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D H LAWRENCE  
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*John Beer*

## **D.H. LAWRENCE AND ENGLISH ROMANTICISM**

When Lawrence's novels first began to appear, it was easy to read them as naturalist fictions. The attempt to capture the mood of his contemporaries in Nottinghamshire and elsewhere made both *The White Peacock* and *Sons and Lovers* so attractive as social documentaries that many of his early readers found it hard to understand the shape or purpose of his later fictions.

If one looks for an underlying attitude in the early Lawrence, moreover, he can still be identified very readily with writers in the romantic tradition, particularly in so far as that had encouraged a sense of the relationship between nature and the tender human sensibility. In his sensitivity, in his love of flowers and animals and his hostility to industrialism he seems to be at one with a long line of nineteenth-century writers. And once the first novels were interpreted in this way the later seemed equally to involve a turning against the tradition; a rejection of gentler feelings, an insistence on everything in nature that is alien to human pretensions and desires and a delight in physical power. It is small wonder that as a writer he has sometimes been aligned with the totalitarian movements of the interwar years.

To see Lawrence as an anti-romantic, however, is to misunderstand him. In important respects he never ceased to sustain the romantic point of view, particularly in its stress on the importance of individual feeling. His work involved not the rejection of romanticism but a new version of it. Where the early English romantic writers such as Wordsworth and Coleridge had stopped short of views of nature which might have seemed pantheist or simply amoral he had no such inhibition,

believing that if life were approached honestly human beings could not find themselves betrayed. In particular he devoted himself to those elements in romanticism which encouraged a view of art in terms of process rather than through survey of the finished products. In nature, such a view focused particular attention on the processes of living things. By setting up this primacy Lawrence developed a framework for looking at the world which would automatically stress the role of energies rather than of forms. It would in no way glorify violence for its own sake, however, and this is perhaps the most crucial point. One reason that he is so often misread (creatively or otherwise) is that it is easy to take particular passages here and there and impose upon them a pattern of one's own. If, for instance, one takes the imagery of violence in the novels that may seem to be dominant. If, on the other hand, one concentrates on the imagery of energy more generally, he may come to be seen as dissolving the whole world into its component electrical relationships.

To do so, however, is to lose sight of the fact that Lawrence's larger philosophy is continually acting to create further patterns of process in, through, or over such imagery. Such patterns are to be traced, for instance, in his sense of the organism as subsisting within its own energy. The violence of energy is for him an essential element in the universe of life, but it is an energy which finds its true form only in association with life, realizing itself most fully in shaping the beautiful forms of living beings or of their spontaneous activities. This in turn helps to illuminate certain elements in Lawrence's art, such as his love of flowers. His delight in spring flowers, linking naturally with the main tradition of romanticism, might appear strangely sentimental. The indications are however that he was being true to further implications of that tradition as they had developed in England during the nineteenth-century, differentiating them from other European theories of the organic. Those theories had concentrated mainly on vegetable growth, focusing therefore upon the unity in diversity to be seen in the growth of a vegetable, realizing the 'idea' that had always been implicit in its seed. They were inevitably conser-

vative in nature, since they encouraged the conception of an evolution which took place according to inward laws. To interfere with such natural workings out, whether in the vegetable creation or in society at large, could be seen, therefore, as destructive. All that might be countenanced was something in the nature of a pruning, which must take strict account of the organism in question and its natural form of development.

Throughout the nineteenth century, however, a further undercurrent had to do with qualities such as 'energy', 'vitality' or 'animation'. Devotion to the traditional organic would logically end in an entranced meditation, but there was a growing sense that life consisted in something more than a simple unfolding. The energies of animals and birds, particularly as displayed in their flights or movements of play, witnessed to different forces.

Such awareness is to be found in many places. It is there in Blake's visual imagery of flames and serpents;<sup>1</sup> it is there in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, with its moments of high insight following upon unusually intense fits of energy. Later in the century it expressed itself more directly in impulses for energetic action or in Arnold's demand that 'literature' should 'animate'.<sup>2</sup>

For Lawrence it was not just the display of energy as such that marked the operation of life; certain particular qualities in that display were to be seen as essential. To express this connection he devised a particular dialect, words such as 'quick,' 'flickering', 'glancing' and so on hint at qualities that can be caught only in movement, being essentially elusive and fugitive. But this very elusiveness made it hard for him to give this conception adequate expression. In his work it often defines itself rather through antitype, negative implication or at best partial illustration.

A good example of antitype is to be found in the famous scene in which Birkin stones the moon on the water until there are only 'a few broken flakes tangled and glittering broadcast in the darkness, without aim or meaning, a darkened confusion, like a black and white kaleidoscope tossed at

random.' Yet even as he watches, satisfied, the reverse process begins inexorably to take effect:

Gradually the fragments caught together re-united, heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in panic, but working their way home again persistently, making semblance of fleeing away when they had advanced, but always flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam fell in with the whole, until a ragged rose, a distorted frayed moon was shaking upon the waters again, reasserted, renewed, trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfigurement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at peace.<sup>3</sup>

The brilliance and power of the writing here have often been commented upon. It should also be noted, however, that the passage harshly tenders the ambiguity of Lawrence's vision. What presents itself in recalcitrant opposition to Birkin's will is cold and circular; but in the process of its recalcitrance it turns first into a disorder of scattered energies, then into an analogue of organic process as the lights become flowerlike. What is happening on a cold reading of the scene is the re-establishment of a blank disc of light; in the energy of the interplay of forces between man and water, on the other hand, there is appearing something which must lie at the heart of all growth, an interweaving that is at once dance and flower. Had Wordsworth been writing this passage, it would have been the sight of the re-established moon that would have been revelatory, its beauty being impressed upon the heart in the moment of peace after agitation; for Lawrence the beauty cannot be established so firmly: it is essentially elusive, fleeting.

For an example of negative implication we might turn to another scene in *Women in Love*, this time the triangular exchange when Ursula looks on as Rupert Birkin shows Hermione the red ovary flowers on some catkins.

'From those little red bits, the nuts come; if they receive pollen from the long danglers.'

'Little red flames, little red flames,' murmured Hermione to herself. And she remained for some moments looking only at the small buds out of which the red flickers of the stigma issued.

'Aren't they beautiful? I think they'r so beautiful,' she said, moving close to Birkin, and pointing to the red filaments with her long, white finger...

Her absorption was strange, almost rhapsodic. Both Birkin and Ursula were suspended. The little red pistillate flowers had some strange, almost mystic-passionate attraction for her.<sup>4</sup>

To see the stigma as little red flames might seem to be peculiarly Lawrentian, an authentic recognition of the energies of the vegetable creation; yet the stress in this chapter is clearly on Hermione's inauthenticity, and there is no good reason for Lawrence to move against that by compromising so central a theme. The implication must be rather that in electing the flame-image and concentrating upon it so exclusively, Hermione is indulging in a paradoxical act of fixation which reveals her consciousness as held in an old stereotyping. To see the stigma with Birkin, as 'flickering', on the other hand, is to keep the flame-imagery from fixation, to acknowledge its importance without allowing that to take over.

Apart from this the particular quality of Lawrence's vision of nature is revealed also in the very guardedness of his assertions: as in one incident of what might otherwise seem to be total physical consummation:

He stood on the hearth-rug looking at her, at her face that was up-turned exactly iike a flower, a fresh, luminous flower, glinting faintly golden with the dew of the first light. And he was smiling faintly as if there were no speech in the world, save the silent delight of flowers in each other. Similingly they delighted in each other's presence, pure presence, not to be thought of, even known. But his eyes had a faintly ironical contraction.<sup>5</sup>

The afflatus in the writing, signalled by repetition where there is little corresponding movement in the sense and by the archaic 'save' brought in for quieting effect, is compensated by the ironic expression in Birkin's eye. Even at the height of love there will be dislocation, a hint of overwriting in the expression, a failure to underwrite in the observed and observing eye, which will preserve it from being stamped too fixedly into experience.



By Lawrence's time the invocation of an ironical or sardonic note had become necessary if his imagery of flowing were to be guarded against the associations of sentimentality which had accreted round it in sub-Romantic texts. In the early stages of Romanticism, when that threat had been less present, the existence of a guarding counter-force can still be traced, particularly in a fascination with energy. Blake is the most obvious figure here, and it is no accident that he is the English writer with whom Lawrence is most frequently associated. Jessie Chambers records his enthusiasm for Blake's work as early as 1905, when Lawrence was particularly intent on painting;<sup>6</sup> and it was for his paintings that he later expressed his enthusiasm:

Blake paints with real intuitional awareness and solid instinctive feeling. He dares handle the human body, even if he sometimes makes it a mere ideograph. And no other Englishman has even dared handle it with alive imagination. Phoenix 560

He also responded to the poetry, however, as various allusions to it show,<sup>7</sup> his one negative comment, 'I am never very fond of abstract poetry, not even of Blake', betraying admiration even in the moment of criticism.<sup>8</sup>

In some ways Lawrence was too close to Blake to be able to discuss him profitably. When he turned to the other Romantics, his divided self could respond, with an alternation of hostility and respect, to the force and counter-force we have traced.

In many aspects, of course, he rejected their influence as harmful. The concept of the 'child of nature', for example: 'The simple innocent child of nature does not exist: If there be an occasional violet by a mossy stone in the human sense, a Wordsworthian Lucy, it is because her vitality is rather low, and her simple nature is very near a simpleton';<sup>9</sup> Yet he could also see Wordsworth in a different light, as one of those who 'slit the fabric in which human beings customerily cocoon or screen themselves from the true nature of things:

The joy men had when Wordsworth, for example, made a slit and saw a primrose! Till then, men had only seen a primrose dimly in the shadow of the umbrella. They saw it through wordsworth in the full gleam of chaos. Phoenix 256

That acknowledgment of a concealed energy in Wordsworth was matched in the terms of his respect for other poets. He resisted the swooning towards death in Keats and still more the tendency to male abstractness in Shelley, yet numbered their odes, along with the Immortality Ode of Wordsworth, among the 'lovely poems which after all give the ultimate shape to one's life'.<sup>10</sup> In Keats, he acknowledged, 'the body can still be felt dissolving in waves of successive death' and his hostility to Shelley for declaring to the Skylark 'Bird thou never wert', was qualified by a recognition that the last line of the same stanza. 'In profuse strains of unpremeditated art' is 'the tumbling sound of a lark's singing, the real Two-in-One'.<sup>11</sup> When he visited Lerici in 1913 he was particularly mindful of Shelley's brilliant use of metre; in 1916 he went so far as to nominate him and Swinburne as our greatest poets and fantasized about a tea-party to which he would invite the two of them along with Herodotus and Flaubert.<sup>12</sup> But he believed that Shelley's drowning was not really an accident ('he was always trying to drown himself— it was his last mood') and his main judgement was that 'Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, the Brontes, all are post-mortem poets'.<sup>13</sup>

From that list Coleridge's name is absent. The absence might well be significant, since the counter-spirit that is observable in Coleridge's work is closer to Lawrence's vitalism than that in any other English romantic poet. The 'one Life within us and abroad' of 'The Eolian Harp', which is present also in many of the conversation poems, manifests itself very openly in *The Ancient Mariner*, while the serpent-imagery of 'Christabel' has thematic links with the 'serpent of secret shame' in Lawrence's writings.<sup>14</sup> From the first, Coleridge had drawn back from the full implications of devotion to the 'one Life'. Even in 'The Eolian Harp' he introduced a reproof for such speculations from his betrothed; in later years he retreated from them except in scattered moments.

Lawrence can hardly have been unaware of such implications in the poetry, which he read enthusiastically in his youth. Jessie Chambers recalls how during the winter of 1908 they walked over frozen snow to the ruins of Deauvale Abbey. 'It

was a day of brilliant sunshine, and the three of us perched in a tree that leaned over a pond, while Lawrence read Coleridge's *Christabel*.<sup>15</sup> From time to time he adopted well-known lines from *The Ancient Mariner*: in 1928 he recalled the year after his mother's death as one in which everything collapsed 'save the mystery of death, and the haunting of death in life'.<sup>16</sup> The Mariner's vision of the water-snakes ('Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,/They coiled and swam; and every track/Was a flash of golden fire'), is of a vividness which looks forward directly to Lawrence's language: one also recalls his lines in 'Snake':

And I thought of the albatross,  
And I wished he would come back, my snake.<sup>17</sup>

Such references, along with Birkin's ready citation of the 'Woman wailing for her demon lover' in *Women in Love*,<sup>18</sup> make it clear that like many writers, he had Coleridge's poems of the supernatural at his finger-tips; but how well did he know the rest of Coleridge's works? The presence of an otherwise striking phrase in a letter of 1909, 'Ah, woful when!' from 'Youth and Age', is explained as soon as one knows that the poem was one of two by Coleridge in the *Golden Treasury* which, Jessie Chambers said, was a 'kind of Bible' to them in earlier years,<sup>19</sup> but there are one or two other hints that he read and responded to Coleridge's poetry, as a whole, the most striking being in his poem 'Catullian Hendecasyllables',<sup>20</sup> which is a close translation from a part of Friedrich von Matthison's 'Milesisches Marchen':

Hear, my beloved, an old Milesian story!—  
High, and embosom'd in congregated laurels,  
Glimmer'd a temple upon a breezy headland;  
In the dim distance amid the skiey billows  
Rose a fair island; the god of flocks had blest it.  
From the far shores of the bleat-resounding island  
Oft by the moonlight a little boat came floating,  
Came to the sea-cave beneath the breezy headland,  
Where amid myrtles a pathway stole in mazes  
Up to the groves of the high embosom'd temple.  
There in a thicket of dedicated roses,

Oft did a priestess, as lovely as a vision,  
Pouring her soul to the son of Cytherea,  
Pray him to hover around the slight canoe-boat,  
And with invisible pilotage to guide it  
Over the dusk wave, until the nightly sailor  
Shivering with ecstasy sank upon her bosom.

Certain features of this poem are close to those of Lawrence's 'The Man who Died'. The man who comes in his case to visit a lonely priestess on her island at night has points of resemblance with Lawrence's Christ figure who arrives to find love with a similar priestess and later departs in a boat across the water. One suspects that Coleridge's poem, with its subdued erotic appeal, may have lingered in Lawrence's subconscious to provide the central idea for his tale; certainly the setting of the priestess's temple, as he describes it, is remarkably similar:

The woman who served Isis stood in her yellow robe, and looked up at the steep slopes coming down to the sea, where the olive-trees silvered under the wind like water splashing. She was alone save for the goddess. And in the winter afternoon the light stood erect and magnificent off the invisible sea, filling the hills of the coast. She went towards the sun, through the grove of Mediterranean pine-trees and ever-green oaks, in the midst of which the temple stood, on a little, tree-covered tongue of land between two bays<sup>21</sup>

The resemblances between the two descriptions are those of a *gestalt* rather than of detail, clearly, one might also dwell profitably upon the differences between them. The verbal sequence, 'embosom'd', 'embosom'd' temple, 'her bosom', in Coleridge's poem presents an imagery of enclosed and affectionate love which is not paralleled in Lawrence's tale. What is more significant, however, is the sense of slightly dangerous speculation in Coleridge's poem. Lawrence's was open exploration of the idea, that of a man visiting the priestess of love with whom he finds ideal physical fulfilment, is deliberately made to challenge the Christian ethos from which Coleridge keeps it carefully segregated. Coleridge's translation does no more than indulge what is repressed in his own poetry; in Lawrence's tale that repressed element has returned to dominate.

Coleridge's counter-romanticism was never more than a subdued element. It could not be allowed to challenge belief in the moral law. Lawrence's statement, 'with should and ought I have nothing to do,'<sup>22</sup> would have been impossible to him. As a result such strands in his work run out into private conversations, isolated notebook entries, footnotes to his published works, and so on. Lawrence, by contrast, begins his explorations at the point where Coleridge leaves off, being willing to contemplate unafraid the fact that a full relationship between the unconscious powers in the human mind and those in nature must take account of violence as well as calm.

He could do so more readily because in his time the element of sensibility in romanticism had been overplayed to the point of being played out. The cultivation of states of entrancement had led to the 'dreaming woman',<sup>23</sup> that typical figure in the society of Lawrence's time which he found so disturbing, negating as she did the possibility of more vital and energetic relationships between men and women. In the same way he found the negative quality in *A Passage to India* at once authentic and inadequate:

The day of our white dominance is over, and no new day can come till this of ours has passed into night. So it! I accept it. But one must go into the night ahead of it...the dark ahead and the silence into which we haven't yet spoken our impertinent echoes.<sup>24</sup>

The imagery here foreshadows that of 'Bavarian Gentians', where the energy of the flower becomes a torch to guide him into the darkness;<sup>25</sup> it also suggests something of the increasing greyness which he felt to be surrounding the play of energies in the world.

Something of what was now at stake is to be seen in one of his last stories, 'The Flying Fish', which plays cleverly in a series of ideas around a single theme: that human beings in the white civilizations live in a 'lesser day', ignoring that 'great day' which is also the great deep from which they have drawn and to which they must return. The hero is himself called Day, he comes from a family of Days who have lived in Daybrook for generations. He is on the way home from the decadence of

his life in south America to resume the family home. But it is what he sees on the voyage home that focuses the story's themes. His sight of flying fishes leaping together comes as a final revelation of powers unrealized by human beings:

This is the purest achievement of joy I have seen in all life; these strong careless fish. Men had not got in them that secret to be alive together and make one life a single laugh, yet each fish going its own gait. This is sheer joy and men have lost it, or never accomplished it... It would be wonderful to know joy as these fish know it. The life of the deep waters is ahead of us, it contains sheer togetherness and sheer joy. We have never got there.

Phoenix 793

The language Lawrence uses here is spirally repetitive in the manner of much of his prose, recalling what a college lecturer, 'Botany Smith', had told him long before—that he was obsessed rather than possessed by his ideas.<sup>26</sup> The method of the whole story, with its interlocking of the idea of 'the greater day' through various elements in space and history, enables him to put that obsessive quality to unusually good use, however, making it in imitative form for the interplaying movement of the flying fish themselves. Perhaps in producing that vision of interweaving energies he was recalling, whether consciously or subconsciously, Coleridge's similar vision of the water-snakes, just as Coleridge himself, voyaging to Malta, saw a myriad of insect activity in the shadow of his ship: 'scattered Os, rapidly uncoiling into serpent spirals', and wrote how hard it was to express 'the Life and time-mocking Motion of that Change, always Os before, always Spirals, coiling, uncoiling, *being*.'<sup>27</sup>

The last word is a most important one. Somewhere in the process of those coilings and uncoilings Coleridge glimpsed a key to the nature of being itself. In the same way, Lawrence had found release from the tyranny of microscope as an instrument for fixing objects when he saw that even in the simplest cell there lay a complex interplay of energies, which as a human he could recognize also in himself.

The fact that Lawrence did not set Coleridge among those who denied the 'essential instinctive-intuitive body' may well

reflect a recognition of his 'one Life' as a power similar to that which he honoured in his work. Perhaps he regarded Coleridge's work primarily as an unsolved riddle, containing attractive elements that he would have liked to investigate further. The only firm clue that we have lies in a letter he sent to Amy Lowell in 1914: 'And don't talk about putting me in the safe with Keats and Shelley. It scares me out of my life, like the disciples at the Transfiguration. But I'd like to know Coleridge when Charon has rowed me over.'<sup>28</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. See my discussion in 'Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth (etc.)' in *William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes* Edited by M.D. Paley and M. Phillips 1973 pp. 234-9
2. See his letter of 30 Nov. 1853, *Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough* ed. H.F. Lowry 1932 p. 146
3. *Women in Love* 1921 ch xix, p. 260
4. *Ibid.*, iii, 39
5. *Ibid.*, xxiii, 329
6. E.T., *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* 1935 pp. 62-3 (hereafter E.T.)
7. For further discussion see H. T. Moore, *Life and works of D. H. Lawrence* 1951 p. 313
8. *Collected Letters*, ed. H.T. Moore, 1962 II 872
9. 'On Human Destiny', *Phoenix II*, 624
10. *Phoenix II* 597
11. *Phoenix* 561-2, 549, 478
12. *Letters* ed. J.D. Boulton (Cambridge 1979) I, 63, 105, 120; I 654
13. *Letters II*, 115; *Phoenix* 552
14. 'The Reality of Peace (ii)' *English Review*, 1917, XXIV 518 (*Phoenix* 677). Cf. my discussion in *Coleridge the Visionary*, 1959, p. 156
15. E.T. 115
16. Unpublished foreword to the *Collected Poems of 1928: Collected Poems*, ed. Pinto and Roberts 1964 II 851
17. *Ibid I* 349
18. *Women in Love* 1921 ch iii 44
19. *Letters I* 132; E.T. 99

20. Coleridge *Political Works* ed. E.H. Coleridge 1912 I 307
21. *The Tales of D. H. Lawrence* 1934 1116
22. *E.T.* 184
23. See *The Trespasser*, 1912, ch iv p 35. The allusion is to Rachel Annand Taylor's poem, 'The Epilogue of the Dreaming Women' in *The Hours of Fiametta* 1910, see *The Trespasser* ed E. Mansfield, Cambridge 1981 pp. 236, 18
24. See his unpublished letter to Forster of 23 July 1924. quoted in part by me in *E.M. Forster: A Human Exploration* (ed Das and Beer) 1979, p. 256
25. *Collected Poems* 1964 II 697 (cf 955)
26. *T.E.* 67
27. Coleridge *Notebooks* (ed K. Coburn) 1957-II 2070
28. *Letters* II 223

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*Harish Raizada*

## **PAUL MOREL: ARCHITECT OF HIS OWN TRAGEDY**

A novelist attempting an autobiographical novel is sometimes unable to take an objective view of the attitudes of characters whose lives get involved with the destiny of his surrogate persona, the hero. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man*, this difficulty is minimized because the author is primarily preoccupied with the protagonist and concentrates on tracing his growth on an intellectual plane. He shows other characters as touching the life of the hero only tangentially, without creating any crisis. In such a novel the contacts between the hero and other characters are significant only to the extent that they contribute to or retard the growth of the questing hero. In an autobiographical novel, however, the author has to deal with complex interrelationships and may fail to take a judicious view of characters and be tempted to project his surrogate hero's view-point about them more favourably. He is likely to impose on readers his own impressions about them without revealing their real inner self in a detached manner.

The trouble with Lawrence in *Sons and Lovers* is that being the protagonist-narrator, he visualizes these relationships from his own subjective view-point and yet manages to include the view-points of other characters also. In his desire to be authentic, Lawrence even incorporates, with some revisions, Jessie Chambers's version of the emotional struggle between Paul and Miriam and Frieda Lawrence's female bits about Clara and Mrs. Morel.<sup>1</sup>

Mark Schorer refers to another difficulty when he points out that Lawrence commits the novel 'to a therapeutic function

which is to be operative not on the audience but on the author', for he declares that 'One sheds one's sickness in books, repeats and presents again one's emotions to be master of them.'<sup>2</sup> Hence the glaring contradictions not only in the view-points of the hero and other characters but also within the point of view of the author-hero himself. Mark Schorer refers to this when he remarks, 'Morel and Lawrence are never separated, which is a way of saying that Lawrence maintains for himself in this book the confused attitude of his character'.<sup>3</sup> These ambivalences, not confusions as he designates them, in a way contribute to the vitality of the novel. In his essay 'Morality and the Novel', Lawrence justifies the need for antitheses in aesthetic terms; 'life is so made that opposites sway about a trembling centre of balance... And of all the art forms, the novel most of all demands the trembling and oscillating of the balance.'<sup>4</sup> To emphasize the significance of contradictory impulses and view-points of characters in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence dramatizes them through the paradigm of paradoxes in the behaviour of characters and 'antipodal images' of spirit and body, vitality and inertness, darkness and light, sun and moon, bright nature and dark coal pits, and rich imagery of names drawn from diverse sources: classical, biblical and historical.

