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APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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LAWRENCE IN OLD AND NEW MEXICO: THE QUEST AND THE ART

CHAPTER I

THE END OF THE CYCLE

When D. H. Lawrence arrived at Mabel Dodge Sterne's house in Taos, New Mexico, on his thirty-seventh birthday, 11 September 1922,[1] he came in response not merely to the written invitation he received from the rich American dilettante[2] on 5 November 1921,[3] nor even to what she, as Mrs. Tony Luhan, subsequently described rather luridly as her nocturnally willing him to come,[4] but to the urging of his own expectations of America. Although the anniversary

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[1]Harry T. Moore, Poste Restante: A D. H. Lawrence Travel Calendar, with "Introduction" by Mark Schorer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956), p. 68.

[2]Harry T. Moore, in The Intelligent Heart: The Story of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1962), p. 356, comments that "Lawrence asked whether Taos was not an art colony: he knew 'all that "arty" and "literary" crew', who were 'smoking, steaming shits'."

[3]Richard Aldington, D. H. Lawrence: Portrait of a Genius But . . . (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 283.

[4]Mabel Dodge Luhan, Lorenzo in Taos (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), p. 35, as reprinted in Edward Nehls

seems to have occasioned no particular celebration, it marked for Lawrence the beginning of an experience through which he sought the means to personal and artistic regeneration for himself and to spiritual, cultural, and political regeneration for society. In one sense, Lawrence's pilgrimage to the promise of America embodied, no less than his fiction of the period, the quest of the hero of romance. As Joseph Campbell has stated the mythic pattern of this quest:

> The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.
>
> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.[5]

Lawrence's journey to America, the most important of his many travels, was, in essence, a quest for the symbols and myths by which what he regarded as the waste land of contemporary western civilization could be revived. The purpose of this study is to discover, through an examination of Lawrence's fiction of the three years between his arrival in America and his final departure on 22 September

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(ed.), D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography (3 vols.; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-59), II, 166.

[5]Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 30.

1925,[6] first, what the New Mexican and Mexican experience contributed to the artistic development of the concerns of Lawrence's quest, and, second, what the implications of this experience were for his subsequent development as an artist. The solution to the problem of the waste land, for Lawrence, lay finally in personal and public commitment to the values of romanticism, that is, of dynamic organicism rather than static mechanism. This commitment to romantic values was formulated and presented expositorily in several ways in the period preceding Lawrence's journey: in the idea of America that formed concurrently with the rejection of the European waste land in his letters for the period, in the cyclic theory of history in *Movements in European History* (1921), in the romantic theory of literary art and criticism in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), and in the mythic theory of personality in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922). A consideration of these several expressions of romanticism as a major concern in Lawrence's life and art will provide, I believe, the most advantageous perspective from which to view the primary materials of the period in New Mexico and Mexico.

Armin Arnold traces Lawrence's idea of America to his earliest reading of such books by American authors as

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[6]Moore, *Poste Restante*, pp. 83-84.

Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic, Alcott's Little Women, Longfellow's poems, Emerson's essays, Thoreau's Walden, and Whitman's Leaves of Grass, though except for the last of these, "These books had by no means such a far-reaching influence on Lawrence as the novels of Thomas Hardy or George Eliot." Lawrence's first direct connection with America, which came with the American publication of his first novel, The White Peacock, on 19 January 1911, led him, on the basis of unfavorable American reviews, to the conclusion that "The Americans are just as stupid as we expected."[7] Nevertheless, major characters in Lawrence's early novels and short stories with some regularity think of emigrating to America,[8] and Mellors' plan for a life of farming in British Columbia in Lady Chatterley's Lover[9] indicates that Lawrence never abandoned the theme.

Lawrence's first personal relationship with American artists was with the American poets among the Imagists, a group Lawrence joined, despite reservations on both the others' part and his, probably because he liked H. D.

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[7] Armin Arnold, D. H. Lawrence and America (London: The Linden Press, 1958), pp. 13-14.

[8] Arnold, p. 14, mentions George in The White Peacock, Siegmund in The Trespasser, Geoffrey in Love Among the Haystacks, the young couple in "Daughters of the Vicar," and Bachmann and Emily in "The Thorn in the Flesh."

[9] D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959), p. 301.

(Hilda Doolittle) and Richard Aldington.[10] Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., notes Lawrence's apathy toward Imagist goals but thinks that he needed the financial assistance Amy Lowell provided and that his gratitude kept him in the group. Lawrence, who replaced Ezra Pound in the first Some Imagist Poets (1915), acknowledged, along with H. D., Aldington, Miss Lowell, F. S. Flint, and John Gould Fletcher, the six principles, derived from Pound, which appeared in the preface as a statement of poetic doctrine representing the common ground of the contributors. Coffman asserts, nevertheless, "that Lawrence was an Imagist only by courtesy of the others: 'we only included him from sympathy and to try and educate him,'" though Aldington thinks that this statement "was meant as a joke" and calls Lawrence's poetry "immeasurably superior to mine."[11] Lawrence's personal relations with the American Imagists remained cordial: Amy Lowell paid well for his contributions to the Imagist anthologies of 1915, 1916, and 1917 and sent him a present of sixty pounds when in 1916, after the suppression of The Rainbow, he was trying to raise money for a trip to America; and H. D., after the Lawrences' expulsion from Cornwall in

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[10] Arnold, p. 18.

[11] Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), pp. 28-30.

1917, lent them her apartment in Mecklenburgh Square.[12]

Lawrence's first written mention of his impulse to go to America makes the venture sound like an escape to a place of refuge,[13] for he wrote to Lady Cynthia Asquith on 16 August 1915: "I feel like knocking my head against the wall: or of running off to some unformed South American place where there is no thought of civilised effort."[14] Lawrence's frustration, though it had personal components, grew not so much out of specific personal problems as out of an increasing universal disillusionment with practically the whole of western civilization.

There were, of course, personal problems: Ernest Weekley's divorce from Frieda in the proceedings of "Weekley v. Weekley and Lawrence" (28 May 1914),[15] the continuing difficulty, after the Lawrences' marriage (13 July 1914)[16] between Frieda and Weekley over the children,[17]

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[12]Arnold, p. 18.

[13]Hence, Arnold, p. 23, entitles his second chapter "America as Place of Refuge (1914-1918)."

[14]D. H. Lawrence, _The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence_, ed. with "Introduction" by Harry T. Moore (2 vols.; New York: The Viking Press, 1962), I, 361.

[15]Moore, _The Intelligent Heart_, p. 213.

[16]_Ibid_., p. 215.

[17]Lawrence, in a letter to Amy Lowell on 18 December 1914, in _Collected Letters_, I, 297-300, relates, he says "verbatim," an appalling scene between Frieda and the righteously indignant "Quondam Husband"; and Barbara

the seizure and suppression of The Rainbow (3 November 1915),[18] the threat of military conscription in a war with which Lawrence had no sympathy,[19] Lawrence's physical illness,[20] and, as a final blow, the Lawrences' persecution and ultimate expulsion as "spies" by their hysterically suspicious Celtic neighbors in Cornwall.[21]

Weekley Barr, in a memoir printed in Nehls, I, 320-21, describes how, after Frieda's repeated attempts to see the children, once by waiting outside their school, the children followed instructions "to run away if we saw our mother."

[18]Moore, in The Intelligent Heart, pp. 258-59, quotes the statement by the Commissioner of Police at New Scotland Yard that "'The proceedings in 1915 were solely on the ground of obscenity'" but supports Aldington's view that the "'real reason for the attack'" was Lawrence's attack on war. The Parliamentary Debates on The Rainbow for 18 November and 1 December 1915 are reprinted in Nehls, I, 333-35.

[19]Lawrence, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell on 12 December 1915, in Collected Letters, I, 396-97, describes his first queueing up "to be attested and to get a military exemption" (11 December 1915); on reaching the table where his name was to be written down, he suddenly turned away in disgust at the "utter travesty of action" his presence there implied.

[20]See Lawrence's letter to Barbara Low on 18 July 1916, in Collected Letters, I, 258. Dr. Ernest Jones, the psychoanalyst, a friend and colleague of Lawrence's friend, Dr. David Eder, also a psychoanalyst, apparently told Lawrence that he had consumption.

[21]Cecil Gray, in Musical Chairs, or Between Two Stools (London: Home and Van Thal, 1948), pp. 126-28, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 423-25, gives an account of this hysteria. Interviews on the subject with Lawrence's friendly farm neighbors in Cornwall, the Hocking family, adapted from British Broadcasting Corporation telediphone recordings of 14 and 22 November 1953, are printed in Nehls, I, 425-28. Lawrence's account of the experience appears,

There was in the period, additionally, Lawrence's almost incessant dissension with friends and acquaintances over both important and trivial matters: with Edward Marsh over Lawrence's use of rhyme and meter in poetry;[22] with Edward Garnett over his criticisms of the manuscript of The Sisters, which was to grow into The Rainbow and Women in Love;[23] with Percy Lucas, whom Lawrence caricatured, though he subsequently regretted doing so, as Egbert in "England, My England," over undisclosed matters;[24] with Bertrand Russell over his preference for "mental consciousness" to "blood knowledge";[25] with S. S. Koteliansky over

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with names changed, as Chapter XII: "The Nightmare," in Kangaroo (Melbourne, London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955), pp. 215-65; and Frieda Lawrence's account appears under the subheading "Cornwall" in the section on "The War" in "Not I But the Wind . . ." (New York: The Viking Press, 1934), pp. 84-92.

[22]Edward Marsh, in A Number of People: A Book of Reminiscences (New York: Harper, 1939), pp. 227-28, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 358-59, admits his own "overweening presumption" and recalls that Lawrence called him "the policeman of poetry" and said that he ought to have his bottom kicked.

[23]Moore, The Intelligent Heart, p. 210.

[24]Ibid., p. 239.

[25]See D. H. Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence's Letters to Bertrand Russell, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1948), for Lawrence's side of the stormy correspondence between the two men. See also Bertrand Russell, "Portraits from Memory—III: D. H. Lawrence," Harper's Magazine, CCVI (No. 1233, February, 1953), 93-95, which is reprinted in Nehls, I, 282-85, for Russell's attack on Lawrence; and Mrs. Frieda Lawrence Ravagli's rebuttal in Harper's Magazine, CCVI (No. 1235, April, 1953), 22-23.

whether his humble bearing was fraudulent;[26] with Lady Ottoline Morrell, whom Lawrence satirized as Hermoine in *Women in Love*, over still undetermined differences;[27] with John Middleton Murry, who figured as Gerald Crich to Katherine Mansfield's Gudrun in *Women in Love*, over, among other things, Murry's refusal to join Lawrence in the blood-sacrament of *Blutbrüderschaft*;[28] with Catherine Carswell over her appearing before the Lawrences, during a visit to their cottage in Cornwall, improperly dressed in "an ankle-length petticoat topped by a long-sleeved woollen vest" minus a dressing gown;[29] with Philip Heseltine

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For a philosophical study of the Lawrence-Russell debate, see James L. Jarrett, "D. H. Lawrence and Bertrand Russell," *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959), pp. 168-85.

[26]Moore, *The Intelligent Heart*, p. 271.

[27]*Ibid*., p. 279.

[28]John Middleton Murry, in *Between Two Worlds: An Autobiography* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1936), pp. 408-17, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 375-81, gives an account of his own frightened supposition that the sacrament was to be "some sort of ceremony of black magic," though he later decided it was to have been something like the nude wrestling match between Birkin and Crich in Chapter XX: "Gladiatorial," in *Women in Love* (Melbourne, London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1957), pp. 258-68.

[29]Catherine Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage: A Narrative of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1951), p. 69.

(pseudonym Peter Warlock), whom Lawrence caricatured as Halliday in Women in Love, over undetermined matters, though Moore suggests that Lawrence's letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell about two of Heseltine's girls may have been the cause;[30] with Cecil Gray, who figured as Cyril Scott in Aaron's Rod and James Sharpe in Kangaroo, over Gray's unwillingness to accept what Gray calls the role of "the disciple whom Lawrence loved."[31]

The Lawrences, of course, also had their marital rows. Katherine Mansfield, in a letter written from Cornwall on "Thursday" (11 May 1916), tells Koteliansky about "the situation between those two": one of their fights began with Lawrence's threatening to give Frieda "a dab on the cheek" for "showing off" in calling Shelley's Ode to a Skylark false; progressed to Frieda's running in circles around the Murrys' kitchen table, calling for Murry's help, while Lawrence, in blind rage, beat her about the face and breast and pulled her hair out; and ended the next day with

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[30]Moore, The Intelligent Heart, pp. 271-72. Cecil Gray, in Peter Warlock: A Memoir of Philip Heseltine ("The Life and Letters Series No 84"; London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), pp. 168-69, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 452-53, says that while Heseltine was acting altruistically as literary agent for Lawrence's The Reality of Peace, Lawrence was "actually engaged in writing his disgusting libel."

[31]Cecil Gray, Musical Chairs, pp. 131-40, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 431-38.

Lawrence's serving Frieda's breakfast in bed and trimming a hat for her.[32] Catherine Carswell recalls another incident in Cornwall when, the quarrel apparently finished, Lawrence went to the scullery to wash up, singing to himself, and Frieda, approaching him from behind, cracked a heavy stone dinner plate over his head.[33] Recalling an incident from the Hermitage period, Cecily Lambert Minchin, who lived next door to the Lawrences with her cousin, Violet Monk (Lawrence satirized the two women as March and Banford in The Fox), says that after Frieda accidentally damaged Miss Monk's sewing machine, Lawrence forced her to scrub the cousins' kitchen floor of "old-fashioned, well-worn bricks," while Frieda, bent over the work in tears, hurled insults at him.[34] Lady Cynthia Asquith insists that though some of Lawrence's relationships foundered, the one with Frieda did not. If he hurled a plate at her head, "What of it? Is it so very important? Less memorable men have done as much and more in this line without becoming world-famed for it."[35] Mrs. Carswell, who agrees

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[32]Katherine Mansfield, "A Letter about the Lawrences," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, pp. 131-33.

[33]Carswell, p. 76.

[34]Cecily Lambert Minchin, in a memoir printed in Nehls, I, 501-506.

[35]Cynthia Asquith, Remember and Be Glad (London: James Barrie, 1952), pp. 146-50, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 443-47.

substantially with Lady Cynthia's assessment, comments that though she witnessed many of the Lawrences' rows,

> I never felt any one of them to be of that deadly "painful" nature which is of frequent occurrence between many couples who all the while protest their love with endearments and never get within arm's length of violence. . . .
> . . . . Each was capable of bitter complaints against the other uttered behind the other's back to a third party. But they kept the most ancient loyalty of all, and they never descended into being "good pals".[36]

Lawrence's encounters with total strangers did not necessarily run more smoothly than his relationships with intimate associates. On his only visit to the studio of Duncan Grant, whom he later caricatured as Duncan Forbes in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_, Lawrence gratuitously pronounced Grant's artistic ideas wrong and for hours inveighed against every picture the puzzled Grant showed him.[37] Similarly, on his only visit to the studio of Augustus John, who was engaged in painting Lady Cynthia Asquith's portrait, Lawrence repeatedly muttered, "Mortuus est. Mortuus est," his volume rising to crescendo with the _ex cathedra_ insult: "Let the DEAD PAINT THE DEAD!"[38] And

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[36]Carswell, pp. 73-75.

[37]David Garnett, _Flowers of the Forest_ (New York: Harcourt, 1956), pp. 33-37, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 265-69.

[38]Cynthia Asquith, _Haply I May Remember_ (London: James Barrie, 1952), p. 106, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 439-40.

when Cecil Gray, to his regret, introduced Lawrence to the composer Bernard van Dieren, whose artistic values were the direct opposite of Lawrence's, "the antipathy between them," "as much physical as psychological," was "arctic."[39]

Most of Lawrence's friends, enemies, and biographers have commented on the violence of his quarrels. The picture that emerges from most such comments is of a savagely unreasonable Lawrence loftily denouncing a whole tribe of consciously or unconsciously willing victims. Mabel Dodge Luhan quotes an anonymous memoirist, described only as "a girl who had known them in England," as saying:

> at the slightest touch of adverse criticism or hostility, Lawrence becomes violent. His vituperation is magnificent. . . . He spares none. He has quarreled with everyone. He says he has no friends that he has not quarreled with. And yet all these same friends, I noticed, are very likely to come back for the same treatment again and again.[40]

Murry, whose chief desire was "to live in a warm atmosphere of love," says Lawrence responded not to him but to the Murry of Lawrence's own projection. But Murry pictures himself, at least during the Greatham period, as a person of no fixed beliefs, who felt passively affectionate toward Lawrence and feared risking Lawrence's rejection but who was puzzled at just what Lawrence expected in their rela-

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[39] Cecil Gray, Musical Chairs, pp. 141-42, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 438-39.

[40] Luhan, pp. 40-41, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 416.

tionship.[41] Though the Murrys felt misgivings about living in community with the Lawrences in Utopian Rananim or anywhere else, they moved next door to the Lawrences in Cornwall anyway.[42] Russell, who, after a particularly vituperative letter from Lawrence, for twenty-four hours contemplated suicide, calls Lawrence:

> a sensitive would-be despot who got angry with the world because it would not instantly obey. When he realized that other people existed, he hated them. But most of the time he lived in a solitary world of his own imaginings, peopled by phantoms as fierce as he wished them to be.[43]

But Russell's colleague, John Maynard Keynes, the economist, thinks Lawrence's judgment that the Cambridge group was "done for" had "a grain of truth" in it. Under "Lawrence's ignorant, jealous, irritable, hostile eyes," such people must have seemed like "water-spiders, gracefully skimming, as light and reasonable as air, the surface of the stream without any contact at all with the eddies and currents underneath."[44] According to Cecil

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[41] Murry, _Between Two Worlds_, pp. 331, 332-38, 338-40, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 275-81.

[42] _Ibid_., pp. 295-97, 401-402, 403-405, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 370-75.

[43] Russell, pp. 93-95, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 282-85.

[44] John Maynard Keynes, _Two Memoirs: Dr. Melchior: A Defeated Enemy and My Early Beliefs_ (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1949), p. 103, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 287-88.

Gray, though the innocent reader receives from Lawrence's novels the impression of man desperate for friendship but always betrayed,

> Friendship with Lawrence was essentially one-way traffic. One was expected to give everything without question. In return you received the scintillations and coruscations of his remarkable mind and sensibility; and for the poor in spirit, those who have little or nothing to give, this exchange was, no doubt, a good bargain . . . ; but between equals this was not enough—and Lawrence could not brook equals. One had to be a devoted disciple or he had no use for you.

Lawrence's "lamentable failure" in almost all human relationships Gray attributes to "the central defect not merely of Lawrence as a person, but as an artist as well—his complete lack of humanity, the absence of any genuine warm response to, by, with, or from any other living being—except, perhaps, his mother."[45] Douglas Goldring agrees that most people got "on Lawrence's nerves":

> He constantly got on his own nerves. All the same, Lawrence was not <u>fundamentally</u> disloyal and the proofs of warm friendliness which he gave to people to whom he was sincerely attached were not invalidated by the harsh things he was apt to say about the same people behind their backs.[46]

Lady Cynthia Asquith also defends Lawrence. He "was often angry with people," she says, for not understanding "what they were congenitally incable of understanding": "to be

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[45]Cecil Gray, <u>Musical Chairs</u>, pp. 131-40, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 431-38.

[46]Douglas Goldring, <u>Life Interests</u> (London: MacDonald, 1948), pp. 83-84, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 490-91.

thwarted in the search for understanding and sympathy was to suffer bitter disillusion—almost a sense of betrayal—."[47]

Several persons who knew Lawrence during the War years attribute his outbursts to psychological illness. Robert Nichols believes that in 1915 Lawrence was suffering not only from tuberculosis but also "from a nervous condition" which prevented his displaying "that balanced and good-humoured sense" which Aldous Huxley and Koteliansky had led Nichols to expect.[48] Lytton Strachey, who did not know Lawrence but who saw him at Dorothy Brett's premature farewell party for him,[49] observed, "I've rarely seen anyone so pathetic, miserable, ill, and obviously devoured by internal distresses."[50] Katherine Mansfield thought in 1916 that Lawrence "has gone a little bit out of his mind" and "is suffering from quite genuine monomania at present."[51] Even Frieda Lawrence, writing to

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[47]Asquith, Remember and Be Glad, pp. 146-50, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 443-47.

[48]Cecil Gray, Peter Warlock, pp. 89-90, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 331-32.

[49]Dorothy Brett, Lawrence and Brett: A Friendship (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1933), pp. 17-19. See also Moore, Poste Restante, p. 55, which reveals that Lawrence did not leave England until 14 November 1919.

[50]Garnett, pp. 95-96, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 342-43.

[51]Mansfield, in A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, p. 132.

John Middleton Murry on 19 December 1951, admitted, "Sometimes he went over the edge of sanity."[52] But Lady Cynthia Asquith insists that she never saw Lawrence's "dark self":

> Desperately unhappy I saw him—tormented at times—but I never had so much as a glimpse of that almost maniacally violent, perverted Lawrence of whom some of his "friends" have had so much to say and write . . . . Even though his eyes might be dark with despair, I never saw them five consecutive minutes without a twinkle.[53]

Lady Cynthia quotes Lawrence's statement in a letter to A. D. McLeod on 26 October 1913: "one sheds one's sicknesses in books—repeats and presents again one's emotions, to be master of them."[54] The statement is reminiscent of Wordsworth's familiar definition: "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."[55] It is also reminiscent of Freud's theory of the origin of art in conflicts within the personality of the artist:

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[52]Frieda Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence, ed. E. W. Tedlock (London, Melbourne, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 312.

[53]Asquith, Remember and Be Glad, p. 147, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 444.

[54]Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 234.

[55]William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 740.

> The motive forces of artists are the same conflicts which drive other people into neurosis . . . . The artist's first aim is to set himself free and, by communicating his work to other people suffering from the same arrested desires, he offers them the same liberation.[56]

Lawrence's statement is indicative of his insight on both the expressive basis of his art and the necessity of creative production to the maintenance of psychic health. The sheer volume of Lawrence's creative work between 1915 and his journey to America in 1922 is staggering: a volume of criticism: Studies in Classic American Literature (the first version published in eight successive issues of the English Review from November, 1918, to June, 1919; the second version unpublished except for the essay on Whitman in The Nation and The Athenaeum, July 25, 1921; and the third version published in New York in August, 1923, and in London in June, 1924);[57] five volumes of verse: Amores (1916), Look! We Have Come Through! (1927), New Poems (1918), Bay (1919), and

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[56]Sigmund Freud, "The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest," Totem and Taboo and Other Works, Vol. XIII of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud (24 vols.; London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 187.

[57]Arnold's Chapter III: "The Studies in Classic American Literature (1918-1923)" is a valuable comparative analysis of the three versions of the essays. See also D. H. Lawrence, The Symbolic Meaning: The Uncollected Versions of Studies in Classic American Literature, ed. Armin Arnold (New York: The Viking Press, 1964).

Tortoises (1921); five novels: The Rainbow (1915), Women in Love (1920), The Lost Girl (1920), Aaron's Rod (1920), and Kangaroo (1923); two travel books: Twilight in Italy (1916) and Sea and Sardinia (1921); two volumes of short stories: England, My England (1922) and The Ladybird (1923); and two psychological-philosophical essays: Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1921) and Fantasia of the Unconscious (1922), in addition to a number of short periodical essays. Such a volume of creative work could come, perhaps, from a productively neurotic, but not from an emotionally incapacitated, person. Lawrence's personal problems, whether generated internally or externally, no doubt colored but did not wholly determine his perception of England as a waste land. His ultimate disillusionment rested on nothing so tenuous as privately nurtured rancor but on the universal significance he perceived in events in the history of his time.

Lawrence's sense of history is revealed most directly in Movements in European History, the text he wrote for the Oxford University Press shortly after the prosecution of The Rainbow, though it was certainly evident in his artistic treatment of the history of the Brangwens. Vere H. Collins, impressed by Lawrence's knowledge of history, suggested that he write the text, and the Oxford

historian C. R. L. Fletcher read and approved the manuscript, criticizing only minor details of dates and names.[58] When Lawrence wrote to Cecil Gray on 3 July 1918: "The chief feeling is, that men were always alike, and always will be,"[59] he was expressing in informal language what Arnold Toynbee calls "the philosophical contemporaneity of all civilizations."[60] Near the end of the Introduction to Movements in European History, Lawrence explains his approach to history. Although the "bad old history," which was only "a register of facts," is no more, Lawrence objects to the two leading contemporary historiographical methods, graphic and scientific. "Graphic history consists of stories about men and women who appear in the old records, stories as vivid and personal as may be." But it is difficult to recreate the personality of past ages: "Personality is local and temporal. . . . And each age proceeds to interpret every other age in terms of the current personality." We can, however, know historically the impersonal force of a past age: "We must leave in the impersonal, terrific element, the sense of the unknown,

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[58]Vere H. Collins, in a memoir printed in Nehls, I, 471.

[59]Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 561.

[60]Arnold Toynbee, Civilization on Trial (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 8.

even as it is left in Red Riding Hood or any true nursery tale." Seeing the past in a too personal light insults the past and exaggerates the present: "We are not the consummation of all life and time."[61] "But," Lawrence argues, "if graphic history is all heart, scientific history is all head. . . . This is the business of scientific history: the forging of a great chain of logically sequential events, cause and effect demonstrated down the whole range of time." But rather than discovering, we merely abstract cause and effect after the fact: "The logical sequence does not exist until we have made it, and then it exists as a new piece of furniture of the human mind." Rejecting both methods, Lawrence proposes instead

> to give some impression of the great, surging movements which rose in the hearts of men in Europe, sweeping human beings together into one great concerted action, or sweeping them apart for ever on the tides of opposition. These are movements which have no deducible origin. They have no reasonable cause, though they are so great that we must call them impersonal.[62]

For Lawrence, "history proper is a true art, not fictional, but nakedly veracious." The "unknown powers . . . . that well up inside the hearts of men . . . are the fountains

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[61] D. H. Lawrence, Movements in European History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1925), pp. x-xi.

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xii.

and origins of human history." "Life makes its own great gestures, of which men are the substance. History repeats the gesture, so we live it once more, and are fulfilled in the past."[63]

In the closing paragraphs of Movements in European History, Lawrence makes his cyclic theory of history explicit:

> So the cycle of European history completes itself, phase by phase, from imperial Rome, through the medieval empire and papacy to the kings of the Renaissance period, on to the great commercial nations, the government by the industrial and commercial middle classes, and so to that last rule, that last oneness of the labouring people. So Europe moves from oneness to oneness, from the imperial unity to the unity of the labouring classes, from the beginning to the end.
>
> But we must never forget that mankind lives by a twofold motive: the motive of peace and increase, and the motive of contest and martial triumph. As soon as the appetite for martial adventure and triumph in conflict is satisfied, the appetite for peace and increase manifests itself, and *vice versa*. It seems a law of life.[64]

The statement has much in common with Arnold Toynbee's more sophisticated theory, which it foreshadows:

> Briefly stated, the regular pattern of social disintegration is a schism of the disintegrating society into a recalcitrant proletariat and a less and less effectively dominant minority. The process of disintegration does not proceed evenly; it jolts along in alternating spasms of rout, rally, and rout. In the last rally but one, the dominant minority succeeds in temporarily arresting the society's lethal self-laceration by imposing on it the peace of a universal

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[63] *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

> state. Within the framework of the dominant minority's universal state the proletariat creates a universal church, and after the next rout, in which the disintegrating civilization finally dissolves, the universal church may live on to become the chrysalis from which a new civilization eventually emerges.[65]

Toynbee comments that though taken for granted by "the greatest Greek and Indian souls—by Aristotle, for instance, and by the Buddha," this cyclic theory of history, to most Western minds, "would reduce history to a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing." For Toynbee the meaning in this seemingly purposeless cycle of history is to be looked for in a super-historical divine plan: "While civilizations rise and fall and, in falling, give rise to others, some purposeful enterprise, higher than theirs, may all the time be making headway, and, in a divine plan, the learning that comes through the suffering caused by the failures of civilizations may be the sovereign means of progress."[66] For Lawrence, at least when he wrote _Movements in European History_ and for a time thereafter, the purpose of history was to be fulfilled in the figure of a strong leader:

> a great united Europe of productive working-people, all materially equal, will never be able to continue and remain firm unless it unites also round one great chosen figure, some hero who can lead a great war, as well as administer a wide peace. It all depends on

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[65] Toynbee, p. 13.

[66] _Ibid._, pp. 14-15.

> the will of the people. But the will of the people must concentrate in one figure, who is also supreme over the will of the people. He must be chosen, but at the same time responsible to God alone. Here is a problem of which a stormy future will have to evolve the solution.[67]

In the three "leadership" novels, Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence further explores this theme of the purposeful, heroic leader.

The genesis of Lawrence's cyclic theory of history coincides so exactly with his rejection of Europe as a static waste land and his concomitant turning to America as the embodiment of an unrealized organic potential that it is impossible to separate the two. Early 1915 found Lawrence still hopeful that Europe could be regenerated. In a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith on "Sunday" (probably 31 January 1915) he applies the cyclic pattern of death and rebirth to his own spiritual state:

> We have no history, since we saw you last. I feel as if I had less than no history—as if I had spent those five months in the tomb. And now, I feel very sick and corpse-cold, too newly risen to share yet with anybody. . . .
>
> The War finished me: it was the spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes.

Now he feels hopeful again: "I couldn't tell you how fragile and tender this hope is—the new shoot of life."[68] In a letter to Barbara Low on 11 February 1915, Lawrence

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[67] Lawrence, Movements in European History, p. 344.

[68] Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 309-10.

is full of plans to "put our own immediate lives away" and "devote them to that which is to be done":

> We must revolutionise this system of life, that is based on outside things, money, property, & establish a system of life which is based on inside things. The war will come to an end, and then the Augean stables are to be cleansed.[69]

As Lawrence indicates in a letter to Bertrand Russell on 19 March 1915, he did not expect spiritual rebirth to come through Cambridge intellectuals: "How can so sick people rise up? They must die first."[70] Spiritual rebirth could come only through people who spoke in their "real voices." Lawrence told Eleanor Farjeon: "I _like_ your brother Bertie. . . . But he does not speak in his real voice. Scarcely anybody lets you hear his real voice."[71] And as he wrote to Eleanor Farjeon on 18 May 1915: "We _can_ by the strength of our desires compel our destinies. Indeed our destiny lies in the strength of our desires."[72] Lady Ottoline Morrell has commented that in the spring of 1915 "as the War went on the horror obsessed him more and more. He was . . . intensely English, and had a passionate desire for the regeneration and development

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[69] _Ibid._, p. 316.

[70] _Ibid._, p. 330.

[71] Eleanor Farjeon, in _The London Magazine_, II (No. 4, April, 1955), 50-57, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 292-99.

[72] Lawrence, _Collected Letters_, I, 344.

of England. He had the same kind of reforming and prophetic spirit as Shelley had . . . ."[73] Lawrence and the Murrys' paper, _The Signature_, was inaugurated in an effort to "do something" toward the regeneration of England;[74] it was to be read by "people who care about the real living truth of things."[75]

Arnold proves that "the suppression of _The Rainbow_ was not the fundamental motive behind Lawrence's plan to emigrate, as most biographers would have us believe,"[76] by citing Lawrence's letter to Harriet Monroe of 26 October 1915, eight days before the seizure of _The Rainbow_:

> Probably I am coming to America. Probably in a month's time, I shall be in New York. . . . I must see America: here the autumn of all life has set in, the fall: we are hardly more than the ghosts in the haze, we who stand apart from the flux of death. I must see America. I think one can feel hope there. I think that there the life comes up from the roots, crude but vital. Here the whole tree of life is dying. It is like being dead: the underworld. I must see America. I believe it is beginning, not ending.[77]

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[73]O[ttoline] M[orrell], in _The Nation and Athenaeum_, XLVI (No. 25, 22 March 1930), 859-60, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 308-309.

[74]D. H. Lawrence, _Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays_ (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. ix. See also John Middleton Murry, _Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence_ (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1933), pp. 60-67.

[75]Lawrence, _Collected Letters_, I, 364.

[76]Arnold, p. 24.

[77]D. H. Lawrence, _The Letters of D. H. Lawrence_, ed. Aldous Huxley (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), pp. 266-67.

But characteristically Lawrence still wavered. Only four days later, sending the manuscript of "The Thimble," the story that was to become "The Ladybird," he writes to Lady Cynthia Asquith on 30 October 1915:

> If the war could but end this winter, we might rise to life again here in this our world. If it sets in for another year, all is lost. . . .
> So I keep suspended the thought of going away. . . . If I go, I will go to America. . . . But I hope not to go.[78]

Arnold's view that Lawrence had "decided to turn his back on England" before the seizure of The Rainbow[79] is correct, though "decided" is perhaps too emphatic for what Lawrence states only as a probability.

The reason for the gradually formed "decision" may be found in the mood conveyed in the imagery of the letters. Lawrence's letters throughout the period employ the organic metaphor—seasonal change, vegetation, water, the germ of being—to a similar end: to relate England to hopelessness, death, and the past, and America to hope, life, and the future. So effective is Lawrence's language that Moore's simile, "These letters can be read singly, like poems in an anthology,"[80] and Diana Trilling's evaluation of the letters, "the best in modern literature and

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[78]Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 372-73.

[79]Arnold, p. 24.

[80]Harry T. Moore, "Introduction," Collected Letters, I, ix.

second only to Keats' in the whole of English literature,"[81] are fully justified. An examination of a few passages from the letters of the fall of 1915, that crucial autumn when Lawrence first considered leaving England for America, will indicate his cyclic theory of history as seen in his unwavering vision of the waste land and his hope for its regeneration.

