

D. H. Lawrence, Rananim and Gilbert Cannan's *Windmills*

Abstract:

Biographers and critics of D. H. Lawrence have long recognized the significance of his various schemes to establish small utopian communities in locations such as Florida, the Andes, Palestine, Connecticut, and New Mexico. Recent accounts have, however, sought to distinguish the so-called 'Rananim' fantasy which Lawrence created with his wife and a select group of friends over Christmas and New Year 1914–1915 from his later schemes for communitarian living. This essay offers a detailed and revisionary reassessment of the contexts of the Rananim fantasy, drawing on little-known evidence and a previously overlooked textual source to suggest that the largely forgotten playwright, author and critic Gilbert Cannan shared Lawrence's anti-war views in this period and actively participated in the formulation of Rananim and the associated plan to inhabit an island in the South Seas.

D. H. Lawrence's frequently expressed desire to establish a small community of friends and like-minded individuals in a far-off place away from the civilized world has attracted a good deal of attention in studies of the author's life and writing. Biographers and critics have generally viewed his different plans as part of a single, evolving project which they call 'Rananim', using the term which Lawrence coined over Christmas 1914 and New Year 1915 to describe an imaginary 'Order' that he declared he would found with a few of his closest friends.¹ The 'Rananim' project which commentators have sought to discover in his letters and works has been variously described as 'Lawrence's utopia' and 'the ideal community ... which Lawrence hoped to establish'.²

More recently, however, John Turner and John Worthen have argued that Rananim should be treated separately from Lawrence's later, and more viable, schemes for

communitarian living. They suggest that Rananim was simply a compensatory fantasy created by Lawrence, his wife Frieda and a select few friends – S. S. Kotliansky ('Kot'), John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield – to offset their unhappiness in war-time England: 'a kind of complex, private game, played by people who felt trapped in England'.³ Worthen has subsequently called it 'a pleasing festive fantasy concocted by four or five people over a few days'.⁴ This essay draws on little-known evidence and an overlooked textual source to suggest that the largely forgotten playwright, author and critic Gilbert Cannan participated in the formulation of the original shared fantasy of Rananim and the plan to inhabit an island to which it gave rise. Until now Cannan has been seen as having little or no connection with Rananim, primarily because he is not mentioned in the extant letters and memoirs which describe it, but also because no letters from Lawrence to Cannan have survived and Cannan wrote no memoir of Lawrence. Cannan's obscurity and the paucity of critical attention paid to his life and writing have made him an easy figure for Lawrence biographers to marginalize in their narratives. To address this situation I will provide a detailed and revisionary account of Cannan's role in the biographical context to Rananim, showing that Lawrence and Cannan held similar anti-war views in this period, before presenting the new evidence for Cannan's involvement in the festive fantasy.

In June 1914 Lawrence and Frieda returned to England following an eight-month period of residence in Fiascherino, Golfo della Spezia, north-west Italy. They stayed in a house in South Kensington lent to them by the barrister Gordon Campbell, and on 13 July they were married at Kensington Registry Office. They intended to return to Italy, but the outbreak of war caused them to look instead for a cheap place in which to settle in England. Gilbert and Mary Cannan, friends of John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield who attended a meal in Soho organized for Lawrence and Frieda by David Garnett,⁵ arranged for them to rent a small farmhouse in Bellingdon, Buckinghamshire. They moved there in mid-

August. The Cannans lived just a mile away from the farmhouse in a house with windmill at Cholesbury. In late October Murry and Mansfield moved into a cottage in Lee, near Great Missenden, around three miles from Bellingdon, having stayed for a brief time with the Lawrences while they made their new house habitable.

From mid-October 1914 until 21 January 1915 (when the Lawrences moved to Greatham, near Pulborough, West Sussex) the Lawrences, Cannans, Murry and Mansfield enjoyed a close companionship which compensated them in some small measure for the bitterness of the first months of the war, and for the very different upheavals they were experiencing in their private and professional lives. Katherine Mansfield's infatuation during this period with the French author Francis Carco is well documented.⁶ The tensions this created in her relationship with Murry surfaced during the months they spent in Buckinghamshire; by the end of December 1914 it seemed as if a separation was inevitable. Cracks were also appearing in Cannan's domestic life. In April 1910 he had married Mary Barrie, following the scandal of their affair and her subsequent divorce from J. M. Barrie (Cannan had worked closely with Barrie in his role as honorary secretary of the Society for the Abolition of Censorship). Mary was seventeen years older than Cannan (she was forty-seven years old in the winter of 1914) and they had married under duress when their relationship was revealed to Barrie by one of his gardeners.⁷ According to Cannan's biographer, Diana Farr, during Lawrence's stay in Buckinghamshire Cannan decided that the love between him and Mary 'had never been real but counterfeit' and he became convinced that although Mary had grown to 'care deeply for him in a maternal way, she had begun the affair in an attempt to make jealous a lover who had scorned her'.⁸ Farr traces Cannan's loss of faith in his marriage and his growing feeling that it no longer gave him 'the mental and sexual satisfaction he felt he needed to mature and find lasting happiness'.⁹

In a two-part article published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 19 March and 2

April 1914 Henry James placed Cannan alongside Hugh Walpole, Compton Mackenzie and D. H. Lawrence as the best of the younger generation of British novelists; he described Lawrence as hanging ‘in the dusty rear’.¹⁰ As Mark Kinkead-Weekes observes, in 1914 Cannan ‘seemed much more successful than Lawrence in every way’:¹¹ he was just one year older than Lawrence, but he was already well known as a theatre critic and playwright, and by the winter of 1914 he had published five novels and given a sixth – entitled *Young Earnest* – to Martin Secker for publication in the New Year. Yet the great potential which some saw in Cannan was as yet largely unrealized and he felt a strong pressure to prove himself to his peers and to his wife.¹² The scandal caused by his affair with Mary meant that he was the subject of cruel gossip in literary circles and his forthright critical writing had won him some powerful enemies in the theatre world (including, most notably, George Bernard Shaw, who lampooned Cannan by portraying him as the world-weary and dismissive young critic Gilbert Gunn in his 1911 play *Fanny’s First Play*).