Critics like Daniel A. Weiss, Alfred Kazin and Dorothy Vanghert interpret the tragedy of Paul Morel on the basis of the 'split' theory advanced by Lawrence in a letter to Edward Garnett<sup>5</sup>. It shows how Paul Morel when he comes to manhood is debilitated to love normally because of the dominant pull of his mother. This creates a split between his body and soul and he is therefore shattered inwardly in the course of the struggle. According to another version of the theory, Paul moved by an Oedipal complex, seeks the image of his mother in his beloveds and feels dissatisfied because none of them approximates to her completely. While Miriam, the cerebral type, possesses her spiritual self, Clara reveals only her physical self. Thus taken individually none of his mistresses offers a complete substitute of his mother who is his ideal of a beloved. This strain causes an eternal schism in Paul's character and

leads to his tragedy in life.

Mark Spilka puts the split theory at a discount because he thinks it to be superimposed by Lawrence after having known Freud's views on Oedipal love.<sup>6</sup> He accepts the subjective impressions of Paul and holds Miriam and Clara responsible for their failure to establish satisfactory relations with him. The schism between Paul and Miriam occurs not because of the mother's hold upon the former but because of the abstract and asexual nature of the latter. Clara too fails him not because of the interference of the mother who in a way approves of her relations with Paul but because she is unable to rise to his spiritual level and keep his soul steady: 'she lacks the capacity, the breadth of being, to take on the full burden of his troubled soul.'<sup>7</sup>

Mark Schorer is of the view that the novel "has two themes: the crippling effects of a mother's love on the emotional development of her son; and the split between two kinds of love, physical and spiritual, which the son develops, the kinds represented by two young women, Clara and Miriam. The two themes should, of course, work together, the second being actually the result of the first: this 'split' is the 'crippling';<sup>8</sup> He argues that the logical development of these themes demands the crippled Paul's 'drift towards death'<sup>9</sup> which is also how Lawrence intended to conclude the novel. The novel, however, fails because Paul rejects his desire for extinction towards its conclusion.

If one accepts these simplistic interpretations, *Sons and Lovers* may be reduced to the level of mere naturalistic fiction after Emile Zola's pattern, attributing Paul's tragedy to the nature of his parents' marital relationship. Paul Morel will himself then appear a mechanistic being, having no free will of his own, one who instead of doing things merely endures them. This tends to absolve Paul of his responsibility for contributing to his own tragedy. Judith Fiarr is, however, right in pointing out: 'There is no identity between his (Paul's) vision and the narrator's, but rather a kind of reflexive cooperation.'<sup>10</sup> One has to be aware of the 'livingness' of the men and women in the novel, to see how Paul Morel, though bound to his mother by Oedipal love, often asserts his indivi-

duality and tries to shape his destiny according to his own egotistic nature.

Paul's affair with Miriam is the most complicated of all the relationships treated in the novel. It covers nearly one-third of the novel and stretches on for seven long years of Paul's early youth. Though the presence of Mrs. Morel who moves through the whole novel 'like a cry of pain',<sup>11</sup> is always felt in the background, it is Miriam who dominates the scene during this long period. Critics who attribute the failure of Miriam's affair with Paul to her abnormal spiritual intensity and her complete lack of sensuality or to Paul's Oedipal love for his mother and her domination over him, are only partially correct. What is usually lost sight of is that Paul continues to visit Miriam even when he has broken off with her after being aware of her failure to attract him physically. He goes to her still later when his affair with Clara is over and his mother is dead. Had he been fully convinced of Miriam's sexual failure and her overweening spiritual demands upon him, he would never have sought her company again.

True Miriam is chaste and innocent and at this stage religion for her counts more than anything else: 'she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her either a nunnery garden or a paradise, where sin and knowledge were not, or else an ugly, cruel thing' (P.185). But to be religious is not to be frigid or asexual. If Paul finds her seriousness and lack of frivolity a sign of sadness' (P.188), it is his subjective impression, for a little later we learn she picks up, surcharged with love, her little brother 'And folding him in her arms, she swayed slightly from side to side with love, her face half lifted, her eyes half closed, her voice drenched with love' (P. 190). Squeezing a child in one's embrace is certainly emblematic of neither sadness nor want of passion.

In fact it is Paul who often fails to rouse himself to passion and feels 'bottled up.' When Miriam takes him to show a wild rose-bush and both of them stand close together watching it, we learn, 'Paul looked into Miriam's eyes. She was pale and expectant with wonder, her lips were parted, and her dark

eyes lay open to him. His look seemed to travel down into her. Her soul quivered. It was the communion she wanted. He turned aside, as if pained. He turned to the bush' (p.198). Paul feels inhibited to respond to Miriam's emotions, 'Something made him feel anxious and imprisoned' (P.198). On another occasion when she 'gently and firmly' lays 'her hand on his wrist', saying 'Don't put it away', Paul leans back and is 'bottled up' (P.271). Once when Paul's passions rise high on seeing 'enormous orange moon', he gets so much engrossed in his imaginary impressions of Miriam's abstract love for him that he cowers back with diffidence. He mistakes Miriam's shyness for her disapproval of any sexual contact.

The subtle intimacy which has started between Paul and Miriam because of their common feeling for something in Nature, goes on 'in an utterly blanced and chaste fashion' (p.201) for two years till Paul is nineteen. 'That there was any love growing between him and Miriam neither of them would have acknowledged' (p.201). Miriam stimulates him in his artistic pursuits, appreciates his paintings and inspires him to make his art purposive. 'In contact with Miriam he gained insight, his vision was deeper. From his mother he drew the life-warmth, the strength to produce; Miriam urged this warmth into intensity like a white light' (p.196).

Henceforwards his balanced relationships with his mother and mistress begin to show signs of accumulating strain. Mrs. Morel does not care for Miriam and dislikes Paul's being drawn away 'by this girl' who to her appears 'one of those who will want to suck a man's soul out till he has none of his own left ...she will never let him become a man; she never will, (p.199). She therefore grows worked up emotionally when Paul returns late from his walks with Miriam. She hurts his feelings by chiding him, 'she must be wonderfully fascinating, that you can't get away from her, but must go trailing eight miles at this time of night' (p.199). Paul is unable to understand his mother's attitude and tries to defend himself by telling her, 'But you don't mind our Annie going out with Jim Inger'. Her mother's reply, 'Our Annie's not one of the deep sort' (p.200), does not satisfy him and he fails to grasp her point.

Notwithstanding this fretting of Mrs Morel, Paul continues to be long in the company of Miriam who dreams 'dreams of him, vivid, unforgettable' (p.206); her soul expands 'into prayer beside him' (p.207). She prays 'O Lord, let me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him', and then says, 'But, Lord, if it is Thy will that I should love him, make me love him— as Christ would, who died for the souls of men. Make me love him splendidly, because he is Thy son' (p.212). Meanwhile she also begins to sense the hostility of Paul's family towards her. Paul, however, deceives himself by believing that his relations with her 'do not go beyond a kind of 'platonic friendship' (p.213) and hence the hostile attitude of the mother towards their going together does not matter for him. 'He stoutly denied there was anything else between them. Miriam was silent, or else she very quietly agreed. He was a fool who did not know what was happening to himself' (p.213). He even imagines 'With Miriam he was always on the high plane of abstraction, when his natural fire of love was transmitted into the fine stream of thought' (p.214); but while arranging flowers 'in the bosom of her dress, stepping now and then to see the effect' (pp 214—15), he shocks Miriam who is laughing all through this adornment, by saying 'Don't let mother know' (p.214). It is not the spiritual nature of Miriam's love which makes him fight away from her, but the fear of the mother who does not approve of their intimacy.

Though Paul asserts his individuality, he now begins to feel the strain of the conflict in love for him between his mother and Miriam. He grows 'irritable, priggish, and melancholic' (p.221) Mrs. Morel without realizing that it is her fretting that has disturbed his normal life, blames Miriam for it. 'I'm so damned spiritual with you always'; 'you make me so spiritual. And I don't want to be spiritual' (p.222). He imagines 'If he could have kissed her in abstract purity he would have done so. But he could not kiss her thus— and she seemed to have no other way. And she yearned to him.' He does not realize that one who yearns cannot be spiritual only. In fact it is his own unconscious impotent rage against his jealous mother that he vents against the helpless Miriam who can

endure it because of her love for him: Though he feels he cannot be spiritual, he enjoys sitting with Miriam and his mother in the chapel for long. 'It was wonderfully sweet and soothing to sit there for an hour and a half, next to Miriam, and near to his mother, uniting his two loves under the spell of the place of worship. Then he felt warm and happy and religious at once' (p.236).

When Paul is twenty one he grows more concerned about his mother's agony, Mrs Morel curses Miriam, for she thinks 'she's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him. She wants to absorb him' (p.237). Paul knows that his mother suffers badly and feels 'torn' (p.238) within him. He broods over his mother's situation, 'He knew she suffered badly. But why should she? And why did he hate Miriam, and feel so cruel towards her, at the thought of his mother? If Miriam caused his mother suffering, then he hated her – and he easily hated her' (p.238). It is obvious that Paul's dissatisfaction with Miriam emanates not from the latter's spiritual intensity but from his mother's dislike for her. Even after deep concern for his mother's suffering, he, however, continues to visit Miriam and one day confronts his mother:

'Why don't you like her, mother?' he cried in despair 'I don't know my boy', she replied piteously. 'I'm sure I've tried to like her. I've tried and tried, but I can't I can't'; And he felt dreary and hopeless between the two (p.238)

One day in March as he lies on the bank of Nethermere, with Miriam sitting beside him, he resists to look at her and muses over his relations with her, 'she seemed to want him, and he resisted. He resisted all the time. He wanted now to give her passion and tenderness, and he could not. He felt that she wanted the soul out of his body, and not him' (p. 239). If Miriam 'wants him' and he fails to give passion to her, it is not her but Paul's fault. Whenever Paul is in a sober mood, he can take an objective view of his relations with Miriam and realize his own deficiency, 'He only knew she loved him. He was afraid of her love for him. It was too good for him, and he was inadequate, His own love was at fault, not hers' (p. 255).

When Paul is in the company of his mother, he tries to console her by assuring that he meets Miriam only to discuss with her things in which his mother is not interested – 'painting', 'book's, 'Herbert Spencer' (p.260), otherwise he says, 'mother— you know I don't love her I— I tell you. I don't love her— she doesn't even walk with my arm, because I don't want her to' (p.260). But then there comes a stage when Mrs Morel cannot be fooled any more. Once as he stoops to kiss her she throws her arms round his neck, hides her face on his shoulder, and cries 'in a whimpering voice, so unlike her own that he writhed in agony':

'I can't bear it. I could let another woman— but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room—' And immediately he hated Miriam bitterly. 'And I've never— you know Paul— I've never had a husband—not really—' He stroked his mother's hair, and his mouth was on her throat.

(pp. 261 –62).

Paul feels discontented with himself and with everything. 'The deepest of his love belonged to his mother. When he felt he had hurt her, or wounded his love for her, he could not bear it' (p.264). When he meets Miriam next he tells her, 'we'd better break off' (p.271). He sets his conscience at rest by thinking, 'He meant she loved him more than he her. Perhaps he could not love her. Perhaps she had not in herself that which he wanted' (p.271). Miriam, however, knows that he loves her but wants to be separated from her because of the pressure of his mother.

Paul comes back to his mother who has been 'the strongest tie in his life' (pp. 272 –73), and has a feeling of the satisfaction of self-sacrifice because he is faithful to her. He, however, grows 'mad with restlessness' because 'his new young life, so strong and imperious' (p.273). urges him towards something else. His mother feels his inner conflict and is sorry that it is Miriam and not some other girl who could satisfy the demands of his young heart. Unable to keep himself away from Miriam for long Paul visits her after a week. Though uncertain in his heart he tries to convince her of the desirability of their separation, 'I've tried to find out— and I don't think I love you as a man ought to love his wife' (p. 275). Then he



asks her definitely, 'Do you think we love each other enough to marry?' Miriam replies truthfully 'No, I don't think so—we're too young' (p.275). Feeling miserable, he again repeats, 'I thought perhaps that you, with your intensity in things, might have given me more— than I could ever make up to you. And even now— if you think it better— we'll be engaged', and Miriam again replies, 'No, I don't think so' (p.276). She knows that owing to the unconscious pull of his mother he is not yet stable enough to take a firm decision in a serious matter involving the future of two lives. The discord between them springs not from their abstract love but Paul's own uncertain mind struggling against his mother's pressure. He tells Clara when she asks him, 'your mother doesn't care for her', 'No, or I might have married her' (p.397). To set his conscience at rest Paul sends Miriam a letter saying: 'You see, I can give you a spirit love. I have given it you this long, long time; but not embodied passion. See, you are a nun, I have given you what I would give a holy nun— as a mystic monk to a mystic nun', (p.307). Paul is, however, still unable to withdraw himself from Miriam for good and grows more and more restless: 'He still kept up his connection with Miriam, could neither break free nor go the whole length of engagement. And this indecision seemed to bleed him of his energy' (p.314).

Paul is twenty three when justifying his partial rupture with Miriam, he says to Clara, 'No, I don't love her. I never even kiss her— ... I know she wants a sort of soul union.' Clara's comment on it is, however, disillusioning, 'she does not want any of your soul communion. That's your own imagination. She wants you' (p.239). He once again returns to Miriam. Neither his Oedipal love for the mother nor his imaginary misgivings about Miriam's spiritual intensity hold him from establishing physical communion with her:

Mrs Morel saw him going again frequently to Miriam, and was astonished. He said nothing to his mother. He did not explain or excuse himself. If he came home late and she reproached him, he frowned and turned on her in an overbearing way. (p.341).

Out of her deep love for him Miriam submits to the demands

of Paul's body, and yet is unable to rid herself of the feeling of guilt for sex relations outside the orbit of marriage. This accounts for her lack of natural abandon in their physical communion: 'Her big brown eyes were watching him, still and resigned and loving; she lay as if she had given herself up to the sacrifice: there was her whole body for him; but the look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting immolation, arrested him, and all his blood fell back' (pp. 353-54). Miriam would not have betrayed any physical inhibition had she been married to Paul. She confesses truthfully, 'You see—you see—as we are—how can I get used to you? It would come all right if we were married' (p.354). Paul who has by now been exposed to the physical charms of Clara, feels dissatisfied with Miriam and returns to his mother, 'I shall break off with Miriam, mother... I don't love her. I don't want to marry her— so I shall have done' (p.359). When he apprises Miriam of his decision to break off with her finally, she tells him, 'Always—it has always been so; It has been one long battle between us— you fighting away from me' (p.362). Later Miriam feels, 'he was despicable, false, inconsistent, and mean' (p.364).

Paul once again meets Miriam at the close of the novel. His mother is dead and he has restored Clara to her husband. In despair he thinks of Miriam. He sees her in the Chapel and grows restless to meet her, 'A warm, strong feeling for her came up. She seemed to yearn, as she sang, for the mystery and comfort. He put his hope in her' (p.502). When they are alone together she, out of compassion, suggests to him 'I think we ought to be married' (p.506), for she thinks she can thus prevent him from 'wasting' himself. But he has his fears and declines the offer saying 'you love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I should die there smothered' (p.506). The rupture is now complete.

Paul's passionate affair with Clara is physically exciting but brief. In this Paul does not face serious strain from Mrs Morel who vaguely and partially even approves of it. Not unlike his affair with Miriam, it, too, fails because he wishes to have Clara on his own terms. Clara refers to this saying: 'you talk about the cruelty of women; I wish you knew the cruelty

of men in their brute force. They simply do not know that the woman exists' (p.440). Later on comparing him with her husband Baxter Dawes, she says to him, 'He loved me a thousand times better than you ever did... He did; At any rate, he did respect me, and that is what you don't do' (p.466).

It is Miriam who puts Paul in contact with Clara Dawes; she is thirty while he is only twenty three. He is oblivious of her intellectual accomplishments and is drawn by her physical beauty only. He still loves Miriam 'with his soul' but grows warm at the thought of Clara', 'he battled with her, he knew the curves of her breast and shoulders as if they had been moulded inside him; and yet he did not positively desire her.' He even gives Clara to understand, 'If ever he should marry, some time in the far future, it would be his duty to marry Miriam' (p.337). Clara, instead of binding him to herself, sends him back to Miriam to forge new relations with her by taking a new initiative. Only when convinced that he has broken off with Miriam does she try to ensnare him.

Though unable to resist Clara's physical charm, Paul is a divided self before he starts going out with her. Mrs Morel, though not sure of what type of woman she wishes her son to have, wants him 'to fall in love with some woman.' When she sees him fretting, getting 'so furious suddenly', and 'melancholic', she desires, 'he knew some nice woman— she did not know what she wished, but left it vague. At any rate she was not hostile to the idea of Clara'(p.297). She, however, knows that he will soon get tired of her. She is even sorry for Clara because finding him 'pale and detached-looking', she feels sure 'it would be hard for any woman to keep him' (p.301). Her cautious warnings about the incompatibility of their relations because of Clara's being married, are treated by Paul only as expressions of a mother's jealousy.

Clara, initiated earlier in sex by her husband, gives herself to Paul in natural abandon, and soon enthralled him by her physical communion. Their initial consummation in Clifton grove is wonderfully done and proves an exhilarating experience. 'He sunk his mouth on her throat, where he felt her heavy pulse beat under his lips. Everything was perfectly still. There

was nothing in the afternoon but themselves' (p.379). Their sense of fulfilment is mediated through floral imagery thus:

When she arose, he, looking on the ground all the time, saw suddenly sprinkled on the black wet- beach- roots many scarlet carnation petals, like splashed drops of blood; and red, small splashes fell from her bosom, streaming down her dress to her feet. (p. 379)

It is approved by the old woman who serves them tea when they enter Clifton village after their love-making. She offers to Clara 'three tiny dahlias in full blow, neat as bees and speckled scarlet and white' saying, 'she shall have them all' and then turning to Paul remarks, beaming with joy 'you have got enough for your share'(p.381). When returning home alone in the railway carriage, Paul finds himself, tumultuously happy, and the people exceedingly nice. and the night lovely, and everything good (p.382). Paul is thrilled by his love-makings with Clara. He thinks he has experienced 'something big and intense' that changes a person when he really comes together with somebody else. The experience is in accord with Lawrence's belief in some sort of life-force which sexual love implies. Miriam sees that he has been seeking 'a sort of baptism of fire in passion' (p.387). Clara feels renewed vitality and is happy that her hurt pride is healed:

She stood letting him adore her and tremble with joy of her. It healed her hurt pride. It healed her; it made her glad. It made her feel erect and proud again. Her pride had been wounded inside her. She had been cheapened. Now she radiated with joy and pride again. It was her restoration and recognition. (p. 412).

With these experiences of the immensity of passion Paul and Clara feel, 'small, half afraid, childish, and wondering, like Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realized the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise' (p.430).

As Paul carried on his love with Miriam on the spiritual plane, with Clara he does it on the physical plane. As she does not belong to a cerebral type, he fails to derive any intellectual satisfaction from her. He tells his mother, 'you know, mother, I think there must be something the matter with me, that I can't love. When she's there, as a rule, I do love her. Sometimes,

when I see her just as the woman, I love her, mother; but then, when she talks and criticizes, I often don't listen to her' (p.426). Clara is mad with desire of him but she feels she cannot keep the moment stand for ever. 'She wanted it again; she wanted something permanent. She had not realized fully. She thought it was he whom she wanted. He was not safe to her... She had not got him, she was not satisfied' (p.431). Paul also loves her passionately, but there is something lacking in her and he feels she cannot hold him for ever. 'He loved her. There was a big tenderness, as after a strong emotion they had known together; but it was not she who could keep his soul steady. He wanted her to be something she could not be' (p.431).

If the fissures begin to arise in their relations, the fault lies with Paul and not with Clara. He does not wish to commence with her on the intellectual plane as well but wants to meet her on the level of the flesh alone. Even when Paul and Clara go for holidaying to the seaside in Spring, he regulates his time for work and his time for love-making.

'It seems', she said... — 'it seems as if you only loved me at night— as if you didn't love me in the day time'.

He ran the cold sand through his fingers, feeling guilty under the accusation.

Paul has no intention to marry her as he had told his mother earlier, 'No; at first perhaps I would. But why— why don't I want to marry her or anybody?' (p.426), but to shift the blame for it on Clara he asks her: 'But you don't really want a divorce from Baxter, do you?' 'No', she said, very deliberately; 'I don't think I do' (p. 437).

Clara realizes that her life does not belong to Paul Morel, nor his to her. 'They would separate in the end, and the rest of her life would be an ache after him' (p. 439). One day she tells him:

'Do you think it's worth it—the—the sex part?'

'The act of loving, itself?'

'Yes: is it worth anything to you?'

'But how can you separate it?' he said. 'It's the culmination of everything. All our intimacy culminates then' (p. 441).

At this point she frankly asks him, 'But is it *me* you want, or is *it*' (P. 441)? Paul feels guilty, for he has always left Clara 'out of court' and cared only for the woman in her. Their mating now loses its earlier warmth. 'They did not often reach again the height of that once when the peawits had called' (p. 443). Ultimately an untoward incident in which he is badly assaulted by Clara's husband, Baxter Dawes, brings his affair with her to an end. Later when he makes up with Dawes, he tells him, 'That's how women are with me. They want me like mad, but they don't want to belong to me. And she belonged to you all the time, I knew' (P. 491). Paul, however, satisfies his conscience by reconciling Clara to her husband and as they part Clara thinks, 'There was something evanescent about Morel... something shifting and false. He would never make sure ground for any woman to stand on. She despised him rather for his shrinking together, getting smaller. Her husband at least was manly, and when he was beaten gave in. But this other would never own to being beaten.. She despised him' (p. 494).

Paul's relations with his mother are also characterized by antitheses and contradictions: they oscillate between love and hate, drawing to and drawing out, possession and release. We learn 'The deepest of his love belonged to his mother. When he felt he had hurt her, or wounded his love for her, he could not bear it' (p. 264). When he finds her fretting, 'He could not bear it. Instinctively he realized that he was life to her. And after all, she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing' (p. 261). But at the same time he is often 'angry with her' (p. 235) because she does not leave him free to love his mistress. 'Then sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her bondage. His life wanted to free itself of her. It was a circle where life turned back on itself, and got no farther. She bore him, loved him, kept him, and his love turned back into her, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman. At this period, unknowingly, he resisted his mother's influence' (p. 420). Once when she tries to console him by saying, 'you haven't met the right

woman,' he hurts her by replying, 'And I never shall meet the right woman while you live' (p. 427).