For Lawrence, the literal autumn of that year presaged the metaphorical winter of western civilization. As he writes to Lady Cynthia Asquith on "Tuesday" (probably 9 November 1915):

> When I drive across this country, with autumn falling and rustling to pieces, I am so sad, for my country, for this great wave of civilisation, 2000 years, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. . . . the past, the great past, crumbling down, breaking down, not under the force of the coming birds, but under the weight of many exhausted yellow leaves, that drift over the lawn, and over the pond, like the soldiers, passing away, into winter and the darkness of winter— no, I can't bear it. For the winter stretches ahead, where all vision is lost and all memory dies out.[82]

This autumn world was an organism whose health had been blighted by disease. Thus, Lawrence writes to Lady Cynthia on 3 August 1915:

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[81]Diana Trilling, "A Letter of Introduction," The Selected Letters of D. H. Lawrence, ed. with "Introduction" by Diana Trilling (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), p. xiv.

[82]Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 378.

> It is this mass of unclean world that we have superimposed on the clean world that we cannot bear. When I looked back, out of the clearness of the open evening, at this Littlehampton dark and amorphous like an eruption on the edge of the land, I was so sick I felt I could not come back: all these little amorphous houses like an eruption, a disease on the clean earth; and all of them full of such a diseased spirit, every landlady harping on her money. . . .[83]

In the literal war of this diseased world, Lawrence saw the destruction of a cosmos. For all the poetry to come out of World War I, no poet evokes both the sensory and metaphysical experience of an air raid with such immediacy as Lawrence does in his letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell of 9 September 1915:

> Then we saw the Zeppelin above us, just ahead, amid a gleaming of clouds: high up, like a bright golden finger, quite small, among a fragile incandescence of clouds. And underneath it were splashes of fire as the shells fired from earth burst. Then there were flashes near the ground—and the shaking noise. It was like Milton—then there was war in heaven. But it was not angels. . . .
>
> I cannot get over it, that the moon is not queen of the sky by night, and the stars the lesser lights. . . .
>
> So it seems our cosmos has burst, burst at last, the stars and moon blown away, the envelope of the sky burst out, and a new cosmos appeared; with a long-ovate, gleaming central luminary, calm and drifting in a glow of light, like a new moon, with its light bursting in flashes on the earth, to burst away the earth also. So it is the end—our world is gone, and we are like dust in the air.[84]

As Lawrence saw it, the "mental consciousness" of such thinkers as Bertrand Russell was, despite their conscien-

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[83] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

tious protestations, an integral part of the war spirit. In this vein he writes to Russell on 14 September 1915:

> Your basic desire is the maximum desire of war, you are really the super-war-spirit. What you want is to jab and strike, like the soldier with the bayonet, only you are sublimated into words . . . . like a soldier who might jab man after man with his bayonet, saying 'This is for ultimate peace.'[85]

For Lawrence, both the War and the "mental consciousness" that promoted it were anti-life because anti-love. As he writes to Lady Cynthia on 2 November 1915:

> The one quality of love is that it universalises the individual. . . . It is an extending in concentric waves over all people. . . . So that if I love, the love must beat upon my neighbours, till they too live in the spirit of love. . . . And how can this be, in war, when the spirit is against love?
>
> The spirit of war is, that I am a unit, a single entity that has no <u>intrinsic</u> reference to the rest: the reference is extrinsic, a question of living, not of <u>being</u>.[86]

Before the spirit of love could emerge, triumphant, over the spirit of war, the "shell" of "mental consciousness" had to be smashed. As Lawrence writes to the Scots poet J. C. Meredith on 2 November 1915:

> I am bored by coherent thought. Its very coherence is a dead shell. But we must help the living impulse that is within the shell. The shell is being smashed,
>
> Like you, in your poems, I believe an end is coming: the war, a plague, a fire, God knows what. But the end is taking place: the beginning of the end has set in, and the process won't be slow. . . .
>
> One has oneself a fixed conscious entity, a self which one has to smash. We are all like tortoises who have to smash their shells and creep forth tender and overvulnerable, but alive.[87]

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[85] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 367.

[86] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 374.

[87] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 373-74.

Only by smashing this shell of appearance could one experience intrinsic rather than extrinsic reality. Only then could one have the courage of life rather than merely the courage of death. As Lawrence writes to his young protege, the poet Robert Nichols, on 17 November 1915: "The courage of death is _no courage_ any more: _the courage to die has become a vice_. Show me the courage to live, to live in spirit with the proud, serene angels."[88]

Again and again Lawrence identifies "the courage to live" with America. For the whole autumn of 1915, and for a time thereafter, the idea of America dominates his letters: America as a place of refuge, America as the site of Lawrence's Utopian dream of Rananim. He writes to Lady Cynthia on 21 October 1915: "I think I shall go away to America if they will let me."[89] He explains to J. B. Pinker on 6 November 1915: "I hope to be going away in about a fortnight's time: to America: there is a man who more or less offers us a cottage in Florida. . . . It is the end of my writing for England. I will try to change my public."[90] He reminds Dollie Radford on 6 November 1915: "I am wondering if you have written to the man about Florida. Do, I want so much to go."[91] He tells Edward

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[88] _Ibid_., p. 384.

[89] _Ibid_., p. 371.

[90] _Ibid_., p. 376.

[91] _Ibid_.

Marsh on 6 November 1915: "I am so sick, in body and soul, that if I don't go away I shall die. A man said we could live on his little estate in Florida."[92] He writes to Lady Cynthia Asquith on "Tuesday" (probably 9 November 1915): "My life is ended here. I must go as a seed that falls into new ground."[93] Later (probably 16 November 1915) he urges Lady Cynthia

> to reserve to yourself, always, the choice, whether you too shall come to America also, at any time. You have your children. Probably you will have to rescue them from their decadence, this collapsing life. . . . I shall try to start a new school, a new germ of a new creation, there: I believe it exists there already.[94]

He writes to Constance Garnett on 17 November 1915: "I know America is bad, but I think it has a future. I think there is no future for England: only a decline and fall."[95] He writes to Robert Nichols on 18 November 1915: "You must get well enough, and we will all go to Florida. . . ."[96] He elaborates on the dream of an earthly paradise in a letter to J. M. Murry and Katherine Mansfield on 25 November 1915:

> If only we can get there and settle, then you will come, and we will live on no money at all. . . . If only it will all end up happily, like a song or a poem, and we live blithely by a big river, where there are fish, and in the forest behind wild turkeys and

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[92] *Ibid.*, p. 377.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 378.

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 388.

> quails; there we make songs and poems and stories and dramas, in a Vale of Avalon, in the Hesperides, among the Loves.[97]

And to S. S. Koteliansky, Lawrence writes from Cornwall on 30 December 1915:

> We got here tonight. . . This is the first move to Florida. Here already one feels a good peace and a good silence, and freedom to love—and to create a new life. We must begin afresh—we must begin to create a life all together—unanimous.[98]

It is ironic that in the months that followed, Lawrence was never accused of such subversive ideas as these; he was accused only of being a German spy.

Throughout the coming months, the idea of Europe as a waste land and America as a place of a possible new beginning continues to dominate Lawrence's letters. Sometimes, as in a letter to Catherine Carswell on 20 December 1916, he expresses the idea in purely personal terms: ". . . I believe that England . . . is capable of not seeing anything but badness in me, for ever and ever. I believe America is my virgin soil: truly."[99] More often, as in a letter to Waldo Frank on 27 July 1917, he states it in terms of his cyclic theory of history:

> I believe America is the new World. Europe is a lost name, like Nineveh or Palenque. There is no more Europe, only a mass of ruins from the past.
> I shall come to America. I don't believe in Uncle Samdom, of course. But if the rainbow hangs in the heav-

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[97] Ibid., p. 389. [98] Ibid., p. 405.

[99] Ibid., 494.

> ens, it hangs over the western continent. I very very very much want to leave Europe, oh, to leave England for ever, and come over to America.[100]

Not until seven years after first thinking of forsaking the European waste land to establish an American Rananim did Lawrence finally make his pilgrimage. Even then his journey was not to Florida but to New Mexico—and not, of course, to an earthly paradise "in a Vale of Avalon, in the Hesperides, among the Loves" but to "Mabeltown"[101] in Taos Valley, among a veritable menagerie of arty-folk and assorted Indians.

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[100] _Ibid_., p. 520.

[101] Moore, _The Intelligent Heart_, p. 369.

CHAPTER II

REGENERATION THROUGH ROMANTICISM

If Europe had reached the end of a falling cycle, America was still at the beginning of a rising cycle of history. Lawrence wished not only to identify himself with that rising cycle but also in part to direct it. Eugene Goodheart ably elaborates the point that "Always in Lawrence there is the ulterior view of the future." Calling Lawrence a Nietzchean "tablet-breaker," a figure who appears "at significant crises in culture and whose characteristic impulse is to divert the current of tradition into new and hitherto unknown channels," Goodheart says:

> It is characteristic for the tablet-breaker to assume at various times the roles of nihilist, mystic, diabolist, and obscurantist, for the language of traditional thought and feeling would only give the lie to his grasp of the future. His refusal to assume traditional moral attitudes is not a refusal to be moral. On the contrary, the tablet-breaker has discovered immorality in the old attitudes, and, by assuming on occasion the mask of the immoralist, he attempts to express a new morality.[1]

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[1] Eugene Goodheart, _The Utopian Vision of D. H. Lawrence_ (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 5-7.

With the English waste land behind him, Lawrence turned his gaze directly upon the American desert. As he quickly discovered—so quickly that "sensed" or "projected" would seem more accurate—if a new morality was to be expressed in America, then the American consciousness would have to be diverted from the mechanical will and redirected toward organic feeling. Though Lawrence, on his arrival in the country on 4 September 1922,[2] was charmed by Mabel Dodge Sterne's telegram: "Mabel says: 'From San Francisco you are my guests, so I send you the railway tickets'—so American!" he also regarded American life with distrust: "All is comfortable, comfortable, comfortable—I really hate this mechanical comfort."[3] The undependability of the foundation of America's industrial civilization was immediately impressed upon Lawrence by the first incident in which he was involved after alighting from the train in Lamy station. On the drive to Santa Fe, the car "simply stopped in the road." When Tony Luhan was unable to get it started, Frieda suggested that Lawrence get out and help. According to Mrs. Luhan, Lawrence retorted angrily: "You know I don't know anything about automobiles, Frieda! I _hate_ them! Nasty, unintelligent, un-

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[2] Moore, _Poste Restante_, p. 68.

[3] Lawrence, _Collected Letters_, II, 715.

reliable things!"[4] Lawrence records his first impression of America in a letter to S. S. Koteliansky on 18 September 1922: "America is more or less as I expected: shove or be shoved. But still it has a bigness, a sense of space, and a certain sense of rough freedom which I like."[5] Despite his reservations, perhaps because of them, Lawrence still has the reforming spirit. As he writes to Rachel Annand Taylor on 21 September 1922: "deaths leave me only more aggressive."[6]

Throughout that first autumn of Lawrence's American experience, he moves, as revealed in his letters, toward a redefinition of the American ideals of freedom and bravery through a shift in consciousness from will to feeling. As he writes to E. H. Brewster on 22 September 1922, American life "is just life outside, and the outside of life." But his impression of America at that point was based on his contact with Mrs. Sterne:

> The drawback is, of course, living under the wing of the '*padrona*.' She is generous and nice—but still, I don't feel free. . . . What you dislike in America seems to me really dislikeable: everybody seems to be trying to enforce his, or her, *will*, and trying to see how much the other person or persons will let themselves be overcome. Of course the *will* is

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[4]Luhan, pp. 37-39, as reprinted in Nehls, II, 168-69.

[5]Lawrence, *Collected Letters*, II, 715.

[6]*Ibid*., p. 717.

> benevolent, kind, and all that, but none the less it is other people's will being put on me like a pressure.[7]

The American woman, modishly free of external restraints, lacked the meaningful freedom to love. As Lawrence puts it in a letter to Harriet Monroe on 23 September 1922:

> I should say, wouldn't you, the most unwilling woman in the world is Thais: far more unwilling than Cassandra. The one woman who never gives herself is your free woman, who is always giving herself. America affects me like that.[8]

The philosophical task confronting Lawrence is clearly formulated in his letter to Frieda's sister Else Jaffe on 27 September 1922: "Well, here we are in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. But both freedom and bravery need defining." As Lawrence elaborates the problem:

> Everything in America goes by _will_. A great negative _will_ seems to be turned against all spontaneous life—there seems to be no _feeling_ at all—no genuine bowels of compassion and sympathy: all this gripped, iron, _benevolent_ will, which in the end is diabolic. How can one write about it, save analytically?
>
> Frieda, like you, always secretly hankered after America and its freedom: its very freedom _not_ to feel. But now she is just beginning to taste the iron ugliness of what it means, to live by will _against_ the spontaneous inner life, superimposing the individual egoistic will over the real genuine sacred life. . . . And that's why I think America is neither free nor brave, but a land of tight, iron-clanking little _wills_, everybody trying to put it over everybody else, and a land of men absolutely

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[7] _Ibid_., pp. 717-18.

[8] _Ibid_., p. 719.

> devoid of the real courage of trust, trust in life's sacred spontaneity. They can't trust life until they can control it.[9]

With rare insight, Lawrence recognizes in his own personality the same dichotomy between the outside and inside of life that he sees at the heart of American experience, a dichotomy between will and feeling, surface sensation and inner being, extrinsic and intrinsic reality. In a letter to Catherine Carswell on 29 September 1922, he says:

> Perhaps it is necessary for me to try these places . . . . It only excites the outside of me. The inside it leaves more isolated and stoic than ever. . . . It is all a form of running away from oneself and the great problems: all this wild west and the strange Australia.[10]

An American Rananim still occasionally comes to mind as a possible solution to both personal and societal problems. Lawrence invites Bessie Freeman on "Tuesday" (probably 31 October 1922): "Then come, and let us plan a new life. . . . And the rule would be, no servants: we'd all work our own work. No highbrows and weariness of stunts. We might make a central farm. Make it all real."[11] Even Lawrence's dreams seem relevant to the organic revolution whereby he hoped the mechanistic waste land could be re-

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[9] Ibid., pp. 720-22.

[10] Ibid., p. 723.

[11] Ibid., p. 728.

generated. As he writes to S. S. Koteliansky on 4 December 1922: "I dreamed that Albert Stopford came to see me and told me that something big, very big, was imminent: like another war."[12] Whatever psychological determinants lay behind this dream, the literal translation "All Bert Stop Ford" suggests itself as an intriguing possibility. Lawrence perceptively links America's power through money lust with anal eroticism in the equation of money and feces in a letter to Frieda's mother, Baroness von Richthofen, on 5 December 1922:

> The people in America all want power, but a small, personal base power: bullying. . . .
> Listen, Germany, America is the greatest bully the world has ever seen. Power is proud. But bullying is democratic and base.
> . . . . You know, these people have only money, nothing else but money, and because all the world wants money, America has become strong, proud and overpowerful.
> If one would only say: 'America, your money is shit, go and shit [no?] more'—then America would be nothing.[13]

Lawrence's hope for the regeneration of the waste land, both as the end product of the cycle of European civilization and as the deterrent to the cycle of American civilization, lay in his essentially romantic view of man, nature, and the cosmos. Most critics, of whatever persuasion, have noted the romantic quality of Lawrence's work, though some see qualities which, it seems to me, are not there.

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[12] Ibid., p. 729.

[13] Ibid., pp. 730-31.

Mary Freeman is only partly correct in saying that "he had the Romantic's longing for omniscience, for becoming, or at least understanding, more than a fragment of universal life, for feeling at one with all."[14] To cite only one example among many, Lawrence's derisive comment on Whitman's theme of "ONE IDENTITY!" indicates that he had no wish to feel "at one with all":

> As for living creatures all helplessly hurtling together into one great snowball, most very living creatures spend the greater part of their time getting out of the sight, smell or sound of the rest of living creatures. . . .
>
> Matter gravitates because it _is_ helpless and mechanical.[15]

Horace Gregory may be correct in saying, "I would probably call him less of a 'prophet' than a 'seer.' If we consider Lawrence as an heir of the Romantic tradition in English literature, the resemblance to William Blake does not need proof."[16] But when one recalls that Lawrence equates the poem that Poe's Ligeia dictates to her husband with "a William Blake poem" because "Blake, too, was one of

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[14] Mary Freeman, _D. H. Lawrence: A Basic Study of His Ideas_ (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1955), p. 8.

[15] D. H. Lawrence, _Studies in Classic American Literature_ (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), pp. 175-76.

[16] Horace Gregory, _D. H. Lawrence: Pilgrim of the Apocalypse_ (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1957), p. xvi.

these ghastly, obscene 'Knowers,'"[17] then exposition, if not proof, of the resemblance becomes at least desirable. Herbert Lindenberger is on firmer ground in placing Lawrence's fiction not in the tradition of "the novel of social relations" but in that of "the symbolist novel," "the romance": "It is a form concerned less with the individual's connection with other people than his relation to larger forces and, for that matter, to himself."[18] But perhaps it is not merely a quibble to elaborate that Lawrence, like that novelist of social relations, Jane Austen, used external manners to reveal the individual's "relation to larger forces and, for that matter, to himself." Specifically Lawrence's fiction is concerned with the effect of the individual's relation to larger, and deeper, forces upon his relations to other people and to himself. Kingsley Widmer, recognizing "Lawrence's negative ways to his affirmations,"[19] applies T. S. Eliot's term "counter-romanticism" to much of Lawrence's fiction:

> The rock of Promethean defiance; the sacrificial anti-hero; the longing withdrawal, both guilty and paradisical, symbolized by the post-Renaissance dream of the island

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[17] Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 82.

[18] Herbert Lindenberger, "Lawrence and the Romantic Tradition," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, p. 326.

[19] Kingsley Widmer, The Art of Perversity: D. H. Lawrence's Shorter Fictions (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), p. viii.

> haven; the ecstasy of denial of the intellectual individualist—all are recurrent qualities of fables of _hard_ romanticism.[20]

Whatever Lawrence's affinities with the romanticists of the early nineteenth century, his romanticism, coming after naturalism, is modified by it. William York Tindall summarizes the concensus:

> In the war between imagination and science, poetry and fact, feeling and thinking, Lawrence took his stand not only with Coleridge but with Blake and Baudelaire. "The two ways of knowing," he said in what might be the manifesto of the romantic movement, "are knowing in ways of apartness, which is mental, rational and scientific, and knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic." Only through the creative unconscious, he believed, can the dead universe of fact come alive again.[21]

Even a casual comparison of the values and methods which we think of as Laurentian and the philosophic principles which we identify with romanticism will show why there should be such unanimity of critical opinion, if not on the particular brand of Lawrence's romanticism, then at least on the fact of it.

Morse Peckham's essay, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," is valuable not only for its original contribution to the theory but also for its concise summary, and reconciliation, of the earlier contributions upon

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[20] _Ibid_., p. 15.

[21] William York Tindall, "Introduction," _The Later D. H. Lawrence_ (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. vii.

which it is constructed—those of Jacques Barzun, Newton P. Stallknecht, C. Frederick Harrold, René Wellek, and, especially, Arthur O. Lovejoy. Peckham defines romanticism as follows: "Whether philosophical, theological, or aesthetic, it is the revolution of the European mind against thinking in terms of static mechanism and the redirection of the mind to thinking in terms of dynamic organicism."[22] Stated in radical terms the values of static mechanism and dynamic organicism are opposites. In the older view the cosmos was

> static—in that all the possibilities of reality were realized . . . or were implicit from the beginning, and that these possibilities were arranged in a complete series, a hierarchy from God down to nothingness—including the literary possibilities from epic to Horatian ode, or lyric; a mechanism—in that the universe is a perfectly running machine, a watch usually.[23]

In the newer view the cosmos is dynamic—in that "the history of the universe is the history of God creating himself"; an organism—in that the universe is an imperfect but growing thing, a tree usually. The contrast in metaphor most clearly distinguishes the two views. An organism "is not something made, it is something _being_ made or growing." "It does not develop additively; it

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[22]Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," _PMLA_, LXVI (March, 1951), 14.

[23]_Ibid_., p. 9.

grows dynamically." Thus, whereas a machine is exactly the sum of its parts, an organism is greater than the sum of its parts. Furthermore, "the relation of its component parts is not that of the parts of a machine which have been made separately, i.e., separate entities in the mind of the deity, but the relation of leaves to stem to trunk to root to earth." Thus, "Relationships, not entities, are the object of contemplation and study."[24] Implicit in both staticism and mechanism was the concept of uniformitarianism: "everything that change produces was to be conceived as a part to fit into the already perfectly running machine; for all things conformed to ideal patterns in the mind of God or in the non-material ground of phenomena." Thus, the static metaphysic has the not mutually exclusive values of changelessness and stasis, perfection and uniformity, rationality and the conscious mind.[25] Implicit in both dynamism and organicism, on the other hand, are the concepts of diversitarianism and creative originality: "with the intrusion of each novelty, the fundamental character of the universe itself changes"; since this is "a universe of emergents . . . . it therefore follows that there are no preexistent patterns"; the artist, thus, "is original because

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[24] _Ibid._, pp. 10-11. [25] _Ibid._, pp. 9-10.

he is the instrument whereby a genuine novelty, an emergent, is introduced into the world, not because he has come with the aid of genius a little closer to previously existent pattern, natural and divine."[26] Thus, the dynamic metaphysic has the not mutually exclusive values of change and growth, imperfection and diversity, the creative imagination and the unconscious mind.[27]

Lawrence repeatedly affirms his partisanship for the dynamic metaphysic. In his letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith on 16 August 1915, for example, he sees his quarrel with Bertrand Russell and Lady Ottoline Morrell as a conflict between dynamism and staticism:

> All that is dynamic in the world they convert to sensation, to the gratification of what is static. They are static, static, static, they come, they say to me, 'You are wonderful, you are dynamic,' then they filch my life for a sensation unto themselves, all my effort, which is my life, they betray, they are like Judas: they turn it all to their own static selves, convert it into the static nullity.[28]

His objection to American mechanism provides a similar example. Although Lawrence's values are clearly romantic, his purpose in espousing them is not to align himself with romanticism as opposed to classicism in literary fashion but to ally himself with, in his words to Robert Nichols, "the courage to live" as opposed to "the courage to die" in his approach to the human condition. Basically he

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[26] Ibid., p. 11.

[27] Ibid., p. 14.

[28] Lawrence, Collected Letters, I, 362.

saw the values of static mechanism as anti-life forces. Illustrations of Lawrence's romantic values are so abundant in his works that narrowing the focus to one work, the Studies in Classic American Literature, has the advantage of concentration. In addition, these essays on American literature were written only four years before and rewritten just after Lawrence's arrival in America and, thus, reflect the idea of America that was forming in his mind. Furthermore, however "hysterical,"[29] they are nevertheless essays in criticism and as such reveal something of Lawrence's approach to literature.

Lawrence consistently approves temporal change, especially in the positive sense of growth. The process of growth, whether in the individual or in civilization, involved the disintegration of all that is static and therefore decadent and the reintegration of a new organic whole oriented in the deep passional center of man or cosmos. In the essay on "Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Novels," Lawrence discusses the reasons for the post-

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[29] R. P. Blackmur, The Double Agent, as quoted in Arnold, p. 95. Blackmur defines "hysteria" as "the state when 'the sense of reality is rather heightened and distorted to a terrifying and discomposing intensity', or 'an extreme of consciousness.'" See also Richard Foster, "Criticism as Rage: D. H. Lawrence," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, p. 312: Lawrence "participates in an odd kind of subtradition of his own made up of intellectual renegades, of violently creative minds, of brilliant and angry men . . . ."

Renaissance emigration of Europeans to America:

> They came to America for two reasons.
> 1. To slough the old European consciousness completely.
> 2. To grow a new skin underneath, a new form. This second is a hidden process.[30]

And in the essay on "Edgar Allan Poe," he applies this theory of growth to American literature:

> the rhythm of American art-activity is dual.
> 1. A disintegration and sloughing of the old consciousness.
> 2. The forming of a new consciousness underneath,

To the moralists' question of "why Poe's 'morbid' tales need have been written," Lawrence replies, "They need to be written because old things need to die and disintegrate, because the old white psyche has to be gradually broken down before anything else can come to pass." But whereas in "true art," like Fenimore Cooper's, "there is always the double rhythm of creating and destroying," "Poe has . . . only the disintegrative vibration."[31]

Although growth, as a process of life, involves the deep passional centers, which Lawrence often symbolizes in primitive ritual, Lawrence does not, as some critics think, favor a return to primitivism.[32] Change, as temporal progression, makes such a return, in fact, im-

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[30] Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 62.

[31] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[32] Arnold, pp. 42 and 48, makes the same observation.

possible. In his essay on "Herman Melville's _Typee_ and _Omoo_," Lawrence says that one cannot "truly be brother" to Melville's South Sea Islanders. Though they are beautiful, childlike, and generous, they are, in a sense, "uncreate" in a far off "uncreate past." Though it "looks like a _cul de sac_" for our civilization now,

> through the many centuries since Egypt, we have been living and struggling forwards along some road that is no road, and yet is a great life-development. . . . We may have to smash things. . . . And our road may have to take a great swerve, that seems a retrogression.
>
> But we can't go back. Whatever else the South Sea Islander is, he is centuries and centuries behind us in the life struggle, the consciousness-struggle, the struggle of the soul into fulness.[33]

For better or worse, flux is the only permanent characteristic of life. As Lawrence comments in his essay on "Herman Melville's _Moby Dick_," "It's not my affair to sum it up. Just now it's a cup of tea. This morning it was wormwood and gall. Hand me the sugar."[34] Even truth is subject to flux. As Lawrence says in the essay on "The Spirit of Place," art tells the truth of the artist's day: "Away with eternal truth. Truth lives from day to day, and the marvelous Plato of yesterday is chiefly bosh today."[35]

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[33]Lawrence, _Classic American Literature_, pp. 148-49.

[34]_Ibid_., p. 157.

[35]_Ibid_., p. 12.

Lawrence opposes perfectionist schemes—idealism, democracy, and even Freudian psychoanalysis—because he sees in them exertions of conscious will, which he considers mechanistic. In both versions of his essay on "Benjamin Franklin," as Arnold suggests, "Lawrence's aim is to point out the absurdity of Franklin's belief in the 'perfectability of man', in version 1 by a philosophical argument, in version 3, by some dozens of exclamations." In version 1 Lawrence writes, "'the thing we can make of our own natures, by our own will, is at most a pure mechanism, an automaton.'"[36] In version 3 Lawrence satirizes Franklin's aim of perfection by ridiculing (1) his pride: "'That there is One God, who made all things.' (But Benjamin made Him),"[37] "The amusing part is the sort of humility it displays. 'Imitate Jesus and Socrates,' and mind you don't outshine either of these two"; (2) his obsessive compulsivity as seen in his reification of living into a code: "Why the soul of man is a vast forest, and all Benjamin intended was a neat back garden," "He had the virtues in columns, and gave himself good and bad marks according as he thought his behaviour deserved," "This is Benjamin's barbed wire fence"; and (3) his unconsciousness of his own motives: "Benjamin

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[36]Arnold, p. 45.

[37]Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 20.

had no concern, really, with the immortal soul. He was too busy with social man."[38] In addition Lawrence singles out what to him seem Franklin's perfectionist, and therefore reprehensible, activities of inventing "electrical appliances," becoming "the centre of a moralizing club in Philadelphia," writing Poor Richard's moralisms, being "the economic father of the United States," and approving extirpation of the Indians "to make room for the cultivators of the earth."[39] Lawrence finds some things to admire in Franklin—"his sturdy courage, . . . his sagacity, . . . his glimpsing into the thunders of electricity, . . . his common-sense humour"—but, he adds, "I do not like him."[40] Essentially what Lawrence dislikes in Franklin is his manipulation of himself and others to the end of idealism rather than being himself and relating to others to the end of communion. In parodying Franklin's virtue of chastity, Lawrence satirically seizes upon Franklin's verb _to use_. Franklin had written,

> CHASTITY Rarely use venery but for health and offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.[41]

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[38] _Ibid._, pp. 21-23.

[39] _Ibid._, pp. 23-25.

[40] _Ibid._, p. 23.

[41] _Ibid._, p. 22.

The shift in value from utilitarianism to organicism is apparent in Lawrence's correction:

> CHASTITY Never "use" venery at all. Follow your passional impulse, if it be answered in the other being; but never have any motive in mind, neither off-spring nor health nor even pleasure, nor even service. Only know that "venery" is of the great gods. An offering-up of yourself to the very great gods, the dark ones, and nothing else.[42]

Perfectionist schemes like Franklin's list of virtues as well as idealism of a more general kind were uniformitarian "lies." The trouble with idealism, as Lawrence saw it, was that, like all intellectual productions, it falsified nature by trying to force its conformity to artificially formulated categories. In the essay on "Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur," Lawrence charges that as Franklin had arbitrarily categorized the human being, Crèvecoeur arbitrarily categorized nature: "Between them they wanted the whole scheme of things in their pockets, and the things themselves as well." Crèvecoeur's "Nature-sweet-and-pure business is only another effort at intellectualizing. Just an attempt to make all nature succumb to a few laws of the human mind."[43] In his essay on "Fenimore Cooper's White Novels," Lawrence condemns the democratic perfectionist "IDEAL of

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[42] Ibid., p. 28.

[43] Ibid., pp. 34-35.

EQUALITY": "When America set out to destroy Kings and Masters . . . , it pushed a pin right through its own body, ... The pin of democratic equality." Of the "intrinsically superior" Eve Effingham's democratic acceptance of the "naturally inferior" Septimus Dodge, Lawrence says: "Think how easy it would have been for her to say 'Go away!' or 'Leave me, varlet!'—or 'Hence, base-born knave!'" Lawrence imagines a democratic encounter between Septimus Dodge and King Arthur, beginning with Dodge's "Hello, Arthur! Pleased to meet you," and ending with Dodge's taking over "that yard-and-a-half of Excalibur to play with" and prodding Arthur in the ribs with it. "The whole moral of democracy," Lawrence says, is that "Superiority is a sword. Hand it over to Septimus, and you'll get it back between your ribs."[44] In his essay on "Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance," Lawrence derides the perfectionist endeavors of Brook Farm as idealistic, though perhaps on one level of the apparent inconsistency, he is recognizing the impracticability of Rananim, his own personal Pantisocratic illusion:

> There the famous idealists and transcendentalists of America met to till the soil and hew the timber in the sweat of their own brows, thinking high thoughts the while, and breathing an atmosphere of communal love, and tingling in tune with the Oversoul, like so many strings of a super-celestial harp.

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[44] Ibid., pp. 51-53.

Such idealistic ventures, based on rationality, deny man's passional nature; they are doomed to failure because

> You can't idealize hard work. Which is why America invents so many machines and contrivances of all sort: so that they need do no physical work.
>
> And that's why the idealists left off brookfarming, and took to bookfarming.[45]

In his essay on "Herman Melville's Typee and Omoo," Lawrence condemns idealism as the mask for unrecognized evil:

> No men are so evil to-day as the idealists: and no women half so evil as your earnest woman, who feels herself a power for good. . . . After a certain point, the ideal goes dead and rotten. . . . The whole Sermon on the Mount becomes a litany of white vice.[46]

As for perfectionism in love, Lawrence feels that the static merger to which it leads causes a loss of individual integrity:

> A "perfect" relationship ought not to be possible. Every relationship should have its absolute limits, its absolute reserves, essential to the singleness of the soul in each person. A truly perfect relationship is one in which each party leaves great tracts unknown in the other party.[47]

Lawrence opposes uniformitarianism as counter to natural law and favors diversitarianism as central to that law. In keeping with the age of sociology and psychoanalytic psychology in which he lived, he usually thinks of

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[45] Ibid., pp. 115.

[46] Ibid., p. 154.

[47] Ibid., pp. 155-56.

uniformity in terms of conformity, the loss of individual identity through merger with another or with the mass, and diversity in terms of unique, idosyncratic individuality. Thus in the Poe essay he writes:

> The central law of all organic life is that each organism is intrinsically isolate and single in itself. . . .
> But the secondary law of all organic life is that each organism only lives through contact with other matter, . . . with other life, which means assimilation of new vibrations, non-material.

But, Lawrence warns, "this glowing unison is only a temporary thing." The moment an organism's "isolation breaks down, and there comes an actual mixing and confusion, death sets in."[48] In the essay on "Whitman," whose undirected "I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH AMOROUS LOVE" and "ONE IDENTITY" themes Lawrence derides in several pages of exclamatory fragmentary sentences, Lawrence criticizes Whitman's confusion of sympathy with "Jesus' LOVE and Paul's CHARITY": "Sympathy means feeling with, not feeling for. He kept on having a passionate feeling _for_ the negro slave, or the prostitute, or the syphilitic. Which is merging."[49] The whole "progression of merging" is toward the death of individual integrity:

> The great merge into the womb. Woman.
> And after that, the merge of comrades: man-for-man love.
> And almost immediately with this, death, the merge of death.[50]

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[48] _Ibid._, pp. 75-76.

[49] _Ibid._, pp. 186-87.

[50] _Ibid._, pp. 181-82.

Lawrence believes passionately in the creative originality which springs not from rational, conscious "mental knowledge" but from imaginative, unconscious "blood knowledge." Peckham observes that the romantic concept of the unconscious mind "is really a postulate to the creative imagination," for "with God creating himself, with an imperfect but growing universe, with the constant intrusion of novelty into the world," and with reason inadequate to apprehend the truth, "the truth can only be apprehended intuitively, imaginatively, spontaneously, with the whole personality, from the deep sources of the fountains that are within."[51] For Lawrence, the Holy Ghost, a name he seems to use interchangeably with "demon" and "pristine unconscious," is the balancing, integrative force which prompts from within. As he says in the Poe essay:

> the Holy Ghost is within us. It is the thing that prompts us to be real, not to push our own cravings too far, . . . above all not to be too egotistic and wilful in our conscious self, but to change as the spirit inside us bids . . . . The Holy Ghost bids us never be too deadly in our earnestness, always to laugh in time, at ourselves and everything.[52]

Peckham comments that whereas we think of the unconscious spatially "as inside and beneath," the early romanticists thought of it "as outside and above": "We descend into

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[51]Peckham, p. 13.