Lawrence and Frieda had endured similar gossip about Frieda’s abandonment of her first husband Ernest Weekley and her three children following their departure together from England to Germany in May 1912. In October 1913 Frieda’s divorce hearing in London was reported in both the *News of the World* and the *Nottingham Guardian*.¹³ The war promised to make their early married life in England deeply problematic and they responded to it with anger and despair. Lawrence’s career was effectively placed on hold shortly after the declaration, when his new publisher, Methuen, suspended all new projects for six months, returning the typescript of his fourth novel ‘The Wedding Ring’ (later re-titled *The Rainbow*). Lawrence had received and freely spent £100 of the first half of his £300 advance for it on the understanding that publication was imminent;¹⁴ he found himself plunged into poverty and professional uncertainty at the very moment when his fortunes seemed to be in the ascendancy.

The extent of the contact between the three troubled couples is recorded in memoirs, letters and journals. In “*Not I, But the Wind ...*”, Frieda notes that Murry and Mansfield were ‘an hour’s walk away’ and she and Lawrence would ‘go over to them in the dark winter nights, through bare woods and fields of dead cabbage stalks’.¹⁵ Lawrence tried to explain to them the gendered terms ‘Love’ and ‘Law’ which he was employing in his ‘Study of Thomas Hardy’;¹⁶ he and Murry discussed their relationships in a frank and open manner, and the two couples confided in each other and acted out their disagreements together. Lawrence passed on the details of his typist (Douglas Clayton) to Mansfield, who used the same man to type her own stories.¹⁷

There is little surviving evidence for specific interactions between Lawrence and Cannan, but Lawrence spent plenty of time with him both at the Cannans’ home and at the farmhouse. Cannan introduced Lawrence to a number of his friends, including Mark Gertler, Compton Mackenzie, Lady Ottoline Morrell and his publisher Secker. Lawrence soon warmed to Cannan, claiming to like him at a moment in late August when he was particularly bitter about and disturbed by the war.¹⁸ According to Diana Farr, Cannan’s ‘love for German literature and music and his interest in German philosophy ... all combined to increase his hatred of the war, which he saw as a crime against humanity and an act of lunacy’.¹⁹ Cannan was also attuned to Lawrence’s financial plight: he wrote to the Committee of the Royal Literary Fund to seek financial assistance for Lawrence, and Mary supported this appeal by writing on Lawrence’s behalf to two of her influential literary contacts.²⁰ By 5 January 1915 Lawrence was describing the Cannans as ‘very good friends’.²¹

All of the authors in the close-knit circle were writing, but Lawrence and Cannan were decidedly more productive than Murry and Mansfield. In late November 1914, when he had almost completed the essay on Hardy, Lawrence turned again to ‘The Wedding Ring’, revising it as *The Rainbow*. Between 3 and 20 October he also intensively revised the proofs

of his first volume of short stories, *The Prussian Officer*, which was published the following month. Cannan had finished *Young Earnest* on 2 August 1914 and he remained busy in the following months:²² Farr notes that in addition to working on a volume of poetry entitled *Adventurous Love and Other Verses* and a critical book on Samuel Butler (both of which were published in 1915) he ‘continued to translate’ and wrote ‘plays and innumerable articles, ... contributed reviews to the *Manchester Guardian* and lectured on modern drama’.²³ Sydney Janet Kaplan has suggested that he also began ‘gathering facts about Gertler ... for use in his novel *Mendel*’.²⁴ Murry’s journal shows that he was struggling to make progress with his novel *Still Life*. Mansfield may have worked on an untitled story which she had begun back in 1910 (now known by its opening words: ‘There is always something wonderfully touching’), but the only story we know she wrote during the Lawrences’ time in Buckinghamshire is ‘Brave Love’, which she finished on 12 January 1915.²⁵

In a journal entry for 22 December 1914, Murry ascribed the greater creative productivity of Lawrence and Cannan to the fact that they had ‘fixed ideas’ while he had ‘no ideas at all’.²⁶ The comment probably reflects Murry’s sense that Lawrence and Cannan were both strongly opinionated novelists who saw it as their central aim to challenge the attitudes of their readers, especially at a time of war. Ruth Hoberman has compared the two writers’ interests in the visual arts in this period, arguing that both initially saw in Mark Gertler’s paintings an expressive purity which they thought avoided the compromises necessitated by literary commerce and the publishing industry; she notes that Lawrence and Cannan ‘worried obsessively about their relation to an audience and world they despised yet wanted to transform’.²⁷ Lawrence’s horror at the declaration caused him to write the anti-war article ‘With the Guns’, which he published in the *Manchester Guardian* on 18 August 1914.²⁸ He turned to philosophy in the ‘Study of Thomas Hardy’ out of ‘sheer rage’ at the war, using it

to analyse the suicidal self-destructiveness of the war spirit.²⁹ In mid-November he wrote a war poem in disgust at the ‘glib irreverence’ of some of the contributions to the special ‘Poems of War’ number of the magazine *Poetry*, edited by Harriet Monroe.³⁰ In both the ‘Study of Thomas Hardy’ and this war poem Lawrence portrays soldiers’ selflessness not as a conscious and heroic quality but a tragic symptom of their inability to attain self-realization by any other means than exposure to jeopardy and death in a society premised on safety and conformity.³¹ Lawrence’s desire to counteract war propaganda would lead him to incorporate Ursula Brangwen’s blunt critique of Anton Skrebensky’s vocation as a subaltern in the Royal Engineers into the chapter of *The Rainbow* entitled ‘First Love’.³²

