and particularly apart, from her class" (Lawrence, Sons 264). As Paul says to his mother, "But she is nice mother, she is! And not a bit common!" (Lawrence, Sons 314). The narrator makes a similar assertion about Miriam: "For she was different from other folk and must not be scooped up amongst the common fry" (Lawrence, Sons 143). Paul's consciousness is certainly influenced by his interaction with selected individuals, but these people only reach him at all because they are intuitively linked with him by their mutual superiority. They help each other realize innate, and in Paul's case creative, potentials that are part of their authentic

selves. The narrator claims that "Paul was only conscious when stimulated In contact with Miriam he gained insight; his vision went deeper. From his mother he drew the life-warmth, the strength to produce" (Lawrence, Sons 158). Social relations with the "common" people of the text have no such determinacy. Among the common is Paul's father Walter Morel, a miner. According to the narrator, "There was scarcely any bond between father and son" (Lawrence, Sons 264).

The dominant relationship for Paul is that with his mother. There have been no shortage of psychoanalytical analyses that interrogate the emotional and sexual dynamics between them. However, there is also a psycho-political angle to their relationship that warrants consideration. In Gertrude Morel's environment, "no other woman looked such a lady as she did," and her "lady like ways" set her apart from the other members of her class, especially her husband and his family (Lawrence, Sons 4-11). To her husband, she is "that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady" (Lawrence, Sons 9). Her "lady like ways" represent an outward manifestation of her authentic self, which reflects bourgeois sensibilities despite her lack of substantive social relations with any one from the bourgeoisie. Her only real connection with the bourgeoisie is hereditary. Gertrude Morel "came of a good old burgher family, famous independents. . . . Her grandfather had gone bankrupt at a time when so many lace-manufacturers were ruined in Nottingham" (Lawrence, Sons 7). As a result, her father "was bitterly galled by his poverty. He became foreman of the engineers in a dockyard at

Sheerness" (Lawrence, Sons 7). At best, her father held what Erik Olin Wright calls a contradictory position within the labor process. He had some power over other workers but did not control the means of production (Wright 42). With her marriage to Walter Morel, Gertrude continues the family journey into working-class existence. The text, however, never associates Gertrude Morel with the working-class and continually reinforces the sense of displacement that she feels at having to live in a community of mining people. If her authentic self is inheritable and can be passed down through generations without "suffering" adulteration from social interaction, then it is conceivable that Paul inherits his essence, the real self with which he identifies, from his mother.

Nothing better illustrates the essential connection between Mrs. Morel and her son than their speech patterns. They speak a form of standard English that, in Lawrence's novel, is only spoken by those who are either not working-class, such as Minister Heaton, or those who are working-class but in their essence somehow apart from it, such as Miriam and Clara. For instance, when both Walter and Gertrude are asking the collier Mr. Wesson to move into the arm-chair near the fire, Mrs. Morel says first, "Then come to the fire," and Walter adds, "Go thy ways i' th' arm-chair" (Lawrence, Sons 199). It is not implausible that Paul and Gertrude Morel would be cognizant of, and even at times speak, this form of standard English. It is, however, unlikely that Paul Morel could live exclusively in a working-class community and never internalize the idioms of the

predominant dialect, especially since his father speaks it. Richard Lieth argues that Lawrence often uses dialect thematically (24). He uses it in Sons and Lovers to underscore the recurring idea that the de-emphasized working-class social relations of the text have no deterministic effect on innate, inheritable sensibilities, including linguistic habits.

Lawrence's undercuts the formative nature of working-class social relations with his adherence to what the British Marxist critic Christopher Caudwell calls the "bourgeois illusion." In Studies in a Dying Culture (1938), Caudwell remarks that Lawrence had "rid himself of every bourgeois illusion but the important one" (Studies 71). He never frees himself of the ideology that "counter-poises freedom and individualism to determinism and society," and according to Caudwell, he never demonstrates an awareness that true freedom "involves consciousness of the determinism of the environment and of man and of the society . . ." (Caudwell, Illusion 66-67). Lawrence presents a novel in which Paul Morel articulates the contradictory positions that his identity is both innate and subject to the deterministic effects of his individual will. The narrator says of Paul, "He was to prove that she[, his mother,] had been right. He was going to make a man[, himself,] whom nothing could shift off his feet" (Lawrence, Sons 222). He believes that he can create his identity independent of any other determining social factors. Later in the novel, he reaffirms his belief in a free and autonomously deterministic individual when he says to Clara Dawes of her estranged husband

Baxter, "Oh no! He made himself" (Lawrence, Sons 345). More important, the novel ends with an affirmation of this bourgeois illusion. Because of the death of his mother, Paul's creative self is subsumed by grief to the point that "he could not paint" (Lawrence, Sons 409). Gertrude Morel's death and the termination of Paul's relationships with Miriam and Clara effectively end his sense of belonging to a group that could inspire him to release his creativity. The intuitive connections brought about by their shared sensibilities are gone. Paul must subsequently live among working-class people, with whom he shares no connection. He says that "he was most himself when he was alone" (Lawrence, Sons 410). Consequently, he must either rely upon himself or see his true self atrophy for lack of stimulation. Near the end of the novel, Paul declares that "he would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her[, his mother]" (Lawrence, Sons 420). He would live, in other words, by the deterministic force of his own will and not allow his feelings of grief and isolation to force him to his grave--whether artistic or actual is irrelevant because they imply the same thing for Paul. At the novel's close, Paul alone will determine the nature of his existence because he is the only one left who can release his full potential as an artist. This utopian longing of self-determination, which overrides all others in the text, allows us to extract a social contradiction that this imaginative work hopes to resolve. If nothing else, the novel is about the conflict of a misplaced artist who is born into a world where

the inherent limitations of the working-class people are supposed to stifle art. By asserting that Paul Morel is not part of this working-class world, Lawrence legitimates his character's role as an artist and, in turn, invites his reader to draw the same conclusions about himself.

F. R. Leavis argues that D. H. Lawrence was the first English novelist to show that class is "an important human fact," but Leavis also suggests that Lawrence wrote about the working-class in a way that conveys classless, universal values (94). Thus, he effectively makes class an irrelevant issue in the study of Lawrence. Graham Martin points out that few critics have challenged Leavis's analysis (35). Working in Leavis's shadow, these critics have not seen the self-loathing that permeates Lawrence's representations of working-class people. Biographers and critics of Lawrence often attribute his negative portrayal of the working-class to the unpleasant experiences of his youth. Other working-class boys persecuted him and, according to Keith Sagar, called him "'mardarse' and chanted after him, 'Dicky Dicky Denches plays with the wenches'" (15). However, it is problematic to suggest that these moments led to Lawrence's representations. We cannot hold the working-class responsible for an ideology that works to manipulate and contain them. While such experiences might account for lingering resentment, they do not adequately explain the shame that saturates Lawrence's writing. For instance, in an "Autobiographical Sketch" he says, "my father was a collier, and only a collier, nothing praiseworthy about him. He wasn't even

respectable . . . " (592). Nor do these experiences from his youth account for the continuity that his representations share with those of other English writers.

Lawrence often assigns to his working-class characters the same grotesque embodiment that Forster and Woolf attribute to theirs. In Sons and Lovers, Walter Morel "crouched at the knees and showed his fists in an ugly, beast-like fashion" (58). In Women in Love (1920), Ursula and Birkin meet a young working-class couple to whom they want to give a chair that they have just bought but no longer want. The narrator describes the young working-class man as "a still, mindless creature, hardly a man at all. . . . He had some of the fineness and stillness and silkiness of a dark-eyed, silent rat" (Lawrence, Women 446). Unlike Forster and Woolf, Lawrence's repulsion at working-class embodiment was often negated by a nostalgia. In "Return to Brestwood," he says of the miners he once knew that "they are the only people who move me strongly" (264). Yet, they did not move him enough for him to counter the bourgeois ideology of English Modernism in his writing. That Lawrence himself crossed so many barriers in support for anyone who wishes to challenge the class-based hierarchy of rationality and embodiment that the English Modernists so consistently affirmed. It is understandable that he too affirmed this hierarchy, even if it is inexcusable. He said to Lady Cynthia Asquith in 1915, "Let us have done with this foolish form of government, and this idea of democratic control. Let us submit to the knowledge that there are aristocrats and plebeians born and not made. Some

amongst us are born fit to govern, and some are born only fit to be governed" (Lawrence, Letters vol. 2 379). Here, as with Son and Lovers, Lawrence seeks to legitimate his role as artist within English literary Modernism by affirming the necessity of the existing class structure. He was successful in doing so, which explains why he, more than any other working-class writer of the prewar period, found critical acceptance from Modernist counterparts such as Aldous Huxley and literary critics such as F. R. Leavis. He acquiesced to their reactionary politics, and thus, he colluded in propagating the "wish-images" that defined English Modernism's reaction to the changing class relations that his accomplishments represented. As Virginia Woolf suggests in "The Leaning Tower," he ultimately wrote himself into their tradition, and as a result, remained the only canonical working-class writer until the cultural revolution of the late 1950s (Woolf 137).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ABORTED REVOLUTION

In his influential postwar study The Struggle of the Modern (1963), Stephen Spender makes an important qualification about the historical moment in which Modernism took place. He claims that there were two concurrent, antithetical traditions, "contemporary" and "modern." He says that "the contemporary [writer] belongs to the modern world, represents it in his fiction and accepts the historic forces moving through it. . . . [H]e is quite likely to be a revolutionary" (Spender, Struggle 77). According to Spender's system, the contemporary is politically engaged and chooses to address the modern world from a partisan perspective that calls for immediate change. He says that H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett are early examples of the contemporary and that . . . Kingsley Amis, and John Wain are later ones (Spender, Struggle 76). In contrast, Spender claims that "[t]o the modern [writer], it seems that a world of unprecedented phenomena has today cut us off from the life of the past" (Spender, Struggle 78). According to Spender, the modern withdraws from the world of twentieth-century industrialization and finds refuge in the fortified realm of aesthetics, where art represents "the redemption of life-experience in the perfection of form" (Spender, Struggle 105). Though Spender does not miss the political motives of such a gesture, he does not think that the modern takes a partisan view of the world. Instead, the modern becomes an aesthete aiming to create a fusion with the past so that he can

transcend the limitations of the commercialized present (Spender, Struggle 78). He suggests that the moderns are represented by Joyce, Eliot, Woolf, and Picasso, and he concludes that the past and present are successfully "fused" in great works such as Joyce's Ulysses and Picasso's Guernica.

In the case of Guernica (1937), Picasso's painting that represents the bombing of a Basque village by Hitler's air force, Spender argues that the painting fuses with the past because it takes this contemporary scene and conveys it with the imagery of ancient Greece: "In Guernica, . . . the terror of a modern air raid is translated into the imagery of classical Greek or Mithraic tragedy--the sacrificial bull, the sword, the flaming torch" (Spender, Struggle 78). Yet, it is difficult to concede that Guernica is not a partisan work of art that articulates an anti-fascist position, and to suggest that it is not political is to reduce this powerful painting to an amalgamation of overused tropological conventions. Spender associates anti-fascism with the contemporary, but he does not see Guernica as politically partisan because he thinks that its formal properties transcend its political content. Thus, for Spender in the later stages of his career, whether an author is a modern or a contemporary has nothing to do with his actual political involvement so long as one can see in his aesthetic practices a desire to fuse the past with the present.

In effect, his classification of the moderns as aesthetes allows him to turn a blind-eye to the partisan class politics of Modernists such as Woolf and Lawrence, who regardless of their

approach to aesthetics, were no less political than any other writers working in the same period. There was, as I have been suggesting, a political rationale for their experimentation and innovation, but the ideologies that informed their work were not exclusive to them. The retreat into the bourgeois mind that became the basis of Woolf's aesthetics and set her apart as the most innovative of the English avant-garde also, albeit in a different way, structured Forster's representations of working-class people and Lawrence's insistent renunciation of his own formative working-class experience. Spender is correct to note that not all writers participated in the Modernist movement, but his emphasis on the division between form and politics could be better understood in terms that are purely political. Just as there were those who contributed to the political reaction of English literary Modernism, there were also those who either did not take part in it or who actively resisted the cultural entrenchment that characterized it. Although I object to the logic of his distinctions, Spender does force us to acknowledge that literature was a site of conflict and contradiction and that no one movement represents the actual diversity of the literary moment in which Modernism took place. We cannot generalize about the twentieth-century based on either the aesthetic practices or the politics of the Modernists. Nonetheless, by minimizing the political aspects of the bourgeois writing that preceded his, Spender invites his reader to trivialize his own politically committed writing of the 1930s.

The writing of the thirties poets and their allied converts becomes all the more meaningful if we understand that they were, on some level if not others, resisting the ideological positions that their Modernist predecessors articulated. Where Woolf, Forster, and Lawrence sought to maintain existing class divisions, several younger bourgeois literati attempted to align themselves with the class whose interests were seemingly in opposition to their own both economically and culturally. In his unsuccessful attempt to establish that Modernism was not reactionary, Stanley Sultan points to the left-wing politics of John Lehmann, George Orwell, and the poets of the Auden group (457-58). Yet, he provides no rationale for linking them with Woolf and Forster's movement except that they wrote during the moment that he associates with Modernism. If nothing else, Spender gives us a compelling reason to see that Modernism is not equally descriptive of a movement and a moment as Williams suggests. Even working within Spender's definitions of modern and contemporary, one would have to concede that such blatantly political writers wrote from a partisan perspective and, thus, fall into his classification of contemporary, another word for which in Spender's lexicon is "anti-modernist" (Spender, Struggle xii).

Certainly, John Lehmann stands out in this context because, where the Modernists practiced the politics of exclusion, Lehmann sought to bring together working-class and bourgeois writers in his literal attempt to construct a new writing that reflected the diversity of English culture and that affirmed the

vague leftist values that he, for a time, espoused.¹ He says of the literary project that he conceived with Christopher Isherwood that it was to reflect "a new awareness among imaginative writers which transcended frontiers, and awakened conscience and interest that impelled them to look for their material in new fields" (In My Own Time 155). Thus, the first issue of New Writing from the spring of 1936 includes a story by Gore Graham, "a metal turner from Yorkshire," shortly after four poems by Spender, whom Lehmann describes as "a well-known young poet and critic" ("About" x). Graham's "Pigeon Bill" is about an ironworker named Bill who, as it happens, raises pigeons. Bill comes home from work one day to find his son dying. He subsequently rushes around town trying to find a doctor, but some are not available and some simply refuse to help. He eventually calls for Dr. Johnstone, which he had resisted doing because Johnstone worked as a "blackleg" bus driver during the General Strike (Graham 154). When Bill returns to his house, he discovers that he is too late. His son has died. When the doctor arrives shortly after, Bill explodes in rage. The feelings of resentment that he suppressed when fetching the doctor burst forth, and in the tradition of thirties leftist fiction, he calls Johnstone a "bloody strike breaker" and "a greasy fat pig" (Graham 157).

This story is significant not because of this formulaic awakening of revolutionary desire that was characteristic of thirties leftist fiction, but because it consciously challenges the notion that working-class people do not have aesthetic

sensibilities. Bill raises pigeons because he "knew nothing so beautiful as a young bird fresh from the moult and no observant person could fail to notice the way he would hold that dappled cock" (Graham 147). Bill has the "craving for beauty which exists deep in human nature," and his craving is satisfied by caring for his pigeons and, although he is "not conscious of it," by the "comradeship of his workmates, the flowing feeling of loyalty and oneness that existed among the mass of workers herded together" (Graham 149). Bill's desire for beauty is "no product of book-learned notions that cultivate 'taste'" (Graham 149). His lack of exposure to the bourgeois culture that the Modernist sought to defend does not preclude him from having meaningful aesthetic sensibilities that drive his existence. Graham offers a different understanding of 'taste,' a word that the practical critics of this period only associated with cultural elites. Bill has taste even though his sensibilities have not been cultivated or approved by the arbiters of culture. More important, he has aesthetic sensibilities although he is not free from the grotesque embodiment that characterizes the working-class people in the novels of Woolf and Forster. Like Woolf's Mrs. McNab, Bill has "a short, misshapen body" (Graham 147). We also learn that he has the gaping orifice that features so prominently on Mrs. McNab and Forster's Jacky: "With a second finger, which happened to have a long nail, he began to pick a bit of corned beef from between two teeth" (Graham 150). However, on Bill, this feature does not stand as a bodily marker of witlessness.

Although he downplayed its significance in his later commentary on New Writing, by including works such as "Pigeon Bill," Lehmann opened a door to culture that Forster asserts cannot be opened, regardless of the good intentions of the person with artistic sensibilities. Not only did he resist the Modernist politics of entrenchment by presenting working-class writing alongside that of young but still established bourgeois writers, but some of the chosen writings directly challenged the class based divisions of rationality and embodiment that structure the politics of English literary Modernism. Lehmann attacked Modernism from within the comfortable confines of its own literary establishment. We can, as David Smith does, question the relevance of New Writing for the development of socialism, but we should not downplay the importance of this attack on the cultural establishment simply because Lehmann was part of the *volte-face* at the end of the decade (Smith 2, 56; Lindsay, After 47). At the least, his utopian longing to create a "new writing" that included the working-class as producers tells us so much about the contradictions that defined the literary politics of his age.

Many of those who contributed to bourgeois radicalism of the thirties were committed to abolishing the class structure that the Modernists defended, even though they customarily betrayed themselves as collusive through their own resistant gestures. George Orwell, for instance, went to Spain as a journalist in 1936, but by January of 1937 he was a revolutionary fighting in the militia of the Partido Obrero de

Unificacion Marxista (Williams, Orwell 7). While fighting in the trenches alongside workers from all over the world, Orwell, as he relates in Homage to Catalonia (1938), saw a true workers' democracy in action. This vision heavily influenced his political thinking. However, he also saw that democracy undermined by the group which should have been helping it, the Communist Party. For much of his life, Orwell was not openly opposed to socialism, collectivism, or revolution, even if he often (unconsciously?) undercut his own conscious political commitments. Nonetheless, he vehemently objected to what the Communists had done in the name of revolution. In Spain, they managed to rewrite the history of the war while it was still going on and to convince the people that the P.O.U.M. was a "trotskyist organization in line with Franco's fifth column" (Orwell, Homage 171). For a time, Orwell was a hunted man living on the streets of Barcelona while recovering from a bullet wound in the neck, and he saw the persecution of committed socialists by both fascists and people who pretended to be socialists. Even if we ultimately question and dismiss his version of socialism because of his snobbery and inability to see the working-class as equal participants, it would be unfair to Orwell to suggest that his politics were a false facade, but we should not ignore the limitations and contradictions of his thinking either.

Despite his willingness to lay his life on the line for the advance of socialism, Orwell was, as Raymond Williams and David Zehr suggest, a man caught between classes (Zehr 30; Williams,

Orwell 12). He rejected the class that he was born into, but never felt at home with the class to which he committed himself. At times, he celebrated working-class ingenuity and stamina and, as Gerald Crick remarks, even idealized the working-class home (Crick 188). Orwell says in The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) that, in a prosperous working-class home "you breath a warm deeply human atmosphere that is not easy to find elsewhere" (188). However, in the same book he indicates that he was repulsed by working-class embodiment, and passages reflect an investment in the bourgeois ideology that circulates in the writings of Woolf, Forster, and Lawrence. For example, Orwell says that while walking among the miners "in Sheffield you have the feeling of walking among a population of troglodytes," grotesquely embodied and debased people (Orwell, Road 96). Later, he feels that it is significant to point out that the "lower-classes smell" (Orwell, Road 127). Samuel Hynes remarks that The Road to Wigan Pier indicates that Orwell was "repelled by poverty but sentimentally impressed by the workers, preaching universal socialism but despising middle-class converts, desiring a classless society but separated from the working-class by his background, his accent and his ingrained prejudices" (Hynes 277-78). Orwell was at best conflicted about the working-class, but he did sympathize enough to question his own privileged status. After visiting a coal-mine he says, ". . . it is even humiliating to watch coal-miners working. It raises in you a momentary doubt about your status as an 'intellectual' and a superior person in general" (Orwell, Road 34). Still, one

cannot help but notice that Orwell's doubt is only "momentary" and that he ultimately regards himself as intellectually superior. The compassion and respect that he has for working-class people is under-cut by his belief in their limitations. David Zehr says that such views haunt much of his writing. In his portrayal of the oppressed animals in Animal Farm, for instance, "Orwell makes it clear that their lack of intelligence . . . makes it impossible for them to act against the pigs" (Zehr 35). Napoleon and Squealer are successful in re-inventing the role that Snowball played in the revolution and in making him the scape-goat for the problems of the collective because the worker animals are not smart enough to remember their own revolution. In particular, Boxer, the large work horse, could easily defeat the pigs if he would forget his motto "I will work harder" and mount a counter-revolution (Orwell, Animal Farm 60). The animals are victims, but Orwell presents their victimization as the product of their own limitations. He is stuck with the same ambiguity that plagued Forster; he too expresses both pity and contempt for the workers. He regrets the rigors of their life and, in The Road to Wigan Pier admires their "belly muscles of steel," but he suggests that his own intellect makes him categorically superior to working-class people, whom he repeatedly represents as the embodied and intellectually debased other (Orwell, Road 35). Whether he intended to or not, he ultimately affirmed the same class-based division of rationality and embodiment that was central to the cultural entrenchment of the Modernists.² Orwell could see the contradictions of

capitalism and present a wish-image in which he called for their resolution, but he could not see his own collusion in propagating the ideology that affirmed those contradictions.