[52]Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 83.

the imagination; they rose to it."[53] Lawrence says, in the essay on "The Spirit of Place," that "getting down to the deepest self . . . . takes some diving."[54] The consequences of Lawrence's concept of the unconscious for both literature and criticism may be seen in his theory of "art-speech," which he explains in the essay on "The Spirit of Place":

> Art-speech is the only truth. An artist is usually a damned liar, but his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day. . . .
>
> Truly art is a sort of subterfuge. . . .
>
> The artist usually sets out—or used to—to point a moral and adorn a tale. The tale, however, points the other way, as a rule. Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of the critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it.[55]

Crèvecoeur, for example, "was an artist as well as a liar": "Crèvecoeur the idealist puts over us a lot of stuff about nature and the noble savage and the innocence of toil, etc., etc. Blarney! But Crèvecoeur the artist gives us glimpses of actual nature, not writ large."[56] The fact that the tale speaks to the reader as unconscious to unconscious, whereas the artist speaks to him only as conscious mind to conscious mind, enables the artist to fulfill his function of making "myth-meaning." Although Lawrence does not

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[53]Peckham, p. 13.

[54]Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 17.

[55]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[56]Ibid., pp. 34-35.

suggest that everyone's fantasies are visions of universal significance, the artist, he believes, creates meaningful myth not through the rational intention of his art but through its irrational element of wish-fulfillment. Lawrence says of Cooper: "His actual desire was to be: *Monsieur Fenimore Cooper, le grand écrivain américain*. His innermost wish was to be: Natty Bumppo."[57] Thus, "*The Last of the Mohicans* is divided between real historical narrative and true 'romance.'" Lawrence prefers the romance: "It has a myth-meaning, whereas the narrative is chiefly record."[58] The unconscious element in Cooper's work, like all "true myth," "concerns itself centrally with the onward adventure of the integral soul";[59] when, as in Poe, the artist's unconscious has been perverted by will, the unconscious element in his work is concerned only with the disintegrative process: "All this underground vault business in Poe symbolizes that which takes place *beneath* the consciousness. On top, all is fair-spoken. Beneath, there is awful murderous extremity of burying alive."[60]

Lawrence's reliance on the unconscious creative imagination is central to his position that, as he puts it in the "Whitman" essay:

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[57] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

> The essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral.
>
> But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake.[61]

Such a morality must take into account the duality of man. In the essay on "Nathaniel Hawthorne and The Scarlet Letter," Lawrence elaborates:

> Blood-consciousness overwhelms, obliterates, and annuls mind-consciousness.
>
> Mind-consciousness extinguishes blood-consciousness, and consumes the blood.
>
> We are all of us conscious in both ways. And the two ways are antagonistic in us.
>
> They will always remain so.
>
> That is our cross.[62]

As he expresses the same idea in the essay on "Dana's 'Two Years Before the Mast,'" Lawrence is close to that most mechanistic and inorganic concept of a definite and limited quantity of psychic energy for which the various systems of the personality must compete:[63]

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[61] Ibid., pp. 183-84.

[62] Ibid., p. 95.

[63] See Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957), pp. 36-41: Sigmund Freud, influenced by the deterministic philosophy of nineteenth century physics, "regarded the human organism as a complex energy system." The doctrine of the conservation of energy, Freud thought, is applicable not only to physical but also to psychic energy: "energy may be transformed from one state into another state but can never be lost from the total cosmic system." Furthermore, since psychic energy is limited in quantity, the three systems of personality, id, ego, and superego, compete "for the energy that is available."

> KNOWING and BEING are opposite antagonistic states. The more you know, exactly, the less you _are_. The more you _are_, in being, the less you know.
>
> This is the great cross of man, his dualism. The blood-self, and the nerve-brain self.[64]

The moral change which it is the function of art to bring about is a correction of the imbalance between blood and brain, being and knowing, which presently exists in both civilization and the individual. "Sin" consists in the imbalance in favor of the "nerve-brain self." Lawrence postulates that "before the apple episode" Adam had lived with Eve "As a wild animal with his mate." The "diabolic undertone of _The Scarlet Letter_" is that "Man ate of the tree of knowledge, and became ashamed of himself": "It didn't become 'sin' till the knowledge-poison entered."[65] The unforgivable "sin against the Holy Ghost," in fact, is the failure to recognize and observe the limits of mind, will, and sensation. This is the sin of Poe's Ligeia, who, through exercise of will, turns life into knowing.[66] It is the sin of Melville's Ahab, a monomaniac of the idea, who hunts Moby Dick, "the deepest blood-being of the white race," the "last phallic being of the white man," "into the death of upper consciousness and the ideal will."[67]

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[64] Lawrence, _Classic American Literature_, p. 124.

[65] _Ibid._, pp. 93-94.

[66] _Ibid._, pp. 82-83.

[67] _Ibid._, p. 173.

In Lawrence's religious but non-didactic morality, one's communion with the Holy Ghost, the pristine unconscious, the dark gods is at the heart of one's relation to others and to oneself. Lawrence states this central tenet of his faith in his serious parody of Franklin's creed:

> "*That I am I*."
> "*That my soul is a dark forest*."
> "*That my known self will never be more than a little clearing in the forest*."
> "*That gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest into the clearing of my known self, and then go back*."
> "*That I must have the courage to let them come and go*."
> "*That I will never let mankind put anything over me, but that I will try always to recognize and submit to the gods in me and the gods in other men and women*."[68]

One product of Lawrence's romanticism is the theory of personality which grows out of his fiction and poetry, which, as in the *Studies in Classic American Literature*, is occasionally articulated as a literary principle, and which is elaborated most fully in the two essays on the unconscious, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922). Certainly Francis Fergusson is correct in saying that Lawrence's primary gift was not system-building but "voice, *daimon*, inspiration, sensibility": "Lawrence had many visions, but no consistent doctrine."[69] Lawrence himself would agree. As he writes

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[68] *Ibid*., p. 26.

[69] Francis Fergusson, "D. H. Lawrence's Sensibility,"

of his psychological theories in the "Foreword" to _Fantasia_: "I am not a scientist. I am an amateur of amateurs. As one of my critics said, you either believe or you don't."[70] But Lawrence's statements about his own theory of personality are sometimes inconsistent. In the _Psychoanalysis_, for example, he states, "We profess no scientific exactitude, particularly in terminology. We merely wish intelligibly to open a way";[71] then seven pages later, in referring to an aspect of his theory, he states, "It is obvious, demonstrable scientific fact, to be verified under the microscope and within the human psyche, subjectively and objectively, both. . . . We can quite tangibly deal with the human unconscious."[72] As Armin Arnold remarks on similar inconsistencies in the Franklin essay, "It would be useless to look for too much logic in . . . the essay."[73]

The ambivalence between Lawrence's rejection of

Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, 1920-1951, ed. John W. Aldridge (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1952), p. 330.

[70]D. H. Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_ and _Fantasia of the Unconscious_ (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 53.

[71]_Ibid_., p. 36.

[72]_Ibid_., p. 43.

[73]Arnold, p. 49.

what he saw as the static mechanism of modern science and his desire to create a mythic structure for the human personality which would be accepted as valid not only for the primitive past but also for the apocalyptic future led to the central absurdity in his theory, the reification of purely hypothetical constructs into unverifiable physical fact. Employing the cosmic image of the cross, Lawrence divides the human body into four areas or dynamic centers. The vertical line bisecting the body divides the ventral sympathetic region from the dorsal voluntary region. The two dynamic centers of the sympathetic region are positive in polarity in that their function is to incorporate the other into the self. The two dynamic centers of the voluntary region are negative in polarity in that their function is to define the limits of the self in relation to the other. The horizontal line of the diaphragm divides the lower sensual plane from the upper spiritual plane. The sensual plane, with which Lawrence identifies the personality and art of dark southern peoples, embodies the subjective unconscious in that the function of its centrifugal gaze is identifying and relating to the self. The spiritual plane, with which Lawrence identifies the personality and art of fair northern peoples, embodies the objective unconscious in that the function of its centripetal gaze

is identifying and relating to the other.[74]

Lawrence makes no distinction between psychic and physical development in the human organism; indeed, the two are as irrevocably associated as in Freud's psychoanalytic theory or Sheldon's constitutional psychology. Differentiation of psychic and physical function in the four dynamic centers of "the first field of consciousness"[75] begins, in fact, with the fertilized ovum: "the original nucleus, formed from the two parent nuclei at our conception, remains always primal and central, and is always the original fount and home of the first and supreme knowledge that _I am I_."[76] This sympathetic knowledge is really "_all is one in me_,"[77] since what Lawrence describes, with remarkable psychological insight, is, in the infant, a kind of cosmic identification. "As primal affective centre" of the "pristine unconscious," the original nucleus remains "within the solar plexus of the nervous system." Though the infant "cannot perceive, much less conceive," it "knows" directly and vitally from the solar plexus. Likewise, in a creative "polarized vitalism," "From the

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[74] Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_, pp. 34-35.

[75] Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, p. 87.

[76] _Ibid_., p. 75.

[77] _Ibid_., p. 79.

passional nerve-centre of the solar plexus in the mother passes direct unspeakable effluence and intercommunication, sheer effluent contact with the palpitating nerve-centre in the belly of the child."[78] Wordsworth expresses the same insight, without the paraphernalia of polarized dynamic centers, in The Prelude, Book II; but characteristically in an age that placed the unconscious not beneath but above, he thinks eyes and heart, not solar plexus, the organs of pre-verbal communication:

> . . . blest the Babe
> Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep,
> Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
> Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye! (ll. 234-37.)

In exploring his theme of the story of his own life, Wordsworth begins with

> . . . that first time
> In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
> I held mute dialogue with my Mother's heart. . . .
> (ll. 266-68.)[79]

In Lawrence's theory, the primacy of the solar plexus in pre-verbal communication has physiological as well as psychological implications, for through this medium, he thought, the infant returns to the source from which it came, merging the mother with itself, incorporating her in the act of nursing milk at her breast. Thus, the solar plexus

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[78] Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, pp. 20-22.

[79] Wordsworth, p. 505.

controls the assimilatory function in digestion.[80]

The individuation process begins as the original nucleus divides:

> This second nucleus, the nucleus born of recoil, is the nuclear origin of all the great nuclei of the voluntary system, which are the nuclei of assertive individualism. . . . In the adult human body the first nucleus of independence, first-born from the great original nucleus of our conception, lies always established in the lumbar ganglion.[81]

As the lumbar ganglion "negatively polarizes the solar plexus in the primal psychic activity," individuation begins with the child's ego differentiation from the mother: "There is a violent anti-maternal motion, anti-everything."[82] From the lumbar ganglion arises "the first term of volitional knowledge: _I am myself, and these others are not as I am_—there is a world of difference."[83] Instead of identifying the cosmos with the self, the infant now defines the limits of self in relation to cosmos. "This incipient mastery" in the child's pride of individuality is expressed both in playfulness and in aggressive bursts of rage. As a physiological corollary of this psychic rejection of the world, "the milk is urged away down the infant bowels,

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[80]Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_, p. 22.

[81]Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, p. 76.

[82]Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_, p. 23.

[83]Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, p. 79.

urged away towards excretion." Thus, the lumbar ganglion controls the excrementory function in digestion.[84]

Differentiation of psychic and physical function continues as the two nuclei split horizontally, forming two new dynamic nerve centers, which in the adult remain situated above the diaphragm. Although the two nuclei below the diaphragm "retain their original nature," those above, the cardiac plexus and the thoracic ganglion, "are new in nature."[85] "The upper, dynamic-objective plane is complementary to the lower, dynamic-subjective."[86]

The cardiac plexus, which corresponds to the solar plexus in positive polarity and sympathetic function, does not, like the solar plexus, assert the dark knowledge that "I am I" as cosmic identity, assimilating the other into the self. Rather, it asserts the revelation in light that "you are you" as cosmic identity, merging the self into the other: "The wonder is without me. . . . The other being is now the great positive reality, I myself am as nothing." As a physiological corollary of this adoration of the other, the cardiac plexus controls the incorporative functions of the eyes, heart, and lungs.

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[84] Ibid., p. 76.

[85] Ibid., p. 77.

[86] Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 34.

The eyes, as in the self-effacing vision of the courtly lover, seek the ideal, unknown other in the outer world. Moreover, neither inhalation nor diastole is like the intake of food. "When we breathe in we aspire, we yearn towards the heaven of air and light. And when the heart dilates to draw in the stream of dark blood, it opens its arms as to a beloved."[87]

But on the upper objective, as on the lower subjective, plane, there is a counter movement as from the strong thoracic "ganglion of the shoulders proceeds the negative circuit":

> a strong rejective force, a force which, pressing upon the object of attention, in the mode of separation, succeeds in transferring to itself the impression of the object to which it has attended. This is the other half of devotional love—perfect knowledge of the beloved.[88]

The thoracic ganglion, which corresponds to the lumbar ganglion in negative polarity and voluntary function, does not, like the lumbar ganglion, assert the subjective identity of the self in contradistinction to the other. Rather, it asserts the objective identity of the other in contradistinction to the self:

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[87]Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, pp. 77-79.

[88]Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 37.

> It is the very mould of the contradistinction. It is the impress upon the lover of that which was separate from him, resistant to him, in the beloved. Objective knowledge is always of this kind—a knowledge based on unchangeable difference, a knowledge truly of the gulf that lies between the two beings nearest to each other.[89]

The thoracic ganglion, concomitantly, is the seat of power, of "the extravagance of spiritual <u>will</u>" through which one manipulates others as objects. The child's device of crying to get attention and love from the mother "is quite different from the rageous weeping, which is compulsion from the lower centre. . . ." Nor is the child's willful negativism, as expressed in such acts as dropping everything out of sight over the edge of his crib "with a curious look of negative triumph," the same as the independence asserted from the lumbar ganglion, as expressed in such acts as joyously smashing things. In balanced polarity with the other dynamic centers, however, the thoracic ganglion is the seat of constructive activity: "of real, eager curiosity, of the delightful desire to pick things to pieces, and the desire to put them together again, the desire to 'find out,' and the desire to invent . . . ."[90]

Literally speaking, as Lawrence is, despite his airy dismissal of scientific exactitude in terminology,

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[89] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[90] Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, p. 80.

this theory of personality makes anatomical, if not psychological, nonsense. Anatomically, the nervous system is composed of two broad divisions, the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system. As defined in Henry Gray's Anatomy of the Human Body, since the first edition of 1858 the standard anatomy text,

> The central nervous system consists of the encephalon or brain, contained within the cranium, and the medulla spinalis or spinal cord, lodged in the vertebral canal . . . .
>
> The peripheral nervous system consists of a series of nerves by which the central nervous system is connected with various tissues of the body.[91]

Neurones of two types are found in the peripheral nervous system: sensory or afferent neurones, whose function is to carry sensory impulses to the central nervous system, and motor or efferent neurones, whose function is to carry motor impulses from the central nervous system to the muscles and glands of the body. The motor components are of two types, those associated with the voluntary motor functions and those associated with what, in most individuals, are involuntary motor functions. Using the terminology current when Lawrence was constructing his theory of personality, those motor components of the peripheral nervous system mediating involuntary functions compose the sympathetic

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[91]Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body, rev. and ed. Warren H. Lewis (20th ed. rev.; Philadelphia and New York: Lea and Febiger, 1918), p. 721.

nervous system.[92] "The sympathetic nerves transmit the impulses which regulate the movements of the viscera, determine the caliber of the blood vessels, and control the phenomena of secretion."[93] Anatomically, all four of the structures which Lawrence proposes as primal affective centers belong to the sympathetic division of the peripheral nervous system. Two of Lawrence's centers, the solar plexus and the cardiac plexus, can be located precisely in the human anatomy. The solar plexus, located around the abdominal aorta at the level at which the celiac artery is given off and thus usually called the celiac plexus, and the cardiac plexus, situated at the base of the heart, are large collections of nerve cell bodies and nerve fibers which mediate sympathetic functions in the abdomen and thorax respectively. Thus, those fibers running through or arising in the celiac plexus transmit the impulses which regulate such functions

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[92]See Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body, ed. Charles Mayo Goss (26th ed. rev.; Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1954), p. 1087: Today called the autonomic nervous system, it is composed of two divisions, the sympathetic system and the parasympathetic system. Functionally, "No consistent rule can be given for the effect of each, but in general the sympathetic system mobilizes the energy for sudden activity such as that in rage or flight; for example, the pupils dilate, the heart beats faster, the peripheral blood vessels constrict and the blood pressure rises. The parasympathetic system aims more toward restoring the reserves; for example, the pupils contract, the heart beats more slowly, and the alimentary tract and its glands become alive."

[93]Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body (20th ed. rev.), p. 701.

as the movement of the viscera, the caliber of abdominal blood vessels, and the secretion of intestinal glands; and those fibers running through or arising in the cardiac plexus transmit the impulses which regulate such functions as heart rate, the caliber of thoracic blood vessels, and the size of bronchiolar passages in the lungs. The anatomist recognizes no such specific structure as "the lumbar ganglion" or "the thoracic ganglion." He does recognize, however, twelve paired structures, made up of collections of nerve cells, lying on either side of the spinal cord at its thoracic levels as the thoracic ganglia, and four to five similar paired structures at the lumbar levels of the cord as the lumbar ganglia. The nerve cells arising in these ganglia send their processes through the great sympathetic plexuses and thus are functionally a part of these same plexuses, ennervating the same organs and performing the same functions as the plexuses. The lower thoracic ganglia send their processes by way of two large nerves into the celiac plexus and thus ennervate abdominal rather than thoracic organs. The lumbar ganglia ennervate abdominal and pelvic organs. Thus, all of these components of the sympathetic, or in current terminology autonomic, division of the peripheral nervous system transmit impulses which mediate the rather simple functions of contraction of involuntary musculature or amount of glandular secretion. The central

nervous system identifies, associates, and attributes meaning to incoming stimuli and then selects and originates the proper response to these stimuli. The peripheral motor nervous system then is the means by which impulses initiating the selected course of action are transmitted to the peripheral parts of the body. To attribute to the autonomic plexuses and ganglia, as Lawrence does, the more complex functions of integration, origin of impulses, or consciousness is to burden these relatively simple peripheral circuits with far more than they can bear. Most evidence would indicate that these more complex functions of personality arise in the great and complex integrating systems of the central nervous system.[94]

Lawrence, in his apparent ignorance of known facts of human anatomy, was erroneous in a way that Freud, with his knowledge of neurology, never risked being. Anatomically speaking, Lawrence's theory of personality is inevitably diminished by comparison with other theories which relate personality realistically to actual anatomical

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[94]The foregoing discussion of Lawrence's misconception of the neuro-anatomical basis of his theory is of an elementary nature and demonstrates no specialized knowledge of the fields of neurology and anatomy. It is based, however, on the more detailed scientific discussion in Henry Gray, Anatomy of the Human Body (20th ed. rev.), pp. 968-89, and (26th ed. rev.), pp. 1100-13. I am also indebted to my wife, Judith R. Cowan, M.D., Department of Psychiatry, Tulane University, for her helpful explanation of this material to me.

functions. Lawrence's theory, nevertheless, has much in common with other personality theories, and it is on the basis of his psychological insights, not his anatomical errors, that his theory finally must be evaluated.

Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, in their excellent study _Theories of Personality_, suggest definite though not inflexible criteria for the description and evaluation of a psychological theory of personality. They distinguish four broad traditions from which twentieth century personality theory emerges: the tradition of clinical observation, the Gestalt tradition, experimental psychology, and the psychometric tradition, plus such miscellaneous influences as experimental genetics, logical positivism, and social anthropology. Although personality theory is "a part of the broad field of psychology," there is a difference between it and other areas of psychology. Furthermore, although there are so many individual differences among theories of personality that statements about one theory often do not apply to another, Hall and Lindzey note six "modal qualities or central tendencies which inhere in most personality theories. . . ."[95]

First, personality theory relies historically on

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[95]Hall and Lindzey, pp. 2-3.

clinical data and the creative reconstructions of the theorist rather than on experimental data and the values of the natural sciences.[96] While Lawrence, it is true, is more interested in his own creative hypotheses than he is in data of any kind, he finds clinical observation, in a special subjective sense, at least acceptable. He relies on the clinical data of his self-expression in fiction and poetry: "This pseudo-philosophy of mine—'pollyanalytics,' as one of my respected critics might say—is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse";[97] of his own intuitive experience: "How do we know? We feel it, as we feel hunger or love or hate";[98] and of his perception of others as they relate to each other and to him. Neither experimental psychology, with its "carefully controlled empirical research," nor the psychometric tradition, with its "increasing sophistication in measurement and the quantitative analysis of data,"[99] would appeal to Lawrence, who would perceive in their mechanical techniques of scientific investigation a tendency to reduce the individual object of study to a

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[96] Ibid., p. 3.

[97] Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 57.

[98] Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 20.

[99] Hall and Lindzey, p. 2.

static unit.

Second, because personality theorists historically have been rebels against the conventionally accepted ideas and practices in both medicine and academic experimental science, "*personality theory has occupied a dissident role in the development of psychology*," a role which left the personality theorist relatively free from "The discipline and the responsibility for reasonably systematic and organized formulation."[100] That Lawrence, like most romantic rebels, occupied a dissident role in the literature of his time hardly requires exposition here. His personality theory is hardly less dissident than his fiction. The *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* begins, in fact, with an attack upon Freud as a threat to morality with his "negative unconscious," which represents merely "our conception of conscious sexual life as this latter exists in a state of repression,"[101] and proceeds to praise Trigant Burrow for having the singularly Laurentian insight "that it is knowledge of sex that constitutes sin, and not sex

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[100] *Ibid*., p. 4.

[101] See also Frederick J. Hoffman, Chapter VI: "Lawrence's Quarrel with Freud," *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (2d ed. rev.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), pp. 151-76, which has been reprinted in *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Harry T. Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 106-27.

itself."[102] Furthermore, Lawrence takes pride in his own lack of academic discipline and systematic formulation. As he says in the "Foreword" to Fantasia of the Unconscious:

> I am not a proper archaeologist nor an anthropologist nor an ethnologist. I am no "scholar" of any sort. But I am very grateful to scholars for their sound work. I have found hints, suggestions for what I say here in all kinds of scholarly books, from the Yoga and Plato and St. John the Evangel and the early Greek philosophers like Herakleitos down to Frazer and his Golden Bough, and even Freud and Frobenius. Even then I only remember hints—and I proceed by intuition. This leaves you quite free to dismiss the whole wordy mass of revolting nonsense, without a qualm.[103]

Third, personality theory, in that it is "concerned with questions that make a difference in the adjustment of the organism," is functional in its orientation.[104] The major function of Lawrence's theory of personality is, of course, "to open a way" to his subjective science as an alternative to objective science. While Lawrence propounds no therapeutic technique in his two essays on the unconscious and even opposes "the concert of World Regeneration and Hope Revived Again,"[105] his subsequent review of Trigant Burrow's The Social Basis of Consciousness makes clear that

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[102]Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 8.

[103]Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 54.

[104]Hall and Lindzey, p. 4.

[105]Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 67.

he approves Burrow's group method of analysis:

> the cure would consist in bringing about a state of honesty and a certain trust among a group of people, or many people—if possible all the people in the world. For it is only when we can get a man to fall back into his true relation to other men and to women, that we can give him an opportunity to be himself. So long as men are inwardly dominated by their own isolation, their own absoluteness, which after all is but a picture or an idea, nothing is possible but insanity more or less pronounced. Men must get back into touch . . . shatter that mirror in which we all live grimacing: and fall again into true relatedness.[106]

"True relatedness," for Lawrence, is the "essence of morality": "the basic desire to preserve the perfect correspondence between the self and the object, to have no trespass and no breach of integrity, nor yet any re-faulture in the vitalistic interchange."[107] The "vital question," he says, is "how to establish and maintain the circuit of vital polarity . . . . between ourselves and the effectual correspondent, the other human being, other human beings, and all the extraneous universe," for from this polarity the psyche develops.[108] Using the metaphor of electricity, Lawrence says, in reference to the four

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[106]D. H. Lawrence, Review of The Social Basis of Consciousness, by Trigant Burrow, in Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. with "Introduction" by Edward D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), p. 382.

[107]Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 28.

[108]Ibid., p. 45.

dynamic centers of personality, "Within the individual the polarity is fourfold. In a relation between two individuals the polarity is already eightfold."[109] But Lawrence keeps the question "vital" and resists the temptation to reify it into an abstract norm: "There is not and cannot be any actual norm of human conduct. All depends, first, on the unknown inward need within the very nuclear centres of the individual himself, and secondly on his circumstance." Ultimately the functional goal of Lawrence's theory is to encourage the individual not so much "to know" as "to be" himself: "But that which _I_ am, when I am myself, will certainly be anathema to those who hate individual integrity, and want to swarm."[110]

Fourth, personality theory has "_customarily assigned a crucial role to the motivational process_."[111] Rejecting Freud's sexual motive on the grounds that "when Freud makes sex accountable for everything he as good as makes it accountable for nothing," Lawrence, nevertheless, thinks sex an important if not central motivational force, but he narrows "the essential clue to sex" to coition:

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[109] _Ibid._, p. 35.

[110] Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, pp. 85-86.

[111] Hall and Lindzey, p. 5.

"In one direction, all life works up to the one supreme moment of coition." For Lawrence, however, there is a higher, more dynamic motivational force than sex: "the essentially religious or creative motive is the first motive for all human activity": "It is the desire of the human male to build a world: not 'to build a world for you, dear'; but to build up out of his own self and his own belief and his own effort . . . . Not merely something useful," but "Something wonderful. . . . And the motivity of sex is subsidiary to this: often directly antagonistic."[112] Neurosis results from "idealism," which Lawrence defines as "the motivizing of the great affective sources by means of ideas mentally derived," because idealism leads to "the death of all spontaneous, creative life, and the substituting of the mechanical principle."[113]

Fifth, personality theory maintains the Gestaltist position "that _an adequate understanding of human behavior will evolve only from a study of the whole person_," not from the segmental study of fragments of behavior.[114] For

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[112]Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, pp. 60-61.

[113]Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_, p. 11.

[114]Hall and Lindzey, p. 6.

Lawrence, "Knowledge is always a matter of whole experience, what St. Paul calls knowing in full, and never a matter of mental conception merely."[115] Furthermore, "We must patiently determine the psychic manifestation at each centre, and . . . , we must discover the psychic results of the interaction, the polarized interaction between the dynamic centres both within and without the individual."[116]

Sixth, the personality theorist, in comparison to the traditional psychological theorist, (1) is more speculative and less hampered by the tenets of logical positivism, (2) develops more complex if less specific theories, (3) approaches behavior in a broader context of the total, functioning individual, and (4) places greater emphasis on motivation.[117] Lawrence, in these four senses, is clearly in accord with the personality theorist as opposed to the traditional psychological theorist.

On the basis of the first point of comparison, the question of what Hall and Lindzey call "the stiffening brush of positivism,"[118] Lawrence's theory of personality

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[115]Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 15.

[116]*Ibid.*, p. 35.

[117]Hall and Lindzey, p. 7.

[118]*Ibid.*

may be placed in philosophical perspective and seen, along with his cyclic theory of history, his critical approach to literature, and his aesthetic method, as a natural outgrowth of his romanticism. According to Horace B. English and Ava Champney English, in their excellent _A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms_, positivism, with its historical relation to Comte's philosophical point of view "that knowledge consists of observation of sensory phenomena and the classification of these data according to the doctrine of necessary succession (=causality, but Comte scorned that term as having metaphysical implications), coexistence, and resemblance," led to "the doctrine that science is limited to observed fact and to what can be rigorously deduced from facts."[119] English and English list eight dichotomies which distinguish positivism as a basic approach in psychology. Lawrence's position on philosophy, psychology, criticism, and aesthetics—in brief, his _Weltanschauung_—is informed in all but one of these dichotomies, and then only in defiance of all logical consistency, by values which are diametrically opposite to the values of positivism. Thus, one way of defining Lawrence's values is through a definition of the terms in each of the dichotomies. Positivism in-

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[119] Horace B. English and Ava Champney English, _A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms_ (New York, London, and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), p. 398.

volves _analysis_, "the systematic attempt to reduce phenomena of psychology to their elements,"[120] rather than _synthesis_, "putting data together to form a whole."[121] Positivism embraces the values of _elementarism_, "a point of view holding that complex phenomena can be best (or only) understood when described or reduced to their elements (or simple, independent parts), and that a whole can be totally described in terms of its parts considered as independent elements,"[122] or _reductionist psychology_, "a general point of view which holds that complex phenomena are to be understood and explained by analyzing them into ever simpler, and ultimately into strictly elementary, components";[123] it is opposed, therefore, to _molarism_, a preference for studying behavior in molar, or relatively large and unanalyzed, units,[124] or _Gestalt psychology_, "the systematic position that psychological phenomena are organized, undivided, articulated wholes or gestalts," units whose properties "are properties of the whole as

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[120] _Ibid._, p. 29.

[121] _Ibid._, p. 541.

[122] _Ibid._, p. 175.

[123] _Ibid._, p. 446.

[124] _Ibid._, p. 327.

such and are not derived by summation of [their] parts" but from which, conversely, "the parts derive their properties."[125] Positivism tends toward <u>environmentalism</u>, "a point of view that stresses the role of the environment in determining behavior, in contrast with the influence of heredity,"[126] rather than <u>geneticism</u>, "the doctrine or attitude that phenomena that are inborn (e.g., instincts and primary drives) or that occur very early in life (e.g., infantile conflicts and fixations) have a peculiar importance."[127] Positivism is usually <u>peripheralist</u>, "a point of view that emphasizes, for psychological explanation, the events that take place at the periphery or boundaries of the body rather than events in the central nervous system,"[128] rather than <u>centralist</u>, "a point of view that gives major importance in explanation of behavior to events that take place in the brain."[129] Concomitantly, positivism is <u>associationist</u>, "a theory that starts with supposedly irreducible mental elements and asserts that learning and the development of higher processes consist mainly in the combination of these elements," "the point of view of those who define the

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[125] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 225.

[126] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 182.

[127] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 223.

[128] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 380.

[129] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 80.

variables or constructs of learning theory and experimentation in terms of stimulus and response, and the relationships of temporal contiguity between them,"[130] as opposed to _creative synthesist_, "the doctrine of creative resultants" as in the theory of Wundt, "the hypothesis that the combination of mental processes engenders processes not found in a mere summation."[131] Positivism has the values of _reactivist psychology_, which "stresses the part played by external stimulus in determining behavior," rather than _activist psychology_, which "stresses the role of the person or organism."[132] Positivism may be described as _nomological_, "pertaining to the formulation of general scientific laws,"[133] rather than _idiographic_, "pertaining to, or characterizing, an account of particular or individual cases or events."[134] Finally, positivism has the values of _monism_, "the view that ultimate reality is of only one kind or quality" and thus that "the phenomena of psychology are of the same kind as, or are completely reducible to, those of the physical sciences," practically speaking, the view of mechanism,[135]

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[130] _Ibid._, pp. 45-46.

[131] _Ibid._, p. 129.

[132] _Ibid._, p. 441.

[133] _Ibid._, p. 347.

[134] _Ibid._, p. 250.

[135] _Ibid._, p. 328.

as opposed to <u>dualism</u>, the view that admits of "two fundamentally different sorts of principles or entities in the universe, usually conceived as mental and material" and thus "that accepts a distinction of some sort between mental and physical phenomena."[136]

A position more antithetical to Lawrence's than positivism would be difficult to formulate. Of the "science" to which he wishes "intelligibly to open a way," Lawrence says:

> I refer to the science which proceeds in terms of life and is established on data of living experience and of sure intuition. Call it subjective science if you like.

And of the science which derives its values from logical positivism, he says:

> Our objective science of modern knowledge concerns itself only with phenomena, and with phenomena as regarded in their cause-and-effect relationships. I have nothing to say against our science. It is perfect as far as it goes. But to regard it as exhausting the whole scope of human possibility in knowledge seems to me just puerile.[137]

Unfortunately, though he drew on ancient myth to create a science for the future, Lawrence fell into the mechanistic trap of presenting his unique psychological insights through the too literalized metaphor of the human anatomy,

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[136]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 165.

[137]Lawrence, <u>Fantasia of the Unconscious</u>, p. 54.

though even his literalization of the metaphor is a characteristic of primitive mythology.[138] Inconsistently, Lawrence embraces one sensationist position while rejecting another; he attributes integrative function to neuronal structures in the peripheral nervous system while condemning the modern world's preference for frictional sensation to deeper phallic consciousness. Furthermore, nothing could be more mechanistic than the metaphor from electricity of positive and negative polarity which Lawrence employs to describe the delicate balance of human relationship. It is, perhaps, worth recalling that Coleridge, in his theory of the Imagination, did not fall into the similar mechanistic trap of placing elements of Hartleyan associationism at the heart of his theory; rather, he relegated them to his definition of the Fancy.[139] In the years that followed the development of his cyclic theory of history, his romantic approach to criticism, and his mythic theory of personality, Lawrence applied the tenets of his anti-positivist position to his work with unromantic compulsivity. Since Lawrence saw the waste land

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[138] See Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 21.

[139] See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Chapter XIII of Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches, or My Life and Opinions (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926), pp. 183-90.

of twentieth century life as the outgrowth of logical positivism, this action was consistent with his aim to regenerate that waste land through an appeal in his art to the values set forth expositorily in his theoretical essays.