In fact, even when Paul is deeply concerned about his mother, he tries to have 'his own way and his own pleasure' (p. 307) without caring for her. He then does not hesitate to be bitter to her or accuse her of being 'jealous' (p. 382) or 'mean' (p. 383) about his sweethearts. But whenever he is in distress, he turns to his mother for succour because his hold on life depends on the warmth of her love. When he is wounded by the assault of Baxter Dawes, he wants to be with his mother. When he breaks off with Miriam and is miserable he comes back to his mother: 'Hers was the strongest tie in his life... There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost nonexistent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother' (p. 273). When his mother is dead, he finds himself a derelict i.e. 'left or abandoned as by the owner or guardian.' 'She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her' (p. 510).

Surprisingly enough the love-hate relationship between Paul and his mother has started even when he is not born. When Mrs. Morel conceives Paul, she feels 'wretched', 'the coming child was too much for her' (p.13). She has not wanted this child to come: 'She had dreaded this baby like a catastrophe' (p. 50). But when he is born, she begins to 'love him passionately' (p. 23). And yet when he grows up, she is not happy: 'She had never expected him to live... Perhaps it would have been a little relief to her if he had died. She always felt a mixture of anguish in her love for him' (p. 85). It is the eldest son William who has claims on her to begin with. She makes Paul her companion only after William leaves for Nottingham. Even then her primary concern is the eldest son of whom she dreams: 'Mrs. Morel's intimacy with her second son was more subtle and fine, perhaps not so passionate as with her eldest' (p. 89). It is only after the death of William

that Mrs Morel's life gets rooted in Paul' (p. 176). Paul's sudden illness draws her out from the deep shock she feels in the wake of her eldest son's death. She tells herself, 'I should have watched the living, not the dead' (p. 175).

Of all her children Paul hates his father most because of his deep love for the mother. His passional and Oedipal attachment to his mother is made clear by his love to sleep with her when he is ill: 'Paul loved to sleep with his mother. Sleep is still most perfect, in spite of hygienists, when it is shared with a beloved' (p. 87). When he is again seriously ill, he finds comfort only after he has 'realized' his mother: 'His whole will rose up and arrested him. He put his head on her breast, and took ease of her for love' (p. 175). When at the age of fourteen he goes with his mother to Nottingham for a job, his heart contracts 'with pain of love of her' (p. 117) as he watches her hands in their old black kid gloves. She appears to him 'gay, like a sweetheart' (p. 116). He has a similar ecstatic experience with her when he takes her to Lincoln. When she objects to his wasting his money on her, he says, 'You never mind my money. You forget I'm a fellow taking his girl for an outing' (p. 204). He then asks her, 'Why can't a man have a *young* mother? What is the old for' (p. 296)? Later he tells her, 'But I shan't marry mother. I shall live with you, and we'll have a servant', and again says, 'And you think I'd let a wife take me from you' (p. 300). He wishes to go abroad but confesses to Clara that he cannot be away from his mother for long: 'I shall hardly go for long, while there's my mother' (p. 428).

When his mother is seriously ill and dying of cancer, Paul plays the role of a virtual husband to her because Mrs Morel cannot bear the presence of her husband in her room. Shocked out of himself he cries, 'and the tears hurt in every fibre of his body, (p. 450). When he is with her he kisses her and strokes 'the hair from her temples, gently, tenderly, as if she were a lover' (p. 457). Death makes Mrs Morel look like a virgin again: 'She lay like a girl asleep and dreaming of her love... He looked again at the eyebrows, at the small, winsome nose a bit on one side. She was young again' (p. 485). Paul feels



'she was with him still. He bent and kissed her passionately. But there was coldness against his mouth. He bit his lip with horror. Looking at her, he felt he could never, never let her go' (p. 486). Paul is completely broken after her death and even thinks of his extinction to be with her for ever. Paul felt crumpled up and lonely. His mother had really supported his life. He had loved her; they too had, in fact, faced the world together. Now she was gone, and for ever and for ever behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn towards death' (p. 495).

When he was a lad of fourteen his mother had noticed a certain firmness in Paul: 'She felt, as she saw him trudging over the field, that where he determined to go he would get' (p. 127). This determination coupled with the demands of his young life, goads him to free himself from the bondage of his mother when she obstructs him in acting according to his own lights in his relations with his sweethearts. Mrs Morel directs most of her bitterness against Miriam who most resembles herself. She wants to remain the guardian of her son's soul and does not like anyone to monopolise him without leaving her own share in him. Mrs Morel has no one to lean upon after the death of William. In Paul is anchored her whole life, 'Wherever he went she felt her soul went with him. Whatever he did she felt her soul stood by him, ready, as it were, to hand him his tools. She could not bear it when he was with Miriam. William was dead. She would fight to keep Paul' (p.273). She therefore appeals to him frantically to give up Miriam and Paul assures her to do it but does so only when he fails to live with her in the flesh. As Clara does not pose any serious threat to Mrs Morel she is not initially opposed to her. But the more he gets involved with her, the more his mother begins to feel insecure about him. In his affair with Clara too Paul heeds his mother's caution only when he is satiated with his passional relations with his mistress. But by that time his mother is dying.

It is not uncommon that sometimes the writer's initial impulse and the idea expressed in his work are not identical. He

sometimes ends up with projecting life's conflicts more convincingly than he originally intended. This phenomenon is visible in *Sons and Lovers* which, as opposed to the initial intention of Lawrence, does not end tragically. In his letter to Edward Garnett of 14 November 1912 he wrote that Paul 'is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death', The novel, however, shows that he repudiates death both because of himself and his mother. It, however, takes him quite sometime before he comes to the decision to continue his life's journey alone in the quest of his identity.

Paul's faith in life is emphasized at several places in the novel. He is prepared to 'battle and suffer' if he can have a full savour of life. Replying to his mother who wants him to marry a suitable middle class girl, and enjoy happiness, he says. 'But down your happiness; So long as life's full, It doesn't matter whether it's happy or not. I'm afraid your happiness would bore me (p. 315). When he senses the approaching death of his mother, he tells Clara without any inhibition: 'I s'll go abroad when my mother's dead' (p. 473). There is hardly any attachment so strong as to drive him to his annihilation when it is broken off. True that he feels utterly miserable and shattered when he is left alone after his mother's death. In a fit of profound grief, he feels a longing to follow his mother, but the lure of life is so compulsive as to make him say 'He did not want to die; he would not give in. But he was not afraid of death. If nobody would help, he would go on alone' (p. 495). Owing to his unbearable loneliness he oscillates for sometime 'on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly' (p. 501). The 'stress' within him deepens and he desires 'he should smash'; but 'He would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done. He would not own that life had beaten him, or that death had beaten him' (p. 501). He ultimately decides 'No, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly' (p. 511). The novel thus ends on a positive, affirmative note which is in

keeping with the strongly-willed nature of Paul and the matrix of circumstances he had been plunged into.

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#### NOTES

1. 'Lawrence often had women write out passages for his novels when he wanted to know how a woman would react to a particular situation.' See Alfred Kazin, p. 77
2. Mark Schorer. 'Technique as Discovery', *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Sons and Lovers*, p. 97, first published in *The Hudson Review*, 1, No. 1 (Spring 1941), pp. 75-78
3. *Ibid.*, p. 98
4. *D.H. Lawrence : A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 180
5. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 86
6. Frederick J. Hoffman in 'Lawrence's Quarrel with Freud.' Harry T. Moor and Frederick J. Hoffman, eds., *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 106-27, quotes a letter sent him by Frieda Lawrence in 1942 which states that 'Lawrence knew about Freud before he wrote the final draft of *Sons and Lovers*'.
7. Mark Spilka, 'Counterfeit Loves,' *Twentieth Century Interpretations of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 58, first published in Mark Spilka's *The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence* (Bloomington : University of Indiana Press, 1965)
8. Mark Schorer, pp. 97-98
9. *Ibid.*,
10. Judith Farr, 'Introduction', *Twentieth Century Interpretations of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 9
11. Daneil A. Weiss, *The Mother in the Mind, Twentieth Century Interpretations of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 28, first published in Daniel A. Weiss's *Oedipus in Nottingham: D. H. Lawrence* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962)
12. Clara did not exist in the author's life but had to be invented. She has only a remote resemblance to Frieda.

B.K. Tripathy

## 'THE RAINBOW: UNFAMILIAR QUEST'

The novel as a form has steadily moved out of reach of allegory in England from the time of Fielding and of romance in America from the time of Clemens. It has gravitated toward and has found its forte in becoming history, in rooting itself in sociology, in becoming real, through mimetic exercise, in fact. It is not surprising, therefore, that Leavis, who is a perceptive scholar, forms the idea of the great tradition of the English novel in terms of this mimetic virtue. While he would see Lawrence as a social historian, I would suggest that Lawrence was taking the novel to deeper waters far below the surface of social history, bringing to it a reality rarely seen in it. These are unfamiliar quests, and these create ambiguities, breaking character or entities into processes on the one hand, and stripping or dissolving them into myth and nature, on the other, ultimately bringing new perceptions through character and narrative. These perceptions are metaphysical; the novel plumbs unfamiliar but, to my mind, legitimate depths, not at the cost of social realism but enriching social reality, with its submerged contents, bringing in a bifocality which is not altogether undesirable. *The Rainbow* is such a novel and the present reading seeks to bring out the nature of its contents and quests.

The first phase of Lawrence's writing is climaxed by *The Rainbow*<sup>1</sup>, which turned out to be an epoch-making novel<sup>2</sup>. It is surprising that Lawrence was utterly unaware of the greatness of this novel when he began it. He thought it to be something for the '*Jeunes filles*'. But gradually it outgrew its original conception: 'It was meant to be for the *Jeunes filles*, but already it has fallen from grace. I can only write what I feel strongly about: and that, at present, is the relation

between men and women'.<sup>3</sup> And Lawrence goes even farther. While in the earlier novels there was no overt philosophical interest, in *The Rainbow*, from the very beginning, Lawrence shows a metaphysical preoccupation. In the opening of the first chapter he hints at the eternal fusion of the elements:

Then the men sat by the fire in the house where women moved about with surety and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day. (p. 8)

Or,

They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into breast and bowel... (p. 8)

These are assimilation-passages where character is being absorbed into an expansive context of nature. The result is a gain in depth. Then the character tries to break into meaning:

.. she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in the conquest, her deep desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. (p. 9)

This 'fighting outwards to knowledge' of the unknown touches the keynote of this novel.

Even characters are absorbed into cosmic and mythical context. Ursula has not been seized as a mere psycho-social entity, but has also a metaphysical reality:<sup>4</sup>

'There were giants on the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children unto them, the same became mighty men which were of old men of renown'.

Over this Ursula was stirred as by a call from far off, In those days, would not the sons of God have found her fair, would she not have been taken to wife? (p. 276)

Formally speaking, the mythical and historical references bring a parallel movement into Ursula's character, creating through her a movement in depth. They connect her to a past and project her to the future. There is an unmistakable synthesis

between the abstract and the real in Ursula's character. The real woman of flesh and blood has a far-off existence in the mythical and metaphysical world. The assimilation-passages lead to an absorption of character into a cosmic background giving it a dimension hitherto unknown to the English novel, while the myth-passages suddenly invest the character with depth. As such Ursula lives on two planes of reality: 'She lived a dual life, one where the facts of daily life encompassed everything, being legion, and the other wherein the facts of daily life were superseded by the eternal truth' (p.276). Again, Lawrence universalizes this duality of life:

So, the old duality of life, wherein there had been a weekday world of people and trains, and duties and of reports, and besides that a Sunday world of absolute truth and living mystery... The weekday world had triumphed over the Sunday World. The Sunday World was not real, or at least not actual. (pp, 283-84)

But Lawrence brings the Sunday World back and holds it as real.

This metaphysical preoccupation is observed throughout the book. From the very beginning a consciousness of something beyond the surface of life, beyond the thought and comprehension of man, has been shown: 'There was a look in the eyes of the Brangwens as if they were expecting something unknown, about which they were eager' p. 7). This consciousness is almost always brought forth through the characters:

He[Tom] must admit that he was only fragmentary, something incomplete and subject. There were the stars in the dark heaven travelling, the whole host passing by on some eternal voyage. So he sat small and submissive to the great ordering. (p. 40)

In the treatment of the character of Tom Brangwen this philosophical enquiry about an unknown is made again and again. But no answer is found. 'There is an inner reality, a logic of the soul' (p. 41), but he does not know what it is:

Behind her there was so much unknown to him. When he approached her he came to such a terrible, painful unknown... How could a man be sure he could conquer this awful unknown next to his heart. (p. 58)

Here, the unknown is sought in the relationship between Tom and Mrs Lensky. When Tom leaves the question unanswered and dies in the flood—the fatal and ever-flowing flood of life—Anna and Will Brangwen struggle for a truth, but they find no ultimate meaning or direction of growth. When Ursula takes over, the situation becomes different. She is not merely the object through which an answer is sought, but is herself the question: 'One was not oneself, one was merely a half-stated question'; half stated because the full realization of the nature and drift of life is wanting. It has often been asserted that Lawrence's interest in metaphysics was negligible; reality for him was always physical. But this does not appear to be a correct appraisal of Lawrence's ideas. He had deep-rooted interest in what lay beyond the shape of things. Though his learning of philosophy was probably not systematic, he was interested in studying the invisible forces behind the phenomenon of life and the physical realities in the background of metaphysical realities. Life, however, is too large an affair to be analyzed so easily. It presents innumerable problems which can hardly be solved in the limited sphere of a novel. Therefore, it is dangerous to solve them in a novel.

The Brangwens' experience, closely examined, reveals a pattern of quest.<sup>5</sup> What did the characters want, after all? Hough thinks that Lawrence was trying to find out the ideal sex-relationship through his characters: this was the craving. He arrives at the conclusion that Lawrence 'has evolved a faith where sexual fulfilment is the ultimate'.<sup>6</sup> Leavis, on the other hand, comes closer to an understanding of the meaning of the novel. He has brought out all the relevant facts of *The Rainbow*, though he just misses the right conclusion. He concludes that the 'novel has for its theme the urgency and the difficult struggle of higher human possibilities to realise themselves'.<sup>7</sup> But he does not define this higher possibility. Yet he rightly arrives at the conclusion that in *The Rainbow* love is not an end in itself but the means to achieve contact with the unknown:<sup>8</sup> 'Either lover is for the other a 'door', an opening into the 'unknown'.<sup>9</sup> In the process, however, he neglects to develop his own conclusion that in this novel

Lawrence reveals himself as a realist: 'It gives an inkling, too, of the supreme qualifications of a great novelist for the work of a social historian, for it illustrates the subtlety of Lawrence's study of an actual civilisation'.<sup>10</sup> In most of his novels on England Lawrence has demonstrated his grasp of social history. The fact needs no elaboration as it has been brought out in the pages of Leavis and the works of Hough<sup>11</sup> and Vivas,<sup>12</sup> who make qualified acceptance of the fact. Hough feels that Lawrence was incapable of rendering the texture of 'unimpassioned daily living'.<sup>13</sup> But the argument loses its relevance when we consider the nature of Lawrence's subject and the technique of 'immediacy'.<sup>14</sup> A theme involving three generations, rendered with an emphasis on portraying the texture of 'daily unimpassioned living' would have produced so detailed an account that the expansive context of life would have been narrowed into a maze of repetitive details and would have robbed the novel of all its dramatic urgency. Vivas's qualification is that the realism of Lawrence is accidental and subsidiary, whereas the meaning of the work lies in the study of 'experience as such, experience disengaged from a substantial individual self'.<sup>15</sup> But even he recognizes Lawrence's grasp on the real.

Lawrence's realism, however, contains a duality, a bifocality. He is capable of perceiving the general drift of life as well as the movement of individual life and mind. This dual perception is reflected in the technique of the novels. The whole and the part, society and the individual, both are simultaneously kept in view. And Lawrence depicts not their static state but shows them together changing and moving towards some kind of realization and fulfilment. As the cycle of life moves on from generation to generation and as the characters move in search of fulfilment Lawrence portrays not their staticity, as Vivas would have us believe, but the gradual change of social evolution. Here is where we realize Lawrence's brilliance and verity as a realist.

Tom is a man of agricultural England, but the change brought in by the onset of industrialism is disturbing. He wants



to understand the greater reality of himself as an individual, beyond the realities of a traditional and conventional bondage; to probe beyond the social self. He marries, but this traditional relationship does not help him realize himself. It is the first wind of a social change that Lawrence shows through Tom. He arrives at no positive conclusion. In the next generation Will has the same craving for realizing himself. The social change has been gathering momentum: the change brought in by the industrial revolution which has resulted in the increasing isolation of the individual in modern times. In the political field the democratic ideal was unsettling traditional political systems throughout Europe. Economists were proclaiming *laissez faire*. Education was reaching every man. The wind of change unleashed by the Industrial Revolution blew over the nineteenth century, gathering a certain critical momentum towards its end. The traditional bondage and commitments to a community weakened. Whereas Tom felt uneasy and lived on without finding home, Will has to arrive, for the wind is stronger. With unerring accuracy Lawrence paints a living picture of an age of transition. If Will shows frayed tempers, it is inevitable. Hough's comment that Lawrence has unrealistically portrayed an England of 'vile tempers'<sup>16</sup> loses the point when one realizes that Lawrence portrays this to illustrate realistically the temper of individuals caught in a changing world, striving to attain significance. Unlike Tom, Will, having already tried work, marriage, and sex without satisfaction turns to the church as the ultimate through which the individual can realize himself. Will's passion for the church is repeatedly emphasized. When he visits the Lincoln Cathedral he is overwhelmed with a religious emotion:

Then he pushed open the door, and the great, pillared gloom was before him, in which his soul shuddered and rose from her nest. His soul leapt, soared up into the great church. His body stood still, absorbed by the height. His soul leapt up into the gloom, into possession, it reeled, it swooned with a great escape, it quivered in the womb, in the hush and the gloom of fecundity, like seed of procreation in ecstasy.

... Here the twilight was the very essence of life, the coloured darkness was the embryo of all light and the day. Here the very first dawn was breaking, the very last sunset sinking, and the immemorial darkness, whereof life's day would blossom and fall away again, re-echoed peace and profound immemorial silence.

Away from time, always outside time! Between east and west, between dawn and sunset, the church lay like a seed in silence, dark before germination, silenced after death.

... Here in the Church, 'before' and 'after' were folded together, all was contained in darkness.

... And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met thrust from the earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy. This was all, this was everything. (pp.201-02)

A sense of timelessness is associated with the church and it is taken as the 'apex of the arch' of life. This is a traditional religious feeling that assimilates will. But with the spread of materialism, he could not have continued long to accept the church as the ultimate. Soon his scepticism arises and the peculiar uneasiness grows. But at first it is Anna who drifts away:

But yet-yet she remembered that the open sky was no blue vault no dark dome hung with many twinkling lamps, but a space where stars were wheeling in freedom, with freedom above them always higher. (p. 203)

It is not merely a conflict between tradition and individualism, but a passage from religious faith to cosmic freedom. The cathedral cannot hold him any more:

The sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew quite well, these little imps that retorted on man's own illusion, that the cathedral was no absolute. (p. 204)

Thus, the church and religion become illusory, and lose their sense of wonder: 'Strive as he would, he could not keep the cathedral wonderful to him' (p.205). Anna, after conception, becomes 'absorbed in the child' and postpones 'all

adventure into the unknown realities' (p.206). But Will continues to break away from traditional modes of living:

He listened to the thrushes in the garden, and heard a note which the cathedrals did not include, something free, careless and joyous...There was life outside the church. There was much that the church did not include. (p. 206)

But Will ultimately loses the battle to find out the nature of the individual's relation with the world. Consequently, while the feeling persists that the old form of life is effete and that the centre of life is changing, he becomes indifferent:

His life was shifting its centre, becoming more superficial. He had failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit, he was uncreated. (p. 206)

To say that there is no transition between one generation and the next, to say that there is no development from Tom to Will, as Vivas has done,<sup>17</sup> will be ignoring the salient facts so carefully worked out by Lawrence.

Lawrence was aware of the gradual change in the society and of its reflection in the life of the common man of the country. And he has deliberately and consummately portrayed little things which would show how the English society changed. We can measure this change with tangible frames of reference. First, the question of marriage and sex may be examined. Tom, the early industrial man, in spite of his strivings otherwise, remains committed through marriage and sex to his wife and family. Will is less committed as his dissatisfaction is greater; the Jennie-episode testifies to that. Then Ursula goes farther afield. She is not committed to sex and prefers to retain her individuality. She is less committed by status even to her family. The gradual change generation after generation is unmistakable. Secondly, the attitude towards religion may be considered. Tom is traditionally committed to his church. But Will makes only a qualified acceptance of it and ultimately feels the power of the church to be secondary. In Ursula there is no commitment to the church. She wishes to make love in the church not because sex will be elevated

but because the church is as good a place as any other. She is irreligious from the conventional point of view. Thirdly, education in the three generations may be considered. Tom is almost uneducated. Will is half-educated and has a quasi-technical training. But Ursula has collegiate education. Lawrence's keen observation of the change from generation to generation is evident and this perception of change is a deeper reality Lawrence brings to the novel.

The story so far is unfinished and the theme incomplete. Therefore, Ursula takes over where Will leaves. Through her is continued the social change. The cravings of her predecessors find answers through her character. The basic social fact about Ursula is that she is individualistic and isolated. Her individuality develops and attains freedom in the process of her quest. Tom's individuality is lost in the traditional and communal life. He tries to realize himself but his efforts are feeble. He loses himself. Will continues Tom's quest. He strives to find his feet. The traditional commitments of life in which individuality is lost—the family, the community, and the church—do not satisfy him. He tries to fulfil himself and understand reality through love and sex, but does not succeed: 'He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit he was uncreated' (p.206).

In the third generation Ursula wants to realize herself. She continues to a culmination the feelings which had come over not only Tom and Will but also Anna. Hough observes it and comments: 'But no satisfaction is ever complete. For all her satisfied maternity Anna begins to want 'her own old sharp self' back again, detached, separate.'<sup>18</sup> In her exploration Ursula blunders into lesbianism and is frustrated. Then she makes love to Skrebensky but is not fulfilled. It is because Skrebensky is 'uncreated,' whereas Ursula is striving to attain herself and her individuality has emerged. Hough says of Ursula that 'she is a manifest continuation of the Brangwen line, but more differentiated, more individual, more demanding'.<sup>19</sup> But he hurriedly concludes that the relationship between Ursula and Skrebensky has become a 'muddle' and is a 'stylistic

failure' for Lawrence.<sup>20</sup> When one understands the nature of Ursula's individualized personality, one would realize that her affair with Skrebensky must fail. Anton Skrebensky:

...went about at his duties giving himself up to them. At the bottom of his heart the self, the soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation, lay as dead, still-born a dead weight in his womb. Who was he, to hold important his personal connection? What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation. (p.328)

Skrebensky is decidedly pre-industrial in that his individuality is lost in the community. He is committed to society by status. This difference between Ursula and Skrebensky has been brought out with greater emphasis in another passage:

'I hate soldiers, they are stiff and wooden. What do you fight for, really?'

