D.H. LAWRENCE: SEX AND THE SACRED

BY

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This thesis is a thematic study of the relationship between Lawrence's understanding of human sexuality and the sacred in his shorter fictions. Sex is considered in its broadest sense, encompassing the physical act, gender and sexual politics. The sacred is viewed specifically from the individualistic perspective of Lawrence's "living" or "dark god". The thematic development, evolution and nature of both of these subjects are considered within the significant context of geographical location, which (after Virgil) I identify as the religio loci, and Lawrence calls "the spirit of place". For this reason the thesis is divided into three sections according to specific geographic locale: Part One - England; Part Two - America; Part Three - Europe.

Part I examines the genesis of Lawrence's ideas and how they correspond to his own crises of personal and national identity. This section concentrates on the dialectical engagement of the male and female in the sex wars; the perceived difficulty of retaining a human identity in an increasingly technological and materialistic society; and the formulation of an imagined future (or salvation) in the wake of an absenting divinity.

Part II forms an analysis of the repercussive effects of Lawrence's "savage pilgrimage" and his professed discovery of religion in America's desert regions. The section argues that Lawrence, inspired by his unyielding surroundings, formulated a breed of isolationism which endeavoured to counteract his personal sense of deracination, and what he identified as the universal drift toward bodily abstraction.

Part III focuses on the final period of Lawrence's creative development, concentrating in particular on his reasons for returning to Europe, and the subsequent fusion of his sexual ideology and sacred beliefs in the idiosyncratic formulation of his carnal theology.

I conclude that Lawrence is important both in his insistence that sex is the last bastion of the sacred in the modern age, and his advocation that it is through our most intimate connections that we may come to know God.
To David Inglis
Here's my creed...This is what I believe:

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

There is my creed. He who runs may read. He who prefers to crawl, or to go by gasoline, can call it rot.

D.H. Lawrence
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...there can be no successful sex union unless the great hope of purposive, constructive activity fires the soul of the man all the time: or the hope of passionate, purposive destructive activity: the two amount religiously to the same thing, within the individual. Sex as an end in itself is a disaster: a vice. But an ideal purpose which has no roots in the deep sea of passionate sex is a greater disaster still. And now we have only these two things: sex as a fatal goal, which is the essential theme of modern tragedy: or ideal purpose as a deadly parasite. Sex passion as a goal in itself leads to tragedy. There must be the great purposive inspiration always present. *

There is the wave of light in me which seeks the darkness, which has for its goal the Source and the Beginning, for its God the Almighty Creator to Whom is all power and glory. Thither the light of the seed of man struggles and aspires into the infinite darkness, the womb of all creation. *

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 
But it is a much more fearful thing to fall out of them. *

The purpose of this thesis is to proffer a thematic evaluation of Lawrence's understanding of the complex inter-relationship between human sexuality and the sacred*. During the course of this study I delineate the genesis and development of what is, effectively,

* Sex is considered in its broadest sense: I use the word generically to include issues of gender, sexual politics, the male/female dialectic and the act of coitus. The sacred is approached specifically from the individualistic perspective of Lawrence's own conception of divinity. The descriptive register varies considerably throughout his career; in essence, however his "living god" is an an ancient and animistic pneuma that binds the individual to a vitalistic universe.
Lawrence's treatise of spiritual and social regeneration through the mending, and mystical, power of sexual love; one which endeavours to form an understanding of how the instinctual or animal powers may be successfully conjoined with the divine life in man. I explore and analyse this treatise within a structural framework according to geographical location, primarily because the evolution of Lawrence's artistic vision is inseparable from the profoundly affecting religio loci of whichever continent he found himself. Lawrence never deviated from the belief that the "spirit of place" not only shaped and informed individual and social identities, but also determined the very character of a civilisation. His theories on this relationship - which he perceives as a symbiotic connection - are most coherently expressed in the first draft of his essay "The Spirit of Place":

Every people is polarised in some particular locality, some home or homeland. And every great era of civilisation seems to be the expression of a particular continent or region, as well as of the people concerned. There is, no doubt, some peculiar potentiality attaching to every distinct region of the earth's surface, over and above the indisputable facts of climate and geological condition. There is some subtle magnetic or vital influence inherent in every specific locality, and it is this influence which keeps the inhabitant stable. Thus race is ultimately as much a questions of place as of heredity. It is the island of Great Britain which has really determined the English race, the genius of Place has made us one people. The place attracts its own human element, and the race drifts inevitably to its own psychic geographical pole.

For every great locality has its own pure daimon, and is conveyed at last into perfected life...Every great locality expresses itself perfectly, in its
own flowers, its own birds and beasts, lastly its own men, with their perfected works.*

The intimate connection between Lawrence's geographical environment and his development as a writer and metaphysician has, of course, been commented on: briefly by Mark Schorer in his essay, "D.H. Lawrence and the Spirit of Place*", and extensively by L.D. Clarke in his study The Minoan Distance (1980). Clarke charts Lawrence's global wanderings and provides a general critical analysis of the major works, within the context and setting in which they were written. My own study, though indebted to Clarke's, differs in that it explores the direct relation of a specific theme to the religio loci.

The thesis consists of a general critical survey of a select number of Lawrence's shorter fictions. The works chosen for close attention are those which seem to me to constitute a new stage, or direction, in the development of Lawrence's essential vision, and which I consider to

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...there is probably no other writer in literary history whose works responded so immediately to his geographical environment as Lawrence, and certainly there is no other modern writer to whose imagination "place" made such a direct and intense appeal, and in whose works, as a consequence, place usurps such a central role. Often it becomes the major character, as it were, Lawrence's arbiter, disposing of human destinies in accordance with the response that the human characters have made to itself, the nonhuman place. Or one may say that Lawrence's people discover their identities through their response to place, and that having thus come upon their true selves, they mark out their fate and are able to pursue it to another place - factory or farm, city or country, north or south, England or Italy, Europe or America, death or life. (p.282)
be representative of his more achieved experimental fictions*. In this respect the short stories and novellas are of particular interest because, even more than the novels, they reveal Lawrence's struggle to (re)imagine, articulate, and attain a coherent artistic medium for his evolving ideas. The only exception to my concentration on the shorter fiction is my inclusion of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The novel, I decided, could not be excluded on two counts: first, it is the major meditation of Lawrence's last phase of creative development which forms the greater part of this study; and secondly because it is Lawrence's most explicit and sustained articulation of the inter-relationship between sex and the sacred*.

Because of the frequently idiosyncratic, and always intensely personal, nature of Lawrence's imaginative vision I have endeavoured to outline and assess the formative influences (familial, social, literary, and cultural) that shaped both the man and the creative artist. In addition to the aforementioned fictions

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* This assertion is not without precedent. Julian Moynahan in *The Deed of Life: The Novels and Tales of D.H. Lawrence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) maintains that "Lawrence's short stories and novellas contain a higher proportion of assured artistic successes than do his novels", and their arguments are less "strained" than those of the novels, with "fewer lapses into uncertainty or confusion" (p.175). However, I differ from Moynahan in his belief that the tales are the more exploratory medium:

If the novels are Lawrence's major exploration of human reality, his lonely and at times heroic (and at times murky) vision of a land unknown, the tales represent just such settlement and domestication. They fill in behind the advancing frontier and turn virgin land into neighbourhoods. (p.176)

* On these or similar grounds one could also put forward a plausible argument for the inclusion of *The Plumed Serpent*. However, although this novel develops Lawrence's vision of leadership (indeed, it forms the culminating expression of this line of thought) it is a somewhat forced and artificial work, which Lawrence eventually distanced himself from; moderating and re-formulating some of the novels basic human commitments in the positive affirmations of the Chatterley sequence.
therefore I have also, where applicable, made use of Lawrence's letters, essays, poems, manuscripts and travelogues. My concern, however, is not to provide a catalogue of references or a biographical portrait, but to uncover the complex, and often contradictory forces which animate the text. My critical readings seek to reveal the extent to which the fictions form a series of, what Lawrence termed, "thought-adventures"; a creative space in which he could explore and articulate a vision of life that was adequate (and on occasion preferable) to his own lived and imaginative experiences*.

The thesis is divided into three parts: Part I begins in England and discusses the origins and nature of Lawrence's national identity (what I refer to as his patria); Part II moves to America and charts his renewed discovery of religion; Part III chronicles the return to Europe and his efforts to re-patriate. The progression, it barely needs stating, is chronological; however I also argue that it is a chronology which contains an organic or mythic circularity (or self-enclosure) in that, like T.S. Eliot, Lawrence's desired end was also contained in his own origins and ancestral beginnings.

* I am, of course, by no means the first to approach Lawrence in the way I have outlined. There have been studies in the major novels using the approach in varying degrees by George H. Ford, Mark Kinsead-Weekes, and John Worthen; of the poems by Sandra Gilbert and Christopher Pollittz; the plays by Sylvia Sklar; and all of these by L.D. Clarke and Keith Sagar. My own approach differs in that the thematic subject under discussion had not been dealt with in isolation before.
Each Part is divided into an introductory section in which I discuss the principal thematic pre-occupations, followed by a close textual analysis of relevant fictional works. Part III, although it appears disproportionately large in terms of length, is necessarily longer because it contains the thematic argument which encompasses the preceding two sections, and concentrates upon the final expression of Lawrence's carnal theology.
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PART I

ENGLAND
To attempt to isolate and define the quintessence of an abstract concept such as 'Englishness' (a product of centuries' distillation) is a peculiarly onerous, if not impossible, task. Englishness is a perennially elusive and ambivalent concept, and any effort to provide concrete evidence for its existence frequently results in little more than a catalogue of simplistic detail or vague associations. The search for a definitive description therefore becomes either so reductive that it is rendered meaningless, or the issue is refracted through a nostalgic haze (borne of exile or irretrievable loss) and is similarly untrustworthy. In addition, the difficulty of such an undertaking is accentuated by the fact that Englishness, as approached via nationalism or any form of patriotism, is generally taken to be one of those self-evident notions (reinforced by tradition) that requires neither definition nor explication. One of the most spirited attempts to delineate the "highly differentiated" and distinctive character of the English temperament appears in George Orwell's essay "England Your England" (written in 1941), where he writes,

...there is something distinctive and recognizable in English civilisation...It is somehow bound up with solid English breakfasts and gloomy Sundays, smoky towns and winding roads, green fields and red pillar-boxes. It has a flavour of its own. Moreover it is continuous, it stretches into the future and the past, there is something in it that persists, as in a living creature...And above all, it is your civilisation, it is you. However much you hate it or laugh at it, you will never be happy away from it for any length of time. The suet puddings and the red pillar-boxes have entered your soul. Good or evil, it is yours, you belong to it, and this side
of the grave you will never get away from the marks that it has given you.*

Despite (indeed perhaps because of) Orwell's jaunty tone and light-hearted wit this excerpt, in part, exemplifies the problem: that which is quintessentially English cannot be distinguished by specifics alone without sounding trivial or overly reductive. Englishness can be characterised and individualised but not defined by "winding roads" and "suet puddings". England, it hardly needs confirming, remains English and Englishness continues to be a phenomenon despite the present demise of the solid breakfast and the disappearance of the pillar-box. This is not intended however to be an explicit criticism of Orwell, on the contrary, the vague corollary that follows the above passage is as succinct and concise a definition of Englishness as one could hope to find.

In 1915 D.H. Lawrence, in a letter to Gordon Campbell, wrote,

...A man must now needs know himself as his whole people, he must live as the centre and heart of all humanity, if he is to be free. It is no use hating a people or a race or humanity in mass. Because each of us is in himself humanity. You are the English nation. That which exists as the ostensible English nation is a mass of friable amorphous individualties. But in me...is the living organic English nation. It is not politics - it is religion.*

In the final sentence, Lawrence makes an important distinction between two brands of nationalism: the distinction (though not directly stated) is effectively between 'British' - a political concept, and 'English' - which is a religious or (in the broadest sense) cultural one. In these terms, 'Britain' can be equated with Crown, State, and Empire; whereas 'England' translates itself into the pastoral of country lanes and tea shops, cathedral spires and yew-shaded graveyards. When a nation is in the process of establishing its identity or is in the midst of social turmoil (i.e., when that identity is threatened) - the political asserts itself in the form of nationalistic or official propaganda; as the turbulence recedes the tacit and unofficial forms of nationalism - more commonly recognised as a collective culture - quietly begin to take over*

In his sensitive literary study of versions of Englishness in modern writing, David Gervais* maintains that the concept of 'nation' is essentially contrived through an act of imagination, and is therefore what he describes as a "country of the mind", having no direct association with specific social strata or a particular

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* In certain respects, of course, this is something of an over-simplification (though, in this instance, a valid one), as it fails to take into account the extent to which the cultural reinforces the political, and vice versa. Perhaps the most notable example of just how complex and interdependent this relationship is can be seen, appropriately, in the writings of the First World War poets - Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen - who, in differing ways, challenged (and equally reinforced) the accepted forms of nationalism: the most memorable, and contrary, examples being Owen's 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and Brooke's 'Granchester'.

geographic region. It is, in effect, a myth - one which requires the sustenance of a myth-making mechanism which the culture, in all its manifestations, duly provides. In England's more recent history the discourse of the state has not been particularly prominent (in comparison to European counterparts such as Germany and France); consequently it is to the culture that the English nation's individuals look for corporate meaning, and their patriotism is more ingrained and harder to define. For Gervais, this is where the problems begin: because each writer's conception of the "English nation" is inescapably partial, in no sense can it be taken as wholly representative. Of the writers covered in his study, Gervais analyses a diverse range of 'Englands', and each offers a conflicting and highly personalised construct of Englishness. Gervais (broadly) concludes that the more elegaic (or strident) evocations of Englishness or England usually conceal some kind of anxiety regarding a personal or perceived sense of nationhood. This may account, Gervais suggests, for the fact that the perception of the 'real' England is so frequently considered to be receding, and its fading glory is invariably glimpsed, retrospectively, from a degraded present. It is this very process - the summoning of a retrospective past and the calling upon existing myths, for the purpose of either denouncing or adapting them for individualistic ends - that constitutes the creation, perpetuation and consolidation of a tradition.
Lawrence and Orwell speak authoritatively on the elusive subject of nationhood: both writers were, to varying degrees, semi-nomadic exiles who, with the benefit of their unusual perspectives and penetrative understanding, questioned the period's prevailing notions of national and class identity. The above extracts taken from their writings have a number of things in common; not least is the fact that their considerations regarding what it meant to be English were formulated at correspondingly crucial times in their country's history. These pieces were both written one year into the international mayhem of a World War, when nationalistic fervour - official and unofficial - featured prominently in daily life and discourse. Perhaps it is not surprising then that, despite the obvious differences in tone and temperament, their central thesis is, in many respects, the same. The unifying premise is one which suggests that an understanding of true Englishness lies not in a nationalistic definition born of war-time propaganda (a deracinated abstraction*), but rather in a living and symbiotic relationship with region, landscape and place, incarnate in the material body of the country. The real substance of Englishness is located in what both writers identify as an organic and quasi-mystical connection with the land (like the English Crown, the English landscape has an air of eternity denied its mortal inhabitants); a

* In the same letter to Gordon Campbell (Letters II, ibid., p.300-1), Lawrence voices his specific objection to an undiscriminating nationalism which (understandably) prevailed during this period:

I know that I am the English nation - that I am the European race - and that which exists ostensibly as the English nation is a falsity, mere cardboard. (p.301)
conjoining so complete that it defies - as Lawrence, in particular, was to discover - even the most determined denunciation.

National identity to Orwell was of such significance that to ignore its existence, or under-estimate "the overwhelming strength of patriotism" and its affective power, was, he believed, to fail to "see the modern world as it is"*. Lawrence likewise understood and appreciated the importance of national loyalty, but his interpretation of the concept was more idiosyncratic. He conceived national identity in terms of an organic connection with a native homeland; which is to say, he understood nationhood to be a symbiotic conjoining with the land that nurtures and shapes the individual nature; one that is in the broadest, and indeed oldest, sense religious (a derivative of the latin form, re-ligare = to bind back*) in its power to unite the individual with the delivering earth. It is, therefore, a bond which enables the individual to discover both communion with, and a community in, a local habitation. Lawrence's Englishness is perhaps best understood, and easier to apprehend, in terms of what Stephen Spender, in Love-Hate Relations, has described as a sense of patria ("the idea of the true nation"). By this he means the awareness, felt particularly by writers ("because it has a lot to do with

* "England Your England", The Orwell Reader, ibid., p.249.
living within the language of their birth*), of the imperceptible connection between their separate existence and "their country, its history, culture, landscape and people"*:

This awareness is of a life which is that of an ideal...England which the writer, if he is in a correct relation to it, releases in his work. Unless he does have such a relation, his work will be peripheral to that centre or turned inward on himself. It follows that if the nation itself presents conditions which prevent the writer identifying with it the ideal of the country in his mind, then he will find himself opposed to the official nation. His work will find its centre in a patriotism against which he measures the surrounding public nation.*

Throughout his lifetime Lawrence's patria consisted of an evolving and deepening sense of empathy with a number of changing environments. This apparent portability however is misleading, as each destination invariably proved to be only a temporary respite, incapable in the end of providing him with the emotional, spiritual and physical sustenance that he required and which his imagination always hungered after. Lawrence's patria was initially defined by, and grounded in, the homeland of his youth;

* Ibid.
* Ibid.
* Ibid. Spender goes on to qualify his definition by means of example:

...the distinction between 'patria' and nationalism is exemplified by Yeats' attitude towards Ireland in his youth during the early stages of the nationalistic movement. Yeats had a conception of Ireland that was completely different from that of the rebellious Irish nationalists who were preoccupied with politics, and different also from the poets who wrote nationalistic poetry...For Whitman 'patria' was the physical and emotional reality of soldiers, workmen and pioneers, mountains, plains and rivers, and New York that made up his idea of democracy. For James, Pound and Eliot, it was those centres of European tradition, and the literature, where the past seemed as living as the present. For those on either side of the dividing line, 'patria', though opposite, meant civilisation, nature and human goals, without which it was impossible for the individual to attain the fullest significant life. (p.xiii-xiv)
during the watershed years of the First World War however, this England of memory was irrevocably destroyed and the modern England that emerged in its place was, to Lawrence's mind, antithetical to the England of his heart and home. The pre-war England of Lawrence's patria corresponds to that which both Spender and Gervais identify as the ideal "country of the mind" (hence its mythopoeic significance in Lawrence's work); the post-war England that usurped it, provides what can be described as the negative version of his patria, the "official nation" to which Lawrence remained opposed for the remainder of his days. His denunciations of England are invariably concerned with the modern post-war and industrialised England. In reality, however, Lawrence never ceased to care about England: in spite of a lifetimes's repeated rejection and opposition, he tenaciously determined to remain "English in the teeth of all the world, even in the teeth of England".*

D.H. Lawrence is now commonly considered to be one of our great English writers (his very 'Englishness' taken to be one of the defining features of his work), the credit (or blame) largely due to the efforts of F.R. Leavis, both in The Great Tradition and in works specifically devoted to Lawrence: D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (1955) and Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in D.H. Lawrence (1976). In D.H. Lawrence: Novelist,

Leavis declared Lawrence to be "a recorder of essential English history" and "a great successor to George Eliot", with whom, of course, Lawrence shares a common geographical background. For Leavis, as for others, Lawrence is not merely England's chronicler but he is England. So self-evident is the nature of this 'Englishness' that, again, it requires neither justification nor definition. Thus Raymond Williams * Leavis' championing of Lawrence is well-known and his admiration of him unreserved. In the opening pages of D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), he writes:

Lawrence is before all else a great novelist, one of the very greatest, and it is as one of the major novelists of the English tradition that he will above all live. To give the proposition its due force I have to refer to a conception of the history of prose fiction in English that I have proposed elsewhere. It involves the view that, if the depth, range, and subtlety in the presentation of human experience are the criteria, then in the work of the greatest novelists from Jane Austen to Lawrence - I think of Hawthorne, Dickens, George Eliot, Henry James, Melville, Mark Twain, Conrad - we have a creative achievement that is unsurpassed; unsurpassed by any of the famous phases or chapters of literary history. In these great novelists...we have the successors of Shakespeare; for in the nineteenth century and later the strength - the poetic and creative strength - of the English language goes into prose fiction. In comparison the formal poetry is a marginal affair. And the achievement of T.S. Eliot, remarkable as it was, did not reverse the relation...The point I am making is that Lawrence is incomparably the greatest creative writer in English of our time - if I say, of Eliot's time, I make plain the phase of our civilization that is in question; he is one of the greatest English writers of any time; and, in the nature of his greatness, has his significant relation with what is most vital in the century before him. (p.18).

There have been other studies of Lawrence which endeavour to show his emergence from a 'tradition', the most popular being that of Romanticism. In The Later D.H. Lawrence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), William York Tindall writes:

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

wholeheartedly concurs with Leavis's judgement and considers Lawrence generically "English": "I read Lawrence of course as an English novelist". Like Leavis, Williams shows Lawrence's art as evolving from the English literary tradition, his genealogy going back through Thomas Hardy to George Eliot. Such pronouncements (and others by self-appointed custodians of our literary heritage) have been enough to establish beyond question Lawrence's artistic pedigree and place within the literary canon; but they leave the precise nature and form of Lawrence's patria unaddressed. Even a cursory glance at Lawrence's biography makes such straightforward assumptions look vulnerable. The writer who is famous for declaring - "I am English, and my Englishness is my very vision" - was also, it must be remembered, one of England's most formidable and consistently outspoken critics. Because of the conflicting nature of his patria many of his affirmations of his Englishness are, somewhat paradoxically, uttered in repudiation of his homeland.


* Letters II, ibid., p.414.  

* The following extract from Lawrence's letter, written in 1915, is a good example; forming, as it does a negative affirmation of Lawrence's patria. In reality it is a painful denunciation of his homeland during the horrors of the First World War:

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In this war, in the whole spirit which we now maintain, I do not believe, I believe it is wrong, so awfully wrong, that it is like a great consuming fire that draws up all our souls in its draught...Perhaps you will say it is cowardice: but how shall one submit to such ultimate wrong as this which we commit, now, England - and other nations. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. And I am English, and my Englishness is my very vision. But now I must go away, if my soul is sightless forever. Let it then be blind, rather than commit the vast wickedness of acquiescence. (Letters II, ibid., p. 414.)
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Lawrence's understanding of his own and his country's Englishness proved to be an unresolvable problem, one with which he was pre-occupied his life and may be said to have consumed it. Despite his life-long effort to break free of England his imagination remained tethered to it, and particularly to the region of his birth. (The French have a double word 'pays', which means both the nation and the region, often a small district, where a person comes from.) It is no coincidence that in a large proportion of Lawrence's last works his imaginative and fictive vision should return, not merely to his homeland, but to his native 'pays' of the East Midland counties.

Lawrence's England was centred within the countryside in and around Nottinghamshire, the area of his birth, childhood and adolescence; this region he described as, "the real England...the hard pith of England." His vision of the Midlands is a lived and heartfelt one*: we see this landscape at its most vividly imagined and portrayed in the early short stories and novels - most notably in The White Peacock, Sons and Lovers, The Prussian Officer and Other Stories, The Rainbow, and Women in Love. In "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside", an essay written

toward the end of his life, Lawrence sought, retrospectively, to articulate what England meant to him in his formative years:

To me, as a child and a young man, it was still the old England of the forest and the agricultural past; there were no motor cars, the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape, and Robin Hood and his merry men were not very far away...so that life was a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England of Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and George Eliot...In this queer jumble of the old England and the new, I came into consciousness.*

It pays to be wary of Lawrence's late essays written, as they were, in exile and toward the close of his life*. The series of autobiographical essays written after 1925* are a fascinating chronicle of Lawrence's final creative period, for although they revert to the same autobiographical material that shaped *Sons and Lovers*, they achieve what amounts to a subversion of the familial dynamics which determined the narrative action in the earlier novel. The late essays form a complex undertaking of "revisionary myth-making"*, an example of Lawrence at his most and, it should be added, uncharacteristically nostalgic. They are curious pieces which form a series of

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* The last years and the creative work produced during his final half-decade forms the topic of discussion in Part III. For further discussion of the autobiographical works mentioned here, see John Worthen's essay, "Lawrence's Autobiographies", in The Spirit of D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies, ibid.
* I am referring to autobiographical pieces such as "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside", "Getting On", "Return to Bestwood", "Autobiographical Fragment", "Myself Revealed", and "Enslaved by Civilisation"; these are collected in either Phoenix or Phoenix II.
psycho-dramas, in which the erstwhile favoured figure of
the mother (significantly she is only alluded to, never
directly named) and her generation of women come under
increasing criticism, and are eventually condemned for
the destruction of both his father and the nation's
menfolk. Correspondingly, the father is reinstated (or
more accurately, resurrected) as the lost representative
of England's dying spirit and faltering manhood. Tied in
with this process is the re-creation of landscape and
place which simultaneously mythologises a past and
genuinely appeals to (and in various ways satisfies)
Lawrence's, by now, hungering imagination. For example,
one never leaves *Sons and Lovers* with the impression that "the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the
landscape": on the contrary, the mining community (and
therefore the mines around which it revolves) is one of
the abiding influences around which both the novel's
action and the protagonist's development coalesce. What
is most noticeable about essays such as "Nottingham and
the Mining Countryside" is Lawrence's evident nostalgic
yearning for a time past, the overwhelming desire and
need to recover a lost world and re-create a sense of
'home', where he may subsequently re-ground his patria.
Lawrence however was too intelligent to over-indulge his
nostalgia or wishful thinking for long: these essays all
contain an awareness that this past is irretrievable and
that such a 'home' can only be recaptured on some
internal dream-screen. The complex emotional
undercurrents that inspired these essays are formidable
and much in evidence throughout. Lawrence's personal psycho-dramas aside, what "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" reveals is that like his contemporaries E.M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling, in their deepest imagining of England, Lawrence believed that the real (prehistoric) England "lingers in patches", and was accessible (to those of a discerning and responsive disposition) amidst "the savage peace" of the undisturbed countryside. In these remote and unassailed corners of England, Lawrence asserted that there remained areas where it was still possible to perceive (and imbibe) the vestigial spirit of the nation's ancient *religio loci*; where "the savage old spirit of place" continued to inform the daily lives of its inhabitants; and where the hungry heart could satisfy its yearning for "old gods, old, lost passions", enlivened and sustained by,

...the mystery of blood-sacrifices, all the lost, intense sensations of the primeval people of the place, whose passions seethed in the air still, from those long days before the Romans came*.

One of the problems encountered by the writer who desires to either define or depict the ancient spirit of a bygone England is that there is no coherent or established mythology from which he can legitimately and authoritatively draw in order to create a system or framework of cultural and historical reference. In *Howards End* (1910) E.M. Forster identified and addressed

the problem, lamenting that due to such a lack, England has been forced to appropriate its mythology from the ancient Greeks:

Why has not England a great mythology? Our folklore has never advanced beyond daintiness, and the greater melodies about our countryside have all issued through the pipes of Greece. Deep and true as the native imagination can be, it seems to have failed here...England still waits for the supreme moment of her literature - for the great poet who shall voice her, or, better still, for the thousand little poets whose voices shall pass into our common talk.*

The point is nicely illustrated by H.H. Munro's short story, "The Music on the Hill", where the indigenous daemon of the English landscape is sinisterly personified in Greek form as the God Pan:

"The worship of Pan never has died out," said Mortimer. "Other newer gods have drawn aside his votaries from time to time, but he is the Nature-God to whom all must come back at last. He has been called the Father of all the Gods, but most of his children have been stillborn."*

In denying the existence of this ancient manifestation of the primitive religio loci, Mortimer Seltoun's newly-wed wife Sylvia pays for her city-bred scepticism and derision with her life when, under the "Wood God's" orchestration, she is gored to death by a "horned beast"*. Kipling, in contrast, openly courts "daintiness" using the fairy-form of Pan in the figure of Puck around

* For a more benign depiction of the god Pan see Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows, Chapter VII - "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn".
whom he weaves his own version of the myth of England and the English countryside. This myth is explored and explicated in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910). Because of their apparently whimsical mood and subject matter these books are unjustly considered to be merely 'children's fiction' and have traditionally been relegated, beyond serious consideration, to the nursery*. These books however are deeply concerned with both the complexities and problems surrounding the nature of personal origins and national beginnings, and are thus anxious to prove and establish a sense of belonging or communion with English life and English history: "I belong here, you see", says Puck in "Weland's Sword", "and I have been mixed up with people all my days"*. For Kipling, Puck personifies England's quintessential spirit, in a way that the figure old Hobden represents its enduring manifestation*. In a similiar way to the middle-aged Lawrence (though for very different reasons), Kipling sought to discover and ground his patria in a partially imagined and re-constructed English countryside. In many ways Kipling's task was easier (and therefore more successful) that Lawrence's, in that his preferred solution was to research Englishness, to consciously think himself into English


* Puck of Pooks Hill, p.50.

* Edward Thomas' poem "Lob" (Edward Thomas: Selected Poems and Prose (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981) pp. 207-11) similarly describes such characters as Kipling's old Hobden. Lob is the personification of the enduring spirit of English yeomanry who 'has been in England as long as dove or daw': "The man was wild/And wandered./His home was where he was free./Everybody has met one such man as he."
soil, to absorb and become England by a concerted act of creative effort.

Lawrence similarly used the "Great God Pan" in order to invoke, and give historical and mythic credence to his animistic apprehension of the "spirit of place". Unlike Kipling and Munro, his Pan is not given a specifically English character*, rather Lawrence shies away from parochial limitation and imbues his Pan with a global significance; the god is therefore as likely to make an appearance in Hampstead or Shropshire* as he is in New Mexico or the Mediterranean. For Lawrence the "Great God Pan" was an important mythological figure, an "outlaw, even in the early days of the gods. A sort of Ishmael among the bushes"*; and one of the many forms his "dark"

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* Munro's Pan remains more Puck-like and playful than Lawrence's, even though his mischief ends in murder. The dark mysteriousness of Lawrence's Pan has more in common with E.M. Forster's depiction of the god in his short story 'Panic'. The vital knowledge with which Pan infects his devotees, both writers suggest, is highly ambivalent, being either liberating or lethal.

* Shropshire is the setting in St Mawr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) for the discussion concerning the mystical intuition that an awareness of "the Great God Pan" bestows on his devotees (pp.64-7). "The Last Laugh" is a short story which tells of the effect of Pan's return to Hampstead. James C. Cowan observes in D.H. Lawrence's American Journey: A Study in Myth and Literature (Cleveland: The Press Case of Western Reserve University, 1970) that the tale is only noteworthy in one respect:

Though 'The Last Laugh' is a very minor effort, it provides a successful, if anitrealistic, narrative statement of one of Lawrence's major proposals for the regeneration of the modern world, a revival of the natural mode of religious perception embodied in the figure of Pan. (p.61)

L.D. Clarke, in The Minoan Distance: The Symbolism of Travel in D.H. Lawrence (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1980), similarly comments that the "principal worth of the story is not as fiction but in what it shows of Lawrence's transition from Old World to New at this time". (p.305)

* "Pan in America", Phoenix, ibid., p.22. Lemprière explains that Pan originally derived from the deities of the ancient Egyptians: he was the 'living emblem of fecundity and they looked upon him as the principle of all things' (see the entry on Pan in Lemprière's Classical Dictionary (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1879). Whilst obviously incorporating the symbolic figure of Pan, Lawrence's "dark god" assumes the shape (and gender) of a number of recognisable mythic forms. The variability and fluidity of his 'living' divinity is appropriate to its function, inhabiter as it is of both the underworld and the sacred wood. Lawrence's "dark god" is a composite and protean figure reflecting the shifting pluralities of religious experience.
or "living god" assumes. He is the ambiguous, elusive and protean figure Lawrence invokes when he wishes to discuss (rather than describe) the ancient animistic pneuma that is specific to region and place. Lawrence's apprehension of the "Great God Pan" returns to the ancient, root form: Pan, he explains in his essay "Pan in America", is "All", the essence of life, a rustic deity "more demon than god: Pan was the hidden mystery - the hidden cause...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 daytime 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.*

He is to be feared, not loved or approached*; a primal force rather than an incarnate being; a fertile and phallic spirit of wild, untamed nature. In short, Pan is Nature; not a transcendent deity but the life force itself, the pulsing, striving, creative, evolving, regenerative, playful force that throws off forms in apparently indiscriminate profusion. The archaic Greeks called it phusis; it is the force which inhabits Darwin's evolutionary theory of "spontaneous variation"; and that which Henri Bergson called élan vital. In keeping with Munro, Kipling and Forster, Lawrence likewise believed that the protean spirit of Pan endured in the modern age.

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.65.
* "Pan in America", Phoenix, ibid., p.22. Lawrence's Pan is essentially Dionysian in nature. In his comprehensive work The Flutes of Dionysus: Demonic Enthrallment in Literature (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), R.D. Stock explains that Pan and Dionysus are kindred forms: "Dionysus has become the chief symbol of a complicated numinous experience, demonic dread" (p.xiii), of which Pan is a more primitive representation.
"The older a myth", he wrote in *Apocalypse*, "the deeper it goes in the human consciousness"; which is to say, far from being eradicated Pan has merely retreated from our foreground perceptions and assumed a different metamorphic guise*.

The mystic bonding and connection with landscape was one Lawrence considered to be ancestral; an inherited

* Plutarch, in his essay "Oracles in Decline", recounts that it was during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius that Pan is supposed to have "died" (coincidentally, this was the point in history when Christianity was born in Judea); in other words, when the rationalist mind gained ascendancy over the more primitive animistic vision.

As regards the death of such beings, I heard a story from a man who is neither a fool nor given to telling tall tales. This was Epitherseus, father of the rhetor Aemilianus...He was a fellow citizen of mine, a teacher of literature. His story was that he was once sailing to Italy on board a ship carrying merchandise and a large number of passengers. In the evening off the Echinades, the wind dropped, and the ship drifted close to Paxi. Most of them were awake, and some were still having their after-dinner drinks. Suddenly a voice was heard from the island of Paxi, calling out for someone named Thamous. It was amazing. Thamous was the Egyptian helmsman, whom few of the passengers or crew knew by name. Twice he was summoned, and did not reply. At the third call, he answered. The voice then grew louder. "When you reach Palodes", it cried, "announce that Great Pan is dead."...When they arrived off Palodes, there was no wind and no swell. So Thamous looked out from the stern towards the land and cried, just as he had been told, "Great Pan is dead!" Scarcely had he spoken, when a great cry of lamentation and surprise arose, not one voice but many.