The "middle-class converts" of the Auden group also expressed an Anti-modernist sentiment in their desire to change an existing social order. As David Lodge suggests, they opposed the cultural elitism of the generation that immediately preceded them and mounted a challenge to the politics of exclusion (Modes 190). A problem that they chose to resolve is that spelled out by Louis McNiece in Autumn Journal:

To preserve the values dear to the élite
The elite must remain a few. It is hard to imagine
A world where the many would have their chance
without
A fall of the standard of intellectual living
And nothing left that the highbrow cared about.
Which fears must be suppressed. There is no reason for
thinking
That, if you give a chance to people to think or live,
The arts of thought or life will suffer and become rougher
And not return more than you could ever give. (iii.46-56)

Nonetheless, the working-class, at best, has a haunting absence in the poetry of the Auden group. The general decay of society is often expressed, and the need for practical political action is a dominant theme. However, the working-class is rarely discussed, seldom addressed, and almost never given intellectual agency in the bourgeois poetry of the decade. This prompted Christopher Caudwell to admonish Auden, Spender, and Day Lewis in his "The Future of Poetry" section from Illusion and Reality, where he says, "They know 'something is to come' . . . but they do not feel with the clarity of the artist the specific beauty of this new concrete living, for they are by definition cut off

from the [proletariat] which is to realise it" (283). That they were separated from the working-class by a gulf of experience and belief is confirmed by MacNeice, who reportedly said to Auden, "If one only knows about bourgeois one must write about them" (qtd in Hynes 268). They represented the working-class as the silent other, something observable but not approachable. Spender says of the working-class in "Unemployed" (1935), "They stare through with such hungry eyes / I'm haunted by these images, / I'm haunted by their emptiness" (13-16). Still, Spender is not haunted enough to make contact, and he reduces the unemployed to images that function as catalysts for his apparent sympathy. Spender's poem is about the poet, and the unemployed exist in the poem only as an extension of his guilt and anxiety. Auden places himself in a similar situation in "A Communist Speaking to Others," his only poem that addresses the working-class directly. He says:

We know, remember, what it is
That keeps you celebrating this
 Sad ceremonial
We know the terrifying brink
From which in dreams you nightly shrink.
'I shall be sacked without,' you think,
 'A testimonial.'
We cannot put on airs with you
The fears that hurt you hurt us too. (8-16)

A. T. Tolley notes that "A testimonial" comes in a "comically deflating short line," and he suggests that further damage lies in Auden's inability to recognize that working-class people cannot expect "a testimonial" because they are "just laid off without ceremony" (Tolley 116). Auden cannot really imagine the "fears that hurt" the working-class, and in his one attempt at

doing so he comes off sounding shallow and aloof.

Hynes says of the Auden group that "it is when they attempt to join imaginatively with the working class that they sink into bathos and empty polemical gestures" (260). Their gestures are empty because they, like Orwell, regard themselves as intellectually distinct. Auden says to "Dear Christopher [Isherwod]" in "To a Writer on His Birthday" (1936):

What better than your strict and adult pen
Can warn us from the colors and consolations,
The showy arid works, reveal
The squalid shadow of academy and garden.
Make action urgent and its nature clear?
Who give us nearer insight to resist
The expanding fear. The savaging disaster? (81-88)

They have "insight" and "adult" sensibilities, but working-class people have bodies. They make bodily gestures; they ". . . greet friends with a shrug, / And turn their empty pockets out, / The cynical gestures of the poor" (Spender, "Unemployed" 6-8). In "An Elementary School Classroom in a Slum" (c. 1939), Spender can acknowledge that one working-class child of many might have an imagination: "One unnoted sweet, sweet and young. His eyes live in a dream / Of squirrel's game, in tree room. Other than this" (7-8). Yet, for all that this is a meaningful image, one cannot help but be aware that the child's dream represents nothing more than a primal expression of desire. He gains no inspiration from the trappings of bourgeois culture that surround him in the school room: "On sour cream walls, donations. Shakespeare's head, / Cloudless at dawn, civilized dome riding all cities. / Belled, flowery, Tyrolese valley . . ." (Spender, "Elementary" 9-11). The image of the "squirrel's

game" is an indication from Spender that the boy has been displaced from his bucolic context and longs to return to nature. This longing is appropriate because his imagination is more in tune with it than it is with the artifacts of bourgeois culture. Spender tells us that "Surely, Shakespeare is wicked . . ." to the denizens of this particular slum (Spender, "Elementary" 17). Spender's acknowledgment of imagination is lost in a series of images that reinforce the perception that these working-class children are primarily embodied. He refers to "The tall girl with her weighed-down head. The paper- / seeming boy, with rat's eyes. The stunted, unlucky heir / Of twisted bones, reciting a father's gnarled disease," (Spender, "Elementary" 3-5). To his credit, he could see the need for freeing these working-class children from their "foggy slum"-- "foggy" here representing both their physical environment and the opacity of their intellects (Spender, "Elementary" 23). Unfortunately, he could not accord the working-class equal status in that struggle, and this is where his poem diverges significantly from Graham's story "Pigeon Bill." Someone else is needed to ". . . show the children to green fields, and make their world / Run azure on gold sands, and let their tongues / Run naked into books . . ." (Spender, "Elementary" 29-31). Spender does not even address the working-class. He makes his appeal to the "governor, inspector, visitor," members of the administering class who seemingly have the ability to initiate change (Spender, "Elementary" 25). Ultimately, Spender and Auden rely on the intellectual capabilities of people from their

own class to, in Auden's words, "make action urgent and its nature clear." They saw themselves as the intellectual vanguard, and emphasized that they could know the contradictions that the working-class faced. They engaged in a process of speaking for others, and they created working-class subjects that reinforced their perception that the working-class needed someone from the outside to speak for it. Thus, by silencing the working-class figures of their poetry and presenting them as the embodied other, they validated the ultimate authority of their own poetic discourse and upheld their position as intellectual elites.

Arnold Kettle defends the Auden group, rejecting what he calls the cold-war revision of their poetry and suggesting that "the gains of the thirties [included] the appearance of a body of poetry more wide-ranging, democratically relevant, and humanly progressive than the bulk of British twentieth century poetic production" (Kettle, "W. H. Auden" 86). There is value in what Kettle argues, and a study of more self-consciously radical poetry and fiction would add further support to his claims. To be fair, the poets of the Auden group were Anti-modernist in a significant way; they did express a utopian longing that included the abolition of the cultural hierarchy that the Modernists defended. Yet, they were too deeply invested with the bourgeois ideology that informed Modernism to mount a meaningful and lasting resistance to it. Despite Kettle's insistence on the contrary, they could not express a "sense of solidarity with people battling against poverty and

exploitation" (Kettle, "W. H. Auden" 87). In their attempts to contest the politics of their literary predecessors, they, like Orwell, helped to carry forth the ideological assumptions that structured Woolf and Forster's reaction to democratic changes in the culture. Though she is probably not thinking in these terms, Virginia Woolf is correct when she says of the thirties poets in "The Leaning Tower" that "if you think of them . . . as people trapped in a leaning tower from which they cannot descend . . . it explains the violence of their attack on bourgeois society but also its half heartedness. They are profiting by a society which they abuse" (145). Spender conceded this point in his 1949 contribution to Richard Crossman's The God That Failed (1949), where he says, in the thirties he may have "secretly supported the ills of capitalism from which [he himself] benefited [sic]" ("Stephen Spender" 238). Spender is not claiming to have been dishonest, and it would be unjust to accuse him of being so. He is saying, however, that he could not resolve his desire to see capitalism end with his wish to preserve his elite status as an intellectual, even though he may not always have been conscious of wanting the latter. At the same time that they called for working-class liberation and envisioned a resolution of the primary class contradiction that defines capitalism, the poets of the Auden group silenced the working-class and de-valued its intellect. I would even suggest that Jack Lindsay's assessment of Modernism is more applicable to the authors of the thirties. He says, "Thus, forms of expression which had at their original root a reaction of horror

and indignation against dehumanising processes of our class-society have ended as passive reflections of that process" (Lindsay, After 21). The Modernists may have resisted the commodification of their art, but there is nothing to indicate that they were opposed to the class divisions of capitalism.³ They staunchly defended it, and they could not see the connection between the class structure and the processes of commodification that they bemoaned. In contrast, the Auden poets did question the class basis of their society, but they ultimately undercut their own utopian longings by "passively" propagating the ideology of rationality and embodiment that capitalism relies on to make its class divisions appear necessary.

The common assumption is that English Modernism had run its course by the end of the 1930s. Malcolm Bradbury argues that the deaths of Woolf and Joyce signaled a shift in the bourgeois literary culture (Bradbury, Modern 161). Yet, there is little evidence that a significant change took place by the end of the decade. The values of Modernism may have been under assault during the thirties, but that threat was never sufficient to bring about the end of English literary Modernism's reactionary politics. Virginia Woolf's essay "The Leaning Tower," which she initially presented as an address before the W. E. A. in 1940, is an affirmation of the continuing strength of Modernism's dominant ideologies. By asserting that the working-class had yet to produce anything of literary value, she was dismissing much that had happened in thirties, but she was especially

attacking those who sought to establish that the working-class people in their current state of development could suppose to produce anything that would count as literature. It is difficult to imagine that her address was not directed at John Lehmann, who was connected to the Woolfs through the Hogarth Press. In "The Leaning Tower," she does make some concessions toward a future democracy where classes may no longer exist, but she also confirms the position that emerges so often in her writing. According to Woolf, a worker could only achieve an enlightened consciousness when he has opened himself to the values of bourgeois culture. She directed the working-class audience of her address to "write daily; write freely; but let us always compare what we have written to what the great writers have written. It is humiliating, but it is essential. . . . Nor let us shy away from kings because we are commoners" (Woolf, "Leaning Tower" 153-54). She does not deny that a working-class person like D. H. Lawrence can enter the world of letters, but she makes it clear that, to do so, the person who enters must leave the limitations of his or her own culture behind. While pronouncing the failure of thirties radicalism, she was reaffirming the cultural hierarchy as she saw it naturally existing. She was reminding her audience that people like them, with the exception of Lawrence, had never contributed to literature and that people like her were the gatekeepers of art and would continue to be so for the foreseeable future. She was, in this sense, asserting the ideology of rationality and embodiment that structured much of her writing. She even

equates a working-class person with an "earth worm" (Woolf, "Leaning Tower" 137).⁴ Though she laments the current state of society, she cannot help but remind her audience that she is categorically distinct from them because she understands how to access the cultural arenas that they should strive to enter. The radicalism of the thirties converts may have been a meaningful expression of political desire, but it was not enough to make addresses such as Woolf's seem unacceptable or irrelevant, as she reminded them in her bitter dismissal of what they had tried to accomplish.

The *volte-face* of 1939-40 does not mean that we have nothing to learn from the challenges issued by the Auden group, John Lehmann, or George Orwell, limited as they were. These writers did question the central class based contradiction of English Modernism, and seeing that they did so gives us further evidence with which to argue that class entrenchment was a defining characteristic of Modernist literary politics. However, in the end, we have to admit that the bourgeois converts of the thirties could not even resolve this contradiction imaginatively. The reactionary politics that defined English Modernism remained largely unaffected by the challenges posed and the questions raised during the thirties. In contrast to what Bradbury asserts, there is, therefore, no reason to suppose that English literary Modernism came to an end with the death of Virginia Woolf.

One can even compellingly argue that, in their *volte-face*, the bourgeois converts of the thirties contributed to

propagating Modernism's values on a more conscious level. In "September 1, 1939," Auden famously referred to the thirties as "a low dishonest decade" (5). He says, in the foreword to his Collected Poems, that for him, it was a dishonest decade because he wrote poetry "which expresse[d] . . . feelings and beliefs which its author never felt or entertained" (Author's Foreword xxv). He points out that he is ashamed to have said, "History to the defeated" (Author's Foreword xxv). He classified such poetic sentiments as trash, and resisted their subsequent publication (Skelton 41). After the thirties, it was customary for the Auden group to assert their commitment to a culture that they had never really successfully challenged, even when they tried. Spender's apolitical reading of the Modernists as aesthetes in The Struggle of the Modern is ultimately a concession to the class elitism that characterized English Modernism. After the thirties, he exonerated his immediate elders from the politics that he once attempted to question. In his 1963 study, he largely affirms implicitly what he had said explicitly in 1949: "The effect of centering art on to politics would, in the long run, mean the complete destruction of art" (Spender, "Stephen Spender" 270). By conceding to the idea that politics adulterates aesthetics, Spender is signaling his acceptance of the so-called apolitical values that T. S. Eliot was so influential in spreading through his own literary criticism.⁵ Spender also says in his contribution to the Crosmann anthology that "the artist is simply the most highly developed individual consciousness in a society" ("Stephen

Spender" 270). Eliot agreed; he says in the Sacred Wood, "We assume the gift of a superior sensibility" (14). That Spender made his claims in 1949 and then reiterated them in 1963 suggests that the politics of Modernism were still thriving well into the postwar period and that he had become one of Modernism's later but most ardent proponents. This observation is all the more significant if we recall that Spender was, in fact, a powerful arbiter of culture in the 1950s, when he mediated "tastes" through his editorial duties at Encounter, which as it happens, was funded indirectly by the "US Central Intelligence Agency" (Sinfield 103).

Spender aside, there is ample indication that those who were most responsible for propagating Modernism's reactionary politics still had a dominating influence on the literary culture well into the postwar era. Jack Lindsay in After Thirties questions why "Eliot was elevated so pontifically after 1945," and he was dismayed that "after the terrible years of our national struggle against fascism, we were politely but firmly told to take as our mentor a writer who had hailed British fascism's policy as 'wholly admirable'" (91). In his critical biography of Eliot, Bernard Bergonzi suggests that Eliot had emerged from his isolation of the thirties to become a public intellectual in the 1940s, who through his speaking engagements and volunteerism, "participated in a sense of community and common wartime purpose" (T. S. Eliot 153). Even if Eliot's poetic output had effectively ended with "Little Gidding" in 1942, he maintained a position of influence that seemed to be

increasingly unassailable in his later years, when a younger generation which may have once questioned his politics was actively propagating them. Spender is just the most prominent example. He also published one of his most influential books in 1949, Notes Towards a Definition of Culture, in which he suggests that "the hereditary transmission of culture within culture . . . requires the persistence of social classes," and adds later that "it is now the opinion of . . . the most advanced minds that superior individuals must be formed into suitable groups [and] endowed with appropriate powers" (13; 34). In an age when education was being rapidly democratized by the postwar Labour Government, Eliot responded by reminding everyone "that education should help to preserve the class and to help select the élite" (Notes 103). Although Eliot's public role and publications are important in suggesting a continuity between pre and postwar literary politics, it is also significant that "practical criticism," which he along with I. A. Richards, William Empson, and the Leavises worked to establish, remained the dominant critical method.

Yet, certain developments of the era may suggest otherwise. For instance, the waning popularity of Leavis's Scrutiny and its demise in 1953 might indicate that the practical criticism which emerged from its pages had become less influential, but the slow demise of Scrutiny in the 1940s as an organ of literary propaganda did not necessarily signal the lessening of Leavis's stature as a mediator of literary standards (Hayman, Leavis 61). Malcolm Bradbury, who received his literary education at a

redbrick university in the 1950s, suggests that the influence of Leavis grew even as Scrutiny was in decline, and speaking from first hand experience, he argues that Leavisism "began in the late twenties but achieved its greatest power in the 1950s when the impact of Scrutiny and Leavis moved magically through English departments of most schools and universities" (Bradbury, No 190). Leavis, who died in 1978, continued to produce highly influential criticism into the 1970s. More important, he was responsible for training a battalion of younger critics who put his theories into practice.

Moving this discussion from Eliot to Leavis is not an attempt to gloss over differences in their respective approaches, but one cannot deny that practical criticism is an amalgamation of their complementary views of literature. This is certainly how it was seen by many of their followers. In 1950 a young Raymond Williams, for instance, produced a handbook for practical criticism called Reading and Criticism in which he pays equal homage to the influences of T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, William Empson, and F. R. Leavis (ix). He inexplicably leaves Q. D. Leavis out of this list even though her Fiction and the Reading Public obviously informed so much of what he argues. Like Richards and Q. D. Leavis, Williams expresses concern about the degradation of art and the "levelling down" effect that increased literacy was having on the general state of reading. He complains that "books, in modern society, come near to being instituted as objects of fetish," absorbed indiscriminately "for pleasure" by the

untrained masses (Williams, Reading 2). He adds that the critics should be "increasingly concerned, the facts of mass reading being what they are" (Williams, Reading 21). As a response, he too calls for the establishment of a professional caste who will ensure that traditional standards of evaluation are maintained. He remarks that the critic "is the mediator between the artist and the serious reading-public; his criticism is the articulation of adequate response and trained evaluation" (Williams, Reading 21). Like Q. D. Leavis, Williams fears the commodification of art but also places the onus for its devaluation on the masses who demand the commodities rather than those who control their production and dissemination. What presents itself as an objective summation of an objective critical method is, in reality, a text in which Williams reiterates the predominant wish-image of English literary Modernism. He fears commodification, but his response is to envision the maintenance of a social hierarchy that is the direct result of the economic system that he opposes. Williams does allow for the possibility of a more aware reading public, but he does not move beyond the language of stratification that he inherits from the Leavises and Eliot--a well informed public will always be governed by an elite, the gatekeepers of standard valuation. Williams's first critical study represents a significant postwar affirmation of the reactionary politics that defined English Modernism and indicates a continuation of the Modernist entrenchment well after the death of Virginia Woolf.

This reading is not an attempt to elevate the stature of

Reading and Criticism. It is not one of the period's more influential texts and is generally only read by those who wish to make a complete assessment of Williams's work. It was Williams's first book and reflects none of the original thinking that one can find in his later works. His Eliotic conceptions of tradition bear no resemblance to the more expansive notions of culture that emerge in his monumental works from the end of the 1950s. In Reading and Criticism, Williams defends the notion of traditional valuation, and following Eliot, argues that the goal of present criticism is to create a fusion of traditional values with the present experience. He says that the critic must work for "continuity in the values of criticism, while sufficiently in touch with contemporary living to be able to convert what might otherwise be a set of conventional rules into an organic and contemporary body of judgement" (Williams, Reading 29). Conversely, in his later works he establishes that culture is a site of conflict rather than continuity. Thus, Reading and Criticism is an aberration in Williams's critical oeuvre and should not be viewed as representative, but its significance should not be understated either. As Fred Inglis suggests in his biography of Williams, the thinking that informed it came directly from his pedagogical approach to adult education (Inglis 126). Through his teaching and earliest writing, Williams actively propagated the Leavisite demand for cultural entrenchment against working-class sensibilities. He inexplicably acquiesced to the idea that working-class thinking would lead to the corruption of artistic standards, even though

his own working-class experience offered him sufficient evidence to dismiss such a claim. That Williams, like Lawrence, conceded to the devaluation of his own culture attests to the continuing authority of the bourgeois ideology that equated working-class sensibilities with a lack of intellectuality.

The positions of Reading and Criticism also imply that the sense of social entropy which characterized English literary Modernism during the inter-war years and led to its reactionary politics had not dissipated as a result of the postwar consensus. The political historian David Dutton writes that "with government encouragement, the Second World War was seen as being fought for the benefit of the common man. It was a 'People's War' and it would be the people as a whole who would gain from ultimate victory" (10). By most accounts, the people did benefit significantly. John Montgomery suggests that "The Labour Government of 1945-51 . . . bridged the postwar gap, especially in economics . . . whatever wealth and prosperity was available was shared as widely as possible" (34). Montgomery's claim has an element of truth but is also hyperbolic. Alan Sinfield has challenged the notion that the re-distribution of wealth and power was as dramatic as is commonly presented. He argues that the British class structure remained largely intact because welfare capitalism was still a form of capitalism, even if industries such as coal and steel had been nationalized as early as 1946.⁶ After the economic disasters of the 1930s, ". . . capitalism needed some such bargain [as the welfare state] if it was to survive" (Sinfield 20). Steps taken by the postwar

Labour Government did, nonetheless, improve living conditions for most people. The National Health Service Act of 1946, for instance, made health care universal and "entirely free" (Marwick, British Society 51). The Education Act of 1944 "ensured that all pupils would, around the age of eleven or twelve, move on to some form of secondary education" (Marwick, British Society 55). These developments had a material impact on the lives of millions, but Sinfield makes a valid point when he suggests that they did not result in a fundamental shift in cultural power, and nothing indicates that they brought about an immediate change in the political structure of English literature. If increased access to secondary education meant anything to the democratizing of postwar English literature, it did not do so until the later years of the 1950s, when working-class authors like Alan Sillitoe and David Storey, who had benefitted from these changes, became celebrated figures. Sinfield argues that " . . . the arts in [English] welfare-capitalism . . . [were] presented as for everyone and the situation may well [have been] better than before [the war]; but, nevertheless, structural privilege [had been] preserved" (Sinfield 55). The established institutions of English culture continued to function in the service of bourgeois interests, catered to bourgeois tastes, and upheld bourgeois art as that which should be most valued.⁷ The continuation of the status quo in the arts did not, however, prevent "mediators of evaluation" in the 1940s and 1950s from sensing that their culture was threatened by the increasing enfranchisement of

working-class people.