Cannan, who had recently published a short book on satire, was also renowned for his outspokenness and didacticism: Compton Mackenzie came to think of him as a novelist ‘too much concerned with preaching’.³³ In November 1914 Cannan (an alumnus of King’s College, Cambridge) published a short anti-war article in *The Cambridge Magazine*, founded in 1912 and edited by C. K. Ogden. This article, entitled ‘Kept Alive’, argued that a decidedly internationalist younger generation had been betrayed into the slaughter of war by an Establishment whose hollow ideas and values were hemmed in by commercial self-interest and arrogance. It stated that the dream of the young to ‘make their countries gleeful with love and work’ had been replaced by the desperate practical need to ‘prevent invasion and its bestiality’.³⁴ In Cannan’s view, the soldiers dying at the front were doing so ‘not for their country, but to save human life from worse horrors than those already thrust upon it’; he predicted that when the war was over the ‘young men of every country’ would discover that they had fought only ‘to keep alive the antiquarian ideas governing international relations’ and he asserted that they must ‘see to it that these ideas are buried with the dead’.³⁵

The article was clearly intended as a rallying call for disaffected soldiers and for peace-loving civilians ‘born within the last thirty years’.³⁶ Its attempt to challenge glorifying

accounts of the war may be compared to ‘With the Guns’. Here Lawrence had refuted the ‘glamour and glory’ of modern warfare by describing gunners he had seen during army manoeuvres in Bavaria in autumn 1913 aimlessly firing bullets ‘against an enemy a mile and a half away, men unseen by any of the soldiers at the guns’. He predicted that the current conflict would be ‘a war of artillery, a war of machines, and men no more than the subjective material of the machine’.³⁷ Cannan similarly stressed the threat that war posed to the agency – and therefore the humanity – of soldiers. As Jonathan Atkin notes, Cannan saw ‘dignity’ as ‘the sole guarantee of decency in human affairs’, and he feared that perceptions of it had been ‘impaired’ by official discourses on morality and ‘the taint of accusations of cowardice’.³⁸ In ‘Kept Alive’, Cannan commented: ‘Every day strips this war of a little more of its dignity, even of the dignity of death, for it is not dignified to die in a trench armed with a rifle and a bayonet against a machine miles away out of sight behind a hill’. He despairingly asserted that ‘With the most terrible engines of destruction there is no fighting, no bravery, no courage, but the fortitude of a savage fatalism’.³⁹

On Christmas Eve 1914, in the midst of the misery they felt about the war, the Lawrences hosted a party for Murry, Mansfield and the Cannans; Mark Gertler and Kot were invited too. They decorated the attic rooms of the farmhouse and ‘made the cottage splendid with holly and mistletoe’.⁴⁰ Frieda described it as ‘the last time for years to come that we were really gay’.⁴¹ She observed that they ‘danced on the shaky floor’ and sang songs. She recalled Cannan singing ‘I feel, I feel like an eagle in the sky’, Kot reprising his rendition in Hebrew of Psalm 33 – ‘Rananitza di-ikim badanoi’ (which he had recently sung for Lawrence during the walking tour they took with two other men in the Lake District) – and Mansfield singing ‘I am an unlucky man’ (a version of the song ‘I’m a Jonah Man’ from the popular African-American comedy musical *In Dahomey*) and the French Creole song ‘Ton sirop est doux, Madeleine’.⁴² In his journal Murry describes Gertler’s ‘vigorous dance at the end of the

evening' and 'his talking a long Yiddish rigmarole' as he walked to the Cannans' house, where he, Murry and Mansfield stayed on that night;⁴³ the next day the whole group reconvened at the windmill for a dinner party.

The choice of songs reveals the group's yearning for overseas homelands and places of escape, whilst the songs' lyrics combine solemnity, and even despondency, with a desperate kind of gaiety suiting the occasion. Mansfield delivered 'I am an unlucky man' in an exaggeratedly mournful manner, with 'a long, ridiculous face', mimicking its comedy origins.⁴⁴ 'Ton sirop est doux, Madeleine' is a fast-paced dance song with a sobering and all-too-apposite theme: its speaker beseeches Madeleine not to make so much noise because they do not own the house in which she is creating a commotion. Yet the closest connection is between the songs sung by Kot and Cannan, which gesture towards a transcendence of the friends' current strife. Psalm 33 affirms God's righteousness and justice, and His promise to deliver the faithful from death and keep them alive in times of famine, while Cannan's 'I feel, I feel like an eagle in the sky' is the upbeat interlude in the American slave spiritual song 'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child', which charts the sudden transformations in the mood of a young man separated from his parents and sold into slavery, between deep despair at his situation and joy at his mental flights from it.