(Selected Essays and Dialogues (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.27-8)

(Elizabeth Barrett Browning also give account of this historico-mythic event in her poem "The Dead Pan" (1844)). Initially Pan was demoted by the Greeks to the partially theriomorphic satyr figure (his goat-like form symbolising his personification of the rude and untutored animal instincts), and his gifts of prophecy and music were duly appropriated by the more civilised Sun-god Apollo. In the Christian cosmology Pan re-emerged as Satan with some of his dark power and majesty intact (although he does retain his horns and tale); because of his fallen glory however he was relegated to the nethermost regions of the universe. Pan has also survived in English folklore, emerging in the form of Puck or Robin Goodfellow, whose mischievous machinations cause such liberating emotional and sexual confusion in the Athenian groves of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

For the more superstitious, Pan (as symbol) is also preserved in the Tarot Deck: behind the card depicting "The Devil" lurks the Great God Pan, representing the crudest most instinctual aspect of human nature. Similarly, Pan is discernible in the workings of the unconscious mind, particularly in those unhousable impulses which psychoanalysis has done so much to bring to light in this century - incest fantasies, fascination with the bodily workings, feelings of pollution and sinfulness: here, thoroughly internalised, we can recognise Pan's most recent evolution in the unruly and libidinous concept of the Freudian *id*. For further discussion of Pan see Patricial Merivale's study, *Pan, the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).
knowledge or intuitive awareness, memories that are contained in the blood and passed on through generations. Lawrence's perception of "the organic English nation" was indisputably grounded in English history; his however was a personalised history, not acquired from any boardschool curriculum, but from the living contact with the land and those who worked it (from field and furrow to pithead and allotment). Coming from the heart of the English countryside, Lawrence grew up in and experienced a region that had suffered and endured the greatest, and indeed most drastic, changes during the unremitting onslaught of the Industrial Revolution. The Midlands' landscape of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* had indeed altered radically by the time of D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. His apprehension and perception of England is therefore unusual coming, as it does, from the perspective of one caught - or at least precariously balanced - between industrialism and agriculturalism, factory and farm*. Lawrence, of his generation of writers, stands alone in this respect: his penetrative threshold vision enabled him to gain an unrivalled insight into the peculiarly damaging and desecrating nature of a modern industrialised society. His contemporaries, sequestered in the city, may well (initially) have pioneered the modernist movement*, but it was Lawrence whose liminal

* In "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside", Lawrence confirms this outlook when he writes - "the life was a curious cross between industrialism and the old agricultural England". (Phoenix, ibid., p.135)

* Lawrence's modernity was acknowledged and appreciated, albeit grudgingly, by the master of the modern - Ezra Pound - as the following extract from his letters bears witness:
understanding, and heartfelt articulations, could make clear the human cost of the cultural transition from the maypole to the metropolis. Unsurprisingly therefore much of Lawrence's work is concerned with the effects that the imposition of a material/industrial world has upon an idyllic pastoral/agrarian society. Both *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* are deeply conscious that the industrial-agricultural landscape is continually evolving*: in different ways the novels are concerned with depicting the tensions and consequences of this change.

In *Sons and Lovers* the landscape contains within itself the central change of modern England, what J.R. Watson describes as "the movement from agrarian openness and small-scale cottage industry to a fully industrialised environment"*. The evolutionary process is current and ongoing: the landscape is no longer to be tended and left, but lived with, explored, excavated and, above all, exploited. The besmirching of modern England, although not so pronounced as it is in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is nevertheless witnessed and chronicled in passing. Lawrence's vivid and detailed evocation of this landscape, Watson argues, dramatises "the central tension between the older countryside and modern

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Lawrence has bought out a vol. He is clever...Detestable person but needs watching. I think he learned the proper treatment of the modern subjects before I did. (Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941, (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp.52-3.)

* In this respect *The Rainbow* (more so than *Sons and Lovers*) renders tangible the consequences of a changing historical reality and holds a similar place in Lawrence's work as that of *Silas Marner* did in George Eliot's.

industrialisation"*. This landscape is one which informs the daily lives of all the novel's characters; in turn, the tension between the old and new way of life is registered in their evolving domestic situations. Paul Morel's formative years are spent in an environment which (in Watson's words) "encompasses both his father's primitivism and his mother's aspirations"*; which is to say, his upbringing reflects, not only the inherent tensions of class conflict, but also the tension between a traditional way of life and modern progress (be that through educational self-advancement or technological development).

Paul Morel's apprehension of the surrounding landscape therefore becomes his experience, and while it creates conflict and ambivalence, it similarly serves as his means of (albeit temporary) liberation. Just as Wordsworth relates how his life was irrevocably altered by an awareness of the "unknown modes of being"* present within the landscape's "huge and mighty forms", so Paul Morel's destiny is determined by a similar awareness of Nature's elemental forces framing the perceived ignominies of his daily life. In the first half of the novel Paul seeks his consolation in his excursions to Willey Farm; however it is not until the second half of the novel that his initiation proper occurs. Through the

* Ibid.
* Ibid.
† I am referring specifically to the incident in book one of The Prelude (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), where Wordsworth recounts his boyhood boating adventure in the Lake District (1.370-427).
consummation of his relationship with Clara Dawes, Paul undergoes what Lawrence describes as a "baptism of fire", which duly forms his introduction to the preternatural presence embodied in the natural world*. Thus overwhelmed by "the immensity of passion", Paul Morel becomes alert to

...strong, strange, wild life, that breathed with his in the darkness through this hour. It was all so much bigger than themselves...They had met, and included in their meeting the thrust of the manifold grass-stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars...There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life.*

It was as if he, and the stars, and the dark herbage, and Clara were licked up in an immense tongue of flame, which tore onwards and upwards...everything was still, perfect in itself, along with him. This wonderful stillness in each thing in itself, while it was being borne along in a very ecstasy of living, seemed the highest point of bliss.*

Sons and Lovers, as Watson points out, is central to Lawrence's own consciousness and "to his perception of what England was"* prior to the First World War. In the

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* In his essay "Erotic Metaphor" (ed. Anne Smith, Lawrence and Women (London: Vision Press, 1978)), Mark Kinkead-Weekes analyses the development of Lawrence's erotic writing and examines how he uses sexual activity and consciousness as the vehicle for exploring wider relationships between individuals, their society, and the connection of man to the universe (pp. 101-121). This mysterious sense of unity with a greater power is in keeping with the Romantic tradition, and suggests why so much of the best Romantic poetry is mythopoeic (the identification of the human with the non-human world being, traditionally, one of the major functions of poetry). Coleridge makes it a part of the primary as well as the secondary imagination - "This I call I", he says in the Notebooks, "identifying the percipient with the perceived". The "Giant Forms" of Blake's prophecies are states of being and feeling in which we have our own being and feeling; the huge and mighty forms of Wordsworth's The Prelude have similar affinities; even the dreams of De Quincey seem vehicular in the same sense.

* Sons and Lovers, ibid., p.408.

* 'Lawrence and the East Midlands Landscape', in The Spirit of D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies, ibid., p.26. Watson goes on to add that, "Paul Morel, as Lawrence himself recognised...is a central English character". In this respect, Kangaroo (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950) is also important, articulating, as it does, Lawrence's reasons for his disillusionment and despair
same way *The Rainbow* records this same England, but because it was not published until 1915 it engages more immediately with (and consequently tries to make sense of) the implications of a changing historical reality.

*The Rainbow* charts the narrative of the evolutionary process - from agrarian life to an industrialised environment - over a period of three generations. It begins with a vital reversion to the English landscape and ends with Ursula's attempt to break free of such binding constraints, and to "cast off" old associations like "a year that has gone by". At the heart of *The Rainbow* is Lawrence's evocation of successive generations' mystic connection and primal bond with the earth. The Brangwens have lived for generations on Marsh Farm, bound to the soil, their lives shaped by the seasons' annual turning. Before we become aware of the existence of individual characters, Lawrence is keen to establish the powerful and primitive relationship between man and the earth to which he is connected: the pulse-beat of Brangwen blood has, for centuries, been synchronised with the rhythmic life force of the landscape, and the blood-tie to the land that issued them is stronger than any of the human relations in the book:

> They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth...Their life and interrelations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the

regarding the changes witnessed in his homeland. Richard Somers, the novel's protagonist, is described by Lawrence as - "One of the most intensely English little men England ever produced, with a passion of his country, even if it were often a passion of hatred." (p.247)
grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire.*

For J.R. Watson *The Rainbow* differs from *Sons and Lovers* in one important respect; landscape is not merely perceived

...as life, but it is set against the pattern of individual lives, landscape as power. It is the force of the landscape, accumulated over centuries, that pulses in the blood of Tome, Anna and Ursula, making them what they are: they are shaped and possessed by a power greater than themselves...It is this power...which lies behind the final vision of the novel: for the only conclusion which will satisfy Ursula is one in which the place, that place where the Brangwens have lived for centuries, is transfigured. She gropes "to find the creation of the living God", and sees the rainbow standing on the earth, the covenant of God with man made manifest in the East Midlands.*

Watson, however, fails to take into account Lawrence's wavering faith in the transcendent myth of rural England that *The Rainbow* embraces: crucially, Lawrence's version of the pastoral in the novel is engaged in an uneven contest with the movements of a prosaic history which he, and his characters, might resist but cannot deny. By the close, the novel's sustaining myth is considerably weakened (or, more accurately, it has been sublimated) and Lawrence utters his indictment on the encroachment of a contemporary industrial England by way of his heroine. Ursula Brangwen seeks to dissociate herself from her forefathers, and feels that her connections with the

place of her birth are no longer valid, she does "not", she maintains, "belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to England". Undeniably, the novel ends on a visionary note with Ursula envisaging the rebirth of England as a newly sprung Eden, an unsullied world which is, significantly, projected into an imagined future. By the time Lawrence came to write Women in Love he was fully aware that his myth of a rural England was untenable. In this novel he bids a symbolic farewell to the England he now considered to be dying, and similarly attempts to discard an English nationalism which he then considered to be irrelevant. Thus Birkin articulates Lawrence's emerging notion that the English have "got to disappear from their own special brand of Englishness", before the rot can begin to heal, and the nation can initiate and experience some form of spiritual regeneration.

Between writing Sons and Lovers and The Rainbow Lawrence produced his extended and metaphysical Study of Thomas Hardy. In the strictest sense this Study is not so much a critical assessment of Hardy's novels*, but the first coherent articulation of what Lawrence termed his

* All Lawrence's critical material tends to be more enlightening about Lawrence's own ideas and artistic belief than its ostensible subject. This is not to say that his criticism is in any way uninformative or inaccurate, on the contrary, his insights are lucid, passionate, frequently brilliant, and above all, highly personalised. It is these unusual characteristics that Lawrence brought to his critical assessments that led Leslie A. Fiedler, in Love and Death in the American Novel (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), to conclude that, "Of all the literary critics who have written about American books", Lawrence (in his Studies in Classic American Literature) is "the one who has seemed to me closest to the truth" (p.14) in his ability to unearth the real and underlying nature of American literature. Similarly, Richard Poirier, in A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), has described Lawrence's critical essays in Studies as "probably the crucial study of American Literature" (p.37).
"philosophy": the insights, guiding principles and conclusions outlined in this work are discernible, to a greater and lesser degree, throughout the remainder of his career. The work was intended as both an act of homage on Lawrence's part and an acknowledgement of his literary kinship (which is considerable*) with Hardy. Lawrence identifies Hardy's greatest talent to as his ability to demonstrate the degree to which the religio loci determines the development of his characters, and the events that influence their lives. The "constant revelation", he writes, is that in Hardy's novels "there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it"*:

This is the wonder of Hardy's novels, and gives them their beauty. The vast, unexplored morality of life itself, what we call the immorality of nature, surrounds us in its eternal incomprehensibility, and in its midst goes on the little human morality play, with its queer frame of morality and its mechanised movement; seriously, portentously, till some one of the protagonists chances to look out of the charmed circle, weary of the stage, to look into the wilderness raging around.*

Thus, in regard to The Return of the Native, Lawrence observes that the "real" sense of the novel's tragedy is derived from the setting:

It is Egdon Heath...It is the primitive, primal earth, where the instinctive life heaves up. There, in the deep, rude stirring of the instincts, there was the reality that worked the tragedy. Close to the body of things, there can be heard the stir that

* For a full discussion of Lawrence's literary relationship with Hardy see Richard Swigg's study, Lawrence, Hardy, and American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).
* Ibid., p.29.
makes us and destroys us. The earth heaved with raw instinct, Egdon whose dark soil was strong and crude and organic as the body of a beast. Out of the body of this crude earth are born Eustacia, Wildeve, Mistress Yeobright, Clym, and all the others. They are one year's accidental crop. What matter if some are drowned or dead... The Heath persists. Its body is strong and fecund, it will bear many more crops beside this. Here is the sombre, latent power that will go on producing, no matter what happen to the product. Here is the deep, black source from whence all these little contents of lives are drawn. And the contents of the small lives are spilled and wasted. There is savage satisfaction in it: for so much more remains to come, such a black, powerful fecundity is working there that what does it matter*

Characteristically, Lawrence goes on to identify what he considered to be Hardy's main failing as being an inability to carry his characters through from the moment of their inception, to the moment of their realisation. Lawrence argues that all of Hardy's characters eventually prove false to their origins, in that they invariably divorce their assumed purpose in life "from the passionate purpose that issued [them] out of the earth into being". Although Hardy introduces his characters to the daemonic energy of the English landscape, to Lawrence's mind, he could not bring about his characters' assimilation of that energy; which is to say, Hardy could not propel his characters through a conventional mode of behaviour into an integral one. Consequently, Lawrence argues, one of the perennial themes in Hardy's work is the notion that England is consistently betrayed by those born of it: the "real tragedy" of Hardy's characters is "that they are unfaithful to the greater unwritten

* Ibid., p.25.
morality". Ultimately this "morality" belongs to the greater world of a circumambient universe that is "the waste enormity of nature"; vast, incomprehensible, primal, "greater than ever the human mind can grasp".*. Hardy's characters, Lawrence concludes, "were not at war with God, only with Society", consequently it was "the judgement of man" that finally "killed them, not the judgement of their own souls, or the judgement of an eternal God".*.

The distinctions Lawrence pursued in his analysis of Hardy's novels served to clarify his own literary intentions and ambitions. Where Hardy failed, he determined to succeed in his attempt to reunite the English race with the indigenous "spirit of place". Lawrence's characters are therefore engaged in a perpetual battle with their God: it is an energising fight which, when successful, results in the emancipation of their inner being. The Lawrentian character's quarrel with society is, in this respect, incidental; frequently they choose to avoid any form of social obligation in order to pursue their own individual quest, hence the loners and wanderers who proliferate in his work. It is, however, this unwavering focus upon the continuing struggle with a higher power that enables Lawrence's characters eventually to break free of personal inhibition and social repression - the "little fold of

* Lawrence identifies this supra-reality as that of "the Greater Day" in a number of his shorter works; most notably in "The Flying Fish" and The Escaped Cock.
* Study of Thomas Hardy, ibid., p.30.
law and order, the little walled city within" - and thereby bring about some kind of energising connection with the earth that issued and shaped them.

The real and abiding subject of Lawrence's work is indeed the peculiarly intense relationship between man and nature, between the individual and the relgio loci of time and place. Under such circumstances the intuitional awareness or apprehension of the external world is considered to be far more than a passing acquaintance with, and appreciation of, the surrounding landscape. Lawrence's belief in a "physical vision"* involved a creative and fecundating interaction between the internal and external world; a total experience which incorporated the mind and the body's accumulated understanding. The great enemy of this process, Lawrence believed, was division - the mental faculty that reasonably distinguishes between a knowledge born of the intellect and that of the bodily senses, invariably deeming the former a superior mode of comprehension. Throughout his life, Lawrence endeavoured to subvert this premise (the very basis of occidental thought) and implement his own

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* Willie Hopkins (during the Croydon period) describes Lawrence saying to him:

When will you discover that what you call the intelligence is something that cheats you and juggles you all the time. It can make you believe you are right when you are hopelessly wrong - you must have physical vision. (my italics) (Edward Nehls, D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, 3 Volumes, 1885-1930. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-59. p.74.)
individualistic belief in "a religion of life"*. As early as 1913 he declared:

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about knowledge. All I want is to answer my blood, direct, without the fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what not.*

Modern civilisation's sickness (distinguished by the emotional inertia or ennui that many of his characters suffer from*) Lawrence attributed to society's extrapolating tendencies, its abstracting nature. He was quick to point out that the enduring, and consequently impoverishing, belief in the supremacy of the intellectual faculty resulted in the loss of all bodily sense and awareness: a fundamental severance which subsequently undermined any physical connection we may have with the phenomenal world. The burden of Lawrence's prolific artistic endeavours was to redress this imbalance - "the whole life-effort of man", he argued, is "to get his life into direct contact with the elemental life of the cosmos":

* This phrase is taken from Lawrence's poem, "The Root of Our Evil", where he writes: 'What we want is some sort of communism/not based on wages, nor profits, nor any sort of buying and selling/but on a religion of life.' (The Complete Poems, ibid., p. 483.)
* Lawrence is not alone in identifying the modern malaise (first diagnosed by Baudelaire and Matthew Arnold) as a form of depression or ennui: most notably it is the defining emotion (or want of it) in Eliot's The Waste Land, and many of his subsequent poems. Since then it has been given renewed currency in the work of Evelyn Waugh (most markedly in A Handful of Dust), Philip Larkin and Samuel Beckett.
* Phoenix, ibid., p.146.
Man's life consists in a connection with all things in the universe. Whoever can establish, or initiate, a new connection between mankind and the circumambient universe is, in his own degree, a saviour. Because mankind is always exhausting it human possibilities, always degenerating into repetition, torpor, ennui, lifelessness. When ennui sets in, it is a sign that human vitality is waning, and the human connection with the universe is gone stale.*

For Lawrence this meant that any truly religious vision was rendered redundant which, in time, led to the perversion of human intercourse and, by extension, human identity. The result, he maintained was a deracinated breed of men functioning with eyes only (visually obsessed), as free-floating and meaningless as the expatriate and tourist mobs to whose presence in Europe he so violently objected*. His enduring and animating impulse therefore was to create some sort of regenerative arena in which such a harmonious balance could be restored and achieved (whether this be the imagined colony of Rananim or the ideal space of Wragby Wood).

* The England of Lawrence's patria - the England that is of the early short stories, Sons and Lovers, and The Rainbow - was irrevocably destroyed by the First World War: "The War finished me: it was the spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes"*, he admitted to Cynthia

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* See for example the references to his fellow expatriates in the travel writings, Sea and Sardinia, Twilight in Italy; and his portrayal of the expatriate community in the Italy of Aaron's Rod.
* Letters II, ibid., p.268.
Asquith in 1915. By the end Britain's victory seemed to many to signal no renewal but decline - economic, political, cultural. Industry, the economic basis of the Empire, went into decline, and that which had made Britain great began to pass. The prevailing atmosphere was one of measured uncertainty; a general feeling which the contemporary commentator and historian G.F.G. Masterman characterised as one of "cosmic weariness".

Expectancy and surprise are the notes of the age. Expectancy belongs by nature to a time balanced uneasily between two great periods of change. On the one hand is a past still showing faint survivals of vitality; on the other is the future but hardly coming to birth. The years as they pass still appear as years of preparation, a time of waiting rather than a time of action...Here is a civilisation becoming ever more divorced from Nature and the ancient sanities, protesting through its literature a kind of cosmic weariness. Society which had started on its mechanical advance and the aggrandisement of material good with the buoyancy of an impetuous life confronts a poverty which it can neither ameliorate nor destroy, and an organised discontent which may yet prove the end of Western civilisation. Faith in the invisible seems dying, and faith in the visible is proving inadequate to the hunger of the Soul.*

The age was experiencing all the turmoil and upheaval of social change and the nerve-racking tension created by the juxtaposition of old ideas with the new. In literary circles Modernism emerged to mark and register the dissonance and dissolution at large. There was a temporary respite as Georgian optimism momentarily combated the more dour forms of pessimism, but Georgian verse, from the beginning, struck an elegaic note which

was eventually silenced altogether when a significant number of its proponents became victims of the Great War. Lawrence, who balked at inclusion in any of the contemporary literary movements, became an isolated and passionate spokesman against the atrocities committed on the battle grounds of Europe. He "condemned with all his might" the ravages of mechanised warfare which bred in him a deep-seated disgust and disillusionment, the loss of all hope in the spirit of his country. "England", he declared,

...nauseates my soul, nauseates my spirit and my body...One might as well by blown over the cliffs here in a strong wind, into the rough white sea, as sit at this banquet of vomit, this life, this England, this Europe.*

Like Lou Witt, the heroine of St Mawr, Lawrence believed he was alone in witnessing the brooding and breeding evil which underwrote the war effort; the widespread hypocrisy of patriotism; the resultant state of spiritual crisis; and the inevitable collapse of cultural integrity occasioned by the widespread slaughter. The bulk of his outrage however was reserved for his homeland, what he considered to be the self-determining, self-immolating nature of England's demise - "How England deliberately undermines England"*: "I can't stand this unclean...mania for self-desecration, which has come over England so

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* Letters II, ibid., p.500.
* Letters IV, ibid., p.234.
strongly"*. Like Masterman, he translated his despairing outrage and sense of loss into apocalyptic terms*:

...the most horrible feeling of hopelessness has come over me lately—I feel as if the whole thing were coming to an end—the whole of England, of the Christian era: as if ours was the age only of Decline and Fall. It almost makes one die. I cannot bear it—this England, this past.*

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects about the correspondence of this period is how personal and heartfelt Lawrence's pain was as he witnessed what he considered to be England's death. Stephen Spender does not exaggerate Lawrence's isolation and bitterness during these years when he states:

The hatred in his war letters is that of a man who thinks that he is the only live thing left on the world and who regards everyone and everything else as wishing to kill him.*

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* Letters II, ibid., p.604.
* The scale of Lawrence's apocalyptic despair can be measured by the following excerpt from a letter written to Ottoline Morrell, in the September of 1915:

Last night when we were coming home the guns broke out, and there was a noise of bombs. Then we saw the Zeppelin above us, just ahead, amid a gleaming of clouds: high up, like a bright golden finger, quite small, among a fragile incandescence of clouds. And underneath it were splashes of fire as the shells fired from earth burst. Then there were flashes near the ground— and the shaking noise. It was like Milton—then there was war in heaven. But it was not angels. It was that small golden Zeppelin, like a long oval world, high up. It seemed as if the cosmic order were gone, as if there had come a new order, a new heavens above us: and as if the world in anger were trying to revoke it. Then the small long-ovate luminary, the new world in the heavens, disappeared again.

I cannot get over it, that the moon is not Queen of the sky by night, and the stars the lesser lights. It seems the Zeppelin is in the zenith of the night, golden like a moon, having taken control of the sky; and the bursting shells are the lesser lights.

So it seems our cosmos is burst, burst at last, the stars and moon blown away, the envelope of the sky burst out, and a new cosmos appeared, with a long-ovate, gleaming central luminary, calm and drifting in a glow of light, like a new moon, with its light bursting in flashes on the earth, to burst away the earth also. So it is the end—our world is gone, and we are like dust in the air. (Letters II, ibid., pp.389-90)

* Ibid., p.433.
Time and again, one comes across letters during these years which voice the fury, frustration and impotence that he felt in the face of such overwhelming destruction. "This is the real winter of the spirit of England"*, he grieved:

I am so sad, for my country, for this great wave of civilisation, 2000 years, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. So much beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming: this house of the Ottolines--It is England--my God, it breaks my soul--this England, these shafted windows, the elm-trees, the blue distance--the past, the great past, crumbling down, breaking down, not under the force of the coming buds, but under the weight of many exhausted, lovely yellow leaves, that drift over the lawn and over the pond, like the soldiers, passing away, into winter and the darkness of winter--no, I can't bear it. For the winter stretches ahead, where all vision is lost and all memory dies out...I can't bear it: the past, the past, the falling, perishing, crumbling past, so great, so magnificent.*

For Lawrence, as for many writers of the period, the old English houses came to epitomise the evanescent spirit of old England; and family seats such as the Ottolines' came to symbolise the double-edged beauty and failure of the past. It was the Edwardians - particularly H.G. Wells and (in certain respects) John Galsworthy - who most cogently opened this avenue of feeling. In Wells' novel Tono-Bungay, the country home Bladesover is described as "the key for the explanation of England", the very locus of order, beauty, and purpose. The continuing existence of these houses - last bastions of England's receding spirit - is considered to be precarious in the extreme.

* Letters II, ibid., p.393.
The great houses stand in the parks still, the cottages cluster respectfully on their borders, touching their eaves with their creepers, the English country-side - you can range through Kent from Bladesover northward and see - persists obstinately in looking what it was. It is like an early day in a fine October. The hand of change rests on it all, unfelt, unseen; resting for a while, as it were half reluctantly, before it grips and ends the thing forever. One frost and the whole face of things will be bare, links snap, patience end, our fine foliage of pretences lie glowing in the mire.*

The decline of the country house is equated with, or at least taken to be somehow representative of, England's demise. Houses such as Bladesover, or Lawrence's Breadalby (Women in Love), Thoresway ("The Ladybird"), Daybrook ("The Flying Fish"), and Wragby Hall (Lady Chatterley's Lover) continue to exist, but only as anachronisms; 'living' evidence of a by-gone era, now dismissed as out-dated and out-moded in a post-war Britain, they are considered to be the final guardians of England's quintessential spirit, and duly mourned even before their passing.

In Forster's Howards End, the house is said to possess a living "spirit", hence Mrs Wilcox's search for a suitable "spiritual" heir, who will duly preserve and nuture the surviving anima of Howards End. Notably it is not a member of her own family - the rightful legal heirs - who are nominated as its possessor; the remainder of the Wilcox family being products of the modern England of

commerce, industry and progress who, incapable of appreciating its ancient worth, are considered unworthy of the inheritance. For George and Sophie Chapin, in Kipling's "An Habitation Enforced", "the genuine England of folklore and song" coalesces around the concrete reality of Friars Pardon: "People don't seem to matter in this country compared to the places they live in"*, George Chapin observes. Kipling's couple take root in England discovering their origin (and therefore identity) in their final destination. Sophie Chapin's self-consciousness concerning her acquired (or more accurately (re)discovered) status, makes her better able to appreciate its essence than those who are simply born to it: "George, this is history I can understand. We began here"*. T.S. Eliot likewise found his beginning and his end in English soil. In Four Quartets he emphatically declares - "History is now and England" - where history is given temporal and spatial anchorage in the old house of Burnt Norton, and the even older communal dwelling of Little Gidding. The nostalgic spirit - though by this time slightly sentimentalised - is similarly taken up by Evelyn Waugh in Brideshead Revisited. Again the novel deals with a, by now, familiar theme as Brideshead Castle and Marchmain House (the relics of an England past) are sacrificed in the name of progress to the war effort and re-development, respectively.

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* Ibid., p.125.
* Ibid., p.121.
What links Wells, Lawrence, Forster and Waugh, is the realisation that they each, in turn, have somehow been robbed of their rightful heritage and patrimony. In a crucial respect the individual works these writers produced are the creations of bereft men, and their texts register their lamentation accordingly. This elegaic and threnodic mood is best expressed by Lawrence in a letter written to Ottoline Morell in 1915:

How cruel it is that the world should so have come to an end, this world, our world, whilst we still live in it, that we must either die or go away dispossessed, exiled in body and spirit.*

At the time when other young men were nationally applauded for offering themselves the butchered sacrifices (the "torn dead") on the altar of England's war effort, Lawrence hated and condemned them for it. He regarded their heroism as cowardly and unmanly, considering their deaths to be contemptible acts of submission to, and complicity with, an awful and universal dupery*. He even turned against England, hating his homeland for its nostalgic beauty which hypnotically

* Letters II, ibid., p.434.
* In "The Ladybird" Lawrence registers his detestation of the hypocrisy of patriotism via the figure of Lady Daphne's father:

Earl Beveridge, whose soul was black as ink since the war, would never have allowed the little alien [Count Dionys] to enter his house, had it not been for the hatred which had been roused in him, during the last two years, by the degrading spectacle of the so-called patriots who had been howling their mongrel indecency in the public face. These mongrels had held the press and the British public in abeyance for almost two years. Their one aim was to degrade and humiliate anything that was proud or dignified remaining in England. It was almost the worst nightmare of all, this coming to the top of a lot of public filth which was determined to suffocate the souls of all dignified men. (The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.205)
demanded this of its countrymen. The feeling that the old England was "finished" is now succeeded in his writing by hatred for the new England that emerged in its place. His vitriolic outpourings frequently reach an hysterical pitch as he condemnns outright the state of the nation:

I curse my country with my soul and body, it is a country accursed, accursed and blasted. Let the seas swallow it, let the waters cover it, so that it is no more. And let it be known as accursed England, the country of the damned. I curse it, I curse England. I curse the English, man, woman, and child, in their nationality let them be accursed and hated and never forgiven...I can't live in England. I can't stop any more. I shall die of foul inward poison. The vital atmosphere of the country is poisonous to an incredible degree...I shall die in the fumes of their stench.*

Equally, when not blasting his countrymen with biblical denunciations and apocalyptic curses, he is busy sounding England's death knell:

For me the skies have fallen, here in England, and there is an end. I must go...because to remain here now, after the end, is like remaining on one's deathbed. It is necessary to begin a new life.

You mustn't think I haven't cared about England. I have cared deeply and bitterly. But something is broken. There is not any England. One must look now for another world. This is only a tomb...Do you think I don't know what it is to be an Englishman.*

The necessity "to begin a new life" became Lawrence's major pre-occupation during these years. In quieter mood his attitude to the War revealed a hitherto concealed complexity, for it was in Europe's pervasive "will to

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* Ibid., pp.90-1.
war" that Lawrence first recognised the pressing and urgent need for some form of universal spiritual regeneration. Amidst so much carnage he saw the necessity of maintaining some sort of "hope" in a regenerative process: "The fact of resurrection is everything, now: whether we dead can rise from the dead, and love, and live, in a new life, here [in England]". Paradoxically, when considered in this greater context, the war is seen to be a creative agent, in that Lawrence believed it to be "a great and necessary disintegrating autumnal process", which would clear away the decaying order, and make way for the new life to follow.

Throughout the decade from 1910 to 1920 Lawrence's work and imagination displays both the impulse toward a sense of community and a counter-impulse away from it. Analogously we see how his preternatural ability to sympathise and commune with all forms of life was inseparable from a quite crippling degree of isolation and alienation from his fellow man. With restless dedication Lawrence embarked upon a live-long search for a society, or social body, with whom he could establish meaningful, living contact within the context of an organic world; a world in which the times were not personally degrading, conscious-bound, knowing and knowlegdeable. "Men are free", he wrote, only when

* Letters II, ibid., p.420. This letter was written to Cynthia Asquith as an accompaniment to the first draft of "The Thimble", which was later re-written and published as the "The Ladybird".
* Letters II, ibid., p.424.
...they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. Men are free when they are obeying some deep inward voice of a religious belief...Men are free when they belong to a living organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose.*

Paradoxically, however, Lawrence was either incapable of uniting with (or could never actually find) a community to which he could belong, or one where he could discover any form of lasting freedom. Of his generation, Lawrence was perhaps the only one who retained the Victorian impulse to assume responsibility for the well-being of his society, and to set about re-defining the possibilities of community. Periodically he flirted with the idea of establishing his own spiritual commune; however, although much discussed, Rananim (the name given to his projected Utopia) never actually materialised. The idealism germane to such an undertaking appealed enormously but the manifest reality was another matter. Lawrence's highly individualistic nature, combined with a deep distrust of all collectivities, meant that any project of this kind was doomed from the moment of inception. The motivating impulse behind such endeavours, however, were never actually abandoned. In the wake of his own devastating disillusionment with his homeland (compounded by such events as the banning of The Rainbow and his expulsion from Cornwall) Lawrence sublimated much of his furious idealism into the polemical works that followed his Study of Thomas Hardy. In particular the

extended essays such as *The Crown* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* were written out of a certain trust that the advice contained therein would be heeded and, moreover, could subsequently lead to the betterment of England; if not by actually bringing about a quick and clean end to the war (in the case of *The Crown*), then at least by engendering a meaningful and imaginable future.

Lawrentian metaphysic - as articulated in such works as *The Crown*, "The Reality of Peace", *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, "Pornography and Obsenity", *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and *Apocalypse* - is primarily the vitalistic philosophy (or what he loosely termed "science") of a poetic imagination*. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, he is quick to emphasise that his arguments proceed not by a process of logical deduction, but rather by "intuition": which is to say, the system he proposes is based on the dynamics of metaphor, as opposed to the rigidities of objective fact. By way of confirmation, Lawrence explains:

> This pseudo-philosophy of mine - 'pollyanalytics', as one of my respected critics might say - is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse.*
In brief, Lawrence's metaphysic is conceived in terms of a triadic or trinitarian system in which two opposing trends of thought are reconciled in a third entity; a symbolic mystery of sorts, which creates a perfected harmony and balance, a "new epoch of the mind". The symbolism used to define his tripartite concept varies from text to text - becoming increasingly rapt with the progression of time - however the underlying principle remains, in essence, the same. Lawrence posits the theory that within each individual there exists two opposing forces, which are in a state of constant opposition: it is the resultant state of strife which brings the third entity into existence; the antagonism itself being identified as that which eventually initiates a state of rejuvenated being. If either entity should dominate then the balance is destroyed, and along with it, the hope of a regenerative or redemptive life. The theory (in all its varying forms) is made more complex by its shifting or evolving symbolism; it can however be comprehended readily when seen diagrammatically.

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<tr>
<th>Flesh/God the Father/</th>
<th>Comforter/Holy Ghost</th>
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<td>Law/female</td>
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<td>Word/God the Son/Love/male</td>
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<th>Lion/Darkness/dissolution</th>
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Here the "Holy Ghost" is best defined as a living religious principle, whereby the individual's existence
is circumscribed by "the undivided Godhead"; or in Lawrence's own words,

The Holy Ghost is the deepest part of our own consciousness wherein we know ourselves for what we are and know our dependence on the creative beyond.*

The desire for "creation", and the complementary desire for "dissolution" are, ideally, held in perpetual balance by both the body and psyche. The corresponding process of generation and corruption - the "life-" and the "death-flow" - were, latterly, explicitly related to the genital and excremental functions respectively*. It was out of these speculative adventures that Lawrence's more extreme socio-sexual theories eventually arose. The most notable example occurs in Lady Chatterley's Lover where the phallus (as "Holy Ghost" incarnate) becomes the initiatory means of achieving new life via the symbolic act, or ritual death, of "the phallic hunt"*.

