

THE SHROPSHIRE SCHIZOID AND THE MACHINES OF MODERNISM

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Lawrence may have gone into a “free fall” in the academy, as Adelman puts it, but . . . I too would want to “assert my claim to be among *the ranks of my contemporaries who revere him, and hope to be infused with some of his clarity, simplicity and passion.*” And . . . I too want to believe that “the wheel will turn again; Lawrence will be back, brave and bushy-tailed as ever, to inspire *another generation.*” Then our *literary sons and daughters* may be able to say, “Look! He has come through!”

Sandra M. Gilbert [*emphasis mine*]¹

Is there any modernist scholarship that is not born of frustration? Can today’s criticism achieve anything more than the feeble comforts of correction, recovery, and revision? Must we always pretend to ape the moderns, finding in their own discarded poses the suitable guises and stances for our careers? Granted, some frustration - resentment even - is appropriate. Anyone entering the field will soon sense that the game is up. Take D.H. Lawrence, for example. For years, we were told that Lawrence was a bad man, a white man, a fascist, a chauvinist, a pervert. He served to remind us of the potential despot in all of us, to purge us of any egotistical excess, and to frighten us into the loving arms of Woolf, or (less satisfactorily) H.D. But now, once again, the necessary work of revision and restoration begins. Sandra Gilbert – Sandra Gilbert!?! – comes forth to let us know that Lawrence is a-ok. Start the presses! Lawrence is alright with us - he’s exactly what we’ve been looking for - a courageous soul, a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stale (i.e. politically correct) profession! Bad daddy/good mommy or warm papa/cold mother – it doesn’t matter - this modernist machine can only do one thing. Its dimensions are standardized; its gears have been locked; its flows proceed efficiently, and profitably (at least for some). Indeed, today’s modernism functions according to a series of politicized binaries that the moderns themselves never wholly accepted (center/margins; father/mother; fascist/democratic; semitic/anti-semitic, etc.). It erects an illusionary series of guideposts that distorts the historical landscape and misrepresents the desires of those who inhabit it, locking all into an Oedipal play of authority and alterity. Yes, in our work, the modernists appear as so many clumsy dolls. They are not simply stiff, but animatronic, appearing to couple and hump on their own. The drama we make them enact is infantile, boring - nothing more than a dress-up - and a lame economy of identity and expression neutralizes the explosive dimensions of their work. We’d like to imagine that this drama opposes the inherent fascism of the period, but without ever understanding the economies of totalitarianism, without ever looking beyond the family romance, we effect a coercive relation to the past and thus to our own work, restricting and channeling its truly revolutionary potential. By never seriously questioning the logic of paternalism, never moving beyond the simple impulse of political inversion, we are not allowed to see modernism as it wants to be seen, as a form of liberated desire, as an affective gesturalism, as a passionate enactment. Indeed, to look beyond Oedipal modernism, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari knew, is to reconceive cultural analysis itself as a kind of impassioned engineering, with the writer-critic allowed to tinker with his materials, working through all kinds of sign-machines, soldering and smelting away at poems, speeches, and other substantial dynamos. Ultimately, though, as “literary sons and daughters,” in our neurotic response to the past, we erect a quasi-intellectual bulwark against our own modernism, against our own desire; in the name of anti-fascism, we defend an economic that is just as horrifically final.²

My language here is unforgivably rooted in the polemic of *Anti-Oedipus*³, but it is also unabashedly modernist in its embrace of the explosive energy and polyvocal complexity of modernity at large. My aim in this essay is to show what happens when we consider modernism in terms of its production rather than its consumption, when we consider desire as a single fluid

capable of multiple forms and thus discard the entire apparatus of desire as founded upon lack. Modernism here will be conceived as a willed production, a more or less conscious, yet affective labor that is inextricably bound to its specific place and time. It is an act of production within a monism of production, or, rather, an act of production after production, that is undertaken with the first trace of stock or surplus. It is the moment when production is ever so slightly free of itself as stock and thus, turning back upon itself, finds itself open to possibilities both glorious and perverse. Modernism as a kind of productive *dédoublement*: only *this* formulation accounts for both the explosive energy and the damning self-consciousness of the period. Modernism, here, is production and product, the act of slicing and the thing sliced off; each moment of its creation is at once quantitatively and qualitatively different, each entails both a continuum and a break, and thus always a choice between repression and consummation. And only *this* formulation explains the ability and inclination of contemporary scholars to push the modernist moment further and further back in time (as well as further and further into the future). As product, as surplus, modernism has always already begun, on the body of the despot, with the filiative stock at the campsite, with the nuts in the monkey's pocket. And, as production, as surplus, it is always already about to begin, setting itself in motion. Modernism is a turning point in the past at which we still have to arrive - we are once again almost there. It is a road that is paved with its traveling, or, rather, it is the continual fork in the road that is the only road - and thus it entails a continuous choice, between its own fascism and its own liberation. So don't expect me to pinpoint the historical origins or even the geographical drift of modernity - rather, accept that modernism always arrives at its destination, and, indeed, it is still with us and it is with us everywhere. And don't expect me to define modernism as a unified set of expressive traits, from which we can either distance ourselves or embrace as a certain romantic ideal - modernity works beyond any individual pathology, demanding a worldly response. Ours is to decide whether this infernal return should take, again and again, the form of Oedipal drama, or whether we should drop the curtain for once and for all, go back stage and cavort with the actors. If what follows seems to play fast and loose with the cherished coordinates of modernism and modernist experience, so be it. If modernism is a production and a surplus, I am not so much interested in what it means, but how it works and how it can be reengineered. I am concerned with modernism as it opens history to a new kind of operation, a new kind of labor whose fruits are on par with those of modern technology itself. Welcome to criticism as engineering!

Thus I emphasize here a modernism that refuses to imprison desire within an imaginary order of lack and fulfillment.⁴ In the work of A.E. Housman, D.H. Lawrence, and Wyndham Lewis, I seek a modernism in which desire is a productive force that surges forward into form, slowly eroding and reshaping the forms of the past. This desire contains no absence and its seeks no completion; rather, it reaches toward consummation through connection, through a phenomenological exchange by which it is drawn out of itself by itself and into presence, into its own surplus. Also, I argue, this desire cannot be described apart from other, material forms of production that found their greatest development in the early twentieth-century. This desire, in fact, is only made possible in its being drawn out by surplus value in the form of capital, in its revelation and attenuation by way of capital in the form of new roadways, power lines, and printing presses. Thus, in the first section, I follow Housman's *Shropshire Lad* as he charts the new modernist terrain - the highways and byways that were continuing to carve up the full body of the nation - and records the deterritorializations and reterritorializations affected by the forces of capital. In the second section, on Lawrence's *Brangwen* novels, I introduce the subjects that inhabit this terrain, insofar as they can be called subjects, as they evolve out of the phallic economy of bourgeois capitalism only to be wired up to the electric dynamos of corporate modernism. Finally, in the last section, I move to London and the British avant-garde in order to translate the new anti-expressive language spoken by the modernist schizo⁵, a phenomenal linguistics in which the sign is at once signifier and residue, a surplus that in turn shapes further production. By ordering these writers in this way, I hope to depict modernization as it swept across the British countryside from the country to the city - from Shropshire through Nottingham to London - leaving all changed in its wake, a flotsam of schizophrenic activity. More radically, I hope to tap into the productive energy of the period, its persistent transitionism or becoming - I hope to extend modernism in its most extreme formation, as a continual crisis, teetering between revolution and reification, as it forces us to confront the interconnectedness of its material and symbolic dimensions, its

productive energy and efficient control. Thus, as you will find, I approach these forgotten texts as idle, yet dangerous machines, ready to be used by the adventurous engineer. Conversely, I insist that modern technologies function as sign-systems, looking to be read by scholars who can never respect the boundaries of their field. All is plugged into a strange, forgotten circuitry – at once productive and significant – ready to be lit again, made capable of the most radical transformations and the most heinous crimes. Criticism as engineering - criticism as it flows through a rich, new circuitry, teetering on the brink of annihilation, from the South to the Midlands to the City, along the roadways, through the powerlines and in the press!

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From Clee to Heaven the beacon burns,
The shires have seen it plain,
From north and south the sign returns
And beacons burn again.

Look left, look right, the hills are bright,
The dales are light between,
Because 'tis fifty years to-night
That god has saved the Queen.

Now, when the flame they watch not towers
About the soil they trod,
Lads, we'll remember friends of ours
Who shared the work with God.

To skies that knit their heartstrings right,
To fields that bred them brave,
The saviours come not home tonight:
Themselves they could not save.

It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
And Shropshire names are read;
And the Nile spills his overflow
Beside the Severn's dead.

We pledge in peace by farm and town
The Queen they served in war,
And fire the beacons up and down
The land they perished for.

'God save the Queen' we living sing,
From height to height tis' heard;
And with the rest your voices ring,
Lads of the Fifty-third.

Oh, God will save her, fear you not:
Be you the men you've been,
Get you the sons your fathers got,
And God will save the Queen.