'I would fight for the nation'.

'For all that, you aren't the nation. What would you do for yourself?'

'I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation'.

'But when it didn't need your services in particular—when there is no fighting? What would you do then?'

He was irritated.

'I would do what everybody else does'. (p.311)

Skrebensky's individuality is uncreated. He has the medieval personality of a serf with his allegiance to his community. Ursula the individualistic post-industrial woman sums up correctly:

'It seems to me,' she answered, 'as if you weren't anybody—as if there wasn't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody really? You seem like nothing to me'. (p.311)

The modern individual is isolated and stands alone in direct rapport with the universe. He is not committed to society by status. His relations with social institutions are contractual in nature and terminable at desire.<sup>21</sup> Skrebensky continues in the old and traditional form while Ursula evolves. Given these two characters, it is only natural that the Ursula-Skrebensky affair must fail. Far from being a 'muddle,' it is inevitable. Even when Skrebensky and Ursula are submerged in sexual fulfilment she feels something lacking: 'She took

him, she clasped him, clenched him close, but her eyes were looking at the stars, it was as if the stars were lying with her and entering the unfathomable darkness of her womb, fathoming her at last. It was not him' (p.465). Skrebensky appears to be failing to come alive, dissolving, and Ursula seems to be shifting her position: 'Then a yearning for something more came over her, a passion for something she knew not what' (p.478). Sexual union is not enough, nor the ultimate. Man for a woman, and woman for a man comes as a part of cosmic nature:

She turned and saw the great white moon looking at her over the hill. And her breast opened to it... She stood filled with the moon, offering herself... she wanted the moon to fill into her. (p.319)

Then Skrebensky leads her away, but 'She was not there...her naked self was away there beating upon the moonlight...in meeting, in communion' (p.319). When a man can come to a woman borne on the living stream of creation there will be effective contact between the two, where the self will realize itself in the context of the cosmos. Skrebensky fails to come alive this way. Aspects of this idea have been worked out in *Women in Love*.

When Ursula fears being with child a terrible agitation goes on inside her. Apparently she fears that Skrebensky will refuse to marry her. But that is not the real cause. She is perplexed about whether she will commit herself to a man permanently and sacrifice her individuality merely because she is with child. She is not prepared to accept a man as the sole object of her consummation, as Mrs Lensky and, to an extent Anna had done earlier. Then comes the expressionistic scene of the last chapter, where the phallic horses haunt her. But she escapes and realizes that the ultimate social reality is the integrity of the individual. Because of the child she need not serve a man. The physiological relationship is undeniable, but the social committal is dispensable: 'If there had been a child, it would have made little difference, however. She would have kept the child and herself, she would not have gone to Skrebensky' (p.494). The idea appears sensational. But it is sane and

reasonable. Men and women live together in marriage largely because of the force of tradition. With more than Shavian sharpness Lawrence analyzes and exposes the fallacy of this covenant. Ursula is no longer committed to social institutions. Her individuality has evolved into isolation. The story of three generations comes to an end as the Individual attains its ultimate integrity.

The last chapter and its conclusions do not come unexpectedly. The foundation for the last chapter has been laid three generations before Ursula and the structure is completed through her. In Ch. XV Ursula looks through the microscope at Nottingham University College:

The conversation had ended on a note of uncertainty, indefinite, wistful. But the purpose, what was the purpose? Electricity had no soul, light and heat had no soul. Was she herself an impersonal force, or conjunction of forces, like one of these? She looked still at the unicellular shadow that lay within the field of light, under her microscope. It was alive. She saw it move—she saw the bright mist of its ciliar activity, she saw the gleam of its nucleus, as it slid across the plane of light. What then was its will? It was a conjunction of forces, physical and chemical, what held these forces unified, and for what were they unified?

For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalized in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope? What was the will which nodalized them and created the one thing she saw? What was its intention? To be itself? Was its purpose just mechanical and limited to itself?

It is intended to be itself. But what self? Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope. Suddenly she had passed away into an intensely gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme gleaming triumph of infinity. (pp.40-41)

The individual is the ultimate reality. To develop one's individuality and to live by its irreducible otherness is the creative way of living. The liberation of Ursula lay in her realization that the isolate individual lives in direct and immediate rapport with the universe or the cosmos, with 'infinity'. This is the 'consummation'. Our social, moral, and other

involvements, therefore, violate the integrity of the individual. To live for an extraneous ideal or to live a committed material existence like Skrebensky is to make life mechanistic.<sup>22</sup>

Lawrence, here, is depicting the gradual change which has come over the English society and the culmination of the change in the evolution of individualism. The metaphysical tone of the novel is not opposed to this depiction of change but resonates with it. The craving of the characters to delve into the unknown is only an expression of their desire to understand the phenomenon of change which has engulfed them. They are parts of the process of change and strive to grasp its meaning. Hence some metaphysical obscurity. But the depiction is psychologically truthful for characters in such circumstances. Transition brought with it uncertainty of values. The individuals felt lost and wanted to find out the ultimate social reality; they searched for it in the community, in religion, and in sex. After two generations of search, Ursula discovers that individuality is the greatest good. All man's action must derive from sources within him rather than be based on the dictates of community, religion, and ideas imposed through tradition and convention. Nor can physical urges like sex usurp the ultimacy of the individual and isolate self. The self becomes the ultimate source of action. Intuition and impulse gain ascendancy over intellect and reason. There is, thus, in the novels of Lawrence, this continued contrast between the intuitive and impulse-centred mode on the one hand and the traditional, mechanistic mode on the other. The impulsive and often irrational behaviour of Ursula has misled critics to the conclusion that she was given to fits of madness.<sup>23</sup> Lawrence shows unique understanding of man's social existence, with the capacity of converting a nation's life into not only the artistic framework of a novel, but into a philosophical construct.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf. Harry T. Moore, *Life and Works of D.H. Lawrence* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951], Prologue. Moore makes a chronological classification of Lawrence's works with which I am inclined to disagree on the ground that both thematically and technically the novel belongs to the first phase and not to the second as Moore states.
2. Published in September, 1915, the press declaimed it severely. *The Daily News* (October 5, 1915), reviewed it under the headline 'Down-fall,' and described it as 'a monotonous wilderness of phallicism.' Soon the Public Morality Council staged a prosecution for banning the book. *The Daily Express* (Nov. 15, 1915), summed up the proceedings as, 'obscene novel to be destroyed— worse than Zola'
3. Harry T. Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1965), p. 200
4. Cf. George H. Ford, *Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D H Lawrence*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1956), pp. 138, 152, 184. Ford suggests that the Biblical allusions give the novel a dimension beyond the naturalistic narrative.
5. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 16ff. Some aspects of the search motif in Lawrence's novels have been discussed by Ford.
6. Graham Hough, *Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Duckworth, 1956), p. 71
7. F. R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955; rpt. London: Penguin Chatto and Windus, 1964), pp. 99-100
8. *Ibid.*, p. 118
9. *Ibid.*, p. 115
10. *Ibid.*, p. 106
11. Graham Hough, *Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 72
12. Eliseo Vivas, *D.H. Lawrence: The Failure and Triumph of Art* (Evanston, 1966; University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 201
13. Hough, *Dark Sun*, p. 72
14. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence*, p. 107. Leavis brings out Lawrence's dramatic power in Chs. III and IV, and uses such phrases as 'disturbing intensity' (p.107), 'shattering immediacy' (p.155), and 'dramatic immediacy' (p. 165)
15. *Failure*, p. 204
16. *Dark Sun*, p. 72
17. *Failure*, p. 207
18. *Dark Sun*, p. 65
19. *Ibid.*, p. 66
20. *Ibid.*, p. 69

21. See *Women in Love*, Ch. XIII, where Birkin significantly tells Ursula about marriage: 'Best read the terms of the contract, before you sign'.
22. Mechanism can be both materialistic and idealistic, because either establishes causality in the world. Bergson's analysis of this point may be noted. *Vide* Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (London: Macmillan, 1954), Introduction. Lawrence's arguments on the point have found the most cogent expression in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, (New York, 1921), p. 30ff
23. *Vide* Ford, *Double Measure*, p. 156

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## WOMEN IN LOVE : SEARCH FOR INTEGRATED BEING

*Women in Love*— the fifth of Lawrence's novels— exploits the classic formula used by him earlier, too; the two couples (Birkin-Ursula and Gerald-Gudrun) are involved in two parallel love-affairs which run concurrently, and have their own genesis and growth and are subject to fluctuations peculiar to each. Both these are marked by deep conflict and anguish felt in the subterranean regions of the being and surfaced in the process of disintegration and dissolution of daily living: moments of occasional fulfilment and ecstasy accentuate those of impasse and eventual failure. The two sisters—Ursula and Gudrun of the Brangwen family— products of the same cultural matrix— reflect distinct and divergent personality-types which are projected in their relationship with Birkin and Gerald, respectively. The novel opens with mutual discussion focused incisively on the nature and prospects of marriage and Ursula seems to be sceptical of the assumptions upon which it is conventionally based and thinks that it is validated only by the specific experience which it involves. The course of love in both cases is tumultuous and nerve-wracking; it has moments of felicity and self-abandon, indeed, but it never runs smooth or evenly. Contrasted with Gudrun— and the contrast is pronouncedly sharp— Ursula commands greater poise and stability of temper, is an inquiring intelligence, and has an inherent talent for accommodation and adjustment though this is in no way to put at a discount the acrimony of tongue, the fluxes and reflexes of feelings or the lambent passion which both partake of almost equally. 'Ursula having almost that strange brightness of an essential flame that is caught, enmeshed, contravened. She lived a good

deal by herself, to herself, working, passing on from day to day, and always thinking, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own understanding', (p.3). In other words, Ursula, in spite of her intensity, intrepidity and eager expectancy of soul is, nevertheless, inclined towards some degree of equipoise. Gudrun, on the contrary, is more vivacious, fidgety and mercurial, always unstable in her equilibrium, attaching herself, moth-like, to any bright flame and yielding unhesitatingly to every gust of passion. Both of them are physically charming and attractive but Ursula is more womanly of the two; they both are also conscious, intelligent and sophisticated as Ursula herself points out with an air of ostentation and superiority while commenting on the invitation extended to them by Hermione to visit her country—house, Breadalby. It looks from the very outset that whereas Birkin-Ursula affair is likely to prosper, Gerald-Gudrun liaison is bound to prove a fiasco, to end catastrophically. The former, however, does in no way serve as a norm for the latter because of its own essential inadequacy, but the sense of contrast posited between the two is unmistakable.

In his official capacity as Inspector of Schools Birkin has had ample opportunity of interacting with Ursula—the school mistress, and he is fascinated by her sensuous charm, her sharpened perceptions and her proclivity to submit herself to the effluence of his maleness. Birkin, though frail-looking and non-assertive, is not just an initiate but has had myriad of experiences of love-making. And yet he does not look upon love as a mere emotional entanglement—just a meeting and mingling of the sexes but as something more inclusive and significant than that: 'What I want is a strange conjunction with you... not meeting and mingling... but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings,—as the stars balance each other' (p. 139). Though seemingly baffled and confounded by this sensuous-mystical jargon Ursula yet continues to be piqued by his winsome personality and the ambivalent construction put upon the phenomenon of love by Birkin. It may not be out of place to mention here that the experience of love in Lawrence involves both ecstasy and rapture on the one

hand, and hardness and cruelty on the other— the latter may as well be equated with a certain grain of malice and recalcitrance. But this is to anticipate. The two major characters in the novel—Birkin and Gerald—have as the focus of their preoccupation the endeavour to achieve an Integrated Being in the face of the deluge of fragmentation in which they seem to be swamped. Putting it differently, they experience a sense of polarity between mental consciousness camouflaged as physical and mindless and that which exists at the deepest levels—product of thinking in the flesh and the loins. It is the sense of knowledge of the 'unknown modes of being', and of what constitutes the pre-logical substratum of personality which explains the intriguing paradox of their responses.

Before having had any truck with Ursula Birkin had as his mistress over the years the formidable Roddice Hermione— an 'equivocator' and an intellectual snob of enormous pretensions. With all the suggestiveness of the macabre and the sinister about her Hermione claims to be a devotee of culture and ideas, a connoisseur of art and music; being aggressive and punctilious she is also self-centred and brutal. And she is maddeningly in love with Birkin. Through her pertinaciousness she makes him feel how indispensable he is for her by way of helping her achieve her true identity, her true complement of personality. She suffers from a 'conceit of consciousness', is moved by the lustful passion for knowledge which leads her to a sort of possessiveness and is an adept at the fabrication of verbal structures as an effective means of coming to terms with Reality. She is a sort of blood-sucking woman who will be contented with nothing less than making her lover subservient to her dominating will. For her this is a prime psychological necessity, for inspite of an overbearing exterior, her facade of a relentless female will, her display of an absorbing cerebral activity and her being 'beyond mock and injury', she is tormented inwardly by a sense of insufficiency; 'And all the while, the pensive, tortured woman piled up her own defences of aesthetic knowledge, and culture, and world visions, and disinterestedness. Yet she could never stop up the terrible

gap of insufficiency' (p. 11). For Birkin she is more or less like the Blakean Spectre – not an Emanation – who 'guards his way night and day' like a sepulchral presence. Birkin accuses her, and legitimately enough, of building up a mere superstructure of words for purposes of self-deception and which may lend credence to her corrosive, hide-bound intellectuality which ends up with sterility of apprehension. 'And he stood and looked at her unmoved. She strayed out, pallid and preyed-upon like a ghost, like one attacked by the tomb-influences which dog us. And she was gone like a corpse, that has no presence, no connection' (p. 82). On account of her over-worn consciousness and the concupiscence of knowledge she has little to contribute to the 'spontaneous—creative fulness of life', which is the positive ideal for a Lawrentian character. When in a bid to preserve his hard-shelled freedom, Birkin refuses to yield to her seductiveness. she doesn't hesitate to strike him physically. The element of iron in her is brought out to the fore when in a fit of exasperation and self-mortification she flings a paperweight in his face, thinking that now all is over between them. The use of murderous violence against the lover whom she fails to subjugate may be rationalised in terms of a thwarted will and an inverted form of love. She realises at long last that hers is a lost cause and Birkin is not likely to continue to be entangled in her meshes. Except for a brief and unexpected encounter with Ursula at Birkin's apartment where both join in the endeavour to furnish it for him Hermione fades away little by little from the scene of action like a phantom—the memory of an unsettling and ghastly dream. The entirely negative dimension of her personality is summed up thus: 'She did not believe in her own universals—they were sham. She did not believe in the inner life—it was a trick, not a reality. She did not believe in the spiritual world— it was an affectation. In the last resort, she believed in Mammon, the flesh, and the devil— these at least were not sham. She was a priestess without belief, without conviction, suckled in a creed outworn and condemned to the reiteration of mysteries that were not divine to her. Yet there was no escape. She was a leaf upon a dying tree' (p. 284). Or she was nailed to *Yggdrasil*.

Of Ursula, the school mistress, we are told: 'She was rich, full of dangerous power. She was like a strange unconscious bud of powerful womanhood. He was unconsciously drawn to her' (p. 85). Birkin and Ursula, in their own characteristic way, are magnetically drawn to each other and are impelled by intense physical hunger of passion. But the love experience shared by them is exposed to all kinds of shifts and variations, it has its ebb and flow and this is in accord with the inherent changeableness of each of them. Birkin, when a certain idealistic mood is on him, thinks of love as more than a mere emotional entanglement; there is in him an undoubted craving for transcendence. 'There is a real impersonal me', he says, 'that is beyond love, beyond any emotional relationship. So it is with you. But we want to delude ourselves that love is the root' (p. 137). This 'impersonal me' beyond love—or shall we say beyond the sex relationship? later termed as 'a lovely state of free proud singleness', is an essential component of that integrated Being which he is so anxious to cultivate. He draws Ursula's attention to it with a certain degree of intentness thus: 'There is a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there that I would want to meet you—not in the emotional, loving plane but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures... One can only follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, and responsible for nothing...only each talking to the primal desire' (pp. 137-38). Birkin conceives of love as more or less a primal creative force which is beyond sex and in this domain the lover and the beloved exist as two individualized entities, purged of all physical and passional contamination. He further adds: 'What I want is a strange conjunction with you... not meeting and midgling... but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings—as the stars balance each other, (p. 139). He seems to be stubbornly opposed to any kind of interfusion or process of melting which may lead to the dissolution of separate and distinct identities.

The relationship between Birkin and Ursula is one which takes time to be enrooted; he is already utterly disillusioned in

respect of Hermione and the concept of absolute freedom sponsored by him so far undergoes radical modification. Freedom to be genuinely creative and issue forth in the inner fecundity of the self is hedged in by all kinds of constraints; these constitute not its negation and annulment but contribute to its full flowering. Birkin seems to move gradually from a certain idealistic stance and realizes that the impulse of love has to be incarnated, that despite being a union of the spirits it has also to be embodied in terms of the flesh. Moreover, he also tends to be persuaded of the worthwhileness of the assertion of the male superiority over the female. This is dramatically, *not conceptually*, rendered through the quasi-symbol of Mino— 'a slender young gentleman', who imposes himself upon the female cat— 'a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos' and brings her down to the level of utter submissiveness. In this Ursula sees a desire on the part of Mino 'to have a satellite' though Birkin refuses to treat this kind of boxing of her by the male counterpart as an act of bullying; it is only a way of 'keeping up' his 'male dignity' and 'his higher' understanding'. Birkin is, nevertheless, caught in a sea-saw of emotions: he responds to Ursula's caressive tenderness as much as he is repelled by Hermione's parasitism; he recognizes the urgency of the pressure of emotions and yet wishes to preserve the integrity of his personal self. He is perceptive enough to observe, while repudiating Ursula: 'And woman is the same as horses: two wills act in opposition inside her. With one will, she wants to subject herself utterly. With the other, she wants to bolt, and pitch her rider to perdition' (p.132). And pat comes Ursula's reply: 'Then I'm a bolter.' Birkin concedes the possibility of their melting into each other and yet is fully and irrevocably resistant to it. He would like to make up his mind one way or the other and still is unable to take a firm decision: he recognizes the ambivalence of the experience of love and his own chameleon-like character as a lover. He is aware of the desirability of merging oneself into the identity of another and yet clutches that which is coiled round the essential core of love. Ursula is well posted about



the multitude of erotic experiences Birkin has had with a number of women over a long stretch of time and hence her jeering and taunting of him is expressed with such forthright pungency thus: 'So you come to me, and keep them in the background. You will marry me for daily use. But you'll keep yourself well provided with spiritual brides in the background. I know your dirty little game' (p.298). And further: 'Your purity, your candour, your goodness... Yes, thank you, we've had some. What you are is a foul, deathly thing, obscene, that's what you are, obscene and perverse... You are so *perverse*, so death-eating' (p. 299). Ursula speaks, it may be stressed, not only out of deep revulsion but also with the submerged and dark passion of vengeance.

The frustration generated in him is crystallized concretely in the unusual gesture of stoning and shattering the image of the moon in the mill-pond, and Birkin is discovered doing so in a fit of frenzy by Ursula thus: 'Ursula was aware of the bright moon leaping and swaying, all distorted, in her eyes. It seemed to shoot out arms of fire like a cuttle-fish, like a luminous polyp, palpitating strongly before her' (p.239). Birkin puts dead flower-husks on the water as if deluding himself to have the residual past experiences washed off and thus enabling himself to be set free of Ursula's persistent hold over himself. But he does not quite succeed. Cybele, the accursed Syria Dea, is identified with the Greek Aphrodite and, inferentially, with Ursula—the focal point in the dark body of love. What arrests our attention in an instant of perception is the simultaneous evocation of the fragments of moonlight glimmering on the surface of the water and the waves of darkness rushing from beneath. 'Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running under towards the centre' (p.239). But the broken flakes of the moonlight re-form themselves in the water and thus, metaphorically, the continuing spell of Ursula

cannot be broken. The shimmering reflection of the moon, its undulating movement visible on the surface and the deep agitation and flutter of the waters—all these are components of an indivisible whole and one is stunned into bewilderment by their cumulative impact. All this is symbolic of the fact that the incubus of memories of the past cannot be put by and love tends to assert itself against all odds: '...but always flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam fell in with the whole; until a ragged rose, a distorted, frayed moon was shaking upon the waters again, re-asserted, renewed, trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfigurement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at peace' (p. 240).

Birkin makes it plain that the experience of love and the attitude to sex has had three distinct evolutionary stages. To begin with the human self was androgynous, the differentiation of sex had not yet occurred and it was all mixed up. The next step was the singling out of the male and the female and at the same time it was characterized by union in separateness. It was followed by yet another phase and this may be distinguished as one of apartness in unison or 'the pure duality of polarization': And he enunciates some sort of metabiology of sex thus: 'In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture. The process of singling into individuality resulted into the great polarization of sex... But the separation was imperfect even then. And so our world cycle passes. There is now to come the new day, when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference. The man is pure man, the woman pure woman, they are perfectly polarized. But there is no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling, self-abnegation of love. There is only the pure duality of polarization, each one free from any contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal, sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarized... Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarized sex-circuit' (p. 193). What seems to be insisted on by Lawrence, in the bewildering variety of situations and with frequent reiteration, is the preservation of the little Individual ego or self even despite

the momentary oneness which is achieved in the sex-act. In other words, what is implied in all these contexts is the ideal of the integrated Being—'the lovely state of free proud singleness' which is to be prized as something very precious and well worth cultivating. This notion cuts across any kind of the mystic union which entails the submergence of the pure identity into the whirlpool of otherness.

It is only when they go out—the mutual bickerings having been exchanged with all possible virulence—and Ursula, in a burst of frenzy, throws out the rings Birkin had bought for her, that Lawrence's self-dramatization of personal conflicts with Frieda, as reflected in the chapter *Excuse*, is done with superb authenticity. In a mood of searching introspection Birkin tries to distinguish, *apropos* the attitude to love and sex, the contrasted stance of Ursula and Hermione thus: 'And was not Ursula's way of emotional intimacy, emotional and physical, was it not just as dangerous as Hermione's abstract spiritual intimacy?... Hermione saw herself as the perfect Idea, to which all men must come; and Ursula was the perfect Womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come; And both were horrible (p. 301). But in spite of finding the idea of fusion nauseous, all of a sudden and almost miraculously there takes place in the dark and mysterious Wood a resurgence of love between Birkin and Ursula. This remains unaccounted for, and the ecstacy of love, coming in the wake of bitter mutual recriminations, is no less amazing. Contact is established between them not only at the intangible level of the spirit but more importantly, and simultaneously, at the level of flesh and blood, too: 'She saw a strange creature from another world in him. It was as if she were enchanted, and everything were metamorphosed. She recalled again the old magic of the Book of Genesis, where the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. And he was one of these, one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking down at her, and seeing she was fair' (p. 304). And further, 'She had thought there was no source deeper than the phallic source. And now, behold, from the smitten rock of the man's body, from the strange marvellous flanks and thighs,

deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source, came the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches' (p. 306). In these two passages the reciprocity of love is visualized in terms of some sort of primal accord, and from the root of the phallic source radiate both serenity and bafflement. The ecstasy following the physical consummation— the unexpected, thrilled accession into being— is mediated through the swirl of passion thus: 'Still there remained a dark lambency of anticipation. She would touch him. With perfect fine finger— tips of reality she would touch the reality in him, the suave, pure, untranslatable reality of his loins of darkness. To touch, mindlessly in darkness to come in pure touching upon the living reality of him, his suave perfect loins and thighs of darkness, this was her sustaining anticipation' (p.311). Both Birkin and Ursula are seen as tapping the nether regions of Being in order to have an ineffable experience and recognize each other as participants in a sort of mystical ritualism: 'Quenched, inhuman, his fingers upon her unrevealed nudity were the fingers of silence upon silence, the body of mysterious night upon the body of mysterious night, the night masculine and feminine, never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind, only known as a palpable revelation of living otherness' (p 312).