What he considered to be true of the individual is, by extension, also applicable in the societal sphere; here, Lawrence believed, similar conflicting cultural forces needed to be maintained in some sort of equilibrium to ensure cultural health and regenerative growth. He

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* Lawrence's metaphysic was, in its rudimentary form, rooted in a nonanthropomorphic religion whose gods "were not beings, but symbols of elemental powers": "The undivided Godhead, if we can call it such, was symbolised by the mundum, the plasm-cell with its nucleus: that which is the very beginning, instead of, as with us, by a personal god, a person being the very end of all creation or evolution."
* The Complete Poems, ibid., p.621.
* For a full discussion see Lawrence's essay "Pornography and Obscenity"
attributed England's historico-cultural crisis to the imbalance that arose between the "life-" and "death-flows", both on a microcosmic scale (within the individual psyche) and a macrocosmic scale (society's collective consciousness) scale. In The Crown, Lawrence argued that England's involvement in the War was the direct result of the dominance of the "Flux of Corruption" ("The Will-to-Inertia) which bred a universal, spiritual, mental and moral apathy. Inevitably, while such a negative cultural force was in the ascendency there was no prospect of new or regenerative life:

For the stiffened, exhausted, inflexible loins of our era are too dry to give us forth in labour, the tree is withered, we are pent in, fastened, and now have turned round, some to the source of darkness, some to the source of light, and gone mad, purely given up to frenzy...then began chaos, the going asunder.*

The "going asunder" is perceived as a period of universal chaos, the dark night of the soul; a period of death and "dissolution" which culminated in the flowering of the culture's death-wish on the battlefields of France. In order to break the negative cycle of "Corruption", Lawrence insisted that society must "break down" its "deadened forms" and relinquish its debilitating "Will-to-Inertia". Salvation, in these terms, lies in the prevailing culture's propensity to bring "the flux of darkness and lively decomposition" into synchronisation

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with the opposite forces of "creation". Lawrence identified the War as a "creative" force because within the amplitudes of its orgiastic surrender to universal violence he discerned the necessary acceleration of the processes of "dissolution". The wholesale abandonment to "the flux of corruption", he interpreted as a perverse form of the regenerative impulse toward new life. "Decomposition" is considered to be "lively" because within the process of decay and disintegration Lawrence perceived the sacred presence of the divine:

In corruption there is divinity...in the soft shiny voluptuousness of decay, in the marshy chill heat of reptiles, there is the sign of the Godhead...decay, corruption, destruction, breaking down is the opposite equivalent of creation.*

Thus the acceptance of corruption and death, hatred and violence are considered to be the necessary pre-condition of peace, fulfilment and meaningful human intercourse. Once the complex inter-relationship between "creation" and "dissolution" (life and death) is understood the individual/culture can pass beyond the limitation of such dualities into the perfected "era of the Holy Ghost". Lawrence believed that the only way forward - and of attaining a state of redemptive equilibrium - was via the exacerbation of the widespread "dissolution" to the point where the corruption would eventually exhaust itself:

* In identifying the presence of the sacred in the darker aspects of chaos and destruction, Lawrence is not alone. In the literature of the early twentieth century there is an emergence of what may be termed a Dionysian pre-consciousness. The most memorable example during the period occurs is Mann's Death in Venice
then, and only then, could the new era be ushered forth, phoenix-like from the ashes of the old. At this point Lawrence's proselytising becomes bewildering: in the midst of his deamonic subtleties one finds the crude confusion which all religious apocalyptics share with political revolutionaries. His perception of the terminal corruption in our culture, combined with his commitment to a new order, involved the speedy end and eventual eradication of the old; inevitably this means willing the death of some innocent life, as a means of guaranteeing the hoped for revitalization:

Yet if we are left maimed and halt, if you die or I die, it will not matter, so long as there is alive in the land, some new sense of what is and what is not, some new courage to let go the securities, and to be, to risk ourselves in a forward venture of life, as we are willing to risk ourselves in a rush of death.

Nothing will matter so long as life shall sprout up again strong after this winter of cowardice and well-being, sprout into the unknown.*

Only the gods of legend can do this with impunity: for a man to call his willing of such slaughter "a sacrificial offering" is a violation of the religious impulse (and its history) so grotesque that only a deracinated intellectual could fail to be appalled by it. Lawrence understood this both profoundly and not at all.

* Citation lost.
The fictional work most representative of Lawrence's mode of thinking, both during and immediately after, the First World War is the collection of stories which appeared under the title of *England, My England*. All the stories collected in this volume emerge from, or are deeply rooted in, the sense that the England of Lawrence's patria had become at best an ailing cause, at worst a mere memory. In addition, the England Lawrence chooses to depict is one from which he had already (at least imaginatively) attempted to extricate himself; the tales therefore are characterised by an authorial or critical distance (not seen in either the *Love Among the Haystacks* or *The Prussian Officer* collections), which Cushman accurately describes as a "sardonic detachment". All the stories are about the lives of English characters in

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* *England, My England* was published as a complete volume of short stories in England in 1922 and in America in 1924. The majority of the stories were written and published in literary magazines, on both sides of the Atlantic, during the years from 1913 to 1919. Keith Cushman, in his essay "The Achievement of *England, My England and Other Stories*" (D.H. Lawrence: The Man Who Lived (ed. Robert B. Partlow and Harry T. Moore. Carbondale: University of Illinois Press, 1980) has unequivocally hailed the collection as,

Lawrence's most outstanding accomplishment as a writer of short stories, maintaining that the volume contains some of his 'most striking tales; works which are repeatedly characterized by imaginative boldness, aesthetic richness, and formal integrity. (p.27).

He goes on to qualify this remark by stressing that,

Though a number of Lawrence's finest tales were written and collected later in his career, the stories collected in *The Woman Who Rode Away* and the posthumous *The Lovely Lady* are much more uneven in quality, much more likely to suffer from thinness...My case for *England, My England* is based in part on the book's high percentage of achieved success* (ibid., p.28).

The collection is indeed impressive, forming as it does an extraordinary study of the changing consciousness of a nation at war, not merely with an alien and hostile land, but with its own conflicting attitudes and emerging modernity.

* During the period in which most of the stories were produced Lawrence was seeking permission to leave England. For further discussion see Paul Delaney's *D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare*.
English settings, each of which is somehow implicated, either directly or indirectly, in their country's changing cultural climate. The volume's title is borrowed from W.E. Henry's patriotic poem, "For England's Sake" (an unequivocal expression of pride in the Empire). The allusion is, of course, deliberately cynical, specifically invoked in order to highlight the collection's ironic commentary upon, and intentional inversion of, England's traditional nationalistic sentiment.

In *England, My England*, Lawrence is concerned to address both the cause and effects of the breakdown and disappearance of the "English consciousness". The death of England's spirit is not merely chronicled in the light of the Great War's cataclysmic impact on English society, but is directly blamed as the precipitating factor in England's demise. The tales however are not about the vicissitudes of mortal combat in the manner of Stephen Crane or Ernest Hemingway, rather they examine the War's dislocating and disruptive impact on daily life and human interaction. They are, ostensibly, simple tales about the evolving relationships between men and women who live ordinary day-to-day existences, many miles from the immediate horror of Europe's front line. By design, therefore, all the relationships in one way or another register the effects of international crisis obliquely, so that the only battle ground under discussion is that of the visibly decaying relations of the tales'
successive protagonists. In each story the relationships between men and women are variously depicted as combat zones where the disruption and disorder imposed by the war is registered in the domestic and sexual dramas. Sexual relationships are subverted, traditional roles are overturned, and the indeterminate and volatile battles of the sex war are seen to be slow but determined wars of attrition, which no one side can ultimately win*.

Lawrence, was not alone in chronicling the shifting politics of domestic power during those disruptive times. Partly in reaction to the brief economic and social freedoms given women during the War (and before that with the beginnings of the Suffragette movement at the turn of the century) male writers began to articulate and record their emergent fear of social replacement and emotional diminishment*. This sense of growing insecurity was compounded by the sense of masculine expendability prompted by not only the random slaughter of the War, but also fantasies of mass promiscuity on the part of the deserted womenfolk. In addition, on their return they faced the threat of home and job displacement by the newly liberated and emotionally emancipated women.

* Cushman's essay, "The Achievement of England, My England and Other Stories", demonstrates how each of the stories make use of myth and fairy tale for their foundation and structure. He goes on to demonstrate the myth/folk-tale behind each the individual stories, arguing along the way that, although Lawrence constructs the stories on a foundation of myth and fairy tale, he subverts the myths and fairy tales he makes use of. The Lawrentian meaning resonates against the traditional, received meaning it replaces. This effect - revisionary mythmaking - contributes to the great vitality of the stories. (ibid., p.30)

* For a full discussion of male writers' reactions to the feminist freedoms of World War I, see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's No Man's Land, Volume 1: The War of the Words (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), Chapter 1 "The Battle of the Sexes: The Men's Case", pp.3-65.
Fearful and disaffected, threatened by unemployment and dazed by the war's devastating lessons in human expendability, men responded with an understandable, and to them justifiable, reactive violence, aggression, and seething resentment. When considered in these terms, Hemingway's rearguard defense of the receding possibilities for male self-definition, and Lawrence's case for a resurgent, vitalistic and indomitable maleness can be seen as masculinist rebellions against real and imagined threats of emasculation, displacement, subjection and extinction.

One of Hemingway's most memorable records of the ruthless and all-powerful Female (who haunts the literature of the period) occurs in his short story "The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber"*. The tale chronicles its protagonist's moving rite of passage on the African Savannah: it is through his successful execution of the primitive and masculinist activity of the hunt that Macomber finally comes of age and attains his manhood. On realising that her husband's newly acquired individuality means that he is no longer subject to her thraldom, Mrs. Macomber kills him in a barely disguised shooting accident. Such overt acts of violence and aggression on the part of his female characters is unparalleled in Lawrence's fiction (rather such extreme and brutal acts are reserved specifically for them*); however the

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* The only possible exception is in the case of Dolly Urquart in 'The Princess', when at the close of the tale she is instrumental in the violent death of Romero. However she does not actually
persistent anxiety and fear which plague much of Hemingway's work is likewise abundantly evident in Lawrence's. What distinguishes both writers from their contemporaries (Eliot, Joyce and Pound also voiced similar anxieties) is their effort to keep alive the cherished and time-ordained masculine roles (frontiersmen, mariner and prophetic saviour for instance) that the male culture itself, for whatever reason, could no longer support. Each writer tried to re-imagine the masculine in troubled times, and lamentably concluded (in their best works) that it was an almost impossible task. Emasculation of the male, they ruefully suggest, was as inevitable as it was unavoidable, and that which is commonly credited with 'masculine' characteristics (power, warfare, uncommitted sexual expertise) were, in reality, perversions of essential masculinity borne of a (self-abstracting) culture that had indubitably contributed to the disasters each perceived to have befallen their civilisation. Ironically (considering their misogynistic reputations) both men turned to women for what the male world failed to provide them with, or insure them against; both, in differing respects, were disappointed in their misdirected expectations (femininity being in worse shape than masculinity). For Lawrence and Hemingway progress was shoot him herself; which is to say, her aggression whilst being comparable to that of Mrs. Macomber, is sublimated (the warfare, or combat zone, in Lawrentian fiction is usually restricted to psychological territory). Examples of the female characters the Lawrence either violently mutilates, or conveniently has killed off, include Jill Banford ('The Fox'), Mrs. Hepburn ('The Captain's Doll'), the Woman who rode away, Ethel Cane ('None of That'), and Granny ('The Virgin and the Gipsy').
deemed to be dependent upon a recovery of the masculine, and by extension the feminine with which true masculinity is instinct. Lawrence went in search of primitive cultures for evidence of its earlier (and continuing) existence, Hemingway (whose extremism was greater even than Lawrence's) turned to the spiritual and solitary quest of a daily reckoning with death; the form varies - the hunt, the bullfight, the frontline - but the conversation with human limitation and the unknown beyond is constant. Neither writer managed to re-create and imagine the masculine intact: Hemingway's heroes were casualties of one kind or another; Lawrence's never fully imagined a hero, rather they emerged as a succession of heroines.

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England, My England

Lawrence wrote two different versions of "England, My England"*, the first of which appeared in English Review in 1915. Not only did it cause a great deal of offence to the Meynall family (upon which the story is based) but the unpatriotic nature of the material and tone may well have contributed to the banning of The Rainbow that same year*. The second version - heavily edited, drastically revised and almost twice the length - was completed in the December of 1921 for inclusion in the collection of short stories which went by the same name. The following analysis focuses primarily on the 1922 version of the tale (unless otherwise stated) which is, in every respect, superior to its precursor.

Lawrence indentified the "years 1916 and 1917" as "the years when the old spirit died forever in England"*.

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* This first version is included as an Appendix in the Cambridge edition of England, My England and Other Stories (1990).

* The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird, ibid., pp.157-8. These two years were also the period of the worst carnage on the Western Front. In Kangaroo, when Lawrence recalls his "nightmare" experiences of the War, he likewise identifies 1915 as the year in which "the old world ended": It was in 1915 the old world ended. In the winter of 1915-1916 the spirit of the old London collapsed; the city, in some way, perished, perished from being a heart of the world, and became a vortex of broken passions, lusts, hopes, fears, and horrors. The
"England, My England" is Lawrence's most direct and specific fictional statement about the First World War*. Within the limited parameters of the short story genre he symbolically charts and registers this death, examining in the process some of the reasons for, and repercussions of, the passing of a vital English consciousness. The tale therefore is, essentially, an imaginary dissection of why a defeated England lacked the resilience and spiritual resources to come through the War years intact. Lawrence's analysis of Egbert's abiding "dilettantism"* is effectively the story of the failure of his generation, or more accurately, the failure of Egbert's particular breed of Englishness. "The story", Lawrence viewed as being, in a crucial sense, representative of his age - "the story of most men and women who are married today"*. Consequently, in the process of delineating Egbert's marital breakdown and domestic alienation, he endeavours to reveal the appalling and insidious character of the death-like disintegration so evident on the home front*; he thereby explicates and

* The 'Nightmare' chapter of Kangaroo describes Lawrence's wartime experience with more specific biographical reference and greater detail - hence as an account of England-at-war it reads more vividly and accurately than 'England, My England'. However, with the short story Lawrence is attempting to do far more than merely register his sorrow, frustration and anger at his country's public, and apparently suicidal, rush toward death. A more recent (and interesting) comparison would be Norman Mailer's Why Are We in Vietnam? (1967), where Mailer similarly endeavour's to understand his country's destructive involvement in the political nightmares of South-East Asia through the intensely private and domestic (and apparently divorced) dramas of an adolescent consciousness.

* The description is Leavis's in D.H. Lawrence; Novelist, ibid., p.277.
* Letters II, ibid., p.386.
* Graham Hough also notes that, "'England, My England' is concerned with an individual man; but also with a family, and the family as typical of a whole social world." (ibid., p.173). D. Kenneth Mackenzie, in his essay 'Ennui and Energy in 'England, My England' (collected in D.H.
makes sense of what he considered to be the precise nature of England's malaise which had engendered the widespread collapse of cultural integrity. Although the tale is an alarmingly pessimistic one, it should be noted that the frequently brutal honesty of Lawrence's relentless vision during this period was delivered in the faith that "It should do good, at the long run"*; which is to say, he considered it to be a necessary savage expose of the nation's terminal corruption in the long-term interest of regeneration and renewal.

The tale begins almost seven years into the marriage of Winifred and Egbert - during which time important changes have taken place in their relationship; changes moreover which are rooted in their fundamental spiritual and temperamental differences. During this period Egbert has become increasingly alienated from his wife and progressively more marginalised in the happenings and events of his family. How such a significant, and indeed degrading, displacement has occurred is explained retrospectively, with the story proper beginning at the point of his daughter's lamning: it is this deciding event which propels Egbert toward his ultimate subjection, and the final irreversible drift into dissolution and death.

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* Letters II, ibid., p.636.
Egbert's psycho-emotional deterioration is adumbrated in the equivocal depiction of the English landscape, whose perceived presence is felt throughout the course of the narrative. Like Egdon Heath (by which it was surely inspired) the South Downs that border the couple's cottage - "Crockham" - assert a profound and determining influence upon those who come into contact with it. Throughout the tale the abiding religio loci of the English landscape becomes, in a crucial sense, the objective correlative for the evolving psycho-social dramas that circumscribe the lives of the protagonists. The "spirit of place", it should be noted, is depicted as being deeply ambiguous, charged with a "primeval" energy that is capable of being both revitalising and enervating by turns.

Winifred and Egbert, we are told, have had a passionate and extended honyemoon, living amidst the lush pastoral setting of rural Hampshire. Cocooned at "Crockham" (the wedding gift of Winifred's father), the couple have enjoyed their romantic idyll, at one remove, "caught out of the world" and largely untroubled: "the spear of modern invention had not passed through it, and it lay there secret, primitive, savage as when the Saxons first came"*. Here they enjoy the heritage of a by-gone era, and live amidst the evocation of an earlier more vital phase of national life. Imbued with the timeless presence

of the primitive and energising setting, they thrive and
prosper, consumed and metamorphosed by their mutual
passion: "the flame of their two bodies burnt again into
that old cottage, that was haunted already by so much by­
gone, physical desire"*. This curious and vital
transformation is directly attributed to the powerfully
affecting "spirit of place"*:

There was a curious secret glow about them, a
certain slumbering flame hard to understand.
They...felt that they did not belong to the London
world any more. Crockham had changed their blood...*

Such a metamorphosis is however only temporary and, more
importantly, is dependent upon their continued isolation
from the demands of the modern world and the realities of
practical life: "neither Egbert nor she", Lawrence
explains, "yet realised the difference between work and
romance"*. As the demands of familial responsibility
begin to intrude this distinction becomes increasingly
apparent (at least to Winifred), and their hitherto
intuitive and harmonious relations with one another, and
with both the phenomenal and noumenal world, begin to
falter. No longer attuned to the earth's natural rhythms
and its preternatural promptings, Winifred begins to look

* In Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence writes:

...there is a definite vibratory rapport between a man and his surroundings. Any
particular locality, any house which has been lived in, has a vibration, a transferred
vitality of its own. This is either sympathetic or antipathetic to the succeeding
individual in varying degree...old houses are saturated with human presence, at last to a
degree of indecency, unbearable. And tradition, in its most elemental sense, means the
continuing of the same peculiar pitch of vibration. (ibid., p.132)

* Ibid., p.9.
beyond the charmed circle of their idyllic existence and questions the worth (both emotional and financial) of her husband's erstwhile bewitching insouciance. Egbert, aware of his growing marginalisation, seeks refuge in his garden (which significantly border the heath), in the vain attempt to contain (or tame) the ever-encroaching chaos of emotional/physical and private/public wilderness he and his generation are about to enter. The bitter presence of what Lawrence described as the "autumnal process" of the War - "the chaos and the orgy of ugly disintegration which is to come"* - is reflected everywhere in a landscape increasingly gripped with disintegration and death. In the 1915 version Lawrence is more specific and direct in making these connections:

As [Egbert] worked in the garden he felt the seethe of the war was with him...There, in the absolute peace of his sloping garden, hidden deep in the trees between the rolling of the heath, he was aware of the positive activity of destruction, the seethe of friction, the waves of destruction seething to meet, the armies moving forward to fight.*

In the writing of the 1922 version Lawrence's symbolic method is refined considerably, as mood, time and place are married in the complex imagery and metaphor of landscape and emotional/social disintegration. The "seethe" of "destruction" superimposed upon the landscape of the 1915 text is now translated into a chthonic energy which breeds the spiritual nullity and universal torpor that engulf individual and nation alike:

* Letters III, ibid., p.40.
The sense of frustration and futility, like some slow, torpid snake, slowly bit right through [Egbert's] heart. Futility, futility, futility: the horrible marsh-poison went through his veins and killed him... No sound, nothing but the old dark marsh-venemous atmosphere of the place.*

Egbert's extraordinary responsiveness to, and empathy with, the ancient religio loci is, as Stephen Spender observes, attributable to the fact that he "filled with the profound knowledge that he is only a shadow out of the past"*. Spender's observation also implies that contained within Egbert's "knowledge" or awareness of his own insubstantiality is the foreknowledge of his own imminent defeat and death.

* "England, My England" is effectively an analysis of the dialectics of what Lawrence identifies as two separate strains of Englishness: on the one hand there is Egbert's breed of aestheticism and innate, aristocratic insouciance, on the other there exists Godfrey Marshall's

* Ibid., p.24. In a similar way the landscape's chthonic energies are responsible for the injury sustained by Egbert and Winifred's daughter, Joyce. The difference being that, in this instance, the demonic power is manifest in the sickle that severs her ligaments - where the weapon-like aspect of the snake deftly metamorphosises itself into the concealed sickle. The snake held a profound symbolic significance for Lawrence which he considered, along with the horse, to be one of the 'lords of life' [his most extended meditation on this elusive and mythic creature occurs in his poem, "Snake"]. In Origins of the Sacred, Dudley Young elaborates on the cultural and mythic significance of the primitive dread inspired by and reserved for the snake. Young argues that for the occidental mind the snake is traditionally regarded as an unlawful enemy, associated with the earth, with hiddeness, with knowledge, with eros, and with lethal violence. He reveals to us heretofore hidden energies, unsuspected powers (the knowledge that we are both good and evil)...[and that] we must seek ourselves for the knowledge of how to control these energies. (ibid., p.122)

* Love-Hate Relations, ibid., p.186.
patriarchal authority, and enduring sense of duty and responsibility. Weldon Thornton, in an essay entitled "The Flower of the Fruit": A Reading of 'England, My England', helpfully identifies these two life-modes as the "aesthetic" and "pragmatic", respectively*. Lawrence, contrary to expectation, attaches no particular qualitative judgement to either of these national types, emphasising that, "[d]ifferent as the two men were, they were two real Englishmen, and their instincts were almost the same"*. Rather, what he appears to advocate is the necessity for some kind of co-existence and balance between the two strains, so that they may prove to be mutually enlivening and fecundating*. What "England, My England" dramatises therefore is the failure to achieve a mutually enlivening balance between the two manifestations of the English consciousness; instead Lawrence demonstrates the ascendency of the pragmatic life-mode at the expense of the aesthetic, and reveals

* Thornton goes on to suggest that, as the tale unfolds,

...the balance between these two modes is lost, and the aesthetic mode, embodied in Egbert, collapses... Egbert's mode loses out not because of an inherent lack of virtue or power; rather, it fails because it begins to accept the pragmatist's (its necessary opponent's) estimate of its own lack of worth and, thus undermined, loses faith in itself. The result is Egbert's decline from joy and insouciance to irresponsibility, to self-denigration, and finally to despair and self-destruction. (D.H. Lawrence Review, Volume 16, no. 3, Fall (1983), p.249.)

I would disagree with the assumption that Egbert's aestheticism necessarily fails on account of its own diffidence. Such a conclusion is necessarily limited by its failure to take into consideration the emotional, cultural and historical forces ranged against it.

* England, My England and Other Stories, ibid., p.28. Weldon Thornton accurately notes that this authorial interjection, is at odds with the story's "negative" tone, which in fact adopts the perspective of the prevailing cultural attitude to what it considers to be Egbert's overly prolonged dalliance ("The Flower or the Fruit": a Reading of D.H. Lawrence's 'England, My England', ibid., pp.247-58.)

* This sought for balance created out of 'strife' or opposition is, of course, the triadic system at the heart of Lawrence's "philosophy", which was outlined earlier.
the hidden nature and cost of the psychic and social disintegration that ensues.

The crux of the tale rests upon the increasingly inadequacy of Egbert's "aesthetic" English consciousness in a changing cultural climate. In both the public and private sphere, Egbert is seen to condemn himself by way of his own insubstantiality, his inability to ground himself: "he was a born amateur", who for want of being "brought up to come to terms with anything", inevitably "stood for nothing"*. Naturally, this "delightful and spontaneous passion" is also the initial source of his great charm, the very thing the Marshalls are so taken with (i.e., intend to purchase). Winifred's father - the wealthy industrialist - is willing to finance their "living romance" for the sake of Egbert's aristocratic and enlivening pedigree*: Egbert we are told is "a born rose" - the product of "age-long breeding" - and is looked upon as a "higher being". In contrast, the Marshalls are distinguished by their "hawthorn robustness" and "tough, rough fibre": they are essentially hybrid stock, rooted in and issuing "out of the old England". Despite their acquired fortune and refinement they retain a certain "ruddy" vulgarity which is, of course, the source of the enduring strength and adaptability:

* At first, his investment appears to be worthwhile with the birth of the first grandchild: "It was the first exquisite blonde thing that had come into the family...a wild little daisy-spirit" (ibid., p.10). Doubts eventually surface however when Egbert, "as the years went by...instead of coming to terms with life, he relaxed more" (ibid., p.12).
[The Marshalls were a] stong-limbed, thick blooded people, true English, as holly-trees and hawthorn are English. Their culture was grafted on to them, as one might perhaps graft a common pink rose on to a hawthorn stem. It flowered oddly enough, but it did not alter their blood.*

In vivid contrast to the Marshalls' rootedness, Egbert's life consists of a series of free-floating abstractions. In defence of his own "liberty" he consistently refuses to compromise his integrity by giving "himself to the world", least of all the capitalist and salaried environment of his father-in-law. Instead he lives on carefree at Crockham - his "epicurean" hermitage - steadfastly refusing to assume responsibility for himself or his family and indulging his love of antiquitarian pastimes:

[Egbert] loved the past, the old music and dances and customs of old England. He would try and live in the spirit of these, not in the spirit of the world of business.*

It is the advent of the First World War which brings into stark contrast these two apparently disparate polarities*. Godfrey Marshall's "tough old barbarian fighting spirit", "quick" as it is "with the instinct of power", recognises the choices on offer in a rapidly

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* Ibid., p.10.
* Again the instinctual reaction of both Godfrey and Egbert to the War is not so very far apart: "What Egbert felt subtly and without question, his father-in-law felt also, in a rough, more combative way" (Ibid., p.28). Lawrence explains that the real dilemma posed by the War is whether "a man should become inferior to his own true knowledge and self, just because the mob expects it of him?" (Ibid.). Egbert and his father-in-law's varying response to this question, is the real source of their difference: Egbert counters it with indifference, Godrey chooses to evolve as the circumstances demand.
evolving political climate as being that between "militarism and industrialism"; as the position of least compromise (and, not so incidentally, the most advantageous to himself), he opts for the latter, firmly grounding himself in the new, emerging reality of "the English non-military idea of liberty and the "conquests of peace""*. For Egbert the enforced engagement with reality is more problematic:

Egbert just refused to reckon with the world. He just refused to even decide between militarism and industrialism. He chose neither.*

Naturally, Egbert refuses to be railroaded into the war effort by the politics of nationalism, instinctively disregarding what he considers to be the "mob-spirit" of patriotic propaganda:

He had not the faintest desire to overcome any foreigners or to help in their death. He had no conception of Imperial England, and Rule Brittania was just a joke to him. He was a pure-blooded Englishman, perfect in his race, and when he was truly himself he could no more have been aggressive on the score of his Englishness than a rose can be aggressive on the score of its rosiness.*

Lawrence attributes Egbert's eventual conscription into the general ideology of the War to the failure of his essentially antiquitarian aestheticism; an aestheticism, moreover, that he deems to be rooted in a rapidly vanishing and increasingly untenable past. Such "pure-

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* England, My England and Other Stories, ibid., p.28.
* Ibid.
* Ibid., p.27.
bred" Englishness having entered, via aestheticism, a phase of unconnected negation, is revealed to be impotent to refuse or oppose the War. Lawrence effectively demonstrates how Egbert is consigned to death from the outset; he is, after all, a dying breed and considered by his family to be an expensive, and latterly expendable, anachronism (an Englishness that is of nostalgic memory). Because he is unable to evolve or adapt (which, the tale suggests, would be a betrayal of his personal integrity) Egbert inevitably becomes a casualty in the unrelenting advancement of a modern civilisation which refuses to be informed or enlivened by a rapidly redundant past.

In the private or domestic realm, it is the advent of their first child which precipitates the slow deterioration of the couple's marriage, and breaks the erstwhile spell of their self-enclosed idyll. Once again we see the repercussive effects of Egbert's insubstantiality as Winifred, confused by his lack of rootedness and solidity, slowly begins to turn back toward her older, more enduring touchstones: namely her father and her religion. Thus her conception of her holy family consists not of herself, her husband and child, but rather,

Her child seemed to link her up again in a circuit with her own family. Her father and mother, herself and her child, that was the human trinity for her. Her husband...she loved him still. But that was like
play. She had an almost barbaric sense of duty and family.*

Egbert's failure - his besetting sin - is identified as his inability to oust his father-in-law from the prime position he holds in his wife's affection and esteem. Winifred, grounded in her pragmatic heritage, is unaccustomed to her husband's immateriality: where she requires and expects power and presence, she encounters "the living negative of power":

[Egbert] did not stand firm in the landscape of her life like a tower of strength, like a great pillar of significance.*

In vivid contrast, she perceives Godrey Marshall's patriarchal authority as "the pillar, the source of life, the everlasting support" and in all "serious matters" of "difficulty or doubt", she bypasses her husband ("it never occurred to her to refer to Egbert") and goes straight to her father. The emotional nexus of husband and wife - their "dynamic dualism"* - is seriously

* Ibid., p.11
* Ibid., p.12.
* For Lawrence, creative human communion - a fruitful life - was dependant on a fructifying marriage of opposites, what he termed a 'dynamic dualism'. His theories are directly articulated in Fantasia of the Unconscious. In brief, Lawrence considered it imperative that the integrity and wholeness of the "blood" identities (an appropriate balance of true masculinity, true femininity) were maintained on a level of "blood sympathy": it is at this unconscious and instinctual level where the reviving communion between the sexes takes place:

[Sex]...is the precise parallel of what happens in a thunder-storm, when the dynamic forces of the moon and the sun come into collusion. The result is three-fold: first, the electric flash, then the birth of pure water, new water.

So it is in the sex relation. There is a threefold result. First, the flash of pure sensation and of real electricity. Then there is the birth of an entirely new state of blood in each partner. And then there is liberation.

But the main thing, as in the thunder-storm, is the absolute renewal of the...blood...And in this renewal lies the great magic of sex. (ibid., pp.187-88)
impaired at the outset. Egbert suffers the immediate diminishment of emotional subjugation; overlooked and considered unworthy of serious consideration he is relegated to the peripheral position of "an adjunct", "an accessory"; "he was almost the unnecessary part in the affair".

Understanding Winifred's relationship with her father is crucial here. Although Godfrey Marshall's paternalism is described with a Dickensian benignity ("there was a touch of Christmas about him"), there is an altogether more formidable and incontestable, and above all masculine, strength behind it ("a certain primitive dominion"). His abiding "power", Lawrence explains, derives from "the old dark magic of parental authority, something looming and unquestioned and after all divine":

Here was a man who had kept alive the old red flame of fatherhood, fatherhood that had even the right to sacrifice the child to God, like Isaac. Fatherhood that had life-and-death authority over the children: a great natural power. And till his children could be brought under some other great authority as girls; or could arrive at manhood and become themselves centres of the same power, continuing the same male mystery as men...*

If this delicately balanced "sex connection" is broken the fecundity of the human equation is shattered: the sexes fall into disunity, and their coupling amounts to a mental stimulation which results in nervous exhaustion.

We have made love and sex a matter of seeing and hearing and of day conscious manipulation. We have made men and women come together on grounds of superficial likeness, of commonality - their mental and upper sympathetic consciousness. And so we have forced the blood into submission. Which means we force it into disintegration. (ibid., p.175.)

Lawrence's creed of physical rejuvenation of the body (politic) centred on the belief that only when the "blood" identities were recovered and adhered to could sexual consummation begin, once again, to engender an imaginable future.

* England, My England and Other Stories, ibid., p.16.
An awareness of such a mystical presence has circumscribed Winifred's life - and formed the bed-rock of her existence - until she discovered her overwhelming passion for her husband. In good faith, she had transferred her loyalty, affection and allegiance from father to husband, only to discover that far from offering her the enlivening "blood-authority" of "true male strength" Egbert's "power" is largely cerebral, amounting to "the abnegation of power". This destabilising unreality Winifred (not unjustifiably the tale suggests) considers to be a betrayal of their marriage-bed passion. It breeds in her a terrible resentment and a lifetime's unfulfilled longing, for which of course she (unconsciously or otherwise) desires to exact some kind of revenge. She responds by hardening her "will" toward Egbert, and determines to sublimate her own longing and frustration into a "profound sense of duty" toward her children. Her role as Mother now supercedes her role as Wife and their marriage degenerates into a war of attrition: "it was a battle between them, the battle between liberty and the old blood-power".

Winifred reverts to the Catholicism of her girlhood electing the role of "the Mater Dolorosa" by which to live. This serves a dual purpose in that it assuages her own guilt (for having loved and failed), and enables her

*Ibid., p.17.*
to legitimately sanction the death of her marriage (for which she becomes the living effigy), thereby achieving the spiritual divorce she seeks:

She was purely the Mater Dolorosa. To the man she was closed as a tomb...the tomb of his manhood and his fatherhood.*

Egbert, to the best of his ability, resists the tortuous process of his gradual emasculuation and dispossession ("Egbert now had no real home"), but unmanned and unfathered as he is, he has no choice by to submit to his domestic and social subjugation: it comes as no surprise therefore when at his wife and father-in-law's behest he enlists. At this point their marriage reaches its absolute nadir, as the extent of Winifred's willful abnegation of their love becomes apparent. Having substituted a living "passion" with her sense of "duty" she must now effectively prostitute herself to her own idealism*:

Winifred now had a new duty towards [Egbert]: the duty of a wife towards a husband who is himself performing his duty towards the world...she waited for him in a little passion of duty and sacrifice, willing to serve the soldier, if not the man.*

Unsurprisingly, Egbert finds the whole mechanical submission to her touch unspeakably contaminating - an irrevocable betrayal and his final "degradation" - and he

* Ibid., p.23.
* The whole concept of idealised 'love', which Lawrence so abhorred, is viciously satirised in Mr Noon.
willingly relinquishes himself to the suicidal impulse that Lawrence believed lay at the heart of the war effort. Egbert's formidable powers of negation come to final fruition on the battlefields of France where, rather than redeeming his masculinity through the heroism and nobility of warfare, his defining "nullity" finds its own consolation in the black amnesia of self-annihilation:

Better the agony of dissolution ahead than the nausea of the effort backwards. Better the terrible work should go forward, the dissolving into the black sea of death, in the extremity of dissolution, than that there should be any reaching back towards life. To forget! To forget! Utterly, utterly to forget, in the great forgetting of death. To break the core and the unit of life, and to lapse out on the great darkness. Only that. To break the clue, and mingle and commingle with the one darkness, without afterwards or forwards. Let the black sea of death itself solve the problem of futurity. Let the will of man break and give up.*

Lawrence allows no room for either sentimentality of false pity here: Egbert goes to his death because he has not the courage nor resources to live and combat his own self-effacement.*.