Just as Virginia Woolf had seen apocalyptic implications when servants came into the drawing room and borrowed The Daily Herald, the next generation of bourgeois writers often considered the presence of working-class people in institutions from which they had been previously excluded to be equally ominous. Like E. M. Forster, Evelyn Waugh fears the corruption of an organic social system that he presents as beneficial. Randall Stevenson claims that Waugh sets out to "contrast an idyllic [prewar] past with the shabby present" (British Novel 121). Charles Ryder, the narrator of Brideshead Revisted (1945), complains of Britain in the 1940s that "it was not as it had been" (Waugh 5). Waugh presents Brideshead, the English country estate that Ryder knows through his youthful associations with Sebastian Flyte and, later, his adulterous relationship with Sebastian's sister Julia, as a vision of pastoral perfection, where human beings exist in harmony with nature and where the overwhelming presence of beauty inspires aesthetic creation in its bourgeois inhabitants. Brideshead stands in direct contrast to the newer developments of society that destroy that harmonious union between nature and artifice. At the novel's beginning, which is its chronological end, Charles Ryder is at an army encampment near Glasgow, and he notices that a new landscape is taking the place of a long standing farm: "a half mile of concrete road lay between bare clay banks, and on either side a chequer of open ditches showed where the municipal contractors had designed a system of

drainage" (14). When to his surprise his regiment reestablishes itself at Brideshead, he claims that it is "an exquisite man-made landscape . . . enclosed and embraced in a single winding valley" (Waugh 16). Unlike the new municipally constructed canals, which symbolize the destruction of nature through Waugh's barren imagery, the man-made lakes at Brideshead reflect "the clouds and mighty beeches" that prosper on their "margins" (Waugh 16). That its "unravished" beauty complements nature is further suggested in the phrase "neighborly horizon" (Waugh 16). As Charles later tells us, "It was an aesthetic education to live" at Brideshead, and while there, his artistic sensibilities are heightened so that when he painted landscapes, his "brush seemed somehow to do what was wanted of it" (Waugh 81-82). He has a similar experience when painting the Flyte's London home, Marchmain House, which he calls one of the last houses in the city "which could be called 'historic'" (Waugh 179). It is about to be torn down and replaced by a block of modern flats, so the Flytes ask Charles to produce commemorative paintings, which he does. Again, because of the inspiration that he draws from his surroundings, he "could do nothing wrong . . . the intricate multiplicity of light and colour became a whole" (Waugh 218). Marchmain House is one of those buildings that grew "silently with the centuries, catching and keeping the best of each generation, while time curbed the artist's pride and the Philistine's vulgarity, and repaired the clumsiness of the dull workman" (Waugh 226). The emerging society that Waugh resents places economics over tradition and short term need over the

aesthetic gratification that slow development can produce. Bernard Bergonzi says in The Situation of the Novel that "the myth of the English . . . gentleman who is an inevitable victim of the modern world came increasingly to dominate Waugh's responses" (Bergonzi 105). The injustice for Charles Ryder is that an artistic creation should be destroyed despite the desires of those who are capable of seeing its significance and deriving inspiration from it.

The reference to "the dull workman" indicates that not everyone who works in such a place has the intellect necessary to understand its aesthetic value. For instance, the same elevation of sensibility does not apply to Sebastian's much adored Nanny Hawkins, who spends all of her time encased at Brideshead. When Charles gives her his painting of Brideshead's Italian fountain, she puts it "on the top of her chest of drawers, remarking that it had quite the look of the thing, which she had often admired but could never see the beauty of herself" (Waugh 81). She does not share in his appreciation of art, and in this, she stands out from the regular inhabitants of Brideshead who are discursively present in the novel. That the family cares for her and gives her a home long after her services are needed is an affirmation of the social paternalism that Eliot and Woolf advocated as well, and that Nanny Hawkins does not share the higher sensibilities of the novel's bourgeois characters is offered as proof that bourgeois paternalism is necessary for her well being and continued peaceable existence. The Flytes are so magnanimous that they have "old servants doing

damn all, being waited on by other servants" (Waugh 151). This generosity is part of what drives the Flytes into debt and makes them have to sell Marchmain House. They are willing to make a supreme sacrifice to maintain the stability of this humane social order. Like Eliot, who thought servants were best off when they lived in the civilized surroundings of a well ordered home, Waugh is careful to demonstrate that paternal capitalism is ultimately humane, but in doing so, he denies the working-class characters their full humanity. Like Forster's punkah wallah from A Passage to India, Nanny Hawkins does not have the ability to govern herself, and like Woolf's Mrs. McNab, she has no existence except in relation to the bourgeois people who administer her world. She does not wish to be bothered unless she can indulge in memories of when she cared for Bridey, Sebastian, Julia, and Cordelia: "Nanny did not particularly wish to be talked to; she liked visitors best when they paid no attention to her and let her knit away, and watch their faces and think of them as she had known them as children" (Waugh 151). Her inability to appreciate art is harmless so long as this natural system is not disrupted. She simply disregards what she cannot understand and lives blissfully with her pleasant memories of Sebastian Flyte and his siblings.

The Army in Waugh's novel becomes a metaphor for the new social order. Waugh refers to the chronologically later parts of the novel that frame Ryder's memories as the "age of Hooper" (Waugh 351). Hooper is, as Sinfield suggests, "an officer who is not a gentleman" (13). He shows up to the officers' mess

with his hair uncut, uses words like "rightyo," and does not know how to handle his servants (Waugh 12-14, 348). In his body and his manners, he symbolizes the decay of this paternal class system and the encroachment of those with debased sensibilities into the circles of powers that had previously been closed to them (Sinfield 13). Hooper is a corruption of the elite, and his presence in its ranks signifies the disruption of tradition's smooth progress. The new officer class, the product of a more fluid and democratic society, does not even know enough to appreciate Brideshead's greatest treasure, its Italian fountain. As much as anything in the text, the fountain represents aesthetic perfection in the unity between nature and artifice. Ryder describes the fountain as the "final consummation of the house's plan;" taken from Italy, it stands in a "welcoming climate," and like the man-made lakes, nature thrives because of its presence: "an oval basin with an island of formal rocks at its centre; on the rocks grew . . . wild English fern in its natural frond" (Waugh 81). With his "genius" and "artistic temperament," Charles Ryder "lives for one thing--Beauty," and he has a worshipful admiration of the fountain (Waugh 231; 267). In contrast, the younger officers in the age of Hooper "lark about in it" with their girlfriends, but their transgressions are mild compared to those of the working-class soldiers who "throw their cigarette ends and the remains of their sandwiches there" (Waugh 350). Cigarettes and sandwiches are images that relate to bodily gratification, and Waugh is pointing out that the working-classes defile art

because their status of being primarily embodied prevents them from understanding its significance and revering it.⁸ Thus, Waugh reinforces the Modernist assumption about the distinction between rationality and embodiment. In reality, just as Stephen Spender does, he helped to carry forth Modernism's reactionary politics into the postwar era. Like Woolf's to the Lighthouse, Brideshead Revisited presents a dystopian vision that projects the continuing decay of society. Through this vision, Waugh articulates a utopian longing for the restoration of a paternal hierarchy that he presents as imminently humane but that still accords people certain positions within the labor process because it regards them as intellectually inferior to those who, by right, should be administering the world. Thus, Brideshead Revisited is more than the title of a novel; it is also a political slogan.

David Lodge is right to note that Spender's use of the terms "modern" and "contemporary" free those distinctions from chronology. He then argues that Waugh is an example of a prewar "contemporary" whose work lasted well into the postwar era, which he says was dominated by contemporaries in general (Lodge, Language 243). I am arguing just the opposite. Waugh established himself in the prewar, and his fiction may not resemble the experimental work that both Lodge and Spender associate with Modernism, but that does not change the fact that he was part of Modernism's ongoing political reaction. He had a political link to the Modernist movement that many critics have been unwilling or unable to see because they associate him with

different formal practices.

The same problem runs through the criticism of several writers who, unlike Waugh, initially established themselves in the postwar era. As I note above, Spender argues that John Wain and Kingsley Amis rejected Modernism's retreat from the contemporary world into aesthetics and experimentation, and this assertion about them has become widely accepted as valid. Several critics have echoed his (somewhat casual) claim that there is a formal link between Wain and Amis and the Edwardian writers Bennett and Wells. Rubin Rabinovitz is the most notable. In his book The Reaction against Experiment in the English Novel, Rabinovitz takes the position that Wain and Amis were part of a movement that "argued in favor of a return to traditional forms," and he adds later that "in their fiction the novelists of the 1950s show the influence of the nineteenth century novelist by their realistic style [form?] and their concern with social and moral themes" (5, 16). This formulation is too convenient. The idea of a clean return to the distant past is complicated by Rabinovitz's own admission that there were many writers, such as Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene, who wrote during the moment of Modernism but did not take part in the formal experimentation that he sees as being its defining characteristic. He disregards the possibility that these Modernist novels of experimentation, as few as they were, were also engaged in pursuits that were "social and moral," another term for which is political. His explanation that writers of Waugh and Greene's time just ignored the experimentation while

the postwar realists actively rejected it is altogether unsatisfactory (Rabinovitz 5). Rabinovitz does not adequately explain why there is a return to the Edwardian age and nineteenth-century and not to the "realist" writers of the inter-war years. One can make a compelling case that Brideshead Revisited is very much a novel that deals with social and moral issues. Yet, Rabinovitz does not attempt to establish a link between it and writers of the 1950s.

Like Waugh, writers of Amis and Wain's generation, who are often grouped together as "The Movement" but are also seen as "Angry Young Men," did not engage in the formal experimentation.⁹ The cessation of experimentation, however, is largely a myth fostered by those who want to see a clear break between pre and postwar English literature. A tradition of experimentation continued through the 1940s and 1950s and is associated with writers like Malcolm Lowry, William Golding, Iris Murdoch, and Lawrence Durrell. Nonetheless, Morrison correctly notes that "the Movement writers were assigned an identity which presented them as the 'coming' class. They were identified with a spirit of change in postwar British society, and were felt to be representative of shifts in power and social structure" (57). An anonymous article in the October 1, 1954 issue of The Spectator that is usually attributed to J. D. Scott was likely the first to make this pronouncement. Scott claims that "nothing dates literary fashion so certainly as the emergence of a new movement, and within the last year or so signs are multiplying that such a thing is once again emerging"

(Scott 399). The writers of this new Movement, according to Scott, were opposed to the "lush, loose, fashionable, writing" that came before them (399-400).¹⁰ Philip Larkin, for instance, opposed Modernist writers such as Eliot and Pound who had resorted to "an obscurity unlike previous types in being deliberate and unnecessary" (Larkin, "No Fun" 4). Yet, we need to be cautious about attaching too much significance to this gesture because, as J. D. Scott reminds us, The Movement writers had not rejected the critical methodology that Eliot had been so influential in founding. This new Movement made "genuflections toward Dr. Leavis and Professor Empson" (Scott 400). John Wain echoes the elitist tendency that was so important to Leavisism when he says that "any tradesman can do simple arithmetic. But the tradesman cannot understand higher mathematics; only a few people can do that and they are born with the right kind of brain, and he concludes that "The number of people who can read poetry as it should be read is equal to the number of Mathematicians" (Wain, Preliminary 95). The Movement writers did not embrace the obscurities of Modernist experimentation, but nor did they offer a challenge to Modernism's reactionary politics.

Unlike the writers who dominated the earliest days of English literary Modernism, The Movement writers did not come from the upper-echelons of society. Yet, as George Watson argues, "they were not underprivileged either" (6). Wain, for example, was the son of a prosperous dentist in Stoke-on-Trent (Allsop 67). Most got Oxbridge educations, and not as the

result of the Education Acts of 1944. At most, the squabbles between them and their upper-class predecessors were conflicts between petty bourgeois and bourgeois factions, both of which had access to cultural institutions that were only beginning to be opened to working-class people through incremental democratization. The Oxford of Amis and Larkin may not have been that of "Charles Ryder and his plovers eggs," but it was still Oxford (Larkin, Introduction 10). Scott suggests that The Movement signifies a conscious break from the "fierce-cold-bath-Marxists" of the Auden group (Scott 399-400). His characterization of the Auden Group is troubling, but Scott's point is generally acknowledged as valid. However, not all critics would accept his reasoning. Some of the Movement writers, such as Amis, were loosely (and misleadingly) connected with socialism.¹¹ As is the case with Woolf and Forster, Amis's association with progressive politics did not stop him from adopting reactionary stances in his writing. Blake Morrison makes the point that The Movement's rejection of the Auden Group had more to do with their sexual orientations and upper-class backgrounds than it did their politics (30-31). There was a shift in cultural power. The bourgeois dilettantes who dominated the literary scene in the twenties and thirties were challenged, though not entirely deposed, by a caste of professional writers and critics who, like Amis and Wain, held university teaching positions. This younger generation also wrote novels set in provincial areas of the country that the writers of Bloomsbury, for instance, had largely ignored

(Bradbury, No 204). Yet, on this last issue, The Movement writers were not as innovative as critics generally suppose. Their novels may have been set in the provinces, but that does not entail a celebration of provincial life. Wain and Amis end their first novels by having their characters leave conflict filled situations in the north of England for prosperity and stability in London. After a series of mishaps in the provinces, fate returns the downwardly mobile Charles Lumley of Wain's Hurry on Down to what is seemingly his rightful place, a high paying cultural job in London (Wain, Hurry 249).

Ultimately, I opposes the argument that these writers started a new Movement, and more important, reject the claim made by Morrison and Sinfield that The Movement writers were "anti-modernist" (Morrison 193; Sinfield 183). They may not have engaged in experimentation, but neither had everyone who came before them. In their fiction and criticism, they embraced the elitism that was central to Modernist politics. Just as working-class encroachment was a concern for Waugh and the Modernists who preceded him, it was a pre-occupation for The Movement writers as well. Their novels did include working-class characters, but the tendency to suggest that they, therefore, embraced the working-class is a misconception and is usually the result of the visceral reactions that their working-class characters elicited. In his famous 1955 review for the Sunday Times, Somerset Maugham remarks, for instance, that Jim Dixon, the main character of Amis's novel Lucky Jim (1954) is a "scum" because he did "not go to the university to a acquire

culture, but to get a job" (4). Amis lamented that Maugham should perceive Jim Dixon as a legitimate challenge to the cultural establishment. He says that Maugham "thought wrongly on the whole that this character and what he stood for represented a threat to [his] values. . . . later developments have seen to it that the non-gentleman and the gentleman would be standing together . . . holding off the even more ungentlemanly people" (Amis, "Faces" 168). Lucky Jim, the most influential and enduring of The Movement novels, shows the ascent of a working-class person into provincial academia, but Amis does not present Jim Dixon's accomplishment as admirable. He sets it up only to show that it must necessarily fail because of Jim's intellectual limitations.

Just as Waugh envisions the corruption of the elite, Amis suggests that the postwar democratization of education has resulted in the decay of the academic intelligentsia. One of the symbols of this decay is Ned Welch, the professor in Jim Dixon's history Department at a provincial red-brick university. The narrator tells us that "no other professor in Great Britain . . . set such store by being called Professor" (Amis, Lucky 9). He is pretentious and hosts "arty" weekends that feature recorder playing and singing with multiple parts. True intellectualism to Welch means being able to tell the difference between a flute and a recorder (Amis, Lucky 9). Lucky Jim is a famously comic novel, and Welch is the vehicle through which much of the text's humor is delivered. However, the novel's comic elements function in the service of serious political

content. Welch's limitations are meant to signal the decay of British education in its postwar expansion into the red-brick universities. Amis presents narrative commentary on this point that is unusually straightforward. A fellow lecturer remarks to Jim Dixon that education has become a self-serving bureaucracy: "If we institute entrance exams to keep out the ones who can't read or write, the entry goes down by half and half of us lose our jobs" (Amis, Lucky 175). He notes that all "the provincial universities are going the same way. [Though n]ot London . . . and not the Scottish ones," which like Oxford and Cambridge, were established institutions before the postwar boom (Amis, Lucky 174). As Waugh does in Brideshead Revisited, Amis sets up a dichotomy between the quality of an established tradition and the potential corruption of what that tradition represents in a modern bureaucratic age. The lecturers at Jim's University are often people who could not cut it at Oxbridge. Amis is careful to note that the professor of English whom Jim accidentally wounds with a stone is a former fellow of some Cambridge college (Amis, Lucky 17). Welch is not a professor. He is a caricature of one, and the fact that he "sets such store" in being called professor is ironic. Through his wife, he is independently wealthy (Amis, Lucky 69). His presence in academia signals the corrupting influence of bourgeois amateurism in an academic world that, according to the traditions of Leavisism, ought to be reserved to the professional elites who can safeguard the standards that Welch himself does not maintain.

Welch and his son Bertrand are Jim's nemeses. The former

has the ability to destroy his career, and the latter embodies the bohemian culture that Jim, with his working-class sensibilities, despises. However, like Welch, Jim also represents the corruption of the intelligentsia. One can even argue that, as its next generation, he signifies a further level of academic decay. Welch is a misplaced member of the bourgeoisie whose manipulative and evasive character would suggest that he might be more suited to commerce. He is an expert at exploitation, as is indicated by the way that he maneuvers Jim into collecting his library material (Amis, Lucky 180). Jim, on the other hand, is a product of the postwar welfare state who attended university on a government grant after his military service ended (Amis, Lucky 29). Welch can at least read music, but despite his assurance to Welch that he can, Jim cannot (Amis, Lucky 40). He tells Margaret, ". . . I can't sing, I can't act, I can hardly read . . ." (Amis, Lucky 26). Even with these overwhelming limitations, Jim was chosen by a bureaucratic board to be the primary lecturer in medieval history for the department, but his choice to study the Middle Ages was not based on scholarly interests. Jim confesses that "the reason why I'm a medievalist . . . is that the medieval papers were a soft option in the Leicester course, so I specialized in them" (Amis, Lucky 35). He teaches medieval history but cannot accurately define scholasticism, although "he read, heard, and even used the word a dozen times a day" (Amis, Lucky 30). The greatest indictment of Jim's intellectual abilities comes with the novel's climactic comedic moment.

Welch asks him to deliver a lecture on Merrie England, but Jim has little inclination to do it. When Arthur Beesley, a fellow lecturer, offers to give him notes on the Age of Chaucer, Jim thinks that he might be able to "construct the rest of his lecture out of the work of others" (Amis, Lucky 174). Such as it is, much of his presentation is not in his own words, and by revealing this, Amis foreshadows what happens when Jim actually delivers the lecture. To the amusement of the assembled students, officials, and dignitaries, Jim begins his address and unintentionally adopts "Welch's manner of address," and when realizing this, "begins imitating the principal" of the college (Amis, Lucky 227-29). Ted E. Boyle and Terence Brown characterize this point well when they remark, "In spite of the fact that Dixon wants to play the Welch game, he simply cannot" (105). Jim cannot speak the language of scholarship with his own west Northern accent. It is not adaptable. When finally thrust into a situation where he cannot evade engaging in academic rhetoric, the best that Jim can provide is a corrupted imitation. The stress that the presentation produces overwhelms him because "Jim, when moved, was bad at ordering his thoughts" (Amis, Lucky 55). He cannot adopt the language of the intelligentsia and does not have the sensibilities to produce what amounts to a passable imitation, which for all of his pettiness, Welch is at least capable of doing.

It would be obvious and correct to attribute Jim's failure at the lecture to his inebriation, but to leave it at that would be to suggest that his drinking has no significance beyond

propping up the comedic elements of the plot. Jim does drink before his lecture because he is nervous and afraid. Yet, by emphasizing his need to drink, Amis draws our attention to his embodiment and suggests that Jim's bodily pre-occupations cancel his ability to engage in intellectual pursuits. This pattern re-emerges throughout the novel. When Jim is at the Welch's "arty weekend," he says to Margaret that "I'd give anything for three quick pints. I've had nothing since the one I had down the road" (Amis, Lucky 45). Jim ducks out and gets drunk at the local pub. He returns to Welch's house and eventually falls asleep while smoking. When he wakes the next morning, he discovers that he has burned a hole in the bed clothes (Amis, Lucky 64-5). As much as the Welches stifle Jim's desire to satisfy his bodily urges through their insistence on intellectual pursuits, Jim brings a sense of chaos into their neatly ordered world of servants and madrigals through his desire to fulfill those impulses. There is a mutual incompatibility between the two. Through it, Amis suggests a necessary division between rationality and embodiment. Welch's may be a misplaced intellect, and his ruthless manipulation and exploitation of Jim may tarnish the spirit of academia, but he still has a claim on rationality that Jim can never hope to make.

When forced into a situation where he must match wits with Welch, Jim does not have the ability to do so, and he reverts to fantasies of violence or makes bodily gestures. Jim fantasizes that he will pick Welch up and "plunge [his] too small feet in

their capless shoes into a lavatory basin, pulling the plug once, twice and again, stuffing the mouth with toilet paper" (Amis, Lucky 12). Later, when discussing their relationship with Margaret, he also expresses a desire to "to rush at her and tip her backwards in her chair, to make a deafening rude noise in her face, to shove beads up her noise" (Amis, Lucky 161). Boyle and Brown remark that, in moments of stress, Jim reverts to inarticulate bodily gestures and makes his famous faces (101). While preparing his lecture, he "got up from his chair where he'd been writing . . . and did his ape imitation all around the room. With one arm bent at the elbow so that so the fingers brushed the armpit" (Amis, Lucky 209). When confronted with an intellectually intense situation, Jim intuitively retreats into his own embodiment. By having him do so, Amis indicates that embodiment is the defining element of Jim's identity. He reinforces this notion by showing the ease with which Jim thrashes Bertrand when confronted about his advances toward Christine. Just as the Welches disarm him intellectually when he enters their domain, Jim easily incapacitates Bertrand physically (Amis, Lucky 214). Through this episode, Amis further draws our attention to what he sees as the necessary division of rationality and embodiment.