A.E. Housman, "1887"⁶

First, the modernist landscape. Housman, in 1887 - the year of the Queen's Golden Jubilee - was already there. He stood high above Clee, above so many shires - the full body of England - and saw the Empire slowly eroding into its future. What lies at the heart of this poem is begetting, a continual begetting, through which the nation, somewhat precariously, exists. A continual energy

or labour links all - skies knit, fields breed, sons are born unto fathers who are born unto sons. A flame of passionate industry lights up the full body of the Queen, its effulgence crowding out the shadows of each dale, chasing away the sentiments of humanism as it has always done. What intrigues here, and throughout Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, is the schizophrenic perspective, a dizzying relay of dilation and contraction. Housman's view flickers between heaven and Clee, between the socius in its most reified form and the minutiae of desiring-production. Everywhere, he moves from the molar to the molecular, from a two-dimensional topography of the nation as a whole to a murderer's bloody hand. He zooms in and out of the expanse, at first distanced from all creation and then opened up to the most intense connections - a flowering, a shoveling, each glorious-catastrophic "plunge of plummet" (36). Behind this convulsive gaze lies the very contradiction of capitalism, an economy urging its own destruction for the sake of its survival. Up and down, from hill to dale, the full body explodes into flame: the Queen is saved in her perishing - the soldier reborn through the wound in his groin - the Empire exists in its ceaseless breaching, the economy in the continual displacement of its limit. On the one hand, the entire scene is locked into the symbolic logic of the past. The ghosts of Oedipal drama still haunt the nation - the landscape is a mother fertilized by so many dead sons. The poet yearns, anxiously, for the restoration of patrilineage, the resurrection of so many Lads and their proprietary claims. Yet, undeniably, these men have perished, and their perishing - at least this time around - has broken through the supposedly redemptive cycle. These men "could not save" themselves, and their mute corpses expose an asymmetry in the system, an imbalance in the economy. The cry for more sons, for imperial expansion, can only be read in despair, as the call for more coal, more rivets, so many more dishes for the voracious Queen. The cycle can be sustained only in the extension of its limit, to produce and consume in ever greater quantities, a painful appropriation. Importantly, this imbalance works both ways - the redemptive "sign" is too bright, greater than that which it expresses, while this violent production could never be reduced to the symbolic. Everywhere, the economy of the full body is thrown out of balance - there is overflow - a certain excess, a residue, a surplus arises that is not easily consumed. Housman, standing high above Clee, faces the most sublime contradictions of modernity: a landscape that is being rapidly deterritorialized by forces of production that ensure reterritorialization, a capitalistic decoding of the full body by way of axiomatics that ensure its recoding. Hence, his schizophrenic vision: the dilation and contraction, public exposure and private despair, post-Oedipal dissolution and the mute ghosts of Oedipus. Hence, his tortured nostalgia: a desire for return that only pushes him further away from home, a call for intimacy that is heard out in the street, the assertion of manhood that everywhere makes him the woman he fears. His is a schizomodernity, orphaned, nomadic, scattered, surcharged - long before Futurism, long before *BLAST*, long before Deleuze and Guattari.

Housman's work, in other words, gives expression to those processes by which capitalism at once opens the vast networks of desiring-production and shuts them down. "Capitalism," according to Deleuze and Guattari, "through its process of production, produces an overwhelming schizophrenic accumulation of energy or charge, against which it brings all its vast power of repression to bear." "For capitalism constantly counteracts," they continue, "constantly inhibits this inherent tendency while at the same time allowing it free rein; it continually seeks to avoid reaching its limit while simultaneously tending toward that limit. Capitalism institutes or restores all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territorialities, thereby attempting, as best it can, to recode, to rechannel persons who have been defined in terms of abstract quantities. Everything returns or recurs: States, nations, families" (34). But capitalism does not effect its own repression simply through the persistence of symbolic codes. This restraint is more directly enacted by the abstract relations capital forges between capital, exchange, and labor. In other words, while "decoding" or "deterritorialization" suggests a liberation of productive networks, it is occasioned by the utterly restrictive, rationalized logic of exchange. Yes, certain traditional barriers have been dissolved by the aggressive economic order, but only by way of abstractions or, more precisely, axiomatics - the quantitative reductions and differential relations of the modern economy. The entrepreneurial subject is at once unplugged from the traditional objects of (libidinal) investment, and thus freed to enter into new productive relations with his environment, but his desire is just as immediately restricted by the empty, alienated quanta of the marketplace.⁷

In its primary form, capitalist decoding entails a dual movement, a dilation that is also a contraction, a retreat into liberation; the expansiveness of its reach is everywhere countered by an

utter isolation or reduction of experience. Thus we come to the singularly modernist experience of a nation defined in its own dissolution, a subject released into the claustrophobia of wide open space. Capital creates a reality that is at once less than and greater than the local; it ushers the entrepreneur into a space that is neither here nor there; his abstract labor brings him into contact with everything and nothing.⁸ This perhaps explains why Housman's most famous collection of poems - *The Shropshire Lad* - has little to do with Shropshire, but life on the roadways, carrying its population into Nottingham, London, and so many other industrial cities. Indeed, Housman's "Shropshire" hardly exists in the collection as anything but a vague site at one end of the road, a fantasy, a nostalgia. The "Shropshire" lad has long since been forced out of the humble shire; he and his lower-class "helpmates" drift across a homogenous landscape, looking for some means of life, anxiously registering the carving up of the nation by privatization and exchange. On the roads, they experience an almost vertiginous liberation, a freedom that borders on suffocation - theirs is an anonymous, anxious, roving life, continually merging with the "moving pageant file / warm and breathing through the street" (34). The roads, of course, are nothing new, but their development seems to have reached a critical mass, obliterating regional specificity and the networks of local power. This network - at once material and affective - provides a way out of the provincial life, but it contains its own limitations and restrictions, and so the sensation of escape is often accompanied by the sensation of being carried away. Life on the roadways is intensely public, with all the freedom of movement that democratic life seems to entail, but it also occasions a kind of formality, a rigidity, that is described here as both a dehumanization and an isolation: "There pass the careless people / That call their souls their own: Here by the road I loiter, / How idle and alone" (36). The roadways, then, serve as both product and scene of economic flow, and thus throw all identity into crisis, individual and national. Once the Lad leaves home, his ego is only tenuously held together, formed and dispersed according to the demands of the economy: "From far . . . the stuff of life to knit me blew hither: here am I. / Now - for a breath I tarry / Nor yet disperse apart" (56). The nation, too, is constantly being knit and reknit by the economy - its traditional forms of propriety are being rewritten daily, reinscribed on the terrain. For Housman, England is "the nation that is not," in which "Nothing stands that stood before" (34).

Again, the decoding of the subject and the nation is not simply counteracted by a recoding in other spheres, such as the church, state, family, etc. Rather, decoding/recoding occurs through the market's dependence on axiomatic relations - an incomprehensible, dizzying, yet utterly rationalized play of presence and absence. To this, then, we may add that all identity, all "concrete being," is founded only on differential relations, on the abstract relations between "decoded flows whose respective qualities have no existence prior to the differential relation itself" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 249). In other words, Oedipus - the logic of subjective lack - is founded upon the marketplace. The economy itself creates the emptinesses as well as the satisfactions by which it can sustain itself. Capital enacts, to borrow from Weber, the practical transformation of the subject into a guilty worker, always in arrears with a hidden god, and thus always engaged in a ceaseless labor of redemption.⁹ Tellingly, Housman's Shropshire lad, despite his name, is always where he never is. He exists in a state of continual leave-taking, a ceaseless displacement that is always present, yet already past. Thus, his keen sensation of lack occurs only as an after-affect of thwarted desire, as a second-level desire that could never find a suitable object. His enforced displacement, which he could never fully apprehend, generates a nostalgia so intense that it can only imagine the home he never had.

In fact, "Shropshire" ("the land of lost content") arises ("I can see it shining plain") only because the lad has left it behind (64). It is an imaginary object, and thus an impossible object, that forever distracts the Lad. Or rather, it is an impossible object that ensures the lad's continued productivity, the appropriate channeling of his desire: "Now through the friendless world we fare / and sigh upon the road" (62). In fact, it is precisely the Lad's desire to be home, his longing for fullness, that carries him along the roadways away from home. Hence, his progressive nostalgia - like Benjamin's angel of history - looking over his shoulder as he moves towards that which has never been.¹⁰ This *perpetuum mobile* provides a valuable service insofar as it augments the market as it sustains it. This is the ceaselessly displaced limit of capital, as it opens itself up to a desire only to close in again upon it at a further remove: "the *relative limit* [of desiring-production] is no more nor less than the capitalist social formation, because the latter engineers (*machine*) and mobilizes flows that are effectively decoded, but does so by substituting for the codes a

quantifying axiomatic (*une axiomatique comptable*) that is even more oppressive. With the result that capitalism - in conformity with the movement by which it counteracts its own tendency - is continually drawing near the wall, while at the same time pushing the wall further away" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 176).

Thus an intense desiring-production lies at the center of all, but it has been harnessed by the forces of capital, by a deterritorialization that contains all territory, a decoding founded on a new kind of code. In a sense, everything is liberated by exchange, yet everything is trapped by exchange. Everything has been stripped of its aura, and is thus free to be bought and sold. We can immediately see how this transformation can be perceived as a redemption. For Housman, the curtain has been drawn, ever so slightly, and he glimpses a glorious new order. On the roadway, the Lad meets so many men in circulation, in exchange. Desire is freed to effect new, strange linkages; it is plugged directly into a rapidly changing socius, not man-to-man, but body-to-body, mouth-to-mouth, bypassing all the identifications and disidentifications of Oedipus. This experience is nomadic, life a wandering daisy-chain, a series of polyvocal networks. It is telling that so many poems in this collection focus on appendages, partial objects, the fragment of the body rather than the whole Oedipalized body. Importantly, in this, there is no subjective middle-ground: desire moves from the global to the particular, from the socius to the organ, without any mediation of the romantic subject. So many hands, for example - the hand of a true man, the hand of a murderer, the hand of a train conductor, an ex-lover. The hand "aches" with so much shaking - exchange here is never empty, calculable; rather, with each touch passes an electric shock that utterly changes all. The flow of energy enters into completely new configurations, new mechanisms - it never rests. Indeed, these exchanges reshape the lad as he moves through them - and he is grateful, thanking "The Men that made a man of me" (61). To borrow again from Benjamin, this shock figures as a kind of love at last sight, one that instantaneously transforms the poles between which it passes. We never crossed before - we're likely to meet no more, yet only because I am imprinted with your touch, forever (45, 176).¹¹

Yet, at the same time, everything is also reduced to the mechanics of exchange. At times, and only briefly, one glimpses the valuata passing between these hands - money, if not gold itself (46; 61). The body, under capital, moves out of Oedipus, but it is also reduced to so much quantifiable matter, so much raw material, for a voracious mechanism of production. Thus, the logic of the marketplace overtakes the schizophrenic body, not to mention each love poem: a living lad is "worth a dozen" dead; poor Fred, he lies "Stock-still," on a shelf, yesterday's produce (48). With hope, with pride, we see "The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair." But these are all "sterling lads" with "hearts of gold"; their self-worth depends on an empty standard that demands continual reassertion. They are looking for a reassuring love, but they arrive in quantity, reduced by competition to so much common currency (89, 61). Indeed, for Housman, this disheartening scene calls up an equally tragic vision of sacrificial warfare. His narrator turns away from the lovers of women to the lovers of nation, who stop at the fair on their way to the battlefield, where they will face pain, death, and anonymity. These, too, are indiscernible victims of the economy: "I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell / The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern" (46). The key word here is "token," for the cash nexus destroys the expressive mechanism through which labour and consumption are typically validated. The only tokens here are the nondescript coins that are exchanged amongst the lads and their lovers, coins which, in their very non-description, their complete abstraction, garner all power to themselves. With this comparison, Housman exposes the grand illusion by which history shifts from despotic power to economic power proper, the mutation of heroic sacrifice to God, to the economic sacrifice to Capital: "They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man, / The lads that will die in their glory and never be old" (46). Capital - wielded by a woman in love, a hawker at the fair, a boss in the mines - functions as master signifier by which all value is distributed. Its plentitude riddles the socius with lack, its knowledge is placed in service of maintaining ignorance.