CHAPTER III

LAWRENCE AND MURRY: THE DARK AND THE LIGHT

Between 11 September 1922 and 22 September 1925, Lawrence, except for a brief, eventful visit in Europe from 7 December 1923 to 5 March 1924,[1] lived in New Mexico and Mexico. Though not the time of Lawrence's greatest fiction, this period of near perfection in some minor work and significant failure in major work produced the volume containing _St. Mawr_ and "The Princess" (published 1925), _The Plumed Serpent_ (published 1926), and several of the stories in the volume entitled _The Woman Who Rode Away_ (published 1928). In the following chapters, these works will be discussed in order of ascending significance, which is not to say quality, considering first the short stories, then the nouvelle, and finally the novel.

Lawrence's long friendship and feud with John Middleton Murry provided materials for much of his fiction, including four of the stories in _The Woman Who Rode Away_. In all four, Murry is cruelly punished: he is mercilessly ridiculed in "Smile" and "Jimmy and the Desperate Woman" and killed off

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[1]Moore, _Poste Restante_, pp. 76-78.

in "The Border Line" and "The Last Laugh." The biographical materials of most immediate relevance to the genesis of these four stories are the events and feelings of the Lawrences' brief visit in Europe in the fall and winter of 1923-1924.

Early in 1923, Murry wrote Lawrence of the death of Katherine Mansfield. Lawrence replied that her passing meant "something gone out of our lives," adding, "We will unite up again when I come to England. It has been a savage enough pilgrimage these last four years."[2] The Lawrences left Del Monte Ranch for Mexico on 18 March 1923 and remained until 9-10 July 1923, when they departed for New York for the first publication of Studies in Classic American Literature.[3] Lawrence wrote to Murry from New York on 7 August 1923, telling him of Frieda's plan to go to England to see her children and asking him to "look after her a bit" in Lawrence's absence because, "wrong or not, I can't stomach the chasing of those Weekley children."[4] Frieda sailed on 18 August 1923.[5] As she recalls: "It was winter and I wasn't a bit happy alone there and was always cross when I had this longing for the children upon me; but there it was, though now I know he was right. They didn't want me any more, they were living their

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[2]Lawrence, Collected Letters, II, 736.

[3]Moore, Poste Restante, pp. 69-72.

[4]Lawrence, Collected Letters, II, 749.

[5]Moore, Poste Restante, p. 72.

own lives."[6] Lawrence, returning in the fall to Mexico with the Danish painter Kai Gótzsche, found Chapala different without Frieda: "'The life has changed somehow, has gone dead, you know, I feel I shan't live my life here.'" Gótzsche wrote to Knud Merrild on 22 October 1923 that Lawrence was really "proud of England" and would return except for his "author ideas": "he wants to start that 'new life' away from money, lust and greediness, back to nature and seriousness."[7]

Meanwhile, unbeknown to Lawrence, Frieda and Murry had fallen in love. As Moore summarizes the situation, "during a trip to Germany in September, Frieda had proposed that they become lovers, but Murry made what he later called the 'great renunciation' of his life: 'No, my darling, I mustn't let Lorenzo down - I can't.'"[8] Neither Murry nor Frieda revealed, during their lifetimes, the full extent of their love affair, though Murry, in Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence, alludes to "a decisive mystical experience of my own"[9] and says that the reason he did not return to New Mexico with the Lawrences "cannot be fully told,"[10] and Frieda, in a letter to Edward Gilbert, says that "only a part of Murry was the smart Alec"

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[6]Frieda Lawrence, "Not I But the Wind . . . ," p. 141.

[7]Knud Merrild, A Poet and Two Painters: A Memoir of D. H. Lawrence (New York: The Viking Press, 1939), p. 340.

[8]Moore, The Intelligent Heart, p. 401.

[9]Murry, Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence, p. 163.

[10]Ibid., p. 168.

and adds, "Of course there are things I don't want to tell."[11] The full story, as finally revealed in the ten year correspondence between Murry and Frieda from 1946 to 1956, has the poignance of youth remembered in age. In his letter to Frieda on 27 May 1946, Murry recalls the "lovely moments with you": "Those moments of blessedness when I lay beside you fed something in me that had been utterly starved . . . ."[12] In her reply on 4 June 1946, Frieda agrees that they were "fond of each other" and sees no "blame" in that: "Guilt is stupid anyhow!" At sixty-six she does not feel old, she says, "except peacefully": "I am sure Lawrence would have been like we are now."[13] Three months later, on 4 September 1946, Murry writes: "What a queer young man I was, to be sure!" His one redeeming quality had been a "capacity for love": "though may be it was largely a desire for protection: for the safety and security of love." His "shrinking" from betraying Lawrence, Murry admits, though genuine, was an excuse for his own fear of love, a relationship which he describes, for both men and women, as "a head-long self-surrender."[14] Five years later, on 9 December 1951, Murry is still obsessively justifying himself: "You gave me something then that I needed terribly . . . ." His wish not to be disloyal to Lawrence seems in retrospect that

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[11]Frieda Lawrence, The Memoirs and Correspondence, p. 309.

[12]Ibid., pp. 279-80.

[13]Ibid., pp. 280-81.

[14]Ibid., pp. 281-83.

Laurentian anathema "an 'idea' - something in my head." Though it is unclear whom he includes, Murry has no doubt "that we could all have lived together now happily and at peace."[15] In her reply on 19 December 1951, Frieda says that she, too, often thinks "of our friendship first and later of our intimacy with great satisfaction." On the trip to Germany, she had been sad but not bitter because she had felt that Murry was fond of her, and, "after all it was my job to see L. through to the bitter end." She believes now that her "deepest feeling" for Lawrence was "a profound compassion."[16] On 1 July 1952, after seeing Murry briefly while visiting her children and grandchildren, Frieda writes to praise his book Community Farm: "It isn't sentimental, thank God; in my old age I am sick of emotions." Her visit with Murry had proved that "when people have been real friends they don't become strangers, it was as if I had seen you the day before!"[17] A year later, on 20 July, 1953, Murry writes that "Not least because of you, I was able to love Mary," his third wife, with whom he has "complete physical fulfillment": "I believe it would have been the same between me and you, . . . if I had had the courage in 1923." The reason he had not gone to New Mexico he finally discloses: "Because Brett was going, too." He confesses "how bewildered I was - and still am - by Lorenzo's doctrine of love-and-hate."[18] In

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[15] Ibid., pp. 310-11.

[16] Ibid., p. 312.

[17] Ibid., p. 314.

[18] Ibid., pp. 320-21.

a letter undated but written about the time of her seventy-fourth birthday, Frieda agrees: "We shall never understand L.'s hatred. It came like an impersonal, elemental thing out of nowhere and it frightened me, but a last scrap of me wasn't frightened . . . ." Lawrence's hatred, perhaps, was really love: "It exasperated him so much that people were so unfree and miserable."[19] On 2 August 1953, Frieda recalls the circumstances of her first intimacy with Murry: "I think L. had become strange to me, when he came back and I was scared and your warmth was good to me and I was happy about it and deeply grateful." But she believes "there _is_ marriage, you have it with Mary and I with Lawrence, that elemental, unconscious thing." And she asks, "Do you know that terrible story of L's _The Border Line_? The jealousy beyond the grave?"[20] On 29 August 1953, Frieda comments that whether "it was love or hate or both" between Lawrence and Murry, "the impact you had on each other was very real and very powerful."[21] In his reply on 24 September 1953, Murry agrees, but he thinks Lawrence's ideas on love both right and wrong: "The physical tenderness of love is just as much a spiritual thing as it is a physical." He had, for example, wanted "_all_" of Frieda: " . . . the generosity of your soul as much as the generosity of your body."[22] In a letter undated but written about Christmas, 1953, Frieda again recalls "That awful pity I felt for him, that I shall

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[19] _Ibid._, pp. 322-23.

[20] _Ibid._, pp. 326-27.

[21] _Ibid._, pp. 328-29.

[22] _Ibid._, p. 331.

always feel, that he had to die and did not want to die. He still holds me, as if he said grimly, 'You are mine.'"[23] On 16 November 1955, Frieda tells Murry playfully: "for me you are always the old god Pan! You remember when Christianity came there was a voice heard crying: 'Pan is dead.' Maybe now Pan has come to life again."[24] Murry replies, on 27 November 1955, with an allusion to "The Last Laugh":

> Funny you calling me Pan. Lorenzo, you remember, used Pan to kill me off in one of his stories - a queer one which I have never quite understood - all about me and Brett and a policeman in snowy Hampstead. Quite a good picture of me. Of course I understood that I was well and truly killed off. But I didn't and don't understand quite what, *in the story*, I was supposed to have done that deserved death at Pan's hands.[25]

Frieda replies, on 10 December 1955, that she, too, dislikes and does not understand "the Pan story": "He really felt you as Pan and I fear envied you." Though Frieda and Murry apparently did not keep in touch after their brief intimacy, Frieda says: "something ultimate and deeply satisfactory and new had happened to me; there it was, just an inner lovely fact, that I accepted without question for ever. . . . Lawrence was already very ill."[26]

This is the period also of Lawrence's famous "last supper," a kind of shared apocalyptic vision of Lawrence as Christ and a number of his oldest friends as disciples, with Murry in the role of Judas. The Lawrences gave a dinner at the

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[23]*Ibid.*, p. 333. [24]*Ibid.*, p. 365.

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 367. [26]*Ibid.*, p. 368.

Cafe Royal in London "for Lawrence's real friends," inviting Murry, Mark Gertler, S. S. Koteliansky, Mary Cannan, Dorothy Brett, and Catherine and Donald Carswell. The increasingly tense dinner was punctuated by Koteliansky's "murderous dislike" for Donald Carswell, who conversed with Lawrence in Spanish, a language that Koteliansky considered Lawrence's "special perquisite," and culminated in Koteliansky's speech "in praise and love of Lawrence," during which he smashed wine glasses and proclaimed that no woman, with the possible exception of Frieda, could understand Lawrence's greatness. In this emotionally loaded atmosphere, the entire group of "normally abstemious" people drank a great deal of Port wine. After dinner Lawrence asked each in turn to go with him back to New Mexico. As Catherine Carswell puts it:

> Implicit in this question was the other. Did the search, the adventure, the pilgrimage for which he stood, mean enough to us for us to give up our own way of life and our own separate struggle with the world?

Only Mary Cannan refused outright. Dorothy Brett made a simple and genuine commitment to go. The others, with unspoken reservations, promised to go. Next Murry went to Lawrence and kissed him, a demonstration that he said women could not understand. Mrs. Carswell recalls observing drily that "it wasn't a woman who betrayed Jesus with a kiss." At this, Murry embraced Lawrence again, saying, according to Mrs. Carswell, "In the past I _have_ betrayed you. But never again," or, according to Murry, "I love you, Lorenzo, but I won't promise not

to betray you." Whatever it was that Murry said, Lawrence responded by silently falling sick on the table. Brett and Mrs. Carswell "ministered to him," as Donald Carswell, the soberest man present, was given the money to pay the bill. After Mary Cannan and Gertler departed, the others left in two taxis for Hampstead, where the Lawrences were staying. Mrs. Carswell's brother, awakened by the noise of Koteliansky and Murry carrying the unconscious Lawrence upstairs, later said that "when he saw clearly before him St. John and St. Peter (or maybe St. Thomas) bearing between them the limp figure of their Master, he could hardly believe he was not dreaming."[27]

Lawrence's interest in Dr. Trigant Burrow's theories of group psychotherapy parallels his interest in gathering a group of old friends about him to create a "new life" in New Mexico. Perhaps in preparation he engaged in what may be called the occupational therapy of group arts and crafts whereby, with unwary accuracy, each participant revealed his own unconscious needs and wishes. Dorothy Brett describes a number of evenings when she, Lawrence, and Murry molded flowers in plasticine while Frieda sat nearby knitting or sewing. Once they decided to make a model Eden, with Lawrence making Adam and Eve, Brett the tree and apples, and Murry, predictably,

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[27]This account of the Cafe Royal dinner is taken from Carswell, pp. 216-23, and Murry, _Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence_, pp. 168-70.

the snake. When Brett and Murry became scandalized at Adam's "indecency," Lawrence obligingly snipped it off.[28]

Murry insists on what he calls "the successive perversions and distortions" of Mrs. Carswell's version of his relationship with Lawrence.[29] Lawrence's own perception of Murry during the period is revealed in the four anti-Murry stories of The Woman Who Rode Away.

In "Smile," a slight narrative which Anthony West dismisses as "A kick in the pants for one old friend at the bier of another,"[30] Matthew (Murry), husband of Ophelia (Katherine Mansfield), in answer to a telegram notifying him of Ophelia's critical condition, journeys to "the home of the blue sisters" where she is hospitalized, only to learn that she has died earlier that afternoon. Although he has carefully primed himself for the role of "super-martyrdom," Matthew, on seeing the body of his late wife, cannot suppress an involuntary smile. This expression of inappropriate affect proves infectious as the three nuns accompanying him to the bedside cannot help smiling, too. Matthew, who has a kind of sexual fear of the Mother Superior and an alarming attraction to one of the other nuns, the dark one, eventually, though with some difficulty, recovers his composure and, assuming an appropriately solemn

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[28]Brett, pp. 29-30.

[29]Murry, Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence, p. 121.

[30]Anthony West, D. H. Lawrence (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1950), p. 96.

demeanor, as the Mother Superior presses toward him, makes his smileless escape.

Although the narrative itself is as inconsequential as most critics have observed and although, as Graham Hough says, it is motivated chiefly by "ill-temperated _jeaux d'esprit_,"[31] "Smile" is hardly "the trivial and fuzzy anecdote" that Kingsley Widmer, voicing the critical consensus, calls it.[32] Rather, the story has, beneath the surface bludgeoning of Murry, a subtlety of satiric statement. Employing the mock-heroic device of ludicrously overstating a trivial subject by comparing it to a grand one, Lawrence compares the morally blind Matthew, in his melodramatic journey, directly to Christ on the Cross, "with the thick black eyebrows tilted in the dazed agony,"[33] and, by implication, to Orpheus, "walking in far-off Hades,"[34] and Hamlet, leaping in agony into the grave of his Ophelia. Lawrence cruelly exposes Matthew's lack of self-knowledge in the unconsciously determined smile, which undermines not merely Matthew's attempt to deceive the nuns with an expression of sorrow that he does not feel but more significantly, his wish to manipulate himself into the experience of what he perceives

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[31]Graham Hough, _The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence_ (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1957), p. 168.

[32]Widmer, p. 56.

[33]D. H. Lawrence, _The Complete Short Stories of D. H. Lawrence_ (3 Vols.; Melbourne, London, and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955), II, 582.

[34]_Ibid._, p. 583.

as the appropriate affect of suffering.

Matthew's reaction to the three nuns, an ambivalent mingling of fear and attraction, is a projection of his characteristic response to women in general and to his dead wife in particular. The symbolic value of the three nuns as the triadic image of woman in man's experience is made clear in Lawrence's subtle differentiation among the responses they make to Matthew's smile:

> In the three faces, the same smile growing so differently, like three subtle flowers opening. In the pale young nun, it was almost pain, with a touch of mischievous ecstasy. But the dark Ligurian face of the watching sister, a mature, level-browed woman, curled with a pagan smile, slow, infinitely subtle in its archaic humour. . . .
>
> The Mother Superior, who had a large-featured face something like Matthew's own, tried hard not to smile. But he kept his humorous malevolent chin uplifted at her, and she lowered her face as the smile grew, grew and grew over her face.[35]

As Theodor Reik proposes in reference to the three women in Offenbach's Tales of Hoffman:

> Here are three women in one, or one woman in three shapes: the one who gives birth, the one who gives sexual gratification, the one who brings death. Here are the three aspects woman has in a man's life: the mother, the mistress, the annihilator.

Psychologically, Reik suggests, all such triadic constellations —Paris's three goddesses, Lear's three daughters, Hoffman's three loves—have their source in a single figure, the mother: "She is the femme fatale in its most literal sense, because she brought us into the world, she taught us to love, and it is

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[35]Ibid., p. 584.

she upon whom we call in our last hour."[36] Mythically, the figure is not merely the mother but the Great Mother. As Robert Graves, who writes of her as the White Goddess, explains: "the New Moon is the white goddess of birth and growth; the Full Moon, the red goddess of love and battle; the Old Moon, the black goddess of death and divination."[37] Since "Smile" is, it must be admitted, a rather tasteless psychological satire on Murry's personality, the psychological level of the story is uppermost. But the mythic level, though submerged, lends structural and thematic coherence to what would otherwise be the pointless narrative most critics take it to be. On both levels, the transposition of a symbolic value into its opposite, or the merger of two opposites in the formation of a third principle, makes possible the equations of life with death, death with life, and sex with both. Thus, the paleness of the young nun identifies her with both the purity of growth and the decay of death. The Mother Superior's office and her facial resemblance to Matthew mark her as exactly what she is called, the "Mother Superior," the life bringer; but in her function of informing Matthew of Ophelia's death, symbolically his own death, she is also the death bringer. The pagan maturity of the dark nun emphasizes her sexual potential as lover, but the

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[36]Theodor Reik, "The Three Women in a Man's Life," Art and Psychoanalysis, ed. William Phillips (New York: Criterion Books, 1957), p. 163.

[37]Robert Graves, The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth (rev. ed.; New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1958), p. 61.

holy book she carries suggests her funereal function. The metaphoric identification of the nuns' hands with birds throughout the story, a seeming irrelevance, suggests not only the traditional literary association of birds with the soul or spirit and thus with death but also the traditional folkloristic association of birds with sexual experience. The final merger of the three nuns into a single symbol of death comes as they move down the corridor "like dark swans down the river,"[38] the same death symbol, incidentally, that Gian-Carlo Menotti uses in the gypsy song that Monica sings at the end of Act I in _The Medium_.

The satire against Matthew turns only in part on his inability to maintain the level of bathos he wishes and on the involuntary smile which betrays his unconscious inappropriate affect. It turns in a deeper sense on Matthew's lack of self-awareness, a product of his unresolved ambivalence about all three aspects of woman.

"The Border Line," the first of Lawrence's sexual ghost stories, follows, as Widmer points out, the familiar "pattern of two antithetical men and a love that is at the border of death."[39] Philip Farquhar (Murry), who marries Katherine (Frieda) after her first husband and his best friend, Alan Anstruther (Lawrence), has been killed in World War I, is superseded by the ghost of Alan, who, even in spirit form,

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[38]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 586.

[39]Widmer, p. 53.

asserts the inevitable superiority of Laurentian dominance through blood consciousness to Murryan strength through fawning weakness by freeing Katherine from Philip's clutch of death and taking her to bed as Philip dies.

The title of the story refers to the multiple border line between dichotomies on various levels of abstraction—Alan and Philip, male and female, blood consciousness and sterility, life and death, reality and unreality—symbolized in the Rhine River, "that point of pure negation, where the two races neutralised one another, and no polarity was felt, no life—no principle dominated."[40] On the subject of Philip, Alan observes: "He's too much over the wrong side of the border for me."[41] Alan, needless to say, is on the right side of the border, and the plot of the story is concerned solely with Katherine's being made aware of that fact.

Katherine herself is described as a "queen-bee." She tips porters handsomely out of "a morbid fear of underpaying anyone, but particularly a man who was eager to serve her."[42] "Secretly somewhere inside herself she felt that with her queen-bee love, and queen-bee will, she could divert the whole flow of history—nay, even reverse it." And when Alan is missing in action, she evolves from drone-killing queen to man-devouring earth mother: "The queen-bee has recovered her sway, as

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[40]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 599.

[41]Ibid., p. 590. [42]Ibid., p. 587.

queen of the earth; the woman, the mother, the female with the ear of corn in her hand, as against the man with the sword."[43]

The two Englishmen Katherine marries are at opposite extremes of character. Alan Anstruther, her first husband, is "that red-haired fighting Celt, father of her two grown-up children." He is "Son of a Scottish baronet, and captain in a Highland regiment," "handsome in uniform, with his kilt swinging and his blue eye glaring." A typical Laurentian hero, "Even stark naked and without any trimmings, he had a bony, dauntless, overbearing manliness of his own." What Katherine cannot "quite appreciate" in him is his natural aristocratic superiority: "his silent, indomitable assumption that he was actually first-born, a born lord."[44] Philip Farquhar, Alan's hero-worshiping admirer, does appreciate Alan's nobility. For him, in fact, Alan is a touchstone of reality: "'When a thing really touches Alan, it is tested once and for all. You know if it's false or not. He's the only man I ever met who _can't help_ being real.'" Philip so strongly identifies himself with Alan that he becomes Katherine's second husband. He does not, however, emulate Alan in the arts of war: to him the war was "monstrous," "a colossal, disgraceful accident." He spends the war "as a journalist, always throwing his weight on the side of humanity, and human truth and peace." Instead of Alan's aristocratic dominance, Philip has a "subtle, fawning power": "'I'm different! My strength lies in giving in—and then

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[43] _Ibid._, p. 591.

[44] _Ibid._, p. 588.

recovering myself.'" Shortly after Katherine marries Philip in 1921, she is filled with "a curious sense of degradation": "Life became dull and unreal to her . . . ." She realizes, at last, "the difference between being married to a soldier, a ceaseless born fighter, a sword not to be sheathed, and this other man, this cunning civilian, this subtle equivocator, this adjuster of the scales of truth."

At this point, Katherine, a woman of German descent, makes her journey to the German Rhine. Here, as Kingsley Widmer has suggested, "the story turns from realism to allegory as the heroine undergoes an inverted religious experience"[46] as she stares at a Gothic church which she perceives as a "living and threatening 'Thing'":

> There it was, in the upper darkness of the ponderous winter night, like a menace. She remembered her spirit used in the past to soar aloft with it. But now, looming with a faint rust of blood out of the upper black heavens, the Thing stood suspended, looking down with vast, demonish menace, calm and implacable.
>
> Mystery and dim, ancient fear came over the woman's soul. The cathedral looked so strange and demonish-heathen. And an ancient, indomitable blood seemed to stir in it. It stood there like some vast silent beast with teeth of stone, waiting, and wondering when to stoop against this pallid humanity.
>
> And dimly she realised that behind all the ashy pallor and sulphur of our civilisation, lurks the great blood-creature waiting, implacable and eternal, ready at last to crush our white brittleness and let the shadowy blood move erect once more, in a new implacable pride and strength. Even out of the lower heavens looms the great blood-dusky Thing, blotting out the Cross it was supposed to exalt.[47]

For Widmer, who comments that "the Latinate rotundity stylizes

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[45] Ibid., pp. 590-92. [46] Widmer, pp. 53-54.

[47] Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 595-96.

the emotion of the apocalyptic vision," the passage recalls the "demonic attack on the sentimentalist and rationalist sensibility" by Melville, Yeats, and Faulkner: "The bloody and phallic beast of the second coming, the primordial urge in the blood, the demonic, heathenish black heaven, and the ancient fear of the implacable menace and mystery reveal essential aspects of the Christian tradition, only partly obscured by the Christian symbols of religious love."[48]

Immediately after Katherine's apocalyptic vision, both husbands are re-introduced in terms of the allegorical valuations established for them in the description of the cathedral. Philip metaphorically embodies the "white brittleness" of "pallid humanity" to be crushed by the blood beast, whereas Alan, in ghostly form, is the "shadowy blood" moving erect, the risen phallic principle of blood consciousness.

As Katherine turns from her vision, she sees a man, "dark and motionless," and knows instinctively that it is the spirit of Alan, her "demon lover."[49] The ghost, a kind of inverted Orpheus figure, conducts her to the bridge, symbolically to the border line of consciousness, and seemingly promises, with only the wave of his hand, never to leave her again.[50]

When Katherine, as planned, meets Philip in Oos, he is

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[48]Widmer, p. 54.

[49]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 596.

[50]Widmer, p. 55.

obviously ill. Philip, symbolically, is "frightfully cold" and "can't get warm" because "Germany freezes my inside, and does something to my chest."[51] Derisively Katherine and her sister Marianne belittle Philip as "the little one" and the "stand-up-mannikin," terms which express the same idea as the reference to Juliet's husband's "futile little penis" in the unexpurgated edition of "Sun."[52] Philip responds to his worsening condition with manipulative "clinging dependence." In terms of Lawrence's theory of personality, Philip has the same affliction as Sir Clifford Chatterley, a symbolic modern disease whose symptoms may be described as atrophy of the solar plexus, lumbar ganglion, and thoracic ganglion, in a cardiac plexus oriented personality whose hypocritical, self-effacing mode of relating to the world proves insufficient to cope with the demonic heritage of Celtic darkness. In a typically graphic illustration, Lawrence contrasts Philip's flaccidity and sterility with Alan's tumescence and fertility. Philip, "who never would walk firm on his legs," "just flopped," whereas Alan is identified with "a great round fir-trunk that stood so alive and potent, so physical, bristling all its vast drooping greenness above the snow."[53]

In the final scene of the story, the ghost of Alan

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[51]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 600.

[52]D. H. Lawrence, "Sun" (unexpurgated edition), as quoted in Harry T. Moore, The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1951), p. 257.

[53]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 603.

delivers Katherine from Philip's clinging manipulation by loosening the literal hold of his hands around her neck. As Philip dies, his lips "unfurled" to show "his big teeth in a ghastly grin of death," which Lawrence with a biographical double entendre calls the "sickly grin of a thief caught in the very act," Alan makes love to Katherine in the other bed "in the silent passion of a husband come back from a very long journey."[54]

Anthony West's view that in "The Border Line" the characters have been taken much further as symbols than is usual with Lawrence" is correct: "experience," as West says, "has been generalised nearly to the point of abstraction, and the characters are nearly as much ideas as flesh and blood people."[55] If one accepts West's opinion that this tendency toward abstraction is a flaw in the story, however, then one must dismiss as "unrealistic" and therefore "flawed" most of the world's literature. Lawrence achieved exactly what he set out to achieve: a minor perfection in the genre of topical and philosophical allegory.

In "Jimmy and the Desperate Woman," which Widmer calls a "generally well-done satiric comedy of courtship,"[56] the typical Laurentian situation of two antithetical men competing in love is presented as an ironic illustration of the title of an afternoon lecture by one of the men on Men in Books and Men

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[54] Ibid., p. 604.

[55] West, p. 99.

[56] Widmer, p. 140.

in Life. Lawrence cannot resist announcing his own partisanship in the heavy sarcasm of "Naturally, men in books came first."[57] Jimmy Frith (Murry), the effete litterateur, editor of the high brow periodical Commentator, is the figure for "men in books." Pinnegar (Lawrence), the sardonic miner, is the figure for "men in life." Emilia, Pinnegar's wife, though she is cast in Frieda's role as the object of competition, is not so much Frieda as, like many of Lawrence's female characters, modern woman in search of a soul.

In the now familiar pattern, Lawrence's figure for the modern, white consciousness wins the woman, only to wonder, when he has her, what to do with her. The woman, in turn discovers in herself a fidelity deeper than conscious thought to Lawrence's figure for the ancient, dark, blood consciousness. Frith, needing, as his divorced first wife Clarissa has observed, "some woman's bosom" to fall on, sets out to find a "womanly woman," the sort who might even fall on his bosom instead.[58] When Emilia Pinnegar, unhappily married, as she puts it, to "a man who lives in the same house with me, but goes to another woman," submits a poem, "The Coal-Miner" 'By His Wife,' "expressing herself," in lieu of a teaching position, in verse, Frith is attracted by "something desperate in the woman, something tragic."[59] Arranging a meeting, he invites her, in an afternoon of romantic role playing, to come live

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[57]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 609.

[58]Ibid., p. 605. [59]Ibid., p. 608.

with him, bringing her daughter Jane along, and even to marry him, should marriage prove to be what they want. When he hears the plan, Pinnegar observes drily, "You've caught a funny fish this time, with your poetry." As far as he is concerned, his wife "has a blank cheque . . . to do as she likes."[60] Emilia, who "can't come today," promises abruptly, before Frith can collect his second thoughts, "I can come on Monday."[61] In an ironic shift, Frith becomes the desperate one when, unable to take responsibility even for his own reservations, he projects them on Emilia: "Don't come, please," he writes her, "unless you are absolutely sure of yourself." When she comes anyway, Frith sets his teeth and greets her with the false heartiness of "I'm _awfully_ glad you came." For her part, Emilia is still, unconsciously and irrevocably, committed to Pinnegar, a fact which makes her all the more desirable to Frith.

The competition for the woman's soul as ultimate being centered in sexual commitment is worked out, here as in most of Lawrence's fiction, with the clarity and precision of a medieval morality play—though, of course, each of the various subspecies of his fiction, ranging from almost pure allegory to psychological realism, moves on its own appropriate level of abstraction and generates its own appropriate tone. The tone of "Jimmy and the Desperate Woman," as determined by the satiric purpose, is ironic. Frith and Pinnegar, whose names are puns on "froth" and "vinegar," illustrate in their characters

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[60] _Ibid_., p. 623. [61] _Ibid_., p. 626.

the values that Lawrence attaches to the properties of surface bubbling and acid in depth.

Frith, as Widmer points out, is satirized as an "urbane litterateur" who is unable "to see the world through other than literary-colored glasses" and as a sexual anomaly.[62] As a literary dillettante, Frith is introspective without insight because he is concerned more with style than with substance, more with the figure he cuts in assuming his various roles than with genuine experience, more with book-likeness than with life-likeness. Though he has a misleading resemblance to Pan, Frith thinks of himself as "a Martyred Saint Sebastian with the mind of a Plato," Lawrence's image of the mentalized "Idea" in a passive, arrow-riddled male body. Though Frith, concerned only academically with life, has "scarcely set foot north of Oxford,"[63] he now sets off, in a mock heroic parallel, "like some modern Ulysses wandering in the realms of Hecate."[64] He plays out his charade of courting Emilia in a parody of low-mimetic romance: "You ought to get away from here," he tells her. "Why don't you come and live with me?"[65] But Frith's "rather Oxfordy manner" goes "beyond" Emilia. This manner is characterized by Frith's self-dramatizations in convoluted interior dialogues with the appropriated images of others rather than by relating to others in actual experience. When Emilia

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[62]Widmer, pp. 140-41.

[63]Lawrence, <u>Complete Short Stories</u>, III, 606-607.

[64]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 610. [65]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 612.

responds to his proposal,

> He made odd, sharp gestures, like a drunken man, and he spoke like a drunken man, his eyes turned inward, talking to himself. The woman was no more than a ghost moving inside his own consciousness, and he was addressing her there.

Though Frith insists, "Now I do actually want you, now I actually see you," Lawrence contradicts him: "He never looked at her. His eyes were still turned in." A corollary of Frith's surface sophistication is his sexual ambiguity. As a result of his Oedipal fixation, his need to "fall on some woman's bosom," he is emotionally impotent: Clarissa observes that he cannot "stand alone for ten minutes,"[66] and he himself wonders in reference to Emilia, "My God, however am I going to sleep with that woman!" Lawrence answers the question sarcastically: "His will was ready, . . . and he would manage it somehow."[67] Frith both fears and desires Emilia primarily because she is already married to someone else: "the presence of that other man about her" goes "to his head like neat spirits": "Which of the two would fall before him with a greater fall—the woman or the man, her husband?"[68] As Widmer points out, when Frith takes Emilia, he really

> marries the consubstantial husband, the vicarious virility. By taking advantage of the desperate strife that lies between man and woman he has approached reality as close as he can—the erotic perversity of secondhand experience.[69]

The contrast between the two men is established as

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[66] Ibid., pp. 614-15.

[67] Ibid., pp. 624-25.

[68] Ibid., p. 629.

[69] Widmer, p. 144.

Pinnegar enters "rather like a blast of wind" and Frith gets up "with a bit of an Oxford wriggle."[70] Pinnegar smells appropriately "of the strange, stale underground," a conventional symbol, as Lawrence observes in the essay on Poe, for the unconscious. As most of Lawrence's heroes get around to doing eventually, Pinnegar strips to the waist in the Laurentian image of dominant male sexuality. Like many of these heroes—among them, Cyril in The White Peacock, Aaron in Aaron's Rod, and the risen Jesus in The Man Who Died—Pinnegar is ritualistically bathed or annointed by another:

> his wife brought a bowl, and with a soapy flannel silently washed his back, right down to the loins, where the trousers were rolled back. The man was entirely oblivious of the stranger—this washing was part of the collier's ritual and nobody existed for the moment.

As usual, this ritual is a sacrament of renewal into the vital life of the blood. To emphasize this point, Pinnegar performs a second ritual of "gazing abstractedly, blankly into the fire" until the "colour flushed in his cheeks." Like most Laurentian heroes, from Cyril to Mellors, Pinnegar is an idealized self-portrait: "a man of about thirty-five, in his prime, with a pure smooth skin and no fat on his body. His muscles were not large, but quick, alive with energy." Pinnegar's qualities of moral perception, moreover, like Mellors', parallel his physical qualities. Of the Commentator, he says, "Seems to me to go a long way round to get nowhere."[71] Proclaiming that he "won't

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[70] Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, III, 616.

[71] Ibid., pp. 617-19.

be made use of," Pinnegar wants "a wife who'll please me, who'll want to please me."[72] As Widmer points out:

> The quality of manhood remains a final purpose and justification and its negation comes from accepting the status of an object, a thing "to be made use of," which limits the fullness of being that gives the only meaning to existence.
>
> The embittered miner hates being made into an industrial object, a thing to be used, in the pit. This simple but pervasive point centers Lawrence's fundamental critique of industrial society.[73]

In "The Last Laugh," which West dismisses as "an elaborate Hampstead-bohemian practical joke,"[74] the two antithetical forces clash again, with the resulting execution of the figure of modern white consciousness by the figure of ancient, dark, blood consciousness. In the slight plot, Miss James (Dorothy Brett), whose deafness necessitates her carrying "a Marconi listening machine," and Marchbanks (Murry), who is a "sort of faun on the Cross, with all the malice of the complication," bid goodnight to Lorenzo (Lawrence), the conventional Laurentian hero, "a thin man with a red beard,"[75] and proceed toward home through a veritable barrage of occult phenomena caused by a mysterious supernatural being—clearly the returned god Pan, though he is identified with Lorenzo, who drops from the story after the opening scene. First, Marchbanks hears the laughter of the elemental being and responds with "wild, neighing, animal laughter" himself. A young

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[72]_Ibid._, pp. 620-21. [73]Widmer, p. 143.