Lawrence's first extant mention of Rananim is in a letter to Kot of 3 January 1915. He declares 'We are going to found an Order of the Knights of Rananim', and he states that its badge will be 'an eagle, or phoenix argent, rising from a flaming nest of scarlet, on a black background'.⁴⁵ The name – 'Rananim' – derives from Kot's chanting of Psalm 33, while the eagle may refer back to Cannan's song at the Christmas Eve party. Rananim took the form of a plan to inhabit an island. In a diary entry for 3 January, Katherine Mansfield observes that, together with Murry, she 'Talked over the island idea' but was sceptical: 'For me I know it has come too late'.⁴⁶ Catherine Carswell, who visited the Lawrences in Buckinghamshire,

notes that Mansfield's spoiling tactic was to obtain 'a mass of detailed, difficult information about suitable islands', in response to which Lawrence 'fell sadly silent'.⁴⁷ Yet Lawrence wrote out a 'long draft for the constitution' of his island,⁴⁸ and he clearly gave some thought to where he wanted it to be located. When he first met E. M. Forster in February 1915, he was 'sure that if we all set out at once for one of the South Sea Islands we should found a perfect community there which would regenerate the world'.⁴⁹ In July 1915, Bertrand Russell reported to Ottoline Morrell the consequences of interrupting what he saw as Lawrence's 'muddle-headed' ideas: 'When one gets a glimmer of the facts into his head, as I did at last, he gets discouraged, and says he will go to the South Sea Islands, and bask in the sun with 6 native wives'.⁵⁰

Turner and Worthen state that Lawrence 'only ever seems to have used the word 'Ranim' in the company of the Murries, Kot, and (a little later) Donald and Catherine Carswell' and they describe it as a 'special private game played by the Murries, Kot and Lawrence'.⁵¹ There is, however, a fascinating piece of evidence for Gilbert Cannan's involvement in the Ranim fantasy and the island scheme which has thus far been entirely overlooked.

In the autumn and winter of 1914–1915 Cannan had with him in Cholesbury the manuscript of a book of four satirical fables. This manuscript, currently held at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, includes the Cholesbury address at the bottom right-hand corner of its title page.⁵² The four fables – 'Samways Island', 'Ultimus', 'Gynecologia' and 'Out of Work' – were published by Secker in April 1915 under the title *Windmills: A Book of Fables*, with an epigraph from Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and a dedication 'To D. H. Lawrence'. The title combines a private reference to Cannan's windmill home with an allusion to *Don Quixote* which gestures towards the book's emphasis on the futility of war and the construction of imaginary enemies. The dedication is a clear sign either that Cannan had

discussed the book with Lawrence or that he had a special reason for connecting it with Lawrence at that time, or both. It is the first two, linked fables – ‘Samways Island’ and ‘Ultimus’ – which are of particular interest in relation to Rananim. These are satires on war involving an island inhabited by like-minded individuals from warring nations who are violently opposed to the conflict. Since *Windmills* is so little known I will initially provide a brief account of the plots of the two fables.

In these comical picaresque tales Cannan presents a thinly-veiled fantasy world in which Fatland (England) is at war with ‘Fatterland’ (Germany). The main characters are George Samways (the proprietor of an uncharted island which was first discovered by his deceased parents), his son Ultimus, and a Fatterland engineer turned philosopher named Ignatz Siebenhaar. At the beginning of the first fable, Samways Island is badly affected by a violent storm and comes loose from its rocky base, becoming a floating island akin to Laputa (Swift’s flying island in *Gulliver’s Travels*). Two shipwrecked survivors of the same storm – a bishop and his daughter, Arabella – are taken in by George Samways. The naïve and inexperienced George instantly falls in love with Arabella. His ensuing adventures contrast his youthful purity and honesty with the greed, cruelty and narrow-minded prejudice of supposedly civilized people in war time. A Fattish vessel moors nearby and George agrees to give his island as a gift to the Skitish (British) Empire. However, en route to Fattish waters the vessel is sunk by a ship from Fatterland; George, the Bishop and Arabella are rescued by the enemy ship and George meets Siebenhaar, who is impressed by his innocence. Cannan is at pains to stress George’s lack of nationalistic feeling and his innate sympathy for his fellow man. Unfortunately the unpatriotic sentiments which Siebenhaar expresses to George result in them both being set adrift with minimal supplies. They almost starve but are eventually picked up by a Fattish sailor who delivers them to a nearby colony. This colony is then besieged by the Fatter navy and George is inadvertently responsible for defeating an invading

force. He is taken to Bondon (London) as a romantic war hero. Peace is declared between Fatland and Fatterland and the addition of Samways Island to the Empire is seized upon as a suitable retrospective justification for the conflict, but at the very moment when George is set to sign the island over to the Emperor-King a report arrives that it has drifted away and cannot be found. George instantly falls out of favour with the Fattish people. He responds by fleeing Fatland, sailing with Arabella, Siebenhaar and the captain of the ship that saved him from starvation to find his island home. They locate it after an eight-month search of the South Seas (where it was formerly located).