Again, though, we are describing a system that works according to its own imbalance. An original monism of production finds itself everywhere restrained and diverted by itself: on one side, desire creates the surplus that then falls back on desire; on the other side, capital works to release a desire that radically transforms the make-up and function of capital. In Housman's work, this monism flows through all, capable of taking many conflicted forms: "It fanned their temples, filled their lungs, / Scattered their forelocks free; / My friends made words of it with tongues /

That talk no more to me” (62). What is essential here is that desiring-production always entails stasis as well as change. Desire does not simply produce the static object, for stasis is everywhere built into its movement, arising out of its movement and thus enforcing its continuation.

“Producing, a product,” Deleuze and Guattari write, “a producing/product identity. It is this identity that constitutes a third term in the linear series: an enormous undifferentiated object. Everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place – and then the whole process will begin all over again” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 7). In one of Housman’s longest poems, we follow a Lad as he, in turn, blindly follows a merry youth through a windy natural landscape. Despite the journey’s initial promise, the Lad soon realized that he is being trailed by a shadow (perhaps the reader), and then by the falling leaves of Autumn, and finally by “the fluttering legion of all that ever died” (67). Here, too, death is not the antithesis of desire - it is stitched into it. Stasis or anti-production shadows production at every step – it arises at every connection, or, rather, it is the condition of connection - the mark of connection as well as disconnection, the move away. Again, “the automata stop dead and set free the unorganized mass they once served to articulate” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 8). Importantly, though, if stasis is the precondition to movement (and vice versa), it can often become oppressive, a repression of production that falls back on production in order to pervert it. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari speak of two kinds of repression, “Desiring-machines are both technical and social. It is in this sense that desiring-production is the locus of a primal psychic repression, whereas social production is where social repression takes place, and it is between the former and the latter that there occurs something that resembles secondary psychic repression” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 32). Not surprisingly, Housman’s merry guide reveals himself to be a trickster, a changeling, with a “serpent-circled wand.” His vital jaunt leads us to “the fluttering legion/ of all that ever died” – it is, throughout, shadowed on all sides by death (67). Ultimately, it is this intensely schizophrenic activity - torn between disorder and rigidity, caught in the simultaneous birth and death of new forms – that allows us to define Housman's life and work as schizo-modernist. We should be wary of pathologizing Housman, with his “queer double life,” as a private victim of familial repression. Rather, he is merely one of many “careless people” on the modern highway, a contemporary Hermes of the ways, liberated into attraction-repulsion across the full body of the landscape. The multi-dimensional compartmentalism of his life, in its ceaseless transitioning, bespeaks of so many new and public connections, at once freed and denied, both with and without the guilt of Oedipus. So much life, amidst so much mechanical death, moving fastidiously between outrageous spectacles - back and forth between Shropshire, Bromsgrove and London, between the London Museum, Café Royal, and University College, between Arnold, Twain, Hardy, detective novels, and ghost stories, between Toryism and socialism, between queer and straight.¹² Again, so many lives, so many deaths – Housman as avatar of a modernity already in place - faced with that which we continue to face.

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That which she was, positively, was dark and unrevealed, it could not come forth. It was like a seed buried in dry ash. This world in which she lived was like a circle lighted by a lamp. This lighted area, lit up by man's completest consciousness, she thought was all the world: that here all was disclosed forever. Yet all the time, within the darkness she had been aware of points of life, like the eyes of wild beasts, gleaming, penetrating, vanishing. And her soul had acknowledged in a great heave of terror only the outer darkness. This inner circle of light in which she lived and moved, wherein the trains rushed and the factories ground out their machine produce and the plants and the animals worked by the light of science and knowledge, suddenly it seemed like the area under an arc-lamp, wherein the moths and children played in the security of blinding light, not even knowing there was any darkness, because they stayed in the light.

D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*¹³

Lawrence’s work remains valuable insofar as it gives us a glimpse of the demons of desiring-production as they continue to threaten the modern subject. Here, and throughout his work, the great passion crouches in the bush, just outside the blinding light of civilized Oedipus, at once revealed and ousted by a particularly tortured consciousness.¹⁴ Importantly, Lawrence’s most

immediate frame of reference is not the family, but the emerging socius at large; his great subject is the monism of the will and its perversion, as it is released, repressed and mangled by modernity's changing social networks. At its best, his work courses along the roadways of the nation, through the power lines that were beginning to overtake them, hooked up to the electrical current that still flows through Nottinghamshire and linked to the great city of London; it pulses with an energy that is both its own movement and its own expression, establishing couplings and connections that are at once shocking, obliterating, creative. His characters are so many an Oedipal chameleons, changelings, nomads, open and then closed to a ceaselessly metastasizing socius. They are contradictory to the point of incoherence, and their actions bespeak a "rich, new circuitry," involving changes both intensive and substantial. Will Brangwen is phoenix, is eagle, is mole with thin, fine fur; Birkin is cripple, is Greek, is nettle-bush, is anus. Skrebensky dies - literally - and then he speaks on the next page. Throughout, the darkness of desiring-production "wheel[s] round about, with gray shadow-shapes of wild beasts, and also with dark shadow-shapes of the angels, whom the light fenced out, as it fenced out the more familiar beasts of darkness" (*Rainbow*, 424). Indeed, in their very structure and style, Lawrence's novels reflect the paradoxes of decoding/recoding under capitalism. His writing everywhere confounds the codes of family romance - it is rarely genealogical, or even causal; rather, he moves his readers through repetition and variation, both within each relationship, and through history as a whole. His narratives revel in contradictions, doublings, and elision that make a folly of the family - they consists of only transition and transfiguration, movement through an electric landscape of flows and circuits. We may ask, with Ursula, for significance, for historical redemption, "But the purpose, what was the purpose?" But Lawrence teaches us that desire is one of many "impersonal forces," without "purpose," simply "alive." Indeed, like electricity, it has "no soul" to reveal, for it is its own revelation, at once expansive, fluid, and luminous (*Rainbow*, 426). Modernity's strange circuitry: we cannot know what it means, only how it works - what it does. And we are the ones who must choose what to do with it.

Let's just get the ego out of the way, right away. All love in Lawrence's novels is set up as Oedipal, occasioned by family romance, but in its instance, this love everywhere exceeds the Oedipal. The configurations of desire are not maintained as triangles triangulating other triangles, but as so many arcs and curves, parabolas and loops, that always proceed in one direction at one time, but then proliferate on a single plain and thus obliterate any trace of subjective coherence. Desire is always multiple, self-contradictory; characters are never heterosexual, or even hermaphroditic or amorphous; they are angular, cubist, kaleidoscopic. There is no man, no woman - rather, it is always woman or man or then something else, first one and then the other, and always in transition from one to the other (*Anti-Oedipus*, 76). We can imagine no geometry complex enough to contain Ursula's desire: she loves Birkin in one aspect, her father in another, her sister in yet another, and also Miss Inger, Skrebensky, Gerald's horse, and a kitty cat. Always, she is able to "love a hundred men, one after the other," and with each consummation she moves beyond love, beyond daddy-mommy-me, as an end in itself (*Rainbow*, 460). So many intensive states, so many crowded connections - the circuit board nearly explodes: "I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things, I do not belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to England nor to this world, they none of them exists, I am trammed and entangled in them, but they are all unreal. I must break out of it, like a nut from its shell which is unreality" (*Rainbow*, 478). Importantly, though, it is the increasing modernization of the landscape that allows a more extreme form of desiring-production to seep in to the Oedipal drama. Increasingly, with the move from the countryside to the city, object choices lose their inevitability, and, once passion evolves into fullness, it dissolves the molar identity of the individual into so many constellations of radically charged molecules. Yes, Ursula plugs into her father, but also into the Church school near the marsh, the High School at Nottingham and Anton Skrebensky; she dances before the moonlight and kills Skrebensky; she falls for a teacher before failing miserable as a teacher . . . and then the Café Royal and then the German alps and then "the next move into the world again." "In every phase," she exclaims, "she was so different. Yet she was always Ursula Brangwen" (*Rainbow*, 423).

In "The Crown," a somewhat muddled set of notes composed with the Brangwen novels, Lawrence describes the ego as an artificial shell that sustains as it destroys the illusion of wholeness. The ready-made individuality of Oedipus is a delusion, a piece of grit, that only serves

to distort the steady flux of desiring-production. This self is a “sick fetus,” “mundane egg,” and “safe within the everlasting walls of the egg-shell we have not the courage, nor the energy, to crack, we fall, like the shut-up chicken, into a pure flux of corruption.”¹⁵ In fact, for Lawrence, this ego - for what it's worth - exists only in its lack, in its being barred from the other. It is at once told what it cannot have and thus what it desires; it is told that it must be differentiated and thus always threatened with the (fictive) possibility of nondifferentiation. More specifically, we might say that this ego is ruled by two impossible desires for what it never really wanted in the first place: a desire to have what it could never fully possess (mother) and a desire to be what it could never become (father). Thus, as Lawrence makes clear, the subject is constructed in its (false) lack and all of its desire is directed toward a single person, who is not really a person at all, but a bundle of equally neurotic desire. Hence, a Lacanian desire that is always a desire to be the desire of the other; hence, a socius locked into a miserable, intersubjective grid of presence and absence. In *Women in Love*, of course, Gerald's Oedipus is everywhere directed toward the acquisition of power over others. The very lack he feels transforms the need to “equilibrate” with another into a demand for power; he seeks, in Gudrun's submission, for example, a sense of self that is “liberated and perfect, strong, heroic” (*Women*, 329). And yet, everywhere, the cure here is fouler than the disease; the very desire for mastery exposes and inflames the lack. Gerald, the perennial infant, knows Gudrun as nothing other than his “great bath of life”; his “pure body” is lifted up in her maternal arms, yet it is also then “almost killed,” made insignificant and helpless on its own.¹⁶ Thus the affair between Gerald and Gudrun devolves into an elemental, and utterly meaningless, dialectic of mastery and servitude, a self-sustaining battle between two Oedipuses at once creating/destroying each other without change: “always it was this eternal see-saw, one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because the other was nulled” (*Women*, 445). Like Housman, though, Lawrence wrestles with these reductive tendencies without ever losing sight of their larger, social dimensions – their productive capacities. The false ego, having never been brought out of itself and into the world of fullness, defends its wholeness by an appropriation of the phenomenal world that is only mechanical: aestheticism, pornography, violent sex, war, etc. The selfish, conceited egg - a reification, nothing more - must sustain the illusion of its artificial completeness, and thus crams itself full of so much produce: “For where is the rich man who is not the very bottomless pit? Travel nearer, nearer, nearer to him, and one comes to the gap, the hole, the abyss where his soul should be. He is not. And to stop up his hollowness, he drags all things unto himself” (“Crown,” 385).