It is, however, worth pondering that Birkin's notion of love which leaves elbow-room for both identification and almost complete detachment and segregation between the lover and the beloved falls short of ideal perfection. The union of the opposites on the physical plane or in the sex-act remains incomplete without similar identification between the two male lovers:

'You've got to take down the love-and-mariage ideal from its pedestal. We want something broader. I believe in the *additional* perfect relationship between man and man— additional to marriage'.

'I can never see how they can be the same' said Gerald.

'Not the same— but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred, if you like' (p. 345).

The allegiance of each to the other is well indicated by swearing to *Blutbruderschaft* after the fashion of the German Knights and is made all the more unambiguous towards the very end of

the novel (pp. 472-73). It looks as if the identification between Birkin and Ursula needs to be supplemented with a similar one between him and Gerald. Will it be too much to hazard the guess that the possibility that the self may remain incomplete even after union with the opposite sex or dissolve into fragments is averted by the further act of intimacy and communion with the male friend? It may be added that the relation between the male lovers helps them reach up the higher spiritual poles of consciousness as against the lower sexual ones (cf. *Fantasia of the Unconscious*). The wrestling bout between Birkin and Gerald, though rather unsavoury to the squeamish modern taste, is, nevertheless, symbolic of a sort of creative tension and is an aspect of the unity in diversity—the major theme which is pervasive in the novel. Birkin concedes towards the end that Ursula should be enough for him in the normal way of satisfaction but some sort of inner compulsion for a perilous intimacy with Gerald is therefore not ruled out. For Ursula his is not a piece of irrefragable logic but Birkin regards it as neither whimsical nor perverse, for it is part of an inclusive design of integration.

Gerald, with whom Birkin has had a consistently steady relationship till the very end, is the product of a petrifying environment. Early in a colloquy with Birkin, when the latter inquires of him: 'Then wherein does life centre for you?' his forthright affirmation is: 'As far as I can make out, it doesn't centre at all. It is artificially held *together* by the social mechanism' (p. 51). Metaphorically referred to as 'a ray of cold sunshine' his northern beauty has the coldness of the arctic regions about it. Son of an industrial magnate—Thomas Crich—he has had the stigma of Cain branded on him for having accidentally killed his own brother. Whereas his father believed in the subdual of the coalminers in Shortlands by managing his affairs paternalistically, smoothing his machines with the oil of Christian *caritas*, Gerald, the efficient and cold-blooded executive, looks upon them as mere agents in the promotion of industry. Once the machine is turned into a totem and worshipped as a god rather than regarded as a necessary adjunct of the whole industrial complex, the coarsening

of the fibres of human consciousness is its inevitable consequence. 'What mattered was the pure instrumentality of the individual. As a man as of a knife, does it cut well? Nothing else mattered' (P. 215). The desecration of life in its essential roots and the sapping of its potential energies which naturally proceeds from the operation of the industrial processes is one of Lawrence's major concerns here as later in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, too. Along with the reduction of life to mechanism, what possibly mattered also was the fulfilment of his own Urizenic will and intellect by Gerald and the resistant matter which had to be moulded and refashioned. What has happened in the case of Criches is precisely the domination of the human psyche by the machine and which also therefore entails the oozing out of the fertility of life by the development of Will and Idea. Man comes of necessity to believe in surplus production of commodities as the ultimate target and the increased profits accruing from it as his ultimate reward, exalts machine to the status of a mysterious and all-potent force and looks upon the network of human relationships as subservient to the plausible ethics of productivity. What Gerald prides himself on is his own masterful will by which the wills of the coalminers have to be battered, for human personality in such a context becomes a mere anatomical sub-structure which subserves cold, impersonal ends and has only an instrumental value. What counts most in Gerald's relations with the coalminers is the increased output of coal and iron which may ensure for him an impregnable position of security and render his prestige unquestionable. The antithesis between the mechanical and the organic which lies at the heart of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* receives a lucid exposition here, too. An order of things resting on mechanical processes and the cash-nexus linked to it helps in the growth of human attitudes and responses which are purely nihilistic and life-denying. And with the suicidal surrender of human values to mechanical values begins the downright plunge into Chaos. 'It was the first great step in undoing, the first great step of chaos, the substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the

destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity, and the subordination of every organic unit to the great mechanical purpose. It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos' (P. 223). And with this is lost the holistic complexion of life for good. The 'universe of death' in which Gerald lives and moves is the main determinant of his being and confers upon it a kind of frostiness. The malady of the individual psyche in his case becomes, by indirection, as pointed out by F. R. Leavis,<sup>2</sup> an index and a means of exploration of the malady of the whole Western industrial civilization.

Gerald is coarse-grained and brutal and believes in an iron-cast discipline to be enforced with maximized rigidity and callousness. One aspect of his personality— and that most irksome — is brought out in his handling of his red Arab mare he is riding on and who gets bruised and wounded because he insists on her continuing to be exposed to the locomotive which chuffed past the railway crossing. However much she tries to wince away Gerald holds her firm under his legs and forces her back. She rebounds 'like a drop of water' both from the violence of the hot iron and the terror of the noise and yet Gerald continues to sit 'glistening and obstinate' forcing her wheeling mare and not caring a jot for her bleeding under the spurs. 'But as strong as the pressure of his compulsion was the repulsion of her utter terror, throwing her back away from the railway, so that she spun round and round on two legs, as if she were in the centre of some whirlwind' (P. 103). And Gudrun, with her 'black-dilated', 'spell-bound' eyes was overcome by a sort of primitive horror by this display of utter insensitiveness on the part of Gerald.

Magnificently handsome as Gerald is, he is also more self-willed and assertive than the frail-looking Birkin and casts the irresistible spell of his personality on whomsoever he comes across: 'he seems to reap the women like a harvest' (p.384) and 'before every woman he unfurls his male attractiveness, displays his great desirability, he tries to make every woman think how wonderful it would be to have him for a lover' (p. 454)

Of the two sisters he is more attracted by Gudrun than by Ursula though he does have some spirited and animating discussions with the latter on several occasions. Between Gerald and Gudrun some sort of temperamental incompatibility is sometimes evident which causes them to be at loggerheads with each other. And yet early in the novel she is fascinated when she catches a glimpse of him while rowing the boat along with Hermione: 'And instantly she perished in the keen *frisson* of anticipation, an electric vibration in her veins, intense, much more intense than that which was always humming low in the atmosphere of Beldover' (p.112). Later when they have the opportunity of knowing each other more intimately—knowing 'darkly, in the blood'—her reactions are conveyed to us thus: 'And her breast was keen with passion for him, he was so beautiful in his male stillness and mystery. It was a certain pure effluence of maleness, like an aroma from his softly, firmly moulded contours, a certain rich perfection of his presence, that touched her with an ecstasy, a thrill of pure intoxication... Her hands lay on the paddle like slumber, she only wanted to see him, like a crystal shadow, to feel his essential presence' (pp. 169-70). And she communicates her sensitivity to him later in extremely lyrical, passionate and sex-ridden overtones in the same chapter, entitled 'Water Party' with such specificity: 'The beauty of his dim and luminous loins as he climbed into the boat, his back rounded and soft—ah, this was too much for her, too final a vision. She knew it and it was fatal. The terrible hopelessness of fate, and of beauty, such beauty' (p.173). This whole passage is drenched in a sort of fervid emotionality and verges almost on some sort of hysterical effervescence.

Though his sensibility had become deadened and mildewed by being exposed to a highly mechanized mode of living yet Gerald, too, was fully responsive to the luminous and overwhelming tenderness of Gudrun. What bound them closely together was the hot current of sexuality that flowed and touched them both and obliterated for the time being the little discrepancies which became visible occasionally. But Gerald was always disinclined to settling down to the organized, marital



state of life. His relationship with Minette and involvement with the whole set of Bohemians who gathered together at Halliday's provide some dim and fatal intimation of how his affairs will turn out eventually. His relationship with Gudrun, unlike that of Birkin with Ursula, and in spite of all its exuberance and impetuosity, is rather infirm and shaky and hence liable to sudden shifts. He does not subscribe to any kind of idealistic stance but believes in a down-to-earth, naked, sexual rapport. But despite his masterful will and apparent imperturbability he is swept off his feet by watching Gudrun's frenzied, ritualistic dance before the cattle which in a way is a libidinal parading of female assertion against the traditionally accepted male superiority. The bewildering ecstasy, the jazz-like movement and the tremendous potential of energy unleashed in this dance are evocative of what Mark Schorer calls the 'hallucinatory effects'<sup>3</sup>: 'Then in a sudden motion, she lifted her arms and rushed sheer upon the long-horned bullocks, in shuddering, irregular runs, pausing for a second and looking at them, then lifting her hands and running forward with a flash, till they ceased pawing the ground, and gave way, snorting with terror, lifting their hands from the ground and flinging themselves away, galloping off into the evening, becoming tiny in the distance, and still not stopping' (p.161). It is in this powerful passage that Gudrun's personality, with all its latent tensions and flurry of emotions, is rendered with shattering, dramatic immediacy and it foreshadows with an element of murkiness how she will eventually bring about, unconsciously though, Gerald's discomfiture. Gerald and Gudrun hardly entertain the possibility of a marital relationship, for to them knowledge through the medium of the flesh is the basis of all true understanding, and is also self-sufficing. The carved figure of the savage woman in labour sighted by Gerald at Halliday's, the Aztec art and the mysteries of Etruscan religion—concrete evocations of fully-lived life in unfathomable depths seething below the surface—are invested with sensuous riches which are not accessible to and lie beyond the pale of mental consciousness. Gerald is also one who, given his extraordinary physical charm, has been promiscuous and Gudrun, 'the arrogant queen

of life', is very much aware of it. His relationship with her is partly determined by his consciousness of his productive will—his being the God of the machine—a psychological complex which he cannot drive out of its lair. But though apparently self-willed and assiduously set upon the pursuit of his objectives Gerald proves weaker than Gudrun who seems to be made of sterner stuff. An artist of some pretensions and having had her training and professional experience in London and other places, Gudrun is scandalized by the sight of the squalor and the sordidness of Shortlands—'the landscape of hysteria' or what Lawrence identifies as a 'ghoulish replica of the real world'—which is the nerve-centre of the industry run by the Criches. Her hypersensitiveness and capability of emotional perturbation are brought out by the way in which she is repelled by the rabbit episode—the rabbit being the symbol of the vital, self-possessed animal life as well as victimisation in of sex. 'And he saw her eyes black as night in her pallid face, matters she looked almost unearthly. The scream of the rabbit, after the violent tussle, seemed to have torn the veil of her consciousness' (p.233). The frenetic violence associated with this episode is not, however, the main focus of attention; what is even more relevant is the inter-polarity or the hidden area of antagonism between the two of them which is thus externalized. The Gerald-Gudrun liaison is marked by a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety because neither of them is sure of the continued allegiance of the other: a sort of precariousness and potential destructivity adheres to its very roots. Though she regards herself as 'a beetle toiling in the dust' yet Gudrun is also profoundly disturbed by the feeling that probably she cannot fit in with the mechanistic, monotonous and soul-withering amorphous atmosphere out of which Gerald had sprung like 'a flower of dissolution'.

Fugitive moments of felicity and fulfilment alternate with those of rancour, suspicion and distrust: when they pass under the colliery railway bridge and Gudrun is locked in Gerald's arms with the ache of the honey-dew of pleasure as 'colliers had pressed their lovers to their breasts' formerly, both of them are thrown into rapture and feel themselves up-

lifted and expanded : 'Her arms were round his neck, he kissed her and held her perfectly suspended, she was all slack and flowing into him, and he was the firm, strong cup that receives the wine of her life. So she lay cast upon him, stranded, lifted up against him, melting and melting under his kisses, melting into his limbs and bones, as if he were soft iron becoming surcharged with her electric life' (p. 323). Later when they are hurled back to pressing, mundane concerns of daily living and the high tension-power is relaxed, the perpetual sea-saw of emotions again plunges them into a mood of scepticism and near-despair. The drama of this love-hate relationship, this, 'sympathetic antagonism'— is, however, pushed to the verge of desperation when Gudrun, resolving upon a self-imposed exile, is masking herself from the common gaze and Garald makes a renewed effort to establish contact with her, and after floundering and groping on tiptoes through close-shut doors and corridors, parodying the journey to Chapel Perilous, finally succeeds in clandestinely worming his way into her 'bed of crimson joy' while every-thing was shrouded in the mysterious and overwhelming stillness of the night. When they are brought in touch with each other on the purely physical level the gulf of separateness yawning between them seems to be bridged momentarily : they are able to tear the veil of exclusiveness and the hot current of intimacy interfuses them to such an extent that they tend to forget their individual and self-contained entities and merge into an indistinguishable oneness : 'Mother and substance of all life she was. And he, child and man, received of her and was made whole. His pure body was almost killed. But the miraculous, soft effluence of her breast suffused over him, over his seared, damaged brain, like a healing lymph, like a soft, soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again' (p. 337).

But from this point onwards a sharp descent is forced upon them unwillingly : the cauterizing flame of desire begins to burn low and the rupture of their relationship is precipitated by the appearance of Herr Loerke, the German sculptor, on the scene of action, Gudrun becomes enamoured of him passion-

ately and he takes full advantage of the messiness of the situation created by the conflict between Gerald and Gudrun. *Apropos* of the West African wooden figures, Loerke would not like one to confuse the relative work of action with the absolute work of art. Though himself a fervent admirer of the latter he, nevertheless, becomes convinced that this approach implies an untenable position and lacks both credibility and substance. This brings into relief two distinctive traits of his personality: first, he has an unerring perception of things and secondly, he is capable of adjusting himself to the changed context and does not believe in any kind of wooliness. He possesses a god-like detachment from the objects and persons surrounding him and can, therefore, take their bearings with sober and lucid objectivity. Gerald regards Loerke as a reptilian figure, and he is time and again visualised, by way of deflation, either in the manner of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* or Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. Birkin tells Gerald he is 'the gnawing little negation at the root of life.' And yet he has more immediate and penetrative insight into the subtleties of that 'temple of mysteries'—Gudrun—, than Gerald can lay any legitimate claim to: he is possessed, that is, of a tremendous power of understanding and can peer into depths which remain undisclosed to the opaque vision of his arch rival. The contrast between the two of them is brought home to us this way: 'He, Loerke, could penetrate into depths far out of Gerald's knowledge. Gerald was left behind like a postulant in the ante-room of this temple of mysteries, this woman. But he, Loerke, could he not penetrate into the inner darkness, find the spirit of the woman in its inner recess; and wrestle with it there, the central serpent that is coiled at the core of life' (p. 442): And further: 'He (Gerald) could not touch the quick of her, But where his ruder blows could not penetrate, the fine, insinuating blade of Loerke's insect-like comprehension could. At least, it was now time for her to pass over to the other, the creature, the final craftsman. She knew that Loerke, in his innermost soul, was detached from everything, for him there was neither heaven nor earth nor hell.

He admitted no allegiance, he gave no adherence anywhere' (p. 443). It may however, be surmised that in spite of the hard, metallic perfection of his exterior and the obstinate, immovable will Gerald was the weaker of the two. Gerald's Being, though fashioned in the crucible of rigorous discipline is, nevertheless, quite vulnerable as is proved by the fact that his discomfiture and annihilation is quietly and unobtrusively brought about by Gudrun and Loerke. He was also dimly aware of Loerke's presence in Gudrun's veins and this is what poisoned the vessels of his mind. With all his triumphs as a captain of industry he was conscious of a terrible inner emptiness, of the coldness that hovered over his passion and of the lack of connectedness in the framework of things. In cutting himself from 'the deepest sources of life' he has 'elected his damnation and death'.

'And once or twice lately, when he was alone in the evening and had nothing to do, he had suddenly stood up in terror... He was afraid, in mortal dry fear, but he knew not what of. He looked at his own face. There it was, shapely and healthy and the same as ever, yet somehow, it was not real, it was a mask. ...He dared not touch it, for fear it should prove to be only a composition mask. His eyes were blue and keen as ever, and as firm in their sockets. Yet he was not sure that they were not blue false bubbles that would burst in a moment and leave clear annihilation... He was afraid that one day he would break down and be a purely meaningless babble lapping round a darkness' (pp. 224-25).

He thus looks dazed and forlorn, his psyche is like a broken mirror and the chaotic fragments of his Being have nothing to unify and hold them together. His mind is assailed by doubts and misgivings and he seems to have lost his moorings. He is unable to diagnose his own malady except to have the sensation of falling adrift and cannot hope to achieve any coherence or equipoise and make his way to any focal point to which he can cling to save himself from complete disintegration. What seems to hold his mind under their sway are 'dry mortal fear' and the dreadful awareness of 'clear annihilation'. Everything looks messy and uprooted, fragmented and atomized and he is at a loss to understand the nature and source of this atomization, this lack of centrality and cohesion in life. His is a

lonely self which has lost its point of contiguity and interaction with others. His father, though not a conspicuous success as a business magnate, was, however, able to keep the cupidity of the workers in check whereas Gerald, though seemingly efficient and rigorous, was aware that his hold over the coal miners was loose and infirm. His relations with Gudrun betray the same sense of inadequacy and self-mistrust. In spite of the swirl of passion, the occasional high-pitch of intensity and the cloying sweetness of his embraces of Gudrun, there is something which makes him sceptical not only of the authenticity of love but also of the authenticity of his own Being, Gudrun, likewise, refuses to be treated as a satellite and resists every manoeuvring on his part to reduce her to a position of servility and subordination and thus she takes an irrevocable decision to choose in Loerke the lover-substitute.

What initiates the crisis is Gerald's taking a fancy to the professor's daughter and Gudrun's strengthened and sustained infatuation of Loerke. All three of them flock together to stay at Troylese hostel in proximity to the mystery and serenity of the snow-capped mountains and the contrasted reactions of Gerald and Gudrun to the grimness and seculsion of these surroundings are symptomatic not only of their inner turmoil but also dimly foreshadow the shape of things to come: 'He (Gerald) saw the blind valley, the great cul-de-sac of snow and mountain peaks under the heaven, And there was no way out. The terrible silence and cold and the glamorous whiteness of the dusk wrapped him round, and she remained crouching before the window, as at a shrine, a shadow' (p. 391). And 'she (Gudrun) felt that there, over the strange, blind, terrible wall of rocky snow, there in the navel of the mystic world, among the final cluster of peaks, there, in the infolded navel of it all, was her consummation' (p. 400). Here 'the cul-de-sac of snow' and 'the navel of the mystic world' are configurations of the blind alley of love and the umbilical cord which is the divide—the point of intersection—between life and death and both are premonitory of the impending calamity. In other words, Gerald and Gudrun are alike being driven, as

if by an irresistible impulse, towards their fated end. Earlier in the novel Gerald had frequently been associated with and conceived in terms of categories like 'ice-destructive knowledge' and 'snow-abstract annihilation' and both seem to have fatal and gruesome implications. Overcome by a sudden paroxysm of violent jealousy and hatred he forms in his distraught brain the plan of destroying Gudrun: 'A blinding flash went over his brain, his body jolted. His heart had burst into flame, His consciousness was gone into his wrists, into his hands. He was one blind, incontinent desire to kill her. His wrists were bursting, there would be no satisfaction till his hands had closed on her' (p. 453). As if in the grip of some malignant force which is both ultimate and unshunnable he succeeds in knocking Loerke down with frictional violence and feels 'a perfect voluptuous fulfilment' in the grim resolve to strangle Gudrun to death. But though they reel under the impact of the unexpected shock yet they also recover from it while he himself proceeds to his doom, skiing to the frozen and desolate mountains and meets a cruel and disastrous end. Snow and ice which dissolve into water (water linked with life, vegetation and baptism in pagan and biblical myths, though) become in his case the means of sheer destruction and death. As he wanders through the awfully forbidding slopes and precipices, covered with layers of endless snow, he falls and with it 'something is broken in his soul', bringing him the much-needed sleep of eternal repose. Birkin later comments on it thus: 'Birkin remembered a rabbit which he had once found frozen like a board on the snow. It had been rigid like a dired board when he picked it up. And now this was Gerald, stiff as a board, curled up as if for sleep, yet with the horrible hardness somehow evident. It filled him with horror' (p. 468).

Birkin fails in his consistent endeavour to achieve a total integration of self or Being because his ideal of unification or organic forms and rhythms, in spite of establishing psychic and physical rapport with Ursula, is neutralised by a sense of 'lack' or insufficiency. His is the failure of an impractical theorist or Utopian visionary. Gerald, his polar opposite, the embodiment of an absolute will, nourished in a soulless, mechanistic milieu

of his own making, feels frustrated and gnawed by an irritable sense of nullity and vacuum and is baulked in his effort to develop a coherent and meaningful identity. His defences which create the false illusion of being impregnable crumble before the superior strategy, the quick, intuitive grasp of the situation and the 'insect-like comprehension' of Loerke and he is swamped in 'the river of dissolution.' His end had, amazedly, been seen in his beginning:

'Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow? '(pp. 246-47).

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*Iqbal A Ansari*

## **LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER : PATTERN OF CONTRAST AND CONFLICT**

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* D.H. Lawrence attempts a critique of the contemporary European civilization tracing the origin of the malady that it suffered from to science and Socrates, Jesus and Plato. The style is partly poetic-fictional employing a romantic fable and straightforward narrative, and partly Prophetic-oracular. The sense of doom and impending disaster in the author-protagonist lends such an urgency, iterativeness and deliberateness to his criticism of the industrial civilization that the novel becomes suspect as a satisfactory work of art. But before assessing the novel's artistic merits and failures, let us have a close look at the verbal, ideational-conceptual and symbolic patterns on which the novel is structured.

The basic pattern of the novel is that of contrast and conflict of opposites. The opposites are: the contemporary squalid industrial England against nostalgic memory of pre-industrial England of Shakespeare and Elizabeth and even of earlier pagan ages; Tevershall mining village blackened and deadened by 'the smoke of coal and the cruelty of iron' on the one hand and the wood with its potency, peace and mystery on the other; Wragby Hall as a seat of modern literary-intellectual and industrial activity having Mammon and the Bitch Goddess Success as its gods and the gamekeeper's cottage and the hut in the wood with its vitally regenerating power; the artificial electric light and hectic activity of Tevershall, and its high-speed vehicular traffic against the inwardness, stillness and peace of the wood with its natural darkness and light of the sunrise and sunset and the waxing and waning moon; English industrial Midlands and the European cities of Paris and Venice set against exotic colonies and distant lands of Africa, America and Australia.