* Ibid., p.33.
* In a letter to Robert Nichols, written in 1915, Lawrence explains that one of the repercussions effects of the War is that the,

...Courage of death is no courage any more: the courage to die has become a vice. Show me the courage to live, to live in spirit with the proud, serene angels. (Letters II, ibid., p.443)

In a similar vein, Lawrence's essay "On Being a Man" (Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays, ibid., pp.213-222) registers the personal and emotional devastation inflicted by the War in the space of a sentence: "Many men went out and faced the fight. Not a man dared face his own self afterward." (ibid., p.213)
Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of "England, My England" is that the depressing scenario of familial and cultural breakdown neither begins nor ends with one generation. Egbert who lacks the inclination and resources to rescue Winifred from her Oedipal entrapment pays for his failure with his marriage and masculinity; the ambiguous legacy of "love" that Godfrey Marshall bequeathes his daughter, is therefore passed on (in perverted form) to his granddaughters. This process is manifest in the figure of Joyce - symbol the marriage at its best, and latterly (after her physical maiming) at its worst.

As the couple's marriage deteriorates the issue of the children becomes the focus of their battles. Egbert's subversive resistance to his wife's "Catholic blood-authority" involves the silent stealing of his daughters' "emotion and spirit" (without assuming responsibility for them) and leaving Winifred the "thankless task" of commanding their "behaviour". That the daughters "adore" their father is beyond doubt; in particular there exists a marked affinity between Egbert and his eldest daughter:

There was a tacit understanding between him and his little girl: not what we would call love, but a weapon-like kinship.*

She acknowledged the effort made [by her mother] on her behalf. But her flamy reckless spirit was her father's. It was he who had all the glamour for her. He and she were like members of some forbidden

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* England, My England and Other Stories, ibid., p.25.
secret society who know one another but may not recognize one another.*

Such a clandestine "kinship", Lawrence warns, augurs ill for the girls' future happiness; for the daughters in adoring their unmanned father have no inkling of "the empty bitterness they were preparing for themselves when they too grew up to have husbands: husbands such as Egbert, adorable and null"*. Joyce's rage and aggression (albeit subliminal) which she, in part, inherits from her mother, is already perceptible in her "weapon-like" disposition and "menad temper". The implication here is that the revenge she will exact on her menfolk will be even more extreme than Winifred's*. As the language with which Joyce is described suggests she already bears a concealed "weapon" about her person (the stories prevailing symbolism points toward a sickle) with which to perform her later castrations.

What Lawrence effectively reveals and delineates in this story is a self-perpetuating cycle of corruption that cuts all ways; one which would, unless broken, continue to affect generation after generation. In *Kangaroo*, he writes that the "family is our social bedrock and our limit"; which is to say, it provides both the foundation for our being and the boundary of our social development; and, as such, Lawrence believed it to be the most

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* Ibid., p.17.
* In essence, Joyce is an embryonic version of the revenging female - Dollie Urquhart - of "The Princess" (to be discussed later).
reliable barometer of the sociological climate. Thus, in order to address England's crisis successfully, society must attend to its most basic problems which originate in the nursery-bed of the family romance. In his essay "On Being a Man", he asserts that "Marriage is the great puzzle of our day. It is our sphinx-riddle. Solve it, or be torn to bits, is the decree":

Solve the puzzle. The quickest way is for the wife to smother the serpent-advised Eve which is in her, and for the man to talk himself out of his old arrogant Adam. Then they make a fair and above-board combination, call a successful marriage.

But Nemesis is on our track. The husband forfeits his arrogance, the wife has her children and her way to herself. But lo, the son of one woman is the husband to the woman of the next generation! And oh women, beware the mother's boy! Or else the wife forfeits the old serpent-advised Eve from her nature, and becomes the instrument of man. And, oh young husband of the next generation, prepare for the daughter's revenge. 

"On Being a Man" should be read as an epilogue to "England, My England", providing, as it does, a dazzling analysis of the failure of England's masculinity (and the consequent cultural breakdown) both during and immediately after the First World War. Lawrence argues in this essay that the attainment of true masculinity is attendant upon a re-cognition and loyalty toward "the old red-earth Adam", the "unknown bodily self" which is, essentially, an unconscious awareness that he locates below or beyond "the self-conscious ego". The failure of England's manhood is attributed to the inability of the

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* Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays, ibid., p.216.
* Ibid., p.216.
nation's menfolk to realise anything other than their own "idea of themselves" (i.e., their fatal insubstantiality). "To be a man!", exclaims Lawrence, is to "risk your body and your blood first, and then to risk your mind"; in so doing the "self" (for which we many read manhood) is restored, vindicated and fecundated, becoming "once more a self you could never have known or expected". This old hunter/warrior mentality has been usurped and the true male has been replaced by "a mere personality": "Today men don't risk their blood and bone. They go forth, panoplied in their own idea of themselves."* "Their unknown bodily self", Lawrence explains,

...is never for one moment unsheathed...And the dark self in the mysterious labyrinth of the body is cased in a tight armour of cowardly repression"*

The net result is a profoundly de-stabilising self-doubt and disillusionment, as each man betrays his own manhood in the name of a self-elected idealism:

If a man goes out to fight as a man, to fight, he may be beaten, but he cannot be disillusioned. There is no illusion to start with. These men went out in the illusion that their own self-conscious ego was their own manhood. They were disillusioned. But the turned the blame on democracy and other abstractions. They refused to realise the actuality. As men, as responsible, sincerely-conscious men they never fought. As heroic automata, as servants of their country, as heroes and saviours the fronted the guns. But as men, isolated men, they never faced the strange war-passions that came up in themselves. As thought-adventurers, they never for one moment faced the issues of the war inwardly. They were all

* Ibid., p.218.
of them popular darlings, so they just sweltered in horrors and popularity, without ever taking the last manly adventure of realisation.*

Whilst the men were failing to fight and reneging on their manhood the women, in contrast, fought a different battle, one which involved the aggressive assertion of their femininity. It was a bitter fight for their own emancipation from their faltering male counterparts (and the dictates of a mainly masculine culture that had been erected around them*). The combat zone, as we have seen, was (to them) the more familiar territory of private and domestic realm, and Lawrence believed their ascendency to be uncontested and complete. In his essay "The Real Thing" he writes:

Perhaps the greatest revolution of modern times is the emancipation of women; and perhaps the deepest fight for two thousand years and more has been the fight for women's independence, or freedom, call it what you will. The fight was deeply bitter, and, it seems to me, it is won. It is even going beyond, and becoming a tyranny of woman, of the individual woman in the house, and of the feminine ideas and ideals in the world. Say what we will, the world is swayed by feminine emotion today, and the triumph of the productive and domestic activities of man over all his previous adventurous or flaunting activities is a triumph of the woman in the home...But inwardly, what has happened? It cannot be denied that there has been a fight. Woman has not won her freedom without fighting for it; and she still fights, fights hard, even when there is no longer any need. For man has fallen. It would be difficult to point to a man in the world today who is not subservient to the great woman-spirit that sways modern mankind.*

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* The "skies" of Western culture, Lawrence wrote in his poem "Don't Look at Me", "are established on the many pillars of the phallus" (The Complete Poems, ibid., p.541).
* Phoenix, ibid., p.196.
To this "revolution" Lawrence attributed what he considered to be a reversal in the traditional male/female balance, both within and between the sexes. The end result was what he identified as an emergent breed of "hensure men" and "cocksure women"* who are busy "out-manning the man" in the world of human affairs. This imbalance in the gender relations - and the fundamental disconnection from the true self that arises as a result - Lawrence blamed for the increasing tendency toward bodily abstraction, and the overwhelming sense of deathly inertia and "Nothingness" that was swamping European society during this period. He wrote extensively and prolifically on this subject - in essays, fictional work and letters - throughout the remainder of his life; the animating impulse which prompted work after work being the necessary re-establishment of some sort of meaningful and fecundating contact between the sexes, that would stay the overwhelming and de-humanising advancement of a technological society. Lawrence's most telling thoughts on what he considered the general derangement of gender/sexual breakdown can be summarised in the following (remarkable) lines from the poem "Don't Look At Me"; these line also serve as a fitting conclusion and epilogue to the preceding discussion of "England, My England":

The son of man goes forth to war
no more, he sends his daughter
collecting foreskins.*

Aftermath: "The Fox" and "The Ladybird"

In response to the dispiriting conclusion he had reached in "England, My England" Lawrence - between the years 1916 and 1920 - formulated a new and revolutionary understanding of the male and female relationship. Although anxiety concerning the dangers of female arrogance and aggressive dominance is still present (it actually becomes an abiding feature for the remainder of his career), feminine forcefulness begins to be countered by methods other than male collapse. Thus there is an increased tendency for the works to conclude not with male subjugation or defeat, but with the woman learning the folly her erstwhile assertive independance, renouncing her will-to-exertion, and quietly acquiescing in her new-found submission and, ideally, fulfilment. The man no longer negotiates or argues his position, but silently and recklessly (occasionally ruthlessly) establishes what he considers to be his male right of ascendency or dominance*. What emerges in Lawrence's fiction at this time is effectively a new kind of masculine affirmation (or even supremacy), and a corresponding assertion of the appropriateness of a female submissiveness and acceptance*.  

* Concurrent with this thematic development is the increased tendency for the fictional works to become more polemical or doctrinal. Whereas the earlier novels had been exploratory and painstaking in their effort to understand and arrive at the possibilities and problems endemic in the relationships between the sexes (both men and women, and men and men), the new fiction is occasionally brash and hurried, the urgency of the message dictating the speed at which such fictions were produced. The problems and intricacies of the relationships in the earlier work are now outlined or resolved relatively speedily, with the drama residing in the narrative rather than descriptive nuance.  

* In a letter of 1918 to Katherine Mansfield, he writes:
The two short fictions which best explore Lawrence's re-imagining of the male-female dialectic are "The Fox" and "The Ladybird". Both tales are set in the bleak, wintry landscape of a post-war England* and were written in the hope that they would facilitate the envisaged "new shoots" of life that Lawrence believed the nation so desperately required at this time. Faith in the possibility of discovering any form of redemptive life in England is however limited in both these texts; the inference being that in order to escape the stifling claustrophobia of an increasingly narrow-minded environment, departure is necessary*. In both works this disaffection is articulated via his male protagonists: in "The Fox", Henry Grenfel perceives a certain limitation and confinement in the landscape:

And suddenly, it seemed to him England was little and tight, he felt the landscape was constricted even in the dark, and that there were too many dogs in the night, making a noise like a fence of sound, like the network of English hedges netting in the view.*

And in "The Ladybird" Count Dionys similarly comments on the imprisoning effect of England's countryside:

I do think a woman must yield some sort of precedence to a man, and he must take this precedence. I do think men must go ahead absolutely in front of their women, without turning round to ask for permission or approval from their women. Consequently the women must follow as it were unquestioning. I can't help it, I believe this. Frieda doesn't. Hence our fight. (Letters III, ibid., p.302)

* Although both novellas actually pass through spring and summer, the abiding mood is autumnal.
* "The Fox" ends with the couple about to leave England for Canada, and "The Ladybird" sees Daphne and the Count preparing themselves for the radical 'departure' an 'afterlife', where they can finally achieve the union they desire.
"Ah England! Little houses like little boxes, each with its domestic Englishman and his domestic wife, each ruling the world because all are alike, so alike--"
"But England isn't all houses."
"Fields then! Little fields with innumerable hedges. Like a net with an irregular mesh, pinned down over this island, and everything under the net."

This sense of geographical or spatial limitation is mirrored in the emotional delineation and development of the characters portrayed in both works; the texts are characterised, therefore, by an unusual sense of interiority, as the narrative action focuses upon the evolving psychological dramas (there is no story as such) and the final attempt at satisfactory resolution.

Part of Lawrence's imaginative method in these tales involves a move away from the dictates of civilised convention - with its restrictive "network" of "hedges" - toward an engagement with a more primitive and mysterious and life-orienting energy. "The Fox" and "The Ladybird" are stories which simultaneously seek to re-define the basis of the modern marriage, and to articulate the imagined triumph of the instinctual life (borne of the body) over a negative or conditioned life-mode (intellectual in origin) that had prevailed during the war years. Both novellas have, as their basic paradigmatic form, a triangular relationship which encompasses these polarities, with a third protagonist poised (and wavering) between the two. Thus in "The Fox"

* Ibid., p.176.
we see these opposing life-modes represented by the characters of Henry Grenfel and Jill Banford respectively, with Nellie March being the character who hovers between a death-in-life (with Banford) and a life-new-found (with Henry Grenfel). In "The Ladybird" the mythic intent is altogether more sophisticated and self-conscious*, with the polarities being personified by the dark mysterious figure of the Count Dionys and the daylight figure of Basil, and Lady Daphne is caught between the two, married to Basil and mated to the Count. Sandra Gilbert in her essay on "The Ladybird" summarises this three-way dynamic as follows:

...the shadowy coupling of Daphne and Dionys suggests the mystic marriage of Pluto and Persephone, while the tense friendship of Basil and Dionys functions as a neo-Nietzschean comment on the Apollonian and Dionysian modes of being that the two men incarnate."

With the triadic structure being completed by the potent presence of Lady Daphne "to close the circuit".

"The Fox" depicts the break-up of a quasi-Lesbian* relationship between two "landgirls" - Jill Banford and

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* *Potent Griselda: 'The Ladybird' and the Great Mother", ibid., p.144.
* My description is not without precedent: Julian Moyahan in The Deed of Life: The Novels and Tales of D.H. Lawrence describes their lifestyle as 'a travesty of marriage', a 'fertile and unproductive friendship' which forms 'a metaphor of the condition of death-in-life', ibid., p.197.
* For a full discussion of the supposed homosexual nature of March and Banford's relationship see Edmond Bergler's essay 'D.H. Lawrence's The Fox and the Psychoanalytic theory on Lesbianism' in A D.H. Lawrence Miscellany, ibid., pp.49-55; and Claude Sinzelle' essay 'Skinning the Fox: a
Nellie March - as a direct result of the arrival of a young returning soldier, Henry Grenfel. By the story's own terms of definition, the women's relationship is considered a perversion of the natural order, an exemplar of a decadent and barren modernity. This derangement is reflected in the ironic anti-pastoral of Bailey Farm, where the chickens do not lay, the heifer "refused absolutely" to be coralled and the Berkshire landscape is uniformly "black" and wintry. Grenfel's constant equation (and later conflation) with the fox - who harries their farm - suggests that he is similarly an ambivalent agent of Nature's destructive power, the upsurge of a wild and apocalyptic energy that is necessary to overturn the prevailing sterility of a waste land mentality. Like Crockam cottage in "England, My England", Bailey Farm is situated at the edge of the wilderness, isolated and at one remove from the wider influences of the contemporary world; consequently it becomes increasingly prone to the dæmonic energies of the indigenous religio loci. As the novella progresses the disparity between the conventional and thwarted existence of the farm's interior world and the chthonic forces of the surrounding wilderness become more pronounced. Correspondingly, Grenfel assumes more of the fox's characteristics and, as hunter/warrior, he is increasingly seen to be an agent of the woodland's emanating instinctual life.

The story climaxes with the violent scene in which a felled tree kills Grenfel's rival, Banford, outright. Although astonishingly brutal, the scene is presented in such a way as to imply that only through occasional death can life flourish and escape repression. In an inversion of the normal moral code - which ordinarily condemns murder - the tale celebrates it as a triumph of the instinctual life over a deathly and redundant mode of existence. In addition, by making a tree the instrument of Banford's death, Lawrence infers that it is, specifically, the woodland's latent violence that erupts to overwhelm and destroy a redundant and negative life-mode. Thus, having eliminated the opposition, Grenfel and March's relationship can develop unimpeded by Banford's nagging ventriloquism and mean-spirited manipulation.

Their initial attraction for each other is based upon an instinctual understanding (one which persists despite March's rationalisations), and goes beyond commonplace or superficial notions of character and personality, to achieve a deeper more vital connection. Grenfel, for example, pursues his "love" with the same animalistic instinct and savage urgency as the fox pursues his quarry in the hen-house: which is to say, the impulse to action emanates from a depth of being that is ordinarily considered inhuman*. The novella chronicles the gradual emergence of a "new connection" which is based upon a

* This unconscious region of the human psyche is what Lawrence identified as the dark "unknown"; a region of elemental chaos where our primitive apprehension of religious awareness originates.
deeper instinctual knowledge of the other, which bypasses conscious awareness ("the old way of love") to penetrate the deepest levels of the unconscious being. By the close, however, March and Grenfel's marriage, although based on such an understanding, struggles to embody this living awareness. March cannot relinquish her accustomed wilful independence and submit wholly to the unconscious acquiescence that Grenfel demands of her:

He wanted a new connection. He wanted her to give herself without defences, to sink and become submerged in him. And she - she wanted to sit still, like a woman on the last milestone and watch. She wanted to see, to know, to understand.*

If she was in love, she ought to exert herself, in some way, loving...But she knew that in fact she must no more exert herself in love. He would not have the love which exerted itself toward him. It made his brow go black...No, she had to be passive, to acquiesce, and to be submerged under the surface of love.*

Part of the novella's enduring strength and realism can be attributed to its open-ended and ambiguous conclusion. Unlike later works, Lawrence doesn't force the tale's resolution to comply with his doctrinal schema of cultural regeneration and renewal, but is content to leave the couple in a state of abeyance.

In "The Ladybird" Lawrence explores the nature of this "new connection" in greater depth and more formulaic detail. Here the polarities between the dark mysterious

* Ibid., p.67.
potencies of an intuitive phallic energy, and the "white" cerebral consciousness are distinctly presented in the figures of Major Basil Apsley and Count Dionys Psanek. Both men have fought in the War and, by their own admission, have "lost" their "manhood" on the battlefields of Europe*: how they deal with this loss highlights their fundamental difference. Basil effectively renounces his body and retreats into the mind-ordained realm of "mechanical action"*. Relations with his wife degenerate, and he proceeds to annihilate her with the "white", idealising, worshipful "love" endemic in a "mind-mischievous age"*. The Count, in contrast, is a votary of what Lawrence refers to as "blood-knowledge" - the intuitive and unconscious awareness that originates in the body not the mind. His rehabilitation in hospital is understood to be a painful growth toward, and recovery of, life. As such, it forms an emotional, spiritual and bodily resurrection - one that involves an apprehension of the dark and mysterious indwelling godhead which, in turn, enables him to

* The Count confesses: 'I feel I have lost my manhood for the time being. The continual explosion of guns and shells! It seems to have driven my soul out of me like a bird frightened away at last' (ibid., p.171). Basil, though not so candid, admits - 'something of me died in the war' (ibid., p.220).

* Basil's concluding remarks are indeed telling: 'I only ask of life', he says to the Count, 'to spare me from further effort of action of any sort - even love. And then to fulfil myself, brooding through eternity.' (Ibid., p.221). He is, of course, the precursor of the deracinated intellectual, Clifford Chatterley.

* The phrase is taken from Lawrence's poem "Chastity" (The Complete Poems, ibid., p.469) where he voices his abhorrence for the modern understanding of 'love':

O leave me clean from mental fingering
from the cold copulation of the will,
from all the white self-conscious lechery
the modern mind call love!
correspond and connect with the vital life without*.
Significantly, this godhead is identified as masculine -
"he is a man's God" - "The blessed God of
destruction...The God of anger, who throws down the
steeples and the factory chimneys"*. The Count's "god" is
a supremicist deity of power, whose destructive
capacities are deemed to be creative in that, when
realised, they will be capable of ushering in a new era
to replace the old. His visionary and "aristocratic
scheme for the future" consist of a natural order of
elect beings who will emerge "to take the sacred
responsibility of power"*, and lead mankind toward new
awareness and fulfilment.

Lady Daphne, although she has litte patience with the
Count (and her husband's) "combustion of words", is
nevertheless mesmerised by the Count's charismatic
presence and natural vitality. She is drawn instinctively
by the supernatural promptings of his midnight serenade
which, like the mysterious singing of March's fox,
promises to satisfy her unspecified yearnings. What he
offers her is relief from her "neurotic" modern woman's
brain - the "fretful self-consciousness" to which she
feels inescapably "nailed" - in return for her
unconscious submission. The Count's Dionysian power comes
into its own in the depth of night, and it is to this

* Lawrence's abiding resurrection motif is at once a source of his fictional characterisation and
of his vision of cultural well-being. For further discussion see James C. Cowan's essay "D.H.
dark energy that she relinquishes herself (and indeed pays homage), as they perform the strange ritual of their night-time communion: "Darkness answering to darkness, and deep answering to deep"*. Loyalty to the Count now supersedes her loyalty to her husband (or marriage vows):

It was to the Count she belonged. This had decided itself in her down to the depths of her soul. If she could not marry him and be his wife in the world, it had nevertheless happen to her forever. She could no more question it. Question had gone out of her.*

Thus Daphne acquiesces to the Count in the very way that Grenfel had desired of March: an unquestioning willingness to submit wholly and irrevocably. To Daphne the Count is now looked upon as "infallible":

And when she went to him as his lover, his wife, it was always dark. She only knew his voice and his contact in darkness. "My wife in darkness," he said to her. And in this too she believed him. She would not have contradicted him, no, not for anything on earth: lest, contradicting him she should lose the dark treasure of stillness...*

The "dark treasure" she discovers is that is born of the "new" and fecundating "connection" with her mystic lover:

...she had suddenly collapsed from her old self, into this darkness, this peace, this quiescence that was like a full dark river flowing eternally in her soul. She had gone to sleep from the nuit blanche of her days.*

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† Ibid., p. 219.
‡ Ibid.
§ Ibid.
What Lawrence seems to be suggesting in these two novellas is some sort of necessity for a subversion of the whole idea of female emancipation, and the corresponding assertion of a male supremacy and power. It appears to reverse the vision explored in earlier works: The Rainbow and Women in Love, for example, assert that human creativity and growth depends on the essential marriage of complementary opposites within each individual - in "star-equilibrium"*; an evolutionary balance that can accommodate both separate individuality and committed relationship. Equally, in both works male or female domination had been exposed (especially in the near-death of Gudrun and the death of Gerald) as appallingly destructive, detrimental to both the other and the self*. And yet, this is the very thing he appears to be promulgating in both "The Fox" and "The Ladybird". Even if we acknowledge that this re-definition of the male female dialectic was in response to, what Lawrence perceived as, the failure of England's defining consciousness, and we allow that it was offered in the spirit of cultural renewal, there is a considerable falling off in human terms. Where, in "England, My England" the sympathy and understanding of the complex and differing perspectives of the protagonists was delicately delineated, with no apportioning of blame, in

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"The Fox" there is an inescapable awareness that the characters are manipulated, in tandem with the readers response. What is vaguely disturbing in the conclusion of "The Fox" borders on being offensive in "The Ladybird", as March's inarticulate reluctance gives way to Lady Daphne's demeaning passivity. However, perhaps the most alarming, and indeed contradictory, development in these tales is that faith in a marriage based on this "new connection" falters in "The Fox", and appears to be non-existent in "The Ladybird", which chooses rather to promote the benefits of a mystical relationship that will come to full fruition only in an after-life.

It wasn't until a few years before his death, and in another country, that Lawrence would re-address and resolve some of these outstanding difficulties, when he put forward his gospel of sexual and cultural regeneration in the Lady Chatterley sequence. In the meantime the so-called "leadership novels" began: a series of works - including Aaron's Rod, Kangeroo and The Plumed Serpent - where he explores the possibility of a political and sexual revolution based upon male power and female submission. The main pre-occupations therefore are concerned with the world of men, the importance of man's work and collective male action, or authority and obedience. The most significant, in this respect, is Aaron's Rod which clears the way for men doing without women altogether; it is the novel which presages a movement away from sex and women ("the old way of love")
that is conclusive. Lawrence burdens himself with the task of detailing precisely why Aaron makes this monkish renunciation*: the resultant novel is intensely misogynistic. Aaron's Rod marks the end of a fifteen year period of writing novels about sexual experience. In the spring of 1922 Lawrence set out on his restless wandering; coincidentally, or otherwise, this move prompted a different fiction in which man's most significant experiences were not sexual, but religious. Christianity and democracy are continually exposed as exhausted and redundant; the disintegration of civilisation based on them being repeatedly and conclusively revealed.

The works that followed, particularly the American fiction*, all converge (in differing ways) on a primitivism that Lawrence identified as a redeeming "savageness" indigenous to native peoples and ancient places. Such "savageness" is ranged against the modern industrialised world and poses a radical critique of western civilisation and its insidious and rapidly subsuming deathliness. These stories are informed by an animistic vision, focused as they are through, what in Sons and Lovers Lawrence called, the "wild life at the source" - the living pneuma or divine energy that vivifies all things. Consequently they each, in turn,

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* G.M. Hyde makes the observation that the "novels of this period are sometimes called the novels of 'male power'. They ought to be called the novels of male impotence": D.H. Lawrence, (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.91.
* By which I mean St Mawr, 'The Princess' and 'The Woman Who Rode Away'. These form the subject of discussion in Part II.
insist that the human relation with the cosmos is more important, not only than male (or female) supremacy, but than the sexual relationship itself.

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PART II

AMERICA
At the beginning of the jazz age when transatlantic traffic was mainly eastward Lawrence, defying the general drift of his generation, went West. The Twenties proved to be the very Era of Expatriation, the roll call of its migratory writers one of the most impressive ever; but of the illustrious company there was perhaps no more solitary, or tenacious an expatriate than D.H. Lawrence. "[A] savage enough pilgrimage"* was how he chose to describe his own nomadic wanderings, whilst living in New Mexico, in 1923. This is an apt description for it alerts us to the primarily religious nature of his often brutal and unrelenting quest. Lawrence's life-long search was a lonely and arduous one; in his more despairing moments he would bitterly lament the isolation (not merely psychological) that necessarily accompanied his particular breed of intellectual and physical restlessness. Throughout his life he sought a society, or social body, with whom he could establish meaningful, living contact within the context of an organic world; a world in which the times were not personally degrading, conscious-bound, knowing and knowledgeable. Lawrence's original intention had been to go to America to establish just such a commune: he desperately wanted to be one of the spiritual pioneers who would establish an embryonic community from which a whole new faith and new civilisation would slowly emerge. It was an ambitious and idealistic enterprise which was destined never to materialise: not only was Lawrence temperamentally

* Letters IV, ibid., p.375.
unsuited for such an undertaking, but the harsh and uncompromising desert regions of America likewise proved to be unsuitable and unaccommodating.

Conversely, Lawrence's compulsive travelling also contained an element of flight. It was part of a necessary leave-taking from all the miseries and evils into which he had been delivered and for which (in spite of any artistic detachment he might cultivate) he felt a profound responsibility. Lawrence was a revisionist, desiring nothing less than to change the world, to reform its governing precepts. He pursued such ambitions with life-long dedication and impatient determination. His American journey marks the beginning of a series of experiences in which he sought the means whereby he could achieve personal, spiritual and artistic renewal for himself, and religious, political and cultural regeneration for an exhausted civilisation.

Lawrence's exile was, in the main, a self-elected one; a direct response to the dehumanising atrocities of the First World War. Not only had he was sickened by, and despairing of, life in England but, to his eternal chagrin, he became increasingly aware that he was impotent to do anything to stay the culture's downward and degenerative drift toward death. To continue life in England, he was forced to conclude, involved an
incriminating degree of complicity in the disintegrative process he so abhorred:

...to remain here now, after the end, is like remaining on one's death-bed. It is necessary to begin a new life. You mustn't think I haven't cared about England. I have cared deeply and bitterly. But something is broken. There is not any England. One must look for another world. This is only a tomb.*

After a High Court injunction for (unpatriotic) obscenity was served against The Rainbow he was effectively ostracised by the literary world. His work banned and his word unheeded, Lawrence was deemed too controversial a figure for any publishing house to take on: unable to earn a living, he was forced to acknowledge the imperative need for departure. If life in England was no longer tenable then Europe also, as a place of refuge, ceased to be an option; both literally and metaphorically Lawrence considered it to be too close to home. In addition, along with others of his generation, he had been quick to perceive that Europe, ravaged by war, was spiritually dead, or at best in its death throes: which is to say, that at its core, it harboured a barren wasteland, and was, therefore, no more prepared for Lawrence's regenerative schemes than England.

Unable to change the world therefore, Lawrence changed worlds: America beckoned. This was not an unprecedented choice; it was, after all, the quest for a new world, a

* Letters III, ibid., p.91.
new hope, to the west that begot America*. Not only had
the continent fascinated Lawrence since the early drafts
of Studies in Classic American Literature, but most
importantly, he recognised that at the heart of America
(in vivid contrast to Europe) lay the fructifying ground
of its unbound wilderness. This shadowy, and largely
uncharted, region proved irresistible to his hungering
imagination: as a land of the "unknown" it held forth all
the revivifying and fecund promise of regenerative and
enlivening mystery. The following extract from a letter
written in November 1916 succinctly summarises not only
Lawrence's disillusionment with England, but also
articulates the hope that the American continent
symbolised for him:

I know now, finally:
(a) That I want to go away from England for ever.
(b) That I want ultimately to go to a country of
which I have hope, in which I feel the new unknown.
In short, I want, immediately or at length, to
transfer all my life to America. Because there, I
know, the skies are not so old, the air newer, the
earth is not so tired. Don't think I have any
illusions about the people, the life. The people and
the life are monstrous. I want, at length, to get a
place in the far west mountains, from which one can
see the distant Pacific Ocean, and there live facing
the bright west. But I also think that America,
being so much worse, falser, further gone than
England, is nearer to freedom. England has a long
and awful process of corruption and death to go
through. America has dry-rotted to a point where the
final seed of the new is almost left ready to

* America, it should be remembered, has existed as an archetype for the European mind ever since
the occasion of its supposed 'discovery'. Indeed contained within the body of European myths were
two antagonistic pre-Columbian conceptions of the West: the primitive belief in the West as the
land of the sunset, passion, darkness, dreams and death; and the counterbelief in the West as the
Blessed Isles, the land of life's renewal, rebirth and a refined and regenerate reality. It was
therefore viewed variously as an Ovidian land of cornucopian (pagan) plenty by the Virginian
settlers and as a New Canaan by the Puritan Fathers. From the outset America has been conceived of
mythically: it exists in the European (and latterly of course the American) mind as a tabula rasa
onto which it is possible to transpose any number of ideological structures.
Ill sprout. When I can, I shall go to America, and find a place.*

For Lawrence there were two Americas: first, the contemporaneous America (essentially an idealistic hybrid of European civilisation) that he viewed as a "monstrous", lurid extension of all he had fled; secondly the aboriginal America, the land of life's renewal, of rebirth, reason and a higher reality.

Reticence never figures prominently in the Lawrentian canon, and on the subject of "white" America Lawrence is both voluble and unrestrainedly condemnatory. His main objections focus on the overpowering domination of what he chose to call "wilful" and hypocritical spirit of the Anglo-American. Essentially, of course, this was European in origin, having been initially transferred with the first settlers. In American soil, Lawrence maintained, this destructive wilfulness had grown hard and implacable, intensifying to the extent that the "blood-self" had been "sapped", almost to the point of extinction, "by a parasitic mental or ideal consciousness"*. This America was directly descended from the Founding Fathers' historico-cultural legacy: it was, Lawrence argued, a mythic heritage that was based upon a series of false premises - the most fundamental of which was the ideal of American "freedom". In his essay "The Spirit of Place" Lawrence insists that the idealistic

* Letters III, ibid., p.25.
* For further discussion see Lawrence's essay on Melville's Moby-Dick in Studies in Classic American Literature, ibid., pp.153-70.
myth of American democracy begins with the belief that the Puritan Fathers went West in search of greater "freedom of worship"; pointing out that this is a fallacious notion:

England had more freedom of worship in the year 1700 than America had. Won by Englishmen who wanted freedom, and so stopped at home and fought for it. And got it. Freedom of worship? Read the history of New England during the first century of its existence.*

Far from trying to rediscover the "lost trail" to the "godhead", the early Pilgrims displayed a marked disinterest in the religio loci and its aboriginal peoples and gods; instead they imported their own pre-conceived beliefs, prejudices and divinity, which they proceeded to graft onto America's virgin soil, and thence claim the land as their own. The myth, Lawrence asserts, is a negative one, primarily because American "liberty" amounts to nothing more than "the breaking away from all dominion": it is therefore a freedom which, paradoxically, becomes "a hopeless form of constraint", defined, as it is, in opposition to "the old master" Europe (to which it remains in perpetual bondage). In seeking self-definition in an external body, the newly formed America, was thus founded upon a negative ideal (something it is passively not, rather than something is actively seeks to be). Tony Tanner correctly asserts that for Lawrence the American ideal of "liberty" meant a form of "deprivation, a loss of attachment or connectedness

with any power, energy or rhythm which could give life a more than materialistic meaning*. "True" freedom, Lawrence maintained, will only begin

...when Americans discover IT, and proceed possibly to fulfil IT. IT being the deepest whole self of man, the self in its wholeness, not idealistic halfness.*

Lawrence's recurring criticism of "white" America is that

...nobody does anything from the blood. Always from the nerves, if not from the mind. The blood is chemically reduced by the nerves, in American activity.*

Their besetting "sin" is a "self-watching, self consciousness" which abhors and seeks to destroy any form of instinctual or "blood-conscious" life. He therefore declared the continent to be peopled by a deracinated and neurasthenic race, incapable of trusting in either independent life or instinctual being, until it is able to control or manipulate it. "White" America's self-proliferating unreality epitomised for Lawrence the dehumanising power of modern western society, with its mechanisation, stultifying cities, automatic concord, dehumanising modes of industrial production, and democratic mobs:

Altogether it is ideal, according to one's ideas. But innerlich, there is nothing. It seems to me, in America, for the inside life, there is just blank

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nothing. All this outside life - and marvellous country - and it all means so little to one...there is no inside life throb here - none - all empty - people inside dead, outside bustling (sometimes).*

It was on this ephemeral, soul-less America that he uttered his most damaging and apocalyptic prognoses. "We have lost the cosmos by coming out of the responsive connection with it, and this is our chief tragedy"* he lamented. In the works produced during his time in America he specifically addresses the problem of whether such a severance is rectifiable in the modern era, even going so far as to suggest how this rift should be remedied. The heroine of St Mawr, like her creator, realises the necessity of leaving Europe to seek the regeneration (of both sexes) in the open spaces of the American West. In this respect, St Mawr is the work of this period forming, as it does, a consummate exposé of the culture's psychopathology, via the story of one woman's effort to resist the disintegrative backwash of her age.