The erosion of cultural barriers by the bureaucratic machinations of the welfare-state compel people like Jim to cross the boundaries that naturally define the limits of their existence. In turn, this displacement opens them to conflict and abuse that they would otherwise not have to face. For all

that he represents the corruption of the intelligentsia, Jim is still a victim in this novel. Like Forster's Leonard Bast, he has been displaced and exposed to a culture that he can never hope to attain and does not really want anyway. He has a basic "undiscriminating goodwill" and intuitive grasp of emotions that the novel celebrates (McDermott 61). These qualities emerge when he says to Christine in a rare moment of fluency, ". . . the love part's perfectly easy; the hard part is the working out, not about love, but about what they're going to do" (Amis, Lucky 149). Amis sentimentalizes Jim's naivete and suggests that it is threatened by his growing cynicism. As a displaced worker, his good qualities become perverted or abused, especially by the emotionally manipulative Margaret, who uses the appearance of psychological frailty to beguile Jim into committing to a sexless and combative relationship.

Like Leonard Bast again, Jim is not entirely devoid of intellect. He does grasp the husks of culture. For example, he knows that the word scholasticism is important even if he does not know what it means, but he ultimately cannot appreciate art and history enough to understand what tradition has to offer. It unclear to him why anyone would want to listen to a "violin sonata by some Teutonic bore" when there is a perfectly good pub just up the road (Amis, Lucky 47). In Postwar British Fiction, James Gindin argues that "Amis' point of view is ultimately a comic acceptance of the contemporary world as it is, a recognition of multiple facts of experience" (42). However, Amis does not ask us to accept Jim's situation as displaced

worker. Bruce Stovel argues that Gore-Urquhart is "a comic *deus ex machina*" (71). He descends among the chaos of Jim's life and restores a sense of order by offering Jim a job. As Maragret says, he is "quite the real thing," a wealthy man with a selfless devotion to art and an ability to assess the real value of people (Amis, Lucky 108). Gore-Urquhart rescues Jim from his displacement and gives a sense of balance to his world. Keith Wilson concludes that the "end of Lucky Jim [is] a triumphant opening up of the future" (57). For Jim it also marks a return to a social arrangement of a more stable past. At the novel's end, Jim is where he should have been all along, employed in the service of a (wealthy) man who has the sensibilities needed to "administer the world" in a way that the modern bureaucracy that displaced Jim does not. This bureaucracy allows Jim to take the "soft option," whereas Gore-Urquhart recognizes his skills and pushes him into his proper place in the labor process. If Jim is "lucky," it is largely because he has found someone who can correct the decision that he was not capable of making for himself.

Thus, Kingsley Amis projects the necessity of an administering class, and like Waugh, asks his reader to recognize that paternal capitalism is ultimately humane and beneficial to those who necessarily allow their passions and bodily urges to rule their intellects. Merritt Moseley is one of the few critics who sees that Lucky Jim expresses "a fear of democratization" (2). Amis's utopian longing is that the class divisions of capitalism should be maintained, and he projects

the necessary continuance of a social order that denies the majority of people access to intellectual arenas because it assigns them a primary role of embodiment. In his contribution to the fifties anthology Declaration, the film and theater director Lindsay Anderson accuses Amis of being "anti-idealist, anti-emotional, and tepid or evasive about [his] social commitments" (147). Yet, in Lucky Jim Amis advocates the Modernist ideology of rationality and embodiment and takes a reactionary stance against the democratization of the cultural institutions that had largely been closed to the working-class before the establishment of the welfare state. Whatever else Amis was, he was not politically tepid, and like his Movement counterpart John Wain, he was not an Anti-modernist.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEGITIMATING MOMENTS

Part of what complicates any study of English literature and politics in the 1950s is the way in which the notion of the Angry Young Man has been employed by critics since the sixties. Often, they use the term to describe anything produced in the decade that seems to indicate some level of disaffection. In her analysis of Lucky Jim, Angela Hague objects that Kingsley Amis should be associated with the label, saying, "Anger did not officially arrive in London until the first production of Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court Theatre on May 8, 1956, . . . which appeared to herald a new character in English culture," three years after the publication of Lucky Jim (209). She implies that the concept of the Angry Young Man is more adequately descriptive of the works of John Osborne, Colin Wilson, and the working-class authors who followed them in the last years of the decade. Hague is right to suggest that the phrase Angry Young Man came into existence some time after the first successes of Osborne and Wilson, but she is wrong to imply that it was not initially used by journalists and scholars to describe Amis, Wain, and the other Movement writers. Also, her suggestion that Amis and Wain "were not particularly enraged about anything" is not an adequate justification for challenging the idea that they were or should have been linked to the concept of Anger (Hague 209). Both expressed a sense of disaffection over the democratization of education and the arts, and if they not were particularly "enraged" about postwar

developments, they were at the least fearful that their positions of authority were under threat from an encroaching working-class that did not, by their estimations, share their elevated sensibilities.

To be fair to Hague, there is a great deal of mythology surrounding the origins of the phrase Angry Young Man. In his book The Angry Decade, published in 1958 but written in the fall of 1957, Kenneth Allsop explores the origins of the phrase but cannot provide a definite reference for when it might have appeared as descriptive of the decade, although like Hague, he too suggests that it became culturally significant following the appearance of Osborne (19). Allsop is important not just because he provides an informative first hand overview of the decade, but moreover, because his use of the term Anger in 1957 suggests that it had become an established part of the critical discourse before the majority of the working-class writers achieved recognition. The first edition of The Angry Decade contains much on Amis and Wain, but it makes no reference to the working-class authors who followed Osborne and Wilson, except to talk briefly about John Braine. It is only in a new introduction to the 1964 edition of the Angry Decade that Allsop refers to Alan Sillitoe, David Storey, or Arnold Wesker, and even then, he only offers a passing acknowledgment of their appearances at the end of the 1950s or beginning of the 1960s (Allsop 7).

That the Northern working-class writers who appeared at the end of the fifties were not initially included in a discussion

of the Angry Young Men is further indicated by Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg's 1958 anthology The Beat Generation and The Angry Young Men, in which they assemble extracts from English and American authors in an effort to present a contrived study of the transatlantic situation. They conclude that "the crucial difference between the Angry Young Man and The Beat Generation is that the former still care, the latter are beyond caring" (Feldman and Gartenberg 17). The Beats aside, this reading does not adequately account for the politics of Amis and Wain, who cared enough about the postwar decay of culture to join in the reactionary positions of their prewar antecedents. In general, the extracts from this anthology do not do justice to the works from which Feldman and Gartenberg take them. It is of little scholarly value, except that it further indicates that the concept of Anger was established by 1958, before the appearance of the working-class authors with whom the term is often casually linked in what can be only described as an insensitive revision of the decade. With some notable exceptions, such as Mary Eagleton and David Pierce, scholars after the sixties ignored what some earlier critics realized (Eagleton and Pierce 130). The literature of the Movement writers who were identified as Angry Young Men bore little resemblance to the working-class writers who followed them. William Van O'Connor published an essay in the 1962 PMLA in which he asserts what so many others seem to have forgotten about the protagonists of the working-class novels of David Storey, Alan Sillitoe, and John Braine: "Neither Arthur Machin, Arthur Seaton, nor Joe Lampton

belongs to the Lucky Jim type" (170). Though O'Connor does not acknowledge it, they are working-class characters constructed by authors with an experiential knowledge of the working-class life. Jim Dixon is not.

Every author to whom the label Angry Young Man has been applied has steadfastly denied its significance. John Wain went so far as to have his publishers advertise his books with display cards that said "John Wain is not an angry young man" (Hewison 130). The term invites us to dismiss the politically diverse literature of an entire decade because it evokes associations with youthfulness and irrationality. Yet, it would be dishonest to suggest that fear, disaffection, and even rage were not expressed in the literature of 1950s. However, the way that the phrase Angry Young Man has been applied as generally descriptive invites us to ignore competing forms of anger. Critics have not been willing to acknowledge that the Anger expressed in different texts is done in response to the different social contradictions that those works propose to resolve imaginatively.

Hague is correct to argue that Jimmy Porter, the protagonist in John Osborne's Look Back in Anger, heralds a new type of character in the English literature of the twentieth-century. Arnold P. Hinchliffe and Alan Carter both remark that to link Jimmy Porter too closely to Jim Dixon is to miss important differences between them (Hinchliffe 8; Carter 28-9). Yet, Robert Hewison makes the point that "Amis and Wain prepared the stage for the Angry Young Man, Colin Wilson gave him an

identity as the Outsider, John Osborne gave him a voice" (Hewison 135). But the progression here is too neat, and it disregards the fact that Amis had Jim Dixon stumbling off the stage before he could find a voice of his own. Jimmy Porter did not emerge because of Jim Dixon; he came about in spite of him. In a 1956 article in the Observer, the drama critic Kenneth Tynan, one of the first to understand the importance of Osborne's play for the institutions of the mainstream culture, remarks that Look Back in Anger "betokened something new in the theatre--a sophisticated, articulate lower-class" (Tynan 14). If John Osborne seems for the first time to have given voice to an intelligent person with ties to the working-class, it is largely because he was preceded by such a long tradition of writers who were trying to keep that voice from ever being heard.

Unlike Amis's Jim Dixon, Osborne's Jimmy Porter is good at ordering his thought "when moved." In contrast to the working-class subjects of the thirties poets, he does not need someone to speak for him, and unlike Woolf's Mrs. McNabb, his is not the voice of witlessness. He may lament that when "Old Porter talks, . . . everyone turns and goes to sleep. And Mrs. Porter gets 'em going with the first yawn," but his complaint is ironic because he does not give them any choice but to listen (Osborne, Look 11). In a world where people like Jimmy have been silenced, he refuses to be, and he turns what he is not supposed to have (words) into weapons of class conflict. Jimmy is, in the words of Alison, "a spiritual barbarian" invader engaged in

"guerrilla warfare" to undermine the sanctity and exclusiveness of upper-class society (Osborne, Look 44, 67). She is his upperclass "hostage" (Osborne, Look 43). Colonel Redfern, Alison's father, says "simply and without malice" that Jimmy "has quite a turn of phrase" (Osborne, Look 67).¹ In that admission, Colonel Redfern asks us to believe what the Modernist could not imagine. When Jimmy Porter shouts at the gates of bourgeois culture, he has the discursive agency to do it.

Like Jim Dixon, Jimmy Porter attended a provincial university. Alison says to her friend Helena, the bourgeois friend who comes to stay and eventually takes her place, that "I don't think one 'comes down' from Jimmy's university. According to him, it's not even red brick, but white tile" (Osborne, Look 42). Yet, Osborne challenges the idea that place will be necessarily associated with inferior intellects. Where Amis opposes the post war democratization of education, Osborne shows that a product of this newly expanded educational system can have an intellectual prowess that frightens and silences the play's bourgeois characters. Jimmy Porter is the intellectual center of Look Back in Anger, and the bourgeois characters of the play "exist only in relation to him" (Hayman, John 17). Leonard Bast and Jim Dixon may have had the husks of culture in their grasps, but Jimmy Porter has a full command of the bourgeois heritage. He uses the language of its tradition like missiles to be hurled at Alison, the daughter of an upper-class family that Jimmy associates with the illusion of an idyllic "Edwardian twilight" (Osborne, Look 15). Martin Banham remarks

that "Jimmy attacks Alison for what she is" (16). It would, however, be more accurate to say that he attacks her for what she represents, a dying class in the age of democracy whose "authority is becoming less and less unquestionable" (Osborne, Look 63). Unlike Charles Ryder, Jimmy revels in this change: "If you have no world of your own, it's rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else's" (Osborne, Look 17).² That leaders of this "passing world" deprived certain people of their full humanity motivates much of his aggression towards Alison, and Jimmy attacks her in response to the way that she and her class have trivialized and ignored the working-class people. He says to Helena that Alison "thought that because Hugh's mother was a deprived and ignorant old woman, who said all the wrong things in all the wrong places, she couldn't be taken seriously" (Osborne, Look 73). In response, Jimmy derides everything that is meaningful to Alison, and he cannot help but hurt her, which he does physically by intentionally knocking the iron over so that it burns her arm (Osborne, Look 32). It becomes apparent that Jim does care for Alison, and through his sobering apology, one of the play's central conflicts emerges. Jimmy wants everyone to "pretend that [they're] human beings," because they have been denying each other's humanity (Osborne, Look 15). Yet, Jimmy is culpable in preventing them from acting as humans. As Frantz Fanon argues in The Wretched of the Earth, when given the chance, the oppressed will become the oppressor (53). Jimmy acts out his fantasy to be the oppressor when, for instance, he refers to Alison as Lady Pusillanimous, "from the Latin

pusillus, very little, and animus, the mind" (Osborne, Look 22). Because Alison and her class have denied the "deprived" something of their humanity, Jimmy cannot help but return the gesture, which he does by belittling her intelligence and that of her family.

As part of his assault, Jimmy also masters bourgeois culture through his "white tile education" and turns it against the play's bourgeois characters. As in so many of his verbal barrages indicate, the artistic tradition that the bourgeois class sought to uphold is not inviolable. Jimmy says, for instance, that he wrote a poem while at his market stall that is irreverently "soaked in the theology of Dante, with a good slosh of Eliot as well. It starts off 'There are no dry cleaners in Cambodia'" (Osborne, Look 50). Jimmy further shows his irreverence when the classical tradition that Eliot and Spender so valued becomes a tropological vehicle through which he discusses homosexuality. He says to Cliff that he almost envies "Gide and the Greek Choir boys" (Osborne, Look 35). Later, he does something similar when he says of Alison's friends that "they're a very intellectual set . . . They sit around discussing sex as if it were the Art of Fugue" (Osborne, Look 49). It would be easy to dismiss these statements as a grotesque corruption of aesthetic discourse, but that would be to ignore that Jimmy Porter has a mastery of that discourse that no other character in the play can equal and that he alone expresses an appreciation of art: "Oh, yes. There's a Vaughan Williams. Well, that's something anyway" (Osborne, Look 17).

Jimmy Porter is not Jim Dixon with his "filthy Mozart" (Amis, Lucky 66). He uses the allusive language of art, but he does so to discuss issues of embodiment. When he does, he demonstrates that the higher domains of the culture are not sacred. Someone who has a preoccupation with bodily matters such as sex can still gain access to those domains and can use aesthetic language knowingly. Through Jimmy Porter, Osborne interrogates the division of rationality and embodiment and suggests that an open identification with the latter does not imply a negation of the former. Osborne takes the issue a step further by challenging the idea that one can identify a person with ties to the working-class as the embodied other. His continual references to eating do not let us forget that Jimmy is embodied (Faber 71). These bodily pre-occupations do not, however, cancel the fact that he still has a formidable intellect which he uses to its fullest in his attacks on Alison. With the exception of the incident with the iron, Jimmy's attacks are purely verbal. When Helena "slaps him savagely," he does not return the blow (Osborne, Look 70). At this point, she becomes identified with embodiment, not Jimmy, because he is "the type who despises physical violence" even if he, like Helena, resorts to it (Osborne, Look 57). Through this confrontation between Jimmy and Helena, Osborne challenges a fundamental assumptions of English literary Modernism. He refuses to identify a bourgeois character exclusively with rationality. Jimmy disarms Helena intellectually, and she responds physically. She does not represent the bodily sublimation that writers like Woolf and

Forster associate with the bourgeois women in their novels. By undermining the class significations of rationality and embodiment that were central to the exclusionary assumptions of English literary Modernism, Osborne signals his unwillingness to propagate its defining ideology.

Osborne ends his play by having Jimmy and Alison begin playing their fantasy game of "bears and squirrels," which they do because it is "a way of escaping from everything . . . [of becoming] little furry creatures with little furry brains. Full of dumb, uncomplicated affection for each other" (Osborne, Look 47). Simon Trussler argues that the "game is a brave attempt to compensate for [their] failure by means of an extended metaphor" (45). Compensation in this case implies evasion. They still care for each other, but they can no longer confront the reality of their lives because it is too painful. In retreating from the conflicts of their relationship, they also retreat from the very human class conflict that defines it. Through the death of Jimmy and Alison's baby, Osborne projects that this all-consuming conflict is destroying the future because it prevents them from even pretending to be human and, thus, from producing a human who is viable and healthy. Just as in the working-class texts that followed Look Back in Anger, there is a unresolved tension between Jimmy's collusion in perpetuating the class conflict through his desires for retribution, and the text's ultimate projection that these struggles are destructive. Osborne rationalizes Jimmy's behavior, but in the end, he cannot concede that Jimmy's behavior resolves anything. Osborne ends

this play with a dystopian vision of unresolved conflict, one which projects the indefinite continuation of destructive behavior. However, like all dystopian visions, it implies a utopian opposite. Larry L. Langford says convincingly that "the anger of [Osborne's] work is not only a rejection of things as they are but an expression of bitter disappointment over how they have never been" (241). If Osborne does not offer a meaningful alternative to Jimmy's treatment of Alison, and if he does not show us how the class contradictions of capitalism can be resolved, he at least presents us with an implied longing that they necessarily should be. In this, he stands in contrast to his the Modernist predecessors who actively sought to preserve those contradictions. Thus, the Anti-modernist moment of the 1950s began with John Osborne, not the Movement writers who preceded him.

Saying that Look Back in Anger is Anti-Modernist is not the same as saying that it is a working-class text, although one could certainly make a compelling case that it belongs in that tradition. Nonetheless, I am less comfortable than Ian Haywood is in linking Osborne to the working-class tradition that followed him (95). Some might object to this linking on the basis of Osborne's own alignment, a working-class mother but a "middle-class" father who died when Osborne was 11 and whose benevolent society arranged for Osborne to attend a low-end public school (Osborne, "Cricket" 64-5; Better Class 130). Yet, Osborne did live much of his young life in extreme poverty. However, my reservations are based on Jimmy Porter himself and

the somewhat ambiguous class alignment that Osborne assigns him in the play. Simon Trussler says that "Jimmy Porter is self-consciously proletarian and self consciously proud of it" (43). Though Trussler's assessment is generally accepted, it does require qualification. Cliff says of Jimmy to Alison that "we both come from working people" but adds that "some of his mother's relatives are pretty posh, but he hates them as much as he hates yours" (Osborne, Look 30). Osborne gives Jimmy a strong experiential tie to the working-class, but he also qualifies it with a reference to "posh relatives" in a way that does not happen in the working-class texts that followed his. Nonetheless, even if Jimmy has what Erik Olin Wright identifies as a contradictory class affiliation, it does not change the fact that Osborne is doing what so many before had tried to assert was impossible. He links intellectuality to a person with experiential working-class affiliations, but he does not do it in a way that negates the formative significance of those relations, as D. H. Lawrence had done with Paul and Gertrude Morel in Sons and Lovers.

Osborne was only one spark of the "revolution" that began in May of 1956. Colin Wilson was the other. It is not my intention to perform a reading of Colin Wilson's cumbersome tome The Outsider, even though it was a "literary bombshell" when it came out in the same month as Look Back in Anger (Feldman and Gartenberg 202). The anonymous reviewer for The Listener called it "the most remarkable book upon which the reviewer has ever passed judgement" (767). Kingsley Amis even begrudgingly

admitted that he felt "overwhelmed by the author's erudition" (Amis, "Legion" 830). However, as James Gindin notes in Postwar British Fiction, by the appearance of Wilson's second book Religion and the Rebel in 1957, The Outsider had been dismissed as "pseudo-philosophy" and nonsensical name dropping (222). A reception study would yield important information about why Wilson's text was so quickly discredited after its initial positive reception, and it may very well be that class based prejudices were a factor. Nonetheless, the text itself is of secondary importance in the phenomenon that Colin Wilson created. As Kenneth Allsop says, the 1950s saw "the influx of the new intelligentsia" (37). Wilson, the self-taught working-class existentialist who grew up in Leicester, became its symbol (Weigel 19). Through his initial popularity, he helped to legitimate the idea of a working-class intellectual, and he did so within the institutions of the mainstream culture in Britain. Because mainstream critics such as Kingsley Amis, J. B. Priestly, and A. J. Ayer were willing, at least initially, to admit that Wilson had written a "serious [book] . . . that deserved to be assessed on its own merits," Wilson, whether he intended to or not, mounted a challenge to the assumptions that sustained the Modernist entrenchment against the working-class encroachment (Ayer 75).³ He was being taken seriously by the very institutions that the Modernists had sought to maintain as their domains of privilege. Even if the same critics soon rejected his book, Wilson validated the idea that someone with a working-class background could produce a text of literary merit

and, along with Osborne helped to create a climate in which the working-class became a suitable subject for art. That the working-class was seen as such is further suggested by the numerous films that were adapted from working-class novels of the era by the bourgeois film makers of what Christopher Booker calls the "new Oxford group" (100).⁴ Osborne and Wilson are transitional figures who set the stage and opened the door for the working-class writers and critics who followed them, but they were not alone in changing the cultural climate of this decade, and much of the credit for sustaining the intellectual legitimization of the working-class needs to go to the working-class academics Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams.

Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy (1957) challenges the Modernist tendency to link mass culture with working-class sensibilities. He argues that, far from being responsible for the abuses of mass culture, the working-class is in "some ways more open to the worst effects of the popularizers' assault" because working-class people "are ground between the millstones of technocracy and democracy; society gives them an almost limitless freedom of the sensations, but makes few demands on them--the use of their hands and of a fraction of their brains for forty hours a week" (Hoggart 174, 249). Where Q. D. Leavis in particular saw the working-class as the primary threat to traditional standards, Hoggart remarks that the tradition of the working-class is eroding as well, but he concludes that its tradition has yet to be obliterated: "'older' attitudes exist not only in the middle-aged or elderly; they form a background

to much in the lives of younger people. What I am questioning throughout is how long they will continue to be as powerful as they are now, and in what ways they are being altered" (Hoggart 23). In the same way that Eliot and Leavis clamor for the defense of their tradition, Hoggart calls for the preservation of his. Yet, many of his assertions are objectionable because they reinforce Modernist values. His total dismissal of popular culture is at best facile. Although he admits that it holds a great appeal to the working-class, he gives little account of the way that it impacts working-class life except to say that mass entertainments "kill [taste] at the nerve, and yet so bemuse and persuade their audience that the audience is almost entirely unable to look up and say, 'But in fact this cake is made of sawdust'" (Hoggart 197-98). He romanticizes and fetishizes an idyllic working-class past when he says that working class people live "intuitively, habitually, verbally, drawing on myth, aphorism, and ritual," but he provides no real evidence except his own assurance that he is writing from the "inside" (Hoggart 17, 33). However, he also reinforces the Modernist idea that the working-class is the most debased in British capitalism, even if he is unwilling to believe that working-class sensibilities are "so badly affected" as is commonly asserted by the defenders of the bourgeois tradition (Hoggart 33). The Modernist notion of a progressive social entropy survives in his study, but Hoggart, like the Modernists, can provide no real evidence that this decay is actually occurring except to say that he believes it to be so.

Nonetheless, even if he affirms this key Modernist assumption on one level, Hoggart still refuses to take the Modernist stance of making the working-class the scape-goat for this entropy. He fetishizes the working-class past, but he also strives to give the working-class what Eliot and the Leavises sought to deny it, a legitimate tradition which he presents as an appropriate subject for scholarly inquiry. It more than coincidental that just after The Uses of Literacy came that "books like Saturday Night and Sunday Morning . . . began finding their way onto station bookstalls" (Gray 216).

Above, I discuss how Reading and Criticism portrays Raymond Williams's early investment in Leavisism. I also suggest that this early study is atypical of Williams's later work. Stuart Hall argues that, for Williams, Culture and Society (1958) is an "engagement with [his] Leavisite inheritance" in which he is "attempting to redress the appropriation of the long line of thought about 'culture' to reactionary positions (Hall 58). Williams says of Leavis, for instance, that his error was in making Culture "into an entity, a positive body of achievements and habits, precisely to express a mode of living superior to that being brought by the 'progress of civilization'" (Williams, Culture 254). Eliot and Leavis fetishize culture by turning it into a "fragmentary" abstraction to be protected by a governing elite, and they do so because they equate democratic progress with social decay and aesthetic corruption (Williams, Culture 234). Where Williams previously defended that minority, he now calls it a "damaging formulation" because it allows the elite to

construct a vision of culture entirely in its own image (Williams, Culture 255). For Williams, culture is not the domain of an elite, but rather "a whole way of life," and he adds that "the whole system must be considered and judged as a whole" (Williams, Culture 242).⁵ Thus, in Williams's later thinking, culture is a site of conflict between competing bourgeois and working-class factions which, because they exist only in relation to one another, must be considered as equal in the history of the current epoch.

He elaborates on this claim in the conclusion to Culture and Society, where he says that "in our culture as a whole, there is both a constant interaction between [the factions] . . . and an area which can properly be described as common to or underlying both" (Williams, Culture 327). Williams does not develop this idea of a common area, and so it is difficult to see what he means by it. Though he later regretted that he said so, Terry Eagleton found it a disturbing notion, and in Criticism and Ideology, he accuses Williams of advocating a "populism and reformism" because of it (Criticism 34). I am not in a position to defend the vagueness of Williams's language on this point. However, by giving the working-class equal status in his reformulation of culture, he is, in fact, opposing the exclusionary entrenchment that he once advocated. If there is a "populism" in Williams's thinking, it is a refreshing response to the elitism of others. Where he once expressed a fear of democracy, he argues, in The Long Revolution (1961), that western culture since the industrial revolution can only be

understood in terms of a progressive struggle for it in all levels of existence (121). To understand that culture, we need to give equal consideration to the role of the working-class in its defining struggle. At the end of the 1950s, Williams and Hoggart gave the working-class a scholarly legitimacy that the Modernists sought to deny it. They helped to establish an academic tradition of Cultural Studies. What was once the defense of a fragmentary abstraction could then become the analysis of a "whole way of life," with a full consideration of the working-class. Ultimately, Williams and Hoggart were part of a broader cultural revolution that cracked the foundations on which the Modernist ideological barriers were constructed. Through their scholarly redemption of the working-class, they facilitated a shift in the mood of the mainstream academic culture. The response has been limited, and we still have much work to do in making people understand the necessity of studying working-class culture. Yet, it is essential to acknowledge that, because of these legitimating moments in the 1950s, working-class writers and scholars could study their own history and write fiction about themselves. Most important, they could invest their working-class subjects with a complex intellectuality that the Modernists, through their fear, had sought to deny them.

CHAPTER SIX: PARTY POLITICS AND COLLUSIVE RESISTANCE

Most social historians regard the passage of the Education Acts of 1870 as the most important legislative development for the British working-class prior to the enactment of those laws that established the welfare state in the aftermath of World War II. Eric Hopkins remarks that these Education Acts were responsible for creating a working-class which was ninety-seven percent literate by the turn of the century (130). Prior to 1870, the working-class had literacy rates that were, at best, thirty-five to forty percent (Klaus 9-10).¹ The purpose of these Acts and the subsequent legislation which made elementary education free for all was to "civilize" and pacify the masses by indoctrinating them with values that would ensure the continuation of a peaceable state. Nonetheless, these legislative measures also had the consequence of creating a working-class that even at its most disadvantaged levels was capable of voicing in its cares and concerns in the established forms of the dominant class. The authors of Rewriting English remark that "literacy is a weapon . . . , a form of cultural power, gained in struggle and, in the 1860s and 1870s, conceded as much as given" (37). As a result of this educational expansion, a modern expressive working-class came into existence in Great Britain, and with it came the working-class's wide scale adoption and adaptation of bourgeois literary forms.

The British working-class appears to have a literary tradition that goes back much farther than the 1870s. Stephen

Duck, the eighteenth-century poet who spent most of his life as a farmhand, wrote a book of verse (circa 1730) called The Thresher's Labour (Klaus 11). H. Gustav Klaus suggests that any history of working-class writing in Britain should begin here because Duck was one of the first authors to present in his poetry "an intuitive recognition that work is a theme worthy of literary treatment" (11). Duck does write about the rigors of the rural laborer, and much of his poetry deals directly with labor:

But when the scorching Sun is mounted high,
And no kind Barns with friendly Shade are nigh;
Our weary Scythes entangle in the Grass,
While Streams of Sweat run trickling down apace (Rpt. in Klaus 11).

However, whether or not Duck's rural laborer can be called working-class in the way that Marxism defines it is debatable. E. P. Thompson argues that the making of the English working-class as a class with political agency was a process that took place in the period from 1790 to 1831, following the mass movement of people like Stephen Duck from farms to the urban factories (887). Ian Haywood suggests that the history of working-class literature began after 1832, but dating this inception is complicated because many early forms of working-class artistic expression are difficult to trace (1). For instance, Raymond Williams argues that autobiography and the ballad were important aspects of working-class life before the adoption of the novel sometime in the nineteenth-century ("Ragged-Arsed" 240-41). We also should not forget the tradition of oral story telling, which has mostly been lost to

modern scholarship.

By most accounts, the advent of working-class fiction is a nineteenth-century phenomenon. The first appearance of novels by working-class authors came in the late 1840s and early 1850s, during the waning days of the Chartist movement, which got its start in 1839. Martha Vicinus notes that most Chartist fiction was written after 1848 as supporting propaganda for the People's Charter, which called for universal suffrage and equal legislative representation for all regardless of income or property (7). However, the Chartist novels were historically isolated, and Chartist fiction had run its course by the mid 1850s. In addition, Ronald Paul and Ian Haywood both acknowledge that most Chartist fiction was written by people who were not working-class (Paul 14). Haywood says that, of the Chartist novelists, "Thomas Cooper and Thomas Wheeler Martin can be singled out for our attention here, as they both came from [financially] humble backgrounds" (4). For working-class literature, there is a twenty year gap in the historical record that follows. Thus, one can reasonably argue that the substantive history of the British working-class fiction began sometime after the 1870s--after the working-class had been introduced to narrative fiction on a broad scale through the newly implemented system of popular education (Paul 19; Klaus 86).

My point here is not to write a comprehensive history of the working-class literature. I do, however, want to make the observation that the history of British working-class writing

from 1870 to 1940 was dominated by works that were blatantly proletarian--written by working-class authors but ultimately committed to a socialist agenda. With the rediscovery of authors like James C. Welsh and Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, there is increasing evidence that the earlier decades of the century were prolific ones for proletarian writing, but most critics still regard the 1930s as the most productive decade. Even if this is not necessarily the case, it is reasonable to assert that proletarian literature had a more diverse readership in the 1930s than in any prior decade, if only because a younger generation of bourgeois literati, like John Lehmann, helped to popularize it. During this decade, many left-wing organizations also sponsored working-class writers in their efforts to cultivate a tradition of proletarian literature. By doing so, they sought both to agitate the masses and to subvert the ideologies of bourgeois art. Because of the diversity of these organizations, a socialist agenda can manifest itself in many forms. Nonetheless, very likely because of their own organizational affiliations, some Marxist critics have been reluctant to locate certain authors in a socialist context.

Without exception, the few critics who have actually written on Walter Greenwood have declined to read his work as Marxist writing. Carole Snee argues most vehemently against such a reading, and she says that, in contrast to the proletarian novelists Lewis Jones and Walter Brierley, "Greenwood may have been a working class novelist writing about working class life, but he never challenges the form of the

bourgeois novel, nor its underlying ideology" (Snee 171). Yet, Greenwood was an active member of the Independent Labor Party at the time that he was writing Love on the Dole (1933), his first novel (Greenwood, There Was 175). As late as 1938, five years after the unprecedented success of the novel's debut, Greenwood felt comfortable identifying himself as a Marxist. He says in an autobiographical sketch included in The Cleft Stick (1938) that "a study of Marxian economics satisfactorily explained the true cause of my predicament" (Greenwood, "Old School" 211). Much socialist writing of the period is predictably formulaic, like Gore Graham's short story "Pigeon Bill" with its obligatory awakening of revolutionary consciousness at the end. However, not all proletarian novels of the 1930s are so blatantly programmatic, but it does not follow that they are any less committed. Although it shares their agenda, Greenwood's Love on the Dole stands out from the other proletarian novels of the thirties for its subtlety and for the sophisticated way in which it explores how economic depression and oppressive labor practices impact the relations of its working-class characters.

Harry Hardcastle, the main character of Love on the Dole, is a young man who initially has a job in a pawnshop, but he longs for the opportunity to do industrial work because he associates it with adult masculinity. He begs his parents to let him sign on at Marlowe's, which he sees as a "great engineering works where an army of men are employed" (Greenwood, Love 19). Harry fails to realize that this army of men is actually an army of boys who have been recruited by the company

to work as apprentice engineers--in reality lathe and drill operators. The management wants an under-aged work force so it does not have to pay its employees a full adult wage. As happens to every other apprentice in the factory, the company terminates Harry's employment when he finishes his apprenticeship. He then faces a long period of bitter poverty when he is plagued by a persistent feeling that he is deviant, even though his unemployment is not his fault. The narrator says of Harry that "he trudged homewards staring, a strangled sensation in his throat, a feeling in his heart that he has committed some awful crime in which he is sure to be found out" (Greenwood, Love 159). He was assigned a place in the labor process. Having been pushed out of it, he wants desperately to return to it. Thus, Greenwood does a masterful job of demonstrating the way in which capitalist ideology makes working-class people long for their own exploitation.

Sally Hardcastle, like many heroines of these novels, is "a gorgeous creature whose native beauty her shabbiness could not hide. . . . A face and form such as any society dame would have given three-quarters of her fortune to possess" (Greenwood, Love 15). Gore Graham opposes the ideological associations of grotesque embodiment by showing that Pigeon Bill has an intellect and innate desire for beauty. Greenwood disassociates this female character from the grotesque and, thus, challenges assumptions that reserve bodily perfection to bourgeois women, as Woolf does with Mrs. Ramsay. He also demonstrates that Sally's embodiment is a cultural manifestation, a product of the

way in which the powerful men in her life fetishize her as an object to be desired. Many men pursue Sally, including Ned Narkey, an imposing thug, and Sam Grundy, the local bookmaker. She rejects their advances in favor of Larry Meath, who is a committed socialist and one of the few adult workers at Marlowe's. Sally wants to get married, but Larry does not want to marry because he is afraid that he will lose his job like virtually everyone else in Hanky Park. He says to Sally, "You misunderstand me. It isn't this marriage business that matters. . . . It's this damned poverty. My wages" (Greenwood, Love 140). Greenwood demonstrates that unemployment and the organization of labor under capitalism pervert human desire and prevent people from engaging in social relations as they would wish. They are first and foremost married to their circumstances. Harry says of having a job that "everything depended on it" (Greenwood, Love 158). Unfortunately for Sally, Larry is killed by a policeman during a demonstration, and so their marriage never occurs. In an act of resignation, Sally finally gives in to the advances of Sam Grundy and becomes his mistress. It is through him that she finally arranges jobs for her brother and father on the local buses. Despite all that these characters have gone through, their situations at the end of Greenwood's novel are largely what they were at the beginning. Harry and his father are employed in dead end jobs, and Sally returns to her place as an exploited woman, and her exploitation is more severe than it ever was when she was a millhand. Even though Greenwood associates her with sexual

promiscuity at the novel's close, he indicates that the distribution of power and wealth force her into this role as the embodied other.

To underscore the circularity of the story, Greenwood ends the narrative exactly as it began. The beginning reads: "5:30 a.m. A drizzle was falling . . . At No. 17, Mrs. Hardcastle, an old woman of forty, came downstairs . . ." (Greenwood, Love 13). And the end: "5:30 a.m. A drizzle was falling . . . In Mrs. Dorbell's house, Helen came down stairs . . ." (Greenwood, Love 255-56). For Carole Snee and Ronald Paul, a major failing of Love on the Dole is that it represents the situation of the working-class as static by virtue of its very form, and it is for this reason that Snee associates this text with bourgeois values (Paul 31; Snee 171). However, embedded in Love on the Dole's circularity is a sense of continuance. Greenwood suggests that the circumstances of Helen's new born child will be similar to that which befell Mrs. Hardcastle's children, and he asks us to consider the responsibility that Larry Meath shoulders for not working to disrupt this cycle when he has the chance.

In her analysis of Love on the Dole, Pamela Fox contends that Larry Meath emerges as the "true" hero of the text because the shame that he feels over his working-class alignment motivates him to adopt "middle-class" values as a type of revolt against his subjectivity (134). She asserts that Larry Meath's "attention to ideological domination--backed up by a seemingly contradictory, but distinctly middle-class code of

behavior--emerges as the most authentic model of class consciousness in the novel" (Fox 83). Although there is value in Fox's observation that working-class revolt can be both collusive and resistant, she does not acknowledge that Larry Meath is a failure as a revolutionary. Therefore, she does not allow for the possibility that the novel is critical of Larry as a leftist for adopting "middle-class" idioms that prevent him from communicating his message of social change to other members of the working-class. If anything, Greenwood indicates that Larry's "middle-class" values weaken his radicalism. The novel offers Larry's radicalism as the only viable means for substantive social change. However, when in a moment of revolutionary fervor the working-class is about to confront the police, Larry, as a leader of the movement, attempts to impose an order on his fellow protesters that will not threaten the military apparatus of the bourgeois state (Greenwood, Love 202). The revolt fails, and Larry is murdered by the superstructural apparatus that he was unwilling to oppose. Far from endorsing his class shame and the subsequent adoption of a "middle-class code of behavior" as a viable or "authentic" mode of resistance, Love on the Dole concludes that Larry's shame, which is not shared and seldom understood by the other working-class characters, prevents him from helping the working-class to resist the domination of the bourgeois state. If this novel fails to show the successful culmination of a revolutionary moment, it also shows us why a professed revolutionary has failed. It is unusual for a socialist novel to conclude with an

image of stagnation. However, in emphasizing Larry Meath's collusion in perpetuating the working-class exploitation, Love on the Dole projects a formula for revolutionary action. Its ultimate utopian longing--articulated through circumstance rather than dogma--for a revolutionary who rejects the capitalist system as a whole and who will devote himself absolutely to the concrete organization of the working-class revolution is one that it shares with other prewar texts by working-class socialists.

Unlike Greenwood, many of his contemporary proletarian writers were active in the Communist Party. Lewis Jones, a Welsh miner, wrote two novels, Cwmardy (1937) and We Live (1939), which are about life in the Rhondda Valley of Wales. These novels trace the political development of Len Roberts, a miner in the Welsh town of Cwmardy. Cwmardy shows the development of class-consciousness in Len as he gains the understanding that the only way for the miners to succeed in their endeavors against the mine's owners is through unified action. In We Live Jones establishes that this action can only be successful with the organization of what the novel cryptically calls "The Party." As Len says to his wife Mary, the daughter of the reformist union leader Ezra Jones, "We must not grieve our condition, but fight against it. That is the way, and that is what the party is for. Forgive me, comrade, for being so childish" (Jones 227). In this text, all human relations are subsumed by party relations. Mary is no longer Len's wife. She is a comrade, and her commitment to the

development of the party takes precedence over her personal relationship with Len.² Whatever individual desires the characters have are ultimately rendered meaningless by the novel's overriding utopian longing for the establishment of a party stocked with revolutionaries of unwavering commitment. Though Jones's demand is more blatant and the programmatic language more obvious, this longing is the same that Greenwood projects through his text. I want to suggest that this utopian longing is the defining aspect of proletarian fiction, and the concluding articulation of this longing distinguishes proletarian from other forms of working-class writing.

If literary history is any indication, this longing for party organization did not resonate widely after the 1930s. A significant development in the history of proletarian literature was the apparent cessation of writing by its authors in the period from 1940 to the mid 1950s.³ Because of the Depression, there was interest during 1930s in the circumstances of working-class people. As I indicate in my analysis of the decade's bourgeois authors, many had embraced the working-class cause in a way that they had not done before and would not do again until the end of the fifties, when a group of film makers popularized the working-class literature of that decade. Love on the Dole did achieve a popular success that is noteworthy. It was turned into a play in 1934 and staged at London's famous Garrick Theatre, where it had a run of 391 performances. Ray Speakman notes that more than one million people saw the play by the end of 1935 (Speakman 10). Yet, Love on the Dole is an aberration,

both in terms of its subtlety and its popularity. In the history of proletarian writing, its success and popularity are only exceeded by Robert Tressell's The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist (1914/1955).

Alan Sillitoe argues that "the whole proletarian movement in literature before the war or between the wars really failed--with the possible exception of Walter Greenwood's" novel (Halperin 178). Sillitoe's language is too harsh, but if we understand failure in terms of revolutionary impact, we would have to concede that there is some validity to his point. It is easy for Marxist critics who need the sustaining myth of a tradition to place undue significance on the socialist literature of the 1930s. The proletarian writing of the decade is important for its revolutionary content and documentary evidence, and I remind my reader that I am a Marxist. I share the revolutionary desires that many of these texts articulate, but it is dishonest to overstate the historical importance of this literature by according it a greater role in society than it actually held. At most, it existed as a much less conspicuous alternative to the Modernist tradition that I discussed at length earlier. For three years at the end of the 1930s, the bourgeois and proletarian traditions did come together in John Lehmann's New Writing, but the result of the bourgeois *volte-face* was the severing of those ties and the shutting off of one of the few outlets that proletarian writers had for reaching the larger audience of people who were not already committed to socialism. While I do not question the

revolutionary potential of proletarian literature, I do question its actual revolutionary achievement in the face of the bourgeois reaction that it prompted. It did little to break through the barriers that were raised by the bourgeois cultural elites who felt themselves to be under siege and who defended themselves successfully against working-class encroachment. Only Lawrence got through the barricade, and that is because he acquiesced to the devaluation of his culture and the erasure of his working-class experience. He was never part of the socialist tradition that dominated working-class writing. I want to suggest that, when Virginia Woolf gave her 1940 address to the W. E. A. declaring the failure of working-class literature and thirties radicalism, she was ultimately holding a sort of victory celebration in the enemy camp.

The reasons for the stagnation of proletarian literature in the forties are multiple and complex. One could attribute it to end of the depression, when improving conditions likely restored an apathy about the conditions of the working-class among those who could actually afford to buy books.⁴ The decline in literary production may be attributable to a working-class pre-occupation with fighting World War II. It is conceivable that many would-be proletarian novelists were too busy fighting the fascist powers of Germany, Japan, and Italy to do much writing. However, socialism also faced several crises as the decade closed. The 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact and the Soviet purges drove many away from their affiliations with the left. It seems more than coincidental that the proletarian movement in literature

came to a virtual halt when it was abandoned by John Lehmann and the Auden Group converts, who like Spender returned to comfortable places in the bourgeois establishment. After this re-alignment of literary politics, many proletarian writers had difficulty getting publishers to accept their work. As the most successful, Greenwood's failure is also the most dramatic. He continued to write plays and novels after the success of Love on the Dole, but with the exception of His Worship the Mayor (1936), his later works reflect no trace of the commitment that he so skillfully communicates in his first novel.⁵ After 1940, he mostly wrote plays for theaters that catered to audiences on the sea-side. The English proletarian novelist Harold Heslop was immensely popular in the Soviet Union during 1930s and had a lesser but still significant domestic following, although some of his novels were never even published in Britain (Croft 22). Heslop worked for the Soviet travel office Intourist as his domestic publishing began to wane. Andy Croft notes that, like most proletarian novelists of the thirties, Heslop could not find a British publisher who was willing to accept his work after 1940 (Croft 36). Most of his writing went unpublished, and The Earth Beneath (1946), the one novel that he did publish, went largely unnoticed.