In the process of symbolisation the wood, Tevershall and the Wragby Hall acquire distinctive characters of their own no less significant than the human characters. Significantly the aristocratic house of the Chatterleys, the Wragby Hall, is historically traced back to the middle of the eighteenth century which marks the culmination of the scientific movement in England, giving rise to a mechanical order and even a mechanical continuity. It is the chafing walls of this house that force Constance Chatterley to seek refuge in the woods. Tevershall represents the misery and ugliness of industrialism. The people's major pre-occupation there is wages; the whole fun of life for them lies in getting and spending. They are left with neither intuition nor spontaneity in life. Unlike birds and beasts they are not sensitive to beauty either. Relationship between Wragby and Tevershall is just functional and mechanical, devoid of any human warmth. The wood is threatened by felling of trees for trench-timber, by deadening pollution of sulphur and coal and by a general greed that is driving the whole society to insanity. The sense of seclusion and refuge that the wood gives is therefore just illusory.

The wood symbolises vitality, sap, potency, suppleness and also mystery; but above all else Lawrence emphasises the wood's *inwardness, stillness and peace*:

From the old wood came an ancient melancholy, somehow soothing to her, better than the harsh insentience of the outer world. She liked the *inwardness* of the remnant of forest, the unspeaking reticence of the old trees. They seemed a very power of silence and yet a vital presence. (p.67)

It is again these very values that Mellors, the gamekeeper, is made to represent, especially in his tender and compassionate love relation with Connie. These values are opposed to self-will, power and demination, greed and display that the modern life stands for.

The key-words that are frequently used in the novel to signify two opposing nodal concepts are 'mechanical' and 'organic'. There are two sets of words that are so iteratively used as to constitute a pattern of 'mechanic-organic' opposition. On the one hand we have: organic contact, touch, rootedness,

connectedness, togetherness, blood, spontaneous, intuition, oneness, wholeness, belonging, fusion, growth, sap, shooting, budding, branching, body, life, phallus, leafy, vital; on the other hand we have: mechanical, nothingness, void, insentient, non-organic, inert, dead, emptiness, blank, hollow, hard, separateness, dreary, spectral, corpse, plucked, fallen (leaves), forlorn. These opposing pairs of words have been so iteratively used and contextualised that almost each acquires the status of an image reinforcing the nodal symbols of 'organic' and 'mechanical'. Even time, its passage and sequencing, is visualised by Lawrence in the two categories of mechanical and organic:

What there was in the moment was everything. And moments followed one another without necessarily belonging to one another. (p.18)

Of the books and stories written by Clifford Lawrence says that:

There was no organic connexion with the thought and expression that had gone before. (p.18)

About the life in the Wragby Hall it is said to have 'mechanical cleanliness and the mechanical order... No warmth of feeling united it organically' (p. 18). Nostalgically remembering the England of Elizabeth, Lawrence says, 'This is history...The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical' (p. 163).

Often the description of the human body and of sexual experiences is made in terms of breeze, branches, suppleness, erectness, power and sap of the tree and the wood:

She went to the wood next day. It was a grey, still afternoon with the dark-green dogs-mercury spreading under the hazel copse, and all the trees making a silent effort to open their buds. Today she could almost feel it in her own body, the huge heave of the sap in the massive trees, upwards, up, up to the bud-tips, there to push into little flamey oak-leaves, bronze as blood. It was like a tide running turgid upward, and spreading on the sky. (p. 126)

And:

She was like a forest, like the dark interlacing of the oak-wood, humming

inaudibly with myriad unfolding buds. Meanwhile the birds of desire were asleep in the vast interlaced intricacy of her body. (p. 143-144)

It is this concept of mechanism and organicism that binds the two themes of sex and industrialism together in the novel. Man to Lawrence is an organic whole: instinct, intuition, reason, all united by 'blood'. The fall of man, to him, starts with rational enquiry, which is knowing in apartness:

But the two ways of knowing, for man, are knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, and knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic<sup>2</sup>.

Post-Renaissance science built up a mechanistic world-view based on this enquiry whose roots go back to Socrates. Rational analysis and dissection gave birth to atomisation, converting organic wholes into disjuncted 'things' and 'objects', 'force', 'matter' and 'energy'. Machine further intensified this process of treating man and Nature as functioning units of 'things' and 'objects' and raw materials to be converted into marketable commodities that could be sold for profit. Cash nexus is thus established and greed is aroused as the driving force behind man's activities. More than once in the novel Lawrence tries to see Bolshevism as an alternative, but dismisses it equally vehemently as representing a big machine, as an outcome of the same consciousness. The ideal of Bolshevism is a 'democracy of pockets,' whereas what is needed, Lawrence thinks, is a 'democracy of touch'<sup>3</sup>.

The other source of evil to Lawrence is what he calls the 'uplift taint' i.e. Christianity's contempt for the body and sex. Buddha, Plato and Jesus—all life-negating philosophers and Prophets despise the body, its passions and desires:

By abstracting oneself from the life, the daily, yearly, seasonal life of birth, and death and fruition, and in living in the 'immutable' or eternal spirit... It brings dull inertia<sup>4</sup>.

Hence his quarrel with Christianity. Though Lawrence believes in a Power beyond and a higher Mystery, he would like the masses of people to 'be alive and frisky, and acknowledge the great god Pan,' (p. 315) and attune their lives to the

great nourishing and sustaining reality of the organic world; rhythm of the bodies in consonance with the rhythm of the cycle of seasons, the sun, and the moon.

Apart from Christianity's 'uplift taint' given to the body, 'mental-consciousness' has given rise to the values of freedom, self-identity and assertion, especially among the modernised and liberated lot in Lawrence's contemporary Europe. It makes them treat sex with another kind of contempt and flippancy, as if sex were an ancient sordid adjunct that they would like to outgrow, altogether dispensing with sex and possibly breeding babies in the bottle. Thus the two maladies of industrialism and sex derive from the same evil of 'mental consciousness'.

In a letter to Brewster, written after the third and final draft of the novel in 1928, Lawrence says:

...it is a novel of the phallic consciousness or the phallic consciousness versus the mental-spiritual—consciousness, and of course you know which side I take. The versus is not my fault. There should be no versus. The two things must be reconciled in us. But now they're deggers drawn

Again *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* he says:

Life is only bearable when the mind and body are in harmony, and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other...

About the first version of the novel Frieda Lawrence reported that Lawrence felt that 'the tenderness and gentleness hadn't enough punch and fight in it. He even thought 'they'll say as they said of Blake: 'Its' mysticism'. Lawrence therefore makes a determined effort in the final version to give the mental consciousness a 'rout' putting a lot of 'punch and fight' in it. Hence the heightened conflict and tension and on occasions adoption of a style resembling that of the Israelite Prophets.

On the level of human personages of the novel, the two triangles of Clifford, Connie, Mellors and Mellors, Bertha Coult and Connie represent the pattern of contrast and conflict. Other minor characters, including Michaelis and Tommy Dukes can be easily placed in either of the two contrasted groups. This is not however true of Mrs Bolton, a very int-

eresting though ambiguous character, most impersonally and vividly portrayed by Lawrence. Apart from conflict and tension represented by the two triangles, among each other there is contrast and conflict— Clifford-Connie; Mellors-Bertha Coult. Even Mellors-Connie relationship, though based on tenderness and deep passional feelings, is characterised by tension and apparent tenuousness. Her acceptance of Mellors is a difficult process. On occasions she seems to be on the verge of rejecting him. This continues till the last phase. After having finally resolved not to return to Clifford, when Connie receives in Venice a letter from Mrs Bolton about the scandal that Bertha Coult has been spreading about Mellors's low sexual tastes, she develops an aversion for him only to be overcome by the sympathetic intervention of Duncan Forbes.

The novel closes open-ended. It is still an open question if Connie will join Mellors on his farm. Connie's case is clearly one of change from mental-consciousness of sorts to an authentic phallic consciousness. Lawrence has taken pains to point to features in her background and make-up that render her potentially adequate and receptive to such a change, though the transition and change is not easy, smooth and unidirectional. She has to learn to overcome lot of resistance and doubts from within. This sustained tension between pairs of characters, especially between Mellors and Connie makes the novel so very different from an easy conventional romantic love tale that the fable appears to be.

Sadness and gloom hangs all over the novel, again in spite of the regenerative influence of the wood and the vivifying power of tender- sensual consummated love. This sadness is part of the intended scheme, and derives from utter hopelessness and despair of the situation that people were not ready for any healthy change. How Mellors once wished he had other comrades to fight the diabolical machine; but he had none. No escape routes are available. Even the seclusion of the wood, as pointed out earlier, is illusory. This leads Mellors to desire the extermination of the human race. Connie, however, presents a contrast here. It is the most deeply felt desire in

Connie to have a child that prepares her to change and accept the phallic reality. It is the sight of 'a tiny perky chicken... most alive little spark of a creature in seven kingdoms... Life! Pure, sparky, fearless new life! New Life!' that fascinated Connie and, never had she felt so acutely the agony of her own female forlornness' (p.118).

The last letter of Mellors to Connie written from the farm marks a distinct change in his mood. Apart from setting forth his scheme for an alternative society the letter expresses faith in a 'power beyond', a 'higher mystery', and the hope that the flame between them will not be blown out by evil forces.

The sexual theme of the novel is basically concerned with the problem of self-identity and love, one with which Lawrence has been preoccupied in most other major novels. Mental consciousness has bred an ethos where freedom, self-will and assertion and domination even in sex are valued more than tenderness, compassion and surrender. Moreover, the old Christian contempt for the body has reappeared in a different manner. Sex is treated now flippantly, as a toy, a mere jazzing; sex act being a mere interchange of sensations. Clifford once reads out some passages from a scientific religious book to Connie which says 'The universe shows us two aspects: on one side it is physically wasting, on the other it is spiritually ascending<sup>5</sup>' (p 243). Body-spirit polarity has thus reappeared.

The question of 'self and love' has been dealt with more thoroughly in this than in any other novel. The solution has taken long to work out. Mellors is a man with a phallic consciousness. He is therefore capable of sensuality combined with tenderness and compassion Connie has nowhere met with. Nine love scenes between Mellors and Connie are in the nature of her schooling to make her develop true phallic-consciousness in herself. In stages which are not all smooth, she learns to accept that in love 'losing', 'surrendering' and even 'dying' do not mean loss of identity; it is rather to 'find' and 'to be reborn'. The last love scene in Mellors's cottage during 'the night of sensual passion' comes as a completion of this schooling, when she finally learns to surrender like a slave.

The problem of 'self and love' has dimensions other than the question of position, postures and attitudes in sex-act. It is a larger and perennial 'I-Thou' question in which Lawrence is not in the least interested. But his love-ethic can become more comprehensible and acceptable if viewed in the larger context of 'I-Thou' relation, where one loses one's self to find; one dies to be reborn.

In a novel the 'message', according to Lawrence, is to 'live'. For him the novel matters because here you have 'the whole man alive'. Again in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he says that the vast importance of the novel lies in its ability to lead the flow of our sympathetic consciousness into new places and to lead our sympathy away in recoil from things 'gone dead'. Judged from this angle we find that both the successes and failures of the novel are singular.

The novel is rich in evoking the spirit of the place. The fauna and flora of the wood become very much alive. Everywhere our sense of beauty, health and vitality is aroused and directed towards deserving places, and recoils from things 'gone dead'. Symbolisation is so rich that 'every bush burns<sup>6</sup>' in the novel.

Flash-back narrative technique has been very skilfully employed in unfolding the past in the lives of Constance, Mellors, Clifford and Mrs Bolton. The opening chapter is a great achievement of narrative. It not only reveals with clarity and precision the essential situation and characters but dexterously portrays the socio-cultural milieu of the times.

The prose is lucid, majestic, and yet by iterativeness a sort of sacred-incantatory-magical tenor is lent to it. Then the whole book is replete with the echoes of the Authorised Version. This lends the novel a sense of sacredness, and adds to the ever-present nostalgia in it. Describing the pollutional effect of Tevershall it is said that 'even on the Christmas roses the smuts settled persistently, incredible, like black manna from the skies of doom.' (p.14)

Do the major characters in the novel come alive? Does their portrayal direct the flow and recoil of our feelings rightly?



Connie does come alive in the novel. Situations, circumstances and persons interact naturally in her case. Her development and change looks natural and convincing. No simplistic short-cut devices are employed. But both Clifford and Mellors fail to live as whole men in the novel. We find Clifford assigned the roles of a titled aristocrat, a captain of industry, and the widely acclaimed modern intellectual-writer, all rolled into one. He worships the Bitch Goddess Success and Mammon. It is too large a burden for him to carry; and then he is made a cripple, physically paralysed waist downwards. He looks a synthetic figure. His lameness is especially questionable. Except for the last phase when he is reduced to the status of a child—man being nursed by mother—mistress, Mrs Bolton, our sympathies do not necessarily recoil from him. They are not warranted by events and facts in the novel. Clifford is called an idiot and a buffoon, but he is not made to appear like that through his sayings and doings. Imagine a writer of film or stage-script of the novel inventing scene after scene to make him come off on the stage or screen. It is only in relation to Mrs Bolton that Clifford looks detestable exactly as Lawrence wants him to.

In Mellors, the protagonist, the failure is not of the same kind. It needs a very understanding, and patiently sympathetic reader to get to know him. In common parlance one may curtly call him a difficult person, as he sometimes appears to Connie. His use of vernacular dialect, for example, which she resents seems to partly contribute to it. It may be part of Lawrence's design to make him so—rather different from a 'romantic hero', although Connie falls in love with him at first sight and seeing him wash his body naked waist upward she has 'a visionary experience'. Mellors calls himself and Connie 'battered warriors', a very unromantic image indeed. In the last part of the novel sitting with Connie after love-making amidst thunderstorm and downpour Mellors feels they are in 'a little ark in the Flood'. In the last longish letter that he writes to Connie he signals death and destruction, yet has faith that his forked Pentecostal flame will be saved.

Thus we see the pattern of contrast, conflict and tension sustained throughout the novel. Thus structure is part of its meaning which is often missed.

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. All quotations are from *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Penguin Edition, London, 1961: Abbreviated LCL
2. D.H. Lawrence, *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
3. In the first version of the novel *The First Lady Chatterley* Parkin joins the Communist Party at the end, whereas we find thorough contempt is poured on socialism and Bolshevism in the LCL.
4. *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*.
5. Other passages follow on p. 244. They have been traced by Roiland Hall, *Notes and Queries*, 1962 to A.N. Whitehead's book *Religion in the Making*, 1926. Interestingly Whitehead's earlier book *Science and the Modern World*, 1925 lays great emphasis on the concept of organicism.
6. Mark Schorer, Introduction to the American edition of the unexpurgated *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, 1959

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## ST MAWR: THE THIRD EYE

*St Mawr* is a powerful short novel of such major achievement that F R Leavis is persuaded to think that it presents 'a creative and technical originality more remarkable than that of *The Waste Land*'<sup>1</sup>. Whatever the technical or creative originality of the work, it certainly is major in its unique exploration of the non-human domain of life — the 'inhuman' *St Mawr*, and the 'wild' New Mexican ranch. It presents a world which falls open to the 'third eye', as it were: 'But now my third eye is coming open'<sup>2</sup>, as Lou says in the novel. The horse and the ranch symbolise the terrible beauty and mystery of life which is even beyond love and religion — 'something big, bigger than men, bigger than people, bigger than religion'<sup>3</sup>. As Graham Hough puts it: 'A uniquely powerful experience in Lawrence's life, it (the ranch) can become the concrete embodiment of a vast, impersonal force, beyond good and evil, the power of life itself that seems gone from the contemporary civilisation'<sup>4</sup>.

Like the tales and novels of the animal tropes<sup>5</sup> — *The Fox*, *The Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent* — *St Mawr* constitutes what may be called the 'savage pilgrimage' of Lawrence. Here Lawrence moves from the vast stifling sham of human civilisation to the primitive sources of life where even the pack-rat and the lizard of the desert hold out a new promise of life for man — a life that heals the old wounds and quickens the atrophied limbs of man. Or as Frank Kermode puts it:

On a ranch subject to natural catastrophes — drought, pack-rats' disease — Lou passes beyond Law and Love, far beyond decadent sex sensation, choosing instead the wild America 'where a wild spirit wants me'. Her aspirations are questioned by her sceptical mother: but her mother is on the side of death, Lou on the more terrible side of life<sup>6</sup>.

St Mawr is a movement from the sterile wasteland of the European civilization to the live wasteland of the New Mexican desert which responds creatively to the adventurous immigrant. Lou Witt of the story takes her chestnut stallion, the St Mawr, and the Navajo Indian, Phoenix, to the ranch which overlooks the desert, betokening its vital possibilities. It is a great daring, a powerful adventuring into the seeming desert to quicken its dormant roots of creation. In this, the short novel recalls, as has been rightly pointed out by R. E. Pritchard<sup>7</sup>, Forster's *A Passage to India* where the apparent desert of the sunburnt land reveals the mysterious life-forces that the *Temple* section of the novel unravels. But the daring in *St Mawr* is of a different and superior kind, and the revelation has a visionary dimension. As Lou Witt says at the end of the novel :

There's something else for me, mother. There's something else even that loves me and wants me, I can't tell you what it is. It's a spirit. And it's here, on this ranch. It's here, in this landscape. It's something more real to me than men are, and it soothes me, and it holds me up. I don't know what it is, definitely. It's something wild, that will hurt me sometimes and will wear me down sometimes. I know it. But it's something big, bigger than men, bigger than people, bigger than religion.<sup>8</sup>

This may sound as the misanthropic vision of life. But actually what Lawrence is doing here is that he is divesting man of the acquired habit of denaturing civilisation and putting him back on the root of the vast non-human life from which he has to derive his animal integrity first, before he develops his full human stature. And as early as *The White Peacock* Annable says : 'Be a good animal, says I, whether it's man or woman'<sup>9</sup>.

The animal in Lawrence, especially in his savage pilgrimages, acquires a profound archetypal significance and value. It is as if in each man there lurks a totemic animal, a fox, a horse or a kangaroo which is his peculiar genius. The animal figures not only as a creature of natural wonder and mystery but as the vital and elemental currency of the energetic life. Kenneth Innis lists three categories of the meaningful uses of animals in Lawrence's writing, apart from their 'moral and cosmological implications' : A, Animal as 'other'... B. Animal

as emblem or archetype ... C, Animal as creative symbol<sup>10</sup>. The animal is the unalloyed pristine expression of the pure flame of life : and so is the animal man : 'A pure animal man would be as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath'<sup>11</sup>. We have in *St Mawr* both the pure animal man and the man in whom the animal has gone corrupt : we have the Welsh groom Lewis who has preserved his animal genius, the horse in him, and Rico who has destroyed his deeper animal integrity of the horse. As Lewis was grooming the horse ('with an absorption almost ritualistic'), 'He seemed the attendant shadow of the horse'. Of him Lou says 'He goes with the horse. If we buy *St Mawr* we get man thrown in'<sup>12</sup>. And Mrs. Witt wonders : 'Isn't it curious the way he rides ? He seems to sink himself in the horse. When I speak to him, I am not sure whether I'am speaking to a man or to a horse'<sup>13</sup>. And as a contrast to this we have Rico in whom the spirit of the horse is thwarted : 'He, too, was rather like a horse — but forever quivering with a sort of cold, dangerous, mistrust, which he covered with anxious love.'<sup>14</sup> He didn't want to erupt like some suddenly wicked horse—Rico was really more like a horse than a dog, a horse that might go nasty any moment<sup>15</sup>. But there was more of the real horse in the other groom Phoenix than in Rico, even though he 'looked 'common'; rather horsey and loud'<sup>16</sup>. He was a 'good animal', with a good horse sense — 'He was very good with horses'<sup>17</sup>, which perhaps was the incentive for Mrs. Witt to start riding in the park 'with phoenix in tow, and a couple of horses'<sup>18</sup>, and thus pave the way for *St Mawr*.

*St Mawr* is a 'red-gold' stallion, with the red of the blood and the gold of the sun, the red-gold of fire<sup>19</sup> — 'He was of such a lovely red-gold colour, and a dark invisible fire seemed to come out of him'<sup>20</sup>. Lou feels the heat of its life and the fire of its sun as she lays her hand on the terrible beast.

She laid her hand on his side and gently stroked him. Then she stroked his shoulder, and then the hard, tense arch of his neck. And she was startled to feel the vivid heat of his life come through to her, through the lacquer of red-gold gloss. So slippery with vivid, hot life!

She paused, as if thinking, while her hand rested on the horse's sun-arched neck. Dimly, in her weary young woman's soul, an ancient understanding seemed to flood in.<sup>21</sup>

The impact of the horse is so powerful on Lou that it marks a decisive moment in her life :

But now, as if that mysterious fire of the horse's body had split some rock in her, she went home and hid herself in her rock and just cried. The wild, brilliant, alert head of StMawr seemed to look at her out of another world. It was as if she had a vision, as if the walls of her own world had suddenly melted away, leaving her in a great darkness, in the midst of which the large, brilliant eyes of that horse looked at her with demonish question, while his naked ears stood up like daggers from the naked lines of his inhuman head, and his great body glowed red with power.

What was it? Almost like a god looking at her terribly out of the everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse; great, glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question and containing a white blade of light like a thread. What was his non-human question, and his uncanny threat? She didn't know. He was some splendid demon, and she must worship him.<sup>22</sup>

The 'wild' horse of 'inhuman head' and 'uncanny threat' poses a 'non-human question' to Lou — a 'demonic question' that possesses her almost with the cleansing 'inhumanity' of the horse, making her realise 'the triviality and superficiality of her human relationships'<sup>23</sup> and urging her finally to undertake the savage pilgrimage to the wild American Southwest, the quick wasteland of New Mexico.

The horse splits the rock in her, melts her to tears, and baptises her anew in its own electrical fire :

She looked at the glowing bay horse that stood there with his ears back, his face averted, but attending as if he were some lightning-conductor.<sup>24</sup>

And when Rico suddenly moved nearer, he sprang with a sudden jerk backwards, as if lightning exploded in his four hoofs.<sup>25</sup>

The Horse is a 'bonfire in darkness'<sup>26</sup>, it 'burns with life'<sup>27</sup>. It belongs to 'another world' a world different from the one inhabited by Rico and the tame civilised humanity :

She realised that St Mawr drew his hot breaths in another world from Rico's, from our world. Perhaps the old Greek horses had lived in St Mawr's world. And the old Greek horses, even Hippolytus, had known it.