Enough. Desire is never essentially lack, but a force, a movement, a fullness. Lawrence everywhere elbows and kicks his way out of the paper bag of Oedipus, trying desperately to create that which he also wants to reveal. His characters struggle to move beyond lack into an orphan fullness, beyond the will to power into the will to actualize. Here, too, an other is necessary, interdependence is divine, but as the precondition for bringing being into being, as the foundation of a positive substantiation of selfhood. The entire dynamic of love depends upon the possibility of exposure and the mutuality of presence - two lovers together in difference, rather than the persistence of lack and the hierarchy of presence and absence.¹⁷ “The Crown” begins with a series of binaries - light/dark; flesh/mind; creation/procreation - that seems to reinforce the most offensive dimensions of modernist thought. But these pairs are actually only mutualities within a single monism of desire; one is merely the other turned back upon itself, bringing itself into being. The darkness, impregnated by light, develops into light - the future turns around to face the past and develop it into itself. In their palpable mutuality, in their proximate and proximating estrangement, one brings out the other; thus, “the flesh develops in splendor and glory out of the prolific darkness, begotten by the light it develops to a great triumph, till it dances naked in glory of itself” (“Crown,” 369). A necessary strangeness, an original asynchronicity of mutual desire, marks all of Lawrence's narrated affairs. An initial difference, a misrecognition of the self-same, initiates all passion, and thus sustains its flowering. The other draws out the other, brings one to realization in its simultaneous derealization. There is thus a mutual activation, a double presencing that disrupts the unity of being only to bring it to being on another level. In the language of “The Crown,” “When I put my hand on her, my heart beats with a passion of fear and ecstasy, for I touch my own passing away, my own ceasing-to-be, I apprehend my own consummation which obliterates me in its infinity . . . I resist, yet I am compelled; the woman resists, yet she is compelled. . . . I melt out and am gone into the eternal darkness, the primal creative darkness

reigns, and I am not, and at last *I am*" ("Crown," 377-8). And, historically, the same process transforms the rural landscape, Housman's landscape. The city, which is depicted as only the intensification of rural economy, turns back on the country, in its strangeness, and brings the latter into itself. The road to London is also the road to Nottingham, the father is the son in another aspect, and the same phenomenological mutuality ensues on a historical level. Thus, the attraction of the rustic Tom for an urbane Lydia is founded upon "strangeness," upon a "beyond" that is also oddly near. He is granted a "certain reality" in her "foreignness"; he is released from his incoherence by her crisp "self-possession." Again, destruction and creation commingle, man and woman both at once, both as man and both as woman - but also country and city at once, realizing each other - history as one phenomenological arc, realizing itself in desire, in work, in surplus. The country comes into being only with the arrival of the city, with the recognition of itself in its future aspect; thus, always, in the countryside, we hear the bells and whistles of the growing city, the cries of intense labour: "Then the shrill whistle of the trains re-echoed through the heart, with fearsome pleasure, announcing the far-off come near and imminent" (*Rainbow*, 9).¹⁸

In this, we are simply dealing with an inversion of the Oedipal relation we defined above. This intense double presentism everywhere bursts through the semiotics of lack, its transitionism destroys the egos that cry out to one another in vain. Indeed, throughout Lawrence's work, lovers signal each other with desperate cries; they call out desperately in their desire to be the desire of the other. But this is no Lacanian relay of empty talk - Lawrence's characters are never neurotic chatterboxes (such as those we find in Joyce or Woolf's work), trying to stuff up the void with so many deceptive words.¹⁹ Rather, their language is expressive in the most phenomenal sense - their words are so many presences and sign-posts that serve to direct and channel desire, enacting linkages hitherto unthinkable between subjects. For Tom and Lydia, the moment of consummation occurs once "They had exchanged recognition," and this leaves them "quiet, suspended, rarefied." In fact, at this moment, Tom "could not bear to think or speak, nor make any sound or sign, nor change his fixed motion. . . . He moved within the knowledge of her, in the world that was beyond reality" (*Rainbow*, 25). In the first Brangwen novel, Lawrence presents this dynamic through the architectural metaphor of the arch, in which two positive, material desires bend forth and stretch out to touch one another, thus creating a stability between them: "Here the stone leapt up from the plain of earth, leapt up in a manifold, clustered desire each time, up, away from the horizontal earth, through twilight and dusk and the whole range of desire, through the swerving, the declination, ah, to the ecstasy, the touch, to the meeting and the consummation, the timeless ecstasy. There his soul remained, at the apex of the arch, clinched in the timeless ecstasy, consummated" (*Rainbow*, 193).

The half-arch is a pouring out into space, an exposure unto space. Certainly, this is the greatest pain, the pain of blindness, of groping alone, and in response to this unbearable openness the subject may develop its defensive shell. The introjected ego serves as a band-aid, a false covering, deferring the real possibility of connection. But what Lacan and others define as lack is really only surface, an end-point, a blistering exposure in space that demands not fulfillment, but contact. Desire, again, is never founded upon incompleteness, on lack; rather, its precondition is a failure to connect, to link up: "He could not be alone. He needed to be able to put his arms around her. He could not bear the empty space against his breast, where she used to be. He could not bear it. He felt as if he were suspended in space, held there by the grip of his will. If he relaxed his will he would fall, fall through endless space, into the bottomless pit, always falling, will-less, non-existent, just dropping into extinction" (*Rainbow*, 180). We can see how easily this dynamic can fall into its perversion, into an aggressive rigidity, and Anna in fact ultimately rails against the reification of the church arch; yet, as Lawrence remains us, the most complete soul is that which is most open to the desire of the world, who allows its positive thrust to meet with the ecstatic energy of the earth and sky and their inhabitants. Anna dances naked before all of creation, Gudrun before the cows on the heath; the "aristocrat" is one who can always establish fresh, multiple connections with the vital world, for "Man is great according as his relation to the living universe is vast and vital."²⁰

We have explored desiring-production in its most immediate expression between subjects and its apparently inevitable fall into Oedipal corruption. Our trajectory, in fact, is similar to Lawrence's own, for while *The Rainbow* explores the permutations of desire as it is first conditioned by the family, *Women in Love* is more specifically about the modern socius and how

desire is both released and repressed by the structures of capital, particularly its technology. Indeed, in *Women in Love*, Lawrence reconceives desire - in its personal aspect and its productive aspect - as a single electrical pulse capable of multiple manifestations. In this, he stages a groundbreaking debate on the appropriate channeling of desire by forces and forms that literally extend through and beyond the subject into the world of material production.²¹ In other words, he shows just how the economic shift to modernity proper radically transformed not just the understanding of desire, but the flow of desire itself - the new power lines recondition not only the theory, but the very management of desire.²² More specifically, then, desire here is understood in its plentitude, as both a motion and revelation, a dark current on its way and a blinding white light that is already here. Indeed, it is its power to collapse distances in space and time - to collapse the expressive gap between depth and surface, desire and consummation - that makes electricity such an appealing alternative to traditional notions of desire. For Lawrence, for the Futurists, even for Lacan and Deleuze, it is desire-as-electricity - unlike a desire based on lack, a desire that never speaks itself - that is appealingly self-evident, immanent - it comes "out of nowhere into somewhere," creating itself as it reveals itself, and thus capable of manifold forms and intensities.²³

In *Women in Love*, Birkin and Gerald represent this total force in its positive and negative aspects - as dark passion and as blind power - and thus the two directions toward which this history moves. Birkin is a philosopher of the crackling, electric flux; he appears "ageless, like some crouching idol, some image of deathly religion." He exists in intimacy with an electric flood of "destructive creation," or "progressive devolution," a "further sensual experience - something deeper, darker than ordinary life could give" (*Women*, 172, 204, 252). And, indeed, he reinterprets all desire as a positive charge between opposing poles; in his speech, the arch-model of the previous novel is replaced with an intense play of attraction and repulsion between two magnetic poles. "One must commit oneself to a conjunction with the other - forever. But it is not selfless - it is a maintaining of the self in mystic balance and integrity - like a star balanced with another star" (*Women*, 152). More radically, he locates the source of this dark electrical current at the base of the spine, in the pulsing anus, "far beyond the phallic cult" (*Women*, 253). His yearning everywhere is for release through the anus and in the undifferentiated power that flows through it: an anal release that is also a death into the pure being of creative destruction, the freedom of undifferentiated, an Oedipal gender.²⁴ And his meeting with the equally willing Ursula proves his glorious undoing: "She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him, drew into herself. She had established a rich new circuit, a new current of passional electric energy, between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body and established in perfect circuit. . . . She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of the man's body, from the strange marvelous flanks and thighs, deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches" (*Women*, 314-5).