[74]West, p. 96.

[75]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, III, 630-31.

policeman approaches, asks about the laughter, and appears doubtful when Marchbanks describes the laughter that only he hears as "the most marvelous sound in the world."[76] Second, to Marchbanks' seemingly extrasensory hearing is added Miss James's extrasensory vision. Looking "with brilliant eyes, into the dark holly bushes," she exults, "I always knew I should see him." Third, a Jewish lady in a nearby house, having heard a knock and a call, opens her door, hoping "that something wonderful is going to happen," and asks Marchbanks if he has knocked. They decide that Marchbanks must have knocked "without knowing," and he disappears into the house with her.[77] Fourth, as Miss James walk on with the policeman, she has the surrealistic sense that occult phenomena are occurring just out of range of sensory perception:

> And the whirling snowy air seemed full of presences, full of strange unheard voices. She was used to the sensation of noises taking place where she could not hear. This sensation became very strong. She felt something was happening in the wild air.

Fifth, Miss James sees "the dark, laughing face" again in a flash of lightning. In contrast, the "tame-animal look" in the policeman's frightened eyes amuses her. Sixth, Miss James hears in the whistling of the storm "with a strange noise like castanets," voices crying, "He is here! He's come back!" Seventh, a church window is broken and the church desecrated by elemental forces of nature: "Then a white thing, soaring like a crazy bird, rose up on the wind as if it had wings, and

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[76] _Ibid._, p. 633.

[77] _Ibid._, pp. 634-36.

lodged on a black tree outside, struggling." They recognize it as the altar cloth. The wind runs over the organ-pipes "like pan-pipes, quickly up and down."[78] When the two arrive at Miss James's house, the policeman comes in, cold with fear, to warm himself. The next morning Miss James's total perspective is changed. She muses on the absurdity of her own paintings, "Especially her self-portrait, with its nice brown hair and its slightly opened rabbit-mouth and its baffled, uncertain rabbit-eyes." The housekeeper makes the startling announcement that the policeman, still downstairs, is lame. Looking out of her window, Miss James notes that "Suddenly the world had become quite different: as if some skin or integument had broken, as if the old, mouldering London sky had crackled and rolled back, like an old skin, shrivelled, leaving an absolutely new blue heaven." With her new Pan-perspective, she also sees the absurdity of her friendship with Marchbanks, of Marchbanks' chasing the Jewish woman, of the policeman's "messy," "doggy" devotion, and of the state, in general, of "this being-in-love business." She attributes these changes in view to the "extraordinary" being of the night before, the "wonderful face" who "certainly will have the last laugh."[79] When Marchbanks arrives, she discovers her deafness cured: "Don't shout," she tells him. "I can hear you quite well." She also discovers that she has lost what has passed for her "soul":

". . . . I never had one really. It was always fobbed

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[78] Ibid., pp. 638-40. [79] Ibid., pp. 641-43.

> off on me. Soul was the only thing there was between you and me. Thank goodness it's gone. Haven't you lost yours? The one that seemed to worry you, like a decayed tooth?"

Downstairs, the young policeman confirms in tears the fact that he is lame: "He slowly pulled off his stocking, and showed his white left foot curiously clubbed, like the weird paw of some animal." As they marvel at the metamorphosis, Marchbanks suddenly gives "a strange, yelping cry, like a shot animal. . . . . And in the rolling agony of his eyes was the horrible grin of a man who realises he has made a final, and this time fatal, fool of himself." With the smell of almond blossom in the air, Marchbanks dies "in a weird, distorted position, like a man struck by lightning."[80]

Most critics, mystified by "The Last Laugh," have found the story, with Widmer, insufficient,[81] or, with Leavis, not representative.[82] Hough says "it illustrates emphatically the way not to evoke the chthonic powers."[83] Even Moore finds the story "not easy to explicate," but suggests that Lorenzo "might almost be the sorcerer who magically causes the strange subsequent events. . . ." Moore thinks it "quite possible that Lawrence playfully wrote this story as a fable symbolizing his relationship to the people involved, and to the Church, whose effects he fluttered . . . ." But he finds another clue to

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[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 644-46.

[81] Widmer, p. 56.

[82] F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 371.

[83] Hough, p. 188.

Lawrence's meaning in the phallic significance of the smell of almond blossom after Marchbanks' death.[84] Widmer, on the other hand, thinks the miracles "during a London night of apocalyptic snowstorm are only indirectly sexual . . . ." Though "Pan-devil, recognizable in his bacchic laughter and the lascivious pagan smell of almond blossoms," returns to change the world, "Lawrence hasn't bothered to provide much world, or character, to be altered . . . ." Widmer regards "shattering churches, policemen and intellectuals" as "supernatural trickery":

> By carrying disenchantment to its perverse extreme—the godless universe becoming totally bedevilled—the ironist gets back to a sacred sense of wonder. But demonic sorcery creates only a pyrrhic last laugh when it fails to relate to a living world.[85]

"The Last Laugh," it seems to me, fails only in not being what it does not pretend to be, a realistic short story. The whole conception, on the contrary, is anti-realistic. The story succeeds in the only thing it attempts: an ironic revival of the Pan myth as a proposal for the regeneration of the modern world. As the Great God Pan died at the birth of Christ, so now he returns to shatter the Christian church, transform the policeman, exalt the spinster, and execute the hopeless intellectual—Lawrence's representatives of the sterility of modern life. The "living world," it is true, is not presented at all; but what Lawrence regards as the dead world is given shape through his surrealistic manipulation of stock symbols and characters drawn from the modern white consciousness. The

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[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 248-50.   [85] Widmer, p. 56.

spinsterish painter with her symbolic deafness, her prudishness, her fear of life; the pseudo-intellectual with his irreverent insistence that the snow, the elemental force of nature which becomes Pan's instrument of necessary destruction, is only whitewash;[86] and the young policeman with his baffled devotion —all function, as befitting their status as "things," as little more than counters of the spiritual deadness which Pan returns to destroy or revive.

Besides their traditional literary elements, all four stories contain personal elements which are too much in evidence to be ignored. Lawrence is, indeed, in most of his work, scarcely less autobiographical than Thomas Wolfe, who, in "The Story of a Novel," comments on the term "autobiographical novel" as applied to _Look Homeward, Angel_:

> I protested against this term in a preface to the book upon the grounds that any serious work of creation is of necessity autobiographical and that few more autobiographical works than _Gulliver's Travels_ have ever been written. I added that Dr. Johnson had remarked that a man might turn over half the volumes in his library to make a single book, and that in a similar way, a novelist might turn over half the characters in his native town to make a single figure for his novel.[87]

This is a reasonable statement. The difficulty, it may be charged with justification, is that Lawrence, like Wolfe, rather than turning over half the people he knows to make a single character, often turns over only one person. Thus,

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[86]Moore, _Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence_, p. 250.

[87]Thomas Wolfe, "The Story of a Novel," _Only the Dead Know Brooklyn_ (New York: The New American Library, A Signet Book, 1952), p. 117.

Lawrence leaves himself open to negative criticism on other than strictly artistic grounds.

Wolfe admits that "a young writer is likely . . . to confuse the limits between actuality and reality."[88] An inexperienced critic, it seems to me, is apt to do likewise. Thus, Cecil Gray, who comments several times on the subject, says:

> Lawrence was incapable, in his full-length novels at least, of creating living characters—only heroes, all of them ludicrously Narcissist self-portraits several times life-size, surrounded by miserable, abject little caricatures of his friends, many times less than life-size, in order to provide foils and contrasts to the dazzling nobility and transcendent greatness of the central figure, himself.[89]

Gray allows that the artist cannot work "*in vacuo*" and that his characters, if they are to have the "semblance of reality," will possess traits inevitably similar to those of persons the artist has known. Lawrence, Gray complains, offends against propriety, not to mention the laws of libel, not merely by the portrayal of his acquaintances in fictional guise but by the ugliness and injustice of the portrait: "what one objects to chiefly . . . is the spiteful way in which he combines truth and fiction, not merely exaggerating slight defects out of all proportion but also grafting others of his own invention on to the original." Some of these unflattering qualities, Gray observes, are projections of Lawrence's own personal traits.

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[88] *Ibid*., p. 118.

[89] Cecil Gray, *Musical Chairs*, pp. 131-40, as reprinted in Nehls, I, 431-38.

In *Women in Love*, for instance, Lawrence gives Halliday "a high-pitched, hysterical squeal or squeak," whereas Philip Heseltine, whom Lawrence is caricaturing, "had rather a deep and sonorous voice" and "it was Lawrence himself who . . . perpetually squeaked and squealed in a ridiculous manner, like a eunuch."[90] Gray's judgment, though not without foundation, is distorted by his inexperience as a critic and his bias in favor of Heseltine. No such reasons can be given, however, for Richard Aldington's questionable practice, in *D. H. Lawrence: Portrait of a Genius But . . .*, of quoting passages from Lawrence's fiction as if they were literal transcriptions of situations, conversations, and attitudes in Lawrence's actual experience. As Wolfe asserts,

> it is impossible for a man who has the stuff of creation in him to make a literal transcription of his own experience. Everything in a work of art is changed and transfigured by the personality of the artist.[91]

To complain about the relative indebtedness of the work of any literary artist to the artist's personal experience seems to me fruitless. What matters is the use he makes of his experience. Though biographers rightly point out the personal element in Lawrence's work and though the victims of his satire understandably resent Lawrence's use of them, Heseltine

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[90]Cecil Gray, *Peter Warlock*, pp. 220-31, as reprinted in Nehls, II, 92-102.

[91]Wolfe, p. 118.

to the point of threatening suit for libel,[92] the critic's concern, as distinguished from the biographer's, the victim's, or the law court's, must remain primarily the artistic effectiveness of the whole work of art rather than whatever autobiographical elements may serve as what Henry James would call the "germ" of creation.[93] Even the injustice of the satirical portrait does not, of itself, invalidate its artistic merit. Only the artist's failure to translate the fragmented facts of personal experience into the wholeness, truth, and universality of art can do that.

Lawrence's heroes, despite their origin in the author's narcissism, usually emerge, Gray to the contrary, as credible characters. The figures of Lawrence's friends, furthermore, are seldom merely miniature foils for Lawrence's ego-figure. But the ego-figure does usually establish the moral norm against which the friend-figures, if they are satirized, are measured. Often the ego-figure punishes, alters, or in some way corrects the friend-figures for their own and the reader's instruction. It must be conceded that Lawrence's fictional versions of his friends, if taken as biographical portraits, are often unfair. Even with Murry's inevitable tendency to present himself in a favorable light, however, the version of his character in

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[92] Cecil Gray, Peter Warlock, pp. 220-31, as reprinted in Nehls, II, 92-102.

[93] Henry James, The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces, with "Introduction" by Richard P. Blackmur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 119.

1923-1924 that emerges in his own subsequent correspondence with Frieda and the one that emerges in Lawrence's four anti-Murry stories do not differ in essentials. In both versions, Murry is presented, though perhaps unconsciously in Murry's version, as a frightened, dependent person, who is concerned more with self-dramatization than with introspection, more with self-justification than with self-consciousness. It is Lawrence's ego-figures that are embellished. Though Lawrence, for example, was certainly a fighter of moral battles, he was never a soldier, as in "The Border Line," but despised everything related to warfare. Neither was he, as in the same story, the son of a baron, a distinction which he borrows from Frieda for the portrait of Alan, leaving Katherine an untitled commoner. Nor was Lawrence, by the same token, the common laborer he represents himself as being in the figure of Pinnegar in "Jimmy and the Desperate Woman." His only unadorned self-portrait, as Lorenzo in "The Last Laugh," is the least successful of the ego-figures in these stories. Perhaps that is why Lawrence drops the character after the first scene and introduces the larger than life ego-figure of Pan in his place. Such borrowings exist neither as decorative embellishments nor as personal disguises but as symbolic constructs in the metaphorical world of any story in which they appear. In these four stories the figure of Murry is presented, whether as Matthew, Philip Farquhar, Jimmy Frith, or Marchbanks, as the major exhibit proving the spiritual deformity of the modern waste land of sterile, white

consciousness. In three of them the figure of Lawrence himself is presented, whether as Alan Anstruther, Pinnegar, Lorenzo, or even Pan, as the moral norm by which the Murry-figure is measured and as the major exhibit proving the possible regeneration of the modern waste land through a return to the ancient, dark, blood consciousness.

CHAPTER IV

THE QUEST FOR SYMBOL AND MYTH

Lawrence's task in the American-Mexican period was to find adequate symbols to express the waste land of contemporary life and a myth potent enough to transform it. The four anti-Murry stories, though they are more serious attempts at symbolic and mythic statement than most critics have noticed, are quite minor works. Furthermore, though Lawrence successfully embodies in Murry his own vision of the emotional sterility and spiritual deformity of the white consciousness, his choice of Murry as an allegorical figure was dictated, it would seem, more by personal than by universal considerations. Thus, whatever the quality of the stories, Lawrence leaves himself open to the charge of forsaking artistic distance for personal invective, of emotion not remembered in tranquility but wielded in battle. In three short works of the period, the tales "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away" and the short novel _St. Mawr_, though he follows his usual practice of turning his friends into story material, Lawrence attempts a more universal statement.

In "The Princess," as John B. Vickery has suggested, myth

> operates as a kind of second story, almost a double plot which illuminates the basic story by suggesting a link with man's earliest forms of belief and behavior. . . . Consequently, we find here instances of Lawrence's using ritual as a mythic reenactment, as a method of telling a past story through what is now being done.[1]

First, as in _Lady Chatterley's Lover_ and elsewhere,[2] Lawrence employs the Sleeping Beauty myth as a structural and thematic principle; but in "The Princess," the tale of an aging twentieth century Beauty who remains adamantly unawakened, he ironically inverts the fairy tale ending. Second, as in _The Plumed Serpent_ and elsewhere,[3] Lawrence employes the "separation—initiation—return" pattern of romance which Joseph Campbell, following James Joyce, has called the monomyth;[4] but in "The Princess," in which, as Mark Schorer summarizes it, "a frozen New England virgin makes a ritual journey, half-fearful, half-wishful, over New Mexican mountains, the symbolic barriers, to her destruction,"[5] he ironically inverts the mythic return.

Mary Henrietta Urquhart, whose mother calls her "_My Dollie_," a name suggesting, as in Henrik Ibsen's _A Doll's_

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[1] John B. Vickery, "Myth and Ritual in the Shorter Fiction of D. H. Lawrence," _Modern Fiction Studies_, V (No. 1, "D. H. Lawrence Special Number"; Spring, 1959), 70.

[2] Harry T. Moore, "_Lady Chatterley's Lover_ as Romance," _A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany_, p. 263.

[3] Jascha Kessler, "Descent in Darkness: The Myth of _The Plumed Serpent_," _A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany_, p. 243.

[4] Campbell, _Hero with a Thousand Faces_, p. 30. See also James Joyce, _Finnegans Wake_ (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1958), p. 581.

[5] Mark Schorer, "Introduction," _Poste Restante_, pp. 12-13.

House, possession of the plaything as object rather than love for the person as subject, and whose father calls her "My Princess,"[6] a title with multiple allusions to the extremes of aristocracy of birth, social snobbishness, and the unreality of romance, strikingly resembles her sleeping prototypes. The Germanic Briar Rose falls into her hundred years sleep as the result of a curse laid upon her by the fairy who was not invited to the King's feast honoring her birth.[7] The Norse Brynhild, a Valkyrie, as punishment for disobeying Odin, is put to sleep until a man shall awaken her.[8] In both the charm is inculcated by a pricked finger and a magic circle. Briar Rose falls under the spell after pricking her finger with a spindle, and afterwards the whole castle is surrounded by a hedge of briar roses.[9] Odin pricks Brynhild's finger with a magic thorn and encircles her couch with fire.[10] As Campbell explains, "This is an image of the magic circle drawn about the personality by the dragon power of the fixating parent" and resulting in

> an impotence to put off the infantile ego, with its sphere of emotional relationships and ideals. One is bound in by the walls of childhood; the father and mother stand as threshold guardians, and the timorous soul, fearful of some punishment, fails to make the passage through the door

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[6]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 474.

[7]The Brothers Grimm, Grimms' Fairy Tales, trans. Mrs. E. V. Lucas, Lucy Crane, and Marian Edwards (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1945), pp. 101-102.

[8]E. Tonnelot, "Teutonic Mythology," Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, with "Introduction" by Robert Graves (New York: Prometheus Press, 1959), p. 289.

[9]Grimm, p. 103.

[10]Tonnelot, p. 289.

and come to birth in the world without.[11]

Recognizing the evil-mother figure of the unconscious in the jealous fairy who puts Briar Rose to sleep or the evil-father figure of the unconscious in the all-powerful Odin, who, as Campbell puts it, arrests Brynhild in her "daughter state" of virginity for years,[12] requires precisely the kind of psychological sophistication which Lawrence possessed. But resetting the fairy tale, with an ironically inverted ending, in the Jamesian world of New Englanders in the international set requires the special kind of satiric sophistication for which Lawrence is seldom given credit.

Lawrence subtly mythicizes Dollie's father, Colin Urquhart, the mad descendent of Scottish kings, in progressively more suggestive terms:

> He was a handsome man, with a wide-open blue eye that seemed sometimes to be looking at nothing, soft black hair brushed rather low on his low, broad brow, and a very attractive body. Add to this a most beautiful speaking voice, usually rather hushed and diffident, but sometimes resonant and powerful like bronze, and you have the sum of his charms. He looked like some old Celtic hero. He looked as if he should have worn a greyish kilt and a sporran, and shown his knees. His voice came direct out of the hushed Ossianic past.[13]

Mrs. Urquhart, Lawrence disposes of quickly with the omission of particulars that is characteristic of fairy tales. Having "lived three years in the mist and glamour of her husband's

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[11]Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 62.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 473.

presence," "She had no great desire to live. So when the baby was two years old she suddenly died."[14]

Lawrence's descriptions of Dollie are characterized by what S. Ronald Weiner calls the "poise . . . of fantasy and vulnerability."[15] Lawrence introduces her, in fact, with the statement: "To her father, she was The Princess. To her Boston aunts and uncles she was just Dollie Urquhart, poor little thing." Hostesses comment, "'She is so quaint and old-fashioned; such a lady, poor little mite!'" And as Lawrence juxtaposes the contradictions in her character, "She was always grown up; she never really grew up. Always strangely wise, and always childish."[16]

As Dollie develops, or rather fails to develop, under Colin's tutelage, she becomes fixated, as in the extended sleep of her prototypes, at an Oedipal level, suspended in a Barrie-an Never-Never Land where children pretend to be adults, adults behave like children, and maturation is effectually stymied for all. Colin had early put Dollie in the ambivalent position of masking fearful distrust with polite condescension and a sense of inferior differentness with aristocratic superiority. Lawrence's description of Colin's method of doing so is significant enough to require quoting at length. Colin

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[14] Ibid., pp. 473-74.

[15] S. Ronald Weiner, "Irony and Symbolism in The Princess," A. D. H. Lawrence Miscellany, p. 223.

[16] Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 473-76.

tells her:

> "Inside everybody there is another creature, a demon which doesn't care at all. You peel away all the things they say and do and feel, as cook peels away the outside of the onions. And in the middle of everybody there is a green demon which you can't peel away. And this green demon never changes, and it doesn't care at all about the things that happen to the outside leaves of the person, and the chatter-chatter, and all the husbands and wives and children, and troubles and fusses. You peel everything away from people, and there is a green, upright demon in every man and woman; and this demon is a man's real self, and a woman's real self. It doesn't really care about anybody, it belongs to the demons and the primitive fairies, who never care. But, even so, there are big demons and mean demons, and splendid demonish fairies, and vulgar ones. But there are no royal fairy women left. Only you, my little Princess. There are no others. You and I are the last. When I am dead there will be only you. And that is why, darling, you will never care for any of the people in the world very much. Because their demons are all dwindled and vulgar. They are not royal. Only you are royal, after me. . . . And always remember, it is a _great secret_. If you tell people, they will try to kill you, because they will envy you for being a Princess. . . . And so, darling, you must treat all people very politely, because _noblesse oblige_. . . . But you are the Princess, and they are commoners. Never try to think of them as if they were like you. They are not."[17]

In his notion of the green demon as the essential self at the core of every person, Colin seems, at first, to be stating a version of the "pristine unconscious," which Lawrence defines in _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_ as "that essential unique nature of every individual creature, which is, by its very nature, unanalysable, undefinable, inconceivable."[18] But when Colin uses the green demon only to impose on Dollie his fantasy of aristocracy of brith in the privileged class, a far cry from

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[17] _Ibid_., pp. 475-76.

[18] Lawrence, _Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious_, p. 15.

the Laurentian aristocracy of blood consciousness, his perversion of the concept becomes clear. T. Lidz and his associates, on the basis of their study of the families of schizophrenic patients, conclude that the family is a destructive agent, both in the formative years and later, and that the parents often transmit their irrational conceptions of a delusional or quasi-delusional nature directly to their children without elaboration. Lidz, in fact, enlarges the concept of _folie à deux_, "the occurrence in two close associates of the same mental disorder at the same time,"[19] to _folie à famille_.[20] The effect of the Urquharts' _folie à famille_ is Dollie's education in basic distrust: "The Princess learned her lesson early—the first lesson, of absolute reticence, the impossibility of intimacy with any other than her father; the second lesson, of naive, slightly benevolent politeness." Illustrations of these generalizations are profuse. In refusing an invitation to live with her grandfather, for example, Dollie says: "'You are so very kind. But Papa and I are such an old couple, you see, such a crochety old couple, living in a world of our own.'" In this world, Dollie's potential womanhood sleeps: "She was so exquisite and such a little virgin." Mediterranean cabmen and porters, standing in for Lawrence, sense in her a "sterile

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[19]English and English, p. 212.

[20]Silvano Arieti, "Schizophrenia: The Manifest Symptomatology, the Psychodynamic and Formal Mechanisms," _American Handbook of Psychiatry_, ed. Silvano Arieti (2 vols.; New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), I, 469-70.

impertinence towards the things _they_ felt most," "_beautè male_" and "the phallic mystery," and long to crush the "scentless," "barren flower" of her maidenhood. Dollie senses their hatred, but, as Lawrence puns, "she did not lose her head. She quietly paid out money and turned away."[21] As Sigmund Freud writes, such girls

> to the delight of their parents, retain their full infantile love far beyond puberty, and it is instructive to find that in their married life these girls are incapable of fulfilling their duties to their husbands. They make cold wives and remain sexually anesthetic. This shows that the apparently nonsexual love for parents and sexual love are nourished from the same source, i.e., that the first merely corresponds to an infantile fixation of the libido.[22]

In the sleep-like fixity of her personality, Dollie "had that quality of the sexless fairies, she did not change. At thirty-three she looked twenty-three." In contrast to Lawrence's sexual sleepers who are awakened by the phallic sun god—sometimes, as in "Sun," by the phallic mystery embodied in the literal sun itself—Dollie is laconic, "like a flower that has blossomed in a shadowy place." When she is thirty-eight, her father dies: "She was the Princess, and sardonically she looked out on a princeless world."[23]

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[21]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 476-77.

[22]Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," _A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality, and Other Works_, Vol. VII of _The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud_, trans. and ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud (24 vols.; London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953), p. 227.

[23]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 479.

What Lawrence calls Dollie's "passion for her mad father" is now transferred to her father's nurse-companion, Miss Charlotte Cummins, though Dollie still entertains "the idea of marriage." She and Miss Cummins move westward to a New Mexican dude ranch, the Rancho del Cerro Gordo, near the Indian pueblo of San Christobal.[24] There the Sleeping Princess meets her dispossessed and fragmented Prince, Domingo Romero, the son of an old San Christobal family of Spanish landowners who, as the result of their own "fatal inertia" and the invasion of the white man, became mere Mexican peasants. The heir apparent to this ruin works as a guide on the ranch, where the emotionally lifeless tourists "rarely _see_ anything, inwardly," of "the spark at the middle of Romero's eye." Amid the appropriately phallic imagery of trout fishing, however, Dollie sees Romero's spark and concludes promptly that he is a "gentleman" with a "fine demon." Like most Laurentian heroines, Dollie senses in her dark aristocrat of the working class "a subtle, insidious male _kindliness_," which no white man has ever shown her.[25] She entertains, however, no thought of marrying Romero: their two demons seem already married, though their external selves seem incompatible. Not surprisingly, Dollie conceives a desire for Romero to fulfill, in relation to her,

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[24]_Ibid._, p. 280. Lawrence describes these pueblos in the essay "Dance of the Sprouting Corn," in _Mornings in Mexico_, (Melbourne, London, Toronto: William Henemann Ltd., 1956), pp. 54-61.

[25]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 482-85.

both his literal and symbolic functions as guide:

> She wanted to look over the mountains into their secret heart. She wanted to descend to the cabin below the spruce trees, near the tarn of bright green water. She wanted to see the wild animals move about in their wild unconsciousness.[26]

Shortly, Dollie, Miss Cummins, and Romero set out on a three days' journey to the top of the mountain ridge. This section of the story is a fictional rendering of a biographical experience. Lawrence, the Honorable Dorothy Brett, and Mrs. Rachel Hawk took a day's ride to the top of the ridge above San Christobal canyon.[27] Dollie Urquhart, in several ways, resembles Brett, and Romero, even if fragmentarily, embodies some of Lawrence's ideas. Yet in "The Princess" Lawrence maintains the psychological distance necessary to unity of plot, character, and setting in universal rather than local significance.

As the structural and thematic motif, Lawrence employs, from this point in the story to the end, an ironically inverted rendering of the traditional pattern of romance which Campbell calls the monomyth. Romero, dressed in Laurentian black and riding a black horse, is, as Widmer suggests, one of Lawrence's demon lovers.[28] Here he is also the mythic guide, whose function, like that of the masculine supernatural helper of folklore and literature, whether represented as the Virgil of Dante's _Inferno_ or the Mephistopheles of Goethe's _Faust_, is to lure "the

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[26] _Ibid_., pp. 487-88. [27] Brett, pp. 149-52.

[28] Widmer, p. 84.

innocent soul into realms of trial": "Protective and dangerous, motherly and fatherly at the same time, this supernatural principle of guardianship and direction unites in itself all the ambiguities of the unconscious—thus signifying the support of our conscious personality by that other, larger system, but also the inscrutability of the guide that we are following, to the peril of all our rational ends."[29] Romero is, in other words, a version of the figure that C. G. Jung identifies as the spirit archetype, the principle, often represented as an old man, standing in opposition to matter and pointing the way to the hero. According to Jung, "An anamnesis of this kind is a purposeful process whose aim is to gather the assets of the whole personality together at the critical moment, when all one's spiritual and physical forces are challenged, and with this united strength to fling open the door of the future."[30]

Romero as guide has chthonic qualities, which are the function partly of his own fragmentation but primarily of the response elicited in him by Dollie. The journey into the heart of the mountains is itself the process of what Widmer calls the "metaphysical simile" of peeling the onion,[31] with Romero, as chief peeler, performing the negative task of stripping away

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[29]Campbell, _Hero with a Thousand Faces_, pp. 72-73.

[30]C. G. Jung, "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," _Psyche and Symbol: A Selection from the Writings of C. G. Jung_, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. 74.

[31]Widmer, p. 82.

the outer layers of Dollie's social self as he guides her out of the ranch, above the timberline, to the ridge beyond. When Miss Cummins turns back after her horse is lamed, the last support for Dollie's daughter state of dependency vanishes.[32] Reaching the summit with Romero, Dollie gazes down into the primordial core of the Rocky Mountains:

> It frightened the Princess, it was so inhuman. She had not thought it could be so inhuman, so, as it were, anti-life. And yet now one of her desires was fulfilled. She had seen it, the massive, gruesome, repellent core of the Rockies. . . .
>
> . . . . She had looked down into the intestinal knot of these mountains. She was frightened. She wanted to go back.[33]

What frightens Dollie is the vision of independent, amoral, even impersonal, self-hood, the cosmic identification of "the first and supreme knowledge that I am I."[34] For the intestinal knot" of the mountains into which she stares is the ultimate green demon of the earth, the solar plexus of the cosmos, the navel of the world. As Campbell explains, since the World Navel "is the source of all existence, it yields the world's plenitude of both good and evil. Ugliness and beauty, sin and virtue, pleasure and pain are equally its production." The quest of the hero of the monomyth is "the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world."[35]

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[32] Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 492-93.

[33] Ibid., pp. 496-97.

[34] Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 75.

[35] Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, pp. 40-44.

> The torrent pours from an invisible source, the point of entry being the center of the symbolic circle of the universe . . . . Beneath this spot is the earth-supporting head of the cosmic serpent, the dragon, symbolical of the waters of the abyss, which are the divine life-creative energy and substance of the demiurge, the world-generative aspect of immortal being.[36]

As Dollie and Romero descend, they move, as if in answer to the mythic summons to adventure, out of society and across the threshold into the center of experience. According to Campbell,

> the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration—a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.[37]

Not surprisingly, Dollie's brain becomes "numb" and Romero's mind goes "blank" as "Blood-consciousness overwhelms, obliterates, and annuls mind-consciousness."[38] When they reach the cabin, they find this artifact of civilization all but taken over by nature: "The roof had gone—but Romero had laid on thick spruce boughs."[39] That night, instead of feeling transfigured, Dollie feels cornered:

> She dreamed it was snowing, and the snow was falling on her through the roof, softly, softly, helplessly, and she was going to be buried alive. She was growing colder and colder, the snow was weighing down on her. The snow was going to absorb her.[40]

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[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. [37] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[38] Lawrence, *Classic American Literature*, p. 95.

[39] Lawrence, *Complete Short Stories*, II, 500.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 503.

The dream parodies Poe, of whose premature burial stories Lawrence wrote, "All this underground vault business in Poe symbolizes that which takes place beneath the consciousness."[41] When Dollie awakens suddenly, the conservative side of her ambivalent feelings reveals the symbolic value of the dream:

> What did she want? . . . . She wanted warmth, protection, she wanted to be taken away from herself. And at the same time, perhaps more deeply than anything, she wanted to keep herself intact, intact, untouched, that no one should have any power over her, or rights to her.[42]

When she calls to Romero that she is cold and he offers to make her warm, both are speaking in baroque metaphor. Contrasting in themselves the extremes of heat and cold, Romero and Dollie also represent the opposite values of the lower and upper dynamic centers of Lawrence's theory of personality. When Romero comes into her bed "with a terrible animal warmth that seemed to annihilate her," he pants "like an animal." For Dollie, however, the sexual act is purely mental: "She had never, never wanted to be given over to this. But she had willed that it should happen to her."[43] In Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, Lawrence describes "the mystic contemplation of the navel" as "the upper mind losing itself in the lower first-mind, that which is last in consciousness reverting to that which is first."[44] The opposite of this mystical

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[41]Lawrence, Classic American Literature, pp. 89-90.

[42]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 503.

[43]Ibid., p. 504.

[44]Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 20.

experience is Idealism, which Lawrence defines as "the motivizing of the great affective sources by means of ideas mentally derived."[45] The effect of the former is psychic health and of the latter neurosis. In Lawrence's theory, "Development takes place only from the polarized circuits of the dynamic unconscious, and these circuits must be both individual and extra-individual."[46] Imbalance, especially in the direction of the willed idealism of the upper centers, causes neurosis:

> I may have ideals if I like . . . . But I have no right to ask another to have these ideals. And to impose _any_ ideals upon a child as it grows is almost criminal. . . . It results in neurasthenia.[47]

Dollie's father imposed his delusional "ideals" of royalty upon her. The imbalance thus set up among the dynamic centers of her personality makes impossible any but a willed, mental relationship with Romero, and so leads to his psychic ruin, too.

Despite Dollie's disclosure that she had not "really" liked "last night," Romero continues desperately peeling the onion of civilization. Taking her clothes and boots, he tosses them into the pool. But in the face of her obstinate coldness, he alternates ambivalently between wheedling: "'You sure won't act mean to me,'" and despair: "' I sure don't mind hell fire . . . . After this.'"[48]

Dollie, having irrevocably refused the mythic call to

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[45] _Ibid._, p. 11. [46] _Ibid._, p. 44.

[47] Lawrence, _Fantasia of the Unconscious_, p. 90.

[48] Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 506-508.

adventure, dissolves in helpless hysterics. The effects of refusing the summons are described brilliantly by Campbell and illustrated graphically by Lawrence. According to Campbell:

> Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or "culture," the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action . . . . His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless . . . . All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration.[49]

Dollie, freed from the cabin by forest rangers, who kill Romero in an exchange of gunfire, remains the prisoner of her own psychic virginity, her own sexual sleep.[50] As Campbell points out:

> The myths and folk tales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. The future is regarded not in terms of an unremitting series of deaths and births, but as though one's present system of ideals, virtues, goals, and advantages were to be fixed and made secure.[51]

Years later, still fixated, as at the beginning of the story, in her daughter state of dependency, Dollie infuses her experience at the World Navel with delusion: "'Since my accident in the mountains, when a man went mad and shot my horse from under me, and my guide had to shoot him dead, I have never felt quite myself.'" Symbolically, through her marriage to an older man, Dollie even gets her father back.[52]

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[49]Campbell, _Hero with a Thousand Faces_, p. 59.

[50]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 510-12.

[51]Campbell, _Hero with a Thousand Faces_, pp. 59-60.

[52]Lawrence, _Complete Short Stories_, II, 512.

