

5. John Worthen, D.H. Lawrence, *The Early Years 1885-1912* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 398-9 (henceforward, *E. Y.*); see also James T. Boulton (ed.), *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence* vol 1 (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 392; 401 (henceforward *Letters* 1).
6. Brenda Maddox, *The Married Man: A Life of D.H. Lawrence* (London, 1994), p. 124.
7. *Letters* 1, recognising that the evidence of date comes only from the trial report in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, boldly 'corrects' it to the 7th, but this seems high-handed.
8. *Letters* 1, p. 421.
9. Mark Kinkead-Weekes *D.H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 10.
10. *Letters* 1, pp. 393; 394; 395.
11. *Letters* 1, pp. 390-1.
12. 'Misery' in *Look! We Have Come Through!* seems likely, along with the definite case of 'Meeting Among the Mountains', to date essentially from 1912 - unlike many of the others, written or rewritten in 1917, see note 13 below.
13. 'The Shaping of D.H. Lawrence's *Look! We Have Come Through!*' in Howard Erskine-Hill and Richard A. McCabe (ed.), *Presenting Poetry* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 214-234.
14. To Katherine Mansfield, *Letters* 2, pp. 301-2.
15. 'Education of the People' in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, ed. Michael Herbert (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 165-6.
16. Cambridge and Penguin pp. 266-7; see previously Cambridge and Penguin p. 264.
17. Cambridge and Penguin pp. 34-5.
18. Cambridge and Penguin p. 290.

## Helen Corke's *Neutral Ground* and D.H. Lawrence's *The Trespasser*: the fascination of the Siegmund story

Jonathan Long

Ellis, roused sufficiently to desire that Derrick Hamilton should be convinced of error, gave him her record of the five days spent with Angus Rane in the Island. And Derrick, gazing, fascinated, into the other man's soul, followed Domine throughout his measure of passionate experience - and beyond, the one day's journey to death.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst much has been written about Lawrence's use of real events for *The Trespasser*<sup>2</sup> there is little commentary on Helen Corke's *Neutral Ground* which, although reflecting the earlier part of her life as well, covers the same tragic events of August 1909 in some detail.

Lawrence and Helen Corke came to write their books from very different beginnings. According to Jessie Chambers (who is wrong about the *date* of composition):

Almost immediately on returning to Croydon he wrote, apparently very much disturbed, saying that he found that he had to write the story of Siegmund ... It was in front of him and he had got to do it. He begged me to go to Croydon and make the acquaintance of 'Helen'.

His second novel, *The Trespasser*, was written in feverish haste between the Whitsuntide and Midsummer of 1910. Lawrence implored me not to attempt to hold him. He told me most impressively of the Shirt of Nessus. Something of that kind, he said, something fatal, perhaps, might happen if I insisted on holding him: 'For this I need Helen, but I must *always* return



to you,' he said earnestly, 'only you must always leave me free.'<sup>3</sup>

In Helen Corke's words:

DHL sees me put away a writing pad when he enters and presently asks what I am writing. It is only the long letter which there seems no need to end. I have finished a brief diary of the Island experience. He asks if he may see a scrap of my work. There is, I tell him, no 'work'. But the claim his intuitional sympathy has established is strengthened by the coincidence of his presence upon the Island during that first week of last August – and my experience is already undergoing in my mind the first of the modifications whereby the raw material of events is shaped into works of art. I give him the Freshwater diary. There is a new urgency in his voice when he returns it. 'What are you going to do with those prose poems?' he asks. I reply, nothing. They are written; it is enough. He declares, and insists, that the act of expression in writing pre-assumes a reader, and also that human experience is the common property of humanity ... He returns to the subject later – comes with the request that he take the diary and expand its theme.<sup>4</sup>