It is also readily apparent that this period of stagnation was followed by the emergence of a different kind of working-class writing near the end of the 1950s. Ingrid von Rosenberg usefully suggests that working-class novels of the "1950s and early 1960s fall easily into two groups: The smaller group of

political or socialist novels on the one hand and the greater majority of . . . descriptive working-class on the other" ("Militancy" 149). In the mid-1950s, shortly after they published the unexpurgated edition of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists in 1955, which had been in print in an expurgated form since 1914, the British Marxist publisher Lawrence and Wishart also published a series of novels by communist writers. It is unclear whether this was a conscious effort to revive the proletarian fiction of the thirties or a move to capitalize on the success of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, which Lawrence and Wishart keeps in print in a hardcover edition to this day. These socialist novels, and in particular Len Doherty's The Man Beneath (1957), are unlike their predecessors from the thirties because they make a conscious attempt not to announce themselves as socialist propaganda.

Lewis Jones's We Live is an explicit celebration of the revolutionary importance of "the party," but that same "party" has an understated role and is virtually invisible in Len Doherty's novel. The protagonist of this novel is Jim Harris, a miner from the village of Thornton who is trapped beneath a collapse in the mine where he works. After introducing this fact, the novel then becomes one long flashback where Jim's life literally passes before us. We learn, for instance, that he, like Jones's Len Roberts, is a remarkable scholar who "for the third time running had won a prize for being head of his class" (Doherty 30). His education is cut short by the death of his

father, and at the age of fourteen, he has to enter the mine to help support his family (Doherty 59). Because of these remarkable intellectual attributes, he quickly becomes a leader in the Miners' Union and distinguishes himself as a tenacious fighter throughout his career. He consistently refuses to acquiesce to the Mine's director when he feels that management is making demands that will endanger the safety of his fellow workers. Harris says that his "job is to protect them lads" (Doherty 18). He resists letting the miners work in a dangerous section until the government, which owns the mine after nationalization, agrees to have it drained. Harris maintains his position despite the opposition of Sid Arlott, another union official who is a career bureaucrat and who always adopts a conciliatory stance toward the management. Much of Doherty's novel dramatizes the battles that Harris and Arlott wage as they attempt to take control of the Miners' Union.

Arlott and his toady Joe Burke are eventually removed from the organizing committee of the union because they refuse to support striking miners. The miners are demanding that "negotiations were to begin before they returned to work," but "for Arlott it was too revolutionary" (Doherty 108). In contrast, Harris supports their efforts unconditionally. However, in spite of his devotion to the cause of his fellow workers, he does not affiliate himself with an outside political organization. He tells Johnny Morgan, his friend and young protégée, "they pestered me to join the Labour Party for years. Didn't want to, and never will. . . . We've our jobs to do

without political finagling" (Doherty 129). Harris believes that he can act as an independent agent, and he views himself as the only person who can protect the workers. He says to Arlott at one point, "I favour nobody and I'm scared of nobody. Those blokes [the miners] need me and they know it" (Doherty 19). By assuring the miners that he alone can protect them, he creates a situation where he cannot even protect himself. His entrapment in the collapse becomes a metaphor for the way in which his reformist actions have entrapped him and his fellow workers politically. The miners are employees who must always protect themselves against the abuses of the state. When Davy Walker, a young miner, is killed in the collapse, this becomes Doherty's way of showing the futility of Harris's reformism and indicating that it is destroying the future. The only indication that the Communist party represents the correct path is that Johnny Morgan, who is likely to take over for Harris, has joined it. Unlike Harris, he is on the surface helping Harris's wife get through the crisis (Doherty 129). However, there are no party rallies, and Communist dogma is absent. Where the proletarian novels of the thirties were openly critical of reformist politics, Doherty embeds his criticism of Harris's reformism in the tropological language of The Man Beneath.

Instead of having the mass demonstrations, Doherty emphasizes the need for working-class unity by having Joe Burke, Arlott's toady, contribute the greatest effort in extracting Harris from the collapse. Because of this unified working-class action, Harris lives, and the workers as a class become his

saviors. The Man Beneath marks a change of the proletarian form. It mutes its revolutionary language in a cold war environment that would have made such language unpopular. Nonetheless, it still reflects a commitment to the socialist ideals of mass organization and party politics, and it articulates the defining utopian longing of socialist fiction. It projects that all social contradictions are resolvable through a commitment to a socialist organization. This longing entails the devaluation of the reformist cares and concerns that inhibit the development of the party. In its own way, the proletarian novel projects the necessary negation of working-class identity because it regards that identity as the flawed product of capitalist social relations.

Ingrid von Rosenberg says that, with the exception of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, Lawrence and Wishart's proletarian novels of the 1950s only sold between 1100 and 1800 copies ("Militancy" 164-65). In contrast, Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1958) won a Golden Pan Award in 1964 for having sold one million copies (Gerard 4). The first edition of John Briane's Room at the Top (1957) sold thirty-five thousand copies in the first year and earned fifteen thousand pounds for the author (Allsop 23, 86). The Penguin paperback edition that was released to coincide with the debut of Jack Clayton's filmic adaptation of Room at the Top sold three hundred thousand copies and was one of Penguin's leading sellers for the next twenty-five years (Marwick, "Film and Novel" 254). Unlike their proletarian predecessors, both of

these novels were of immediate, though limited, interest to literary scholars in both America and Britain. It is conceivable that this was due to the legitimating influence of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, who made the study of such work acceptable. The Man Beneath was not the last example of proletarian writing, but it and all other works like it were overshadowed by a type of working-class writing that was almost non-existent before the mid-century period of stagnation. The majority of novels and plays that emerged in the period after Look Back in Anger, when working-class writing had a newly attained cultural legitimacy, do not reflect a commitment to a socialist agenda of one form or another. Like its proletarian counterpart, the working-class literary tradition that began in the fifties still challenges Modernist assumptions about the nature of working-class subjectivity, but it also represents a shift in working-class literary politics. For the first time in the history of working-class literature, the majority of texts being produced were free of the mediating demands of left-wing propaganda. The dominant working-class literature of the post-war movement does not share proletarian writing's defining utopian longing for the establishment of party or mass organizations. Proletarian writing absolutely negates collusive behavior through a concluding longing for commitment. However, as I will demonstrate in my analyses of Room at the Top and Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, the two most successful and influential working-class novels of the 1950s, working-class writing concludes with an unresolved tension between the

collusive desires of the characters and the resistant utopian longings that the texts project.

Like Osborne's Jimmy Porter, Joe Lampton, the protagonist of John Braine's Room at the Top is the intellectual center of the work, and the bourgeois characters who exist in the text do so only in relation to him. Also like Jimmy Porter, he declares war on the rich because "the rich [are his] enemies" (Braine 75). We meet Jimmy Porter in the aftermath of his invasion, when he has already taken his hostage, but Braine provides a narrative account of just such an invasion as it progresses to the hostage taking stage. Joe comes from a working-class family in the town of Dufton, Yorkshire. He longs to escape from what he sees as the limitation of his working-class life, and Dufton for Joe becomes a symbol of death, partly because his parents were killed by Dufton's only bomb during the war. He says that "Dufton was Dead, Dead, Dead" and adds later that "no dreams were possible in Dufton, where the snow seemed to turn black before it hit the ground" (Braine 34). These barren images are reminiscent of those that Evelyn Waugh's uses to describe life in the modern age of bureaucratic planning. For Joe, Dufton represents the past, where the houses only recently acquired bathrooms because, when they were built, "it wasn't considered that the working-classes needed baths" (Braine 14). Where Waugh presents the past as idyllic, Joe associates it with poverty, deprivation, and stagnation. He regards Dufton's inhabitants as figuratively dead because they have seemingly resigned themselves to the limitations of what life there can offer. Joe

and his boyhood friend Charles call these people Zombies, because they cannot progress beyond the roles that have been assigned to them (Braine 29). They have been denied something of their humanity by the forces that control their lives and make them live in an "atmosphere of poverty" (Braine 34). For Joe, who works as a municipal clerk, Dufton can only offer "security and servitude" (24). Fearful that he will become a Zombie and ashamed to be associated with the filth that Dufton and its working-class people represent, Joe leaves for Warley, another town in Yorkshire. There, he takes a position as an accounts clerk in the city's town hall.

Joe's move to Warley is a politically significant act of resistance and, ultimately, an attempt to reclaim something of his humanity by distancing himself from the limitations that he associates with his own past. Joe is "moving into a different world" where, as Charles tells him, "there'll be no more Zombies" (Braine, 11, 17). His gesture is, however, both collusive and resistant. Above, I suggest that Pamela Fox's analysis of Love on the Dole is flawed because she does not read it as a socialist text and does not see the text as critical of Larry Meath's failure as a socialist organizer. Nonetheless, her argument that Larry's adoption of middle-class attitudes is a form of resistance is valuable because she suggests that an action can have both collusive and resistant properties. She remarks that "collusive strains of these narratives are not a denial of or regression from working-class experience but another legitimate part of it" (Fox 61). This is an observation

that one could apply to Osborne's Jimmy Porter. Jimmy resents that he has been denied a world of his own and that working-class people have been deprived of their humanity, but by turning the tables on Alison, he becomes the oppressor, denying her humanity in the process of asserting his own. Thus, he colludes in propagating the class conflicts whose effects he resists when they impact him. Joe Lampton is in a similar situation because, by removing himself from Dufton, he refuses to accept his assigned role, but he also reinforces the negative values that capitalist ideology assigns to working-class identity and working-class culture.

Joe, for instance, gives an account of a grocery manager at the top of Oak Crescent in Dufton who berates his working-class customers about their lack of cleanliness by saying "a person doesn't have to be *rich* to be clean" (Braine 14). Thus, Joe distances himself from this image of working-class bodies by adorning his body with clothes that are expensive and well made (Braine 12). He sublimates his body because he associates the working-class with the filth, chaos, and the grotesque. Virtually every description of Warley emphasizes that it and its people are "clean," but when he describes the bathroom of his aunt's home in Dufton, he remarks that "on the window-sill were a dingy mess of toothbrushes, used razor-blades, face-cloths, and no less than three cups with broken handles which were supposed to be used as shaving mugs" (Braine 14). Yet, by showing that Joe sublimates his body and by emphasizing his desire for cleanliness, Braine invites the reader to see what

Joe himself cannot; the association between the working-class and grotesque embodiment is not a necessary one. Even though Joe is the narrator of his own tale, he does not see the implications of his actions or the significance of his own observations. For instance, noting that the wealthy Alice Aisgill has a "speck of decay on one of her upper incisors" gives him a sense of connection with her, but it does nothing to disrupt his sense of inferiority about his own teeth in relation to those of other rich people (Braine 78). He refuses to smile with an open mouth for fear that he will betray himself as working-class because his are not the perfectly white and straight teeth of Susan Brown or Jack Wales (Braine 41, 78). He cannot move beyond the image of himself as a "swineherd" among royalty (Braine 58). Even if his bodily sublimation signals an act of resistance through his refusal to accept the stigma of those associations, Joe never really questions the bourgeois ideology that equates working-class people with unsublimated embodiment. If Joe cannot see the limits of the ideology that informs much of his thinking, it does not follow that the reader should be blind to them as well. Through his placement of contradictory imagery, Braine puts his reader in a position to do so, and that his reader might break free of bourgeois associations and patterns of behavior is one of the utopian longings that Braine articulates in this novel's conclusion.

The Marxist critic Ronald Paul dismisses Room at the Top because he argues that it merely valorizes "the mentality of crass materialism and consumerism" (Paul 57). Joe is the

product of a materialist culture, and Braine does not allow us to forget that. He does not trivialize the impact of consumerist and materialist ideologies on his main character, but it does not necessarily follow that he endorses those ideologies. Like Jimmy Porter, Joe Lampton vacillates between wanting meaningful and supportive relationships and emulating capitalist mechanisms of dehumanization. Stuart Laing remarks that there is a "'human' quality" in the relationship between Joe and Alice Aisgill that Joe does not share with the other inhabitants of Warley (175). At first, Joe finds a "shabby kinship" with Alice (Braine 78). She takes the place of Charles, his friend from Dufton. As much as Joe claims to despise Dufton and as much he indicates that he wants to start over again in a "place with no memories," there is still a part of him that seeks what he had in Dufton, genuine friends and a sense of security (Braine 96). Joe says, "I'd see Charles and know that I would be able to talk away all my accumulated anger and humiliation" (Braine 78). Alice fills this void, and she comes to be both mother and friend to him. When he is near her, he feels "reassured too, protected like a child" and he adds later that being with her was "like having his mother and father alive again" (Braine 77, 180). Symbolically, their first meetings take place in Warley's working-class district. Joe is aware of this part of the town from the moment that he arrives, but he leaves it out of his descriptions of Warley because it invites associations with Dufton, at first negative but later positive. After one of his meetings with Alice, he walks

through the district and notes that "each house was [his] home and the blackened millstone grit looked soft as kindness" (Braine 79). When he returns to Dufton for Christmas, Joe is not altogether repulsed by what life has to offer there. He takes comfort from the sense of belonging, and when his aunt offers him a cup of tea he is "moved by an impulse of affection" (89). It is only when his aunt pressures him for information about Warley that his ambitions cancel his affection and the tea begins to "taste like old sacking" (Braine 90). On one level, Alice represents a more genuine human connection and a return to values of family and security that Dufton still symbolizes for Joe, even if he suppresses it. The fact that their relationship is not entirely mediated by a fetishism of the commodities should give us ample reason to question the degree to which this text celebrates consumerism and materialism.

Despite the important role that Warley's working-class district eventually plays in Joe's life, he does not associate Warley with its working-class inhabitants or with what he perceives to be the limitations of working-class existence. Nonetheless, that it has working-class inhabitants and that the Aisgills know Dicky Torver, a wealthy man from Dufton, suggests that the two towns are not as different as Joe portrays them (Braine 69). Ian Haywood suggests that Room at the Top "is organized around Joe Lampton's symbolic passage between [these] Yorkshire towns" (95). If Joe assigns Warley and Dufton symbolic values, Braine gives us evidence that he derives this symbolism from the idealization that he encounters in

advertising and other forms of mass produced culture. His aunt's home is a symbol of chaos that he associates with working-class life, but when he sees the Thompson's kitchen just after arriving in Warley, he says that it "would, just as it was, have served as a film set for any middle-class comedy" (Braine 23). Thus, Joe derives his ideal of the "middle-class," a term that he applies to both the wealthy and moderately wealthy, from representations of that class through the way that it advertises itself. Haywood also argues that "Joe appears to have complete control over his destiny" (95). Joe asserts as much when he says, "I'm my own draughtsman. Destiny, force of events, fate, good or bad fortune--all that battered repertory company can be thrown right out of my story . . ." (Braine 124). Yet, the text gives us sufficient reason to view this statement as ironic. Braine demonstrates that Joe is a social construct, one who is torn between an experiential knowledge that working-class relations are nurturing and sustaining and an ideologically instilled desire to move beyond those relations because they do not match the idealized image that the bourgeoisie equates with success and power.

If Joe finally yields to the ideologies of consumerism and materialism over his experiential knowledge, it is more an indication of the power of ideology than a signal that the text celebrates the mores of bourgeois commerce. Alice gives Joe a sense of community, and he values her for that. However, he also views her against the idealized images of women that he sees in the media. He likens her to a "Vogue drawing," and

because on a superficial level she fits this image of success, he fetishizes her as an object that he wants to possess sexually (Braine 69). Thinking of her in relation to Charles, he admits that the difference is that he "never had the least desire to undress Charles and, [he] realized with shock, [he] wanted to undress Alice," but he adds that "he was angry with [himself] for the thought," (Braine 78). If Joe is a sexual predator, it is not because all working-class are driven by uncontrollable bodily urges. He may be angry at himself for having it, but the reference to Vogue indicates that the thought of sexual conquest is the result of an ideology of which he is unaware and over which he exerts no control. He does pursue Alice sexually and wins her over, but he soon rejects her when he discovers that she had once posed as an artist's model--although they later renew the relationship. According to Joe, the act of posing was "not decent," and he cannot bear to think that another man had seen her naked (Braine 116-17). On the one hand, he resents that she should treat herself as a commodity and despises the men who have colluded in putting her in that position, but on the other, he is proprietary. Alice is a possession which he has expropriated from a rich man, and so he in turn treats her like a commodity. She correctly accuses him of seeing her as his "own private dirty postcard," which he had been doing ever since he compared her to the drawing from Vogue (Braine 117). Possessing her becomes an act of class warfare, and it indicates how he intends to engage the enemy in his "irresistible method of attack" (Braine 30). Joe emulates the patterns of

exploitation and expropriation that he has learned from the dominant culture and that he associates with power and self-determination, even when this emulation negates the supportive community that he desires and that Alice can offer him.

Joe is caught in a paradox. He resists his own exploitation by trying to move up the social hierarchy to a place where he will not be subjected to it, but in the process, he affirms the values of a culture that exploits people and fetishizes their relationships. Like Jimmy Porter, the oppressed becomes the oppressor in Room at the Top. Joe's ultimate concession to consumerism and materialism is in his pursuit of Susan Brown, the teenage daughter of a wealthy industrialist. According to Joe, Susan is a "justification of the capitalist system" (Braine 128). Although she is childish and inexperienced, she meets his expectations for an idealized woman even more than Alice Aisgill does. Unlike Alice, Susan "has a young fresh voice and the accent of a good finishing school," and more important, Joe proclaims that "she was like the girl in the American advertisements who is always being given a Hamilton watch or Cannon Percalé (whatever that is) Sheets or Nash Airflyte Eight" (Braine 36). Again, Braine reminds us that the image against which he judges her comes from the mass media that is controlled by her class. Although she offers Joe none of the support and companionship that Alice does, Joe chooses to pursue Susan, and with the urging of Charles, concocts a scheme to win her affections and get her pregnant. As he says, he "was taking Susan not as Susan, but as

a Grade A lovely, as the daughter of a factory-owner, as the means of obtaining the key to the Aladdin's cave of [his] ambitions" (Braine 139). Yet, there is a part of Joe that is left unsatisfied by his actions. When he and Susan engage in childish foreplay, he feels a "loneliness come over [him], real as the damp churchyard smell of the grass" (Braine 136). He quickly negates this feeling by complimenting her with childish cliches and quoting the poetry of Betjeman. Again, like Jimmy Porter, Joe has the intelligence to use the language of bourgeois art as a weapon against the bourgeoisie. He turns their own culture against them, and he uses their methods of expropriation to take possession of Susan. She is his hostage, and at the moment of conquest, he believes that he has finally achieved the full humanity that had been denied to him through his life of "servitude and security" in both Dufton and Warley. When he finds out that she is pregnant, he says, "I was a man at last" (Braine 209). For Joe, this moment affirms that he is not a Zombie because he has achieved the capitalist ideal for masculinity.

Where the bourgeois people of Jimmy Porter's world try to prevent him from taking Alison away, in Joe Lampton's Warley, they reward him for having played the game of bodily expropriation so well. Mr. Brown, Susan's wealthy father, says "I don't give my daughter away to seal a deal" (Braine 210). But that is precisely what he does when he offers Joe a lucrative managerial position in his business and includes marriage to Susan as part of his proposition. Mr. Brown says to

Joe, "You're the sort of young man we want. There's always room at the top" (Braine 212).⁶ James W. Lee says that Joe "is perfectly aware that his humanity is slipping away from him as he grows more prosperous" (61). Where Joe had first thought that this moment would be a realization of his full human potential, he soon discovers that, in fact, it signals the beginning of his own figurative death. By winning Susan, he loses any chance to regain the "shabby kinship" with Alice that had sustained him during his lonely "maneuvers" (his word) to get Susan (Braine 77). When Alice dies in a car crash after Joe rejects her for a second time, he admits that his entire scheme had been "designed and manufactured for one purpose, to kill Alice" (Braine 221). She represents a type of sustaining human relation that the novel associates with Dufton but that Joe rejects in his attempt to satisfy ideologically instilled notions of success. After she dies, he attempts to regain some of this kinship by returning to a pub in the working-class district of Leddersford, but after drinking with a working-class girl, he has to fight her disgruntled boyfriend and his friend just to get away. Christopher Dodds remarks that Joe's venture into the working-class district is a symbolic "return . . . to his working-class origins which now, in their turn reject him" (45). Joe also "kills" Alice by fetishizing her as an object to be possessed. Although she offers him more, he denies her humanity by her treating as an object to be consumed and discarded. Peter Fjågesund correctly remarks that she is a victim "left behind on the battlefield . . . of the main

character's ambitions" (249). Yet, Joe ultimately recognizes his collusiveness in denying her humanity, and he despises himself for it. As he says, "I hated Joe Lampton . . . but he'd come to stay, this was no flying visit" (Braine 219). The sudden tendency to talk about himself in the third person is an admission that his subjectivity is the product of an ideology over which he has no control. Although he survives and prospers materially, he is dead to himself, and he despises the materialist creature who is "sitting at his desk in his skin" (Braine 219).