The problems presented by "The Woman Who Rode Away" are attested by the extremities of praise and blame with which critics have responded to it. Written in the summer of 1924, between the composition of the two halves of The Plumed Serpent,[53] the tale, which has affinities with the novel, has been variously classified—by Kingsley Widmer as a novella,[54] by Mark Spilka and Mark Schorer, more accurately, as a fable,[55] and by Eugene Goodheart, most accurately, as a "terrible parable."[56] Easily summarized in William York Tindall's precis, "The woman . . . rides away from her husband to find consummation with the sun in becoming its victim,"[57] "The Woman Who Rode Away" is difficult to evaluate. The extremes are stated by Anthony West and Graham Hough. To West the story seems "really, a forgery": expecting to find a "living religion" in Mexican Indian culture, Lawrence found, in West's mixed metaphor, "the dead carcass of a religion . . . existing only as a formal gesture for the benefit of the American tourists."

Lawrence, believing in the life of the body as the supreme

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[53]Moore, Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence, pp. 242-43.

[54]Widmer, p. 32.

[55]Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 35, and Schorer, "Introduction," Poste Restante, p. 13.

[56]Goodheart, p. 133.

[57]William York Tindall, D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 77.

> human fulfilment, was being entirely untrue to his belief in making his white woman find the way to fulfilment by accepting death at the hands of the Indians. The effect is as dead as the religious work of the smart rationalist painters of the eighteenth century who tried to counterfeit mysticism with the contortions of eroticism.[58]

To Hough, on the other hand, the story seems "successful": "a mode midway between realism and symbolism" that permits transformation of "the actual, the given without any breach of unity." The question of whether Lawrence counterfeited the religious motif is "irrelevant"; "we are not discussing the actualities of Mexican religion: we are discussing Lawrence's religion projected into the Mexican scene." The woman's sacrifice by the practitioners of the death cult is admirably, if horribly, realized. As Hough puts it, hyperbolically: "I should say for myself that The Woman Who Rode Away is his completest artistic achievement. It is also his profoundest comment on the world of his time."[59]

Most unfavorable comments come from critics who, like West, wish to take the story literally. Thus, Kenneth Young objects that "the submission of the woman to the 'true' Gods of the Indians and to the knife are incredible to us, and, we feel, to Lawrence."[60] Julian Moynahan, who thinks the woman's "ritual disembowelment . . . neither excusable nor interesting,"

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[58]West, pp. 96-97. [59]Hough, pp. 140-46.

[60]Kenneth Young, D. H. Lawrence ("Bibliographical Series of Supplements to 'British Book News' on Writers and Their Work," No. 31, rev. ed.; London, New York, Toronto: Published for The British Council and the National Book League by Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), p. 13.

finds in the story "one of the most depressing images in all Lawrence: a blonde woman crawling on hands and knees along a narrow mountain ledge, while her two Indian captors walk easily erect, . . . both indifferent to her discomfort and danger."[61]

A fairer, if more partisan, view of the technique and achievement of "The Woman Who Rode Away" is stated by F. R. Leavis:

> By a marvellous triumph of incantation—incantation that proceeds by a compellingly vivid and matter-of-fact particularity—it succeeds supremely in something that _The Plumed Serpent_ fails in. It imagines the old pagan Mexican religion as something real and living; living enough for its devotees to entertain the confident hope of reconquering Mexico.[62]

Calling the story a fable rather than a novella has, I think, the advantage of recognizing Lawrence's emphasis on the ritualistic rather than the realistic aspects of the narrative. Hough notes that "Lawrence does not fall into the mistake of making the woman a self-conscious, competent cosmopolitan like Kate of _The Plumed Serpent_, or of giving her a circumstantial and literal social setting."[63] Diana Trilling remarks, in quite another connection, "I read Lawrence today and I'm utterly confounded by the effect he had on me and my friends when we first read him: we thought his metaphors were translatable

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[61]Julian Moynahan, _The Deed of Life: The Novels and Tales of D. H. Lawrence_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 178.

[62]Leavis, pp. 342-43. [63]Hough, p. 141.

into a program for practical conduct!"[64] There is, as Mrs. Trilling implies, a distinct advantage in reading Lawrence's metaphors as metaphors. The confusion about "The Woman Who Rode Away" can be resolved, I think, by examining the myths, rituals, and ideas that Lawrence unifies into a single metaphor.

First, there is in the story more than a touch of the monomyth. The summons to adventure comes in a chance conversation with guests who are discussing an Indian tribe, living deep in the mountains of Chihuahua and following, as one says, "'howling and heathen practices, more or less indecent,'" or as the other puts it, "'old, old religions and mysteries'":

> And this particular vague enthusiasm for unknown Indians found a full echo in the woman's heart. . . . She felt it was her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvellous Indians of the mountains.

Lawrence's word about the "monotony of her life" and her longing to be "free"[65] makes clear that the call is to spiritual passage from constriction to freedom.[66] The destination of her journey, the World Navel, as well as its association with her own solar plexus, becomes apparent on her first night away from home:

> She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and

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[64]Trilling, p. xxviii.

[65]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 549-50.

[66]See Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 51.

mysterious.[67]

The young Indian, the only one who speaks Spanish and who, from his trips to Mexico City and Chicago, knows white culture, is, appropriately, the woman's guide in her perilous journey from the white man's world to his. He repeatedly poses the choice that she must make between alternative modes of being, and in his simultaneously threatening and solicitous manner, he unites the ambiguities of her own unconscious.[68] The woman makes a journey of three days, both in space and in time, on a road of trials. One of the Indians, with a malevolence without purpose except to destroy her will, repeatedly strikes her horse with a stick so that the woman is jerked forward in the saddle painfully.[69] To fulfill her desire of entering the Indian village, the woman must, at the expense of both her dignity and her upright posture, laboriously cross the dangerous razor's edge of the mountain ridge.[70] The latter image, which Moynahan finds so depressing, should be familiar, if not from the Katha Upanishad 3:14,

> A sharpened edge of a razor, hard to traverse,
> A difficult path is this,

then at least from Chrétien de Troyes' account of Lancelot's

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[67]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 552.

[68]See Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 72-73.

[69]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 555-56.

[70]Ibid., p. 558.

crossing the sword-bridge to rescue Guinevere from the Castle of Death in the person of King Bademagu. As the woman's impulse to hurl herself down suggests, the narrow ledge bridges the abyss of damnation. As in the similar Persian test of the sword-bridge at the Last Judgment, "the sinful will fall into the abyss, but for the pious the edge broadens out into a smooth and pleasant way, leading to Paradise."[71] Thus, the Indians, who preserve the Laurentian "piety" of dark consciousness, walk erect, and only the woman, guilty of the "sin" of whiteness, is in peril. As Campbell explains, the road of trials "is the process of dissolving, transcending, or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past."[72] The woman, however, still has much to undergo. In Campbell's words, "The original departure into the land of trials represented only the beginning of the long and really perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination."[73] Taken before the cacique, the woman begins her metamorphosis from white lady to sacrificial victim. The Indians, despite her protests, remove her clothes, and the "old man moistened his finger-tips at his mouth, and most delicately touched her on the breasts and on the body, then on the back. And she winced

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[71]These examples are cited in Heinrich Zimmer, The King and the Corpse: Tales of the Soul's Conquest of Evil, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960), pp. 171-72.

[72]Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 101.

[73]Ibid., p. 109.

strangely each time . . . as if Death itself were touching her." Then she is given new clothing: "a long white cotton shift, that came to her knees: then a tunic of thick blue woollen stuff, embroidered with scarlet and green flowers."[74] Subsequently, she learns the symbolic value of her color, blue:

> "It is the colour of the wind. It is the colour of what goes away and is never coming back . . . . It is the colour of the dead. And it is the colour that stands away off, looking at us from the distance, that cannot come near to us."[75]

The woman undergoes ritual purgation by means of a liquor "made with herbs and sweetened with honey," which induces uncontrollable vomiting, the symbolic regurgitation of her old life, and a languorous heightening of the senses so that she can hear "the sound of the evening flowers unfolding."[76] In another trance, she even hears the little dog the Indians have given her "conceive, in her tiny womb, and begin to be complex, with young."[77] The woman also undergoes ritual purification by being bathed and rubbed with oil in "a long, strange, hypnotic massage."[78] According to Campbell,

> The ordeal is a deepening of the problem of the first threshold and the question is still in balance: Can the ego put itself to death? . . . . Meanwhile, there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies, and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land.[79]

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[74]Lawrence, Complete Short Stories, II, 564.

[75]Ibid., p. 574.

[76]Ibid., p. 565.

[77]Ibid., p. 568.

[78]Ibid., pp. 576-77.

[79]Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 109.

The woman is even told the purpose of her sacrifice. Not surprisingly it has to do with the regeneration of the world. In the Indians' myth of creation, the sun, as the male principle, and the moon, as the female principle, live at opposite ends of the sky:

> "So the woman, she asks the moon to come into her cave, inside her. And the man, he draws the sun down till he has the power of the sun. . . . Then when the man gets a woman, the sun goes into the cave of the moon, and that is how everything in the world starts."

When the Indians weakened and lost their power with sun and moon, the whites stole them: "'White men don't know what they are doing with the sun, and white women don't know what they do with the moon.'" But Indian myth holds that when a white woman shall sacrifice herself to the Indian gods, these gods "'will begin to make the world again, and the white man's gods will fall to pieces.'"[80] Finally, on the shortest day of the year, the woman is taken in a litter, "with its attendance of feathered, lurid, dancing priests," to a mountain cave, where, stripped of her garments, she is placed on a flat stone for the sacrifice in which she has acquiesced. In an image drawn from the Indians' myth of creation, Lawrence places the time of her sacrifice at the moment when the setting sun will shine "through the shaft of ice" at the mouth of the cave "deep into the hollow of the cave, to the innermost." Once again, with the ritual killing of the white woman, the sun will enter the cave of the moon in the act of creation. And

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[80]Lawrence, <u>Complete Short Stories</u>, II, 570-71.

from here at this navel of the world the generative waters will flow. The sacrifice, in Lawrence's concluding sentence, is an image of "The mastery that man must hold, and that passes from race to race."[81]

If the monomyth, with the return necessarily omitted, provides the pattern for the fable of "The Woman Who Rode Away," a second, and of course more obvious, mythic construct, the rite of human sacrifice, itself a segment of the monomyth, is the basis for the theme. The religious ritual of the Dying and Reviving God, the world over re-enacts the natural ritual of the annual death and rebirth of the sun. Robert Graves recounts, for example, the semi-annual sacrifice of the twin Hercules-figures of European solar festivals. The first Hercules, sacrificed at mid-summer after a half-year reign, is made drunk with mead, led into a circle of twelve stones, and brutally killed. The whole tribe is sprinkled with his blood to insure their vigor and fruitfulness. His tanist, the second Hercules, who succeeds him, reigns for the rest of the year, that is, until mid-winter, when he too is sacrificially slain by the new Hercules.[82] Graves notes the universality of this solar mythology: "Zeus was born at mid-winter when the Sun entered the house of Capricorn." In addition, "the Sun-gods Dionysus, Apollo and Mithras were all also reputedly born at the Winter Solstice, . . . and the Christian Church . . . fixed the Nativity feast of Jesus Christ at the same season

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[81]*Ibid.*, pp. 578-79. [82]Graves, p. 124.

. . . ."[83] William Tyler Olcott says, "Even the sacrifices offered to the Sun in pagan times at the great solar festivals find their survival in the sacrifices of a lamb which we offer at Eastertide, and an ox at Christmas."[84] Olcott relates a Scandinavian tradition of making bonfires of pine boughs at the summer solstice on the death of their Sun-God Balder to light his way to the nether world and of burning a yule log and lighting fir trees at the winter solstice on his rebirth to light his way to the heavens.[85] E. O. James recounts a related tradition, the ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna, the earth mother and counterpart of Ishtar, who, as queen of heaven and wife of Anu, descends into the lower world to secure Anu's release. On her arrival she is recognized and led through seven portals, at each of which she is stripped of one item of dress, until at last she is naked when she reaches the temple of Ereshkigal, queen of the underworld, who has Inanna turned to a corpse. Inanna's messenger, Ninshubur, who has been warned to raise an alarm if she is not back in three days, fashions two sexless creatures, whom he sends to revive her by sprinkling the water of life upon her. Revived,

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[83] Ibid., p. 348.

[84] William Tyler Olcott, Sun Lore of All Ages: A Collection of Myths and Legends Concerning the Sun and Its Worship (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), p. 230.

[85] Ibid., p. 236.

Inanna returns to the earth.[86] Such solar myths and rituals as these are the basis of Aztec rituals of human sacrifice. Sir James George Frazer reports:

> At the festival of the winter solstice in December the Aztecs killed their god Huitzilopochtli in effigy first and ate him afterwards. As a preparation for this solemn ceremony an image of the deity in the likeness of a man was fashioned out of seeds of various sorts, which were kneaded into a dough with the blood of children.[87]

And Victor W. von Hagen says that at mid-summer in the eighthmonth (July 2-21) of the eighteen months of twenty days each in the Aztec calendar, "the adoration of the eating of the corn, an eight-day feast . . . could not get under way until the priests had dispatched a slave girl, beautifully attired to impersonate the Goddess of Young Corn."[88] Clearly, the rite of human sacrifice is in part an agricultural fertility ritual deriving from solar festivals celebrating the death and rebirth of the sun.

According to Alfonso Caso, director of archaeology in the National Museum of Mexico and director of the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico, "the essence of human sacrifice among the Aztecs lay in the conception of the interdependence of man and his gods."

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[87]Sir James George Frazer, The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion)1 vol., abridged ed.; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1951), p. 568.

[88]Victor W. von Hagen, The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of the Americas (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1961), p. 98.

The Aztecs considered the victim a messenger who was to bear their supplications to the gods. For this reason, sacrificial victims were treated solicitously and sometimes even revered as gods themselves.[89] As Laurette Séjourné explains this interdependence between the divine and the human, since the deity "detaches a little from itself in every creature," it would totally deplete itself were the individual to destroy his particle "instead of returning it still brighter than before": "That is, creation is held to be impossible except through sacrifice: the sacrifice of the Sun dismembered among human kind; . . . the sacrifice of men to restore the sun's original unity."[90] The concept underlay even the form of the sacrifice, which, Caso says, was begun by

> placing the victim on a stone called _téchcatl_, similar in shape to a sugar loaf or cone with the top somewhat flattened out.
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> Four priests seized the victim by the arms and legs and laid him on his back on the techcatl in such a way that his chest was arched upwards. Then a fifth priest took the flint knife and plunged it into the breast, thrust his hand into the open wound, tore out the heart, and offered it to the gods.[91]

The concept of human sacrifice to replenish the source

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[89]Alfonso Caso, _The Aztecs: People of the Sun_, trans. Lowell Dunham (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 72-73.

[90]Laurette Séjourné, _Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico_ (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1956), pp. 59-60.

[91]Caso, p. 73.

of life was familiar to Lawrence through the rituals of tree worship among the ancient Germanic tribes of Europe. As he notes in Movements in European History:

> The tree-worship, the worship of the Tree of Life seems always to have entailed human sacrifice. Life is the fruit of that Tree. But the Tree is dark and terrible, it demands life back again.[92]

A secondary motif which Lawrence takes up in connection with the ritual of human sacrifice in "The Woman Who Rode Away" is the taking of hallucinogenic drugs, a practice among the Chilchui Indians, who have preserved the rituals and beliefs of the ancient religion. Interestingly, Miss Séjourné gives an account of such a tribe:

> the Huicholes, a tribe living in the north-west of present-day Mexico, among whom many Nahuatl beliefs and rituals appear to have survived, say that the priests and sorcerers of past times created the Sun by casting the young son of the Corn Goddess into the fire.[93]

Frazer throws further light on the subject: "The Huichol Indians of Mexico treat as a demi-god a species of cactus which throws the eater into a state of ecstasy."[94] Irene Nicholson, critic and translator of Aztec poetry from the Nahuatl language, says that the poets sometimes used mushrooms to induce visions.[95] Finally, Aldous Huxley,

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[92]Lawrence, Movements in European History, p. 59.

[93]Séjourné, p. 152.

[94]Frazer, The Golden Bough, p. 26.

[95]Irene Nicholson, Firefly in the Night: A Study

who in Brave New World represents D. H. Lawrence as a New Mexican Indian, says of peyote in Brave New World Revisited: "It permits the Indians who use it in their religious rites to enter paradise, and to feel at one with the beloved community, without making them pay for the privilege by anything worse than the ordeal of having to chew on something with a revolting flavor and of feeling somewhat nauseated for an hour or two."[96]

In "The Woman Who Rode Away," the rituals and values of the religion which, as Hough says, Lawrence projects into the Mexican scene are beautifully integrated with the rituals and values of the Nahuatl religion of the Aztecs, which was already there. If the sacrifice of Lawrence's woman is to be efficacious, she must be identified, first, with traditional sacrificial victims of solar rituals and, second, with the white world which is being sacrificed symbolically through her. Lawrence relates the woman to traditional victims of solar rituals of fertility by associating her with vegetation: with the pine boughs of her shelter and her bed on the journey, with the ears of corn in the maize fields she passes on entering the village, with the red flowers in the garden outside her cell, and with the scarlet and green flowers embroidered on her blue tunic. In keeping with the practice among the

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of Ancient Mexican Poetry and Symbolism (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 187.

[96]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World Revisited (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 88-89.

Huichol Indians, whose name is transposed in Lawrence's anagram to Chilchui, she drinks the mead-like liquor made, it would seem, from a plant of the peyote family, and experiences a heightening of consciousness. As in the solar rituals of the Aztecs, along with those of others among the world's peoples, the great day of festival among Lawrence's Chilchui Indians, the occasion for human sacrifice to release the sun from captivity, is the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. The Indian's loss of power with the sun and the white man's theft of the sun are related, by implication, to the sun's journey into the underworld. Thus, the function of the blood sacrifice of the woman is the rebirth of the sun and, therefore, the salvation of the world. This fertility-scapegoat motif is worked out in the functional ambiguity of two additional mythic constructs.

The first of these mythic constructs places the woman in the white world even as it marks her as a victim for the sacrifice. Since the woman's sacrifice symbolizes the ritual death of the white man's gods, and therefore of their spiritual potential in the world, the woman must both represent those gods and, if her sacrifice is to have greatest efficacy for the Indian, demonstratively reject them in favor of the Indian gods. Lawrence presents the woman as a representative of western culture in decline by keeping her nameless but giving her a husband whose mines, like Sir Clifford Chatterley's, encroach upon nature and who lives by the

acquisitive ethic. Hating anything physical, this mine owner, Lawrence says in a telling phrase, "admired his wife to extinction."[97] Beyond this, Lawrence presents the woman as a representative of the white man's religion. She is identified with Christ as sacrificial victim through her age, thirty-three; her journey of three days, a metaphorical descent into hell; her ritualistic anointing with oil and perfume; her sign of peace to the ancient <u>cacique</u>, a symbolic Gethsemene; her cup of liquor, a parallel to the chalice of the Last Supper; her being stripped for the sacrifice; and finally her being sacrificed for the sins of her race. She is also associated with the Blessed Virgin through her color blue, the color of fidelity and of the heavens. The repeated emphasis on her blondeness suggests her symbolic role as queen of heaven. But Lawrence has the woman reject the Christian God four times for the gods of the Indians. When she first meets the three Indians, the young Indian asks her where she is going and what she wants to do. She replies, "'I want to visit the Chilchui Indians—to see their houses and to know their gods.'"[98] On her arrival when she is brought before the chief, the young Indian translates the chief's question whether she wants to bring the white man's God to the Chilchui. She replies, "'No. . . . I came away from the white man's

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[97] Lawrence, <u>Complete Short Stories</u>, II, 547.

[98] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 554.

God myself. I came to look for the God of the Chilchui.'"[99] When she is brought before the cacique, the young Indian translates the old man's question, "'do you bring your heart to the god of the Chilchui?'" She replies, acquiescing in her own sacrifice, "'Tell him yes.'"[100] Finally, when the young Indian explains that the Indians have lost their power over the sun and are trying to gèt it back, the woman replies, "'I hope you will get him back.'"[101] When the woman has both assumed the metaphorical identity of Christ and offered herself as a sacrifice to the Indians, Lawrence can say:

> More and more her ordinary personal consciousness had left her, she had gone into that other state of passional cosmic consciousness, like one who is drugged. The Indians, with their heavily religious natures, had made her succumb to their vision.[102]

In this important passage, her consciousness is "passional" in the dual sense of suffering and sexual, with reference, in both senses, to the cosmos. The heightening of her awareness of her religious role parallels the sensations of her drugged state. Critics who object to the woman's having been literally drugged forget that in this state she loses her will and gains sensuousness and thus, in Lawrence's view, approaches both personal and cosmic

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[99] Ibid., p. 560. [100] Ibid., p. 563.

[101] Ibid., pp. 572-73. [102] Ibid., p. 574.

fulfillment.

Finally, the "vision" of the Indians is through their <u>cacique</u>, whose face is "like dark glass."[103] In this single image Lawrence unites the ambiguities of his theme. The Christian allusion is, of course, to St. Paul: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). The Aztec allusion is to the sacrifice of Tezcatlipoca, the Lord of the Smoking Mirror, which fell about the time of the Christian Easter. On this day a youth, in the role of Tezcatlipoca for which he had prepared for a year, during which time he was greatly honored, was sacrificed. Though this was a spring ritual, Miss Séjourné suggests that the ceremonies of the twenty days preceding the sacrifice symbolize the winter solstice:

> If the winter solstice reproduces on a larger scale the daily drama of light imprisoned by darkness, the prisoner's death must signify his liberation. . . . This hypothesis seems, moreover, to be proved by the fact that the ceremonies immediately following upon the death of Tezcatlipoca (Earth Sun) are dedicated to Huitzilpochtli (Sun of the Centre), who seems to rise from the sacrificed body of the Lord of the Smoking Mirror . . . .[104]

The reiterated image in reference to the <u>cacique</u>—he is a "glassy-dark old man,"[105] with "black, glass-like, intent

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[103] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 563. [104] Séjourné, pp. 165-66.

[105] Lawrence, <u>Complete Short Stories</u>, II, 564.

eyes,"[106] which, at the sacrifice of the woman, are "fixed like black mirrors on the sun,"[107]—identifies him metaphorically as Tezcatlipoca, in whose stead the woman, representing the white race that holds the phallic sun captive, will be sacrificed. In the final image of the story the cacique waits for the rays of the phallic sun to penetrate the yonic cave in an illustration of the Indians' myth of creation. What the woman sees "through a glass, darkly," then, is not merely the fact of her sacrifice but its meaning as well: the rebirth of the sun and the flow of creativity in the body of the cosmos.

On St. Mawr opinion is less uneven than on "The Woman Who Rode Away." Leavis, in his unreserved admiration for the short novel, records a minority opinion. He thinks, in fact, that the term nouvelle

> doesn't suggest the nature or weight of the astonishing work of genius that Lawrence's "dramatic poem" is. "St. Mawr" seems to me to present a creative and technical originality not less remarkable than that of The Waste Land, and to be, more unquestionably than that poem, completely achieved, a full and self-sufficient creation.[108]

Though it is easy to sympathize with Leavis's feeling driven to extremes of praise by T. S. Eliot's extremes

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[106] Ibid., p. 573.

[107] Ibid., p. 581.

[108] Leavis, p. 279.

of blame,[109] it must be admitted that St. Mawr has neither the "creative and technical originality" nor the "self-sufficient" completeness of The Waste Land. Leavis's extravagance, far from embellishing what many critics think the synthetic jewel of St. Mawr, only calls attention, by peripety, to its lackluster. The unbalanced structure, underlined by an uneven style, poetically heightened when St. Mawr is on center, often cliche-ridden when he is not, is the focal point of most critical dissatisfaction. Tindall, for example, praises the symbolic technique:

> His use of the main symbol, a structural center for other effects, is a technical advance with which Lawrence joined the company of Conrad and Kafka. Lawrence's horse, not unlike Kafka's castle or Conrad's forest, presents and unifies feeling and idea.

Nevertheless, Tindall admits, "What he meant is expressed so fully by his completed image that his comments on its meaning seem both unnecessary and unfortunate."[110] Most other critics are less generous. Father William Tiverton thinks St. Mawr "Bi-valvular, because two-thirds of the way through he forgets all about the horse-hero, St. Mawr

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[109]See T. S. Eliot, "Foreword" to Father William Tiverton [Father Martin Jarrett-Kerr], D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence (London: Rockliff Publishing Corporation Ltd., 1951), pp. vii-viii.

[110]Tindall, "Introduction," The Later D. H. Lawrence, p. xiv.

himself, and becomes absorbed in New Mexico."[111] For Hough,

> The magnificent chestnut horse, quivering with pride, beauty and power, is surely too obvious and unmodulated a symbol of primitive energy. And he immediately begins to conflict with the carefully conditioned social reality that Lawrence is trying to establish for his human characters.[112]

This "weakness of the story as a whole becomes most evident" in the ending:

> After the comprehensive indictment of modern society outlined in the first part, the solution is inadequate. If you don't like men any more, go and live in New Mexico with a horse.[113]

(Hough was apparently looking the other way when Lou left St. Mawr in Texas with Lewis.)[114] Hough admits that

> indeed in some of its characterisation and description it is among Lawrence's most brilliant performances. I am, none the less, persuaded that it is not an authentic piece of work, that there is a falsity in the motive and the conception that fatally affects the whole.[115]

Anthony Beal, likewise, finds Lawrence's achievement in St. Mawr impressive but inadequate: "His diagnosis of social ills is acute, but the suggested remedies nearly always make a sad anti-climax." We last see St. Mawr on a dude

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[111] Tiverton, p. 75.

[112] Hough, p. 182.

[113] Ibid., p. 184.

[114] D. H. Lawrence, St. Mawr, The Short Novels (2 vols.; Melbourne, London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1956), II, 122.

[115] Hough, p. 180.

ranch in Texas, "ignominiously sniffing round after the owner's mare: the symbol of all Lawrence's positives is come to this!" Though the New Mexican ranch where Lou and Mrs. Witt go is wonderfully described, "As an answer it does not impress."[116] The severest critic of the work, excluding Robert Liddell, who has been answered several times,[117] is Eliseo Vivas, who finds St. Mawr "if not one of Lawrence's worst, one very close to the worst":

> My judgment is based on the fact that I thought I discerned the failure of the English part of the story to cohere with the New Mexican part, and it was also based on the fact that I saw it as a rather poor and careless imitation of Lawrence by Lawrence.

Vivas admires Lawrence's poetic vision of St. Mawr, but not his novelistic conception of the social world which he sets in antithesis to the horse:

> When Lawrence confines himself to the task of bringing the horse, St. Mawr, before the eyes of his readers, he achieves a vivid and powerful revelation. . . .
>
> But Lawrence was not satisfied with being a poet and giving us a sketch of a horse bursting with vitality and power. The horse reminded him of the futile young men and women whom he had known and for whom he felt deep contempt, and the aroused feeling against them flooded his consciousness. . . . And so he had to concoct a story to tell us again what

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[116] Anthony Beal, D. H. Lawrence ("Writers and Critics"; Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 101.

[117] See Robert Liddell, "Lawrence and Dr. Leavis: The Case of St. Mawr," Essays in Criticism, IV (July, 1954), 321-27. See also the letters of David Craig, Mark Roberts, and T. W. Thomas in answer to Liddell in the "Critical Forum" in Essays in Criticism, V (January, 1955), 64-80.

> he had already told us and was to tell us again. The result is not a great artistic achievement.[118]

The best defense of St. Mawr yet published, for Leavis's chapter is rather panegyric than defense, is an essay by Alan Wilde. Though it is not to the purpose here to detail in full Wilde's argument, it may be noted, at least, that he disposes of the "titular heresy" of earlier criticism by pointing out that St. Mawr is not merely "a story about a symbolic horse" but, as another title Lawrence suggested indicates, a story about "Two Women and a Horse."[119] More significantly, Wilde comments perceptively on the objection underlying "the fuss about the horse" to what Vivas calls the "essential inchoateness"[120] of the book:

> What happens is minimal, but the paucity of incident is itself one indication of the obvious fact that action in the novel is secondary to the thoughts and feelings events stimulate in the mind of its heroine, Lou Carrington. Still, however, little action there is in the novel, the curve it describes is significant. The story of St. Mawr is essentially episodic in form, the several episodes becoming, as the book progresses, shorter in length, less dramatic in conception, and barer of interpersonal conflict. The curve indicates,

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[118]Eliseo Vivas, D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1960), pp. 151-53.

[119]Lawrence, Collected Letters, II, 814. In another letter, p. 810, Lawrence suggests possibly calling the short novel "Two Ladies and a Horse."

[120]Vivas, p. 162.

> in fact, the progress of Lou from confusion and from immersion in the social world of her husband to a state of solitary self-knowledge.[121]

However extravagant Leavis's comparison between St. Mawr and The Waste Land may seem, the analogy is inappropriate in regard to neither theme nor content but only in regard to the quality of their execution. Lawrence's problem in St. Mawr is to present the waste land of contemporary life in sufficiently sterile terms and to suggest sufficiently potent means to its regeneration.

Lawrence's symbol of the waste land is English society, from the horsemen and horsewomen of Hyde Park to the society of country houses and vicarages. The focal point of this society, for Lawrence, is Lou Carrington's husband, the effete, dilettante painter Rico. Rico, who cares more for appearance than for reality, is consistently defined and qualified through the metaphor of clothes. He shows his disrespect for the phallic principle by ruining a necktie in removing it.[122] Appearing "all handsome and in the picture in white flannels with an apricot silk shirt," he looks

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[121] Alan Wilde, "The Illusion of St. Mawr: Technique and Vision in D. H. Lawrence's Novel," PMLA, LXXIX (No. 1, March, 1964), 164.

[122] Lawrence, St. Mawr, p. 4.

ridiculous in comparison to the Indian servant Phoenix, whom he is reprimanding.[123] Before riding St. Mawr to Corrabach,

> he dressed himself most carefully in white riding-breeches and a shirt of purple silk crepe, with a flowing black tie spotted red like a ladybird, and black riding-boots. Then he took a *chic* little white hat with a black band.[124]

Of this florid description, Hough says:

> This is a grotesquely impossible get-up for even the most flower-like young man; but what is far more impossible is that Rico in this outfit should be admired and worshipped by the conventional hunting young woman Flora Manby. In reality she would never speak to a man who could be seen in such a costume.

Hough complains that "this whole elaborately painted English scene is pure pasteboard, a stage set done with nothing deeper than a scene-painter's knowledge." He suggests that comparing the treatment of English life in *St. Mawr* with that in the early chapters of *The Rainbow* or the colliery chapters of *Women in Love* will make "its shallowness and falsity . . . immediately apparent."[125] Similarly, Vivas contends that, except for the horse, *St. Mawr* offers nothing new. Lawrence "had done it before and done it better and more convincingly":[126]

> Here we are witnessing another puppet show. Or rather, it is the old stock company again, and we know each and every one of the actors. The man now playing Rico

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[123] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[125] Hough, pp. 182-83.

[126] Vivas, p. 152.

> is the same man who played Clifford Chatterley . . . .
> And Lou, playing now an American role, is Connie. . . .
> The groom is the man who played Mellors . . . .[127]

Interestingly, both Hough and Vivas use the image of the stage to establish the falsity of Lawrence's picture of English society. Hough emphasizes the painted paste-board quality of the scene, and Vivas the stock characters. Wilde comments that Hough's "description is accurate, but the complaint behind it is unjustified" since Lou herself has the same feeling:[128] "People, all the people she knew seemed so entirely contained within their cardboard let's-be-happy world."[129] He might have noted, too, that subsequently Lou writes to her mother: "'It is terrible when the life-flow dies out of one, and everything is like cardboard, and oneself is like cardboard.'"[130] Vivas's complaint is similarly accurate but unjustified since both Lou and Mrs. Witt often appear as spectators at a performance: "Mrs. Witt had now a new pantomime to amuse her"; ". . . there she had the whole thing staged complete for her: English village life."[131] The mechanical, the petty, the artificial, the dead are everywhere apparent.

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[127] _Ibid_., pp. 155-56.

[128] Wilde, p. 165.

[129] Lawrence, _St_. _Mawr_, p. 25.

[130] _Ibid_., p. 103.

[131] _Ibid_., p. 27.

Rico means it when he says: "'Lou dearest, don't spend a fortune on a horse for me, which I don't want. Honestly, I prefer a car.'"[132] Lou thinks of him as "Poor old Rico, going on like an amiable machine from day to day."[133] Rico reduces everyone to the diminutive: Lou is "'Loulina,'"[134] Flora Manby will become "'Fiorita: or perhaps Florecita,'"[135] and Lou, who thinks the world "'a very queer one when Rico is the god Priapus,'" tries to imagine the absurdity of "Sir Prippy.'"[136] As she tells the fair young man at the Devil's Chair: "'We don't exist.'"[137] Such examples as these go far toward proving that the artificiality of which both Hough and Vivas complain is the very quality in English society that Lawrence was seeking to establish.

The question of verisimilitude, which both also raise, is a different, though related, question. Hough, in his concern about what the English hunting set is like "in reality," questions Lawrence's fidelity to life. Vivas, in his concern about stock characters, questions his fidelity to art. What neither recognizes is that Lawrence, holding up to English society the distorting glass of satire, is describing spiritual grotesques. Grotesques

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[132] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[135] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[136] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

of another sort, as in Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, can be "drawn in the round"—but grotesques notable primarily for their flatness cannot. Vivas, who resists taking sides against Sir Clifford Chatterley because he is "a mere name for a constellation of qualities that Lawrence hated," applies the same judgment to Rico, "the arch-villain of St. Mawr—if a spiritual castrato can be called a villain."[138] Vivas's opinion is consistent with what is traditionally expected of a novel. A believable conflict involves not merely the clash of abstractions but the encounter of persons as well. A credible character cannot be the sum of his formalized responses, artificial, changeless, predictable, but must move in the moral and emotional ambiguities of life and art. The former state implies the determinism of a closed system, the latter the freedom of choice of an open system. But Rico and Sir Clifford and all of their Laurentian counterparts move in no such ambiguities. They have become, through the emotional fixity of their neuroses and the moral fixity of their spiritual emptiness, little more than the constellations of self-defeating stock responses. Such characters as Lou Carrington and Connie Chatterley, on the other hand, whatever their patterns of self-defeat at the beginning, through their emotional and moral

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[138] Vivas, p. 151.

viability possess the potential of growing into persons. The former, in their sterile inflexibility, remain in the static world of things. The latter, in their creative adaptability, evolve in the dynamic world of organic life.