With their strangely naked equine heads, and something of a snake in their way of looking round, and lifting their sensitive, dangerous muzzles, they moved in a prehistoric twilight where all things loomed phantasmagoric, all on one plane, sudden presences suddenly jutting out of the matrix. It was another world, an older, heavily potent world. And in this world the horse was swift and fierce and supreme, undominated and unsurpassed. ... 'Meet him half-way', Lewis said. But half-way across from our human world to that terrific equine twilight was not a small step. It was a step, she knew, that Rico could never take. She knew it. But she was prepared to sacrifice Rico.<sup>28</sup>

Lou has to 'sacrifice' Rico, and sacrifice the sterile civilisation, for something that promises life and creative possibilities. She has to sacrifice lesser life, life that has lost the creative quick in it, even as the horse has done before. The horse has already killed two men, and it is going to disfigure the face of another, and lame yet another. The destructiveness of the horse is a cleansing destructiveness a destructiveness that must precede the creative upsurge of new life. The horse betokens a vitality which man has lost in the process of his being civilised. He has lost his native wildness which gives him the rare dignity and power of a wild animal, of the horse St Mawr. As Lou observes about St Mawr :

He stands where one can't get at him. And he burns with life. And where does his life come from, to him? That's the mystery. That great burning life in him, which never is dead. Most men have a deadness in them, that frightens me so, because of my own deadness. Why can't men get their life straight, like St Mawr, and then think? Why can't they think quick, mother: quick as a woman: only farther than we do? Why isn't men's thinking quick like, fire mother? Why is it so slow, so dead, so deadly dull?

Man should be an animal with the natural mystery of the animal, deriving his life 'straight, like St Mawr.' It does not then mean that man should become an animal, sink into the lesser animal being : Lou does not want that regression :

I don't want to be an animal like a horse or a cat or a lioness, though they all fascinate me, the way they get life *straight*, not from a lot of old tanks, as we do. I don't admire the caveman, and that sort of thing. But think, mother, if we could get our lives straight from the source, as the animals do, and still be ourselves.<sup>30</sup>

To be an animal, in the deeper vital self, and yet be 'oneself', one's own individual human self — that is what Lou aspires to. If man is, as suggested by scientists, at the peak of evolution starting from amoeba, then man should perhaps be all animals that he has himself evolved from, inheriting all the splendour and glory of each individual animal and at the same time be himself, the transcended human self. Lou presents her new vision of man :

A pure animal man would be as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath. And he'd be part of the unseen, like a mouse is, even. And he'd never cease to wonder, he'd breathe silence and unseen wonder, as the partridges do, running in the stubble. He'd be all the animals, in turn, instead of one, fixed, automatic thing, which he is now, grinding on the nerves<sup>31</sup>

Lou is clear that only a man who is aware and sensitive can contain in himself all the power and glory of the splendid animals in creation. She is not making the mistake of thinking that the primitive man is capable of that. She puts it most emphatically : 'I don't consider the cave man is a real human animal at all. He is a brute, a degenerate.'<sup>32</sup> It is the human animal, not the brute, that is capable of the pantheistic mystery of all the animals. As Cartwright puts it :

'Pan was the hidden mystery—the hidden cause. That's how it was a Great God. Pan wasn't *he* at all: not even a great God. He was Pan. All: what you see when you see in full. In the day-time you see the thing. But if your third eye is open, which sees only the things that can't be seen you may see Pan within the thing, hidden: you may see with your third eye, which is darkness'.<sup>33</sup>

Lou sees Pan in the horse, St Mawr, for her 'third eye' has fallen open, the eye of mystic darkness. Mrs Witt asks her— 'Did you never see Pan in a man, as you see Pan in St Mawr?' And Lou replies : 'No mother' I don't think I did. When I look at men with my third eye, as you call it — I think I see — mostly — a sort of — Pancake'<sup>35</sup>. Even Cartwright who talks about Pan does not have Pan in him : 'that young man Cartwright talks about Pan, but he knows nothing of it all. He



knows nothing of the unfallen Pan : only the fallen Pan with goat legs and leer'<sup>36</sup>.

But it is Lewis, the 'aboriginal' Welsh groom, who has preserved the Pan spirit in him. There is an 'aristocracy', the 'aristocracy of the invisible powers'<sup>37</sup>, in him. And Mrs Witt is drawn to him, as Lou is drawn to the horse, and it is something more than love, something too uncanny and mysterious either for love or religion. Mrs Witt identifies this intriguing animal magic of the man :

'Isn't that curious!' she said. 'I've loved people, at various times. But I don't believe I've ever liked anybody, except a few of our negroes, I don't like Louise, though she's my daughter and I love her. But I don't really like her. — I think you're the first person I've ever liked since I was on our plantation, and we had some very fine negroes. — And I think that's very curious. — Now I want to know if you like me'.<sup>38</sup>

The word 'like' precisely identifies the nature of this attraction which is deeper, more compulsively vital and instinctive than love. It has a stronger physical basis than 'Love' — the word 'like', meaning in its Anglo-Saxon origin, *lic*, 'body'. It is as if the body recognises its fellow in the other — the horse, the man. It is an uncanny 'fellow'—feeling that has a deeper basis than that of instinct. It is so big that it includes love, and not the other way round. Lou, therefore, does not need to 'love' the horse: she does not need the 'love' of man either. She has a strange sufficiency in herself, like the horse itself which does not need the mares, does not 'fancy the mares',<sup>39</sup> like Lewis who refuses to take a woman, and rejects outright Mrs. Witt's offer of marriage. Or, as Frank Kermode observes: 'She embraces a positive chastity knowing better than to expect the 'mystic new man'<sup>40</sup>.

The clue to this singleness of being lies in the moon myth which Lewis naively believes in, and is thus 'moon' man himself, a kin of the cold planet which does not need the fire, the fire of sex, the 'sexual passion'<sup>41</sup>, as rightly suggested by R. E. Pritchard. And because there is no fire, there is no consummation, there is no consumption, no death, Lewis's

folk myth bears out the significance of chastity leading to immortality :

And I wasn't frightened of the moon. If you didn't go near the fire all day, and if you didn't eat any cooked food nor anything that had been in the sun, but only things like turnips or radishes or pignuts, and then went without any clothes on, in the full moon, then you could see the people in the moon, and go with them. They never have fire, and they never speak, and their bodies are clear almost like jelly. They die in a minute if there's a bit of fire near them. But they know more than we. Because unless fire touches them, they never die. They see people live and they see people perish, and they say, people are only like twigs on a tree, you break them off the tree, kindle fire with them. You made a fire of them, and they are gone, the fire is gone, everything is gone. But people of the moon don't die, and fire is nothing to them. They look at it from the distance of the sky, and see it burning things up, people all appearing and disappearing like twigs that come in spring and you cut them in autumn and make a fire of them and they are gone. And they say: What do people matter? 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.<sup>42</sup>

Lewis thus is a 'moon' boy, and he has therefore an uncanny perception of trees and animals and even of God. His is a strange religion of primitive naivete, a folkey naturalistic mysticism:

'You ask me about God', he said her, walking his horse alongside in the shadows of the wood's edge, the darkness of the old Pan, that kept our artistically-lit world at bay. 'I don't know about God. But when I see a star fall like that out of long-distance places in the sky: and the moon sinking saying Good-bye: Good-bye: Good-bye: and nobody listening: I think I hear something, though I wouldn't call it God'.

'What then?' said Rachel Witt.

'And you smell the smell of oak leaves now', he said, 'now the air is cold. They smell to me more alive than people. The trees hold their bodies hard and still, but they watch and listen with their leaves. And I think they say to me: 'Is that you passing there, Morgan Lewis? All right' you pass quickly, we shan't do anything to you, You are like a holy-bush'.

'Yes', said Rachel Witt drily. 'Why'?

'All the time the trees grow and listen. And if you cut a tree down without asking pardon' trees will hurt you some time in your life, in the night-time.<sup>43</sup>

That is how Lewis has a dark inhuman understanding of *St Mawr* as perhaps the horse too has of the man. There is perfect rapport between him and the horse: the horse and the rider move in oneness, in the strange being of fellowship. And those who are not attuned to the spirit of the horse are thrown off its back, kicked or bruised or killed: Rico, the incapable rider, becomes thus a victim of the horse.

There is an amusing ironic significance that Lewis, the horse man should be drawn to Mrs. Witt, 'the bell mare', as he calls herself punning on her son-in-law's French 'belle-mare' ('mother-in-law'): 'I always see myself as an old grey mare with a bell round her neck, leading a bunch of horses<sup>44</sup>. There is an added significance in her proposal of marriage to him, for the Pan spirit, the spirit of the horse in her seeks fellowship with the 'aristocratic' groom, though the groom being too independent and isolate like his horse does not seek a sexual fellowship with her.

But there is a fellowship, a non-sexual elemental fellowship which unites all these 'horse' folk in the oneness of the Pan spirit. They all stand solidly by *St Mawr* against the civilised humanity which seeks to destroy the horse. Rico is lamed by the horse, and all men and women, seek to kill the horse, or what is worse, hold it, Lou says determinedly :

'I should say: 'Miss Manby, you 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.<sup>45</sup>

*St Mawr* is 'dangerous'. It had killed, hurt and maimed people. Is it the sheer viciousness of the horse or is it the self-preservative instinct, self-protective reflex of the animal? The following debate in Lou's mind clarifies the question :

The wild animal is at every moment intensely self-disciplined, poised in the tension of self-defence, self-preservation and self-assertion. The moments of relaxation are rare and most carefully chosen. Even sleep is watchful, guarded, unrelaxing, the wild courage pitched one degree higher than the wild fear. Courage, the wild thing's courage to maintain itself alone and living in the midst of a diverse universe.

Did St Mawr have this courage?  
And did Rico?

Ah, Rico : He was one of mankind's myriad conspirators, who conspire to live in absolute physical safety, whilst willing the minor disintegration of all positive living.

But St Mawr? was it the natural wild thing in him which caused these disasters? Or was it the slave, asserting himself for vengeance?

If the latter, let him be shot. It would be a great satisfaction to see him dead.

But if the former...<sup>46</sup>

Lou had a vision of evil, symbolised by the upturned horse. St Mawr had reared and fallen on its back at the sight of an adder recently killed :

Then she saw a pale gold belly, and hoofs that worked and flashed in the air, and St Mawr writhing, straining his head terrifically upwards, his great eyes starting from the naked lines of his nose, With a great neck arching cruelly from the ground, he was pulling frantically at the reins, which Rico still held tight. ... Yes, Rico, lying strangely sideways, his eyes also starting from his yellow-white face, among the weather, still clutched the reins.<sup>47</sup>

The 'evil' seemed to fill the whole universe : 'the writhing, immense, horse, whose pale-gold inverted bulk seemed to fill the universe.'<sup>48</sup> The fallen horse, in its helplessness and writhing with its 'pale-gold' belly up was like the gold-and-yellow' adder itself — reduced to the low phallic being of a snake or a lizard. But that is a condition, a false state brought about by man's perversity, man's ugly will. The beast of goldy grandeur, with the fourth dimension of noble wildness in him, cannot be subjugated to man's mean will and pride. The horse therefore did well to kick and hurt : it is a destructiveness that higher life must gladly make in order to make way for better life : it is a destruction for creation, a necessary concomitant of life and growth :

Man must destroy as he goes, as trees fall for trees to rise. The accumulation of light and things means rottenness. Life must destroy life, in the unfolding of creation. We save up life at the expense of the unfolding, till all is full of rottenness. Then at last we make a break.<sup>49</sup>

And what must Lou do, caught as she is in the close, choking atmosphere of civilised humanity? Can she destroy it at one decisive stroke and depart? She can at best depart and seek to cleanse her own soul.

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. Try to hold fast to the living thing, which destroys as it goes, but remains sweet. And in his soul fight, fight, fight to preserve that which is life in him from the ghastly kisses and poison-bites of the myriad evil ones. Retreat to the desert, and fight. But in his soul adhere to that which is life itself, creatively destroying the stiff old thing to let the new bud come through. The one passionate principle of creative being, which recognises the natural good, and has a sword for the swarms of evil. Fights, fights, fights to protect itself. But with itself, is strong and at peace.<sup>50</sup>

Lou must launch herself on the savage pilgrimage. She must depart and fight — 'Retreat to the desert and fight'. She therefore decides to abandon the civilised mankind of Europe, and go seeking the wild west for the new possibilities of life. She collects those who are with the horse, those with the unfallen Pan still in them — the two grooms, and her mother. She leaves Europe, a finished civilisation, for the wild prospective south-west. She pioneers the daring journey into the creative unknown of the new land, the new continent.

Lou has become, in spirit, single and isolate and independent like the horse. Like the horse she does not need a mate: she has achieved a maturity that needs the beatitude of aloneness. She could understand Jesus's need for the untouched aloneness:

I do so understand why Jesus said: '*Noli me tangere*'. Touch me not. I am not yet ascended unto the father. Everything had hurt him so much, wearied him so beyond endurance, he felt he could not bear one little human touch on his body. I am like that. I can hardly bear even Elena to hand me a dress. As for a man — and marriage — ah, no: *Noli me tangere, homine*: I am not yet ascended unto the father. Oh leave me alone, leave me alone! That is all my cry to all the world.<sup>51</sup>

Lou undertakes the most relentless rigorous journey into the wild west. The new world holds a certain promise and

fulfilment. The horse and the groom find the new world congenial. St Mawr finds the 'long-legged, arch-necked glossy-maned Texan mare' attractive and follows at its heels 'almost slavishly'. But Lou must go beyond the horse. She leaves the horse and its groom, Lewis, behind, and ventures farther— farther into a more rigorous, more challenging desert of New Mexico. That is only kindly place. She has to fight it, master it like a good rider mastering a wild horse, and harness it to the human hands.

There have been fighters before. The school master or an American trader and his New England wife had tried their hands at the intractable land and tamed it a little, imposing the stamp of civilisation on it— 'taps, running water and wash-hand basins'. The New England woman could say with pride: I have tamed the waters of the mountain to my service<sup>52</sup>.

But the ranch was for her a savage place with a malevolent spirit of evil. Despite the strange beauty of the place the New England wife could not but feel '*that there was no merciful God in the heavens*'.

And every time she looked at it, she said to herself, in spite of herself: 'There is no Almighty loving God. The God there is shaggy as the pine trees, and horrible as the lightning'. Outwardly, she never confessed this. Openly, she thought of her dear New England Church as usual. But in the violent under-current of her woman's soul, after the storms, she would look at that living, seamed tree, and the voice would say in her, atmost savagely: What nonsense about Jesus and a God of Love, in a place like this: This is more awful and more splendid. I like it better.' The very chipmunks, in their jerky helter-skelter, the blue jays wrangling in the pine tree in the dawn, the grey squirrel undulating to the tree trunk, then pausing to chatter at her and scold her, with a shrewd fearlessness, as if she were the alien, the outsider, the creature that should not be permitted among the trees, all destroyed the illusion she cherished, of love, universal love. There was no love on this ranch. There was life, intense, bristling life, full of energy, but also, with an undertone of savage sordidness.<sup>53</sup>

The savagery and sordidness of the place was a reality. But man has to fight it, and only in fighting it man becomes himself:

For all savagery is half sordid. And man is only himself when he is fighting on and on, to overcome the sordidness.

And every civilisation, when it loses its inward vision and its cleaner energy, falls into a new sort of sordidness, more vast and more stupendous than the old savage sort. An Augean stables of metallic filth.

And all the time, man has to rouse himself afresh to cleanse the new accumulations of refuse. To win from the crude, wild nature the victory and the power to make another start, and to cleanse behind him the century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse: even of tin cans.<sup>54</sup>

And that is precisely what Lou is determined to do. She accepts the challenge and puts her mettle to it to achieve the truth of her being, the dignity of her individual self. Despite the discouraging note of her mother about 'so much hopelessness and so many rats' of the place, she dares to press on, for the place is strangely, inhumanly 'beautiful'— 'But, mother, you must admit the place is beautiful' :

It was always beauty, *always!* It was always great, and splendid, and, for some reason, natural. It was never grandiose or theatrical. Always, for some reason, perfect. And quite simple, in spite of it all.

So it was, when you watched the vast and living landscape. The landscape lived, and lived as the world of the gods, unsullied and unconcerned. The great circling, landscape lived its own life, sumptuous and uncaring. Man did not exist for it.<sup>55</sup>

Man did not exist for it, not in the misanthropic sense but it was too vast and stupendous, too inhumanly beautiful to serve man's purpose, to yield to man's control, to pander to man's taste. It is a goat's place, of 'fire-mouths' as the goats are called, for the goats so nibble the quick of the plants that they grow no more— the place of the Great Goat Pan, Las Chivas. And man is welcome, perhaps as a goat-herd. Lou says :

Now I've come! Now I am where I want to be: with the spirit that wants me— and that's how it is. And neither Rico nor Phoenix nor anybody else really matters to me. They are in the world's back-yard. And I am here, right deep in America, where there's a wild spirit wants me, a wild spirit more than men. And it doesn't want to save me either. It needs me. It craves for me. And to it, my sex is deep and sacred, deeper than I am, with

a deep nature aware deep down of my sex. It saves me from cheapness, mother. And even you could never do that for me.<sup>56</sup>

The savage pilgrimage of Lawrence leads to what is deeper than sex, bigger than man, bigger than religion. It is a place where life abides in its pristine innocence, beyond the Law and instinct of man, beyond his moral habits and religious rituals — a place where life answers elementally to life, Pan answers 'inhumanly' to Pan in man and bird and beast.

*St Mawr* thus succeeds where the *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India* may be said to fail. The 'Horror'<sup>57</sup> of the Congo jungle and the 'Boum'<sup>58</sup> of the Indian caves are too terrible for the fragile human soul whose civilised defences and pious props, whose very shield of humanity, crack and collapse at the terrible impact. But the New Mexican desert, despite its 'natural catastrophes-drought, pack-rats, disease,<sup>59</sup> yields meaning and significance to a soul which can look beneath the 'Horror' and the 'Boum' and dare to reach even beyond the 'DA'<sup>60</sup> of the thunder in *The Wasteland* which betokens the love of mankind and the charity of religion. Lou brings to the desert no piety and humanity of Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested, no white man's burden of Mr Kurtz or Marlow; she goes to the pristine landscape 'more splendid and awful than man-God, a saviour'<sup>61</sup> in the utterness of her soul shedding a civilization, a husband, a horse — even herself as the Law-bound, Love-held entity of the human civilisation. She does not come to ask, but come to give — give herself in 'chastity' to the virgin desert: 'She embraces a positive chastity better than to except the 'mystic new man.'<sup>62</sup> Here is not a perversity that seeks to immerse in the destructive element,<sup>63</sup> as Stein in Conrad's *Lord Jim* urges, but a positive faith that issues in the core of her being,— the non-human, elemental root of her living self. William York Tindal, in his iconoclastic book on Lawrence, writes in ridicule: 'The heroine of *St Mawr* is lost in admiration of all that is natural and in the end finds polarity not with man but with mountains, flowers and trees.'<sup>64</sup> Lou seeks the 'Beyond' in the mountains and flowers and trees, seeks the 'Unknown mode of being,



a Blake or a Wordsworth, for perhaps it is the 'Unknown' that ultimately sustains and supports the known. Lou turns her back on life to face Life – 'No, I don't know much of life – but of Life,' Lawrence has said :

I do know a fair amount about Life. Life has four dimensions, not two. Probably I know more about the middle and bottom sea than does many a many-leagued sailor. If I cross the seas in a little boat I never touch the waters; I can but judge them generally. But bathing and paddling in the pools by the shore – see, I know how salt it is, how buoyant, and how it moves. I don't pretend to know how to behave at a big dinner, at a big hall; I am in total ignorance of aristocratic life – save from books; and I cannot tell a *femme perdue*, by the look of her, as most men seem to be able to do. No, I don't know much of life – but of life.<sup>65</sup>

*St Mawr* is positive in the absolute terms of 'Life.' It is that that makes it 'one of the most achieved of his works'<sup>66</sup>, or as F. R. Leavis claims :

*St Mawr* seems to me to present a creative and technical originality not less remarkable than *The Wasteland*, and to be, more unquestionably than that poem, completely achieved, a full and self-sufficient creation. It can hardly strike the admirer, as anything but major.<sup>67</sup>

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#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *D. H. Lawrence : Novelist*, p. 225
2. *The Short Novels*, Vol. II, 'St Mawr', William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1959, p. 146. Subsequent references to the text will be referred to as *St Mawr*.
3. *The Dark Sun*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1956, p. 216
4. *St. Mawr*, p. 52
5. 'Lawrence uses animals as emblems and analogues of human states. ...Kenneth Innis, 'The Animals in Fiction', *D. H. Lawrence's Bestiary*, 1973, p. 108
6. *D. H. Lawrence : Body of Darkness*, Hutchinson, University Library, London, 1971, p. 157
7. *Lawrence*, Fontana/Collins, Great Britain, 1973, p. 113
8. *St Mawr*, p. 146
9. *The White Peacock*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, p. 156
10. *D. H. Lawrence's Bestiary*, pp. 14-15

11. *St Mawr*, p. 47
12. *St Mawr*, p. 16
13. *Ibid.*, p. 22
14. *St Mawr*, p. 14, 'Only villains like Rico are unbestial', observes William York Tindal, with a pejorative implication of the animal—*D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow*, p. 82
15. *Ibid.*, p. 9
16. *Ibid.*, p. 19
17. *Ibid.*, p. 7
18. *Ibid.*, p. 8
19. In the words of F. R. Leavis, *St Mawr* 'represents deep forces' (*D. H. Lawrence : Novelist*, p. 231)...but Eliseo Vivas disagrees: '*St Mawr* is what he is, he does not represent anything abstract' (*D. H. Lawrence, The Failure and Triumph of Art*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1960, p. 161). But that would be a simplistic deduction: *St Mawr*, as F. R. Leavis suggests in the next sentence is both the 'stallion' and 'the deep spontaneous life'.
20. *St Mawr* p. 11
21. *Ibid.*, pp 12-13
22. *St Mawr*, pp. 13-14
23. *Ibid.*, p. 14
24. *Ibid.*, p. 12
25. *Ibid.*, p. 18
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29
27. *Ibid.*, p. 46
28. *St Mawr*, p. 18
29. *St Mawr*, p. 46
30. *St Mawr*, p. 46
31. *St Mawr*, p. 47
32. *Ibid.*, p. 47
33. *Ibid.*, p. 51
34. *Ibid.*, p. 52
35. *Ibid.*, p. 52
36. *St Mawr*, p. 53
37. *Ibid.*, p. 110
38. *Ibid.*, p. 58
39. *St Mawr*, p. 12
40. *Lawrence*, p. 113
41. *D. H. Lawrence : Body of Darkness*, p. 160
42. *St Mawr*, p. 96
43. *St Mawr*, p. 95
44. *St. Mawr*, p. 76-77
45. *St Mawr*, p. 84
46. *Ibid.*, p. 68

47. *St Mawr*, p. 62
48. *Ibid.*, p. 62
49. *Ibid.*, p. 66
50. *St Mawr*, pp. 66-67
51. *St Mawr*, p. 109
52. *St Mawr*, p. 137
53. *Ibid.*, p. 138
54. *St Mawr*, pp. 141-42
55. *Ibid.*, p. 137
56. *St Mawr*, p. 146
57. Kurtz's cry in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1975, p. 100
58. E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1974, p. 145
59. *St Mawr*, p. 113
60. T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland and Other Poems*, Faber and Faber, London, 1968, 'What the Thunder Said', p. 42
61. *St. Mawr*, p. 113
62. *Ibid.*, p. 113
63. 'In the destructive element. immerse' ... Stein, in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, The Modern Library, New York, 1931, p. 214
64. *D. H. Lawrence & Susan His Cow*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1939, p. 79
65. *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 42-43
66. *Lawrence*, p. 111
67. *D. H. Lawrence : Novelist*, p. 225

*Angus Easson*

**'MY VERY KNEES ARE GLAD':  
D. H. LAWRENCE & APOCALYPSE AGAIN**

The recent appearance of a new edition (strictly, the first edition) of D. H. Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, together with manuscript fragments and other writings on the Book of Revelation<sup>1</sup> prompts me to consider again Lawrence's responses to *Apocalypse*<sup>2</sup>, in terms both of ideas and of technical possibility. Much of what I will say is necessarily well known and I won't flinch from referring to some of the most famous, and rightly famous, passages in the novels. Yet this long essay of Lawrence's, with all its displays of attraction and repulsion for its subject, with a focusing and reiteration of so much that he believed in and demonstrated throughout his career, is perennially fascinating and gives the opportunity, illuminating as it does Lawrence as man, as writer, and as an inheritor of Romanticism, to say something more about an English literary figure who won't go away.