Again, though, the desires unleashed by modernity are never truly free, for the linkages affected here are also coercive, or at least rigidly guarded, channeled into mechanical production by the captains of industry. In fact, the very conception of desire-as-electricity is not simply liberatory, for it can be immediately appropriated by a coercive regime; while it can seem to grant the subject access and movement to a larger socius, it also leaves that subject exposed to the demands of efficient management.²⁵ Gerald's blood is also "fluid and electric," flush with a force both "turgid and voluptuously rich," but his Oedipal fears work to restrain and retard the pulse of electrical current. His passion thus never achieves consummation, but, rather, emerges either in dark violence or, sublimated, into the blinding heat of production (*Women*, 60, 65). As he describes the sensation of being near a woman, "She's so beautiful, so perfect, you find her *so good*, it tears you like a silk, and every stroke and bit cuts hot - ha, that perfection, when you blast yourself, you blast yourself! . . . it's nothing - your brain might have gone charred as rags . . . it's blasting - you understand what I mean - it is a great experience, something final - and then - you're shriveled as if struck by electricity" (*Women*, 440). Importantly, Gerald harnesses his energy to an electrical power plant outside the mine, with which he begins to appropriate the energy of the countryside. In the novel, this coupling first figures as a glorious sublimation: Gerald - unlike Birkin - seems capable of transmuting the dark power of electricity into the light of productive

day. But it also appears as the most horrific form of death; the complexity of Gerald's industrial organization can barely mask its utter stasis, its death-like grip on the landscape. Here, Birkin's liberatory analism is transformed - in its utter repression - into a kind of corporate management, the efficient restraint and release of capital flow.²⁶ Gerald's power is utterly reductive, appropriative - it is the power of sublimation proper, or, to borrow from Deleuze & Guattari/Bataille, "the dead rat's ass suspended from the ceiling of the sky," the elevated and disinvested anus that swallows all desire (*Anti-Oedipus*, 143). And yet the workers are drawn to Gerald's dark dynamo: "Let them turn into mechanisms, let them. Let them become instruments, pure machines, pure wills that work like clockwork, in perpetual repetition. Let them be this, let them be taken up entirely in their work, let them be parts of a great machine, having a slumber of constant repetition" (*Women*, 466). Gudrun herself attains a (false) sense of power and comfort by submitting to his regime: "Ah, it was terrible and perfect. Under this bridge, the colliers pressed their lovers to their breast. And now, under the bridge, the master of them all pressed her to himself! And how much more powerful and terrible was his embrace, than theirs, how much more concentrated and supreme his love was, than theirs, in the same sort!" (*Women*, 330).²⁷

Again, desire always entails its own reification, its own estrangement. As we saw in Housman's work, anti-production is built into all production, where it is capable of both freeing us from repetition as well as constraining us to sheer repetition. The lover, like the worker, must undergo self-alienation in order to know his self, but therein also lies the possibility of a more complete alienation, a more complete death.²⁸ The greatest mistake is misrecognizing one aspect of this unified process as the whole process. Life and death are stitched together, but, as Lawrence warns, we fail to embrace this relation when "we see in part, always in part. We are enclosed within the womb, we are the seeds in the loin of the eternal light, or we are the darkness which is enveloped by the body of the past, by our era" ("Crown," 370). Yet this is not a simple dialectic. No, as Lawrence realizes, the history of desiring-production - both for the individual and the *socius* - is also a history of surplus. Desiring-production entails a coming together of so many disparate qualities, of many flows and partial objects, but with every linkage, some object, some third thing or other value is produced. In other words, desiring-production is an activity, a network, a system, yet it everywhere leaks, creating surpluses, excesses; its own surface even, in its phenomenological aspect, can be seen as an excess that exceeds the system. Part of the flow is always channeled back into the organ-machine, but part is sliced off, as stock, as sign, as subject. As I now hope to show, the moderns were everywhere amazed by this "third thing," the final term of desire that arises out of desire or the coming together of two desires. It is the term beyond love itself, beyond creation and destruction, appearing inevitably, always, out of the very forces that negate it. Always, something more is produced - "a fragment of earth which travels to be fused out, sublimated"; there is always a "residue of imperfect fusion" ("Crown," 374-376). Gloriously, for the moderns, this third thing is precisely what frees us to produce again. It is the rest, the pause in the machine, but also a difference, out of which and against which desiring-production emerges renewed; moreover, it is emblem, imprint, of what is possible and what can be improved: "On the slow wave of matter and spirit, on marble or bronze or colour or air, and on the consciousness, we imprint a perfect revelation, and this is art" ("Crown," 412). The difficulty is that this surplus can always be seen as a finality, as an origin itself. It can - with Lacan, with Lawrence at times - be read as an absolute or law, as the third point in the symbolic triangle of mommy-daddy-me. It thus falls back on the production out of which it arose, miraculating itself as its own origin, appropriating all, harnessing all, like Gerald, to a single electric dynamo. Again, the moment of surplus is an utterly modernist moment - so much commingled hope and despair, so much promise leading directly to violence.

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That these things on the surface are different to what they are in the depths or interior, and that we are surface creatures, is the truth that Nietzsche insisted on so wisely. All the meaning of life is of a superficial sort, of course: there is no meaning except on the surface. It is physiologically the latest, the ectodermic, and more exterior material of our body that is responsible for our intellectual life: it is on a faculty for exteriorization that our life depends.

Wyndham Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*²⁹

I hate to admit it, but so much depends - in politics, in art, in love - on our approach to language. And, when all is said and done, the moderns understood - even at their worst - that it is only through language that we can move beyond the impasses of modernity. Thus, it is time to unearth the desiring-production that underlies linguistic-production, to restore the dynamism, the magnetic play of attraction/repulsion that pulses beneath the textual machine. It is time to upend a modernist canon that validates the ceaseless expressionism of the market and rethink it through an alternative linguistics founded upon a material phenomenology of the sign and thus aligned with the most radical effects of modern technology. I am asking here that we abandon the language of lack, the very notion of language as founded upon the "void." I am asking that we abandon the language of Woolf and Joyce, in which the signifier always arrives from elsewhere to cover up so many psychic wounds and gaps - the language of Lacan, whose work tends to affirm a demanding economy in which one must first disown all power in order to beg for it back. Maybe, for a few paragraphs, we can entertain the notion that language is also part of our machinery. Or, more precisely, it is a product, a surplus, of the machine that nevertheless remains a part of the machine - never expressive of a supposed interiority, but always a functional aspect within a single, fluid dynamic. It is, if you will, the surface of the machine, what we see of the machine - the exterior record of the mechanical operation, the persistent etching of so many movements and digressions from the inside out - that serves, at least for a time, to shape further movement. Or, it is simply the mutating code of the machine, of all machines, which, in turn, works to shape the machines in their functioning, effecting so many linkages, channeling desires, engineering production in every direction. "It is an entire system of shuntings along certain tracks, and of selections by lot, that bring about a partially dependent, aleatory phenomenon The recordings and transmissions that have come from the internal codes, from the outside world, from one region to another of the organism, all intersect, following the endlessly ramified paths of the great disjunctive synthesis. If this constitutes a system of writing, it is a writing inscribed on the very surface of the Real, a strangely polyvocal kind of writing, never a biunivocalized, linearized one; a transursive system of writing, never a discursive one" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 39). And, further, through the axiomatic of capital, with the deterritorialization brought about by private property, all these codes are freed, released, allowed to speak so much revolutionary jargon. The entire signifying edifice is broken down, and the avant-gardiste is released into the schizophrenic activity of blasting and blessing - Let's meet at the coffee house! Anyone can own a press! Sign my manifesto! It is not surprising that this great confounding of the code occurred on the streets of pre-war London, at the tail-end of empire, at the height of capital's rampant decoding of itself. At precisely the same moment, the schizos and their schizzes decided to convene in Piccadilly, the Café Royal, the ABCs, in order to propound the moment - any moment - of a universal history, past, present or future.

But we must also realize that those most intensely committed to the new socius, most loudly speaking the new, polyvocal language, were also the most dangerous. It should be acknowledged that while the British avant-garde was one of the first movements to open itself to desiring-production, it was also one of the first to engage the rhetoric(s) of fascism. While Hulme, Lewis, Pound and Co. cycled through the permutations of universal history, they hit upon desiring-production in its paranoid form, as well as its miraculate form, and its celibate form - they swung all ways between liberated desire and social repression, spinning gloriously, horrifically, through the arcs of attraction and repulsion across the full body of modernism.³⁰ Undeniably, their work begins with the romanticism of Bergson, with the utterly modernist discovery of the *élan vital* as a single force of will conflicted against itself and with the notion that the entire phenomenal world is merely the trace of that repeated conflict. They applied this theory to the human body, to the race car, to the nation, to language itself - most importantly, it shaped a phenomenal linguistics that

saw each poem, each utterance as the result of multiple expressive tensions. The image, no matter how pure, how crystalline, exists only between the various factors of its making; despite its romantic grandeur, it exposes as it creates a conflicted field of energies.³¹ Yet, here is where the paradox arises, for while language can be freed by desire, desire everywhere solidifies into language. Language always ultimately becomes the dead product of desire - that little bit of death that emerges from the mouth of desire, that echoes life in its effort to renew life; it is the corpse that is also the origin, and falls back on all, darkening all. Anti-production, as mentioned, is at once primary, stitched into the very processes of production as the basis of difference and renewal, but it also exists as a socially-enforced secondary phenomenon, as the basis of all social and mechanical reproduction and thus opposed to desiring-production in its full sense.

Importantly, though, in both its forms, anti-production rests upon the creation and maintenance of discursive codes; as Deleuze and Guattari claim, "the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface. Society constructs its own delirium by recording the process of production; but it is not a conscious delirium, or rather is a true consciousness of a false movement, a true perception of an apparent objective movement, a true perception of the movement that is produced on the recording surface" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 10). Thus, Ezra Pound as savior of modernity and demon of modernity. His work freely celebrates a neoplatonic monism, a Deleuzian monism of liberating desire, in which willing and seeing and writing are hardly discernable and together produce a pagan wonderland. Quickly, though, the radiant image turns into tyrannical myth - the nymphs cavort with the stormtroopers - the glorious delusion of a redeemed modernity finds itself aligned with one of the century's most heinous campaigns of social repression.³² H.D., though, saw her poetry in similarly willful terms - each word was a rough trace of bodily desire. But her vision more consistently led to a liberatory phenomenology, one in which so many material sign-posts released the subject into a fluid, omni-sexual socius: "For what is crystal or any gem but the concentrated essence of the rough matrix, or the energy, either of over-intense heat or over-intense cold that projects it? The poems as a whole . . . contain that essence of that symbol, symbol of concentration and of stubborn energy."³³ Again, the health of the socius depends upon one's language and one's relation to it, yet it is only modernism that allows us both to recognize and abuse this notion. Thus, we turn to the last point on our trajectory - to Lewis, to London, and the word as vortex with polished metallic sides - where modernity spins out wildly beyond any categories of containment that we may devise for it today.