Lawrence's macrohistoric scheme of cultural regeneration* involved nothing less than the dissolution of America's "white civilisation". Effectively, what he demanded during this period was a necessary revolution of consciousness; one which would initiate a spiritual, 

* Apocalypse, ibid., p.27.
* During the War years Lawrence had formulated an increasingly subjective conception of European (and by extension, global) history, as an unremitting cycle of death and rebirth throughout successive phases of civilisation. His theories are outlined and elaborated on in Movements in European History. For further discussion of Lawrence's cyclic theory of history see chapter 1 of James C. Cowan's D.H. Lawrence's American Journey.
sexual, and social rebirth on a universal level. The "American consciousness has so far been a false dawn", he declared; an era, that is, in which the "white civilisation" had done its utmost to usurp and destroy the indigenous gods (not to mention people) of the American continent. Having achieved its end (and exhausted itself), Lawrence hoped "white" America would eventually implode (as a result of it own self-destructive inertia), thereby making way for a "new beginning", an authentic and meaningful life shaped and informed by both the phenomenal and noumenal world.

But there it is: the newest democracy ousting the oldest religion! And once the oldest religion is ousted, one feels the democracy and all its paraphernalia will collapse, and the oldest religion, which comes down to us from man's pre-war days, will start again. The sky-scraper will scatter on the winds like thistledown, and the genuine America, the America of New Mexico, will start on its course again. This is an interregnum.*

The antidote to modern man's abstracting tendencies, Lawrence believed, was be found in the "aboriginal" "spirit of place": by turning to embrace the emanating chthonic energies of America's primitive religio loci, the "white civilisation" would, he suggested, be able to overcome its spiritual paralysis and achieve the renewal it so desperately required:

America must turn again to catch the spirit of her own dark, aboriginal continent.
That which was abhorrent to the Pilgrim Fathers and to the Spaniards, that which was called the Devil, and the black Demon of savage America, this

* 'New Mexico', Phoenix, ibid., p.147.
great aboriginal spirit the Americans must recognise again, recognise and embrace. The devil and anathema of our forefathers hides the Godhead we seek.*

It is this second, native America which proved to have so profound an impact on Lawrence. For him the real America was the ancient continent of the American Indian, "a remnant of the most deeply religious race still living".*

It was the oldest continent and religion that he had encountered; its ancient sanities overwhelmed him as awesomely real, encompassing and partaking of a greater eternity: "I had no permanent feeling of religion", Lawrence confesses, "till I came to New Mexico and penetrated into the old human race-experience there".*

The event itself he describes in terms of a spiritual rebirth; one in which an old self is discarded as a new consciousness is discovered. What he relates in his essay "New Mexico" is a spiritual rite of passage which is essentially a religious initiation:

...the moment I saw the brilliant, proud morning shine high up over the deserts of Santa Fe, something stood still in my soul, and I started to attend...In the magnificent fierce morning of New Mexico one sprang awake, a new part of the soul woke up suddenly, and the old world gave way to the new.*

His own personal rebirth initiated a life of interior resonance and meaning, an authentic experience that successfully liberated him from the soul-numbing effects

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* "America Listen To Your Own.", Phoenix, ibid., p.87-91.
  * "New Mexico", Phoenix, ibid., p.144.
  * Ibid.
  * "New Mexico", Phoenix, ibid., p.142.
of War, industrialisation and the created social comedy he found so claustrophobic:

I think New Mexico was the greatest experience from the outside world that I have ever had. It certainly changed me for ever. Curious as it may sound, it was New Mexico that liberated me from the present era of civilisation, the great era of material and mechanical development.*

Lawrence's revelation took the form of an important, life-orientating, discovery of a truly primitive religion*. In America he found and unearthed what he was looking for: the well-spring of the sacred. What he discovered was a deeply ambivalent life-force that breathed and bequeathed both life and death, one which the Christian concept of God could not contain. Unlike Christianity's one-dimensional divinity - an anthropomorphic deity of love and forgiveness alone - it was a pre-Christain pneuma that contained an enlivening, hard-edged dualism, savage and sublime. In St Mawr he describes this harsh New Mexican landscape (home of the indigenous gods) as "a world before and after the God of Love." Out West, in New Mexico, Christianity is seen to be deficient and peculiarly inappropriate, incapable, in some vital way, of grasping the reality of the land onto

* Ibid.
* It was this religion which provided a cohesive sense of tribal identity, the very sense of binding community that he had been searching for in his own life and homeland. In "New Mexico" he writes:

...while a tribe retains its religion and keeps up its religious practices, and while any member of the tribe shares in those practices, then there is tribal integrity and a living tradition going back far beyond the birth of Christ, beyond the pyramids, beyond Moses. A vast old religion which once swayed the earth lingers in unbroken practice there in New Mexico, older, perhaps, than anything in the world save Australian aboriginal taboo and totem, and that is not yet religion. (Phoenix, Ibid., p.144-45)
which it has been grafted; in the words of the New England woman:

What nonsense about Jesus and a God of Love, in a place like this! This is more awful and more splendid.*

It was the ancient, aboriginal, animistic vision of the American Indian that so impressed Lawrence ("it is not the religion of the Spirit. A religion of spirits, yes. But not of the Spirit"*); with its time-honoured mode of experience in which Nature and culture had achieved some sort of precarious concordance. The pantheistic cosmology of the Native American Lawrence identified as being older and more fundamental than its European counterpart pre-dating, as it does, the occidental god-concept:

There is strictly no god...Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves...all is godly. There is no Great Mind directing the universe. Yet the mystery of creation, the wonder and fascination of creation shimmers in every leaf and stone, in every thorn and bud, in the fangs of the rattlesnake, and in the soft eyes of the fawn. Things utterly opposite are still pure wonder of creation.*

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.159.

The animistic religion, as we call it, is not the religion of the Spirit. A religion of spirits, yes. But not of Spirit. There is no One Spirit. There is no God. There is strictly no God at all: because all is alive. In our conception of religion there exists God and His Creation: two things. We are creatures of God, therefore we pray to God as the Father, the Saviour, the Maker.

But strictly, in the religion of aboriginal America, there is no Father, and no Maker. There the great living source of life: say the Sun of existence: to which you can no more pray than you can to Electricity. (ibid., p.72)

* 'Indians and Entertainment', Mornings in Mexico, ibid., p.59.
In the essays, letters and fiction this animistic life-force is identified, more familiarly, as the all-pervasive spirit of Pan*, residual traces of whom, Lawrence maintained, could still be found. Amongst the indigenous peoples of America's desert region he discovered the existence of a re-animating, re-vivifying communion between man and nature; an established, purposeful and unmediated dialogue with the natural world; one which guarantees (yet simultaneously surpasses) the context of human relationships. 

"[T]he whole life-effort", Lawrence explains, of the American Indian

...was to get his life into direct contact with the elemental life of the cosmos, mountain-life, cloud-life, thunder-life, air-life, earth-life, sun-life. To come into immediate felt contact and so derive energy, power, and a dark sort of joy. This effort into sheer naked contact without an intermediary or mediator, is the root meaning of religion...*

Such a living discovery confirmed Lawrence's belief that "religion" is primarily a felt experience, "an uncontrollable sensual experience, even more so than love": he identifies the religious impulse as beginning in, and belonging to, the physical realm of the senses, a permanency of the body not of the mind: "an experience deep down in the senses, inexplicable and inscrutable"*. He is at pains to stress that this consummation is not

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* See Lawrence's essay "Pan in America" (Phoenix, ibid., pp.22-32). The significance of Pan in the Lawrentian pantheon has already been discussed in Part I, pp.28-32.
* "New Mexico", Phoenix, ibid., p.146-47.
* Ibid., p.144.
only pre-linguistic, but also pre-sexual: "wild America", he notes, has

...none of the phallic preoccupation of the old Mediterranean. Here they hadn't got even as far as hot-blooded sex.*

Lawrence believed that the creative (synonymous with the religious) impulse was stronger, older, and greater than the sexual, which had become perverted in the modern age - hence his advocacy, during his years in America, of a breed of isolationism.

But for all his admiration of the American Indian religion Lawrence did not fall into the trap of advocating the straightforward adoption of an alien culture. Cultural renewal could not, he realised, come

* "Au Revoir U.S.A.", Phoenix, ibid., p.105. Lawrence here is again making us of old European pre-conceived (and largely mythic) notions concerning the habits and instaetual life of America's indigenous peoples. By way of example Thomas Jefferson, in Notes on the State of Virginia records such prejudices in an effort to refute and redress such common misconceptions. Here he quotes Mons. de Buffon:

Although the savage of the new world is of approximately the same structure as the man of our world, this does not suffice for him to be an exception to the general fact of the shrinking of living nature on all that continent. The savage is feeble and has small generative organs; he has neither hair, nor beard, and no arodor for his female...There is no reason for seeking further into the cause of the dispersed way of life of the savages and their aversion to society: the most precious spark of the fire of nature has been denied to them; they are wanting in arodor for their females and, in consequence, in love for their fellow men...they love but feebly their fathers and their children; the most intimate society of one family with another does not exist at all...For them the physical love is the moral ethic; their heart icy, their society cold, and their dominion harsh...their original defect [is that] they are impotent, and this indifference to sex is the fundamental blemish which blights their nature, which hinders its blossoming, and which destroys the seeds of life, at the same time cutting off society at the root. (Thomas Jefferson: Writings (New York: Library of America, 1984) p.183.)

Characteristically, Lawrence inverts the belief that the American Indian is somehow arrested at a lesser stage of evolutionary development, to demonstrate the purity of unacknowledged sophistication their culture, by comparing it to the moral degeneracy of the 'white civilisation'.
from the marriage of the bifurcated and incompatible
strains of American consciousness:

The Indian way of consciousness is different from
and fatal to our own way of consciousness. Our way
of consciousness is different from and fatal to the
Indian. The two ways, the two streams are never to
be united. They are not even to be reconciled...The
consciousness of one branch of humanity is the
annihilation of another branch. That is, the life of
the Indian, his stream of conscious being, is just
death to the white man. And we can understand the
consciousness of the Indian only in terms of the
death of our consciousness.*

In the essays and fiction this ongoing battle In the
essays and fiction this ongoing battle of wills with the
American Indian finds an objective correlative in bloody
resistance of the natural world, the slow, violent, soul-
destroying opposition of the landscape. Lawrence's work
is not alone in this, rather it is a defining feature in
the literature of the American West, where the presence
of the landscape itself is so pervasive that it assumes
the determining force and status of a character in its
own right*. But where the Western is apt to obfuscate the
reality of the landscape's latent violence - ignoring the
horror behind the vision of its invariably triumphant
morality - Lawrence recognises it as the very essence and
meaning of the continent. "America is tense with latent
violence" he says in his remarkable essay on Fenimore
Cooper where he identifies the violence as being

* "Indians and Entertainment.", Mornings in Mexico, ibid., p.53.
* Contemporaneous writers that Lawrence may well have been familiar with include Owen Wister (The
Virginian, 1902); Stephen Crane, whose evocative Western Stories are particularly noteworthy; Zane
Grey, Frederick Remington, and Willa Cather, whose Death Comes for the Archbishop is similarly set
in Norther New Mexico.
symptomatic - the inevitable consequence - of the white
culture's confrontation with the religio loci. No amount
of distracting hypocrisy occludes the fact of the "crime-
tinged" (because violating) nature of the "pioneering
brute invasion of the West." "The American landscape", he
explains, "has never been at one with the white man" for
there is a perpetual devilish opposition - "the
aboriginal demon hovering over the core of the continent"
with its "Great wings of vengeful doom" that broods
implacably "over the west, grim against the intruder."
Consequently the will of White America has petrified:

But you have there the myth of the essential white
America. All the other stuff, the love, the
democracy, the floundering into lust, is a sort of
by-play. The essential American soul is hard,
isolate, stoic, and a killer. It has never yet
melted.*

It is this continuing war of attrition that Lawrence
eventually found so debilitating: "America exhausts the
springs of one's soul...It lives to see real spontaneity
expire".*

Lawrence was equally aware that the way forward was not
the way back, but the way down; down to the internal
resevoirs of the (collective) unconscious and the
forgotten fragments of mythic memory. The journey is
perforce a personal one, an exploration of the deepest
recesses of the human psyche. The breed of sentimental

* Studies in Classic American Literature, ibid., p.68.
* Letters IV, ibid., p.503.
nostalgia that advocated a return to a simplistic state of primitivism he considered to be lethal in its naivety. The renegade who does seek a return to a state of idealistic barbarism is, in Lawrence's opinion, on a fool's errand; such a straightforward retrogressive step he considered detrimental, and merely another symptom of the descent into decadence. On this subject he was emphatic:

One cannot go back...there is a gulf in time and being...Whatever the South Sea Islander is, he is centuries and centuries behind us in the life-struggle, the consciousness-struggle, the struggle of the soul into fullness...We can't go back. We can't go back to the savages: not a stride. We can be in sympathy with them. We can take a great curve in their direction, onwards. But we cannot turn the current of our life backwards, back towards their soft warm twilight and uncreate mud. Not for a moment.*

Equally deplorable (and counter-productive), to Lawrence's mind, was the one-dimensional nature - the visionless arrogance - of the, effectively, colonial enterprise. His account of the Hopi Snake Dance is a delightful exposé of liberal "white" America's attitude to its indigenous races; who, when not attempting to brutally decimate their numbers, assume an attitude of voyeuristic or tolerant interest. What Lawrence objects to, above all, is the sensationalistic way the ceremonial dance is viewed by, what he perceives to be, a titillated group of spectators who are incapable of realising its religious or spiritual significance. The patronising

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* "Herman Melville's Typee and Omoo", *Studies in Classic American Literature*, ibid., p.144-45.
incomprehension which the "white civilisation" reserves for the "Indian" and his "religion" means that he is eventually treated "as a sort of pet", and America's fecundating wilderness is transformed into a theme park: the resultant loss was for Lawrence incalculable.

What emerges, quite distinctly, in Lawrence's essays, letters and fictions of this period is the belief that progress - true progress - is always a forward-looking and an evolutionary process. It is a process, moreover, that looks beyond the dissolution of western society to the foundation of a new continent of "afterwards"; hence it is a creative, life-enhancing process (regardless of the casualty rate). The rebirth that Lawrence envisaged for America (and by extension the rest of western civilisation) he acknowledged could not be achieved through the appropriation of another race's religious and cultural beliefs. From observation and time spent with such communities he derived his necessary inspiration and the eventual belief that for each individual, and therefore society, the "fight" for renewal and rebirth must come from within:

...I stand on the far edge of their firelight, and am neither denied nor accepted. My way is my own, old red father: I can't cluster at the drum any more.*

Lawrence knew that life itself depends upon, is, the tension between two opposite imperatives: the absolute

* "Indians and Englishmen", Phoenix, ibid., p.99.
need to reach out for a life of the spirit, and the absolute need to fulfil the life of the body. The breed of isolationism that emerges in his American fiction is symptomatic of his search for a means of self-definition that can only be acquired through the separateness of an individual consciousness, necessarily removed from the repressive and limiting constructs of a dying civilisation.

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Between June and September 1924 whilst living on the Kiowa Ranch in northern New Mexico, Lawrence wrote what forms the core of his "American fiction". It consists of three novellas, St Mawr, The Woman Who Rode Away, and The Princess. They are remarkable and disturbing works about the uncivilised New Mexican landscape and the equivocal effects of, what in St Mawr he calls the "sordidness of savagery", upon the psyche of the respective heroines. As the following excerpt from a letter to Catherine Carswell suggests, each is a deeply imaginative and personal response to Lawrence's experience, as perceived from Kiowa ranch, of the New Mexican landscape and the American Indian:

It was good to be alone and responsible. But also it is very hard living up against these savage Rockies. The savage things are a bit gruesome, and they try to down one. - But far better they than the white disintegration.- I did a long novelette...about 2 women and a horse...And two shorter novelettes...: The Woman Who Rode Away and The Princess. St Mawr ends here. They are all about this country more or
They are all sad. After all, they're true to what it is.*

The loyalty of each tale's truth to the presiding "spirit of place" does indeed produce sad tales of varying degrees of defeat. Lawrence sends each of his heroines into the New Mexican mountains in search of a greater reality than that to which they are accustomed. The results however are far from encouraging: the heroine of "The Woman Who Rode Away" dies the death of a sacrificial victim, the Princess goes mad, and Lou Witt, the heroine of St Mawr (the most optimistic of the stories) is left on the mountainside preparing to do homage to the annihilating "unseen presences" that preside there.

Much of the peculiar force of these pieces is derived from the powerful impact of the descriptive writing, and the very appropriateness of the varying styles to the stories thematic preoccupations. F.R. Leavis speaks highly of Lawrence's versatility, the range of style, that he produces in these fictions: a style which ranges from the peculiar incantation of "The Woman Who Rode Away"; the ironic subtlety and nuance which characterises "The Princess"; through to the informal "slangy colloquialism" of St Mawr. Leavis is especially positive in his praise of St Mawr admiring, in particular, its ability to couch the profundity of its subject matter in a "conversational" language which ensures "the everyday

world, is always kept in touch with the depths."* L.D. Clarke, in The Minoan Distance, is more reserved in his judgement, arguing that there is a marked dilution of lyrical intensity in these works:

As if to match his tone with that of American culture, Lawrence adopted a racy prose style, flippant and exclamatory, an exaggerated twist to the kind of showiness he had displayed in his psychology books a couple of years before. Gone now are the long cadences of the...essays [on American authors], the prose that endeavoured to summon up in wonder the vastness of history and a mystical transubstantiation of time and place to create a future land...Place [in these essays]...was seen as a slowly unfolding miracle of words in which every progression of nature or of history tingled in deep accord with the vibrant feelers of the human souls, a great mystic passion of history or of landscape.*

This change of prose style* Clarke attributes to the fact that, during his westward migration, Lawrence underwent a similar process to that which he had described happening to American authors* in their striving to articulate (and make contact with) the spirit of their land:

They have felt that they were trespassing, transgressing, or going very far, and this has given a certain stridency, or portentousness, or luridness to their manner.*

That there is an alteration in Lawrence's prose style is indisputable, though it does not necessarily follow that

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* D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, ibid., pp.235-6. Leavis treats the tale as a major "dramatic poem", a view that is countered by Graham Hough in The Dark Sun, where he objects to the tale's implausibilities (see pp.180-81).
* The Minoan Distance, ibid., p.277.
* Clarke maintains that, in synchronisation with his westward movement, Lawrence "turned abrupt and colloquial. He seized the subject by the throat" (The Minoan Distance, ibid., p.277)
* See The Symbolic Meaning and Studies in Classic American Authors.
* The Symbolic Meaning, ibid., p.254.
there is a concurrent deterioration in quality. The lyrical intensity of the descriptive writing (though it may not have the same historical range and emotional depth as that in The Rainbow for example) is undeniably powerful and, even by Lawrentian standards, extraordinary. Dan Jacobson correctly asserts that the affecting quality of Lawrence's writing during this period "springs", primarily, "from it literal accuracy"; the effect of which,

...makes us feel as we read it that the landscape is yielding its secrets to the language, even while the language itself is being shaped by the landscape.*

This unusual symbiotic relationship between language and place, is one of the defining features of the works he produced during the years in New Mexico; it originates in Lawrence's heightened responisiveness and intuitive empathy for the "spirit" of aboriginal America; as a result it is extremely evocative. David Cavitch, in D.H. Lawrence and the New World, maintains that Lawrence's profound attachment to, and unrivalled understanding, of the Southwest derives from the fact that he "invested the locality with much of his deepest intuition about the self, particularly about himself":

In doing so, he made his imagination dependent, to a large degree, upon the continuing inspiration of the American continent. He strove thereafter to realize consciously the meaning of the place that he had encoded with personal significance. The attitude toward America which he carried forward from these studies for several years and through many works is,

understandably enough, proprietary, hierophantic, and illusional. In a very intimate sense, it is his country.*

* D.H. Lawrence and the New World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.100. Similar conclusions have led Richard Poirier to claim that "Lawrence was himself by temperament an 'American' writer working within the conventions of English literature"; and as such proved to be profoundly influential:

[Lawrence] was not only responsive to the main lines of force in American literature; he himself accelerated them. In Lawrence, with a degree of consciousness never attained by any American writer, are the struggles, difficulties, and tensions that went into the writing of the best American books. So much did he feel these tensions that perhaps his clearest expression of them comes when he is talking not about American writing at all, but about his own. (A World Elsewhere, ibid., p.37.)

With some persuasiveness, Poirier, goes on to suggest that St Mawr is the American story - a conclusion I would disagree with, for the simple reason, that a heroine displaces the hero on the rocky frontier, and in this respect the tale is anomalous.
Lou Carrington (née Witt), the novel's central figure of consciousness, is bored -- bored and tired of the clockwork, "lots of fun!", giddy-go-round of socialising in Europe's unreal cities. As a result of having "had her own way" for so long, she is hopelessly adrift upon the sea of her soul's ennui. Rich and spoilt she possesses neither purposeful determination, nor the anchorage of national identity, and so suffers a terrible sense of futility and placelessness. A cursory glance at her life reveals a perfect "composition"; she has all she wants, wealth, beauty, social success and a "charming" marriage to a devoted husband who is completely "mastered". Upon close examination however their relationship reveals itself to be a travesty of what Lawrence considered to be a meaningful marriage. It is a sexless union that is mutually destructive, reduced to a debilitating friction of nerves, and charged with a "a curious tension of will, rather than a spontaneous passion"*. As the storyprogresses Lou comes to identify her husband as the epitome (the "symbol") of the overwhelming and universal nullity she perceives to be her social milieu's defining characteristic. This conclusion is both encouraged and compounded by Lou's biting sardonic mother, who barely conceals her "contempt for the ménage", which she views as being symptomatic of the general sickness abroad, a degenerate sign of decadent times.

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.24.
Like her daughter, Mrs Witt is tired and frustrated with the banal and insubstantial social pantomime. Unlike the passive and youthful Lou, however, she is "at the time of life when the malevolent male in man, the old Adam, begins to loom above the social tailoring": accordingly, Lawrence converts the vague and largely unfocused disillusionment of the daughter into the indomitable, and moreover, irrepressible rage of the mother. Disgusted with the "bare-faced unrealities" of the generation she has contributed to, Mrs Witt grows increasingly impatient with and intolerant of what she perceives to be its inane trivialities. Her own life, she confides to her daughter, has been comprised of tabloid commentaries—illusory experiences that have been witnessed not felt. Convinced as she is that she has been deprived of a "real" life (and that a meaningful existence is no longer possible) she determines instead to die a "real" death. As the narrative unfolds, therefore, she becomes progressively more obsessed with the idea of her own self-elected dying; to which end her energies are increasingly directed (in inverse proportion to her daughter's energetic search for new life). Her contempt for England finally sends her back to America: here her formidable (as the name would suggest) intellectual powers implode.

* Ibid., p.23.
* David Cavitch aptly describes Mrs Witt's furious discontent as a "Gorgonish disaffection" (D.H. Lawrence and the New World, ibid., p.152.).
* L.D. Clarke similarly notes that Mrs Witt is "more of an outsider than her daughter. She shares the story to the extent of dominating it at times, although in the long run her purpose is to serve as foil to Lou's search." (The Minoan Distance, ibid., p.312.)
and, rather than achieving renewal and rebirth, she withdraws from living contact, and enters a trance-like state as she awaits death.

In the first half of the novel however she is the entertaining and ironic mouthpiece of much of Lawrence's biting social satire. It is her effete son-in-law who becomes the focus of her frustration and the target of her rapier wit:

...[they] were deadly enemies yet neither could keep clear of the other. It might have been they who were married to one another their duel and duet were so relentless.*

Lou, as their ultimate trophy, is caught in the crossfire of this intense, albeit humorous, battle of destructive wills. The quasi-incestuous triad is emotively charged with a misplaced and impotent energy that is unable to find constructive outlet or release; thwarted and perverted, it crystallises into a quartz-like fury which petrifies and paralyses all independent life. Unsurprisingly, Lou feels bullied to the brink of emotional numbness by the battle's sheer futility. Marooned amidst so much unreality she is unable to penetrate the emotional fog of her increasingly miasmic existence: "What was real? What under heaven was real?"*, is her echoing refrain. Lou's animating quest becomes her search for a tenable reality; a search, that is, for the

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* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.45.
* Ibid., p.132.
clarity of vision that will reveal to her a life worth living. The narrative charts her determined movement away from the jaded, defiling intimacies that she has exhausted (significantly) in Europe, toward a purer liveliness and a boundless isolation that she (re)discovers in the unsullied regions of America's aboriginal Southwest.

The first intimations that such a reality exists comes to Lou through the apocalyptic figure of St Mawr, whose potent presence embodies the promise "other worlds" exist beyond her own. In theological terms her encounter with the burnished stallion forms an epiphany; the revelation of "a living background" that adumbrates the sterile human world of "attitude"*

The wild, brilliant, alert head of St Mawr 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 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 with red power.
What was it? Almost like a god looking out of the everlasting dark she had felt the eyes of that horse, great glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question, and his uncanny threat? She didn't know. He was some splendid demon and she must worship him.*

*In other tales - namely "The Flying Fish" and The Escaped Cock - the dialectics of the phenomenal/social and the noumenal/mystical realms are referred to as the 'lesser' and 'Greater Day', respectively.
*St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., pp.30-31.
St Mawr effectively shatters the imprisoning matrix of Lou's unreal existence to reveal the mysterious and primordial world of a "terrific equine twilight" (the Lawrentian region of the "unknown" where all forms of religious awareness originate). The chthonic energy which the horse embodies derives from the same source as Count Dionys's dark and ambiguous "god of destruction". Lou's visionary encounter therefore is with an indistinct masculine divinity (the sacred male principle), the apprehension of whose presence ontologically founds her world: "he was the only thing that was real"*. Through St Mawr she gains a new vision and greater insight which manifests itself as a profound intuitive awareness; the ability that is, to apprehend the hidden mystery - "the Great God Pan" - in all things. Effectively it is an unconscious, sensory mode of knowing, distinct from any form of intellectual understanding, "which sees only the things that can't be seen"*. It is important to note, however, that St Mawr is only an initiator - what Keith Sagar identifies as a "hierophany"* - the object or medium through which Lou obtains her intimations of the greater existence of a "living" godhead. St Mawr remains

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* Ibid., p.32.
* Ibid., p.65.

For it is a break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also a revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a centre. (*The Sacred and the Profane*)
her psychic touchstone until Lou reaches America, where he subsequently fades from the representative realm into the actual, and his symbolic meaning is finally superseded by the aboriginal "spirit" of the untamed American continent. Back on the familiar territory of her homeland, Lou realises the necessity of undergoing nothing less than an oxymoronic dying into life; a solitary pilgrimage that involves the death of her old consciousness before a resurrection into a new mode of living can occur.

It is the post-war Georgian England that Lou is so desperate to escape; that of the superficial, mannered milieu of the intellectual and artistic circle that her husband is so anxious to be a part of. Rico becomes the figure in whom the novel's despair coalesces: visionless, he is the representative of his lost generation whose decadent aestheticism is not even redeemed (as Egbert's was) by a national identity*. He is, of course, a Lawrentian personification of the modern, debased male principle; a deracinated "pesonality" who lacks the vital spark of intuitive awareness or creative connectedness to either individual or place. He is a social specimen; the representative of an amorphous, and increasingly androgynous, mass whose natural instincts are repressed beyond recognition:

* Rico, it should be remembered, is Australian and the social set he belongs to drift, aimlessly, around Europe, belonging nowhere, and attached to no-one.
If [Rico's] head had been cut off, like John the Baptist's, it would have been a thing complete in itself, would not have missed the body in the least.*

Lawrence's symbolic method involves the ranging of St Mawr's phallic energy and sacred male power* against Rico's debased masculinity and essential deathliness. The comparison is lent additional force by virtue of their similarities (both are refined creatures and sensitive thorough-breds, highly-strung aristocrats among their respective type or species). It is, of course, St Mawr's ability to remain true to, and resist the defilement of, his animalistic being that lends him his instinctive

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.34.
* For a full discussion of the symbolic significance of the horse in the Lawrentian canon see James C. Cowan's D.H. Lawrence's American Journey (ibid., pp.87-92) and Keith Sagar's Life Into Art (ibid., pp.268-71). In his fiction Lawrence frequently uses the image of the horse and rider to illustrate the damage done, and perpetuated, in the name of Plato's dualistic mind/body distinction (combined, Cowan and Sagar provide a comprehensive catalogue of examples across the range of Lawrence's work). For the sake of the present discussion it is necessary to draw attention to Lawrence's elaborations on the life-enhancing aspect of man's relationship with his equine counterpart. In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence defines the horse as "the symbol of surging potency and power of movement, of action in man". He goes on to explain that within the "last fifty years" this enlivening connection has been broken and as a consequence "man is lost. Man is lost to life and power" (ibid., p.61). Elsewhere, Lawrence writes:

In modern symbolism, the Horse is supposed to stand for the passions. Passions blowed. What does the Centaur stand for, Chiron or any other of that quondom four-footed gentry? Sense! Horse Sense! Sound, powerful, four-footed sense, that's what the Horse stands for. Horse-sense, I tell you. That's the blue Horse of the ancient Mediterranean, before the Galilean or the extra pale German or Nordic gentleman conquered. First of all, Sense, Good Sense, Sound Sense, Horse sense.

And then, a laugh, a loud, sensible Horse Laugh. After that these same passions, glossy and dangerous in the flanks. And after these again, hoofs, irresistible, splintering hoofs, that can kick the walls of the world down. (The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, ed. Aldous Huxley, (London: William Heinemann, 1932) p.592. This letter is not included in the fourth volume of the Cambridge Edition.)

In the modern industrialised age (with its widespread proliferation of the motor car) the mutually fecundating relationship that the Centaur enjoyed with the animal world is considerably undermined. The two grooms in *St Mawr* are, of course, intended to be seen as centaur-like figures: they retain vestiges of their respective race's ancient and intuitive modes of being, and are still in possession of a residual "horse-sense". Although they embody, to a degree, an animistic consciousness their integrity (and therefore masculinity) has been compromised by an exposure to European civilisation and, more specifically, the benumbing effects of the Great War.
nobility*. Rico and his type, by constrast, have denied or repressed their instinctual being, and reneged upon their masculinity: hence, the tale suggests, they have become emotionally atrophied, suffering an emotional and spiritual diminishment that reduces them to cowardly, mind-ful intellectuals. Most men, Lou observes, have a "deadness in them" and, by way of reproach, wonders "why can't men get their life straight, like St Mawr, and then think?"* Intrinsic to Lou's quest for a tenable reality is the search for a concept of maleness that requires neither justification nor explication, but is simply self-evident:

Just think of St Mawr! I've thought so much about him. We call him an animal, but we never know what it means. He seems a far greater mystery to me than a clever man. He's a horse. Why can't one say the same of a man: He's a man?*

Instead, the men she encounters have denied or lost their innate (and the story suggests, divinely begotten) masculine being, consequently they have become servile and cringing. The problem both Lou and her mother face is not one of having to recognise and come to terms with the male principle (the fate of Nellie March and Lady Daphne), but rather the difficulty of finding the living

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* Significantly St Mawr and Lewis (the novels representatives of the surviving male-principle) shun intimate or sexual relations that are "forced" (and therefore violating), opting instead for a life of uncompromising celibate monasticism. By the novella's own terms of definition this is seen to be a gesture of self-preservation in a modern society whose mental fingering has reduced the mystical act of coitus to a masturbatory exercise.

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.61.
* Ibid., pp.59-60.
embodiment of that principle, or Pan-presence, within a 
man.

Rico's incompetence as a horseman is portrayed as being 
symptomatic of his personal and spiritual impotence. The 
scene of Rico's riding accident therefore becomes 
decisive in a number of ways. It instantly divides the 
party into two groups - the pro- or anti-life faction; 
which category they belong to is determined by their 
willingness (or otherwise) to take the side of St Mawr. 
Rico (and associates), predictably, blame the wild 
"beast", condemn him as dangerous, and immediately begin 
to plot his destruction. Mrs Witt and the two grooms are 
in no doubt where the responsibility lies: they detest 
and condemn Rico and his kind (such as the emancipated 
but emasculating Flora Manby) as "conspirators, who 
conspire to live in absolute physical safety, whilst 
willing the minor disintegration of all positive 
living"*. From their point of view the stallion's 
destructiveness is to be applauded, a kick in the face 
for a civilisation that seeks to geld that which it 
cannot contain.

Only Lou, it would seem, is sensitive enough to perceive 
the deeply ambiguous nature of St Mawr's violence 
registering, as she does, that in the midst of the 
accident the horse becomes "reversed and purely evil". 
This transformation is not simply, as Keith Sagar

* Ibid., p.82.
suggests the savage irruption of a thwarted or maimed phallic energy*; but rather, as Tony Tanner explains, St Mawr's behaviour (analogous to Rico's) is deemed to be symptomatic of larger "evil" (or violence) "welling up from the core of things":

An important aspect of this picture is that the horse is "reversed", inverted, suggesting a fearsome convulsion of values, such as, perhaps, Lawrence felt Europe had been through in the Great War...the picture is one of vital energies in dreadful disarray, a flailing mess where there should be a noble concourse and the ensuing vision is of an oceanic evil emanating, not from man with his ineptitudes, but from the very centre of nature.*

Lou's resulting vision involves a perception of the world "immersed" in the chaos of an apocalyptic flood-tide:
"the dark-grey waves of evil rearing in a great tide...There was no relief. The whole world was enveloped in one great flood...a strange tide of evil"*. Appalled by what she sees, Lou rejects the "army of ideal mankind" mired in a "morass of ignoble living":

The mean cruelty of Mrs Vyner's humanitarianism, the barren cruelty of Flora Manby, the eunuch civilisation of Rico. Our whole eunuch civilisation, nasty minded as eunuchs are, with their kind of sneaking, sterilising cruelty.*

and determines to break free, to "depart from the mass". Her declared intention is to "cleanse" herself, to return that is to an older (i.e., newer) purity of being: "to

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* See Sagar's chapter on "The Monk and the Beast: St Mawr" in Life Into Art, ibid., pp.246-77.
* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.78.
* Ibid. p.96.
adhere to that which is life itself...the one passionate principle of creative being"*.