If asserting himself was a resistant act to reclaim his humanity, then the collusive manner in which he does it re-emphasizes the dehumanizing nature of capitalist social relations. As a model of success, Joe is a "sort of sandwich-board man" for capitalism but nothing more (Braine 6). John D. Hurrell concludes that Joe has "exchanged his humanity for a set of social symbols" (42). Though financially prosperous, he is no less a Zombie than he was in Dufton, and at least while there, he was not complicit in the exploitation of others. Nonetheless, under capitalism, "nobody blames [him]" for his part in this exploitation, and the narrative ends with the admission that "that's the trouble" (Braine 235). Like Look Back in Anger, Braine's first novel ends with a dystopian image of unresolved class conflict. The exploitative relations that Joe resists are still in place, largely because his own actions have reinforced them. However, the dystopian contains within it an implied articulation of its utopian opposite. The novel does

not provide a solution to the class conflicts that it presents as destructive, but neither does it celebrate them as Ronald Paul contends. Room at the Top ends with an unresolved tension between the collusive desires expressed by Joe Lampton and the utopian longing for an end to a system of exploitation and expropriation. It is different from the proletarian fiction that dominated the traditions of pre-war working-class writing because it does not resolve all contradictions through a demand for party organization, but it ultimately does not defend those contradictions as necessary or beneficial either. Thus, it carries forth the Anti-modernist tradition that began with Look Back in Anger.

Joe Lampton and Jimmy Porter are the intellectual centers of their respective stories, and the bourgeois characters with whom they interact are only significant in relation to them. This in itself marks a significant challenge to the politics of the Modernist entrenchment. Arthur Seaton, the protagonist of Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, has the same role in that novel. He is a capstan lathe operator in a bicycle factory, and it is in relation to him that the other characters exist. However, in Sillitoe's novel there are no bourgeois characters, which is rare even for a working-class or proletarian text. Yet, the bourgeoisie and its state still have a controlling presence in Arthur Seaton's life. He is aware that he is subject to the limits set by the ubiquitous "them at the top," and Arthur acknowledges that "They've got you by the guts, backbone and skull, until they think you'll come whenever

they whistle" (Sillitoe 140). In his Discipline and Punish, Michel Foucault give us the language to see that capitalist society is organized as a "Panoptican" (Foucault 200).⁷ Those with less power feel that there are always being observed by those with more power, who in turn, have the ability to punish the weaker for transgressive behavior. In Foucault's terms, working-class people are subjected to a disciplinary apparatus that, through the invisibility of its omnipresent gaze, produces "docile bodies" that discipline themselves for fear that they may be punished (Foucault 138). Even when there is no direct evidence that the gaze is present, those with less power act out the roles that have been assigned to them, and they do it in a way that does not threaten the prevailing distribution of power.⁸ The weaker are productive because, through their docility, they reproduce the system that keeps their limited power under control. As a working-class man with relatively little power, Arthur feels "a lack of security [because] no place existed in all the world that could be called safe . . . If you lived in a cave in the middle of a dark wood you weren't safe" because you would always be subject to the disciplinary gaze of the dominant class and its representatives (Sillitoe 197). Much of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning is about Arthur Seaton's struggles and negotiations with the disciplinary forces in his life.

The rate-checker at the bicycle factory often watches Arthur to see how fast he produces parts. Since Arthur is on "piece work," being overly productive could mean a reduction in

his rate, and he responds to this disciplinary gaze by moderating his output. He says that when "you felt the shadow of the rate-checker breathing down your neck you knew what to do if you had any brains at all: make every move more complicated, though not slow because that was cutting your own throat" (Sillitoe 27). These moments give Arthur a sense of control because he believes that he is working the system to his advantage by earning the allowed maximum. Nonetheless, it is equally clear that the system is working him. He is doing his job with a deliberate thoroughness and is totally absorbed in producing the results that the factory owners want, quality parts produced efficiently. Like Joe Lampton, Arthur feels that he is in control of his own destiny, but in reality, he is merely working within the acceptable limits for someone in his position. Arthur may be "filled underneath with a burgeoning sense of his possibilities and always liable to erupt or implode into violence," but he is "tame enough on the outside and docile at the lathe" (Roskies 182). The rate-checker exists, in Raymond Williams's terminology, to remind Arthur what the "limits" are and to exert "pressure" on him to conform to acceptable standards for nonthreatening behavior. Even if Arthur thinks that his negotiation within these limits signifies a type of resistance, he is in fact being a foucauldian docile body. The increased remuneration that he gets for being so productive is a reward for behaving as the system requires. Robboe the foreman warns Arthur that he is making too much for a lathe operator, but he does nothing to cut Arthur's fourteen

pounds a week because Arthur is so productive (Sillitoe 60). Despite his desire to do so, Arthur does not challenge the bourgeois forces that administer his world and maintain social order through their disciplinary gaze.

Yet, Arthur repeatedly fantasizes about destroying the very system that he helps to reproduce through his docility. The narrator notes that "violent dialogues flayed themselves in his mind as he went on serving a life's penance at the lathe" (Sillitoe 222). Arthur dreams of blowing up the factory and baling out "for Russia or the North pole where he'd sit and laugh like a horse over what he'd done" (Sillitoe 37). When he does his military training, he imagines that he is shooting at the "snot-gobbling gett that teks [his] income tax, [and] the swivel-eyed swine that collects [their] rent" (Sillitoe 141). Nigel Gray correctly suggests that "Arthur can carry through a revolution in his mind--but the world remains unchanged" (109). Arthur may dream about destroying the infrastructure of capitalism because he is aware that it imposes such serious limits on him, but he does not carry out any of his proposed actions. His most significant moment of rebellion in the factory comes when, as a young worker, he discovers that Robboe has been sending him on errands to purchase prophylactics. When Robboe is not around, Arthur mocks him in a "deliberately brutalized Robin Hood accent," shouting at the top of his lungs that he is going to get Robboe's rubbers (Sillitoe 39). This derision may signify Arthur's desire to act out against authority, but it does not amount to a meaningful challenge to

the system. Robboe is a foreman, but he is not a member of the bourgeoisie. Like the hypothetical pizza parlor manager that I discuss in chapter two, he only has power within the labor process because the factory owners have granted him some. Though his power is real, one can question the degree to which he uses it for his own advantage. He is the closest person in the novel to the bourgeoisie, but even Arthur admits that he is only the "enemy's scout" (Sillitoe 61). Robboe reminds Arthur that he is subject to the same disciplinary gaze when he says, "I'll get in trouble for letting you earn so much" (Sillitoe 60). Arthur's denigration of Robboe is a meaningful expression of desire, and it indicates the level to which he wishes to lash out at those who exert control and disciplinary authority over him. At the same time, as an act of resistance it is ineffectual. He only carries it out when Robboe is no longer present, and he does nothing to challenge Robboe's limited authority or to disrupt the more expansive relations of power that structure life in the factory.

It is important to note that his attack on Robboe exemplifies a pattern of behavior for Arthur. In his famous analysis of the pervasive jungle imagery in Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, James Gindin remarks that "Sillitoe's characters are always aware of the conflict of interest between workers and management, the cold struggle that keeps class antagonisms alive and allegiances firm" ("Sillitoe's Jungle" 36). Although the first part of Gindin's observation is valid, the idea that Arthur has an unwavering allegiance to other working-class

people is difficult to see. Arthur ultimately desires to annihilate the capitalist system that exerts a defining control over his actions. Because he is incapable of doing so, he attacks those who are subject to the same disciplinary forces that he is. Robboe's may have a greater degree of power within the labor process than Arthur, which explains why Arthur is so circumspect in his attack, but the foreman is still susceptible to discipline from the bourgeois forces that employ them both. Jimmy Porter and Joe Lampton wage war directly against the bourgeoisie, but these people are not accessible to Arthur so he turns on those from his own class, either because he associates them with bourgeois forces and institutions or because he simply believes that they are weaker than he is.

By moderating his production, Arthur feels that he is manipulating the limits imposed on him by the factory, but he never confronts the rate-checker or challenges his authority. While at work, most of his behaviors arise from a fear that the rate-checker might punish him. Yet, he does want to resist the disciplinary gaze in some form, and his attack on Mrs. Bull symbolizes his desire to do so. She is the neighborhood gossip who stands at the end of his street and monitors the factory workers as they go to and from work. The narrator says that "fat Mrs. Bull the gossip stood with her fat arms folded over her apron at the yard-end, watching people pass by on their way to work. With pink face and beady eyes, she was a tightfisted defender of her tribe, queen of the yard because she had lived there for twenty-two years . . ." (Sillitoe 24). In role her as

defender, Mrs. Bull admonishes Arthur for running around with married women and exerts pressure on him to live within the limits of acceptability for a single male with his social standing. Her disciplinary role in the community is a way in which the working-class affirms the institutions of capitalism. She defends patriarchy and the family. Where Arthur was unable to use violence against the rate-checker and can only mock Robboe behind his back, he is secure in assaulting Mrs. Bull because he knows that she and her husband are physically weaker than he is. Arthur shoots her with his air-rifle and bruises her face (Sillitoe 124). However, in shooting her, he is also aware that he opens himself to disciplinary measures from the state. Where he has no problem confronting Mr. and Mrs. Bull and admitting that it was an act of revenge, he conceals his crime from the policeman who makes inquiries at Mrs. Bull's request (Sillitoe 134). Arthur is willing to attack someone whom he associates with disciplinary pressure, but he does not challenge the institution that sets limits and that has the ability to deprive him of the material comfort that the capitalist system offers him. Mrs. Bull can exert pressure on Arthur to conform, but the type of punishment that she can inflict does not approach that of state, which she ultimately appeals to in her effort to see Arthur punished. She has power because no one is ever without it, but she does not have the sort of power that the legal apparatus of the state does. Arthur's attack on her signifies his desire to resist the disciplinary gaze, but it also reinforces his inability to do it

in way that challenges the systemic divisions of power within his society. Mrs. Bull merely reinforces the limits that have been set by others. Yet, by attacking her, Arthur further divides the working-class community in which he lives and helps to perpetuate the divisiveness that keeps the working-class focused on internal struggles. Arthur's desire may be motivated by a spirit of resistance, but the result of his action is a collusion in perpetuating intra-class conflict that, in the end, gives the state a reason to reassert its disciplinary control.

Like Joe Lampton, Arthur longs for the power of self-determination. When he goes for his fifteen days of military service they say to him that "you're a soldier now not a Teddy-boy," but the narrator says that "he was nothing at all when people tried to tell him what he was. Not even his own name was enough, though it might be on his own pay-book" (Sillitoe 147). But Arthur is a soldier, and though he refuses to conform to all that the Army dictates, he still shows up for his service and performs the role that has been assigned to him by the government. While doing his fifteen days of military training, he refuses to get his haircut (Sillitoe 147). This is a significant gesture of resistance because it denotes a desire on his part to resist the bodily sublimation that the state requires of him, but ultimately, it does nothing to change the balance of power. The feeling of control that results from his act of resistance is meaningful, but the result is limited. Though he is not punished, the risk of being disciplined severely for his action is slight. One could also argue such

limited acts of rebellion actually help to reproduce the system. Capitalism's success depends on the ability of workers to make decisions within limits that do not threaten the social hierarchy but that still give them a sense that they have power over their own destinies. Arthur makes choices and doing so gives him a feeling of control, and although his control is extremely limited, it temporarily satisfies him and stops him from acting on his more violent and confrontational impulses.

Arthur objects that the factory and state can force him to use his body in ways that he opposes, such as "grabbin'" his guts out at a machine (Sillitoe 228). In his drive to assert himself, he attempts a politically significant reclamation of his body from the system, and therefore, his own person becomes a site of conflict. Arthur emulates the abuse of the body that it experiences in the factory every day because he decides that real possession involves disposing of it as he chooses. After all, for most of his day his body is docile, functioning to reproduce a system that perpetuates this cycle of docility and self-destruction. Arthur declares that "piled-up passions were exploded on Saturday night, and the effects of a week's monotonous graft in the factory was swilled out of your system. . .[by the] beer going beneficially down into the elastic capacity of your guts" (Sillitoe 4). On Saturday night Arthur pushes his body to the limits of physical endurance because he can, but bodily indulgence does not signify a lack of intelligence, as the Modernist sought to establish. Ronald Dee Vaverka argues that "on a mental level the personal requirements

of his job are soon fulfilled" because Arthur feeds "the same piece of steel that is cut the same way over and over again" (237). Vaverka concludes that such work necessarily leads to intellectual decay. Yet, there is no indication of this in the novel. In fact, Arthur has a formidable intellect that grows keener because he spends all of his working day contemplating things other than work. He says, "But listen, this lathe is my ever lasting pal, because it gets me thinking," and spends most of his time thinking about ways to establish that he has more power than he really does (Sillitoe 221). Unlike Woolf's Mrs. McNabb, he even has the ability to pose the most significant ontological question: "What am I?" (Sillitoe 147). In his most violent moments, he wants power over others. Nonetheless, there are times when all he wants is power over himself, and so he expropriates his own body and abuses it, for the most part harming only himself--except when he vomits beer and gin on the elderly working-class couple in the pub (Sillitoe 10-11).

While in the Army Arthur sneaks out of the camp to get drunk, and thus defies an imposed limit in a way that gives him a sense of control, but his action is not a meaningful attempt to change the limit. For a time, he escapes the disciplinary gaze of his superiors and does not have to face punishment from them. However, one night Arthur returns in a state of extreme inebriation. When he wakes the following morning, he discovers that he has been tied to his bunk, as Ambergate claims, at the order of the C. O. We never find out if the C. O. has given the order, but it does not matter. That the soldiers restrain

Arthur reinforces the idea that the working-class is conditioned to discipline itself. They all stand to suffer because of his delinquency. If Arthur does not strike at the bourgeois people who make the rules, he does on occasion attack those who try to enforce them, but only when he is fairly certain that the risks of being substantively punished are minimal. When Arthur demands to be untied, Ambergate refuses to accommodate him, saying to Arthur, "You'll only lash out . . ." (Sillitoe 151). Again, attacking other working-class soldiers perpetuates the intra-class conflict that capitalism relies on to keep the working-class from developing a Lukácsian sense of class-consciousness, which entails a working-class awareness of itself as a class. Arthur's restraint is both literal and symbolic. Because of his tendency to lash out at other working-class people, they literally tie him to the bed. Tying him to the bed symbolically represents the way that Arthur's actions bind him to an assigned position within the labor process, one that requires him to "sweat his guts out" at his lathe and perform his yearly service as a soldier.

Through this episode, one of the novel's major tensions emerges. Arthur responds to his restraint by thinking that there is "no better way to spend his fifteen days, provided they gave him a drink of tea and a fag now and again" (Sillitoe 151). Arthur resents the limits that capitalism places on his life, but his resistance of this system is always tempered by his desire for the material gratification that it has to offer. He longs to "kick down his enemies crawling like ants," but he also

wants to accept "some of the sweet and agreeable things of life" (Sillitoe 222). His rebellious gestures are limited and calculated to minimize the risk of punishment, and they never occur in a way that jeopardizes his gratification and sustenance. When Arthur and Fred see the man throw his pint glass through the undertaker's window, Arthur advises him to break free of the female soldier who is holding his wrist (Sillitoe 117). Being aggressively rude may signify a desire to help the man, but calling the female soldier "Rat Face" ultimately falls short of the physical violence that would be needed to extract him from her grasp. Arthur may want to resist the state, but at the moment when such resistance would benefit someone else from the working-class, he stops short of acting out because doing so would open him to punishment and threaten his comfort and security.

The fact that he is living in an age of comparative prosperity goes a long way toward explaining why Arthur feels unable to attack directly the very system that he longs to destroy. Yet, Arthur still desires to destroy something because "it gave him satisfaction to destroy" (Sillitoe 148). Capitalism may meet most of Arthur's physical needs, but the limited agency that it gives him does not ultimately satisfy his desire for power. He longs, therefore, to attack that which places limits his agency in some way. J. R Osgerby observes that Arthur's "life is a cycle of violent rebellion and imposed conformity" (217). But most critics have failed to note that Arthur's violence is never directed at those with the most power

over his life. Stripped of meaningful control through capitalism's mechanisms of exploitation and expropriation, Arthur turns his most violent attacks against those who are also subject to exploitation and expropriation, such as Mrs. Bull. In his desire to assert his own agency, like Joe Lampton, he emulates behaviors that he associates with power and control. James Gindin notes that Arthur's society is a predatory one which rewards people who victimize others ("Sillitoe's Jungle" 42). In his desire to assert that he has power, he adopts the predatory habits of those with power over him. Arthur the oppressed becomes the oppressor, and he fetishizes women as objects to be expropriated from weaker men.

Arthur does seemingly have a genuine affection for Brenda, the wife of his friend Jack, and on rare occasions, he fantasizes about how nice it would be to enter into a mutually nurturing relationship with her. For instance, he thinks that "it must be good to live with a woman . . . and sleep with her in a bed that belonged to both of you . . ." (Sillitoe 137). Yet, his desire for joint domestic ownership conflicts with his tendency to see women as objects to be possessed and used for his sexual gratification. In many ways, he faces the same dilemma that Joe Lampton does. He longs for mutually supportive relationships because he knows that communal effort is the only way to survive when you have little control over your circumstances. Nonetheless, he continually feels the need to affirm his own power by trying to exploit others. Alan Penner argues that "Sillitoe's heroes champion the poor and despise the

rich" (Penner 21). While there is a certain truth to this observation, it also needs qualification. For example, when Arthur and his cousin Bert find a drunken Irishman, they help him back to his boarding-house. Knowing what it is like to be in that position, they are unwilling to let another working-class person face the punishment that might follow. Yet, they cannot help but steal the man's wallet, which just happened to be "stone empty" (Sillitoe 86). Arthur both pities and exploits the Irishman's weakness. He is conflicted between a need to help his own people and a desire to confirm that he has the power to be in control of his destiny, which he can only do by taking something that someone else might value. This attitude ultimately accounts for his pursuit of both Brenda and her sister Winnie.

At times, when Arthur thinks of Brenda, he sees a companion. Such feelings are soon negated by his misogynistic perception that she is an object to be possessed and used for his sexual gratification. He indicates that a wife of his who had extra-marital relations as Brenda does would get "the biggest pasting any woman ever had" because his wife will "have to look after any kids [he] fills her with, [and] keep the house spotless" (Sillitoe 155). Like Joe Lampton, Arthur is proprietary. He believes that he has rightfully expropriated her from the weaker Jack: ". . . if he was carrying on with Jack's wife then it served Jack right" because he classifies Jack as slow, and "he had no pity for a 'slow' husband" (Sillitoe 41). Jack is physically weaker than Arthur, but

Arthur also sees him as weak because he concedes so readily to his own exploitation. He is the "type who never got mad no matter how much the gaffers got on his nerve," and he accepts the inconvenience of working night shifts because he wants to get ahead in the factory (Sillitoe 41). When Arthur sees him later, he discovers that Jack had become a "chargehand," supervising "part of the bicycle assembly process" (Sillitoe 179). Yet, Jack is not so different from Arthur; both function as the factory requires. Jack also has the domestic security that Arthur dreams of at times. Brenda is appealing to Arthur because, by being with her, he can indulge his fantasy for domestic control without having to commit to the institution of marriage. When he was at Brenda's house, "knowing every corner of the house and acting as if it belonged to him, [Arthur] stripped off his coat and shirt and went into the scullery . . ." (Sillitoe 14). This moment of temporary possession gives him conflicted feelings of comfort and rebellion. Keith Wilson argues convincingly that "it is in part against the numbing regularity of the cyclical mechanism that Arthur lashes out, defining self by opposition to, as much as enjoyment of the communal rites" (416). With Brenda, Arthur can play out his domestic fantasies, but he does so in the context of disrupting someone else's domestic arrangement. He can have what he thinks are the benefits of marriage, including having Brenda cook him breakfast. However, he does not have to yield to the restricting limits of the institution. That he is conflicted is evident when he thinks that "I suppose I should keep on hoping

that [Jack] gets knocked by a double decker bus so that I can marry Brenda and sleep with her every night, but somehow I don't want him to get knocked down by a bus" (Sillitoe 33). Getting married would signify to Arthur that he has given in to a system which can only offer domestic complacency and tedious factory work, which is what Jack has done. Yet, throughout the novel, there is every indication that Arthur, despite his rebellious desires, has already given into this system. He never challenges those with the greatest power over him, and he produces just as the factory owners want him to. He may want to blow up the factory, but he also believes that they "look after you" there (Sillitoe 160). It is apparent that Arthur can envision no other way of life. He does not really dislike Jack, but he dislikes what Jack represents. Jack symbolizes what Arthur is, and what he is afraid to be, a worker who reproduces a system that limits his agency.

Treating Brenda as an object is a deplorable act of misogyny, but it needs to be viewed in its political context. I want to make it very clear that I am not condoning Arthur's action, but I do want to understand it. In its destructive and dehumanizing way, it is both resistant and collusive. Arthur wants to be he "own boss," and so he seeks to affirm that he has the power and control that he equates with ownership (Sillitoe 235). The only way that he can get this power is by doing to Brenda and Jack what the factory owners do to him, exploiting their weaknesses. The factory owners take Arthur's labor, his time, and freedom, and all this happens in a world where Arthur

does not even have the satisfaction of knowing that his vote counts (Sillitoe 221). He longs to break out of the limitations of his existence but wants to do so in a way that does not jeopardizes his own relative comfort, and so he turns on those who have no more power than he does. The abortion scene, where Brenda and Arthur's unborn child is killed, symbolizes the destructive results that Arthur's predatory actions are going to have on the future of his class. He participates in killing his own child before it ever has a chance for the self-assertion that he desires. Through the intra-class conflict that his actions generate, he is perpetuating the very system that he wants to resist. He strives for a control that he does not have, but in doing so, he emulates methods of exploitation and expropriation that perpetuate divisions among the working-class. And working-class people discipline him, not because he creates intra-class conflict, but because they, like Mrs. Bull, have been conditioned to defend the patriarchal institutions of capitalist culture. The two soldiers beat up Arthur because he has been having an affair with Winnie. Her husband Bill, one of the soldiers, is defending what he sees as his own proprietary rights. He and his friend punish Arthur and compel him to stop his transgressive behavior, but in doing so, they reinforce the system that controls them all. They make Arthur accept a position that he wants to resist, and without saying so, indicate that his rebellious tendencies are only hurting those who are subject to the same far reaching mechanisms of economic and ideological domination, which they, in response to Arthur's

aggression, help to reaffirm. The violence that takes place only serves to underscore the fact that they are all docile bodies, reproducing the very system that compels them to fight each other as they strive for some sense of power and control.