Lewis's work also begins with the flux of life, with Bergson and the will. Everywhere, his art and thought pulses with a vital energy, egoless electricity, charges positive and negative: the "unconsciousness of humanity - their stupidity, animalism and dreams."³⁴ All begins within a "black, nervous fluid of existence" and "flows and forms into hard, stagnant masses" that are only temporary, superficial, and tragic (*BLAST*, 136). Solid objects are composed of only "so much hoarded energy," so much surplus, accumulated through friction, siphoned off the mass of nature. The self, too, is merely a residue, a build-up, generated through "indiscriminate rubbing" against so many diffuse others: "Accumulate in myself, day after day, dense concentration of pig life/ Nothing spent, stored rather in strong stagnation" (*BLAST*, 68). And the best art is neither "pure Abstraction, nor is it unorganized life"; it exists somewhere between the two, between the flux of desiring-production and the recording surface: "It is all a matter of the most delicate adjustment between voracity of Art and the digestive quality of Life" (*BLAST*, 134). But, despite this uneven monism, despite the inevitable implosion of his most willful productions, Lewis is accused - in fact, invites - the charge of "fascism" (*AOBR*, 75, 320-1). Again and again, he sings the glories of a new anti-naturalism, anti-humanism, anti-modernity - he writes above and then below democracy, at times riding the torrent of revolutionary modernism and then digging in his spurs, calling it all to a dead halt. Either way, the fascist label sticks, as it does for the period as a whole; an irrational will to power collides head-on with the will to stillness, the will to stasis or death - anti-production. His prose is a paroxysm, really - words revolt and then stiffen into the emblems of paranoia; his spatialized forms demean as they deploy a series of wildly progressive rhetorics; in the end, his mechanized method proclaims as it strips the age of all originality and willfulness, leaving behind only a rictus of death. Again, Lewis's language begins with manic will, as released from tradition, from narrative, from syntax, and thus free to enter new configurations of desire. But, it immediately seems to solidify into a tyrannical order - as if it recognizes the

constructedness of modernity only to fantasize, anxiously, about reconstructing it in more efficient ways. In the face of world war, suffragette protest, class unrest, in the midst of so much relative flux, Lewis neurotically imagines his own regime: a “centralized consciousness” that could productively channel the mute energy of the masses, a more effective “separation not the result of ‘skin-deep power,’ or of social advantage, but something like a *biological* separating-out of the chaff from the grain” (*AOBR*, 108, 128).

But, given these paradoxes, perhaps “fascism” isn’t the right term, particularly because Lewis himself failed to interpret this system and his allegiance to it in any consistent way.³⁵ Indeed, throughout his vexed career, Lewis typically advocates authority only as it acknowledges and protects all that exceeds authorization, “the most difficult task of any *real* – that is powerful and severe, - form of government is to reconcile the requirements of authority with the personal initiative that is impatient of rules, and which yet must not be crushed unless you wish to rule machines, not men” (*AOBR*, 33). Perhaps, then, we should replace “fascism” with Deleuze and Guattari’s term “anti-production.” With this, we can acknowledge the implicit connection that exists between some forms of modernism and the demand for order (whether from above or below), but we can also explore the subtle difference between stasis as a form of social control and stasis as a necessary component within production itself. In Lewis’s work, we could distinguish between his sometimes grating demands for social organization and his more interesting claims regarding stasis and restraint as the basis of any clear-headed production, whether artistic or political, and thus as the antithesis of the economic violence characteristic of modernity.

Lewis offers clarity in the contrast he draws between the horrors of modern production and a more humane approach that is attuned to the particular machines of its environment. The former, he explains, is governed by a violent egotism that tends to “override” all in its path: “Where men have physically been able to act the giant, and chop through nature, instead of crawling over it, in the manner of Lilliput, and override an accident, instead of accommodating themselves to it, they have not been able to supply the appropriate *mind* for the super-body, that is the trouble.” The other mode is humble, yet affective: “Projecting his torturous, not yet oppressive, geometry, out upon the chaotic superstructures, being methodic where he can, in the teeth of natural disorder, man is seen at his best. He then produces something of intellectual as well as emotional value, which the unadulterated stark geometry of the Machine-Age precludes.”³⁶ And so, as with his fascism, perhaps Lewis’s paranoia isn’t paranoia in the traditional sense either. I have no desire to psychoanalyze Lewis, and I certainly do not have the space here to address the validity of his undeniably anxious claims regarding, say, homosexuality, feminism, colonial revolt, or the sinister efforts of the Bloomsbury group to deny him an audience. I only mean to suggest that his writing – in both form and content – displays a tendency that is at once attuned to and fearful of the emergent forms and flows of desiring-production as they are released by the forces of capital. Indeed, Lewis’s paranoia is never simply an expression of antipathy toward social change, or even an emblem of fascist intent, but should be read as part of a complex response to slow down and contemplate a modernity otherwise emerging without restraint. Deleuze and Guattari write of the paranoid machine, “In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid. . . . But in and of itself the paranoid machine is merely an avatar of the desiring-machines; it is a result of the relationship between the desiring-machines and the body without organs, and occurs when the latter can no longer tolerate these machines” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 9).

As his best critics realize, Lewis’s work should be read as a virtuosic performance, a mummer’s game, at once mocking and surveying – at a rhetorical level - the radical oppositions, produced by the modern economy. One needs only to look at *The Art of Being Ruled* - a text that warns of impending social anarchy, predicts the rise of a global totalitarianism, proposes frightening strategies for social control, opposes those same strategies in the name of democracy, historicizes all of its own claims regarding political reality, and then celebrates the potential liberations and satisfactions generated by capitalism – in order to appreciate his complex position and its critical value. Here, paranoia everywhere combines with schizophrenia, not to mention a wicked sense of irony, in a dazzling performance that at times trumps the rhetoric of Deleuze and Guattari: “We accept the marxian formula of the usefulness of capitalism as it exists today, as a machine building up an immense irrefragable power, that eventually can be used by rather pleasanter people than at present have the handling of it. We match our optimism against Marx’s.

We are quite sure that the most glorious people will shortly appear and use all this unparalleled power, made possible by science and capitalism, more like gods than men. We admit also that it does not sound likely" (*AOBR*, 138).³⁷

Yet Lewis's conflicted rhetoric and its underlying political ambivalence means nothing apart from its technology. The Vorticists entered a socius that was dilating and contracting with the capital of a rapidly dissolving Empire. The fantasy of a rational public sphere was still thriving, but everywhere it was confronted with the increasing appropriation of discourse by a voracious market. The mechanisms of communication seemed wide open, but only to anyone who had the cash - every artist could have a vision, a manifesto in hand, but only a few had a patron to support them or even access to a paying audience. Indeed, so many modernists careers were at once inspired and denied by the axiomatic of capital; Lewis and Pound are no exception - it is hard to say whether they opposed Bloomsbury aesthetics or its cornering of the literary-aesthetic market, whether they really appreciated Eliot's later poetry or simply relished the possibility of publishing in *The Criterion*.³⁸ But there is a more specific formulation to be made here - this paradox was encoded into the means of print production itself. For print had become cheap, transposable, communal - voice had been amplified and extended by moveable type, cheap paper, the rotary press, the Linotype machine. Yet, in this, language had been released into mechanism, into programme - the word was freed to become cliché, to become "advertisement," and its ability to direct consciousness was extended in every which direction. The journal *BLAST* - despite its puce-colored cover - became the latest art-fad/fraud and thus found itself neutralized by the market, amongst so many other point-signs, so many words-as-bricks that ceaselessly reengineered the socius. Lewis realized that with the explosion of print, "the painter could really become a 'star,'" but no longer really an artist. The market demands such "art" fads and thus defuses their energy; the public calls for its own destructive-consumption - "Kill John Bull with Art!" I shouted. And John and Mrs. Bull leapt for Joy, in a cynical convulsion. For they felt safe as houses. So did I."³⁹

But even as it expresses this contradiction, the modern press-world becomes an avant-garde playground. With the ironic release and repression of all discourse, the potential of a rational public sphere is realized without the expressive fantasies of bourgeois-humanist ideology. At this moment, the disjunctive synthesis are freed from the illusion of human essence or interiority; depth and difference are flattened out into one uneven, intensive semiotic terrain. A multiplicity of metonymic linkages - so many contingent energies - bombard the edifices of metaphor, chipping away at its paranoid code, releasing the power within. Modernity makes possible - and the avant-garde embraces - a nonrestrictive, inclusive use of the productive syntheses. It occasions a semiotic activity of "disjunction," like that we saw between Lawrence's lovers, one which "remains disjunctive, yet still affirms the disjointed terms, that affirms them throughout their entire distance, *without restricting one by the other or excluding the one from the other*" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 76). Indeed, with the proliferation of the modernist codes, everything divides, everything competes, but into itself. Man and woman, Liberal and Tory, Futurism and Cubism - each splits into itself, with always an affirmation of the distance that relates the two as different. The codes proliferate, crowd each other out as they rediscover each other. They become so many bricks and blocks - not signs, but points-signs, moving in space. Each bit captures all the other bits, other energies - each is both a break and a flow, a restraint and release, affecting production always elsewhere, into other signage. The new code "resembles not so much a language as a jargon, an open-ended, polyvocal formation. . . . These indifferent signs follow no plan, they function at all levels and enter into any and every sort of connection; each one speaks its own language, and establishes syntheses with others No chain is homogeneous; all of them resemble, rather, a succession of characters from different alphabets in which an ideogram, a pictogram, a tiny image of an elephant passing by, or a rising sun may suddenly make its appearance" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 38-9). Thus, perhaps, we can see Lewis's external method for the humor it contains. Particularly, in the early works - *BLAST*, *Tarr*, *The Apes of God* - he inhabits all the permutations of modernity only to dissolve them back into the free-floating energy that sustains them. The radical stances of modern identity become so many adopted guises, drawn in their exclusive opposition, and thus always guilty of harboring their opposites. Everyone is blasted, and so everyone is blessed - the Vorticist "speaks with two tongues"; his cohorts "discharge themselves on both sides" like "primitive mercenaries" stirring up "civil war among peaceful apes" (*BLAST*, 30-1). Indeed, Lewis's work, like that of his favorite satirists - Shakespeare, Dryden, Swift - is always "non-

moral"; it simply traces desiring-production that is everywhere becoming sign/surplus and thus falling back into desiring-production. Lewis, in fact, at his satirical best, is nothing more than a "laughing shadow," aping and thus exaggerating the dynamism of production/anti-production - his glorious laughter is directed at any identity trying to hide its inner mechanism. His is a tragedy that borders on comedy, that laughs at the most willful efforts - even Lewis's own - when they are exposed as the mere sputtering of the body: "Men are sometimes so palpably machines, their machinations is so transparent, that they are comic." Despite our "illusion of begin autonomous and 'free,'" one of us "inevitably exposes too much of his 'works,'" and we must laugh in order to free us back into desiring-production.⁴⁰

This method works to correct the soft conceit of modernity, of an age that everywhere releases and restrains desiring-production into mechanical abstraction. Lewis the externalist - the "personal-appearance artist" - performs his invaluable surgery at the level of the disjunctive synthesis, on the recording-surface of modernity, breaking down so many exclusive positions - so many absurd oppositions - into the desiring-production that originally informed and inflamed them. The work of art, too, then, must be viewed as a new schizoid object - it represents nothing, but it works, affecting linkages between its parts, with the reader, out into the world. The word as cog, as vortex, at once shaping and generating desire through tension - the word is a "turbine" into which "All experience rushes" (*BLAST*, 153). Lewis's art, in fact, merely extends the machinery of the city and thus shows how it works and how it can be reworked. His prose is engineered, and engineering - the "greatest Earth-medium" - serves as both commentary and praxis in a purely modern vein. Take any page of *Enemy of the Stars*, and you immediately realize that you need to take it as a complete page, as a single object, with so many strange cogs, coils, and attractors. Page 64, for example, "The Night" - here, syntax and all it implies (time, subjective agency, etc.) are

THE NIGHT.