Lou, however, is aware that "generally speaking" there is little she can do to stem this overwhelming "tide of evil", and her essential impotence (which Lawrence, of course, shared) is powerfully conveyed. Through her own observations she comes to the gradual realisation that the widespread social entropy is the result of a fundamental breakdown in human relationships (a failure that the novella attributes to the gender imbalance both within and between the sexes). The collapse of sexual (and therefore human) identity amongst the post-war generation is starkly highlighted in Mrs Witt's emphatic assertion of choice: "Your virility or your life: Your femininity of your life!"* Both women reluctantly come to acknowledge that relations between the sexes have deteriorated to the extent that it is impossible to find a man who can match the woman in either of them. Sexual disunity is seen to be so complete that all that can be hoped for within their social setting is a sterile and disintegrative "marriage of nerves". Lou, deeply disaffected and genuinely disillusioned, longs to reinstate the "wonder"* of this most profound of human communions, recognising that the surrogate "cheap sex" (endemic amongst her peers) is killing not only her but

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* Ibid., p.80.
* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.26.
* This wonder is akin to the Greek thaumazein and is vividly contrasted to the sceptical rhetoric of wit employed in the 'psychic vivisection laboratory' (p.45) that characterises the worldly interactions of her mother and husband.
her generation: "My dealings with men have only broken my stillness and messed up my doorways"*. From these depressing observations she concludes that there is an urgent necessity to institute some sort of reparative process:

It seems to me men and women have really hurt one another so much, nowadays, that they had better stay apart till they have learned to be gentle with one another again. Not all this forced passion and destructive philandering. Men and women should stay apart, till their hearts grow gentle towards one another again. Now it's only each one fighting for his own - or her own - underneath the cover of tenderness.*

It is at this point that she decides to return to America - to "retreat to the desert" - with the express intention of separating herself from "the mass" and re-establishing her soul's equilibrium:

She wanted relief from the nervous tension and irritation of life, she wanted to escape from the friction which is the whole stimulus in modern social life. She wanted to be still: only that, to be very, very still, and recover her soul.*

In departing for the wilderness Lou sheds old associations and superfluities like so much excess baggage. This process is symptomatic of her effort to discard her old mode of consciousness, so that she may prepare herself for a hoped for renewal; one, moreover, that is to be achieved through a holy and regenerative

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.139
† Ibid., p.122.
‡ Ibid., p.137.
communion with the "unseen presences" of America's aboriginal "spirit of place". Thus Lou chooses to abstain from all intimate contact that is sullying: "I will never prostitute myself again", she determines, "unless something touches my very spirit, the very quick of me, I will stay alone, just alone"*:

She understood now the meaning of the Vestal Virgins, the Virgins of the holy fire in the old temples. They were symbolic of herself, of woman weary of the embrace of incompetent men, weary, weary, weary of all that, turning to the unseen gods, the unseen spirits, the hidden fire, and devoting herself to that, and that alone. Receiving thence her pacification and her fulfilment.*

It is through the consciousness of the New England woman that we first experience and discover the profoundly ambiguous nature of New Mexico's religio loci. She, like Lou, found the landscape's surrounding beauty awesome, and in some important and final sense, absolute. She responds to the landscapes powerful energies with a blind intoxication that is likened to a sexual frenzy: "It seemed to enter her like a sort of sex passion, intensifying her ego, making her full of violence and of blind female energy"*. The sexualisation of the landscape that occurs throughout this description of the New Mexican ranch is indicative of the powerfully affecting and deeply rousing impact of the emanating "spirit" of the landscape. The life-force Lawrence invokes, it should be noted, has more in common with a primitive or chthonic

* Ibid., p.144.
energy than any ordinary manifestation of human or lustful sexuality: the inference is that such a life-force goes far deeper, and is much older, than any form of human consciousness. By way of confirmation, Lawrence places an ancient pine tree - "the guardian of the place" - in the centre of the ranch:

...a bristling almost demonish guardian, from the far-off crude ages of the world. Its great pillar of pale, flakey-ribbed copper rose there in strange callous indifference, and the grim permanence, which is in pine trees. A passionless, non-phallic column, rising in the shadows of the pre-sexual world, before the hot-blooded ithyphallic column ever erected itself.*

Lawrence therefore makes the distinction between the differing, though associative, impulses of sacred hunger and libidinous desire. It is an important distinction because although the sacred may well contain the sexual, the sexual, though it is indeed one avenue of approach to the sacred, does not encompass it. The New England woman's confusion (and eventual failure) derives from the fact that she cannot experience her sacred longing as anything other than sexual (i.e., one dimensional); a deficiency which is, in turn, attributed to the restrictive and limiting nature of her "white" mental consciousness.

Part of the reason for the failure of the New England woman to live her life out on the ranch, Lawrence attributes to her inability to see beyond the initial

* Ibid.
"glamour" (or sexual lure) of the landscape.
Psychologically she is unprepared for what he describes as the "sordidness" and "savagery" (the crucial ambiguity) that is endemic to the *religio loci*: "a curious disintegration...a sort of malevolent breath, like a stupefying, irritant gas coming out of the unfathomed mountains"*. Thus while awed by the noumenal world she is, all the time, being attacked by the phenomenal world, the manifest "animosity" of the place. These "unseen forces" prey continually upon her and the struggle against them breeds a fatal emotional inertia and eventual spiritual paralysis. Far from being the hoped-for energising communion with the "gods of these inner mountains" proves profoundly enervating. Life is reduced to a fierce and ruthless battle; moreover it is an entropic battle in which the higher forms succumb to the lower forms amidst a perpetually indifferent landscape: "The great circling landscape lived its own life, sumptuous and uncaring. Man did not exist for it"*. Defeated, the New England woman is forced to retreat "maimed forever".

And so Lou arrives, "new blood to the attack". In providing the reader with the cautionary example of the New England woman, Lawrence highlights the element of absurd naivety in Lou's enterprise (she is, of necessity, something of a holy fool). Her undertaking is a perilous

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* Ibid., p.146.
one, and in order to serve the "unseen presences" she must, the tale suggests, relinquish any idealistic and pre-conceived notions. If Lou wishes to plumb the well-spring of the sacred she must not, as her pre-decessor was, be dazzled by the landscape's hypnotic "glamour" (a panoramic view of which is awe inspiring, great and splendid, but whose foreground detail is primitive and subhuman). The indigenous gods, Lou must learn to recognise, are of tremendous energy, both sacred and profane, sublime and terrible, without consciousness and pre-sexual. On her arrival at the ranch Lawrence tells us that Lou is struck by the fact that "the latent fire of the vast landscape struggled under a great weight of dirt like inertia"; and that, incautiously, she decides to "mind the dirt most carefully and vividly avoid it and keep it away from her". In order to survive, however, this is precisely what she must not do; instead she has to realise that the "savage" and the "sublime" are the same, that the god she seeks to know is both holy and diabolic (the very thing, in fact, that the New England woman failed to comprehend).

It is the powerfully ambiguous presiding "spirit of place", Lawrence explains, that must be fought in an unceasing battle "to win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start". A civilisation that has lost its "inward vision and cleaner

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* Ibid., p.140.
* Ibid., p.151.
energy", he argues, becomes "sordid", but with "a new sordidness more vast and stupendous than the old savage sort". Although Lawrence acknowledges that all "savagery" is "sordid" he makes an important distinction here: the fight with "savage" nature is creative, rousing, energising and, above all, ennobling (even if it does eventually conquer and subsume); in contrast, as the story suggests, life in a dying civilisation can only be degrading, a deprivation that leads to spiritual inertia and bodily abstraction. Lawrence concludes that it is this perpetual struggle to draw upon the creative life-force and energies beyond our own - be it in the sexual duel or the wrestling of understanding from the gods - that defines man, renews his blood and preserves his sense of "wonder".

The novel's ending is ambiguous. Lawrence's leaves his heroine, on a rocky outcrop, in the midst of the potentially annihilating American wilderness. The experiences of her predecessor do not augur well in terms of Lou's eventual success; however, Lou who has nothing to lose and everything to gain, appears to be equipped with a greater understanding of her undertaking and a more resilient heart. By the end, she appears to have learnt a degree of humility (which brings its own reward) and has acquired a determination to attend to her personal quest to serve the "unseen presences":

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. It's something to do with wild America. And it's something to do with me...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...*

Lou's desire for an independent solitude - her move toward isolationism - is synonomous with her longing for a sense of personal integrity, which in turn is inseparable from her quest for meaning. Her efforts are offered as evidence of a female wisdom that would clear out its own "back-yard" before turning to that of the world.

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* Ibid., p.155.
The Woman Who Rode Away

Between the first and second draft of *St Mawr*, Lawrence produced the deeply disturbing tale of "The Woman Who Rode Away". It is a cautionary story about an unnamed Woman who desires to "know" the indigenous gods of the surrounding landscape. Like Lou Witt and the New England Woman before her she also offers up her "sex" to the "spirit" of "wild America" in exchange for some form of unspecified enlightenment. However, unlike *St Mawr* — which chronicles the death of Lou's old mode of consciousness and her consequent awakening — "The Woman Who Rode Away" charts only the progressive dissolution of the heroine's "white" mental consciousness, and her eventual (literal) death. The knowledge the tale's harsh terrain yeilds is both destructive and unequivocally brutal: in order to "know" the gods the Woman must sacrifice everything.

The first thing we learn about the heroine is that she lives in a state of suspended animation: which is to say, her world is not merely unreal, but dead. Indeed, the death-like atmosphere she inhabits is all-pervasive, overwhelming and inescapable (in the nearby "thrice-dead" town the inertia is so complete that even death goes unnoticed on the streets). Her environment and lifestyle offers neither mental stimulation nor spiritual sustenance, merely a "deadness within deadness". In an attempt to escape the monotony of her girlhood she had
married a silver-mine owner with the hope of injecting some sort of "adventure" into her life. Her marriage to this troglodyte figure of a husband materialises to be little more than a state of "invincible slavery"; one, moreover, in which she is (paradoxically) "admired" to the point of "extinction". For more than a decade, prior to the tale's opening, she has existed in this appalling condition of psychic stasis, her "conscious development" having become "completely arrested" with the onset of marriage.

The narrative chronicles the disastrous consequences of this sleeping beauty's momentary subconscious stirrings, and the consequent effects of the temporary arousal "from her stupor of subjected amazement"*. Her approximate awakening is precipitated by the speculations of a young male visitor to her husband's ranch. His vague enthusings and passing anecdotal evidence concerning the region's "unknown Indians" (and their religious mysteries) begin to obsess the Woman:

She was overcome by a foolish romanticism more unreal than a girl's. She felt it was her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvellous Indians of the mountains.*

Spurred into action, on the strength of what appears to be no more than a passing whim, she rides away from her redundant life. She is, of course, alarmingly ignorant as to the nature of her undertaking; only conscious that she

must somehow put an end to her condition of apparently terminal ennui. The only thing that has had any significance in her life is the mysterious mountainous region beyond the known limits of her own psychological and geographical horizon: it is into this mesmeric region that she willingly ventures, shedding all her previous associations. Whatever connections she once had with family, people and society have now been broken.

The region she enters is a mythic and lawless territory, beyond the jurisprudence and knowledge of the "white civilisation", where all her social covenants are brittle. The naïvety of her fascinated trance-like state is painful to witness: the Woman has none of the redeeming determined self-regulation or questing spirit of Lou Witt, rather she appears to abdicate any responsibility for her own destiny and yields herself up to the aboriginal "spirit" of the surrounding landscape. With this extreme passivity comes an attendant abnegation of all choice: nothing appears to be done of her own volition. As she moves further away from the dying centres of western civilisation, the hypnotic effect of the religio loci intensifies, and with each remove comes a corresponding diminishment of her mental consciousness (annotated by Lawrence as a series of symbolic deaths). Alone in the wilderness she feels

...like a woman who has died and passed beyond. She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a
crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious.*

Lawrence's intimation here is that the collapse of the Woman's "white" consciousness is somehow indicative of a universal collapse, one that foretells the slow symbolic demise of "white" America. In this respect the tale is about the envisaged end of the western phase of civilisation, which has depended so much upon individual will and personality for its continuance and success; a tale that is about the death of a redundant form of consciousness and the imagined ascendancy of a primitive and impersonal race-consciousness.

Eventually the Woman is intercepted by the Chilchui Indians and returns with them to their village. Her reaction to the primitive society she encounters there is exactly that of a passing tourist ("I only came to see what it was like"); and her understanding of her predicament is, at best, nominal. When asked, "Does the white woman seek the gods of the Chilchui because she is weary of her own God", she (unthinkingly) responds in the affirmative explaining that she "is tired of the white man's God...She would like to serve the gods of the Chilchui ". The answer she gives is, of course, partially true, but the full implication of her words cannot possibly be known to her, ignorant as she is of the nature of the religious sect she has stumbled upon. Her response to their next question is therefore even more

* Ibid., p.51.
disturbing: "do you bring your heart to the god of the Chilchui"*. Her automatic assent is revealing: the Woman has no conception of any "God"; she has no capacity for belief or commitment, her journey has not really involved any heartfelt vision, only the self-gratifying impulse of the spectator. The question is therefore meaningless to her.

The exchange is a momentous one for it highlights the fundamental rift that Lawrence believed to exist between the two forms of race consciousness*. The Chilchui Indians believe that the living "power" of their universe (as symbolised by the sun) has been usurped by the white man, who is ignorant of the nature and significance of his conquest. Unbeknown to the Woman the Chilchui religion prophecies that when the White Woman comes to "know" (i.e., relinquish) herself to their gods then the world will be restored to its pre-colonial glory and "the white man's god will fall to pieces":

Her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual, was to be obliterated again, and the great primeval symbols were to tower once more over the fallen individual independence of woman. The sharpness and the quivering nervous consciousness of the highly-bred white woman was to be destroyed again, womanhood was to be cast once more into the great stream of impersonal sex and impersonal passion.*

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* Ibid., p.59.
* Mark Kinkead-Weekes persuasively argues that the story is about the nature and repercussive effects of the colonial enterprise. See "The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away" in The D.H. Lawrence Review, vol.22. no.3. Fall 1990.
* The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories, ibid., p. 69. Lawrence is in danger here of confusing his analysis of the 'self-enclosure' of western civilisation with an analysis of the 'self-enclosure' of western women. He specifically uses a woman as the heroine of this story (and indeed 'The Princess') because he had always characterised this kind of self-conscious and individual
This resurrection of a primitive consciousness with its "great primeval symbols", means that eventual negation of any individual inter-subjectivity of being. The Indian version of "power" is, the story suggests, derived not from any one or group of individuals, but from the indigenous "spirit of place"; underscored, as it is, by an "abiding ferocity", "something primevally male and cruel", that Lawrence, throughout the American fictions, identifies with the landscape. This "impersonal" power is (again) imagined to be pre-sexual in origin, concerned not so much with human sexuality (the obsessive concern of a "white" mentality) but with a universal male/female principle that encompasses and transcends the limits of gender.

Significantly, the Woman is considered by the Indians to be practically asexual. As the story progresses it becomes increasingly apparent that they are immune to her western breed of feminine influence: the pigmentation of her skin, in their eyes, "took away all her womanhood, and left her as some giant female ant". There is nothing "sensual or sexual" in the way they look at her, rather she is viewed with all the impersonal objectivity of a sacrificial offering; she becomes a "mystic object to independence as female (even when it occurs in men), and made use of the female as symbol in order to clarify and define his idea. However, it should be remembered, that it is not merely a question of Lawrence's men and women having certain rigidly identifiable character traits, but a question of the proportion of male and female in the respective sexes, which concerns him. Within the limited confines of this tale he is trying to imagine the end of the rule of the personal, "mind-conscious" "white civilisation" and the recovery of the older, animistic power of the impersonal and the unselconscious.
them, some vehicle of passions too remote for her to grasp"*. Throughout her captivity she is subjected to what amounts to an extreme denudation of being. Far from resisting this de-personalising transformation into a "mystic object" she seems to accept this reification willingly:

She knew she was a victim; that all this elaborate work upon her was the work of victimising her. But she did not mind. She wanted it.*

The Woman passively complies with all her captors' demands ostensibly because it relieves her of the responsibility of the strain of individuation with all the attendant burdens of her "white" mental consciousness. This process is facilitated by the administering of hallucinogenic drugs which not only purify her body but also "numb" her "commonplace consciousness":

...the herb drink would numb her mind altogether and release her senses into a sort of heightened, mysticness and a feeling as if she were diffusing out deliciously into the harmony of things. This at length became the only state of consciousness she really recognised: this exquisite sense of bleeding out into the higher beauty and harmony of things.*

The profoundly feminine image of "bleeding out" suggests that the Woman has transcended the self-enclosure of her old life-mode and acquired a new animistic, "passional cosmic consciousness": "The Indians, with their heavily

* The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories, ibid. p.77.
* Ibid., p.77.
* Ibid., p.72.
religious natures, had made her succumb to their vision*. The Woman's awakening to the existence of a "higher" reality is her reward - that she may at least temporarily enjoy - for offering herself up as a sacrifice to the indigenous gods. In one sense, therefore, she does offer her heart to the Chilchuis, that she may get to "know" the "unseen presences" of "wild America", in a way that the New England woman or Lou Witt never do: in a more important sense, however, she does not really give her heart; after all, her "passional cosmic consciousness" is not achieved through the slow and personally arrived at realisations of Lawrence's other heroines, instead it is induced by imprisonment, isolation and drugs. In the end, despite the story's considerable efforts to convince the reader otherwise it is hard to see the Woman as anything other than the passive victim of a barbaric rite.

With the approach of the winter solstice the Woman is prepared for her eventual sacrifice. She is taken to a cave on the mountain-top which forms a primitive temple in which her ritual death will take place. The temple's topography is described in a language that lends it the unmistakable characteristics of phallic and vulvate morphology. "[M]arvellously arrested above the the cave's entrance is an "iridescent" stalagtite of ice through which the sun's rays must be refracted so as to penetrate the hollow cave and signal the moment of sacrifice. The

* Ibid., p.74.
tale closes with a macabre freeze-frame (whose sexual connotations hardly need elucidating): the High Priest stands above the altar-bound, prostrate victim holding the sacrificial knife, awaiting the moment he can enter the flesh "and strike home, accomplish the sacrifice and achieve power."

This tale has acquired the reputation (courtesy of Kate Millett) of being the most vicious and misogynistic of Lawrence's fictions*. In Millett's words:

All sadistic pornography tends to find its perfection in murder. Lawrence's movie priests themselves seem to understand the purpose of the rites and are "naked and in a state of barbaric ecstasy," as they await the moment when the sun, phallic itself, strikes the phallic icicle, and signals the phallic priest to plunge the phallic knife - penetrating the female victim and cutting out her heart - the death fuck.*

Tony Pinkey is, for example, a recent critic who supports Millett's reading wholeheartedly*. Other critics have disagreed: L.D. Clarke, Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Shiela Macleod amongst them. Sheila Macleod directly refutes Millett's theory of sexual politics and insists that the death the Woman undergoes is essentially "genderless":

Contrary to Kate Millett's claim in Sexual Politics, there is no evidence here of the white male fantasy

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* It is not: that privileged description is reserved for the short story, 'None of That'. The tale is one which subjects its American heroine to a brutal gang rape by way (it implies) of retributive justice for living according to the repressive dictates of her wilful "white" mental consciousness.


that dark-skinned men are inordinately attracted to white women. It is repeatedly stressed that the Indians find the woman sexually repulsive. Something quite other is happening: one of the last vestiges of her identity, the double pride in her whiteness and the power of her sexuality is being shed.*

She goes on to argue that the Woman is essentially "an emissary who comes in the spirit of surrender and sacrifice":

The woman is no less a Christ-figure than the man in "The Escaped Cock"...and her death is neither more nor less symbolic than his.*

L.D. Clarke hurriedly passes over the problematic issue of either sex or sexual politics in the tale, choosing rather to highlight what he describes as the "apocalypse of sacrifice". He concludes:

The personal implication of the author in this tale is too obvious to require much comment. Wish fulfilment renders submissive an overwhelming female power, not to the mechanical male of the present age but to the suppressed male of the blood. But "The Woman Who Rode Away" carries an artistic conviction beyond any such self-dramatization, through Lawrence's creation of fantastic place from real place and his compelling exposure of reaches of the human psyche in mythic terms...It is a merging of the red soul and the white which Lawrence's scheme is fated to occur. The configuration formerly sketched in Natty Bumpo and Chingachgook has now evolved into an apocalypse of sacrifice and transformation centred on the woman and the Chilchui Indians...The setting in which this occurs is a powerful fantasy of a restored wilderness such as Lawrence had predicted since witnessing the destruction of the wilderness through his reading of Cooper.*

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* Ibid., p.141.
* The Minoan Distance, ibid., pp.309-10.
Regarding the problematic issue of "the sacrificial offering of the victims heart" he concedes that "the modern mind is all but incapable of understanding its efficacy":

Indians like Lawrence's Chilchuis believed implicitly, of course, that they must feed the sun the blood of a few in order to maintain the life of many.*

These divergent views emphasise the difficulty in drawing any firm conclusions about this disturbing short story. It is, above all, a deeply challenging tale in which Lawrence's apocalyptic energies appear to have got the better of him*. Regardless of any rationale one may espouse by way of mitigating the story's innate brutalities, no amount of discussion or argument can, in the end, obscure the horror of the final (and remarkably evocative) scene in which a human sacrifice is all but performed.

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* Ibid., p.311.
* In his essay - "New Mexico" - Lawrence writes:

It is so easy to understand that the Aztecs gave hearts of men to the sun. For the sun is not merely hot or scorching, not at all. It is of a brilliant and unchallengeable purity and haughty serenity which would make one sacrifice the heart to it. Ah, yes, in New Mexico the heart is sacrificed to the sun and the human being is left stark, heartless, but undauntedly religious. (Phoenix, ibid., p.143.)

This brief passage does, to some extent, explain why his heliolatry takes such an extreme form in "The Woman Who Rode Away". That his pagan sun-worship could assume a more creative life-enhancing form is evidenced in his short story "Sun".
The Princess

The Princess is the archetypal wilful white American woman, whose "batlike throes of dementia" Lawrence considered to be characteristic of America's "white civilisation". The story chronicles the disastrous consequences of her sexual initiation in the midst of the mountainous New Mexican landscape.

Dollie Urquhart is another of Lawrence's emergent sleeping beauties. She has been reared by her father who, from the time of her birth, has incorporated her into his constellated fantasy realm and dominated her with his insane "intimacy". The strangest (and most damaging) of his delusions is the belief that father and daughter are the last descendants of dispossessed royal line. Such aristocratic lineage renders all common contact with the rest of the world vulgarising and contaminating. Thus isolated by their common delusory "knowledge" they develop a clandestine and all-exclusive liaison which will not accommodate any other form of shared human contact. In this rarified atmosphere Dollie develops an air of other-worldliness: as a small child, we are told, "something crystallised in her character, making her clear and finished, and as impervious as crystal"*. "Always strangely wise, and always childish", she develops a disconcerting habit of "knowing" in a

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.162.
dispassionate and disconnected fashion (the defining feature of Lawrence's will-bound consciousness). Predictably, Dollie possesses neither sensuality nor any redeeming sign of instinctual life: instead she is described as a "sexless fairy" or "barren blossom" and is distinguished only by her emotional frigidity and wilfulness. By the time of her father's death her emotional nexus with the world is almost non-existent and her solipsistic exclusion almost complete. The eventual freedom from the glass-house of his affections proves to be a traumatic experience and precipitates some sort of nervous collapse: "it was as if everything had evaporated around her". In the wake of his absence she is forced to acknowledge her essential nullity, and admit that she is nothing more than "an empty vessel, in the enormous warehouse of the world".

Alone, for the first time, the Princess begins to notice other men with a view to eventual matrimony. She is forced to conclude however that she is not attracted to them "vitally" and, though the thought of marriage "imposed a sort of spell on her", she cannot get beyond the idea, the "peculiar abstraction":

She thought that marriage, in the blank abstract, was the thing she ought to do. That marriage implied a man, she also knew. She knew all the facts. But the man seemed a property of her own mind rather than a thing in himself, another being.*

* Ibid., p.166.
After a period of aimless and unsuccessful wandering she feels the inexplicable pull of the American West and heads out to the mountainous regions of New Mexico. Here she encounters one the ranch guides - a Mexican, Romero - with whom she instantly recognises some form of "kinship" and a "wierd psychic connection" (that which her father had taught her to identify as a "fine demon"). Romero, unlike the Princess, is legitimately the last of his lineage, the dispossessed descendant of an economically depressed Spanish colonial family. Their physical decline and subsequent moral degeneracy, we are expressly told, is due to the "fatal inertia" which inevitably "overcomes all men, at last, on the desert near the mountains"*. Defeated by the aboriginal "spirit of place" (the eventual fate, it would seem, of all non-native settlers), the Spanish-Mexican(s) passively wait(s) "either to die, or to be aroused into passion and hope". Devoid of life-giving purpose, Lawrence explains, the remnants of a once powerful race finds its eventual "raison d'etre in self-torture and death-worship":

Unable to wrest a positive significance for themselves from the vast, beautiful, but vindictive landscape they were born into, they turned on their own selves, and worshipped death through self-torture.*

This profoundly bleak existence is one in which pain seems to be the last living proof that one is alive, and

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* Ibid., p.167  
* St Mawr and Other Stories, p.168. The Spanish Mexicans - originally being colonists - never attained the "oneness" with the land that the American Indian achieved.
death the ultimate proof one has lived, if only passingly.

The Princess's planned excursion into the Mountains - for which she develops a slightly mad passion - does not augur well. Not only will she and Romero be pitted against the annihilating powers that reside there (Romero we already know is descended from proven prey), but also we have been given enough information to realise that neither guide nor guided issue forth from the stable centres of their respective races.

The ascent into the mountains takes them, beyond all evidence of civilisation, into the heart of "wild America". Like Lou Witt, the New England woman and the woman who rode away, the Princess is transfixed by the hypnotic effect of the "great circling landscape", its "absolute beauty": to her the Rockies (from the safety of her ranch) appear as a luminous "fence of angels". It is this ostensible "glamour" which initially seduces her, rousing her desire to "know" their "secret heart". Her journey, therefore, is undertaken in the spirit of what can only be described as an alarmingly idealistic naïvety: from what we know of the Princess (not to mention the precedent set by Lawrence's other American women) its consequences can only be disastrous. This atmosphere of foreboding is heightened by the changing descriptions of the natural world. As guide and guided progress further toward "the core of things" the mood of
the surrounding landscape begins to alter, as the region's latent "evil" begins to make its presence felt:

In front now was nothing but mountains, ponderous, massive, down-sitting, in a huge and intricate knot, empty of life or soul...The lifeless valleys were concave of rock and spruce, crowded one behind the other, like some monstrous herd in arrest. It frightened the Princess, it was so inhuman. She had not thought it could be so inhuman, so, as it were, anti-life. And yet now one of her desires was fulfilled. She had seen it, the massive, gruesome, repellent core of the Rockies. She saw it there beneath her eyes, in its gigantic heavy gruesomeness.*

The strange squalor of the primitive forest pervaded the place, the squalor of animals and their droppings, the squalor of the wild. The Princess knew the peculiar repulsiveness of it.*

The climb itself relinquishes few compensatory pleasures. Alone they set up camp together, and Romero cooks and caters for the Princess's every comfort. Even amid so much domestic and quotidian detail, the Princess's egoistical paranoia begins to assert itself: she begins to feel a brooding "resentment" toward Romero and, somewhat ominously, feels herself "cornered" by him. Troubled by his masculine presence and harbouring a number of conflicting desires she retires. During the night she is awakened by a disturbing nightmare. The dream's symbolism is not difficult to interpret: its wintry landscape is indicative of her icy frigidity and her solipsistic self-enclosure; roused by the emanating

* St Mawr and Other Stories, p.181. L.D. Clarke describes the "conjoining between landscape and psychic desire" in the tale as one of Lawrence's most achieved, "the link that he had failed to forge in St Mawr, for all the magnificence of that tale" (The Minoan Distance, ibid., p.319).
* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.184.
spirit of the mountains and Romero's disturbing masculinity, her unconscious desire is to break free of her suffocating self-restraint. Upon waking she seduces Romero.

The sexual consummation of their relationship is, for the Princess repugnant, and her subsequent emotional recoil is violent. Although the event was self-initiated (albeit through an act of will), she views the whole episode as one of extreme physical and psychic violation, an act tantamount to rape: "[s]he felt like a victim there. And he was exulting in his power over her, his possession, his pleasure":

She had never, never wanted to be given over to this. But she had willed that it should happen to her. And according to her will, she lay and let it happen. But she never wanted it. She never wanted to be thus assailed and handled, mauled.*

Far from desiring any initiation into an unconscious realm (that her liaison with Romero and her trip into the mountains represents), the Princess acknowledges that, in reality:

She wanted warmth, protection, she wanted to be taken away from herself. And at the same time, perhaps more deeply than anything she wanted to keep herself intact, intact, untouched, that no-one should have any power over her, or rights to her. It was a wild necessity in her: that no-one, particularly no man, should have any right or power over her, that no-one and nothing should possess her.*

* Ibid., p.189.
* Ibid., p.188.
* Ibid.
Her "self-enclosure" is so complete (Lawrence uses the word "crystallised") that she is incapable of allowing any being to penetrate her formidable self-defenses. What she wants is a non-threatening extension of the paternal affection that she had known with her father; a relationship, in other words, that requires no true engagement on anything other than a superficial or mindful level: "She would never love any man. Never. It was fixed and sealed in her, almost vindictively"*. Lawrence is unequivocal as to where the blame lies for the creation of this vengeful, atrophied woman: "It was her father's fault". The story is at pains to point out the extent to which the Princess bears the scar tissue of her mad parent's delusions: her consequent, imagined vulnerability is so extreme that she feels her only means of protection and self-preservation is an inviolate tenacity of will; a repression that is of all unconscious and instinctual life beyond that which she can have absolute control.

In the aftermath of the disastrous coupling their relations degenerate into a ferocious battle of wills. The Princess determines to resist Romero's macho-masculinity* and he, in turn, determines to break the

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* Ibid., p.194
* Romero is another of Lawrence's representations of a breed of masculinity which had been in some way compromised (in this instance by New Mexico's "fatal inertia"). L.D. Clarke's comments concerning Romero's masculinity are illuminating in the context of the present discussion:

...with Romero love and death are too closely allied for him to lose love except by death. Her calling to him in the night is unretractable mating to him. he will not take her out
resolve of his glass-virgin, to make her love him; she merely responds by hardening her resolve. Though he takes her physically, Romero cannot conquer this formidable and implacable resolve and eventually she drags him down in the undertow of her own powers of negation. In this respect the Princess's will-power seen to be double-edged, in that although it is mainly defensive in origin, it is, in effect, deeply aggressive. However, that the Princess is also part victim here becomes apparent when, in a moment of rare candidness, she admits to herself that "she would have given anything" if her implacable spirit "could have melted. If she could have call him to her, with love"*. This private confession is perhaps the saddest part of this depressing tale.

Inescapably, in the desolate autumnal landscape, amidst "the savage, heartless, wildness of the mountains", they both fall victim to the other's powers of annihilation:

They were two people who had died. He did not touch her any more. In the night she lay and shivered like a dying dog...It was now so dreary, and so like death, she wished he would do anything rather than continue in this negation.*

The winter solstice of "The Woman Who Rode Away" is now transformed into the wintry spiritual wilderness of the

* Ibid., p.194.
the Princess's solipsistic will-bound consciousness and Romero's own death-like "inertia". The geographical and emotional wasteland that forms the setting for her failed initiation and his failed conquest is, in the end, devoid of all positive human affirmatives; the final scene is one in which belief, hope, meaningful contact and loving warmth are absent of meaning. Knowing that the Princess will be found and rescued, they both sit and wait for Romero's inevitable death: he is shot down like a dog, and the Princess, we are told, as a result of her trip, goes "slightly crazy". Eventually, Lawrence adds by way of a perfunctory conclusion she marries an "elderly man" with whom she can return to the previously unchallenging, emotionally sterile stasis, that is so reminiscent of her relationship with her father.

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The fictional vision that the American continent inspired - despite the centrality of the fierce but wonderful New Mexican landscape - is, in many respects, a bleak and unredeeming one. Beginning with St Mawr, Lawrence's hope of discovering a regenerative life in American soil is, despite unarticulated reservations, optimistic. With each progressive tale however, the faith that he will find redemption in America's fructifying wilderness begins to falter, and Lawrence's hope of incorporating the dark
promise of the continent's aboriginal power into his own schemes of world regeneration correspondingly fade.