The second fable, 'Ultimus', intensifies the anti-war satire. It opens with the deaths of both Arabella and George. When the captain secretly leaves the island with a cargo of rubies and emeralds Arabella despairs of her isolation; she dies giving premature birth to her son, 'Ultimus' (so named because he promises to be the last of his line). George attempts to keep Ultimus from hearing about the behaviour of the inhabitants of Fatland and Fatterland, and about women, wishing to shelter him from corruption and emotional harm, but when he is six years old he hears Siebenhaar talking in his sleep and comes to his father with a welter of questions about the outside world; George is overcome and drowns himself. Ultimus is raised by Siebenhaar, who seeks to counteract the effect of his charge's fall from grace by imparting to him all of the knowledge he has of the world. Sadly the woeful tales which Siebenhaar tells of war and women only serve to arouse Ultimus' curiosity, leading him to develop new and powerful forms of explosive and to express a desire to see the opposite sex.

Siebenhaar's view of war darkens as a result of witnessing his charge's development. Whereas he had formerly accounted for war as the result of a malady of the internal organs or a consequence of the need to perpetuate the arms industry, he now fears that 'Human nature ... is incurably pugnacious and destructive'.⁵³ This thought coincides with his discovery that war has once more been declared, and this time on a larger scale. Siebenhaar decides that the

time has come to act in order to end the conflict. Drawing on his earlier experiences, he approaches the warring nations with no illusions. To protect against the threat of invasion he and Ultimus destroy their island's harbour and set mines around its coastline, then they sail it to Fatland, manoeuvring it up the Fattish Channel to blockade Bondon. The Fattish think that the island has returned to help them, but Ultimus and Siebenhaar refuse to side with Fatland. In a sceptical mood they agree to look at Bondon and to assess the Fattish cause at first hand. On the mainland Ultimus (who possesses his father's impulsive warm-heartedness) falls in love with a chambermaid while Siebenhaar encounters a people whose attitudes and behaviour have been shaped by fifteen years of conflict perpetuated by the rhetoric of politicians. He decides that he and Ultimus should travel next to Fatterland to see the war for themselves. Once they are back on the island, this time accompanied by the chambermaid, Ultimus is so nauseated by the spectacle of the cheering crowds that he destroys the city.

They are initially welcomed as heroes by the Emperor of Fatterland, who awards them medals for destroying Bondon. However, when Siebenhaar expresses his hatred of the religious rhetoric of war the Emperor is relieved to be able to talk sensibly with them and tells them of his regret at the loss of life the war has brought, his bitterness at the politicians and contractors who gain by it, and his frustration at his powerlessness as a leader. Propaganda is shown to be driven by bigotry and greed. Ultimus is taken in a Zeppelin-style airship to see the 'western frontier'. There he witnesses the brutality of trench warfare:

There were men playing cards, others sleeping; another was vomiting. Another was buttoning up his trousers when his head was blown off. His body stood for a moment with his hand fumbling at his buttons. Then it collapsed ridiculously. One of the men who was playing wiped a card on his breeches and then played it. Another man went mad, climbed out of the trenches and rushed screeching in the direction whence the

missile had come. (107–8).

The sight of this seals Ultimus' determination to end it and retreat to his island as a haven of 'intellect and beauty' (111). He and Siebenhaar draw up a signed eleven-point manifesto which calls for disarmament, the destruction of the Fatland and Fatterland navies, and the introduction of a central government (created in Scandinavia) to oversee political relations between nations. Since 'the natural pugnacity of the human race and its love of spectacular effect' (112) makes conflicts inevitable, this government is also tasked with carefully managing future wars. Ultimus and Siebenhaar destroy the fleets of the two nations by driving the island through them before heading back to the South Seas as a colony of three comprised of them and the chambermaid, who has overcome her boredom with life on the island and realized her love for Ultimus.

The fables are too indebted to powerful literary forbears to have any serious claim to formal originality. Their fantastic elements are obviously culled from Swift, while their picaresque qualities closely reflect the influence of *Don Quixote* and eighteenth-century texts such as Voltaire's *Candide* and Johnson's *Rasselas*. Frieda Lawrence would comment that 'Windmills was jolly, but rather like Smollett'.⁵⁴ However, if the plotlines and effects in the fables are derivative, their satirical reflections on war are far more compelling, distinctive and far-sighted. The fables articulate Cannan's protest against the outmoded and empty values of the political, military and commercial status quo on behalf of the members of an outward-looking and hopeful younger generation indoctrinated and forced to fight against their better natures. The concluding fantasy of setting up a 'central government' (112) or 'United States of Europe' (116) to ensure that future conflicts can be managed and prevented from escalating brings to mind Cannan's friend Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's contemporary proposal to establish a League of Nations.⁵⁵

In his preface to the American first edition of *Windmills*, published in 1920 by B. W. Huebsch, Cannan notes that ‘Samways Island’ was originally published in London in a limited edition ‘little orange-covered booklet, called Old Mole’s Novel’; he states that it was ‘issued simultaneously with Old Mole [i.e. in January 1914],⁵⁶ a character to whom I was so attached that it gave me great pleasure to attribute authorship to him’.⁵⁷ The booklet, actually a 63-page pocket-sized paperback priced at 6d, was published by Martin Secker under the playful title *Old Mole’s Novel, Revised and Expurgated by Gilbert Cannan*. Cannan claims that the fable’s anti-war sentiments were sufficiently well-received by readers in Germany that it encouraged him to write the remaining fables, which he finished ‘a few months before the outbreak of war’ (i.e. shortly before Lawrence’s arrival in Buckinghamshire).⁵⁸ If they were indeed completed at this time, then Cannan’s depiction of the war in ‘Ultimus’ – of trenches as ‘black zigzag parallel lines in the ground’; of the impasse of trench warfare as replacing ‘barbarous fighting with bayonets’; and of western and eastern frontiers (the latter ‘a hundred miles longer’ than the former) (107–8) – fully merits his description of it as ‘prophecy’.⁵⁹ There is no evidence in the manuscript to suggest that the accounts of the war were revised or added at a later date. Cannan states that the book did not sell well in its first English edition of 1915 because ‘it was not a novel, nor an essay, nor a play and the British public had no training in Satire’, but he subsequently received ‘letters from both soldiers and conscientious objectors saying that the book was their constant companion and solace’ and he heard that ‘in a certain division of the British Army it was declared to be a court-martial offense for any officer to have the book in his possession’.⁶⁰