This writing 'fever' was no doubt also because Lawrence was concerned with a number of the themes in the story at the time, such as the sexual emancipation and the power of the independent woman, the weakness of the captivated man, suicide, infidelity, tragedy and the music of Wagner. Helen Corke's need to write was presumably in no small part derived from its therapeutic effects following what was clearly a devastating blow. She never married. As she said, she would not have made a wife for Lawrence or for any other man.<sup>5</sup> The events found their way into an extraordinary number of

places, including her diaries, *The Letter* and *The Freshwater Diary* written between 1909 and 1910, a fictionalised account in *The Cornwall Writing* written in 1911–1912, a play, *The Way of Silence*, written 1909–1910, interviews including one with her former pupil Malcolm Muggeridge on BBC television in July 1968, lectures including one to the D.H. Lawrence Society in 1976, articles including those for *The D.H. Lawrence Review* and poetry in her collection *Songs of Autumn and Other Poems*. In *Our Infancy* is the longest and most sustained non-fiction account,<sup>6</sup> whilst the longest fictionalised account is the novel *Neutral Ground*.

*Neutral Ground* was first published by Arthur Barker Limited in 1933 and has been reprinted only once. It is not an easy book to come by and were it not for its interest to Lawrence scholars it would probably not be read much, if at all, today. According to the author's note at the beginning, it was written in substance by the end of 1918, so the events on which it was based would not have fallen victim to the unreliable memory which became apparent in Helen Corke's later writings and recollections right up to her death in 1978.

To understand the significance of *Neutral Ground* fully it is necessary to revisit the relevant parts of the lives of Lawrence and Helen Corke. They met at the home of a mutual friend, Agnes Mason, who was a colleague of Lawrence's at Davidson Road School, Croydon and lived at home with her invalid father. The school had only opened in 1907, under the headmastership of Philip Smith. She was the only female teacher there. Helen Corke and Agnes Mason had both trained at the Pupil-Teacher Centre at Croydon. Helen Corke also knew Arthur McLeod (the Davidson Road assistant master) from his training there. She taught at Philip Smith's old school, the Dering Place Mixed School in south Croydon.<sup>7</sup> There were therefore some connections in this circle of friends. Accounts by her describe in varying detail this first meeting in the winter of 1908–1909, and the strong im-



pression that Lawrence had on her. It was followed by occasional meetings until one particularly significant one in April 1909, again with Agnes Mason, this time for a walk on Wimbledon Common.<sup>8</sup> She had for some years been receiving violin lessons from Herbert Baldwin Macartney, who lived at New Malden and was married with children.<sup>9</sup> He was a violinist in the Covent Garden orchestra. He had become increasingly infatuated with her and although she did not reciprocate his physical desire for her<sup>10</sup> he had that morning felt confident enough to invite her for a five-day holiday on the Isle of Wight.

It transpired that Lawrence, his mother and sister Ada were also going on holiday to the Isle of Wight at the end of July but Helen wanted to travel alone and they did not meet while they were there. Her holiday with Macartney went well but the end was particularly fraught. She then went down to Cornwall with Agnes Mason and Violet Mary Babbage, another friend. Hearing nothing from Macartney she rushed back home early, only to find in a local paper a report of the inquest following his suicide. One such report is reproduced in the Cambridge Edition of *The Trespasser*.<sup>11</sup> She was completely devastated and probably only carried on because of Macartney's injunction to do so. Lawrence discovered from Agnes Mason what had happened early on in the new school term but does not appear to have got involved in her grief straight away. However, it was not long before he was giving her very considerable support in spite of his own teaching and writing commitments. His means of trying to rouse her from her 'living-death' was to visit her two to three times a week to read the poetry and drama they both enjoyed, and to discuss his own work. Lawrence's feelings for her are reflected in his 'Helen' poems.

Helen Corke began to write her accounts of her relationship with Macartney within weeks of his death. One was *The Letter*, a diary of her feeling between September 1909 and

May 1910, written in the form of a letter to him. Secondly there was *The Freshwater Diary*, giving a daily account of those five days at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. Thirdly there was *The Cornwall Writing*, describing events between Helen Corke's journey down to Cornwall and her agonising return home to find that Macartney was dead, and reminiscences of her time with him. We do not know exactly when Lawrence started to read these accounts but it is clear that he used at least the second and third and expanded on their themes in *The Trespasser*, a book probably started in April 1910 and finished in July 1910 in its first version, *The Saga of Siegmund*, and following revision begun in January 1912 (using much of the original version), eventually published in May 1912. These written sources were backed up with the discussions Helen Corke tells us that she had with Lawrence on walks over the Surrey Downs in the Spring of 1910. He developed feelings for her that were not reciprocated. However, although she asked him not to publish the story for five years, she evidently cared for him sufficiently to change her mind when he decided to make writing his career. They last saw each other in February 1912, not long before he met Frieda.