One of the more disturbing aspects of these fictions is that the natural world itself is increasingly portrayed as being devoid of any innate beneficences: for example, Nature has little or none of the life-enhancing property or Wordsworthian grace encountered in the earlier sections of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*; rather it is seen to be essentially post-Darwinian, possessing not just "sordidness of savagery" but all the random and indifferent brutality of evolutionary theory. It is, of course, this extreme and harsh ambiguity that is the life-force's distinguishing feature. In *St Mawr*, Lawrence characterises this essential ambiguity in the following manner:

> The roses of the desert are the cactus flowers, crystal of translucent yellow or of rose-colour. But set among spines the devil himself must have conceived in a moment of sheer ecstasy.*

Although brilliantly described, and almost perfectly realised, the natural world (and the continent's *religio loci*) is, in the end, seen to be somehow inaccessible or harmful to each of the successive protagonists. It does, of course, represent a life-force to which they are unaccustomed and, critically, are either unprepared for or have no abiding connection with. And this is the point: what Lawrence insists on in each of these stories

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* Ibid., p.149. 
is the urgent necessity to be able to re-connect with this divine energy; stressing that the human being's relation with the cosmos is more important, not only than any form of male or female dominence, but than the sexual relationship itself. Combined they demonstrate Lawrence's desire to explore how the deracinated modern being can be brought into touch, once again, with the deepest cosmic forces: in other word, how essential it is for the human heart to invest its hope in a greater unity, as opposed to dehumanising investment in either a decadent civilisation or a will-to-power.
PART III

EUROPE
Lawrence left America in September 1925 burdened with the knowledge that he was living on borrowed time. During his stay in Mexico he had suffered, amongst other things, his first major pulmonary haemorrhage and had been forced to postpone his anticipated return to England by six months. This alarming confrontation with death and the subsequent (unexpected) recovery induced a marked change in both the man and his work*. Such an unlooked for restoration to life initiated what is recognised as Lawrence's final period of creative development. Concurring with Keith Sagar and Donald Gutierrez* I identify this final phase as beginning in March of 1925 (significantly, before he left America) when Lawrence began the unfinished fragment, "The Flying Fish".

Lawrence's experience of America had left him spiritually exhausted and physically debilitated: the redemption he had hoped to find in its native soil was, in the end, unavailable to him. Originally lured by the rejuvenating potential of America's dark consciousness, he had endeavoured to harness its aboriginal powers and assimilate them into his own grandiose schemes of world regeneration. His seduction had culminated in the heady

* See Frieda's comments in 'Not I, But the Wind...* (London: Granada Publishing,1935):

How thrilling it was to feel the inrush of new vitality in him; it was like a living miracle. A wonder before one's eyes. How grateful he was inside him! 'I can do things again. I can live and do as I like, no longer held down by the devouring illness.' How he loved every minute of life at the ranch. The morning, the squirrels, every flower that came in its turn, the big trees, chopping wood, the chickens, making bread, all our hard work, and the people and all assumed the radiance of new life. (p.144)

intoxication of the mysteries of blood-sacrifice which,
in retrospect, we realise spawned blind and bloody, and
above all damaging delusions: similarly (and not
unrelatedly), the possibility of political revolution as a
means of rejuvenating the culture at large had finally
proved untenable: The Plumed Serpent definitively
demonstrates both these failures. Even the desired
abandonment to apocalypse that Lawrence had been
persuaded of, and indeed promulgated, in Europe had been
defeated by nothing other than the implacable endurance
of America's desert regions.

From the outset a degree of ambivalence had underwritten
the American quest; Lawrence was never quite certain
whether his "savage pilgrimage" was prompted by the
search for a space in which to recolonise the New World,
or a grave in which to bury his appalling delusions.
Retrospectively, it is apparent that it involved both, in
almost equal measure. Although his efforts toward re-
colonisation were quickly abandoned, America provided him
with the imaginative scope to articulate even the most
febrile of his fantasies: these said and done, he was in
a crucial sense liberated from the more onerous aspect of
his self-elected messianic mission. Henceforth his
writing is notably quieter in mood and, while it retains
some of the old insistence and bullying exclusiveness, it
is more hieratic in tone. However, whilst his American
experiences can be seen as a major contributory factor in
the tempering of Lawrence's apocalyptic energies (his
perceived failures were after all nurtured in its soil), it should be remembered that, in the end, it was appropriately Lawrence's weak and treacherous body which became the forum for his own private and protracted skirmishes with death, and that ultimately it was within these fading precincts that he first encountered, and subsequently learnt, the humility and tenderness that characterise many of his last works.

This is not however to say that the saviour fit had passed entirely - it had not - but the evidence does suggest that it was on the wane. In June 1925 Lawrence had unreservedly declared that The Plumed Serpent was his "chief novel so far"*; by March 1928, in a letter to Witter Bynner, he quietly articulated the following reassessment:

...about The Plumed Serpent and "the hero". On the whole, I think you're right. The hero is obsolete, and the leader of men is a back number. After all, at the back of the hero is the militant ideal: and the militant ideal, or the ideal of the militant seems to me also a cold egg. We're sort of sick of all forms of militarism and militantism, and Miles is a name no more, for a man. On the whole I agree with you, the leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, ich dien sort of business.*

This was a recognition, not so much of defeat, but rather limitation; a realisation that there was little he could do, singlehandedly, to 'save' humanity from its innate

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* Letters V, ibid., p.272.
* Letters IV, ibid., p.321.
death-wish, and what he finally perceived to be an ineradicable suicidal impuluse. In January of 1926 he wrote to Murry:

I try as far as possible not to fight against the big currents. I don't care much about having my own way any more, even with myself. All that I want is to live and be well alive, not constrainedly half-dead...don't bother about Jesus, or mankind, or yourself. Let it all go, and have the other sort of faith, as far as possible...Let loose! Let loose!*  

If not quite a middle-aged mellowing, this can certainly be construed as a tactical reassessment. Although Lawrence's ambitions remained fundamentally the same his method of execution altered quite markedly in these final years: "But still, in a way, one has to fight," he wrote in 1928, "But not in the O Glory! sort of way"*. Increasingly during this period he sought to dissociate himself from the earlier didactic 'leadership' preoccupations; thus, in keeping with the concurrent curtailing of his ambitions, there is a significant shift in his focus of attention from the world arena (with its attendant vision of global regeneration), to the private sphere (with its complementary vision of personal redemption*). In part, this apparent change of heart is attributable to the evolving forces of world circumstance: having been washed up on the tide of history in the post-war years, Lawrence resigned himself

* Letters V, ibid., p.372.  
* Letters VI, ibid., p.321.  
* This was not only a thematic development but also a personal one. As Lawrence became increasingly unwilling to engage with the public (and publishing) world, he opted to have his work privately printed rather than subject it to the fingerling of the "censor-morons" (in the shape of critics, reviewers, and the jurisdiction of the courts).
to the emerging world order; the "cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins"*, begins the opening paragraph of Lady Chatterley's Lover, and all that may be salvaged once the dust has settled on the debris, he philosophically surmises, are "new little hopes" and make-shift "habitats." The innate pragmatism so characteristic of the new post-war generation he simultaneously admired - for its determination and resilience ("We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen"); and condemned - for its lack of insight and imaginative scope. The world-view of the syncopated jazz-era, he observed, had shrunk to one of particulars and meaningless minutae; it had neither time nor patience with a cosmic vision or grandiose hopes and gestures, its attention taken up with foreground pre-occupations and low-key quotidian ambitions. Such dispiriting conclusions led Lawrence to admit resignedly,

...there will never be a millenium. There will never be a "true societal flow" -- all things are relative. Men were never, in the past, fully societal--and they never will be in the future. But more so, more than now. Now is the time between Good Friday and Easter. We're absolutely in the tomb. If only one saw a chink of light in the tomb door.*

Predictably (and pragmatically), in the midst of limitation and despair, Lawrence envisioned just such "a chink of light" and doggedly set about articulating his

* Lawrence may well have had Browning's poem 'Love Among the Ruins' here. That Lawrence knew the work well is evident in Women in Love where he has Birkin quote it to Gerald Crich on their shared train journey to London. For further discussion of Lawrence's Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite influences see Karen Z. Sproles essay 'D.H. Lawrence and the Pre-Raphaelites: Love Among the Ruins', The D.H. Lawrence Review, Vol. 22, no.3 (Fall 1990), pp.299-306.
* Letters VI, ibid., p.113.
last hope for England. In this respect, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is the major meditation of his final years delivering, as it does, both a diagnosis of the culture's sickness, and a prognosis for its recovery via the resurrection and embodiment of a "phallic reality" or "consciousness".

It is important to recognise the centrality and significance of the phallus in Lawrence's regenerative scheme: it is the symbol in which he placed all his dying hope, and for which he has been much (and unjustly) maligned. At its most immediate, the sacred mystery and the hidden fire (once symbolised by the rainbow's arc) in the blood of men, is now identified with the life-bestowing phallus, symbol of the generative power of nature, and the resurgent potency of a re-vitalised masculinity. That it should be the phallus that Lawrence chose as his final representation of the fragile yet forceful resilience of human life is, in part, determined by the morphology of human genitalia: the erect phallus is undeniably the ultimate visible expression of human desire; by contrast, the essence of female sexuality being its concealment, its sacred and internal self-enclosure, which to the poetic mind translates itself not into the fountain of life, but the place where new life gestates in silence, hiddenness and mystery. Far from being pathologically phallocentric the lately impotent
Lawrence* was merely attempting to gain recognition that the erect penis is a minor miracle of an assured and prideful masculinity; never, to his mind, had this been more true or necessary than in the post-war era when the utterly abject and unmanned male was at the mercy of the tyrannous and emasculating female; (indeed one of the aims of Lady Chatterley is to transform the female's attitude toward the penis from "masturbatory tool" to maypole). The focus (too easily forgotten) of Lady Chatterley's Lover is not the gamekeeper's genitals, but rather the hostile imbalance of power between the sexes (identified as the source of their mutual miseries); at this level the crudity of the phallus-as-symbol is forgotten, giving way to the greater dimension and mystical design of Lawrence's "phallic consciousness", which seeks the restitution of the meaningful bonds that bind us each to other and to the earth that issued us. "The way to gentle re-union," Lawrence argued (in defence of his most controversial novel), "is phallic, and through tenderness":

...between men and women, and men and men, altogether. Phallic consciousness is so much deeper than what we call sex. I don't call my novel a sex novel: It's a phallic novel.*

Even after completing the Chatterley novel Lawrence was insistent that, "one still has to fight for the phallic

* For a discussion of the more positive aspect of Lawrence's impotence see Mark Spilka's essay "Lawrence versus Peeperkorn on Abdication; or, What Happens to a Pagan Vitalist When the Juice Runs Out?" in his work Reviewing the Normative: D.H. Lawrence A Personal Progress (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992) pp.70-99.
* Letters VI, ibid., p.324-5.
reality, as against the non-phallic cerebration"*: that there are three complete and separate versions indicates not only Lawrence's determination that its central message be clear and coherent, but that the refining process was an intrinsic part of the "fight". In a letter to Trigant Burrow in 1928* he fondly describes Lady Chatterley's Lover as his "modern phallic novel", whose radical enterprise, he prophetically appreciates, will be misunderstood and vilified: "It's such a nice tender phallic novel, so of course, much too fine and sensitive for the gross public. They'd cry dirt on it". And so they did.

This final phase of Lawrence's creative development sees the introduction of certain stylistic modulations which provide a new and distinctive quality to both his poetry and prose. This late-flowering style, at its best, creates a language which evidently undergoes a poetic process of refinement and distillation; a language, that is, stripped of artifice and superfluity which combines both a directness of diction and an evocative lyricism, to produce some of his purest and most expressive work. As Lawrence's imaginative vision became more focussed during these last years his literary ambitions were similarly tempered and his creative efforts were executed on a much smaller scale. Not only did this enable him to

* Ibid., p.324.
transcend the formal difficulties of some of his earlier works, it provided him with the creative freedom to revise and experiment with the wide range of mythic material, symbols, and genres at his disposal. Lawrence's "revisionary myth-making" combines elements of pagan and Christian mythologies, utopias, and private patterns of symbols, some traditional, some newly-wrought; there is an increasing tendency to use characters from popular English fiction and folklore - the virgin, gipsy, Lady of the Manor, gamekeeper - who are manipulated according to idiosyncratic design as Lawrence plays with their cultural associations (past and present), and subjects them to his own adaptive wit and penetrating intelligence. Characterisation, myth and symbol remain, in appearance, simple and coherent throughout, belying their innate layered complexities and range of reference. Above all, Lawrence uses myth not as a means of evading modern reality, but of exploring, commenting on, and criticising it. The notion of escape, of romantic flight is present in these late works, but it is a reflective notion. Although it is true that a number of Lawrence's late protagonists remain solitaries, their isolation is attained as a result of considered and informed choice; which is to say, their tendency to withdraw into a distant, untroubled realm is not to be understood in terms of neurotic or narcissistic flight, but rather as conscious abstention from the immediacy of societal struggle. The brilliant tale of "The Man Who Loved Islands" serves as a corrective to just such an escapist
neurosis: the paradox this latter-day parable exemplifies is that in seeking to escape a personal (and profoundly modern) sense of alienation there is a danger that the narcissist merely compounds his perniciously abstracting tendency, achieving no more than a deathly solipsism. Cathcart's final "peace" is a death-like state (if not death itself; Lawrence is deliberately ambiguous here), devoid of all sustaining life and colour, which hearkens back to the frozen waste land at the close of Women in Love. At the other end of the spectrum, the serene and fertile world to which Lawrence transports many of his later characters is a contemporary pastoral or utopian realm where, he suggests, human innocence can be recovered and even subsist, if only temporarily. This is not to say that he creates an untroubled or inviolate realm: the mythic space of Wragby Wood in Lady Chatterley's Lover is under constant threat; indeed the sustaining hope of the novel is that in despite of external or societal pressures Connie and Mellors can maintain their friable harmony in the blighted territory that is modern England. Their existence, the novel unequivocally states, is an increasingly precarious one set within the context of the twentieth industrial world and its overwhelming dehumanising powers; their ability to stay these annihilating forces is dependant upon the enduring power of their mutually summoned "tenderness".
Comedy and humour are never far from this process, indeed they play an important and necessary part in grounding the mythic material in a circumscribed and contextual reality. Lawrence deliberately employs what may described as a method of comic deflation to undermine some of his more incredible and ambitious notions. The most notable example is the bathetic undercutting of the final sentence in *The Escaped Cock* - "Tomorrow is another day." - which proves to be all the more entertaining for its mild self-mockery and gentle ironic commentary on the tale's mythic content. Traditionally, Lawrentian humour has been undervalued*, largely because its subtlety is often overshadowed by doctrinal intent or emphatic didacticism. During the last years the occasional zealotry of the American period is replaced by a quieter earnestness as the old artistry is allowed to re-

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* The Escaped Cock is more commonly referred to as The Man Who Died. I have used the Black Sparrow Press edition - entitled *The Escaped Cock* (Los Angeles, 1973) - edited by Gerald E. Lacy and have therefore referred to the text under this title throughout. Lacy reprints the several versions of the text and provides a detailed analysis of the tale's history, texts, and analogies; noting specifically that Lawrence only grudgingly acquiesced in 1930 to the title "The Man Who Had Died" - not "The Man Who Died" - but insisted that "The Escaped Cock" be the subtitle. In neither respect were his wishes adhered to (see p. 152). For a more recent detailing of the several texts see Keith Sagar's *D.H. Lawrence: A Calendar of his Works, With a Checklist of the Manuscripts of D.H. Lawrence* by Lindeth Vasey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), pp. 210-211.

* The notable exception to this is John Bayley's insightful essay, "Lawrence's comedy, and the war of superiorities" in *Rethinking Lawrence*, ed. Keith Brown (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990). Bayley gives a lively summary of the range and complexities of Lawrence's comic abilities ('a kind of Laurence Sterne increasingly comes out in lawrence's literary personality'), concentrating in particular on the versatility of his narrative stance and the enduring challenge it poses for the reader ('continually goading the reader to a comparable liveliness of response'). My only criticism of Bayley's essay is his reluctance to accommodate Lawrentian metaphysic, arguing as he does, that this is now outdated and therefore of negligible interest; Lawrence he maintains should be read for form not content.

One of Lawrence's achievements...is to have assimilated Freudain theory, rather as Shakespeare invisibly assimilated Montaigne and Plutarch, and to have given it in his art - particularly that of his stories - a human face, and a comic face. Our response to Lawrence is only intelligent, and therefore only beneficial, if it is light-hearted: not earnestly and rigidly serious.
surface, and Lawrence's more familiar playful antagonism once again comes to the fore. The engagement with the reader becomes more mischievous and flirtatious as his desire to challenge accepted attitudes and assumptions increases. Such humour is abundantly present throughout this period, if not explicitly as in *The Virgin and The Gipsy*, then implicitly as in *The Escaped Cock*. It is almost as if Lawrence, aware of his approaching death, consciously sought to discard his erstwhile weakness for shrill proselytization and chose to concentrate on the simple articulation of his brief life's thinking. These final years after his return to Europe were undoubtedly years of struggle, compounded by the necessity to encompass imaginatively the knowledge and experience of his own approaching death. Wisdom and reflection is a luxury ordinarily reserved for old age and Lawrence, aware that he would not live to inherit this privilege, was forced to cram all his life's ordering into the last four years. Time and again during these last works one witnesses rare moments of fought-for peace and surety amidst profound emotional turbulence. Nowhere is this more evident than in *Last Poems*, whose strong-minded lyricism transmutes (in the words of Richard Aldington*) "the suffering and the agony of departure" into "music and reconciliation".

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* "Introduction to *Last Poems* and *More Passies*, The Complete Poems, ibid., p.598."
The imaginative process began with Lawrence's realisation that he must close the circle of his American quest by pursuing the long arc back to England and Europe, where he could simultaneously re-address (and re-align himself to) his own beginnings and cultural traditions. In this respect "The Flying Fish" serves as a symbolic homecoming in so much as Gethin Day reverses, or rather completes, the spiritual quest that had prompted Lou witt's transatlantic journeying. The process of separation begun in St Mawr is now countered with a move toward personal individuation within the living context of a meaningful, binding relationship or community. In making this last Atlantic crossing, Lawrence initiated a body of work that is thematically centred in the multifaceted meaning of return and integration. Such an undertaking is always potentially treacherous because the returning wanderer (Homer's Odysseus is his archetype) can never be sure what he will find upon arrival. At best, all that may be required is a rapid readjustment on the psyche's dream-screen, a re-evaluation of the nostalgic fantasy against the factual reality; at worst, the unimaginable may have happened and the questing hero discovers, like Tennyson's Enoch Arden, that there is no home to return to.

For Lawrence - England's notorious errant son - such tensions are bought into sharper focus because, like James Joyce, he spent the greater part of his life trying to escape the powerful, determining forces of his beginnings. "Home," T.S. Eliot once declared, "is where
one starts from"* - meaning it is both the point of origin and departure, a beginning and an end, a past to be (ostensibly) discarded in favour of the future: equally, contained within such a statement, is the knowledge that having lost one's way it is to "home" that the individual necessarily returns in order to find his bearings, rediscover himself and begin again. Much of Lawrence's earlier work is concerned with the denial of family or domestic ties, and the processes of self-liberation from the claustrophobia of cloying intimacies. Paul Morel, Ursula Brangwen, Aaron Sisson, Richard Somers, Kate Leslie (to name but a few), are all characters who exemplify, in varying ways, their author's continuing pre-occupation with the processes of dissociation and escape (his last fictional work, it should be remembered, was entitled The Escaped Cock).

Paradoxically however, Lawrence was similarly aware of the impossibility, and indeed futility, of trying to break free of one's past (both in personal and cultural terms). As Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious suggest, the profound effect of our formative influences is immeasurable, evading even the most persistent and concerted scrutiny; the understanding and memories they spawn are as commonplace and distinctive as the human fingerprint which means that wittingly, or otherwise, we cannot but become prey to their subtle and powerful manipulations. In many

respects, Lawrence's entire creative output can be seen as a continuing effort to re-work and re-cast, reconcile and assimilate, his own personal dramas and private dreams in an unfailing attempt to reach a livable conclusion.*. These two forces - the forward plunge into the future, and the constant backwash of the past - are in constant opposition throughout his career, and out of their continuing creative conflict arises much of the dramatic tension within his work. No-one understands this better than Raymond Williams (amongst Lawrence's finest and most perceptive critics) who identifies Lawrence's working-class origins as the root cause of his abiding conflicts:

...the real importance of Lawrence's origins is not and cannot be a matter of retrospect from the adult life. It is, rather, that his first social responses were those, not of a man observing the processes of industrialism, but of one caught in them, at an exposed point, and destined, in the normal course, to be enlisted in their regiments. That he escaped enlistment is now so well known to us that it is difficult to realize the thing as it happened, in its living sequence...Lawrence was so involved with the business of getting free of the industrial system that he never came seriously to the problem of changing it, although he knew that since the problem was common an individual solution was only a cry in the wind. It would be absurd to blame him on these grounds. It is not so much that he was an artist, and thus supposedly condemned, by romantic theory, to individual solutions. In fact...Lawrence spent a good deal of time trying to generalize about the necessary common change; he was deeply committed, all his life, to the idea of re-formining society. But his main energy went, and had to go, to the business of personal liberation from the system.*

* That Lawrence took his own biography to be a symptomatic blueprint of the culture's at large is, of course, both his great strength (the source of his profoundest insights) and his great weakness (the cause of his worst blindness).
The live-long "business of personal liberation" was not, of course, limited to social background. Lawrence himself chronicled his own Oedipal* dramas with unparalleled detail in Sons and Lovers, and continued to examine the repercussions of this central relationship on his own subsequent personal relations, revealing it to be as powerfully deterministic a force as his working class heritage*. Indeed it is important to recognise that Lawrence’s antipathy to Freud is pronounced emphatically in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious. Recognising the similarity between his own theories and Freud’s, Lawrence sought to differentiate and distinguish his own way of thinking. Ironically, there are many parallels between these two modes of thought, the obvious difference being that Lawrence sought no scientific basis for his theorising: on the contrary, like Vladimir Nabokov he insisted that psychoanalysis was essentially a fictional construct, and as such should not be taken as objective fact. Nabokov, mildly contemptuous of the western world’s wholesale appropriation of Freudian theory, made it a ‘rule’ to "address a few words of encouragement" (a lengthy synonym for ‘taunt’) to "the Viennese delegation" (The Defence (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.9) by way of pre-empting the over-simplification and reduction of his elaborate texts in the hands of the psychoanalysts. Lawrence was introduced to the works of Freud and Otto Gross by Frieda early on in his career (for a full discussion of the considerable intellectual influence of Frieda and her sisters see Martin Green’s The Von Richtofen Sisters (1974)). John Worthen, in D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years (1991), maintains that it has not been ‘sufficiently recognised how much Frieda influenced Lawrence’ in his writing of Sons and Lovers (ibid., p.441). He goes on to speculate that Lawrence would have first heard Freudian theory, and in particular the Oedipus Complex, (vaguely) articulated by Frieda, who in turn would have gleaned it from Otto Gross:

Lawrence had as early as December 1910 been in lucid possession of the idea that his mother’s love for him had damaged him: "It has been rather terrible, and has made me, in some respects, abnormal!...he had with great candour told Rachel Annand Taylor. "Nobody can have the soul of me. My mother has had it, and nobody can have it again"...But Frieda’s excitement about what she now thought of as the real heart of the novel was because, in Freud’s theory, the child was not rendered abnormal but was naturally dominated by incestuous feelings for its mother and by a desire to murder its father. Freud described a pattern which - although Lawrence had known all its details before - he can never have heard articulated so clearly as a theory...It gave him both clarity and distance; he could now see that it was Paul’s growing up out of these childish feelings which constituted his crucial development: his killing of Mrs Morel rather than Mr Morel, for example, acquired a very special importance. (ibid., p.443)

Lawrence undoubtedly found it convenient to concur with some of Freud’s thinking - the Oedipus Complex being the obvious example - but only on the occasions where it fitted his already existing conclusions. For the sake of my argument in Part III, I have used the adjective ‘Oedipal’ with reference to both Freud and Sophocles.

* Philip Roth is one of the few twentieth century writers comparable to Lawrence in this respect (industrialism for Lawrence, Judaism for Roth). In Portnoy’s Complaint Roth delivers a late-twentieth century update on the Oedipual crisis which, despite (perhaps even because of) the dazzling wit and riotous bawdy humour, proves to be a sobering read. Like Lawrence, Roth went on to examine the repercussions of what is probably our most significant emotional scarring in My Life As A Man: this, arguably his finest novel (to date), is a brutal exposition of the current
Lawrence's insights into the terminal corruption of his culture, the breakdown of individual and communal relationships, and the desecration of his homeland, are all firmly rooted (either directly or indirectly) in the nursery-bed of the age-old family romance.

Raymond Williams concludes his essay on Lawrence with the assertion that the "tragedy of Lawrence, the working-class boy, is that he failed to come home"*: although he goes on to exonerate Lawrence from all "the impertinences of personal blame", the injustice of such a conclusion is unavoidable in that it fails to take into account the truth that Lawrence did genuinely try to return to England. "The Flying Fish", as I demonstrate below, is a dramatisation and exploration of the original impulse that initiated his attempt at repatriation; the "tragedy", as far as Lawrence was concerned, lies in the fact that the "home" he desired to return to had ceased to exist. It was this inability or failure to repatriate which prompted, specifically, his last novel and the body of work which followed. In 1926 Lawrence had determined never to write another novel; not only had the inclination deserted him, but he felt he no longer had the physical or emotional resources necessary for such an undertaking: "I'm not going to lay myself to waste again in such a hurry", he wrote to Dorothy Brett in the July,

* Culture and Society, ibid., p.212.
"Let the public read the old novels"*. During the late summer of that year he revisited his native region and witnessed the devastating effects of the coal strike and the widespread desecration of the landscape. By the autumn he began shaping, in creative response, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which, in many ways, forms his final threnody for a dying and lamented England. Out of bleakness and despair Lawrence forged the immediate living relationship of Constance Chatterley and her gamekeeper, which would prove to be his last stand, and final defence, against the dehumanising powers of an industrialised nation.

Time and again in the essays, poetry, fictional works and letters, written after 1925, the reader encounters Lawrence's attempt to reassess and re-engage with his background and homeland, to achieve some sort of assimilation and reconciliation before the final dissolution of death. Having temporarily lost his way, Lawrence understood better than most that through the discipline of re-addressing and re-presenting one's beginnings ritual instruction is received on how to begin again; the search for beginnings with which to make sense, bless and consummate an otherwise meaningless present forms a redressing in deepest sense. In this respect the mnemonic component of Lawrence's late works needs to be both acknowledged and understood; it is,

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* Letters V, ibid., p.492.
after all, Mnemosyne* who presides, in spirit, over these last years. Like Wordsworth before him, Lawrence's energies and reveries are essentially religious. Wordsworth, however, was born toward the close of the of the eighteenth century, at a time when it was still possible to bind himself back to the delivering earth (soliciting solace in Nature as Mother Goddess) - this he did, notably following the failure of his political hopes in the misdirection of the French Revolution - enabling him to seek and find a community and communion through the process of dissolving history and personality into nature. Lawrence, finding himself at the wrong end of the Industrial Revolution - as well as having to contend with an entrenched Individualism and the realities of nineteenth century Utilitarianism - cannot perform this task so readily (industrial blight and spiritual inertia having, in his perception, done away with both "the instinct of community"* and nature*). A by-product of his

* Mnemosyne is the Greek Mother Goddess of Memory, daughter of Heaven (Ouranos) and Earth (Gaia), associated with water, and mother of the nine dancing Muses. Our word "memory" is from the Latin memoria and minor = mindful, the act of calling to and bearing in mind. Lawrence's debt to Mnemosyne is implicitly, rather than explicitly, acknowledged in these last works. Beside the obvious acts of memory on which the last works are founded, the elusive goddess's presence can be perceived most immediately in the remarkable fluidity of the imagery. Water - be it in the form of the ocean's elemental blessing bestowed in "The Flying Fish", the apocalyptic flood of The Virgin and the Gipsy, the rain's baptismal and purifying power in Lady Chatterley's Lover, or the Lethe-like waters of death in Last Poems - is the dominant element of the late works; this new-found liquidity is particularly noticeable coming, as it does, after the parched desert landscapes of the American period. Equally important, though less obvious, is Lawrence's awareness that our mnemonic recoveries involve a degree of gratitude and celebration, nearly all of Lawrence's last works are, despite his proximity to death, celebrations of life.
* "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside": Phoenix, ibid., p.139.
* During his absence England had undergone a dramatic change: "It's much worse than when I was here last time, almost gruesome," he wrote to Dorothy Brett, "There's no life in anybody." (Letters V, ibid., p.313). His own nearness to death brought England's demise into sharper focus:

I was at my sisters in September, and we drove round - I saw the miners - and pickets - and policemen - it was like a spear through one's heart...we'd better buck up and do
ongoing "business of personal liberation" meant that he found himself in the uncompromising position of a self-elected exile. By dint of his personal disposition Lawrence could not return home to discover deliverance (even if it were there to be found) in any communal guarantee. This dilemma is succinctly described by Williams (in his essay on Orwell) as the enduring "paradox of the exile":

...because of his own personal position, [the exile] cannot finally believe in any social guarantee: to him, because this is a pattern of his own living, almost all association is suspect. He fears it because he does not want to be compromised... he fears it also because he can see no way of conforming, socially, his own individuality; this, after all is the psychological condition of the self-exile... all he can fall back on is the notion of an atomistic society, which will leave individuals alone.*

something for the England to come, for they've pushed the spear through the side of my England... (Letters V, ibid., p.592).

Lawrence suffered agonies of remorse on seeing his beloved Midlands scarred and defaced; equally painful was the fact that his countrymen were becoming increasingly oblivious and indifferent to the land that bore them. In 'Return to Bestwood' he observes that the 'country seems, somehow, fogged over with people, and yet not really touched. It seems to lie back away, unreach and asleep...[a]sleep in a very heavy, weary dream, disconnected from the modern world.' (Phoenix II, ibid., p.258).

* This excerpt is taken from Williams' essay on Orwell in Culture and Society. That the state of 'exile' Williams outlines is equally valid in this context is supported by his assertion that "D.H. Lawrence, still the most intelligent of these men in our time, knew this condition and described it." The 'tradition' that Williams delineates is uncanny in its accuracy and applicability to Lawrence:

For Orwell was one of those significant number of men who, deprived of a settled way of living, or of a faith, or having rejected those which were inherited, find virtue in a kind of improvised living, and in an assertion of independence...[the tradition]...attracts to itself many of the liberal virtues: empiricism, a certain integrity, frankness. It also has, as the normally contingent virtue of exile, certain qualities of perception: in particular, the ability to distinguish inadequacies in the groups which have been rejected. It gives, also, an appearance of strength, although this is largely illusory. The qualities, though salutary, are largely negative; there is an appearance of hardness (the austere criticism of hypocrisy, complacency, self-deceit), but this is usually brittle, and at times hysterical: the substance of community is lacking, and the tension, in men of high quality, is very great. Alongside the tough rejection of competence, the inability to form extending relationships. (ibid., pp.279-280).
Lawrence, Williams explains, was typical of "exile [who] wants to see the system changed so that he can come home"*. Both the means and the extent of the change Lawrence envisaged and hoped for are articulated in Lady Chatterley's Lover (and later qualified in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover"): Williams is of course right in that Lawrence's proffered solution resides in the hope that his lovers may be left alone in some small pocket of England (an "atomistic society") where they may be at liberty to live their own life uninterrupted and in isolate togetherness*. In reality - and despite the furore surrounding its publication - the book advocates the quietest and most improbable of cultural revolutions; Lawrence's supposed subversive radicalism, in the end, proves itself to be deeply conservative.

Williams goes on to stress that there is "a distinction between exile and vagrancy: there is usually a principle in exile, there is always only relaxation in vagrancy" (ibid., p.280). That Lawrence understood this distinction is apparent in The Escaped Cock where he clearly differentiates between the two states. Thus when the man who died enters the practical world of the priestess' entourage he is temporarily mistaken for "an escaped malefactor" and hostilely viewed as a "vagabond": it is only when he is apprehended through the priestess' consciousness that he is clearly recognised as a "wanderer", whose religious purpose and significance is confirmed by her (mis)taking him for the dying/resurrecting god, Osiris. * Culture and Society, ibid., p.205.

* It is worth noting, at this point, that the only community Lawrence wholeheartedly endorsed was the one he re-created in Etruscan Places: significantly, Etruria had fallen prey to the ravages of historical process (in the form of the Roman legions) and ceased to exist approximately 2,500 years previously. Knowledge of the Etruscan civilisation, to this day, is painfully scant (despite having since deciphered their language), thus Lawrence's essentially imaginative reconstruction means that this, the definitive articulation of his 'dream of life' remains, crucially, incontestable; existing, therefore, beyond the probing reach of the mind-ful archeologist and the intellectual vivisectionist. In short, it is no human solution but an imaginative one. For further and fuller discussion of Lawrence's historical and archeological (in)accuracies see Massimo Pallottino's foreward to the Olive Press edition of Etruscan Places (London, 1986), and Christopher Hassall's informative essay "D.H. Lawrence and the Etruscans" in Essays in Divers Hands, Vol.31 (1962).
The fact that Lawrence lived as an exile however is merely symptomatic of a more fundamental condition. Similarly, the related notion of him as 'romantic rebel'-rejecting outright society's claims - is a vulgarisation (though unfortunately a plausible one), obscuring his life-time commitment to the discovery of a congenial and creative community, immune to the destructive pressures of society. For Lawrence, man's deepest instinct (older than the sexual*) was to be an integral part of a living community: correspondingly, the individual disavowal of the communal guarantee in favour of solitary nomadism was, to his mind, tantamount to the denial of the deepest part of the self. Traditionally the hero's wanderings were only significant - which is to say story-worthy - if purposefully pursued and with the intent of transporting the newly acquired knowledge home to revivify the community. In "The Flying Fish" Lawrence reveals the extent to which the hero's quest in modern times has been denied any sustaining and spiritual dimension; Gethin Day's global wanderings are effectively exposed as aimless, born of contemporary "restlessness", amounting to little more than a meaningless flight which, in the end, proves to be as debilitating as the spiritual impoverishment and alienation it seeks to avoid. On his

* See his letter to Trigant Burrow in July 1927:

What ails me is the absolute frustration of my primeval societal instinct. The hero illusion starts with the individualist illusion, and all the resistances ensue. I think societal instinct much deeper than sex instinct - and societal repression much more devastating. There is no repression of the sexual individual comparable to the repression of the societal man in me, by the individual ego, my own and everybody else's. I am weary of my own individuality, and simply nauseated by other people's. (Letters IV, ibid., p.99).
own dedicated restlessness Lawrence passed the following
telling commentary:

...we make a mistake forsaking England and moving
out into the periphery of life. After all, Taormina,
Ceylon, Africa, America - as far as we go, they are
only the negation of what we ourselves stand for and
are: and we're rather like Jonahs running away from
the place we belong.*

The story of Jonah is a particularly relevant one for
Lawrence: not only does the biblical hero undergo a
mysterious transformation within the fish's belly (a
symbolic plunge into the chaos of the primordial waters)
but he emerges, as though reborn, to a new life, returned
to his homeland and, most importantly, reconciled with
the Father. Jonah of course is Gethin Day's prototype,
but unlike Jonah, Day fails to make it home. Lawrence
himself arrived on English shores but his efforts at
repatriation were frustrated, suggesting that he failed
to bring about his own desired heroic transformation and
the consequent reconciliation with his homeland and the
father (the two of course are inextricably connected). It
is this failure which forms the crux of Lawrence's last
years, and of which he never lost sight; its innate
perplexities, and determining influences are discernible
in all his fictions, essays and poetry, as if each
successive work is an endeavour to re-engage and come to
terms with his own patrimony and, by extension, his
nation's changing heritage. Having fled England during
the immediate post-war years he returned to discover his

imagined 'home' denied him; the subsequent flight to Europe can be viewed as a compromise, in so much as it initiated a partial reconciliation - at least to the ancient Mediterranean civilisations (the parental culture which unites both father and mother) - thereby delivering him up for meaningful burial.