His eyes woke first, shaken by rough moonbeams. A white, crude volume of brutal light blazed over him. Immense bleak electric advertisement of God, it crushed with wild emptiness of street.

The ice field of the sky swept and crashed silently. Blowing wild organism into the hard splendid clouds, some will cast it's glare, as well, over him.

The canal ran in one direction, his blood, weakly, in the opposite.

The stars shone madly in the archaic blank wilderness of the universe, machines of prey.

Mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere, white rivers of power. They stood in eternal black sunlight.

Tigers are beautiful imperfect brutes.

Throats iron eternities, drinking heavy radiance, limbs towers of blatant light, the stars poised, immensely distant, with their metal sides, pantheistic machines.

The farther, the more violent and vivid, Nature : weakness crushed out of creation ! Hard weakness, a flea's size, pinched to death in a second, could it get so far.

He rose before this cliff of cadaverous beaming force, imprisoned in a messed socket of existence.

Will Energy some day reach Earth like violent civilisation, smashing or hardening all? In his mind a chip of distant hardness, tugged at dully like a tooth, made him ache from top to toe.

But the violences of all things had left him so far intact.

replaced with an angular, mechanical body of text. All has become crisp, solid - the lapidary hardness carves up the landscape, chasing away the guilty shadows of humanism. All crashes silently, cleanly, without heat of friction, without shadows of relativity. But, more importantly, the page remains dynamic by so many shifts in speed, so many charged connections, magnetic flows and repulsions, from one phrase to another. The good reader looks beyond the vestigial traces of syntax and ricochets up and down the page, off the "machines of prey" to "mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere" and then to the natural image of Blake's "beautiful imperfect brutes," or back up again and side to side from the "towers of blatant light" to "white rivers of power" to the "electric advertisement of God." All here is advertisement, and all

serves to channel attention, will, libido. But the whole field is saturated with this distracting neon light, and so the text-machine - like a really cool pinball-machine - short-circuits and sputters on every line.

As this text-machine reveals, desire-as-energy is capable of “smashing or hardening all.” This energy is both released and restrained by its own textual production - it is up to us to decide how we invest the field. In fact, we should never see Lewis's tendency towards aesthetic stasis as a simple tendency towards fascism. Rather, his rigidly mechanical style - particularly in his early Vorticist mode - can be seen as an attempt to find a representational form capable of matching the process by which desiring-production is channeled into the exclusive disjunctions of modernity. In his semi-abstract forms, in his emergent, malformed somas, he reveals a monism of desire that is everywhere shaping and reshaping itself into signs, selves, and societies, always threatened by its own activity, by an emergent despot that insists upon exclusive disjunctions, on nondifferentiation. Out of the flux of desiring-production emerge so many hapless Oedipuses - sullen kings, unwilling princes, and the accountants of modernity - forced to perform a tragic drama of identity - forced to assume a selfhood that they are also told is a crime to possess. Take, for example, Lewis's bold series of watercolor prints for Shakespeare's *Timon* of



A Feast of Overmen (1912)



The Thébaïde (1912)

Athens. Here, the textual signs of Shakespeare's play appear as three-dimensional vortices, channeling energy in multidirectional arcs and torques. Human forms emerge, but only partially, as an after-effect, consuming each other as the men at Timon's feast consumed his own limited stock. These bodies remain gloriously snagged in each other, in the material world, swept this way and that by their own coalescing energies. Everywhere, the work threatens to fall to extremes of either mush or rigidity - a certain metonymic contingency continually constructs and disrupts the metaphorical categories of identification that rule Oedipus.⁴¹ For a moment - in *A Feast of Overmen* - we have a glorious play of attraction and repulsion, buzzing back and forth across the full body of the scene, caught between paranoia and miraculation - a truly schizophrenic, celibate machine. Yet, in the next print - *The Thebaïde* - the whole scene is armored in Oedipus. Timon, in his newly discovered lack, in the loss of his stabilizing stock, has finally become “Timon,” a tragic figure in opposition to a world that everywhere denies his wholeness. Absence is thus introduced into desiring-production; the law of Oedipus redistributes power along a once dynamic field. Here, the sign which was once productive and multivalent is brutalized by the master signifier. It emerges out of a thousand breaks-flows only to be signified within the unary stroke of castration (*Anti-Oedipus*, 112). Unfortunately, in Lewis's later pieces - such as *Drawing for Timon*, *At the Seaside*, and the extensive series of portraits he undertook in the twenties and thirties - the

dynamic field is replaced, obscured, by so many placid masks, ridiculous caricatures of selves that are never themselves, caught in a drama they never wanted to perform. Lewis throws in the towel, shuts down the explosive machinery of desiring-production, and settles on the cold comfort of irony, the meager satisfaction of correction, recovery, revision. Or, at times, in his deepest despair, he embraces the Oedipal reification of the modern socius, facing the horror of fascist modernity with a kind of fascism that just might maintain some space for true creation; he carves the full body of modernism into a two-caste system: a few artists creating at will and so many well-managed Oedipuses.

• • •

And so do we. In our frustration with the modernist terrain - in its excesses, its unevenness, in its everywhere being torn between the will to power and the will to stasis - we assert an even more rigid order. We plug up the flows, we channel the excess - everywhere, we see partial objects as manipulatable whole objects: cruel fathers, desiring mothers, jealous brothers. Where we should see desire in production, we like to see Oedipus, lack, castration - thus, we turn the avant-garde into a fascist failure - we curse the daddy we never had, tie the noose, and drop like lead. We are afraid of the modernists not because of their fascism, but because of what seeps through their fascism, beyond the Oedipal dragnet. They are never Oedipal enough, and so we construct a family drama that accounts for each misstep, each contradiction of their work. This is perhaps the saddest aspect of contemporary scholarship: the experts on modernism share none of its radicalism. We do not explore, but police the boundaries of our subject. Thus, if anything, with this essay, I have tried to loosen up the categories with which we work. First and foremost, I have turned to the monism of desire as a way of unifying the complex energies of the field. Modernism, I have proposed is a single, if contradictory production conditioned - historically - by its own surplus.

The period exposes, if nothing else, the continuum of material and intellectual production, and thus, forces us to take all of its forms in relation to each other, mutually implicated - the fascist and the anarchic, the masculine and the feminine, the country and the city. In this, you may call me a romantic - you may say that my idealism and my rage are simple manifestations of Oedipus. My only defense is that my argument is not simply oppositional, but also productive, attuned to the work I am accomplishing at this moment, in this discussion, with you.⁴² Secondly, and relatedly, I have called for a critical awareness of the productive technologies that shape modernity. I have explored technology-as-surplus as it conditions the experience of modernity, its activity and its rhetoric, and I have stressed the need to understand this technology in its double aspect, as liberatory and repressive, as it holds out promises for a decentralized, organic community and as it forges a corporate regime founded upon efficiency and standardization. Body-machine-text - with this continuum, I have tried to express some of the real urgency of studying modernism, which is not that we should be wary of repeating the imaginary structures of the past, but that we should always remain conscious of our active engineering of the present.⁴³ Finally, then, I have tried to stress the continuity of the modern experience - and its persistence. Modernism is a production within the world, conditioned by its own surplus - we have inherited this surplus and thus the crisis it entails. It is for us to decide not what it means, but what it does - ours to decide how to make use of so much complex material, so much stock, without diminishing its potential. How do we deal with this literature, this technology - roadways, power lines, printing presses, poetry even - that everywhere opens all the flows and damns them up again? One last painting, here, by Lewis will suffice - *The Crowd*. Take a look - I'm still not sure whether those figures in the corner are destroying the city grid or locking themselves into its repressive patterns. They repeat - in the very gestures of revolt - the rhythms and shapes of their own oppression. And yet there is still an energy in their motion, a force, rich with life - a small red flag has been raised in the center of the painting, just briefly - it may be enough.



The Crowd (1914-15)

Notes

¹ Sandra M. Gilbert, "Lawrence in Question," in Gary Adelman, *Reclaiming D.H. Lawrence: Contemporary Writers Speak Out* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 12.

² On the prevalence of Oedipalized readings of the modern, see Rita Felski, "Introduction: Myths of the Modern," in *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). Also, for more on the current state of modernist scholarship, see my introduction to *Modernism, Cultural Production, and The British Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³ This opening critique and all that follows attempts to explain the economic/technological transition to modernism in terms of the materialist psychiatry outlined in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. As a quick introduction (or reminder), I can only outline here the five aspects of this radical text that seem most essential: I - Materialist psychiatry is founded on a theory of desire as a productive force; for Deleuze and Guattari, desire lies at the heart of the real, at once shaping and linking the evolving forms and forces of production: "If desire is real, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality. Desire is the set of *passive syntheses* that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production. The real is the end product, the result of the passive syntheses of desire as autoproduction of the unconscious" (26). II - For Deleuze and Guattari, this formulation of desire is the basis of a potentially revolutionary synthesis of Marxism