Some description of *Neutral Ground* is inevitable in a comparison of the two books. It is split into four sections and is a very thinly disguised autobiography. The first, called 'Edward and Elizabeth', introduces Helen Corke's parents, here called Edward and Elizabeth Brooke, and describes their early life in the south east of England. Edward and Elizabeth ran a grocer's shop, having met in the local Congregational Chapel and married soon afterwards. Their first child was Ellis, the Helen Corke character. The family did not enjoy financial success. The second section is called 'Ellis' and describes her life from the age of four to somewhere in her late teenage years. It introduces her cousin Aileen and continues the story of her father's financial problems and his unsuc-



cessful attempts to do something about them, ending in the forced sale of his property. The Brookes moved to south-east London, where Edward worked as a life insurance agent and where Ellis went to elementary school until the age of fifteen. Her father wanted her to become a pupil teacher but she had an apprenticeship at a post office, concerned to earn some money because of her father's continuing financial difficulties.

The third section of the book is entitled 'Domine', Helen Corke's pet name for Macartney, also used by Lawrence in *The Trespasser*. In this account he is called Angus Rane and is a professional violinist giving Ellis lessons from his home. She starts a pupil teachership and gets to know Cecily Morton, the Agnes Mason character. There are detailed descriptions of Rane's unsatisfactory home life and his growing relationship with Ellis. Their friendship deepens and eventually he declares his love for her. She rejects him because of his wife and children but they kiss. After a separation they resume the lessons and the relationship intensifies. One evening when they are alone she allows him to kiss her because she had before, but no more. He wants to go away with her.

Moving to February 1909, Rane is playing the whole of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, which Ellis attends and is captivated by. Returning home one evening her mother tells her that Aileen has died at the age of twenty seven years, during her fourth confinement. Ellis is angry with Aileen's husband Horace for what she sees as wearing Aileen out with childbearing. In April that year Ellis agrees to Rane's suggestion of a holiday, and thinks that they are *both* battling against his physical side. At this time she meets Derrick Hamilton, who bears numerous similarities to Lawrence. He is twenty-two years old and teaches Standard IVC (the class that Lawrence struggled with) at Wigton Road School (Lawrence started teaching at Davidson Road School in October 1908 when he was just twenty-three). He does not get on with the pupils

or the male teachers but is responsive to the friendship of the Agnes Mason character, Cecily. Ellis meets him at her parents' house and the three meet at Blayes Woods to pick primroses. Derrick Hamilton gets on well with Ellis and he wishes to 'discover the key to her shrine'.<sup>12</sup> However when he pushes Cecily's suggestion that she give up her Saturday music lesson, Ellis makes it clear that he is a 'trespasser'.<sup>13</sup>

Rane's wife Cora becomes suspicious about his relationship with Ellis and tries to frustrate it. Derrick Hamilton senses the closeness of the relationship. Coincidentally they are going to the Isle of Wight at the same time but travel separately. The journey is described in many ways similar to Lawrence's description in *The Trespasser*.

The fourth part of *Neutral Ground* is called 'Derrick'. The action moves to November 1909 and Ellis's writing in her heavy despondency about her five days on the island with Rane. There is then a flashback to Ellis meeting Rane at the village station and their time together, their home-coming and their last meeting together as she caught the train for Cornwall. Then the rush back to Blayes and her discovery in the local paper that he has committed suicide, and her continuing to soldier on because of his injunction to her that she 'must go on'.<sup>14</sup> Then her continuing relationship with Derrick Hamilton is described which, closely modelled on Helen Corke's with Lawrence, deals with his reading her record of the five days on the island and his writing his own version of events. By the end we see Ellis's gradual improvement (although she never recovers from her loss), considerably assisted by Derrick Hamilton, and her forging a friendship with Theresa, Hamilton's fiancée and the Jessie Chambers character in the book. Theresa does not see Ellis as a threat as Ellis is self-complete.