I want to begin by considering the apocalyptic idea itself, of endings and of beginnings in the Kingdom of God; to move on to the living power Lawrence found in the Book of Revelation, expressed in terms of images and symbol; to consider how Lawrence seeks to progress artistically through images; and finally to suggest how these concerns underline Lawrence's part in a continuing tradition from Romanticism, not least from the Romanticism of Wordsworth, unlikely a figure though that poet might seem as literary father of the phallic priest.

At times, reading Lawrence, one might well think that he would welcome the full Apocalyptic destruction directed by a God of wrath and the establishment of the rule of the saints,

with Lawrence himself not the least in their number. Often, he bursts out, as in the letter quoted by Walter Greenwood amongst the epigraphs to *Love on the Dole* (1933), a fierce desire prefacing a novel where, if the world is ending, it is with a whimper rather than a bang: 'Oh' it's time the whole thing was changed, absolutely. And the men will have to do it - you've got to smash money and this beastly possessive spirit. I get more revolutionary every minute, but for *life's* sake'. That need for change and the evangelical fervour for life were always amongst Lawrence's priorities, and yet it is that life, life of the here and now, not the life to come proposed by the Book of Revelation, that Lawrence sought and it was not, eventually, to be found by the unsealing of Seven Seals or by Four Horsemen, least of all by the rule of the Saints as conceived by St. John the Divine.

Lawrence might write in 1920, in the Foreward to *Women in love*, that 'we are now in a period of crisis', and go on to enforce the point with an image of religious conscience that has at its back Jacob wrestling with the angel: 'Every man who is actually alive is actually wrestling with his own soul'. But the Armageddon of the First World War had not changed things while the Russian turmoil, as he remarked caustically in the essay, 'Books' (1924), had offered the chance of regeneration through suffering and mankind had not been transfigured. For Lawrence, the puritan relationship of individual and personal god is a crucial one: no mediators, no priests; but the Revelation was Christian and was mean-minded, the utterance of the weak. For Lawrence, the total destruction offered by Revelation was no answer; Christianity was bankrupt. Now I live in 1924,' he writes in the essay 'Books', 'and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a new venture towards God'. And although Lawrence could find much vitality in Jesus, he finds little evidence of Jesus or Jesus's Christianity in Revelation. Not only was Lawrence faced by the problem of reading the Book of Revelation, with all the narrow chapel associations of his childhood crowding in upon him; he hated, as the open-

ing of *Apocalypse* memorably shows, St. John the Divine (who, he is at pains to stress, as his sources assured him, was not the St. John who wrote the Fourth Gospel) and he hated too the ending of St. John's vision. To Lawrence, St. John was a weak man, the antitype of the real aristocrat, true to Christianity at least in that he hated the body and postponed man's divinity :

The Jewish mind hates the mortal and terrestrial divinity of man : the Christian mind the same. Man is only postponedly divine : when he is dead and gone to glory. He *must not* achieve divinity in the flesh. So the Jewish and Christian apocalyptists abolish the mystery of the individual adventure into Hades and substitute a lot of martyred souls crying under the altar for vengeance... (p. 104)

St. John's was a false democracy, mediocrity, whereas the true aristocrat was the wrestler with his soul to find the god. And yet St. John's has been a peculiarly haunting idea of ending, while Lawrence, like Yeats, as expressed paradigmatically in 'The Second Coming', felt himself to be living at a time of ending : in the second fragment of *Apocalypse*, printed for the first time by Dr. Kalnins, he declares there are three states of man; Jesus was the last manifestation of the second ('god-religious') and we 'are at the end of the philosophic state. What next? We don't know' (p. 182). The sense of an ending and the negative consciousness of what was next help to suggest why Lawrence responded so strongly to Revelation's eschatology, both hating St. John's vision and yet having his own conviction of the truth of endings, of the need for endings, and of the new Jerusalem to be established — a Jerusalem of the flesh, soul, and cosmos, here, on earth, where we find our happiness or not at all. Because endings and their consequences were so important to him, endings were also crucial and problematic in Lawrence's fiction, both as statement and as a technical challenge.

At least as early as *Sons and Lovers* the problem as well as the importance of endings showed itself. How a novel ends technically ties in with the sense of the narrative's end and the meaning of the fiction as a whole. There is a sense of

weariness by the end of *Sons and Lovers* which is partly in the situation of the protagonist, partly in the experience of the reader - it has always seemed to me an unduly protracted novel. But at least that debility and Paul Morel's lurch towards death have conviction, so that the final paragraph seems casual or inconsequential, tagged on rather than Paul's truly possible determination:

But no he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's golden phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.<sup>3</sup>

Even that ultimate 'quickly' seems little more than a flourish, rhetorical, however skiful, whatever its function as enforcing Paul's engagement with the vibrant life of the urban world he moves towards. An obvious comparison is with the ending of Zola's *Germinal*, where Etienne walks away to a new life, the narrative providing a tonal shift towards a vision of the already germinating future :

If he meant to catch the eight o'clock train he must put his best foot forward... Everywhere seeds were swelling and lengthening, cracking open the plain... Men were springing up, a black avenging host was slowly germinating in the furrows, thrusting upwards for the harvests of future ages. And very soon their germination would crack the earth asunder.<sup>4</sup>

*Sons and Lovers*, like *Germinal*, has strong naturalistic and even determinist elements. Paul's abrupt resolution, unlike Etienne's developing consciousness, seems to come from nowhere and by no means. Yet Lawrence clearly felt that some conclusion declaring for life was necessary. He did not even offer the shift of narrative perspective that Zola uses' though when he came to conclude *The Rainbow*, it is a similar effect to Zola's that he produces. The need for ending in *The Rainbow* is partly artificial, with the division of the original material into two novels, though how necessary that division was is clear from the totally different effect of *Women in Love* from the earlier novel : despite continuities of

character. *The Rainbow* is, in a sense irrelevant to our understanding of the later novel. End *The Rainbow* had to, though, and its sense of glory and future renewal is done through vision rather than character change, as well as through the shift from the realism of Ursula's life to the poetic and exulted illumination that is the narrator's and the reader's as much as it is Ursula's. The Christian meaning of the Rainbow here looks very much a promise of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, such as St. John promoted in Revelation, but promise though it is, Lawrence reinterprets it in terms of an earthly Jerusalem, more Blake than Augustine, where blood and spirit are connected by the rainbow, and the new architecture is upon earth, part of 'a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the overarching heaven'<sup>5</sup>. One of the most successful of Lawrence's endings, calm, unviolent, where nothing is concluded, is that of *Women in Love*. The suggestions of Norse myth, of the coming of Ragnarok, the day of battle between the gods and evil, a day of destruction from which a man and a woman will emerge, alone, to begin the new world, are there in Ursula and Birkin's removal to the Mill cottage in the novel's concluding lines, a coda that opens out into possibility rather than settling anything. It suggests a Keatsian negative capability in Lawrence, of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, with no irritable reaching after fact and reason, even while it exhibits Birkin in an incipient dissatisfaction that suggests a desire to resolve uncertainties, to explore a world which might be the (implied) continuation of the narrative. The concluding line itself scarcely makes an end: rather, it gives a sense of pause in a conversation that will be taken up again:

'You can't have two kinds of love. Why should you'.  
 'It seems as if I can't', he said. 'Yet I wanted it'.  
 'You can't have it, because it's wrong. impossible,' she said.  
 'I don't believe that', he answered.<sup>6</sup>

Revelation's narrative structure is of a present that must end, a vision of the future being accomplished, and a return to the present that is dissolving. St. John is between two ages, the



past of Rome, the future of the new Jerusalem. Without suggesting Lawrence consciously drew on this pattern for the end of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the likenesses may again explain the warmth and fascination of his response to Revelation. The matter-of-fact summarising of Connie's waiting, as though suspended, that concludes the novel's main narrative is akin to St. John's suspension, especially when the novel's actual conclusion is in Mellors's projective letter of their and England's future which he can only hope, not bring about, just as St. John's vision proves to be expected, not yet accomplished, as he is returned to Patmos. For Lawrence, the change had not yet come in society or in mankind, and he awaited it, a suspension echoed in the handling of his fictive conclusions.

Lawrence began grappling with the Book of Revelation in the mid 1920s and his intensest involvement, as Dr. Kalnins's admirable introduction shows, was in the last months of his life. His re-reading of Revelation, then, could not directly influence his work, but in that fierce commitment to the completion of his essay there lies a re-viewing and reiteration of what he had believed and of the means by which he sought to convey that truth, tenor and vehicle inextricably linked, since the valuable modes of thought and feeling, the ideas, that Lawrence found in Revelation, could only be expressed in ways unfamiliar to modern man. So what Lawrence found enforced his convictions and affords us the opportunity to come to his life's work at another angle. What Lawrence believed was present in Revelation, however defaced or suppressed, was an older way of thinking, a cosmic consciousness conveyed in images, not in logical discourse, and it was the recognition here of something of his own way of working that excited Lawrence. In 1924, reviewing John Oman's book on Revelation, Lawrence declared, 'No explanation of symbols is final. Symbols are not intellectual qualities, they are not to be exhausted by the intellect' (p. 41); and he re-emphasised this in his introduction to Frederick Carter's *The Dragon of the Apocalypse*, writing of how in the astrological images

(Lawrence was at pains to dissociate himself from fortune-telling), by the power of imagination, he was set free: 'when I get release into the zodiacal cosmos my very feet feel lighter and stronger, my very knees are glad' (p.47). Such phrases may be laughable, but it is difficult to deride a man so reckless of absurdity. In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence sharply distinguishes the power of images, above all the symbol, from allegory (see e. g., p. 61). He does not want to know what Revelation means. And this distinction is important, since such meaning kills rather than quickens. Lawrence saw also the same kind of blank aridity as allegory in the scientific treatment of the natural world. *The Rainbow* dramatises it in Ursula's recollection, looking at the plant-animal on her slide, of Dr. Frankstone's denial of 'some special mystery of life': as she remembers Frankstone's words, Ursula passes away 'into an intensely-gleaming light of knowledge' (p. 491).

The same kind of point about two consciousnesses is made about our knowledge of the moon in Lawrence's introduction to Carter's book (pp. 52-54) and about our perception of the sinking sun, though I cannot share entirely Lawrence's claim that it is impossible to see the sun set when 'I know the earth spins round at sunset and carries me away from the motionless sun' (p. 192). More importantly, though, the second fragment in Kalnins's edition shows Lawrence working out the reconciliation of man's two ways of knowing; the religious and the scientific. The religious, which is also the poetic, works differently from the scientific consciousness, yet 'there need be no quarrel between our two ways of consciousness' (p. 194). Perhaps Lawrence was never certain that the two consciousnesses could be reconciled; possibly this is part of the reason for the abandonment of the fragments that Dr. Kalnins now first prints. But such seemingly polarised consciousnesses are deeply seated in Lawrence's fiction and his desire for them to coexist may enforce possibilities in scenes where opposition has chiefly been detected. When, in *Women in Love*, Birkin and Hermione descend on Ursula's classroom while she is 'doing' catkins, there is the scientific

knowledge of pollination and sexual reproduction, while Hermione calls the female flowers 'little red flames' (p. 87): both consciousnesses are here and seem capable of simultaneous acceptance. It is Hermione who would seem to represent the standard 'Lawrentian' view when she provokes Birkin's fury by suggesting that the children should not be roused to consciousness by instruction in the hazel's details: 'isn't it better that they should see as a whole, without all this pulling to pieces' (p. 89). Part of Birkin's anger stems from the emotional tension between himself and Hermione, and he goes on to declare for mind and the breaking free from limited mental concepts, yet there is a crucial ambiguity about where the characters stand, how the reader stands in relation to them, which the two reconcilable consciousnesses of *Apocalypse* may help us to understand has a larger complexity and subtlety than we knew before.

Above all, though, Revelation helped confirm for Lawrence that if there were ways of question, there were older ways of affirmation and turning to that way, we shall find that our mind definitely moves in images' (p. 194). Such movement presents fewer difficulties to those familiar with imaginative literature. When the effect of imagery is itself conveyed in an image of the bee-like activity of the way of affirmation: 'image adds itself to image in a humming unison like a swarm of bees, till at last the individual consciousness consummates itself, the swarm is completed upon the clue, the God-idea' (p. 193), - the effect may be amusing as well as illustrative. The danger of this consciousness is the old danger of the Pauline Christian's sense of justification: is it the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or is it the conceit of self that gives assurance of salvation? It encourages lack of thought (though Birkin's schoolroom response to Hermione shows Lawrence's rejection of mindlessness) and a blur of sensuous impressions that can justify any nonsense. The denial of thought has been attributed to Lawrence, and 'trusting the blood' is a dangerous route to follow. Charlie Chaplin's 'little man in *The Great Dictator*, in the film's final speech that brings back

sanity, declares that 'we have thought too much and felt too little', but alas! the Nazis only too clearly rose by the reverse process, and Lawrence's refusal to credit rational processes has been damaging to him. Yet at least a work like *Apocalypse* helps us to understand better what he was aiming for. The horse in Revelation, for Lawrence, 'roams the dark underworld meadows of the soul' (p. 101). In *Women in Love*, the quality of the mare held by Gerald at the railway crossing is not so important as the sisters' responses, above all the tonal ambiguity (admiration? irony?) of Gudrun's cry as she flings open the gate: 'I should think you're proud' (p. 171). The horses that Ursula encounters near the end of *The Rainbow* (pp. 539-42) offer a better and more disturbing example of symbol and the swarming of images. No allegory here nor a comparatively simple analogy: no female principle dominated by the male to the disgust or excitement of the onlookers. The horses come at Ursula when she is oppressed, has written to Skrebensky that she will marry him, is carrying his child. They could be the male principle, the threat of Skrebensky. Certainly, they are creatures of power, and of beauty in the colour and the light that breaks from them, and of terror. Yet when Ursula escapes over the hedge, the sight of them is almost pathetic, and if she later loses the child, the child tied her to Skrebensky, who was a way of death. Have the horses threatened her? Or broken down the barriers? Neither Lawrence nor the scene answers directly: it is not that answers are impossible or that meaning is absent, but that we must be open to meanings, to possibilities, to powers that rise from the deeper living worlds.

Such a world of life Lawrence found in the cosmic figure of Christ in Revelation, and in the woman, who are sun and moon; and if such ideas introduce visions of Lawrence comic in their concrete detail ('my very knees are glad') and can lead into the loopiness that rightly sets up resistance ('we and the cosmos are one'), yet even such a comment as this latter, standing at the end of a long account of how, amongst others, Artemis, ignored by us, 'whips us with nervous whips' (p. 77),

does through images persuade us of powers even if we finally may refuse assent. And such passages, too, remind us that a scene like Birkin stoning the moon is not only the conscious resistance by Birkin of the feminine and the Great Mother Cybele who demands castration of those that serve her, but is also, through the power of images in its construction, an assertion of the vitality and the wholeness that Lawrence seeks to show Birkin here resisting and the novel pursuing :

Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water and was flying asunder in flakes of white and dangerous fire... But at the centre, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent, quivering of a white moon not quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving and not even now broken open, not yet violated. (p. 323)

If at times Lawrence can give himself unthinkingly to the blood consciousness and seem to advocate a return to paganism; if he can rise to such incantatory dubieties as 'oh if the moon is against you, oh beware of the bitter night, especially the night of intoxication', yet he can again and again fix us in our personal, concrete situation and so we recognise that if the myths and images of the cosmos are powerful, it is because of their possibility as ways into consciousness, whether religious or poetic, rather than their truth as fact. In the introduction to Carter's *Dragon of the Apocalypse* he declares that we 'can never recover an old vision, once it has been supplanted. But what we can do is to discover a new vision in harmony with the memories of old, far-off, far, far-off experience that lie within us' (p. 54). In this reversion to myth as a way of expressing the power that is lost and the power that may come again, Lawrence has roots running back to Romanticism. Myth for Blake was a door to spiritual consciousness, a way of vision; for Keats, a vehicle of the imagination towards a new synthesis of the senses and eternity; even for Wordsworth, apparently the least Dionysiac of the English Romantics, the 'water-drinking bard', myth demonstrated the striving of man's religious consciousness.

It is Wordsworth, after all, who, in that great locus of *the Prelude*, the descent from the Simplon Pass, found that

the darkness and the light  
Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree  
Characters of the great Apocalypse... (1805: Bk. VI ll. 567-70)

Here Wordsworth uses the word 'Apocalypse' in something of its original sense (an 'uncovering') to find not an ending but an understanding, a living unified presence amidst the chaotic fragments of sensory perceptions, just as Lawrence rejects the eschatology of Revelation, but uncovers the cosmos that lives within the images of older consciousness that still infuse the vision. Again, Wordsworth, in a poem like 'The world is too much with us', works through image to enforce more than his overt meaning. Ostensibly he rejects the 'creed outworn' in the rhetoric of 'Great God! I'd rather be'; but even as that alternative seems to be rejected: could modern man return to the childish belief of the pagans? Surely we hold to the 'sea that bares her bosom to the moon? — Wordsworth offers us 'Proteus rising from the sea' and the sense of vitality in the living (but nowadays ignored) moon and wind might indeed seem accounted for in such powers as Proteus and Triton, who were imaginative responses to a living reality lost now to those who 'lay waste' their powers. Where we might expect a return in the close of the sonnet's sestet to the modern world, to some solution or meaning, Wordsworth leaves us thrust forward into a world far from 'out-worn', full of movement and sound, that begins to make the pagan greater than the modern. The poem challenges rather than solves; suggests rather than argues; glorifies even where it seems to denigrate.

In the cosmic belief of the past Lawrence sees evidence of a consciousness that did exist and the images of which still have meaning, just as Wordsworth finds that Proteus and Triton still have meaning. Even Lawrence's description of the 'power' which can lie quite dormant within a man 'and

yet be ready to leap out unexpectedly' (p. 123), has its affinities with the experiences of Wordsworth's spots of time and, like Lawrence, Wordsworth holds that spiritual apprehension, even if mistaken as the Chaldeans or Greeks were mistaken, is better than a rationalist's denial of the life to which the pagan creeds were responding. In *The Excursion*, Wordsworth condemns the rationalist creeds through the figure of the Solitary (even while allowing him a considerable independence that leaves him virtually unchanged at the end of the poem). Typifying such rationalists, whose science removes man from the living world, are Voltaire, whose *Candide* the poet discovers, abandoned, as he enters the Solitary's retreat (BK. II, ll. 442-44), and, though unmentioned by name, Lucretius, whose *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of the Universe*) set out the Epicurean system that by explaining the physical universe aimed at freeing men from the superstition that brings fear. Lucretius was one of Wordsworth's favourite poets, frequently quoted by him in the original, and it is clear that, antipathetic though the idea were, Wordsworth found the poetry had a perennial beauty, so that where Lucretius works in images Wordsworth follows him, though not to the same conclusion. Lucretius in BK. IV describes the nature of echoes and how the superstitious imaginations made gods out of these reflected sounds :

According to local legend, these places are haunted by goat-footed Satyrs and by Nymphs. Tales are told of Fauns, whose noisy revelry and merry pranks shatter the mute hush night for miles around... of music far-heard by the country-folk when Pan, tossing the pine-branched wreath on his brutish head, runs his arched lips again and again along the wind-mouthed reeds, so that the pipe's wildwood rhapsody flows on unbroken<sup>8</sup>

In *The Excursion*, BK. IV, Wordsworth similarly imagines the creation of the gods :

Withered boughs grotesque,  
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,  
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth...  
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood  
Of gamesome Deities; or Pan himself... (Bk. IV, 11. 879-81, 885-6)

Lucretius uses his images in an argument that denies the existence of the gods; Wordsworth uses his, drawing from the example of Lucretius, to assert the existence of a living world, which if wrongly interpreted, nonetheless demanded to be interpreted. Wordsworth was aware of Lucretius and this and other passages are Wordsworth *contra* Lucretius, as the most formidably poetic representative of the materialistic or mechanistic school of thought. When, again in BK. IV (ll.861-69), Wordsworth finds a living interconnection between human emotion and the moon, the images suggest that the moon becomes a goddess: Wordsworth does not *mean* the moon is a goddess, but is working through images (and was doing so increasingly in *The Excursion* 'in ways that were new, more open and powerfully suggestive than the poem's moralising, and that suggest a kinship with Lawrence.

The Book of Revelation for Lawrence proved not to be an account of an ending, but a way to understanding, to a knowledge based not on words, but on images: the 'abstraction was not into generalisations or into qualities, but into symbols' (p. 91). What Lawrence writes in *Apocalypse* may at times remind us how we must be careful in approaching him. Yet it also emphasises in its brio, its euphoria, what had been throughout his life important to him; emphasises his development of and exploration through images and symbols; and reminds us of his Romantic inheritance.

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*U.K.*

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, ed. Mara Kalnins, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D. H. Lawrence), 1980. Page references in the text are to this edition.
2. I use the 'Book of Revelation' or 'Revelation' for the final book of the Bible; *Apocalypse* for Lawrence's essay; 'Apocalypse' and 'apocalyptic' for the vision and sense of endings derived from the Biblical work.



3. *Sons and Lovers*, ed. Keith Sagar. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (Penguin English Library) 1981, p. 492. Subsequent references in the text.
4. Trans. Leonard Tancock, Harmondsworth : Penguin Books (Penguin Classic) 1954 pp. 498-99
5. *The Rainbow* ed. John Worthen. Harmondsworth Penguin Books (Penguin English Library) 1981 p. 548. Subsequent references in the text.
6. *Women in love*, ed. Charles Ross, Harmondsworth : Penguin Books (Penguin English Library), 1982, p. 583. Subsequent references in the text.
7. 'Frankstone' has suggestions of a harsh truthfulness as well as of an anglicizing of Frankenstein'.
9. *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. R. E. Latham' Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (Penguin Classics), 1951 p. 148 (Bk. IV. 11.580 ff).

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I, A. A. Ansari, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**A. A. ANSARI**

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