In the tranquility that follows his punishment, Arthur finally decides to marry Doreen, something that Jack had been urging him to do (Sillitoe 180). Although he imagines that this will give him the domestic stability that he wants. He also says, "Once a rebel always a rebel . . . Ay, by God it's a hard life if you don't weaken," which Arthur does not ultimately want to do (Sillitoe 239). He wants support and companionship, and the novel is replete with images of him enjoying the sense of community that exists among the working-class. The Christmas that he spends with his aunt Ada's family is just one example (Sillitoe 216-18). When he thinks of marrying Doreen, he envisions that "it might not be so bad" (Sillitoe 236). Yet, he still strives for some kind of control and an affirmation that he has power because to give up this struggle would be to weaken, which would make life easier but would also leave him feeling empty and unsatisfied. After they marry, Doreen and Arthur plan to live with Mrs. Greaton, Doreen's Mother. Arthur thinks that "he would be able to get on with Mrs. Greaton, because living there he would be the man of the house" (Sillitoe 237). He sees in this new domestic arrangement a possibility for the control that he does not have in the factory, and the novel ends with a projection that his struggle for power will exist unabated into the future. Arthur believes that he will

spend the rest of his life "fighting with mothers and wives, landlords and gaffers, coppers, army, government" (Sillitoe 238). Thus, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning ends with a dystopian image of unresolved intra-class conflict, one that implies a longing for its utopian opposite.

Arthur's desire for community and companionship will be satisfied through his marriage to Doreen, just as they always have been in his relations with other working-class people. For all that Jack and Brenda become victims of Arthur's quest for self-determination, they are also Arthur's friend. Jack is the one person at work who reminds him that he is something more than an appendage of the machine. Arthur feels conflicted about trying to exploit Jack, thinking that his affair with Brenda was a "rotten trick . . . to play on a mate for a bit of love" (Sillitoe 56). At the novel's end, this friendship may not be entirely destroyed, but it is certainly tainted by Arthur's desire to affirm that he has a power that his place in the labor process denies him. Arthur thinks that "every man was his own enemy," and on some level he recognizes that his own destructive impulses happen because he is "caught up in his isolation and these half-conscious clamped-in policies for living that cried for exit" (Sillitoe 222). By acting on his desires for power, Arthur not only undermines the meaningful relations that he has with other members of the working-class, but he also hurts himself in the process and, through his excessive drinking, seemingly affirms a stereotype about working-class embodiment that the dominant culture relies on to deny him the very agency

that he wants. Like Joe Lampton, Arthur is a victim of his own quest for power. Anna Ryan Nardella argues that by marrying Doreen, Arthur is becoming "a 'regular bloke,' accepting a way of life which he had previously viewed as stifling and narrow" (472). But Arthur did not always see marriage as stifling. More important, the novel gives us no reason to believe that this self-destructive and combative behavior will end, but nor does it indicate that conflict is inevitable. The uneasy truces that develop between Arthur and Jack and Arthur and Bill indicate that there is still a chance to resolve the intra-class conflicts that divide them, even though the novel does not present this resolution as imminent (Sillitoe 206, 228). By projecting that divisiveness and conflict will be the result of Arthur's rebellious tendencies in the future, Sillitoe articulates a utopian longing for a resolution to Arthur's quest for self assertion. Ronald Dee Vaverka correctly notes that Sillitoe does not provide his reader with a ready-made solution to this problem, and in this way, his first novel differs from the proletarian writing that preceded it (49). Like Look Back in Anger and Room at the Top, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning ends with an unresolved tension between Arthur's collusive desires and the text's ultimate projection that Arthur and people like him should have a more meaningful and constructive level of control over their own lives.

CONCLUSION

Working-class texts are highly complex philosophical ruminations about the nature of working-class existence. If they deal with aspects of working-class life that are justifiably unpalatable to those of us on the left, we still should not ignore them. As Lenin reminds us, "We must not regard what is obsolete to us as something obsolete to a class, to the masses" (Lenin, 'Left Wing' Communism 581). Reactionary politics, domestic violence, misogyny, and intra-class conflict are elements of working-class experience, and there are multiple and complex reasons for why they continue to exist. Critics, and especially Marxists, must not fetishize the working-class to the point that they fail to understand the complex philosophical nature of its existence. Yet, as I argue in the first chapter of this study, this is what has happened within virtually every tradition of Marxism, including those that are generally thought to be diametrically opposed as humanist and anti-humanist. We have tended to disregard what the working-class is and have put in its place a vision of what we want it to be. The working-class has the most revolutionary potential of any class, but there is a difference between potential and realization. If the working-class were to realize its potential as those of us on the left want it to, then it would cease to be the working-class. We can only hope that this would, in turn, produce the classless society that compelled us to be Marxists in the first place. Arthur Seaton and Joe Lampton have as much revolutionary

sentiment as anyone in a proletarian novel. However, that sentiment manifests itself in ways that ultimately reinforce the limitations of the class alignments that they attempt to defy. The working-class is the most powerful class in any capitalist society, but that power is at best latent, kept in check by bourgeois strategies of manipulation and containment. Though coerced into doing so, the working-class does collude in its own oppression. Thus, collusive behaviors are part of working-class existence. If we disregard them, we run the risk of ignoring the resistant desires that often actuate those behaviors. We should not ignore these desires even though they lead to actions that ultimately have the effect of re-affirming oppressive relations.

Critics also must not duplicate the errors of Georg Lukács and Lucien Goldmann by setting the expressed concerns of working-class people against static and abstract conceptions of "authentic" class values. Yet, this is how Sillitoe and Braine's novels have been read consistently. John Dennis Hurrell says of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning that "others have given us novels of provincial working-class life. But nobody has given us such absolute verisimilitude" ("Alan Sillitoe" 6). Hurrell celebrates the novel because it conforms to his expectations about the provincial working-class. His claim about verisimilitude implies that he has a conception of working-class life against which he is judging the Sillitoe's text. Nigel Gray does something similar. His influential study The Silent Majority has a special place in the criticism on

twentieth-century English literature. Gray attempts to write a scholarly work in his own vernacular dialect, and he uses working-class idioms to explain concepts and attitudes that might otherwise be expressed with language that is Latinate and technical. For instance, he notes that Arthur Seaton put a mouse on a bench to scare the women at the bicycle factory where he works (Sillitoe 27). Gray explains the significance of this episode by saying, "I knew blokes who worked at Fords who used to deliberately sabotage the work out of boredom" (107). It is refreshing to see someone who is comfortable enough with the descriptive qualities of his language to use a word like bloke in a scholarly study, and there certainly is value in relating literature so directly to your own experience. Nonetheless, Gray is not performing a reading of Sillitoe's novel. He is using it as a platform on which to present a reading of himself and his own experience. The text does not emphasize Arthur's boredom during his seemingly playful attack on the women in factory. One could make a compelling case that disrupting the routine of the factory has more to do with his desire to establish a sense of control and power. Again, it is significant that he directs his aggression at his fellow workers and that he ceases his disruptive behavior the moment that he is aware of Robboe's disciplinary presence. Yet, Gray misses this struggle because he reads it through another narrative, one of his own making. For Nigel Gray to read Sillitoe's text through his own experience is for him to be guilty of the Normative Fallacy. Although Gray's conception of working-class life is

based on an experiential knowledge, Arthur Seaton's Nottingham is not Gray's own community. In Gray's analysis, Sillitoe's narrative disappears, and he replaces it with the story of his own life, which he, in the Lukácsian tradition, presents as a reality against which we should assess the verisimilitude of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning. Although he thinks that he is confirming the realist underpinnings of the novel, he is, in fact, preventing himself from seeing the real contradictions that the novel proposes to resolve imaginatively through its overriding utopian longing.

My analysis of working-class literature is not contingent on its disappearance or dismissal. Even if we find aspects of these texts disturbing, they offer too much information about the world in which we live for us to dismiss them as the degraded products of capitalist social relations. Yet, some of the very best Marxist critics have done precisely that simply because these novels do not present the working-class as they want to see it--in an advanced state of revolutionary development. Arnold Kettle calls the working-class novels of the 1950s "petit-bourgeois" because they seemingly endorse individualism ("Anger" 6-7). Though Sillitoe and Braine deal with individuals, they are also concerned with the way that their working-class characters relate to their own communities. I have shown at length that much bourgeois literature of the twentieth-century sought to affirm a social hierarchy that denied working-class people discursive agency and associations with rationality. It is deeply troubling that Marxists would

categorically dismiss literature that the bourgeoisie found so threatening and that it fought successfully to keep it on the margins of scholarship until the 1950s. The entrenchment against working-class forays into culture became the most urgent part of the bourgeois literary agenda in the twentieth-century. By ignoring working-class literature, Marxist critics affirm the politics of that entrenchment, even when they are not aware that they are doing so. Paulo Freire says that if we hope to liberate the working-class we must learn the nature of its cares and concerns, and to do this we must know where those cares and concerns are being expressed (77). Most important, we must understand something of the real social contradictions that led to these cares and concerns if we hope to see them resolved. Although I oppose her statement about authenticity, I mostly concur with Ingrid von Rosenberg when she suggests that the value of the fifties working-class novels, even for the committed socialist, is that these so-called "descriptive novels, which picture a small slice of social reality, but with fresh observation and a great amount of authenticity in the representation, probably prompted more critical thinking . . . than the CP novels, precisely because they avoid [trying (sic)] to talk their readers into certain fixed political belief[s (sic)]" ("Militancy" 164). Through their inability to resolve real structuring contradictions imaginatively, working-class texts open the door for us to consider how we can resolve them in a way that does not condone or apologize for the collusive actions of the characters but that does not dismiss them as

irrelevant either. When Marxists allow the working-class people to speak for themselves, they do not deny them their rightful place as equal participants in the struggle for their own liberation. The collusive action is often the product of a resistant desire, and our task as revolutionaries is to help bring these things together as constructive and motivated resistance. If working-class literature does not show us how to do this, it at least indicates to us that we should do it. English Modernist literature gives us an idea of the ideological pressures that will be brought to bear against us as we try, but in the end, we must try.

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: THE MARXIST LACUNA (1-32)

¹ Marcuse claims in One-Dimensional Man that “. . . [industrial society's] supreme promise is an ever-more-comfortable life for an ever-growing number of people who, in a strict sense, cannot imagine a qualitatively different universe of discourse and action, for the capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination and effort is an integral part of a given society” (23).

² In Essentially Speaking, Diana Fuss notes that “perhaps it is inevitable that we turn to . . . labels ‘for terminological convenience’ . . . [but such labels] can be unsettling if what we wish to emphasize is not the fixed differences between subject-positions but the fluid boundaries and continual commerce between them” (34). Lukács attempts to address such appearances of fixity by foregrounding his belief in the fluidity of class boundaries. I have yet to find a better way of dealing with this concern in my use of terminology describing extensive groups of people.

CHAPTER TWO: THE REDEMPTION OF REALISM (33-64)

¹ Tom Bottomore reminds us that economism has several different meanings for Marxist thought. When using the term economism, I am referring to “a form of Marxism which emphasizes (and in the view of its critics over-emphasizes) the determination of the social life as a whole by the economic

base" (Bottomore et al. 168).

² Wright argues, "Instead of regarding all positions as located uniquely within particular classes and thus as having a coherent class character in their own right, we should see some positions as possibly having a multiple class character; they may be in more than one class simultaneously. The class nature of the positions is a derivative one, based as it is on the fundamental classes to which they are attached. Such positions are what I have termed 'contradictory locations within class relations'" (Classes 42). Though he addresses a major theoretical difficulty, Wright relies on anecdotal evidence to locate people at contradictory class positions. In his sociological surveys, he generally use his own questionnaires to elicit responses. The replies are perceptions that may very well be the result of ideological interpellation.

³ The passage is originally from Neue Zeit XX.1 (1901-02): 79.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LONG REACTION (65-109)

¹ As I suggest in chapter one, the use of "realism" to describe a particular form is unsatisfactory. Here, I am merely noting the general belief that "realism" as a form was rejected by Modernism. I do not, however, accept the definition implied in the observation.

² Whether Eagleton is referring to the Modernist movement when he uses the term modern is unclear, but it raises the issue that Modernist and modern function interchangeably for most

critics and that this has led to much confusion, even to the degree that I have heard the term "Modernism" (capitalized) applied to anything from Romanticism on.

³ I base my observations in this chapter on a consideration of fiction. However, the distinction between experimenters and non-experimenters is no more convincing when it is applied to the poetry. As with the fiction, formal differences do not erase deeper political similarities.

⁴ The ellipses represent my omissions.

⁵ Tratner makes the same claims in his earlier essay "Figures in the Dark: Working-Class Women in To the The Lighthouse" (3).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ABORTED REVOLUTION (110-156)

¹ Lehmann says in the "Manifesto" to New Writing that "though [it] does not intend to open its pages to writers of reactionary or Fascist sentiment, it is independent of any political party" (vi).

² The editors of the Left Book Club, who commissioned Orwell to write The Road to Wigan Pier, were so ashamed of his comments about working-class people that they reminded their subscribers that "Mr. Orwell is exaggerating violently" when he says that lower-classes smell (Gollancz xiii).

³ It is impossible not to quote T. S. Eliot on this point. He said in 1932 that "I should think better of communism if I learned that there existed in Russia a decent leisure class" and he added, "I think that under the present system the majority of

those who have to work at all, have too work too long and too hard. . . .I should prefer to employ a large staff of servants, each doing much lighter work but profiting by the benefits of the cultured and devout atmosphere of the home in which they lived"--but could never own (Eliot, "Commentary" 273-275).

⁴ Woolf claims that "a boy brought up alone in a library turns into a book worm; brought up alone in the fields he turns into an earth worm" ("Leaning Tower" 137).

⁵ Eliot declares in the Sacred Wood, "It is part of the business of the critic to preserve tradition--where a good tradition exists. It is part of his business to see literature steadily and to see it whole; and this is eminently to see it *not* as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time; to see the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes" (xv-xvi).

⁶ Arthur Marwick argues that the nationalization of industries such as coal and steel did little to change the way that they functioned. He maintains that "in one sense industrial relations had been totally transformed by the war; in another sense they had scarcely been changed at all" (Marwick, British Society 104). The bargaining power of the Unions had increased, but prewar interests maintained bureaucratic control.

⁷ Sinfield argues that the appearance of equality in the arts became a way for cultural elites to justify their ingrained notions about other classes. He says that subsidizing "high culture" has resulted in "better resourcing for middle-class consumers, and [the preservation of] cultural assumptions that

freeze out and discriminate against the lower classes, ethnic groups, women. The final twist is that when lower class people do not take to the arts, it is said to be their fault" (55).

⁸ Sebastian Flytes too has an association with bodily indulgence through his alcoholism, but his alcoholism is a sign of the modern world's inability to feed his spirit. He is, as Cordelia tells Charles, "very near and dear to God," and in no way does his drinking signify an inability to appreciate beauty (Waugh 304).

⁹ The writers associated with The Movement are Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, Donald Davie, D. J. Enright, John Wain, Elizabeth Jennings, Robert Conquest, Thom Gunn, and Thomas Hinde. Morrison notes that, in so much as these writers can be linked together, it is largely because " . . . the Amis-Larkin-Wain triangle might justifiably be thought of as the nucleus of the Movement" (14). However, in his introduction to his novel Jill, Larkin suggests that his connection to Wain were not so strong as the "triangle" image might suggest (16).

¹⁰ Morrison argues that much of their opposition was aimed at the surrealistic poetry of Dylan Thomas (145).

¹¹ Amis published a work in 1957 called "Socialism and the Intellectuals," which portrays no investment in socialist thinking. His strongest political stance is to remark that "the best and most trustworthy political motive is self interest" (315). Most critics think that, from his undergraduates days until his death, Amis's politics became increasingly conservative (Fraser 784). I argue in the following pages that

his conservatism showed itself much earlier than is commonly supposed.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEGITIMATING MOMENTS (157-174)

¹ The words "simply and without malice" are from Osborne's stage direction.

² Nandi Bhatia, Terry Goldie, and Brian Murphy see this statement as an indication of Jimmy's longing for a return to an Edwardian past (Bhatia 396; Goldie 205; Murphy 369). If we emphasize the idea that Jimmy has been denied a world of his own by those who have sought to preserve the Edwardian twilight, then the second part of the sentence becomes ironic. He does not regret the passing of the Edwardian, he takes a pleasure in expressing that regret.

³ Priestly reviewed The Outsider for The New Statesman and Nation on July 7, 1956.

⁴ The filmic adaptations of these books are important aspects of what Arthur Marwick calls the "cultural revolution" of the 1950s ("Room" 127), but we need to exercise caution when linking them to the novels from which they were adapted. They are, after all, different texts and, in their composition, contain different emphases. They, therefore, project different political concerns. For instance, John Hill remarks that the stylized representations "of cities and factories in terms of 'art'" allows the film makers to turn them "into objects of 'comfortable contemplation'" (136). The films tend to minimize the significance that the novelists attach to such places. In

the novel Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, the factory is an all consuming pre-occupation for Arthur Seaton, but in Karel Reisz's film, we only see its interior in the initial establishing shot, and thus, Arthur Seaton's relationship to the labor process is de-emphasized in the film in a way that it is not in Sillitoe's book.

⁵ Williams gives Eliot too much credit for using the phrase "way of life" in Notes Towards a Definition of Culture (Williams, Culture 242). Eliot does use the phrase to describe culture, but in the same paragraph, he says that the "repository of this culture has been the elite" whose "function it is to preserve group culture" (Eliot, Notes 40). He wants his "culture" to be "a way of life" for everyone, but not everyone can have equal access to it.

CHAPTER SIX: PARTY POLITICS AND COLLUSIVE RESISTANCE (175-225)

¹ In The Long Revolution Raymond Williams provides an excellent overview of the chain of events involved in the expansion of popular education: "In 1870, school boards were established, to complete the network of school and bring them under a clearer kind of supervision, and in 1876 and 1880 this extension was confirmed by making universal elementary schooling compulsory. In 1893, the leaving age was raised to 11, in 1899 to 12, and in 1900 to a permissive 14. Thus by the end of the century a national system of elementary schooling, still largely confined to the provision of a minimum standard, had been set going" (137). Yet, Williams also argues that the Education Acts

of 1870 were not as cataclysmic as most historians suppose. He says that "we already know from the history of elementary education that there was no sudden opening of the floodgates of literacy as a result of the 1870 Education Act. The basic history of literacy in the century seems to be a steady expansion" (Long 168). Most scholars do not accept Williams's argument, and it is essential to acknowledge that the rapid increase in working-class fiction after 1870 indicates that there was a different type of literacy than had existed prior to 1870.

² Len eventually dies while fighting in the Spanish Civil War and thus makes the ultimate sacrifice to the causes of the party. Lewis Jones himself made a similar sacrifice in 1939. Though he did not fight in Spain, he did die of nervous exhaustion after conducting thirty street corner rallies in support of Communist Party efforts in the Spanish Civil War (Smith 1, 5).

³ In his recent study of working-class fiction, Ian Haywood, an exceptional bibliographer, only identifies two working-class texts that were published in the 1940s, Sid Chaplin's the Leaping Lad (1947) and Willy Goldman's East End my Cradle (1940) (Haywood 170-72). To his list we could add Sid Chaplin's, My Fate Cries Out (1949) and Harold Heslop's The Earth Beneath, which was published in 1946, but as Andy Croft notes, was written ten years earlier (Croft 31). It could be that our perception of stagnation has prevented us from looking for other working-class texts of the 1940s.

⁴ Stephen Constantine's "Love on the Dole and Its Reception in the Thirties" is a useful study of the early history of Greenwood's first novel. He notes, for example, that there was a Hebrew translation of Love on the Dole in 1933, the same year that the first British edition was published by Jonathan Cape and a year prior to the first American edition (Constantine 233). Constantine's main focus is, however, on the initial readership of the novel, which he claims must have been middle-class because "Love on the Dole cost 7s 6d and even the cheap 'florin' edition [1935] was a not inconsiderable outlay for most wage-earners" (234).

⁵ His 1938 novel, Only Mugs Work, is a very poor attempt at crime fiction.

⁶ The italics are Braine's.

⁷ Foucault takes this term from Jeremy Bentham, who envisions a type of prison where those in charge can "gaze" at all of the inmates from a centrally located position (200-28). The Panopticon makes it possible to "perfect the exercise of power" because "it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised" (Foucault 206).

⁸ In Foucault's system, no one is entirely powerless. If they were, there would be no need for a disciplinary apparatus, which exists to keep power in check. Marxism relies on the notion that the working-class has much more power than the bourgeoisie. The struggle is to make the working-class aware of its power, which is kept under control by bourgeois strategies

of manipulation and containment.

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