*Neutral Ground* is not free from interesting points of observation or irony. However, the early chapters in particular are short of drama and the everyday is insufficient to keep



the reader's attention. For example, Christmas is an occasion that has generated some of the most memorable scenes in literature but there can be few less readable descriptions than the one to be found here.<sup>15</sup> The prose is often purple and pages are taken up with Helen Corke's reflections on life and the universe with little if any action taking place. The fictionalised place names are both confusing and unnecessary. There are a number of similarities with themes in Lawrence's work – we have a saga, with generations of a family and wider family, the effects of adverse weather (a flood), the financial problems of a main character, the possibility of an affair between Ellis and one of her female teachers and the pupil teacher apprenticeship of Ellis. However, the chronological narrative is coupled with slightly clumsy brief flashbacks.

The title *Neutral Ground* was intended to suggest Helen Corke's position between committed homosexuality and committed heterosexuality.<sup>16</sup> To that extent it would appear not to reflect the principal thrust of the book. Helen Corke was attractive to men such as Macartney and Lawrence but she sought only platonic relationships with them, having a much greater attraction to women such as Agnes Mason<sup>17</sup> and Jessie Chambers,<sup>18</sup> with whom she had closer relationships than with any man. Lawrence's book took its title rather more appropriately from the theme of Helena's trespass into Siegmund's married life, although also possibly from the Cecil Byrne/Lawrence character trespassing into Helena's grief.

There are clearly attempts to emulate Lawrence's style (or, in some cases, his use of her material). For example, on the crossing to the Isle of Wight the grey battleships are to Ellis 'hounds couchant' in *Neutral Ground*<sup>19</sup> and to Derrick Hamilton 'when the Solent was alive in the sunset' they were 'like unconsumed coals'.<sup>20</sup> In *The Trespasser* Lawrence wrote 'the battle-ships laid bare their black snouts on the water'<sup>21</sup> and 'two battleships, uncouth monsters lying as naïve and curious as sea-lions straying afar'.<sup>22</sup> Often at the beginnings

of chapters Helen Corke uses metaphors, but not wholly successfully. For example, at the beginning of the 'Domine' section when she is about to describe Ellis' misery after the death of Rane she wrote:

The days of late November, a string of dingy cocoons wrapped more or less closely with city fog, dangled between grey sky and dank earth; Time dropped each in turn into the vat of Night to await their unwinding.<sup>23</sup>

Also, when pondering her life without Rane she wrote:

She knew that, should she go on living, Time would carry her upon the current of years so far from him that his image, caught upon the glasses of memory, would show a blurred and indefinite outline that no focusing could sharpen.<sup>24</sup>

It is an early work though and we are comparing it with *The Trespasser*, a book described by the great Lawrentian F.R. Leavis as 'hard to read through, and cannot be said to contain any clear promise of a great novelist'.<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to compare Lawrence's use of the same material in *The Trespasser*. The similarities only relate to the core subject of Helen Corke's relationship with Macartney and, after his death, with Lawrence. Although he may have spoken to her about such matters he did not have detailed written accounts of her parents' lives, nor her cousin's. Indeed those sections of *Neutral Ground* do not deal with the preoccupations of his described above, which made her story so compelling for him. Helen Corke commented in her Malcolm Muggeridge interview that she wrote *Neutral Ground* partly so that the same events could be described from a woman's viewpoint (although the use of the Cecil Byrne<sup>26</sup> character is not as intrusive as it might be) but partly to include events not in his version, such as the beginnings of her



relationship with Macartney, although she had no major criticisms to make of his work. She said that some of the book, such as the ending, was his invention, as seems likely with the suggestion, made stronger in the revision of the manuscript into its final form, that the relationship was consummated.<sup>27</sup>