Despite his objections to the war, Cannan (apparently at his wife’s insistence)⁶¹ took on light civilian duties as a special constable in autumn 1914. In due course his pacifist beliefs would harden and take a political form quite different from Lawrence’s non-pacifist anti-war stance; Diana Farr notes that in the spring of 1916 Cannan undertook secretarial

work for the National Council Against Conscription and in June 1916 registered as a conscientious objector.⁶² Lawrence saw conflict as an inescapable, and potentially regenerative, feature of human relationships and he came to suspect that pacifists harboured repressed violent desires.⁶³ His writing on the war was directed at analysing ‘the *will* to war’ in the combatants and he stressed the necessity to come through it to new forms of fulfilment.⁶⁴ By spring 1916 the two men had drifted apart: in a letter of 29 April 1916 Lawrence had to ask Mark Gertler what Cannan was going to do in the face of conscription, expressing concern that he would ‘be put smack into the army’, and on 7 July 1916 Lawrence put the same question to Kot, asking ‘Is he a conscientious objector, or what?’⁶⁵ In fact, as Farr explains, in August 1916 Cannan ‘went before a Tribunal in Chesham and was exempted from Active service on account of a heart murmur’.⁶⁶

Between August 1914 and January 1915, however, when Lawrence was living in Buckinghamshire, their views were in much closer sympathy. It is very likely that Lawrence knew about the uproar which Cannan’s anti-war article, ‘Kept Alive’, created in Cambridge in November 1914. In the next number of *The Cambridge Magazine*, dated 5 December 1914, a strong letter of protest was printed from G. Udny Yule, a statistician at St. John’s College. Yule questioned the magazine’s decision to print it and stated that Cannan’s views were ‘enough to make a decent-minded dog sick’.⁶⁷ The editor responded by offering to apologize to Yule and accept no further articles from Cannan if by 1 January 1915 they had ‘not received the signatures of at least one dozen Officers in the British Army declaring themselves not only entirely opposed to the spirit and wish of this astonishing letter, but willing themselves to sign Mr. Cannan’s article’. Before the deadline passed the walls of the editorial office were ‘literally plastered with indignant protests’ defending Cannan’s article.⁶⁸ Cannan’s piece was re-printed in the magazine on 23 January 1915; it was prefaced with a three-page editorial entitled ‘For the Freedom of the Press’ and Cannan contributed a brief

reflective afterword. In this afterword, entitled ‘Addenda and a Soft Answer’, Cannan argues that the young must keep alive their idealism and cling to their humanity even while they submit to military orders and pledge themselves to an ‘inhuman task’: thought, feeling and imagination must not be sacrificed to ‘the present calamity’.⁶⁹ In *The Rainbow*, Ursula mercilessly probes and then criticizes Skrebensky’s unquestioning commitment to military action and to the nation, telling him ‘It seems to me ... as if you weren’t anybody—as if there weren’t anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me’.⁷⁰ In a similar vein, Cannan now asserted that ‘It is for the soldier of 1914 not only to do and die but also to reason why’.⁷¹

It is difficult to imagine that the friend whose outspoken views on the war so closely mirrored Lawrence’s own in these months, and who had created anti-war fables about a neutral island inhabited by kindred spirits opposed to the barbarity of world war (an island located in the South Seas), could have failed to be involved in the fantasy of Rananim. Only the critical neglect of *Windmills* and the absence of any directly corroborating evidence have prevented us from acknowledging Cannan’s part in it. The single detailed reference Lawrence makes to *Windmills* is in a letter to Robert Mounsier of 20 January 1917, in which he recommends ‘Gynecologia’, the third fable (about women taking over Fatland and subjecting men to abject servitude), as probably prescient: ‘I am sure woman will destroy man, intrinsically, in this country’.⁷² Yet if Lawrence did not read the entire book in manuscript in the autumn or winter of 1914–1915 he certainly read it shortly after publication. On 5 May 1915 he told Ottoline Morrell: ‘I too like Gilbert’s *Windmills* better, I think, than anything he has yet done’.⁷³ In a letter to Ottoline of 17 May, Cannan declared: ‘Hardly any reviews of *Windmills* yet, discreet and cautious and giving no hint as to what the book is really about. However with you, Lawrence and Bertie [Bertrand Russell] pleased with it I’m quite content to let it go at that’.⁷⁴ Ottoline had introduced Lawrence to Russell in early February 1915;

Russell was a member of the anti-war Union of Democratic Control, and in June he and Lawrence would plan to deliver a series of anti-war lectures together in London. Before Lawrence visited Russell at Trinity College, Cambridge, on the weekend of 6–8 March 1915 to discuss their possible collaboration he told his host that he wanted to meet ‘Lowes Dickinson and the good people you are going to introduce me to’.⁷⁵ He would almost certainly have travelled to the University with the reassurance of knowing the underswell of anti-war feeling revealed by the reception of Cannan’s article in *The Cambridge Magazine*.