The energy that could revive the waste land is presented as mythic potential in the figure of St. Mawr. As Goodheart observes, "In *St. Mawr* there is explicit speculation on the nature of mythical consciousness and being."[139] St. Mawr, Vickery says, is a totemic animal, but Vickery's definition of totemism is so general as to be uninstructive: "In totemism an intimate relation is assumed between certain human beings and certain natural or artificial objects."[140] According to Sir James George Frazer:

> A totem is a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation. . . . The connection between a man and his totem is mutually beneficent; the totem protects the man, and the man shows his respect for the totem in various ways, by not killing it if it be an animal, and not cutting or gathering it if it be a plant. As distinguished from a fetich, a totem is never an isolated individual, but always a class of objects, generally a species of animals or of plants, more rarely a class of inanimate natural objects, very rarely a class of artificial objects.[141]

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[139]Goodheart, p. 56.

[140]Vickery, p. 79.

[141]Sir James George Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy: A Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society* (4 vols.; London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1935), I, 3-4.

In a letter to Willard Johnson on 9 January 1924, as Moore puts it, "Lawrence spoke out for horses, centaurs, Houynmnms, even hobby horses":[142]

> It would be a terrible thing if the horse in us died for ever, as he seems to have died in Europe. How awful it would be, if at this present moment I sat in the yellow mummy-swathings of London atmosphere . . . and didn't know that the blue horse was still kicking his heels and making a few sparks fly, across the tops of the Rockies.[143]

The letter contains the "germ" of St. Mawr. In the short novel, however, for all the riders in Hyde Park, only St. Mawr, not the horse as a species, is the object of special veneration. Sigmund Freud believes that "the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father; and this tallies with the contradictory fact that, though the killing of the animal is as a rule forbidden, yet its killing is a festive occasion—with the fact that it is killed and yet mourned."[144] In one sense, in terms of both psychological source and presentational symbol, St. Mawr is a figure for the father. He derives, like all figures of darkness in Lawrence, from what Daniel A. Weiss

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[142]Moore, The Intelligent Heart, p. 410.

[143]Lawrence, Collected Letters, II, 768-69.

[144]Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, Totem and Taboo and Other Works, p. 141.

calls "the father in the blood,"[145] that is, from Lawrence's complex attitude toward his own father. In the short novel, moreover, for the widowed Mrs. Witt and her daughter Lou, whose husband is an effeminate modern, St. Mawr is "'one last male thing in the museum of this world.'"[146]

Of greater relevance than the question of totemism is Lawrence's fusion, in the figure of St. Mawr, of the Centaur and Pan. Lawrence wrote to Johnson:

> Two-legged man is no good. If he's going to stand steady, he must stand on four feet. Like the Centaur. When Jesus was born, the spirits wailed round the Mediterranean: _Pan is dead_. _Great Pan is dead_. And at the Renaissance the Centaur gave a final groan, and expired.[147]

In _St. Mawr_, when Mrs. Witt and Phoenix ride, "Phoenix looked as if he and the horse were all in one piece . . . ."[148] Lewis also curiously "'seems to sink himself in the horse'" when he rides.[149] Riding St. Mawr, even Rico seems "a hero from another, heroic world."[150] In one

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[145] Daniel A. Weiss, _Oedipus in Nottingham: D. H. Lawrence_ (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), pp. 13-37.

[146] Lawrence, _St. Mawr_, p. 84.

[147] Lawrence, _Collected Letters_, II, 768. See also D. H. Lawrence, "Pan in America," _Phoenix_, pp. 22-31.

[148] Lawrence, _St. Mawr_, p. 19.

[149] _Ibid._, p. 22.

[150] _Ibid._, p. 34.

scene St. Mawr is identified with pre-fallen Pan. Cartwright imagines that "'Pan once was a great god before the anthropomorphic Greeks turned him into half a man.'" Dean Vyner thinks that "'the world will always be full of goaty old satyrs,'" but he finds them "'somewhat vulgar.'" Mrs. Witt muses, "'Wouldn't a man be wonderful in whom Pan hadn't fallen!'" Later she asks Lou, "'Did you ever see Pan in a man, as you see Pan in St. Mawr?'" Lou admits she never did: "'I see—mostly—a sort of—pancake.'"[151] Man as pancake is symbolized, at least in this scene, in Cartwright, who, like Marchbanks in "The Last Laugh," superficially resembles Pan and is, therefore, the image of fallen Pan. St. Mawr, in contrast, like Blake's "tyger," Hopkins's windhover, or Melville's Moby Dick, burns with the divine fire of brute power in both its positive and negative values. About this god-beast there is "dark invisible fire,"[152] and he looms "fiery and terrible in the outer darkness."[153] To Lou he is the mystery beyond reason:

> "It seems to me there's something else besides mind and cleverness, or niceness or cleanness. Perhaps it is the animal. Just think of St. Mawr! I've thought so much about him. We call him an animal, but we never know what it means. He seems a far greater mystery to me

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[151] Ibid., pp. 50-52. [152] Ibid., p. 11.

[153] Ibid., p. 25.

> than a clever man. . . . There seems no mystery in being a man. But there's a terrible mystery in St. Mawr."[154]

The young men of Rico's social set strike Lou as "handsome, young, bare-faced unrealities, not men at all."[155] It is, thus, fitting that St. Mawr should not only injure the Oedipal Rico's foot but also kick young Edwards in his bare face, leaving him disfigured.[156] When Rico, predictably, says that the horse is dangerous and should be shot, Lou asks, "'And do you think we ought to shoot everything that is dangerous?'"[157] It is ironic, considering St. Mawr's divinity, that Dean Vyner is the one to say: "'We all know, Mrs. Witt, that the author of the mischief is St. Mawr himself.'"[158] Every time the dean says "horse," Mrs. Witt satirically echoes "stallion." What is planned for St. Mawr is a meaner betrayal than death: a dying god can remain a potent force; a gelded god cannot. Rico determines to sell St. Mawr to Flora Manby, one of Lawrence's flower-picking types, who wants him gelded. Lou despairs of "Our whole eunuch civilisation, nasty-minded as eunuchs are, with their kind of sneaking, sterilising cruelty." Mrs.

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[154] _Ibid._, p. 45.

[155] _Ibid._, p. 25.

[156] _Ibid._, p. 62.

[157] _Ibid._, p. 74.

[158] _Ibid._, p. 77.

Witt acidly advises her to tell Flora:

> "'Miss Manby, you may have my husband, but not my horse. My husband won't need emasculating, and my horse I won't have you meddle with. I'll preserve one last male thing in the museum of this world, if I can.'"[159]

Literally, Lou and Mrs. Witt preserve St. Mawr by spiriting him away to America.

If St. Mawr is the Great God Pan, Morgan Lewis is his prophet and Druidism, therefore, the religious ritual of his worship.[160] Lewis, riding through a dark forest with Mrs. Witt, tells her the Celtic fairy lore of his boyhood when children ate ash tree seeds to become "moon-boys": "If you want to matter, you must become a moon-boy. Then all your life, fire can't blind you, and people can't hurt you."[161] According to Robert Graves, "In British folklore the ash is a tree of re-birth."[162] It is sacred to Gwydion, a mixed Teuton-Celt deity equated with Woden. Significantly for _St. Mawr_, the Norse name of Gwydion's horse was "_Askr Yggr-drasill_, or Ygdrasill, 'the ash-tree that is the horse of Yggr', Yggr, being one of Woden's titles."[163] Following his

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[159]_Ibid_., p. 84.

[160]For Lawrence's historical treatment of Druidism, see Chapter VII: "Gaul," in _Movements in European History_, pp. 90-106.

[161]Lawrence, _St. Mawr_, p. 96.

[162]Graves, p. 172.

[163]_Ibid_., pp. 44-45.

usual practice, Lawrence also makes use of the Christian tradition that sees the gods of the pagan world as devils in disguise. Lewis, in a Laurentian, pagan sense, is being deeply religious but, in a Christian sense, subversive when he answers Mrs. Witt's question about his religion with "'I never said I didn't believe in God.— Only I'm sure I'm not a Methodist.'"[164] Rico, similarly, is speaking in a Christian frame of reference when he calls St. Mawr "'accursed.'"[165] And in the Devil's Chair scene, near Wales in "one of those places where the spirit of aboriginal England still lingers, the old savage England," Mrs. Witt observes: "'They give the Devil the higher seat in this country, do they?'"[166]

The conclusion of the short novel, which finds Lou and Mrs. Witt at Las Chivas ranch after leaving St. Mawr to his mares in Texas, has caused much dissatisfaction among critics. But St. Mawr disappears, these critics to the contrary, only after he has served his symbolic function. His "sniffing round," as Beal puts it, after the Texas mare underlines rather than negates this function. Lawrence employs the same motif in The Man Who Died, which he first called The Escaped Cock,

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[164] Lawrence, St. Mawr, p. 91.

[165] Ibid., p. 54. [166] Ibid., p. 59.

by leaving the gamecock, half way through the story, among the hens in the innkeeper's yard.[167] Goodheart comments: "St. Mawr, . . . despite the fact that he defines the human characters in the story in their relationship to him, has a life of his own, which has nothing to do with the human world." As Goodheart observes:

> Employing the traditional view of the horse as a noble animal, Swift contrasts the Houynmnms to the Yahoos, Swift's version of man in his final degradation. There is more than a little of Swift's misanthropic animus in the descriptions of the human world in St. Mawr, and Lou's final acceptance of the "spirit" of Western America involves as complete a repudiation of the human world as Gulliver ever made.[168]

Wilde, who says that "Las Chivas functions as what Susanne Langer has called a 'presentational' symbol, as opposed to the 'discursive' symbol of St. Mawr," believes that St. Mawr's

> energy is largely the energy of opposition, and aversion to the Ricos of the world is the source of his effective being, driven as he is by their suppressed hatred into his own wild outbursts. In Texas he loses his savage fury and with it his vitality and his importance.

For Wilde, the disappearance of St. Mawr before the end is not inadvertent but functional as the signal of a new beginning: "The ranch represents something that is better

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[167] D. H. Lawrence, The Man Who Died, The Short Novels, II, 22.

[168] Goodheart, pp. 58-59.

than the world of the Ricos, but it is not the best; the novel ends with it faute de mieux and in anticipation of the reborn society, the phallic millennium."[169]

Through apocalyptic imagery, Lawrence has prepared the way for the new beginning. Lewis, seeing a falling star, has remarked, "'There's movement in the sky. The world is going to change again.'" He believes that "'stones don't come at us from the sky for nothing.'"[170] Lou and Mrs. Witt, crossing the Atlantic, have a "queer, transitory, unreal feeling": "Never again to see the mud and snow of a northern winter, nor to feel the idealistic, Christianized tension of the now irreligious North."[171] Even Las Chivas itself has been part of the waste land, for it is described at first in images of drought:

> The ranch dwindled. The flock of goats declined. The water ceased to flow. And at length the trader gave it up.
>
> . . . .
>
> And now arrived Lou, new blood to the attack.[172]

Near the end of T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land, the speaker says,

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[169] Wilde, pp. 167-68.

[170] Lawrence, St. Mawr, p. 97.

[171] Ibid., p. 117.

[172] Ibid., p. 142.

> I sat upon the shore
> Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
> Shall I at least set my lands in order?[173]

In St. Mawr Lawrence takes a similar position:

> What's to be done? Generally speaking, nothing. The dead will have to bury their dead, while the earth stinks of corpses. The individual can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself. . . . Retreat to the desert, and fight. But in his soul adhere to that which is life itself, creatively destroying as it goes: destroying the stiff old thing to let the new bud come through.[174]

The phallic millennium, though at hand, is not yet ushered in. For Mrs. Witt, the revelation of St. Mawr comes too late. Already identified with death, the principle expressed in her character in the form of usefully destructive "wit," she moves from the English cottage overlooking the churchyard to the withdrawal of her New Mexican hotel room. For her the quality of her living is to be measured by the quality of her dying. She asks: "'Oh, Death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling?'" For the diminution of "sting-a-ling-a-ling" characterizes the meaninglessness of dying in the modern world: "'I want death to be real to me . . . . If it hurts me enough, I shall know I was alive.'"[175]

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[173] T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land, ll. 24-26, in The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 50.

[174] Lawrence, St. Mawr, pp. 66-67.

[175] Ibid., pp. 79-80.

In New Mexico she tells Lou, "'I have come home to die.'"[176] Neither Phoenix nor Lewis can usher in the new world. Lewis serves the phallic mystery of St. Mawr and, recognizing his own priesthood and Mrs. Witt's masculine aggression, rejects her proposal of marriage. Phoenix, whose rodent sexuality is all that remains of the phallic mystery in him, is "ready to trade his sex, which, in his opinion, every white woman was secretly pining for, for the white woman's money and social privileges."[177] Lou, recognizing his motives for what they are, remains a Vestal Virgin, "weary of the embrace of incompetent men, . . . turning to the unseen gods, the unseen spirits, the hidden fire, and devoting herself to that, and that alone."[178] Wilde says that Las Chivas is "bedrock," though Lou's talk of the wild spirit's wanting, needing, and craving for her "provides the one absolutely false note in the novel."[179] But Lawrence is not referring, I think, to the emotions of love, The ranch, on the contrary, is "a world before and after the God of Love."[180] The wild spirit of the land needs Lou, as it needs all in whom the fire of life is not extinguished, for the creative being of the new day. Lawrence ends on a note of affirmation which, it seems to me, he has earned.

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[176] Ibid., p. 123. [177] Ibid., pp. 125-26.

[178] Ibid., p. 128. [179] Wilde, p. 169.

[180] Lawrence, St. Mawr, p. 139.

CHAPTER V

THE SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE OF THE PLUMED SERPENT

The central thematic abstraction of D. H. Lawrence's major and final work of the period, The Plumed Serpent, is the reconciliation of opposites through creative being. H. M. Daleski, summarizing and building upon the observations of earlier critics, suggests that the most striking thing about Lawrence's world view is its dualism. Daleski quotes Henry Miller's statement that "'Phoenix, Crown, Rainbow, Plumed Serpent, all these symbols centre about the same obsessive idea: the resolution of two opposites in the form of a mystery,'"[1] but Daleski thinks that

> the word "resolution," in so far as it implies a dissolution of the opposites, is hardly a happy choice. The relation is a mystery—it is a whole created out of two parts—but Lawrence repeatedly insists that the parts retain their identity, that they are not neutralised in the process.[2]

Daleski cites an instructive passage in Twilight in Italy:

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[1]Henry Miller, "Creative Death," The Wisdom of the Heart (London, 1947), p. 10, as quoted in H. M. Daleski, "The Duality of Lawrence," Modern Fiction Studies, V (No. 1, "D. H. Lawrence Special Number"; Spring, 1959), 5.

[2]Daleski, p. 5.

It is past the time to cease seeking one Infinite, ignoring, striving to eliminate the other. The Infinite is twofold, the Father and the Son, the Dark and the Light, the Senses and the Mind, the Soul and the Spirit, the self and the not-self, the Eagle and the Dove, the Tiger and the Lamb. The consummation of man is twofold, in the Self and in Selflessness. By retrogression back to the source of darkness in me, the Self, deep in the senses, I arrive at the Original, Creative Infinite. By projection forth from myself, by the elimination of my absolute sensual self, I arrive at the Ultimate Infinite, Oneness in the Spirit. They are two Infinites, twofold approach to God. And man must know both.

But he must never confuse them. They are eternally separate. The lion shall never lie down with the lamb. The lion eternally shall devour the lamb, the lamb eternally shall be devoured. Man knows the great consummation in the flesh, the sensual ecstasy, and that is eternal. Also the spiritual ecstasy of unanimity, that is eternal. But the two are separate and never to be confused. To neutralize the one with the other is unthinkable, an abomination. Confusion is horror and nothingness.

The two Infinites, negative and positive, they are always related, but they are never identical. They are always opposite, but there exists a relation between them. This is the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity. And it is this, the relation which is established between the two Infinites, the two natures of God, which we have transgressed, forgotten, sinned against. The Father is the Father, and the Son is the Son. I may know the Son and deny the Father, or know the Father and deny the Son. But that which I may never deny, and which I have denied, is the Holy Ghost which relates the dual Infinites into One Whole, which relates and keeps distinct the dual natures of God. To say that the two are one, this is the inadmissible lie. The two are related, by the intervention of the Third, into a Oneness.

There are two ways, there is not only One. There are two opposite ways to consummation. But that which relates them, like the base of the triangle, this is the constant, the Absolute, this makes the Ultimate Whole. And in the Holy Spirit I know the Two Ways, the Two Infinites, the Two Consummations. And knowing the Two, I admit the Whole. But excluding One, I exclude the Whole. And confusing the two, I make nullity, nihil.[3]

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[3]D. H. Lawrence, <u>Twilight in Italy</u> (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), pp. 57-59.

The Plumed Serpent, intended as an invocation of the "One Wholeness" of the Holy Ghost, was plagued from the outset with division. There was, in Aldington's words, "a gap of nearly eighteen months between the two writings of this book—June, 1923, to October, 1924,"[4] caused by Lawrence's return visit to Europe in the fall of 1923. In the novel itself, the dialectical tension is between a series of paired opposites on varying levels of concretion.

First, the major theme is the attempted resolution of two subsidiary themes: the quest of modern man for salvation from individual isolation in a dissolute society laid waste by the external substitution of mechanized forms for natural forms and the corollary internal substitution of surface sensation for instinctual being, and the possible fulfillment of the quest in the return through ritual to natural forms and instinctual being as a means of regeneration not only for the individual but also for a society of individuals who possess the requisite spiritual fortitude.

Second, these two subsidiary themes are specified in the "double motive" of the novel, as Mary Freeman puts it, "on the one hand to explore for the European those modes of living that he had so carefully denied, and on the other, to suggest a move toward an indigenous Mexican renaissance."[5]

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[4]Richard Aldington, "Introduction" to D. H. Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent (Melbourne, London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), p. vii.

[5]Freeman, p. 181.

Third, this "double motive" gives impetus to a dual movement in narrative progression. As Hough observes:

> there are really two plots. The first is Kate's *Bildungsroman*, or a section of it . . . . This plot . . . is firmly directed to one end—Kate's progress from one mode of life to another. The progress is not uniform—the movement is one of oscillation, and the needle has not ceased to tremble at the end. . . .
>
> Besides this first plot and interwoven with it is another one—the whole story of the Quetzalcoatl movement. . . . More fundamentally, the Quetzalcoatl revival is intended to provide an explanation of the changes that are going on in Kate's nature, the way her sympathy flows and recoils.[6]

Fourth, this dual narrative structure requires the superstructure of two mythic patterns. For the first plot, as Jascha Kessler observes, Lawrence uses the "*separation-initiation-return*" pattern of the monomyth. Though Kate, as archetypal hero, does not make the ritualistic return, her story does comprise, as Kessler says, the first two parts of the formula.[7] For the second plot, Lawrence uses the mythic pantheon of Toltec and Aztec gods of pre-Columbian Mexico, informed, as Tindall shows, by the astrology of Frederick Carter and the theosophy of Mme. Blavatsky.[8]

Fifth, this duo-mythic pattern, through manipulation

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[6] Hough, p. 136.

[7] Kessler, in *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, p. 243.

[8] Tindall, *D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow*, pp. 113-117, 124-61.

of disparate characters, differentiates between white consciousness and dark consciousness for the purpose of lowering the former and elevating the latter. Don Ramon Carrusco and General Cipriano Viedma are the dark opposites of the white Owen Rhys and Bud Villiers. Ramon's second wife, Teresa, is the dark opposite of his first wife, the white Carlota. Juana's dark children are contrasted with Ramon and Carlota's white children. The early Kate of white consciousness finds her reverse counterpart in the dark Juana, and the later Ramon, as leader of the dark religion, finds his reverse counterpart in the Bishop, as leader of the white religion. To make matters more complex, characters within each category are contrasted with each other. Villiers is colder, thus "whiter," than Rhys. Cipriano, despite, or perhaps because of, his early chastity, is both more overtly phallic and more given to blood violence, and thus "darker," than the more spiritual Ramon. Though she is never so "white" in consciousness as Carlota, Kate, even in the last stages of her progressive involvement in the Quetzalcoatl movement, is never so "dark" as either the naturalistically dark Juana or the ideally dark Teresa. In the narrative movement, as the disparity between white consciousness and dark consciousness becomes increasingly apparent, Kate, as the focal character or central intelligence of the novel, oscillates, to borrow Hough's term, in

progressively narrowing circles toward the center of dark consciousness, the dark sun. The fact that Kate's oscillation has not ceased at the end is one of the curious realities of a novel that is chiefly romance.

Sixth, since character is subordinated to symbolic structure, values in the novel, including those associated with specific characters, are presented chiefly through the counters of image, incident, and ritual.

Color imagery immediately reveals the disparity between white and dark consciousness. On her fortieth birthday, Kate reflects prophetically that

> the first half of her life was over. The bright page with its flowers and its love and its stations of the Cross ended with a grave. Now she must turn over, and the page was black, black and empty.[9]

Kate has sat, with Owen Rhys and Bud Villiers, at the bullfight in "reserved seats in the 'Sun,'"[10] where she has been revolted by the display of sensation for the sake of sensation both in the bullring and in the stands. But she has also shivered in the brooding darkness of Mrs. Norris's massive house in Tlacolulu, a symbol of death willed to Mexico by the white Conquistadores: "The square, inner patio, dark, with sun lying on the heavy arches of one side, had pots of red and white flowers, but was ponderous, as

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[9]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 45.

[10]Ibid., p. 1.

if dead for centuries." Though Mrs. Norris, as an archaeologist and as "one of the few individuals," is aware of the life forces, here suggested by the red and white flowers, bougainvillea, and other flowers, and "Aztec cypresses rising to strange dark heights," by which the white culture of Mexico might be revived, she can do nothing, as an old and sick woman, except to remain in her mountain home and "'refuse to be bundled down to Cuernavaca,'"[11] in the sunny valley.

On the plaza in Mexico City, Kate feels that

> It ought to have been all gay, _allegro_, _allegretto_, in that sparkle of bright air and old roof surfaces. But no! There was the dark undertone, the black serpent-like fatality all the time.[12]

This sense of dark fatality, as an undertone in the spiritual potential of the "bright air" and the physical deadness of the "old roof surfaces," foreshadows the regeneration of modern Mexican culture by the return of the dark Aztec gods. As Kate is drawn gradually, almost unconsciously into the Quetzalcoatl movement, this "black, serpent-like fatality" is objectified in the central image of the novel, "the dark sun." Walt Whitman wrote in _Song of Myself_, Section 16, "The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place . . . ."[13] As Lawrence describes it,

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[11] _Ibid_., pp. 26-27. [12] _Ibid_., pp. 44-45.

[13] Walt Whitman, _Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose_, ed. with "Introduction" by John Kouwenhoven (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 37.

"Behind the fierce sun the dark eyes of a deeper sun were watching, and between the bluish ribs of the mountains a powerful heart was secretly beating, the heart of the earth."[14] This "deeper sun" of blood consciousness appears, with the same color imagery, as a religious symbol on Ramon's banner of Quetzalcoatl: "On the blue field of the banneret was the yellow sun with a black centre, and between the four greater yellow rays, four black rays emerging, so that the sun looked like a wheel spinning with a dazzling motion."[15] The flag combines the blue of the sky and the black of the earth, Quetzalcoatl's spiritual component of fidelity and his physical component of instinctual blood passion; more importantly, it reveals the blackness of earth as a physical source of the spiritual energy of the yellow sun. This dark sun is a life-generative force. As the old man of Quetzalcoatl, in his sermon in the plaza at Sayula, relates the myth of creation:

> ". . . one of the gods with hidden faces . . . . looked up at the sun, and through the sun he saw the dark sun, the same that made the sun and the world, and will swallow it again like a draught of water.
>
> "He said: _Is it time_? And from the bright sun the four dark arms of the greater sun shot out, and in the shadow men arose. They could see the four dark arms of the sun in the sky. And they started walking."

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[14]Lawrence, _The Plumed Serpent_, p. 105.

[15]_Ibid_., p. 116.

But despite this creative power of the dark sun, man turned away from its chief prophet, Quetzalcoatl. As the old man explains:

> "So he cried to the Master-Sun, the dark one, of the unuttered name: I am withering white like a perishing gourd-vine. I am turning to bone. I am denied of these Mexicans. I am waste and weary and old. Take me away.
>
> "Then the dark sun reached an arm, and lifted Quetzalcoatl into the sky. And the dark sun beckoned with a finger, and brought white men out of the east. And they came with a dead god on the Cross, saying: Lo! This is the Son of God! He is dead, he is bone! Lo, your god is bled and dead, he is bone."

Quetzalcoatl himself withered white, the old man says, because he was betrayed by men who turned from his religious principle of dark, instinctual being, taming "the snake of their body" by will, which is equated throughout the novel with whiteness, and degenerating, as a result, from blood consciousness to blood lust.[16] Miss Séjourné interprets the betrayal of Quetzalcoatl politically. The concept of human sacrifice as replenishing the sun is itself the degenerate form in superstition of an earlier spiritual ideal:

> The exalted revelation of the eternal unity of the spirit was converted into a principle of cosmic anthropophagy. The liberation of the individual, the separate "I", came to be understood with crude literalness only, and achieved through ritual killings, which in their turn fomented wars.
>
> . . . .
>
> As seems usual in despotic systems, the Aztec state was founded on a spiritual inheritance which it betrayed and transformed into a weapon of worldly power.[17]

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[16] Ibid., pp. 118-20. [17] Séjourné, p. 28.

Lawrence, on the other hand, interprets the betrayal psychologically. As the old man expresses it: "'And when they could not bear the fire of the sun, they said: The sun is angry. He wants to drink us up. Let us give him blood of victims.'"[18] The spiritual energy of light, the yellow sun, has whitened abnormally into a repressive force which has diverted the instinctual physical energy of darkness, the dark sun, from creative being to destructive perversion. The Mexicans, having acquired a white will, are ready for Christ, whom Lawrence identifies as the white man's god of death. With the rebirth of Quetzalcoatl in the figure of Ramon, however, the physical energy of the dark sun is restored and the spiritual energy of the yellow sun resumes its normal function. The two suns, though revolving in different directions, as symbolized in the counter motions of the inner and outer circles of the dance of the men and women of Quetzalcoatl, revolve in an harmonious pattern. With this integration of the two diverse functions of spiritual and physical energy, creative being is again possible. Susanne K. Langer's comments on dance are relevant to Lawrence's double circle dance:

> Because dance-gesture is symbolic, objectified, every dance which is to have balletic significance primarily for the people engaged in it is necessarily ecstatic.

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[18] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 120.

> It must take the dancer "out of himself," and it may do this by an astounding variety of means: . . . most primitive and natural of all—by weaving the "magic circle" round the altar or the deity, whereby every dancer is exalted at once to the status of a mystic. His every motion becomes dance-gesture because he has become a spirit, a dance-personage . . . .[19]

When a dark man leads Kate "toward the inner fire" of the dance, she feels "a virgin again, a young virgin." Kate sees in the lowered, expressionless, abstract faces of the dancers "the greater, not the lesser sex."[20]

The Quetzalcoatl movement, it must be admitted, is not without its problems. The white consciousness remains in many individuals. Kate is wheeled, as in the dance, progressively toward the dark inner sun; but the outer sun, in its reverse motion, also plays its light upon her. She feels that "These men wanted to take her _will_ away from her, as if they wanted to deny her the light of day."[21] Sometimes when Kate's will diverts her from the greater to the lesser sexuality, she desires "the white ecstasy of frictional satisfaction." But when she foregoes "conscious 'satisfaction,'" "What happened was dark and untellable." That is, by foregoing clitoral orgasm, she achieves vaginal orgasm. Though she is sometimes "Aphrodite of the foam,"[22] she is becoming Malintzi of

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[19]Susanne K. Langer, _Feeling and Form_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 196-97.

[20]_Ibid._, pp. 125-27. [21]_Ibid._, p. 182.

[22]_Ibid._, pp. 420-21.

the green leaves, a goddess who does not appear in the Aztec pantheon but who, Tindall thinks, is "the result of a casual union in Lawrence's fancy between two persons mentioned by Prescott, Metzli the moon and Malinche the mistress of Cortes."[23] As Malintzi, Kate can counter Cipriano-Huitzilopochtli's blood sacrifice with redemptive pardon and rebirth, a contrast in function signaled in their second meeting by Kate's insistence that she "'would like to give them hope'" and Cipriano's view that "'They have some other strength, perhaps.'"[24] This "other strength" for Cipriano, who evolves, fittingly, from general of the army to war god, lies in the blood, as suggested by his color red, and, if necessary, in blood sacrifice, as suggested by his color black. Kate's renewed virginity and spiritual strength are connoted in the white dress and yellow shawl that she wears to the opening of the Church of Quetzalcoatl in Sayula, where she presents a striking contrast to Carlota, whose black dress suggests, along with her name, historically despised in Mexico as a symbol of white repression, her hysterical behavior, and her death, the "last station of the Cross" of white consciousness,[25]

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[23]Tindall, D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow, p. 117.

[24]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 34.

[25]Ibid., pp. 333-50.

The disparity between white consciousness and dark consciousness, signaled in the imagery, is further established by incident. Contrasting attitudes in the two modal worlds toward the counters of violence and nakedness provide insight into the distinction Lawrence makes between surface sensation and instinctual being—the distinction, that is, between blood lust and blood consciousness.

The "grotesque and effeminate [matadors] in tight, ornate clothes . . . . With their rather fat posteriors and their squiffs of pigtails"[26] are effectively contrasted with the small, lean, masculine Cipriano when, as Huitzilopochtli in his role of executioner, he stands "stripped of his blanket, his body . . . painted in horizontal bars of red and black, while from his mouth went a thin green line, and from his eyes a band of yellow."[27] The matadors practice "Human cowardice and beastliness"[28] in torturing the bulls and allowing the horses to be gored so cruelly, whereas Cipriano "swift as lightning . . . stabbed the blindfolded men to the heart with three swift, heavy stabs"[29] in what Lawrence intends as the nobly performed execution of traitors in the efficacious ritual of blood sacrifice. The

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[26]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[27]*Ibid.*, p. 370.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 379.

conduct of the disorderly mob at the bullfight is in contrast to that of Huitzilopochtli's men at the execution. The bullfight mob screams and jostles and throws orange and banana peels and hats.[30] Outside, "Two men stood making water against the wall, in the interval of their excitement."[31] Sexual perversion and sterility, as products of the imbalance of white consciousness, are suggested by Kate's opinion that "these precious toreadors" look "like eunuchs, or women in tight pants"[32] and by the image of the horse "with its hind-quarters hitched up and the horn of the bull goring slowly and rhythmically in its vitals."[33] This image of anal perversion is paralleled after the attack on Jamiltepec in the attitude of one of the bandits at death:

> The bandit dropped on his knees again, and remained for a moment kneeling as if in prayer, the red pommel of the knife sticking out of his abdomen, from his white trousers. Then he slowly bowed over, doubled up, and went on his face again, once more with his buttocks in the air.

Ramon, in contrast to the bull in the parallel scene with the horse, simply lifts the man's chin and swiftly drives the knife into his throat.[34] If blood sacrifice is necessary, this is the way it is done in the dark consciousness.

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[30] _Ibid_., pp. 4-5.

[31] _Ibid_., p. 15.

[32] _Ibid_., p. 8.

[33] _Ibid_., p. 14.

[34] _Ibid_., pp. 293-94.

It is significant that after both forms of violence, the bullfight and the killing of the bandits, a healing, life-renewing rain falls. But after the heated excitement of the bullfight the rain is icy,[35] whereas after Ramon's cool defense of Jamiltepec the blood is washed "down into the cistern" so that "There will be blood in the water" they drink.[36]

The viewing of nakedness as a violation of physical trust is contrasted with the viewing of nakedness in instinctual innocense. The "full-fleshed, deep chested, rich body" of Ramon, with its "soft, cream-brown skin" and its "smooth, pure sensuality," makes Kate "shudder" and "feel dizzy." Seeing his nakedness from the waist up, Kate, like Salome looking at John, cannot resist the "violation" of looking "with prying eyes" as she imagines "a knife stuck between those pure, male shoulders." Kate's second husband, of course, was Joachim; hence, she as Salome bears some responsibility for his death. Ramon is really "like a pomegranate on a dark tree in the distance, naked, but not undressed!" Kate recognizes that it is "Better to lapse away from one's own prying assertive self, into the soft, untrespassing self, to whom nakedness is neither shame nor excitement, but clothed like a flower

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 14. [36] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

in its own deep, soft consciousness, beyond cheap awareness." "The itching, prurient, knowing, imagining eye" is the "curse of Eve." "'Ah!'" Kate says to herself, "'Let me close my eyes to him, and open only my soul.'" Carlota, herself unable to bear any longer the surface sensation with which she responds to her husband's nakedness, asks him to "'put something on.'"[37] Indian women, in contrast to the white women, throughout the novel observe nakedness without a flicker of prurience. As Kate's consciousness slowly evolves from white to dark, her feeling about nakedness changes. When she marries Cipriano, both he and Ramon are naked to the waist.[38] The responsibility for maintaining instinctual innocence rests with the individual, whether voyeur or object. The "chief toreador, . . . lying on his bed all dressed up, smoking a fat cigar," seems to Villiers "'Rather like a male Venus who is never undressed.'"[39] The prurience of both is evident. Ramon, in contrast to the toreador, strips to the waist to kill the bandits,[40] and Cipriano and his guards strip to the waist to execute the traitors,[41] thus differentiating between blood lust and blood sacrifice.