The narrative of *The Trespasser* follows in a mostly chronological way the events of Sunday 1 August 1909 in chapter III through to Saturday 6 August 1909 in chapter XXIX (term ended on 30 July and the school holiday lasted four weeks).<sup>28</sup> There are only two chapters at the beginning, and two at the end, which do not cover that period. We are therefore only concerned with the third and fourth parts of *Neutral Ground*. Lawrence has followed his source material in 'The Freshwater Diary' and 'The Cornwall Writing' with almost excessive diligence. Reading the appendices in the Cambridge edition of *The Trespasser*, where these materials are reprinted, will quickly make this clear. For example, in Chapter III the references to the sea mist, Lethe, whether the foghorn is E or F or F#, the cliff-top walk, watching the sunset, the Beethoven symphony and the *Lohengrin* Grail music all appear in 'The Freshwater Diary' entry for the same day, Sunday 1 August. Physical features such as the Path of a Hundred Steps, the Roman Catholic Church in the fields, the carved Christ, the garden with clematis, honeysuckle and laburnum and the red bungalow all appear not just in both the source materials and the novel but also in the same place on the same day.

There is more. Siegmund MacNair and Helena Verden's travels around the western end of the Isle of Wight mirror those in the source materials not just in terms of locations but also in terms of incident and even wording. In chapter XIV:

The lovers stood for some time watching the people of the farm in the down below dip their sheep on this sunny morning. There was a ragged noise of bleat-

ing from the flock penned in a corner of the yard. Two red-armed men seized a sheep, hauled it to a large bath that stood in the middle of the yard, and there held it, more or less in the bath, whilst a third man baled a dirty yellow liquid over its body. The white legs of the sheep twinkled as it butted this way and that to escape the yellow douche, the blue-shirted men ducked and struggled. There was a faint splashing and shouting to be heard even from a distance. The farmer's wife and children stood by ready to rush in with assistance if necessary.<sup>29</sup>

This had been enlarged (evidently with the original in front of him) from the following passage in 'The Freshwater Diary':

The people of the farm below the Down are busy dipping their sheep this morning. The process is quite primitive. In the middle of the yard is a big zinc bath, half full of a dirty yellow liquid. Two men seize a fat sheep from the little group penned in a corner, and with difficulty hold him more or less in the bath, while the third bales the yellow stuff over his back with an old tin bowl. The farmer's family stands ready to assist, if necessary.<sup>30</sup>

We must not seek to find plagiarism where it does not exist, though. Lawrence owed Helen Corke a great deal but there is much of his own work in *The Trespasser*. Characters that he either created or substantially developed include the landlady at the guesthouse, Hampton ('the Stranger' of chapter XIII), Siegmund's children and the boarders at Beatrice MacNair's house modelled on Lawrence's colleagues at Davidson Road School.<sup>31</sup> He will have blended in some of his own experience of the Isle of Wight that year and material from discussions with Helen Corke not in her writings, although exactly what must be a matter of conjecture. What must have been his



own invention were some of the scenes between Siegmund and his family and the scenes with him on his own. She said in the Malcolm Muggeridge interview that she was generally satisfied with Lawrence's book. As she wrote to Harry T. Moore in 1951:

This brief five days' diary was L.'s inspiration for his work, and his expansion of it occupies 193 pages of the original Duckworth edition [out of 292]. Beyond this point he uses some unwritten factual material and introduces imaginary characters, two of them drawn from sketches of his colleagues on the school staff. Lawrence identified himself so closely with Siegmund that in a sense he lived the experience. The book was too nearly life, and life upon that plane of superhuman perception which is charged with danger, and avoided instinctively, by the generality of mankind. Later, when the emotional stimulus had died down, and been decently covered with ash by Hueffer, Heinemann and Co., L. tried to reshape it by intellectual processes, with the sad result noted in your comment: 'the prose of *The Trespasser* is often thick and gummy.' And it should be remembered that at the time of the revision L. was a convalescent, with his energy at low ebb.<sup>32</sup>

It seems clear that Lawrence's intention was to get as close as possible to the reality of the characters and the events, to understand them and thereby Helen Corke, a very different motive from the therapy apparent in her writing. *Neutral Ground* is an interesting book to read because it gives additional background to the events described in *The Trespasser* but it is not an absorbing narrative about what was clearly a harrowing experience.