and Freudian psychoanalysis, i.e. schizoanalysis. The monism of desiring-production establishes the continuity between psychic drives and technological drives, between individual repression and social repression at large: “There is no such thing as the social production of reality on the one hand, and a desiring-production that is mere fantasy on the other. . . . The truth of the matter is that *social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate condition*. We maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is the historically determined product of desire, and that libido has no need of any mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, any transformation, in order to invade and invest the productive forces and the relations of production. *There is only desire and the social, and nothing else*” (28-9). III – Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari are able to use this theory of desire to mount a massive critique of Western civilization. First and foremost, they argue that the traditional formulation of desire as a kind of imaginary lack, coupled with the Freudian theory of the Oedipalized subject, serves only to bind desiring-production and thus reinforce the demands of a vicious economy: “Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression Lack is a countereffect of desire; it is deposited, distributed, vacuolized within a real that is natural and social” (26-7). “The entire process of desiring-production,” they continue, “is trampled underfoot and reduced to (*rabattu sur*) parental images, laid out step by step in accordance with supposed pre-oedipal stages, totalized in Oedipus, and the logic of partial objects is thereby reduced to nothing” (45-6). IV - At the same time, Deleuze and Guattari see capitalism as a social machine that demands its own dissolution. Capitalism remains caught between its need to decode the flows of desire and its attempts to defend the codes of social repression: “But the *capitalist machine*, insofar as it was built on the ruins of a despotic State more or less far removed in time, finds itself in a totally new situation: it is faced with the task of decoding and deterritorializing the flows. . . . Capitalism is in fact born of the encounter of two sorts of flows: the decoded flows of production in the form of money-capital, and the decoded flows of labor in the form of the ‘free worker.’ Hence, unlike previous social machines, the capitalist machine is incapable of providing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field. . . . Capitalism tends toward a threshold of decoding that will destroy the socius in order to make it a body without organs and unleash the flows of desire on this body as a deterritorialized field” (33). V – Finally, they see the figure of the schizophrenic, in his complete refusal to be Oedipalized, as both emblem and avatar of this impending crisis and the ultimate release of all desiring-production: “The decoding of flows and the deterritorialization of the socius thus constitutes the most characteristic and the most important tendency of capitalism. It continually draws near to its limit, which is a genuinely schizophrenic limit. It tends, with all the strength at its command, to produce the schizo as the subject of the decoded flows on the body without organs – more capitalist than the capitalist and more proletarian than the proletariat. . . . When we say that schizophrenia is our characteristic malady, the malady of our era, we do not merely say that modern life drives people mad. It is not a question of a way of life, but of a process of production” (34). All quotes from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

⁴ I realize that post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory, feminism, and gender studies have been extremely helpful in pushing us beyond the more conservative dimensions of modernist thinking about identity. However, in light of recent advances in phenomenology, affect theory, and systems theory, I feel that the once-vital polemics of the late twentieth-century are starting to wear a bit thin; as my essay tries to show, anyone seeking a more dynamically-charged modernity is forced to look back beyond deconstruction to the truly radical potential of modernist creative activity itself. For an excellent formulation of this position from an avant-feminist perspective, see Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁵ Of course, the schizo referred to here is not the lifeless, inhuman thing that is forged as well as diagnosed by modern psychology, but the liberated, egoless avatar of capitalism’s limit. More

precisely, the schizo is “homo natura,” “the universal producer,” a primitive “bricoleur,” attuned to desiring-production in its primary form (as a process without specific aim or end) and thus able to establish all kinds of new linkages between “continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented” (3-5). Most importantly, then, the schizo confounds established social codes, particularly Oedipus. His active desire places him at once before and beyond capitalism, the nation, history, the ego itself: “The schizo has his own system of coordinates for situating himself at his disposal, because, first of all, he has at his disposal his very own recording code, which does not coincide with the social code, or coincides with it only to parody it. The code of delirium or of desire proves to have an extraordinary fluidity. It might be said that the schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately *scrambles all the codes*, by quickly shifting from one to the other When he is more or less forced into it and is not in a touchy mood, he may even accept the banal Oedipal code, so long as he can stuff it full of all the disjunctions that this code was designed to eliminate” (15).

⁶ A.E. Housman, *Collected Poems and Selected Prose*, ed. Christopher Ricks (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 23.

⁷ “. . . for capitalism it is a question of binding the schizophrenic charges and energies into a world axiomatic that always opposes the revolutionary potential of decoded flows with new interior limits. And it is impossible in such a régime to distinguish, even in two phases, between decoding and the axiomatization that comes to replace the vanished codes. The flows are decoded *and* axiomatized by capitalism at the same time. Hence schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death. Monetary flows are perfectly schizophrenic realities, but they exist and function only within the immanent axiomatic that exorcises and repels this reality. The language of a banker, a general, an industrialist, a middle or high-level manager, or a government minister is a perfectly schizophrenic language, but that functions only statistically within the flattening axiomatic of connections that puts it in the service of the capitalist order” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 246).

⁸ See Eric Hobsbawm, “Men Moving,” in *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 193-207.

⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 76-7.

¹⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257-8.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Illuminations*, 169.

¹² See Richard Perceval Graves, *A.E. Housman: The Scholar-Poet* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 63, 84, 92.

¹³ D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 423.

¹⁴ Lawrence's terminology, in fact, would make plagiarists out of Deleuze and Guattari if they didn't quote him so often. His anti-Oedipalism – in both style and content – provides a comprehensive blue-print for latter-day schizoanalysis, particularly as it links a shaky modern egotism to a consumer-based market. See, for example, *Anti-Oedipus*, 49-50, 115, 132-3.

¹⁵ D.H. Lawrence, “The Crown,” in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works*, eds. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 397.

¹⁶ D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 344.

¹⁷ Although he plays fast and loose with Freudian theory, Gerald Doherty similarly sees love in Lawrence's work as alternating between violent processes of identification and a liberatory state of disidentification, in "A Question of Gravity: The Erotics of Identification in *Women in Love*," *D.H. Lawrence Review* 29.2 (2000), 25-41.

¹⁸ See commentary in Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 264-71.

¹⁹ With this claim, I am drawing from an extensive critical tradition that sees in Joyce and Woolf's experimental fiction a precursor to the radical analyses of discourse in poststructuralist and post-Freudian theory. See, for example, Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer, eds., *Post-Structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Pamela L. Caughie, *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature In Quest and Question of Itself* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Perry Meisel, *The Absent Father: Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Methuen, 1985). For Lacan's "chatterbox," see "Les Formations de l'inconscient," summarized in *Bulletin de Psychologie* 11.4-5 (1957): 293-296; 12.2-3 (1958): 182-192; 12.4 (1958): 250-256 and "Le Désir et son interprétation," summarized in *Bulletin de Psychologie* 14.5 (1959): 263-272; 13.6 (1958): 329-335.

²⁰ D.H. Lawrence, "Aristocracy," in *Phoenix II*, 478.

²¹ For more specifically historical accounts of these issues see R.A.S. Hennessey, *The Electric Revolution* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Oriel Press, 1971) and Bill Luckin, *Questions of Power: Electricity and Environment in Inter-war Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

²² For more on the material history of modern desire, see Tim Armstrong, *Modernism Technology and the Body: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time: 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Also, Lawrence Birkin, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) and David Matless, "Ages of English Design: Preservation, Modernism and Tales of their History, 1926-1939," *Journal of Design History* 3.4 (1990), 203-12.

²³ D.H. Lawrence, "Blessed are the Powerful," in *Phoenix II*, 437.

²⁴ See Doherty, 33, and Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 158.

²⁵ See James W. Carey, with John J. Quirk, "The Mythos of Electronic Revolution," in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1989).

²⁶ See discussions of modern property and corporate identity in Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 7, 123, 377.

²⁷ See related thematic commentary in Andrew Harrison, "Electricity and the Place of Futurism in *Women in Love*," *D.H. Lawrence Review* 29.2 (2000), 7-23.

²⁸ See Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 75-6.

²⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989), 231.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari define these various machines as configurations of the more or less antagonistic relations between the static and anti-productive "body without organs" and the incessantly dynamic forces of desiring-production. The paranoiac or repulsion machine is characterized by the early struggle that ensues when "the desiring-machines attempt to break the body without organs, and the body without organs repels them, since it experiences them as an over-all persecution apparatus" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 9). The miraculating or attraction machine develops when the body without organs (in the form of capital, say) attracts all production to itself as its own creation: ". . . the essential thing is the establishment of an enchanted recording or inscribing surface that arrogates to itself all the productive forces and all the organs of production, and that acts as quasi cause by communicating the apparent movement (the fetish) to them" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 11-2). Finally, the celibate machine, also known as the schizophrenic machine, can be defined in terms of the intensive qualities that circle around its surface: here, "the opposition of the forces of attraction and repulsion produces an open series of intensive elements, all of them positive, that are never an expression of the final equilibrium of a system, but consist, rather, of an unlimited number of stationary, metastable states, through which a subject passes" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 19).

³¹ See, particularly, T.E. Hulme's foundational works "Notes on Language and Style" and "A Lecture on Modern Poetry" in *The Collected Writings of T.E. Hulme*, ed. Karen Csengeri (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

³² See Ezra Pound, "Translator's Postscript to *The Natural Philosophy of Love*" in Remy de Gourmont, *The Natural Philosophy of Love* (Boni and Livewright, 1922), 206-19.

³³ H.D., "H.D. by Delia Alton," *Iowa Review* 16.3 (Fall 1986), 184.

³⁴ Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST I* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1992), 7.

³⁵ For excellent commentary on Lewis's complex allegiances and the difficulty of the label "fascist," see Alun Munton, "The Politics of Wyndham Lewis," *PN Review* 1 (March) 1976, 34-9; Andrzej Gasiorek, "'Jujitsu for the Governed'? Wyndham Lewis and the Problem of Power," *Wyndham Lewis Annual*, 8 (2001), 30-49. in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 6, 298-9. Also, on the correlation of "fascism" and "modernism," see the introduction and first chapter to my *Modernism, Cultural Production, and the British Avant-Garde*.

³⁶ Wyndham Lewis, "The Machine," *Modernism/Modernity* 4.2 (1997), 172.

³⁷ David Trotter also uses notion of paranoia to define Lewis's modernism and its relation to larger socio-economic changes. I recognize the merit of some of his claims, particularly those regarding the emergence of professionalism, but I find that his account of paranoia tends to overwhelm the works in question, not to mention the period as a whole, forging an oversimplified connection between the psychology of fear, the significance of aesthetic stasis, and the prevalence of reactionary politics. See David Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism: Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁸ For a dazzling analysis of these issues, see Kevin J. Dettmar and Stephen Watt, eds., *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, and Rereading* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996).

³⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombairdeering* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1967), 36. For a more elaborate account of the moderns' complex engagement with the commercial mass market,

see Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905-1920* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art*, ed. Seamus Cooney (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1987), 95.

⁴¹ For an intriguing discussion of schizoanalysis in relations to the linguistic issues of metaphor and metonymy, see Eugene W. Holland, *Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis: The Sociopoetics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁴² For a slightly different formulation of a similar cause, see Joseph Allen Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7.

⁴³ See Carey, 114, 116.