Cannan was at this time still a member of that inner circle of friends opposed to the war with whom Lawrence hoped to create a better world. Lawrence told Ottoline Morrell that he felt ‘a real, unalterable power for good in Gilbert’ and he wanted Cannan to participate in meetings in London associated with the planned lectures, to ‘establish a little society or body around a *religious belief which leads to action*’.⁷⁶ In September 1915, when Lawrence was setting up a journal entitled *The Signature* with John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield to serialize his latest long philosophical essay, ‘The Crown’, with its analysis of England as a country overwhelmed by destruction and maiming, he asked Russell whether he and Cannan would care to join them.⁷⁷ As visionary co-believers in the need for some form of post-war social reconstruction Lawrence and Russell were both well placed to appreciate those aspects of ‘Samways Island’ and ‘Ultimus’ which the early reviewers cautiously passed over. Lawrence, however, was the book’s dedicatee and in May 1915 he had a further reason to be pleased with *Windmills*: he was, after all, one who had shared in its island fantasy.

¹ D. H. Lawrence to S. S. Koteliansky, [3 January 1915], in George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (eds), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1981), 252.

² George J. Zytaruk, 'Rananim: D. H. Lawrence's Failed Utopia', in Gāmini Salgādo and G. K. Das (eds), *The Spirit of D. H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies* (Basingstoke, 1988), 266–94 (273); Introduction to James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey (eds), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1989), 3.

³ John Turner and John Worthen, 'Ideas of Community: Lawrence and "Rananim"', *D. H. Lawrence Studies*, 8 (July 1999), 135–71 (141).

⁴ John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of an Outsider* (London, 2005), 157.

⁵ See David Garnett, *The Golden Echo* (London, 1953), 264.

⁶ See, for example, Antony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford, 1982), 171.

⁷ For a full account of this event, see Diana Farr, *Gilbert Cannan: A Georgian Prodigy* (London, 1978), 51.

⁸ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 118. Farr speculates that the man who scorned Mary was Harley Granville-Barker.

⁹ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 119.

¹⁰ Henry James, 'The Younger Generation', *TLS*, 635 (19 March 1914), 133 and 637 (2 April 1914), 157. The quotation is taken from the first instalment of the article.

¹¹ Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912–1922* (Cambridge, 1996), 181.

¹² In *Gilbert Cannan*, 122, Farr notes that '[t]o please Mary it was essential [for Cannan] to establish himself as a writer at least equal to Barrie'.

¹³ *News of the World*, 19 October 1913; *Nottingham Guardian*, 20 October 1913.

¹⁴ See John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: A Literary Life* (London, 1989), 38–9.

¹⁵ Frieda Lawrence, "*Not I, But the Wind ...*" (Santa Fe, 1935), 99.

¹⁶ See John Middleton Murry's journal, entry for 18 November 1914. Wellington, Alexander Turnbull Library, MS-Papers-11327-001, 35.

¹⁷ Katherine Mansfield to Douglas Clayton, 4 February 1915, in Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds), *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1984), 146.

¹⁸ See D. H. Lawrence to Edward Marsh, 25 August 1914, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 212.

¹⁹ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 134.

²⁰ Part of Cannan's letter to the Committee is quoted in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 224–5 fn. 4. Mary wrote to Maurice Hewlett and Alfred Sutro.

²¹ D. H. Lawrence to Arthur McLeod, 5 January 1915, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 254.

²² The date of completion of *Young Earnest* is recorded by Farr in *Gilbert Cannan*, 108.

²³ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 123.

²⁴ Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Circulating Genius: John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence* (Edinburgh, 2010), 22.

²⁵ It is Antony Alpers who suggests that Mansfield worked on the earlier, untitled story; see *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, 172. Both stories are reproduced in Gerri Kimber and Vincent O'Sullivan (eds), *The Collected Fiction of Katherine Mansfield, Vol. 1: 1898–1915* (Edinburgh, 2012), 392–7 and 398–422.

²⁶ John Middleton Murry's journal. MS-Papers-11327-001, 43–4.

²⁷ Ruth Hoberman, 'Making Life into Art: The Three-Way Conversation of Gilbert Cannan, Mark Gertler, and D. H. Lawrence', in Helen Maxson and Daniel Morris (eds), *Reading Texts, Reading Lives: Essays in the Tradition of Humanistic Cultural Criticism in Honor of Daniel R. Schwarz* (Newark, 2012), 31–49 (34).

²⁸ See D. H. Lawrence [under pseudonym H. D. Lawrence], ‘With the Guns’, *Manchester Guardian*, 18 August 1914, 10.

²⁹ D. H. Lawrence to J. B. Pinker, 5 September 1914, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 212.

³⁰ D. H. Lawrence to Harriet Monroe, 17 November 1914, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 232. Lawrence’s war poem was published in revised form in *The Egoist* (1 May 1915), 75–6, under the title ‘Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?’

³¹ See D. H. Lawrence, *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* (Cambridge, 1985), 15–16, and the early version of Lawrence’s war poem transcribed in Alvin Sullivan, ‘D. H. Lawrence and *Poetry*: The Unpublished Manuscripts’, *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 9 (Summer 1976), 266–77 (269–71).

³² See D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (London, 1915), 289–90.

³³ Gilbert Cannan, *Satire* (London, 1914); Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave Four, 1907–1915* (London, 1965), 221.

³⁴ Gilbert Cannan, ‘Kept Alive’, *The Cambridge Magazine*, 4 (28 November 1914), 154 and 157 (154).