## Endnotes

1. Helen Corke, *Neutral Ground: A Chronicle*, London: Arthur Barker Ltd., n.d. [1933], p. 263.
2. For example, John Worthen, *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 253-62 and Elizabeth Mansfield's excellent introduction to the Cambridge Edition, *The Trespasser*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 3-23.
3. E.T. [Jessie Wood], *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1935, pp. 181-82.
4. Helen Corke, *D.H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years*, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1965, p. 7.
5. Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love: A Life of D.H. Lawrence*, London: Heinemann, 1974, p. 99.
6. Although it does not deal with the five days on the Isle of Wight.
7. Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: An Autobiography Part I: 1882-1912*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 132ff; Edward Nehls, ed., *D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, vol. I, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957, pp. 84-89.
8. See for example Helen Corke's 'The Writing of *The Trespasser*' in *The D.H. Lawrence Review*, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1968-83; Newark: University of Delaware, 1984-93; University of Texas at Austin, 1994-2000; State University of New York at Geneseo, 2000-2003, 7.2.227; 'D.H. Lawrence: The Early Stage' in 4.2.111; and 'D.H. Lawrence As I Saw Him' in *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 1960, pp. 5-13 for varying accounts of the early days.
9. Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 144ff.
10. *Ibid*, p. 149.
11. *The Trespasser*, *op. cit.*, p. 324 - see note on 213.33.
12. Helen Corke, *Neutral Ground*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
13. See p. 198 for this important reference.
14. See note on 194.16 about this phrase.
15. Helen Corke, *Neutral Ground*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45ff.
16. See *The Trespasser*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
17. *D.H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years*, was dedicated to 'Agnes Mason ... Kindest friend and helper'.
18. See Helen Corke's correspondence with 'Muriel' in *The D.H. Lawrence Review*, *op. cit.*, 12.1 and 2 and her affectionate memoir 'D.H. Lawrence's "Princess"', reprinted in *D.H. Lawrence: The Croydon Years*, *op. cit.*
19. Helen Corke, *Neutral Ground*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
20. *Ibid*, p. 222.
21. *The Trespasser*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.6.
22. *Ibid*, p. 109.6.

23. Helen Corke, *Neutral Ground*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
24. *Ibid*, p. 259.
25. F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 20.
26. See *The Trespasser*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.28 and note.
27. See *Ibid*, pp. 22–24.
28. Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy*, *op. cit.* p. 168.
29. *The Trespasser*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.10–20.
30. *Ibid*, p. 298.
31. James T. Boulton *et al*, ed. *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, vols. I to VIII, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979–2000, vol. I, p. 136, n. 3 and p. 194, n. 4 and n. 6.
32. Harry T. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

## D.H. Lawrence and the Fall

Steve Taylor

One of the major ideas that runs through all of D.H. Lawrence's work is that there is something 'wrong' with present day human beings. His attitude is as far removed from the optimistic humanism of his contemporary H.G. Wells as it is possible to be. Wells celebrated human invention and achievement, saw human history as one step forward after another, leading to the 'advanced' state of present day civilisation and further glories thereafter. But Lawrence's trajectory of history ran the other way. He believed that modern human beings had degenerated from an earlier, healthier state, and that industrial civilisation was heading irrevocably for disaster.

Because of this kind of view, Lawrence has a reputation for being a bad-tempered misanthrope, who was consumed with hatred of the human race. And it is true that some of his pronouncements do seem a little irrational and even hysterical – for example, when he writes, 'how easily we might spare a million or two of humans / And never miss them'<sup>1</sup> or 'There are too many people on earth / insipid, unsalted, rabbity, endlessly hopping.'<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, this picture of Lawrence is, I believe, flawed. Rather than being a cranky, subjective view generated by his own bitterness and bad-temperedness – or even his tuberculosis – Lawrence's negative opinion of present-day human beings was, from his point of view, justifiable and even inevitable. His sense that there was 'something wrong' with human beings came from a deep, intuitive understanding of the human race's early history and of the world's pre-civilised primal peoples.