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[37] Ibid., pp. 179-82. [38] Ibid., p. 326.

[39] Ibid., p. 21. [40] Ibid., p. 290.

[41] Ibid., p. 370.

Nakedness as an expression of instinctual innocence in the ritual of Quetzalcoatl is seen first in the stranger's rising naked from the lake to announce the return of the ancient gods,[42] then in Quetzalcoatl's man's rising naked from the lake to ask Kate's tribute to the god.[43] It is reflected in the ritualistic stripping to the waist of all the men of Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli on the occasion of any formal rite.

The inverse parallel that Lawrence draws between the Christianity of white consciousness and the Aztec religion of dark consciousness recalls the inversions of Christian forms in the Witches' Sabbath or Black Mass. As George Lyman Kittredge describes the practice: "The rites are in elaborate profanation of Christian ceremonies, which they reverse or parody or burlesque."[44] In The Plumed Serpent the motif has the same function as the inversions in medieval charms against evil. Kittredge relates the superstitious beliefs that a fairy's or witch's spell could be reversed by turning one's coat inside out[45] and that a witch's power could be destroyed

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[42]Ibid., p. 51. [43]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[44]George Lyman Kittredge, Witchcraft in Old and New England (New York: Russell and Russell, 1956), p. 243.

[45]Ibid., p. 215.

by a charm which included repeating the Lord's prayer backwards.[46] Lawrence's Black Mass motif is intended to destroy or reverse the power that emanates from Christianity itself. The motif is thematically functional in Kate's _Bildungsroman_, for, as Jules Michelet observes: "The _Black Mass_, in its primary aspect," purposes the "redemption of Eve from the curse Christianity had laid upon her."[47] Rather than parodying only the Mass, Lawrence draws an inverse parallel between the two myths _in toto_ to the end of exalting the Aztec myth and diminishing the Christian myth. Representing both myths as his purpose suited, Lawrence at times misrepresents both but probably does more violence to Aztec than to Christian concepts.

Following his customary practice, Lawrence employs the Christian tradition that all pagan gods are manifestations of the devil. He saturates his discussion of the Aztec revival with the Satanic colors of red and black and the Satanic imagery of fire and serpent, which, though drawn from Aztec mythology, serve a dual function. To reinforce his meaning, Lawrence adds direct statement almost too literal to be called metaphor. The boatman who rows Kate down the Lake of Sayula has a "peculiar devilish

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[46] _Ibid_., p. 103.

[47] Jules Michelet, _Satanism and Witchcraft: A Study in Medieval Superstition_, trans. A. R. Allinson (New York: The Citadel Press, 1939), p. 102.

half-smile lurking under his face."[48] Kate thinks of the Indians, "'they're like demons.'"[49] Ramon says of himself, "'Give the devil his dues.'"[50] Cipriano remarks, "'My manhood is like a devil inside me,'" and Ramon replies, "'It's very true.'" Ramon's own manhood, he says, "'is like a demon howling inside me,'" and against Carlota's repressive force he rages "like the devil."[51] At Cipriano and Kate's wedding, Cipriano's face "is the face at once of a god and a devil, the undying Pan face." Kate calls him, "'My demon lover!'"[52] After the wedding, one of the women of Quetzalcoatl boils water into which she flings white powder and "yellow-brown flowers . . . as if she were a witch brewing decoctions."[53]

Lawrence's inverse parallel of the two myths begins with the rebirth of Quetzalcoatl. As the angels descended from the sky and announced to the shepherds: "Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, . . . For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11), so "a man of great stature" rises naked from the Lake of Sayula and says to the alarmed washerwomen on

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[48]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 102.

[49]Ibid., 105.

[50]Ibid., p. 164.

[51]Ibid., p. 189.

[52]Ibid., pp. 308-309.

[53]Ibid., p. 321.

shore, "'"Why are you crying? Be quiet! . . . Your gods are ready to return to you."'"[54] Christ was born of a virgin (Luke 1:26-35), and so, according to Miss Séjourné, were Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli:

> In the Annals of Cuauhtitlan we read: ". . . it is said that the mother of Quetzalcoatl conceived because she swallowed an emerald stone." Huitzilopochtli's mother found herself pregnant after having in her bosom a white feather she had found while sweeping the temple. It would therefore seem that, as in the Christian mystery of the Incarnation, the spirit falls from on high to penetrate the body of a woman.[55]

It suits Lawrence's purpose for Quetzalcoatl to arise, in a phallic miracle, from the lake of "frail-rippling, sperm-like water,"[56] the "lymphatic milk of fishes."[57] Whereas Simon Peter said to Jesus, "thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68), Ramon says, "'The roots and the life are there. What else it needs is the word, for the forest to begin to rise again. And some man among men must speak the word.'"[58] In Christian tradition, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1); Kate says to Ramon, "'I love the _word_ Quetzalcoatl,'" and he replies, "'The _word_!'"[59]

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[54] _Ibid._, p. 51. [55] Séjourné, p. 56.

[56] Lawrence, _The Plumed Serpent_, p. 89.

[57] _Ibid._, p. 94. [58] _Ibid._, p. 76.

[59] _Ibid._, p. 56.

Lawrence, like the author of the Gospel according to John, is working with the mythic concept of what Campbell calls "creation from the word, through naming the name,"[60] the same concept that T. S. Eliot uses in the plea, "but speak the word only," in Ash-Wednesday.[61] Both religions emphasize rebirth. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Kate believes, "Ye must be born again. Even the gods must be born again."[62] Christ promised, "I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3), and Lawrence arranges for Ramon to fulfill the Aztec prophecy that Quetzalcoatl would return.[63] Ramon tells Kate, "'Ah, it is time now for Jesus to go back to the place of the death of the gods, and take the long bath of being made young again.'"[64] Baptism is a ritual of both religions. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan (Mark 1:9-10) and instituted the sacrament of baptism to the remission of sins and spiritual rebirth: "Therefore we are buried with

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[60] Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology, p. 86.

[61] T. S. Eliot, Ash-Wednesday, l. 119, in The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950, p. 63.

[62] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 54.

[63] Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology, p. 460.

[64] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 57.

him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). According to Miss Séjourné, the Aztecs also had a sacrament of baptism to the remission of sins, thus revealing "an unsuspected level of inner development: purification and humility being the fundamentals of any true religious life."[65] In The Plumed Serpent the sacrament of baptism is parodied as Ramon and Cipriano swim together in the Lake of Sayula,[66] as Cipriano orders his men to "strip and wash,"[67] and as Kate, on her arrival at the lake, takes her ritual bath in the sperm-like water.[68] Lawrence uses baptism as a sacrament of rebirth in the Laurentian spiritual value of blood consciousness. Prayer in both religions is best prayed in private. Jesus taught, "when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret" (Matthew 6:6). Ramon's habit is to go to his room and close the windows and shutters, making it quite dark. But there the similarity between the two forms of prayer ends. The Christian prayer is the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13),

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[65] Séjourné, p. 9.

[66] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 367.

[67] Ibid., p. 364. [68] Ibid., p. 93.

and Miss Séjourné says that "prayer and penitence formed the very nucleus of Quetzalcoatl's teaching."[69] But Lawrence describes Ramon's prayer as follows:

> He took off his clothes, and in the darkness thrust his clenched fists upwards above his head, in a terrible tension of stretched, upright prayer. In his eyes was only darkness, and slowly the darkness revolved in his brain, too, till he was mindless. Only a powerful will stretched itself and quivered from his spine in an immense tension of prayer. Stretched the invisible bow of the body in the darkness with inhuman tension, erect, till the arrows of the soul, mindless, shot to the mark, and the prayer reached its goal.[70]

The word "will" is instructive, not only because it signals the opposite of the Christian's "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10) but also because by using it together with the highly sexually connotative words of the description, Lawrence unintentionally but revealingly evokes an image of that Laurentian anathema, psychic masturbation. Far from being penitential, Ramon's is a "proud prayer" which Ramon more and more ritualizes as physical gesture:

> Then suddenly, in a concentration of intense, proud prayer, he flung his right arm up above his head, and stood transfixed, his left arm hanging softly by his side, the fingers touching his thigh. And on his face that fixed, intense look of pride which was at once a prayer.[71]

Whereas Christians pray, "Give us this day our daily bread: . . . . And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us

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[69]Séjourné, p. 27.

[70]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 166.

[71]*Ibid*., p. 169.

from evil" (Matthew 6:11-13), Kate prays, without Ramon's physical gestures, "Give me the mystery and let the world live again for me! . . . And deliver me from man's automatism."[72] Carlota, Ramon's Christian wife, who believes that Ramon's pride places him "'in mortal sin,'"[73] crawls down the aisle of the Church of Sayula at its reopening as the church of Quetzalcoatl, crying hysterically:

> "Lord! Lord Jesus! Make an end. Make an end, Lord of the world, Christ of the cross, make an end. Have mercy on him, Father. Have pity on him!
> "Oh, take his life from him now, now, that his soul may not die."[74]

Kate, on the other hand, prays over the unconscious Ramon after the attack on Jamiltepec: "Oh, God! give the man his soul back, into this bloody body. Let the soul come back, or the universe will be cold for me and for many men."[75] Christianity, Lawrence is saying, affirms death of body and life of soul, whereas Ramon's religion of Quetzalcoatl affirms life of body and soul together. Grace, in the Christian view, abounds as the result of the reversal of the effects of Adam's disobedience in Christ's obedience to God, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21).

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[72] Ibid., p. 101.

[73] Ibid., p. 186.

[74] Ibid., p. 340.

[75] Ibid., p. 297.

But Kate's grace comes from sharing consciousness, along with oranges and sandwiches, with her Indian boatmen, a "communion of grace" expressed in the sexual terms of the dark consciousness: "We are living! I know your sex, and you know mine. The mystery we are glad not to meddle with. You leave me my natural honour, and I thank you for the grace." The "pathos of grace" is "not of the spirit" but of the "dark, strong, unbroken blood, the flowering of the soul."[76] Rather than from righteousness, this grace comes from the very opposite: As Ramon says, "these people don't assert any righteousness of their own . . . . That makes me think that grace is still with them."[77] Christ, who is called the "Prince of Peace," in the Sermon on the Mount says: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5) and "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Ramon says:

> "The meek have inherited the earth, according to prophecy.. But who am I, that I should envy them their peace? . . . . Do I look like a gospel of peace?—or a gospel of war either? Life doesn't split down that division for me."[78]

Nevertheless, Ramon, who leads a revolution against the state and the state religion of Roman Catholicism, gains political power over all Mexico by means of war. Nor is

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[76] Ibid., p. 103. [77] Ibid., p. 207.

[78] Ibid., pp. 184-85.

Cipriano, his hatchet-man, scrupulous about war crimes:

> He stripped his captives and tied them up. But if it seemed a brave man, he would swear him in. If it seemed to him a knave, a treacherous cur, he stabbed him to the heart, saying:
> "I am the red Huitzilopochtli, of the knife."[79]

Thus, the revolution, in at least this respect, goes the way of many historical Latin American revolutions. Miss Séjourné, who says that Quetzalcoatl was originally a Nahuatl god of an older spiritual order, makes a pertinent comment on the perversion and betrayal of his spiritual principles in the power politics of the Aztec empire:

> . . . it seems evident that the Aztecs acted simply from political motives. To take their religious explanations of war seriously is to fall into a trap of State propaganda. Their lying formulae are shown up by one fact. The Aztec nobles were never themselves impatient to achieve the Solar glory in whose name they were slaughtering humanity. Their lust for life equalled their desire for power. If they had really believed that the one aim of existence was to give up their lives, sacrifice would not have been limited to supposedly inferior beings—slaves and prisoners—but would have been a privilege of the "elite". In fact everything points to the conclusion that the Aztec lords, although brought up in the doctrine of Quetzalcoatl, which taught men that inner perfection and spiritual sacrifice were supreme goals, had come to think of ritual slaughter only as a political necessity.[80]

The modern state religion of Ramon and Cipriano derives, it is clear, not from the spiritual Nahuas but from the pragmatic Aztecs. Christ, tempted by Satan, said, "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 364. [80] Séjourné, p. 35.

every word of God" (Luke 4:3-4), but when Kate rejects the "dingy-looking tortilla" that Concha thrusts at her, the girl laughs stridently, "'Don't you want it? Don't you eat it?'" and thinks, "She was one of those who won't eat bread: say they don't like it, that it is not food."[81] Whereas Jesus told Simon and Andrew, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17), Ramon tells his followers, "'We will be masters among men, and lords among men. But lords of men, and masters of men we will not be.'"[82] Jesus promised a heavenly reward in the after life (John 15:3), but Ramon, in his first sermon, says, "'There is no Before and After, there is only Now'"[83] Carlota places Christian emphasis on charity (1 Corinthians 13:1-13), but Ramon tells her that "'the white Anti-Christ of Charity, and socialism, and politics, and reform, will only succeed in finally destroying'" Mexico.[84] Christ, tempted by Satan with the promise of power over "all the kingdoms of the world" in return for worshipping Satan, replied: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:5-8). Ramon, similarly, says: "'I don't want to

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[81]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 210.

[82]Ibid., p. 175. [83]Ibid., p. 172.

[84]Ibid., p. 206.

acquire a political smell. . . . It is not myself. It is the new spirit.'"[85] Jesus had "the disciple . . . whom he loved" (John 19:26), and Ramon has Martin, his mozo, "the man who loved him."[86] Finally, in the Christian tradition, Christ at his coming dispelled the pagan gods, whereas in _The Plumed Serpent_ it is the pagan gods who dispel Christ and the Blessed Virgin. The Christian tradition is seen, for example, in Milton's "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Stanzas XVIII-XXVI. In Milton's ode:

> . . . from this happy day
> Th' old Dragon underground,
> In straiter limits bound,
> Not half so far casts his usurped sway . . . .[87]

In the first hymn of Quetzalcoatl, conversely, Christ is quoted as saying:

> _My name is Jesus, I am Mary's Son._
> _I am coming home._
> _My mother the Moon is dark._
> _Oh brother, Quetzalcoatl_
> _Hold back the dragon of the sun,_
> _Bind him with shadow while I pass_
> _Homewards. Let me come home._[88]

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[85] _Ibid._, p. 243. [86] _Ibid._, p. 190.

[87] John Milton, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," ll. 167-70, in _Complete Poems and Major Prose_, ed. with "Introduction" by Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 47.

[88] Lawrence, _The Plumed Serpent_, p. 115.

In the second hymn of Quetzalcoatl, Christ laments:

> "'The images stand in their churches, Oh Quetzalcoatl, they don't know that I and my Mother have departed. They are angry souls, Brother, my Lord! They vent their anger. They broke my Churches, they stole my strength, they withered the lips of the Virgin. They drove us away, and we crept away like a tottering old man and a woman, tearless and bent double with age. So we fled while they were not looking. And we seek but rest, to forget for ever the children of men who have swallowed the stone of despair.'"[89]

But "turbulent fellows" burlesque Ramon's idea of the death and resurrection of the gods by invading one of the churches and throwing out the Christian images, hanging in their place the "gaudily-varnished dolls of papier-mache" representing Judas, which Mexicans explode during Easter week. This is contrary to Ramon's plan. He expresses his regrets to the Bishop,[90] and in a ceremony described as "reverent" he removes the tawdry Christian images from the Church of Sayula,[91] burns them on the rocks by the lake,[92] and subsequently reopens the church with images of Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli.[93]

The first worship service of Ramon as Quetzalcoatl, like the Witches' Sabbath, presents a reverse parody of the Mass. The Introit opens with a Kyrie, "'Oye! Oye! Oye! Oye!'" followed by a Gloria indicating that Ramon has

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[89] Ibid., pp. 224-25.

[90] Ibid., pp. 258-62.

[91] Ibid., pp. 279-80.

[92] Ibid., p. 283.

[93] Ibid., p. 336.

forgotten all about his earlier goal of being a "lord among men," not a "lord of men":

> "Mary and Jesus have left you, and gone to the place of renewal.
> And Quetzalcoatl has come. He is here.
> He is your lord."

The Litany is parodied in the repetition by the Guard of Quetzalcoatl of almost everything Ramon says, and the Collect in the upright prayer, which appears here as a salute. There is a sermon by Ramon as "the living Quetzalcoatl," followed by the Offertory: "'A man shall take the wine of his spirit and the blood of his heart, the oil of his belly and the seed of his loins and offer them first to the Morning Star."[94] These four essences represent, rather directly, the four dynamic centers of Lawrence's theory of personality. Despite Lawrence's protestations in the "Foreword" to Fantasia of the Unconscious that his "pseudo-philosophy . . . is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse,"[95] he is here attempting to deduce a novelistic element from the theory, which has now hardened into a reified object of mind. To put it another way, he is attempting the very "idealism" he so heartily condemns in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, "the motivizing of the great affective sources by means of

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[94] Ibid., pp. 334-39.

[95] Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious, p. 57.

ideas mentally derived."[96] Ramon, as celebrant of the Black Mass of Quetzalcoatl, mixes the yellow, red, black and white liquids symbolizing the four essences. Then, instead of facing the congregation as a Christian priest does,

> . . . he turned his back to the people and lifted the bowl high up between his hands, as if offering it to the image.
>
> Then suddenly he threw the contents of the bowl into the altar fire.[97]

There is a concluding prayer, another salute, a Last Gospel, "'The Omnipotent . . . is with me, and I serve Omnipotence!'" and a Concluding Hymn.[98]

Traditionally the Witches' Sabbath includes the defloration of a virgin. According to Michelet, "the woman . . . was at once altar and sacrifice."[99] In The Plumed Serpent this element is reserved for a later chapter. After Cipriano, who seems to Kate "to be driving the male significance to its utmost, and beyond, with a sort of demonism,"[100] has executed the traitors, he takes Kate to the church, where, before the black idol, he "held her hand in silence, till she was Malintzi, and virgin for him" and their "two flames rippled in oneness."[101] In

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[96] Lawrence, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p. 11.

[97] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 339.

[98] Ibid., p. 341.

[99] Michelet, p. 107.

[100] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, pp. 384-85.

[101] Ibid., p. 392.

Lawrence Durrell's Balthazar, one of the characters is a writer to whom D. H. Lawrence is supposed to have written: "'In you I feel a sort of profanity—almost a hate for the tender growing quick in things, the dark gods . . . .'" The man replies on a post-card: "'My dear DHL. This side idolatry—I am simply trying not to copy your habit of building a Taj Mahal around anything as simple as a good f—k.'"[102] Durrell's parody is not entirely just, but with its reference to "dark gods" and "idolatry" it is a particularly appropriate comment on the scene in the church. Perhaps an even better comment is Lawrence's own parody of Franklin's virtue of chastity. The "venery" in front of the black idol is a complete reification of Lawrence's description of sexual intercourse as "An offering-up of yourself to the very great gods, the dark ones, and nothing else."[103] In its reification, furthermore, it seems, if not downright obsessive, then something less than spontaneous. Lawrence violates his own injunction against using sex for motives other than one's own "passional impulse."

Vivas ably demonstrates the correctness of his thesis that "In his treatment of the Catholic Church,

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[102] Lawrence Durrell, Balthazar (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 113-14.

[103] Lawrence, Classic American Literature, p. 28.

Lawrence was plainly beyond his depth."[104] Lawrence's preconceptions about the relationship between the common people of Mexico and the church "blinded him": "His notion that Jesus is not a Saviour to the Mexicans is a theory made up entirely out of his own head, and one that has very little to do with Mexican reality." Whatever theological distinctions the church makes between prayers to God and prayers to the saints, the Indians did not turn their intelligence to such subtleties and their conversion was, in effect, "the exchange of one polytheism for another." The bleeding "Spanish Christ," in addition, "was made to order for a people who were as obsessed with death and blood as the aboriginal Mexicans." Furthermore, even in the twentieth century, "in rural areas of Middle America the old pagan and the Christian religions live in comfortable symbiotic relationship."[105] Vivas believes that assertions about literal reality, though irrelevant to the evaluation of most novels, are relevant to the evaluation of _The Plumed Serpent_ in the light of Lawrence's comments in a letter to Martin Secker in October, 1925: "Tell the man, very nice man, in your office, I _do_ mean what Ramon means—for all of us."[106]

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[104] Vivas, p. 77. [105] _Ibid_., pp. 81-84.

[106] Lawrence, _Letters_, ed. Aldous Huxley, p. 648.

One need adduce no evidence from the literal reality of Mexican Catholicism, however, to find the interview between Ramon and the Bishop, which Father Tiverton thinks is "the dramatic centre of the novel,"[107] plainly incredible. Lawrence intends Ramon to affirm the mythic identity of all gods as well as the need of the natives of each place to identify themselves with the spirit of that place as embodied in the indigenous gods. Ramon is supposed to be a literate and dynamic leader, but his remark about how "'Catholic Church means the Church of All, the Universal Church'" is just sophomoric and fatuous. The Bishop is supposed to be a Roman Catholic prelate of some stature, but his answer to Ramon, "'I do not understand these clever things you are saying to me,'" unless he is being cruelly facetious, is inane. The one believable exchange between the two follows Ramon's announcement that he intends to expropriate the Church at Sayula. The Bishop reminds him that "'it is illegal,'" and Ramon, who has already intimidated the Bishop with Cipriano's presence as General Viedma, replies with a threat: "'What is illegal in Mexico? . . . What is weak is illegal. I will not be weak.'"[108]

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[107] Tiverton, p. 71.

[108] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, pp. 261-63.

It is Cipriano's army, in fact, that conquers Mexico, not the dark gods. If some of the hymns of Quetzalcoatl, the circle dance and a few symbols are artistically passable, much of the ritual is claptrap. And when one sees pseudo-religious claptrap being used as propaganda in support of a war machine, one is hardly surprised to find people responding as puppets of the state rather than as free individuals in such instances of mass hypnosis as Ramon's parody of the Mass:

> In three successive instants the faces of the men inside the chancel were lit bluish, then gold, then dusky red. And in the same moment Ramon had turned to the people and shot up his hand.
> "Salute Quetzalcoatl!" cried a voice, and men began to thrust up their arms . . . .[109]

One is surprised at neither Cipriano's militarism nor the guards' automatism on the occasion of the execution of the captive prisoners:

> Cipriano: "When many men come against one, what is the name of the many?"
> Guards: "Cowards, my Lord."
> Cipriano: "Cowards it is. They are less than men. Men that are less than men are not good enough for the light of the sun. If men that are men will live, men that are less than men must be put away, lest they multiply too much. Men that are more than men have the judgment of men that are less than men. Shall they die?"
> Guards: "They shall surely die, my Lord."[110]

Obsessed with the question, Kate wonders, "Why should I judge him? He is of the gods. . . . What do I care if he

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[109] Ibid., p. 339. [110] Ibid., p. 377.

kills people?" Her repeated protestations to her conscience show that she, along with Lawrence, is still ambivalent.[111] But it is already too late, one fears, at least where this novel is concerned, for the word of caution that Durrell's character writes to Lawrence: "'Maître, Maître, watch your step. No-one can go on being a rebel too long without turning into an autocrat.'"[112]

When a symbolic structure is so carefully founded as that of The Plumed Serpent, it is difficult to see how the work could go so wrong in novelistic detail. Both the theme and the symbols by which it is concretized are worthy of serious consideration on literary merit alone. A reconciliation of the opposites of white consciousness and dark consciousness can be effected, Lawrence implies, only through creative being. Existence is italicized in Ramon's first sermon:

> "I always am . . . .
> "As a man in a deep sleep knows not, but is, so is the Snake of the coiled cosmos, wearing its plasm.
> "As a man in a deep sleep has no to-morrow, no yesterday, nor to-day, but only is, so is the limpid far-reaching Snake of the eternal Cosmos, Now, and for ever Now.
> . . . .
> In the dreamless Now, I am."[113]

The nature of this creative being is stated metaphorically

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[111] Ibid., p. 392. [112] Durrell, p. 115.

[113] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, pp. 172-73.

in various symbols of unity. If Quetzalcoatl is a god, he must be "Lord of the Two Ways."[114] Miss Séjourné confirms that "the spiritual message of Quetzalcoatl deals with the resolution of the painful problem of human duality,"[115] that is, of the conflict between flesh and spirit. Ramon accordingly must invoke both the snake of the earth and the bird of the sky:

> "Serpent of the earth, . . . Snake of the fire at the heart of the world, come! come! Snake of the fire at the heart of the world, coil like gold round my ankles, and rise like life around my knee, and lay your head in my hand, cradle your head in my fingers, snake of the deep."[116]

> "Come, then, Bird of the great sky! . . . . Come! Oh Bird, settle a moment on my wrist, over my head, and give me power of the sky, and wisdom . . . ."[117]

Hence, the posture of Ramon's naked, proud, physical prayer is upright with right arm raised to receive the bird of the spirit on the wrist and with left arm hanging loosely to receive the snake of the flesh in the hand. Hence, also, the Eye of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent symbol, joins the attributes of bird and snake.

The result of the reconciliation between flesh and spirit is the achievement of centrality. If Kate sees "in the eyes of so many white people, the look of nullity,"

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[114] Ibid., p. 253.

[115] Séjourné, p. 64.

[116] Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 193.

[117] Ibid., p. 195.

she also observes that "The strange, soft flame of courage in the black Mexican eyes . . . was not knit to a centre, that centre which is the soul of a man in a man."[118] Man, as Kate discovers, is "not created ready-made": "Men and women had incomplete selves, made up of bits assembled together loosely and somewhat haphazard."[119] Through religious ritual, Ramon hopes to unify the pieces, to aid man in his self-creation. He advises his followers: "'And let your navel know nothing of yesterday, and go into your women with a new body, enter the new body in her.'"[120] Centrality is revealed in the equilibrium of star balance, a concept held over from Women in Love:

> "The Morning Star and the Evening Star shine together.
> For man is the Morning Star.
> And woman is the Star of Evening."[121]

The sexual union of male and female, so long as the two roles are maintained in star balance, is sacramental. At the wedding of Cipriano and Kate, he is her "'rain from heaven,'" she is his "'earth'"; he kisses her brow and breast, she kisses his feet and heels.[122] As Teresa recognizes, man is a "'column of blood'" and woman a "'valley of blood.'"[123]

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[118] Ibid., pp. 73-74.
[119] Ibid., p. 102.
[120] Ibid., p. 197.
[121] Ibid., p. 338.
[122] Ibid., p. 327.
[123] Ibid., p. 410.

The concept of centrality is expressed appropriately in circle imagery. If the circle itself can be called a Jungian *mandala* symbol, the archetype whereby the self seeks to unify the various components of the personality,[124] Lawrence places within this magic circle a divine center, the mythic construct of the World Navel. Mircea Eliade formulates the architectonic symbolism of the Center as follows:

> 1. The Sacred Mountain—where heaven and earth meet—is situated at the center of the world.
> 2. Every temple or palace—and, by extension, every sacred city or royal residence—is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center.
> 3. Being an *axis mundi*, the sacred city or temple is regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell.[125]

Furthermore, since "Every creation repeats the pre-eminent cosmogonic act, the Creation of the world," "Whatever is founded has its foundation at the center of the world (since . . . the Creation itself took place from a center.)"[126] Thus, in *The Plumed Serpent*, the achievement of centrality —in the eyes, in the navel, in the circle dance, in the dark sun, in the self—is, mythically, the repetition of divine creation, the achievement of godhead through creation of the self.

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[124]Hall and Lindzey, pp. 83-85.

[125]Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Brothers, Harper Torchbooks, 1954), p. 12.

[126]*Ibid*., p. 18.

What went wrong in the novel, for all Lawrence's carefully founded symbolic structure, was, finally, unity—the coherence of components in that artistic integrity lacking which any work of art, whatever the quality of its parts, is doomed to a measure of failure. In The Plumed Serpent this failure makes impossible the realization of the central theme of the reconciliation of opposites through creative being. The positive values of the novel are those of Lawrence's dynamic metaphysic. First, Kate's oscillating response to the revival of the Aztec gods reflects change and growth. Second, the tentativeness of the typically Laurentian ending that leaves unanswered the question of whether Kate will remain in Mexico reflects imperfection and diversity. Third, the moral and psychic energy which went into the creation of such cosmic symbols of unity as the dark sun behind the yellow sun, the double circle dance, and the plumed serpent reflects the creative imagination and the unconscious mind. But mitigating against Lawrence's romanticism are the negative values of the novel, those of the static metaphysic. First, the fact that the Aztec revival, far from being the spontaneous expression of popular feeling, is actually carefully staged reflects, rather than real religious and political growth, merely the substitution of one static system for another. The manipulated revival begins with exhibitionism at the lake, proceeds to the grinding out of hymns and harangues at the propaganda mill, and culminates in the mumbo-jumbo of the ersatz rituals.

Vivas thinks it all in even more embarrassing taste than what he calls the "pure corn" of those fake vaudeville Indians, the Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe, in The Lost Girl.[127] It is impossible not to sympathize when Kate, told that she is Malintzi, cries, "'I am not! I am only Kate, and I am only a woman. I mistrust all that other stuff,'"[128] or even when Carlota exclaims, "'What buffoonery!'"[129] Second, the fact that the revival assumes the character of a revolution in which despotic abuses are supported by a war machine and by power politics shows that, whatever Ramon may say or even believe about freedom of choice, his movement leads inevitably to the uniformity of a totalitarian system. Roman Catholic priests early denounce Ramon as "an ambitious anti-Christ."[130] They are, to put it mildly, perceptive. The revolutionary formula, which includes the demagogy of anti-Catholicism, comes full circle when it turns out that the temporal politics of the socialist President Montes and the temporal military advantage of Cipriano's army, not the religious power of the dark gods at all, are really responsible for this new conquest of Mexico:

> Then a kind of war began. The Knights of Cortes brought out their famous hidden stores of arms, . . . and a clerical mob headed by a fanàtical priest surged into the Zocalo. Montes had the guns turned on them. . . . In the churches, the priests were still inflaming

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[127]Vivas, p. 69.

[128]Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent, p. 369.

[129]Ibid., p. 186. [130]Ibid., p. 243.

> the orthodox to a holy war. In the streets, priests who had gone over to Quetzalcoatl were haranguing the crowd.
>
> It was a wild moment. In Zacatecas General Narcisco Beltran had declared against Montes and for the Church. But Cipriano with his Huitzilopochtli soldier had attacked with such swiftness and ferocity, Beltran was taken and shot, his army disappeared.
>
> Then Montes declared the old Church illegal in Mexico, and caused a law to be passed, making the religion of Quetzalcoatl the national religion of the Republic. All churches were closed. All priests were compelled to take an oath of allegiance to the Republic, or condemned to exile. The armies of Huitzilopochtli and the white and blue serapes of Quetzalcoatl appeared in all the towns and villages of the Republic. . . .[131]

Third, whatever the power of the earlier cosmic symbols of unity, the exasperated reader is likely to suspect that such silliness as the various upright prayers, masculine and feminine salutes, and ceremonies of instant godhead are the ill-conceived spawn of an unwholesome alliance of will and conscious, if not entirely rational, mind.

Horace Gregory remarks on the indecision of Kate with which the novel ends, "the half gods of Mexico cannot bring to full birth the conversion of a single white woman."[132] After their marriage by Ramon, Cipriano says to Kate pathetically: "'I _am_ the living Huitzilopochtli . . . . I _am_ he.—Am I not?'"[133] But anyone who needs reassurance that he is a god, isn't! Kate, significantly, marries Cipriano only in Quetzalcoatl; she balks every time he brings up the idea of a legal civil ceremony. In the end she still oscillates between what has been really a dynamic experience of sexual love and her

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[131] _Ibid_., pp. 418-19. [132] Gregory, p. 73.

[133] Lawrence, _The Plumed Serpent_, p. 320.

personal perception of the degree of staticism that, with Cipriano, accompanies it. She considers, small wonder, getting "'back to simple life'": "'Without all this abstraction, and *will*. Life is good enough for me if I am allowed to live and be myself.'"[134] It is a wise perception—and it reflects Lawrence's own perception, on one level, of what was the matter with *The Plumed Serpent*. As he says in "Morality and the Novel":

> If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail.
>
> Morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance. When the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection, that is immorality.[135]

Two of Lawrence's letters on *The Plumed Serpent* are frequently cited. In his letter to Curtis Brown on 23 June 1925, he calls *The Plumed Serpent* "my most important novel, so far."[136] Three years later, absorbed in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence, in a letter to Witter Bynner on 13 March 1928, in effect rejects the political side of the earlier novel:

> I sniffed the red herring in your last letter a long time: then at last decide it's a live sprat. I mean about *The Plumed Serpent* and the 'hero.' On the whole, I think you're right. The hero is obsolete, and the leader of men is a back number. After all, at the back of the hero is the militant ideal: and the militant

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[134] *Ibid*., p. 439.

[135] Lawrence, *Phoenix*, p. 528.

[136] Lawrence, *Collected Letters*, II, 845.

> ideal, or the ideal militant, seems to me also a cold egg. We're sort of sick of all forms of militarism and militantism, and *Miles* is a name no more, for a man. On the whole I agree with you, the leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, *ich dien* sort of business.[137]

The feeling of tenderness is discernible as a genuine principle of love and friendship, though amid all the swelled godheads it is subordinated to nearly everyone's manipulation of himself and others, in the relationships of major characters in *The Plumed Serpent*. Tenderness in human relationships, in the final phase of Lawrence's work, becomes the major theme of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) and is successfully embodied in Lawrence's treatment of the resurrection, his most successful use of myth, in *The Man Who Died* (1929). If there was a solution to the problem of the waste land, though for Lawrence life was too fluid and varied to admit of any single permanent solution to anything, it was not, he learned in the New Mexican and Mexican experience, in anyone's, including his own, too consciously willed static ideas.

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[137] *Ibid*., p. 1045.

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