³⁵ Cannan, ‘Kept Alive’, 157.

³⁶ Cannan, ‘Kept Alive’, 154.

³⁷ D. H. Lawrence, ‘With the Guns’.

³⁸ Jonathan Atkin, *A War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester, 2002), 209.

³⁹ Cannan, ‘Kept Alive’, 154.

⁴⁰ Frieda Lawrence, “*Not I, But the Wind ...*”, 99.

⁴¹ Frieda Lawrence, “*Not I, But the Wind ...*”, 100.

⁴² Frieda Lawrence, “*Not I, But the Wind ...*”, 99–100. Murry remembered the same songs being sung, but he did not associate them specifically with the Christmas Eve party. See John Middleton Murry, *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1933), 43.

⁴³ John Middleton Murry’s journal, entry for 24 December 1914. MS-Papers-11327-001, 48.

⁴⁴ Frieda Lawrence, “*Not I, But the Wind ...*”, 99.

⁴⁵ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 252–3.

⁴⁶ Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison (eds), *The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield* (Edinburgh, 2016), 148.

⁴⁷ Catherine Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage: A Narrative of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1932), 22.

⁴⁸ See Beatrice Lady Glenavy, *Today We Will Only Gossip* (London, 1964), 99. This ‘constitution’ was apparently shown to Gordon Campbell; it is now unlocated.

⁴⁹ E. M. Forster, *The Listener*, 30 April 1930, reproduced in R. P. Draper (ed.), *D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage* (London, 1970), 343–7 (344).

⁵⁰ *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell Vol. II (1914–1944)* (London, 1968), 53.

⁵¹ Turner and Worthen, ‘Ideas of Community: Lawrence and “Rananim”’, 142.

⁵² New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Gilbert Cannan Papers, GEN MSS 873 Box 10 ff. 62–4.

⁵³ Gilbert Cannan, *Windmills: A Book of Fables* (London, 1915), 74. Further quotations from this edition are referenced in parentheses in the text of the essay.

⁵⁴ Frieda Lawrence to Bertrand Russell, [c.19 May 1915], in E. W. Tedlock (ed.), *Frieda Lawrence: The Memoirs and Correspondence* (London: Heinemann, 1961), 204. The conjectural date of the letter is given in Lynn K. Talbot, ‘From Old Germany to New Mexico: An Overview of Frieda Lawrence’s Letters’, *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 37.2 (2012), 72–249 (102, item 137).

⁵⁵ Within weeks of the outbreak of war Dickinson turned his attention to the best means to establish peace terms and reduce the likelihood of future wars; he helped to found a group of internationalist pacifists commonly known as the ‘Bryce Group’, which in March 1915 distributed a detailed constitution for a League of Nations entitled ‘Proposals for the Avoidance of War’. Dickinson visited Cannan in Buckinghamshire on at least one occasion during Lawrence’s time there. See the letter from Cannan to Ottoline Morrell, 5 October 1914, quoted in Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 109.

⁵⁶ *Old Mole; Being the Surprising Adventures in England of Herbert Jocelyn Beenham MA, Sometime Sixth-Form Master at Thrigsby Grammar School in the County of Lancaster* (London, 1914).

⁵⁷ Gilbert Cannan, ‘Preface to American Edition’, in *Windmills: A Book of Fables* (New York, 1920), xiii.

⁵⁸ Cannan, ‘Preface to American Edition’, xiii.

⁵⁹ Cannan, ‘Preface to American Edition’, xiii and xvi.

⁶⁰ Cannan, ‘Preface to American Edition’, xiv.

⁶¹ This detail is included in Compton Mackenzie’s fictionalized account in his novel *The South Wind of Love* (London, 1937) of an exchange he had with Cannan during the period. In a letter to Lawrence biographer Edward Nehls, Mackenzie claimed that ‘most’ of the novel was ‘factually and conversationally exact’. See Edward Nehls (ed.), *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, Vol. 1 (1885–1919) (Madison, 1957), 246 and 570–1 n. 41.

⁶² Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 135, 136.

⁶³ See D. H. Lawrence to Bertrand Russell, 14 September 1915, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 392. Cf. Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile*, 212.

⁶⁴ D. H. Lawrence to Harriet Monroe, 17 November 1914, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 233.

⁶⁵ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 602 and 623.

⁶⁶ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 136.

⁶⁷ G. Udny Yule, 'An Example of Frightfulness', *The Cambridge Magazine*, 4 (5 December 1914), 170–1.

⁶⁸ 'For the Freedom of the Press', *The Cambridge Magazine*, 4 (23 January 1915), 187–9 (188).

⁶⁹ Gilbert Cannan, 'Addenda and a Soft Answer', *The Cambridge Magazine*, 4 (23 January 1915), 191.

⁷⁰ D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, 290.

⁷¹ Cannan, 'Addenda and a Soft Answer'.

⁷² James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson (eds), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1984), 78–9; fn. 3 incorrectly describes 'Gynecologia' as a poem.

⁷³ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 334.

⁷⁴ Farr, *Gilbert Cannan*, 126.

⁷⁵ D. H. Lawrence to Bertrand Russell, 12 February 1915, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 286.

⁷⁶ D. H. Lawrence to Ottoline Morrell, [24 March 1915] and [20 June 1915], in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 311 and 359.

⁷⁷ See D. H. Lawrence to Bertrand Russell, 5 September 1915, in *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, Vol. 2, 387.