Lawrence's response to England in 1925-26 was deeply divided. In "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" and, more particularly, "Return to Bestwood" he describes his characteristic reaction not only to his native region ("I feel more alien, perhaps, in my home place than anywhere else in the world"*), but also to his fellow Midlanders, for whom he feels both a "devouring nostalgia and an infinite repulsion"*:

They are the only people who move me strongly, and with whom I feel myself connected in deeper destiny. It is they who are, in some peculiar way, "home" to me. I shrink from them, and I have an acute nostalgia for them.*

The affinity and innate empathy of earlier days remain, but true sympathy and identification are now noticeably absent. This breakdown is clearly illustrated when comparing the depiction of the miners (and their mythic significance) in the early and late fiction. Initially

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* Phoenix II, ibid., p.257.
* Ibid.
* Ibid., p.264.
they represent all that is natural and instinctual, underground agents of dark vitality, in which the communal instinct - "the curious dark intimacy of the mine, the naked sort of contact"* - and blood brotherhood were strong and to be envied by the outsider. Latterly, most notably in Lady Chatterley, their glamorous aura has considerably diminished, if not vanished altogether: here the miner undergoes a subtle demonisation whereby he is portrayed as the belligerent underground denizen of an hellish inferno that has reduced him to both the victim of mechanization, and the perpetrator of "the hopeless squalor of industrialism"*. Such practice is symptomatic of Lawrence's late re-visioning of England, and arises from his own disillusionment and loss of faith in the defeated working-classes, with whom he could no longer hope to find any form of sanctuary (just one more contender for the "huge cemetery of human hopes"*).

"Nostalgia" plays an important part in this revisionary method, accentuated as it is, by the mourning for the lost Eden of a (largely imagined) world never to be re-entered, impossible to regain. The existing reality is inevitably, and somewhat unfairly, contrasted with the remembrance of an original happiness that cannot be re-captured and is, consequently, experienced as an ontological 'absence', acutely and profoundly felt. But equally, England's perceived demise is neither wholly inaccurate nor distorted: in Lady Chatterley's Lover,

* "Nottingham and Mining Countryside", Phoenix, ibid., p.136.
* Ibid.
Lawrence chronicles the impact of a changing historical reality upon the landscape, and laments the widespread desecration accomplished in the name of progress and technological advancement;

...in the wide, rolling region of the castles, smoke waved against steam, and patch after patch of raw reddish brick showed the new mining settlements, sometimes the hollows, sometimes gruesomely ugly along the skyline of the slopes. And between, in between, were the tattered remnants of the old coaching cottage England...England my England! But which is my England? The stately homes of England make good photographs, and create the illusion of a connection with the Elizabethans. The handsome old halls are there, from the days of Good Queen Anne and Tom Jones. But smuts fall blacker and blacker on the drab stucco, that has long ceased to be golden. And now, one by one, like the stately home, they are abandoned. Now they are being pulled down. As for the cottages of England, there they are - great plasterings of brick dwellings on the hopeless countryside...This is history. One England blots out another. The mines had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they has already blotted out the cottages. The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic but mechanical.*

For Lawrence this evolutionary process of self-obliteration went beyond the surface befouling of England's greenery to strike at the very core of the nation's psyche. Progress or "continuity", when not "organic", is apt to become annihilating in its resolute refusal to acknowledge or accommodate the human spirit: it is this process of unrelenting "mechanical" advancement that Lawrence considered responsible for the destruction of the "intuitive and instinctive

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.156.
consciousness" in man, and the subsequent disconnection from the universe in which he lives. "The industrial problem", he insisted, "arises from the base forcing of all human energy into a competition of mere acquisition":

The real tragedy of England, as I see it, is the tragedy of ugliness. The country is so lovely: the man-made England is so vile. I know that the ordinary collier, when I was a boy, had a peculiar sense of beauty, coming from his intuitive and instinctive consciousness, which was awakened down pit. And the fact that he met with just cold ugliness and raw materialism when he came up into daylight...killed something in him, and in a sense spoiled him as a man...In my father's generation, with the old wild England behind them, and lack of education, the man was not beaten down. But in my generation, the boys I went to school with, colliers now, have all been beaten down...*

Lawrence, like many a modernist writer, believed that in his lifetime he had witnessed the death of the human spirit as the very fabric of English (not to mention European) civilisation unravelled, instituting a necessary re-definition of contemporary culture. Lawrence identified his generation as an amorphous mass of "half-corpses", victims of a vapid materialism and their obsessive and miserly aspirations, who had long ceased to be informed and enlivened by the season's annual renewal and nature's fecundating abundancies. It was the industrial revolution (culminating in the final death-blow of the Great War) that marked the period during which England underwent its blighting metamorphosis and

* "Nottingham and Mining Countryside", Phoenix, ibid., p.138.
* Ibid., p.137.
finally become a land of lamentation. Lady Chatterley's Lover unflinchingly demonstrates the extent to which, in Lawrence's view, an abstracted "man-made England" is divorced from, and ignorant of, the fructifying spirit of the "old wild England". In the figure of the young baronet Lawrence captures the mood and meaninglessness of the unredeemable and ubiquitous grasping acquisitiveness so characteristic of the modern age: thus Clifford Chatterley, not content with the ownership of his estate, would fence it off, post 'No Tresspassing' signs and police it with a gamekeeper, only satisfied when he has transformed, or rather tamed, Wragby Wood into his own private park. Lawrence perceived such widespread and wilful violation as sacriligeous, a perverse and blasphemous attitude born of a deracinated humankind; one which he both bitterly rails against, and sorrowfully mourns in the novel. As ever in Lawrentian fiction, the formidable and abiding presence of the natural world exists as a presence in its own right; however, in this final novel that erstwhile confidence in its power to endure and resist the "vast evil" of industrialism is in serious doubt*. The destruction and loss of England's old

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* Lawrence is not alone in his concern. More recently Philip Larkin (who shares some of Lawrence's constant horror and guilt at what the English have done to England) expressed a similar sentiment in "Going, Going" (High Windows 1974). Here Larkin laments the rapid demise of the England he and his generation have cherished. The post-England that appears to be usurping the familiar ("The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,/The guildhalls, the carved choirs") is viewed with a mixture of fear and loathing. The rapacious desires of the younger generation are deplored for their successful corruption of an erstwhile (largely imagined) pastoral England, which is slowly effaced beneath the rapidly encroaching detritus of modern life where, "greeds and garbage are too thick-strewn/To be swept up..." and England is imagined as the unrivalled contender for "First slum of Europe".
The shrinking revulsion Lawrence disturbingly describes regarding his fellow countrymen is somewhat harder to comprehend and delineate. It belongs, initially, to the exile problem and the defining impulse to disassociate the fledgling self from its beginnings. However, if we pursue this line of argument further, it inevitably takes us beyond social background into the primal space of the Oedipal arena. The first community we know is that into which we are born, the social unit of the family. If we cannot find our bed-rock foundation here, then the world, and all our subsequent interactions with it, appear to be built on unstable, if not shifting, ground. Lawrence

* I am referring, in particular to the lines from Paradise Lost: "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat/Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,/That all was lost", Book IX, p.484, (Harlow: Longman Group, 1968).
* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.65.
protested volubly against the damage done under the so-called auspices of 'family life', chronicling throughout his fictions the emotional destruction meted out by mothers to their sons, fathers to their daughters. The young Lawrence battled long and hard to escape his own umbilical bondage and harder still to resist its fatal seductions in later life*. The family hearth continued to be an uneasy resting place throughout his life, being not so much a sanctuary but a war zone in which the individual was perceived to fight, on an hourly basis, for continuing life.

Intellectual precocity in tandem with an almost preternatural intuition resulted in Lawrence's rapid identification of this, what he considered to be, the original conflict. Such penetrative insight combined with an emotional immaturity (the well-spring of much of his unholy courage) meant that Lawrence's more aggressive impulses, and what he came to identify as his Oedipal rage, went largely unchecked. The violent efforts of his early years were directed toward denouncing his hindering

* See his letter to Katherine Mansfield, December 1918:

Beware of it - this Mother-incest idea can become an obsession. But it seems to me there is this much truth in it: that at certain periods the man has a desire and a tendency to return unto the woman, make her his goal and end, find his justification in her. In this way he casts himself as it were into her womb, and she, the Magna Mater, receives him with gratification. This is a kind of incest. It seems to me it is what Jack does to you, and what repels and fascinates you. I have done it, and now struggle all my might to get out. In a way, Frieda is the devouring mother. - It is awfully hard, once the sex relation has gone this way, to recover. If we don't recover, we die. (Letters III, ibid., p.301-2)

We see this type of destructive relationship, fully realised, in the form of Clifford Chatterley. First he makes Connie his 'end' and 'justification' regarding her with a 'queer craven idolatory', and when she deserts him he develops a quasi-sexual relationship with Mrs Bolton, the 'Magna Mater'.
father, and then ridding himself of a suffocating mother, thereby liberating himself for the full-time business of life and marriage. His accomplishment, in mythic terms, was to identify Womankind as the source of all England's curse (via the maternal) and to render himself homeless (via the paternal). His exploration of the Oedipal crisis is the familiar subject of Sons and Lovers where the literal matricide is a barely disguised mercy-killing (the enduring question remains for whom) and Walter Morel is repeatedly denounced (a partial-parricide) by his son(s). Daniel Weiss, in Oedipus in Nottingham, provides an interesting interpretation of what he describes as a displaced parricide in Sons and Lovers. Weiss suggests that the line of descent from father to friend to rival is clearly traceable via the obvious affinity of Walter Morel and Baxter Dawes, with Baxter and Clara serving as the new parental constellation in the novel. In the Oedipus story proper, it should be remembered, the son's slaying of the father is deflected to a safely arranged tale of a struggle between strangers (father and son being oblivious of their true relationships at the fateful crossroads): accordingly Weiss argues for a similar displacement in Sons and Lovers, with Baxter Dawes - as the surrogate father-figure - being on the receiving end of Paul's (projected) parricidal aggression. After his fight with Dawes, Paul is described in the same terms as his father, rapidly becoming "paltry and insignificant". This (largely self-imposed) belittlement amounts to a simultaneous regression -
significantly, he returns to his mother's umbilical
embrace after his confrontation with Dawes - and a form
of psychic transcendence. Clara as a result, is restored
to her husband;

...in exchange for these sacrifices their "three
fates lay in his hands". He has become, in this
recreation of the family, the idealized son, who
through suffering and sacrifice has achieved
knowledge and power, the attributes of messiah-hood,
an acceptance through expiation.*

Consequently, Weiss maintains, the son - having
(ostensibly) absolved himself of the repeatedly deferred
murderous impulse - is able to achieve a state of truce,
albeit precarious, with the father for the remainder of
the novel. The broader implication (not articulated by
Weiss) is that the restoration of the wife to her
rightful husband may be seen as an act of reparation
(Clara as peace-offering) toward the father, a begging of
forgiveness by the son. But, although this paternal
blessing is (very!) obliquely sought, there is no real or
substantial evidence to suggest that it is finally
bestowed; (and because of the circuitous and displaced
nature of the search - this can in no way be construed as
a direct blessing - how meaningful would it be anyway).
It is precisely because of the fundamental displacement
at the heart of the exchange that I would disagree with
Weiss's conclusion as regards the final state of truce
between father and son, not only in Sons and Lovers, but
indeed the remainder of the work. This complicated

* Oedipus in Nottingham, p. 75.
scenario of projection and transference conceals a consummate emotional deception. What Paul will not, or more to the point, cannot give up is his mother; it is she above all whom he covets. The relinquishing of Clara (which in real terms costs him very little) serves as a mere placatory gesture in the direction of the father, and ultimately mitigates his erstwhile onerous Oedipal guilt (although this, of course, should not be underestimated). The fatal flaw in this psychic circus is that the father is a false image, in fact nothing short of a blatant substitute. Such tricksterism is wholly characteristic of Paul Morel's conduct throughout the novel, and serves to perpetuate his lethal self-deceptions. Of course, the crowning irony is that the son, having robbed the father of his prize, finally kills her and is left, at the end, "derelict" in every possible respect. Like Oedipus before him, what Paul Morel discovers is that to 'kill' the father is not to become him but to destroy him in oneself, and thereby disqualify the self from possession of the mother. In other words, parricide (literal or otherwise) is self-defeating when the assassin recognises that he has attempted to deny his source, and in effect the well-spring of his own authority; at which point he becomes perpetually obliged to imitate the father, to resurrect the self he has denied. Thus instead of burying the father, the son is continually trying to disinter him; and if he killed a false father - one who either illegitimately possessed the mother or never really did so (in the case of Walter
the attempt to resurrect him becomes increasingly absurd.

The father/son relationship is strictly secondary in *Sons and Lovers*, the main narrative action, necessarily, belonging to the mother/son dyad. The novel does however clearly delineate the denuding process whereby the father is ousted from his home and denied relationship with his wife and family. By the close, the distance between father and son is effectively unbridgeable, and even language as a means of communication has broken down. Throughout the novel the father, in the vital sense, has been absent, the balance of power being obviously on the side of the mother; which means that in real terms, Walter Morel provides no emotional foundation for his sons, he is simply 'not there'. Where one would expect masculine strength, determination, unfettered love, guidance and dignity of purpose there is merely absence: the sons, in succession, are forced to turn to their mother in whom these characteristics - masquerading under the guise of martyrdom - are thwarted and frustrated (through social and emotional constraints) into selfishness and ambition.

For Lawrence the significance of such absence cannot be over-estimated, for it is the father's specific and essential role as the mediator of the difficult transition from womb to world. Without the father's emotional support, it becomes insurmountably difficult
for the son (and indeed daughter) to be properly born and confirmed in his own identity and to be able to negotiate the unavoidable separation from the mother. Lawrence insisted that this umbilical severance is a pre-requisite not only for adulthood but also for a satisfactory heterosexual commitment. What may described as the 'absent father' syndrome encourages a mutually collusive 'embrace' with the mother, fostering a shared illusion of 'oneness', from which the developing son finds it increasingly difficult to extricate himself; leaving him caught in a twilight zone, neither in nor out of the womb, but wedged half way, half alive, half born:

...very few people surpass their parents nowadays, and attain any individuality beyond them. Most men are half-born slaves: the little soul they are born with just atrophies, and merely the organism emanates, the new self, the new soul, the new swells into manhood, like big potatoes.*

Under these circumstances a state of unnatural and ambivalent identification with the mother is prolonged indefinitely, where even the mother's death cannot guarantee release from the engulfing and exclusive symbiosis; instead the umbilical bondage is merely transferred to Woman per se. The Female as Mother/Wife is then loved unconditionally and becomes, by this stage, indispensable and all-powerful; feared, envied, resented and inevitably worshipped for her omniscient competencies and her omnivorous presence; the Son/Lover can neither

* Fantasia of the Unconscious, ibid., p.31
live with nor without her*. Troubling relations with the Female form the foreground focus of Lawrence's successive works, but it is the unresolved relations with the father (though far less obvious) that prove to be more pervasive and disturbing during the last years. Daniel Weiss makes the comment that;

The less fully resolved relationship between the father and son in [Sons and Lovers] is the relationship upon whose psychic residue Lawrence was to draw for the rest of his life. Indeed, his first task after Sons and Lovers seems to have been the conciliation, with honor, of the father, a conciliation that proceeds in a steady line of descent from father to rival, to friend, to positive identity between the father image and the son.*

What he omits to mention however is that the conciliation in The Rainbow is achieved through the father and daughter - where Ursula, amongst other things, is Antigone and Elektra combined. Indeed any heartfelt understanding that does exist between parent and offspring in Lawrence's work is frequently between the father and the eldest female child*. Throughout his life Lawrence failed to comprehend fully, or come to terms with, either the father or fatherhood as an institution.

* Oedipus in Nottingham, p.75. Weiss also notes that, *Sons and Lovers is a coin whose reverse is the remainder of Lawrence's works*.
* One of the reasons for Lawrence's ability to convey such a relationship convincingly was that it lay within the sphere of his own experience. Throughout his later life (significantly only after his marriage to Frieda) Lawrence enacted the role of surrogate 'Daddy' and 'Lover' (combined) to a succession of women. (In this respect he resembles Hemingway who, as the sobriquet "Papa" suggests, similarly became involved with a succession of younger women; the difference being of course that Hemingway's relationships were invariably consummated.) It was a relationship that he could maintain comfortably, for although circumscribed by the sexual (hence its precarious yet tenacious intimacy), it didn't entail the threat of consummation and a head-on engagement in the sex-war (i.e., the confrontation with his own Oedipal drama and incest tabooes/desires).
As his mother's son, he could only perceive the absence of its codified blessings and consequently craved its emotional guarantee (paradoxically evidenced in his continuing rejection of it). Had he himself had children he might have worked through his confused and conflicting emotions; instead he sublimated much of this inchoate longing into the reactionary Bludbruderschaft phase, where the longing for male friendship has its origins in the 'absent father' syndrome*

The most immediate manifestation of the Lawrentian father conflict is the failure to create convincing paternal figures in his fiction. Mothers, wives, and women in general are invariably more powerfully depicted with

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* For this reason I do not see Lawrence's relations with men, or his depiction of male characters, as being overtly homosexual - although, on occasion, there exists an undeniable homosexual dimension (this is particularly evident in the Prologue to Women in Love). Rather, the fundamental emotional dynamic is one that can be described as nigh on parental, whereby the primary emotional nexus is one of unconditional 'love': the massage scene of Aaron's Rod is of this type. The relationship offered by Birkin to the reluctant Gerald in Women in Love is more complex, involving the creation of a forum or sanctuary from the battle-ground of the sex wars. Henry Miller, in A Passionate Appreciation (London: John Calder, 1985), speaks for the buried and largely unarticulated creed contained within Lawrence's concept of blood brotherhood: "the need for a love between man and man", he explains, in not a question of homosexuality but,

...a polarity between man which could embrace the ambivalent value of war, war that spells hatred, cruelty, death, and war that necessitates by its very utterance the idea of fierce, uncompromising love, the adherence to one's beliefs at any cost, the final triumph of love in death which is the meaning of crucifixion, and which man has embraced over and over again in his myths and legends. In this love and hate, this war, it is all a question of man's survival, man's world, man's soul. The war with woman is a side issue because man cannot and will not recognize that war in its true light; it is too ghastly and too shattering to his pride, to his male conscience and consciousness...Man's wonderful world of moralities and religions, of codes of honor, of law and justice, or art, has been erected at woman's expense, in deep defiance of her, in a constant, painful effort to keep alive the illusion of his necessity in the scheme of things, which woman without saying a word, silently and by her mere presence, by her love even negates...Man's battle to establish God, to posit the Absolute, what is this essentially but the avowal of his forlorn, desperate, hungry desire to prove woman wrong, to show that there is a permanency, a final limit, a court of last resort. The world of woman is built on a flux, nature's flux, a living and dying, a birth and death, a metamorphosis. Man's great fear, is it not the primal fear of his defeat at woman's hands? (p.184-85)
shadowy fathers repeatedly baffled by their offspring, unable to connect or influence them for the good. The cultural significance of this emotional phenomenon I have discussed with regard to "England, My England" and "The Princess", although again these are restricted to the father/daughter relationship. There are no comparable fictional works which explore exclusively the father/son relationship in the Lawrentian canon; rather any understanding we may reach is gained via deduction, sub­plot and sub-textual readings. Such efforts however do yield a consistent paradigm: the father/husband figure is invariably diminished and defeated; emotionally he is impoverished and deprived of familial tenderness; frequently he has undergone some form of emasculation at the hands of his womenfolk. The implications for the mythic son are inevitably devastating: in the absence of any masculine guarantee, the possibility of achieving independant manhood amidst so much (actual and subliminal) hostility becomes frighteningly implausible.

* Fictional exploration and detailed depictions of the father/son dyad are normally contained within a larger plot structure, as in Sons and Lovers, or they are sublimated into the intimate 'blood-brotherhood' relationships which haunt the novels from Women in Love through to The Plumed Serpent. The only (possible) exception is the short story of 'The Prussian Officer'. This is a brutal tale which charts the psychological degeneration of the officer and his orderly who are locked (unto death) in a passionate and binding hatred:

The orderly felt he was connected with that figure moving so suddenly on horseback: he followed it like a shadow, mute and inevitable and damned by it. And the officer was always aware of the tramp of the company behind, the march of his orderly among the men. (The Prussian Officer and Other Stories. London: Grafton, 1985. p.2)

Their relationship is depicted as unequivocally 'sexual' - with physical consummation being achieved through violence: thus after viciously beating his orderly the officer is aware that "Deep inside him was the intense gratification of his passion" (ibid., p.10); a gratification he has been unable to achieve with women ("a mockery of pleasure"). That there is some kind of father/son complicity amidst the bullying, violence and homosexual yearning is suggested (though nothing more) in the age discrepancy between the two men and their different military rank.
It is this 'death' to which the Lawrentian son is the heir, the absent father having effectively euchered the son out of his legitimate patrimony: the world he subsequently enters bears him false witness, and he discovers that it becomes increasingly hard to find his way.

It is Jung, rather than Freud, who explains the broader cultural significance of the father in our society. Jung, of course, talks in terms of symbols and archetypes (the innate, inherited pattern of psychological performance, linked to instinct) that lie buried deep within the collective unconscious. Memories such as these are ancestral, contained in, and passed on through, the blood*; we familiarise ourselves with them through dreams and the 'ghosts' of our collective past. Such memories have shaped human thought and emotion over a period of not just generations but centuries; they are discernible not only in the family romance but also in the world of moralities and religions, codes of honour, law and justice and, not least, of art. Jung:

The archetype of the mother is the most immediate one for the child. But with the development of consciousness the father also enters his field of vision, and activates an archetype whose nature is in many respects opposed to that of the mother. Just as the mother archetype corresponds to the Chinese yin, so the father archetype corresponds to the yang. It determines our relation to man, to the law and the state, to reason and the spirit, and the dynamism of nature. 'Fatherland' implies boundaries,

* Lawrence's concept of 'blood-knowledge' is closely related, though less formulated, to Jung's idea of the archetype and the collective unconscious, in that it draws upon the same primordial and instinctual material.
a definite localization in space, whereas the land itself is Mother Earth, quiescent and fruitful. The father...represents authority, hence also law and the state. He is...the creative wind-breath - the spirit, pneuma, atman.*

Lawrence's lasting inability to return to England can be clearly understood in terms of to his failure to re-unite with the father. We have seen how his preference for a continuing peripheral existence is attributable to his reluctance to submit and reconcile himself to "boundaries" and "the definite localization in space"; equally apparent is the perception of a patriarchal will in the dark satanic mills of mechanization; the base forcing of industrialism; and the rapacious desecration of Mother Nature, as ills performed in the name of the father. Likewise paternal "authority", "law" and "state" are rejected in what may be viewed as the recognisable act of the rebellious son; and similarly Lawrence's renunciation of Christianity, in favour of a more primitive animistic vision (older than any sexual distinction), casts him as a Blakean Orc breaking free of an oppressive and morally deterministic Urizen.

Certain critics have argued that in the figure of the Chatterleys' gamekeeper Lawrence resurrects the spirit of his ostracised father, and in so doing brings about a reconciliation with the rebellious son. The most emphatic of these is Gavriel Ben-Ephraim* who maintains that

Mellors needs to be understood in relation to both the fictive father and mythic son of *Sons and Lovers*; arguing, as he does, that the gamekeeper contains deliberate reference to both Paul and Walter Morel, in so much as he combines the son's intuitive sensitivity with the father's vital manliness "in a complex fully comprehended character". Ben-Ephraim, not content with the conflation of father and son, goes on to remark:

Creating a whole man [i.e., Mellors], Lawrence finally integrates the image of the father into a male protagonist, an achievement that signals the integration of the father into the narrator and into Lawrence himself. The synthesis is necessary to a narrator who becomes one with both his protagonists. Finding his way to the father, the narrator frees himself from the female domination that vexes tale and teller in most of the novels; excising the image of the Magna Mater from the pond of his fiction...*

Such conclusions are over-reductive in their failure to take into account the profound uncertainties which, as I shall argue, surround the figure of the gamekeeper; and Ben-Ephraim's thesis has little by way of textual or biographical evidence to substantiate it. His assertions avoid Lawrence's persistent and ambiguous emotions regarding both his paternal and maternal heritage, and fail to acknowledge the extent to which these oscillating conflicts are manifested in the work (particularly in a novel as complex as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). Ironically - and this is perhaps one of the fundamental fascinations for Lawrence's readership - the greater and more emphatic his narrative assertion of unity, simplicity and

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straightforward resolution, the more obvious become his divisions and innate uncertainties; and it is these self-propagating divisions, dualities, and divergences that are of enduring interest and which we should be aware, not just within his family and environment, but also within his marriage, career and ultimately within the very structure of the writing itself.

Admittedly, during this last phase of Lawrence's career, there is an express desire to return to the instinctual life that he came, latterly, to associate with his father and working-class heritage: indeed in the essays and autobiographical pieces that proliferated during this period he creates a more sympathetic and understanding portrait of his father than he had hitherto been willing to acknowledge. During his childhood Lawrence's antagonism toward his father was, by his own admission, violent (and pre-determined): "I was born hating my father: as early as ever I can remember, I shivered with horror when he touched me"*. In his essay "Lawrence's

* Letters I, ibid., p.190. Such a violent antipathy toward any physical connection with the father is also voiced by Hemingway in his story 'Fathers and Sons' (collected in Winner Take Nothing (London: Grafton, 1977): the tale which explores the evolving relationship between three generations of fathers and sons, is essentially a commemoration. In it, Hemingway relates an incident regarding Nick Adams' aversion to any intimate or close contact with his father, an aversion that manifests itself in the refusal to wear his father's underwear:

Nick loved his father but hated the smell of him and once when he had to wear a suit of his father's underwear that had gotten too small for his father it made him feel sick and he took it off and put it under two stones in the creek and said that he had lost it...When Nick came home from fishing without it and said he lost it he was whipped for lying. (p.173)

Unlike Lawrence (whose Oedipal transactions are admittedly more complex), however, Hemingway is able to acknowledge his protagonists rage and aggression, thereby dispelling it:
Autobiographies", John Worthen explains that this is not simply a case of Lawrentian hyperbole, rather there is enough independent testimonial evidence to confirm his vehement antipathy:

May Chambers remembered the young Lawrence sending out "jagged waves of hate and loathing" at his father...George Neville remembered him repeating that his father "is a beast, a beast to mother, a beast to all of us"...As late as 1911, when he was 26, Lawrence wrote to the local Congregational minister that his father was "disgusting, irritating, and selfish as a maggot".*

Later in life Lawrence was disposed to relent in his earlier harsh judgements of his father*. Arthur Lawrence died in 1924*, and it may not be unreasonable to suggest that there is some kind of attempt to placate his ghost, or honour his memory. Correspondingly, his mother becomes the target for all his late-flowering Oedipal rage; and

...Afterwards he had sat inside the woodshed with the door open, his shotgun loaded and cocked, looking across at his father sitting on the screen porch reading the paper, and thought, "I can blow him to hell. I can kill him." Finally he felt his anger go out of him and he felt a little sick about it being the gun that his father had given him. (p.173)

* See 'Lawrence's Autobiographies' (The Spirit of D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Studies), ibid., p.7.

Nine years after the publication of Sons and Lovers Lawrence is reported to have expressed regret concerning certain aspects of his portrayal of his father:

Lawrence pensively watched [the workman], announcing that he resembled his father - the same clean-cut and exuberant spirit, a true pagan. He added that he had not done justice to his father in Sons and Lovers and felt like rewriting it...Now he blamed his mother for her self-righteousness. (D.H. Lawrence: a Composite Biography, ed. Edward Nehls, ibid., p.126)

* Arthur Lawrence's death is referred to only once in the letters:

Did I tell you my father died on Sept. 10th, the day before my birthday? - The autumn always gets me badly, as it breaks into colours. I want to go south, where there is no autumn, where the cold doesn't crouch over one like a snow-leopard waiting to pounce. The heart of the North is dead, and the fingers of cold are corpse fingers. There is no more hope northwards...(Letters V, ibid., pp.143-44)

The significance of his father's death coinciding with the season's annual dying and his own birthday would not have escaped the attention of Lawrence's symbolic cast of mind; this may account for the urgency his fearful desire to flee from any reminder of either his own or the world's mortality. It should also be remembered that "The Flying Fish" (which similarly deals with the death of an only surviving relative) was begun the following February.
it is she, rather than the father, who is now identified as the cause of all their family unrest* and condemned for her resentful snobbery and repressive middle-class aspirations:

My mother fought with deadly hostility against my father, all her life. He was not hostile, till provoked, then he too was a devil. But my mother began it. She seemed to begrudge his very existence. She begrudged and hated her own love for him, she fought against his natural charm, vindictively. And by the time she died, at the age of fifty-five, she neither loved him nor hated him any more. She had got over her feeling for him, and was "free". So she died of cancer.*

In re-negotiating his Oedipal transactions Lawrence rekindled many of his old hostilities; which is to say, far from "excising the image of the Magna Mater" from his fiction, she begins to feature even more prominently and memorably than before. Thus we encounter the more damning aspect of the Female transmogrified into such figures as "the Mater", Bertha Coutts, Ivy Bolton and Rachel Bodoin. As part of the ongoing regenerative scheme these women are subsequently 'killed off' (either metaphorically or literally) in a way that frequently threatens to transform his fiction into wish-fulfilment fantasy: freed of their presence, the rejuvenated world is then clear for the more benign aspect of Woman, who emerges in such characters as Yvette Saywell, Constance Chatterley and the Priestess of Isis. That such a divisive split occurs

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* This psycho-drama is more familiar to the Western imagination in the tragic form of Shakespeare's Hamlet, where, of course, Hamlet blames his mother Gertrude for all the ills that befall Elsinore and Denmark.
at all should alert us to the probability that Lawrence, far from coming to terms with the Magna Mater, is more deeply troubled than ever by her presence.

Despite his efforts to re-imagine the father Lawrence's depiction of fatherhood in his late fiction is singularly depressing. In *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, the Vicar is shown to be a self-deceiving, repressive and hypocritical figure, still in thrall to his overbearing mother. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence examines the broader cultural significance of the father's demise, demonstrating the extent to which all faith in the paternal realm expired in the aftermath of the War, as confidence in the governing classes, the Church, the State, and the Law to contain the world and give it meaning, collapsed. The defining and erstwhile traditions of fatherhood are finally considered discreditable in the eyes of the new, post-war generation: "Fathers were ridiculous...[i]n fact, everything was a little ridiculous, or very ridiculous: certainly everything connected with authority"*. Clifford Chatterley views his own father (and his industrious patriotism) as "a hopeless anachronism", and Connie's father, for all his supposed artistic sensibility, is portrayed as a vulgar and philandering lout; indeed the camaraderie that distinguishes his discussion with Mellors' concerning the quality of his daughters' love-making is one of the low points of the novel:

* *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ibid., p.12.
"Well, young man, and what about my daughter?"
The grin flickered on Mellors' face.
"Well, Sir, and what about her?"
"You've got a baby in her all right."
"I have that honour--!" grinned Mellors.
"Honour, by Gad!" Sir Malcolm gave a little squirting laugh, and became Scotch and lewd.
"Honour!--How was the going, eh? Good, my boy, what?"*

The modern generation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, it seems, can neither recognise nor understand the authoritative nature of the father's fructifying blessing; having thoroughly negated its primordial power (time-enriched through successive generations), they find themselves bereft of the paternal confirmation that would ordinarily underwrite, and impart meaning, to their worldly interactions. Unsurprisingly, Clifford Chatterley considers the issue of his child's paternity to be unimportant - "I don't believe very intensely in fatherhood"* he says to Connie - thus reducing the fecundating mystery of the generative cycle to the practical and economic necessity of a property transaction. Clifford's inability to assume, or indeed understand the significance of, paternal responsibility is shown to be symptomatic of his own failure to achieve independent identity, and self-respecting adulthood. As the novel progresses he reverts increasingly to an infantile mode of behaviour in his relationship with his nurse (the "Magna Mater"), thereby acquiescing in the

* Ibid., pp.282-83. This episode can also be viewed as a further distortion or degeneration of the father/son relationship.
* Ibid., p.44.
final psychological destruction of his manhood that the
War began. Thus Lawrence demonstrates the process by
which the nation's menfolk become skilled automatons in
the marketplace, but remain umbilically ensnared and
their masculinity is offered up as sacrifice to the
domestic hearth. Neither does Mellors - the novel's
surviving representative of a resurrected masculinity -
reveal any greater understanding or appreciation of the
paternal spirit. He too, rebels against a dying and
hypocritical authority, only he opts (to the best of his
ability) to live outside society, refusing to engage in
any form of worldly ambition, choosing rather to maintain
a monkish existence in his woodland hermitage. As a real
or imagined father-figure however he seems fundamentally
incapable of fulfilling the role. In the only episode
that we witness him with his daughter he is evidently
wholly without sympathy or understanding for her
suffering: the brutal shooting of the cat in her presence
is shocking in its insensibility and failure to intuit
childish emotion (irrespective of whether he considers it
mawkish and sentimental). Even allowing for the doctrinal
component of this exchange - the purpose of which is to
expose the young child as a "false little female", whose
manipulative and wilful ways identify her as the product
of the type of modern, emasculating femininity the novel
abhors - there is a considerable falling off in human
terms, particularly when it is compared with the touching
scenes in Sons and Lovers that involve Walter Morel and
his children, and the compassionate and exquisitely drawn
relationship of Tom Brangwen and the young Anna Lensky, in *The Rainbow*. Similarly, he views the prospect of his forthcoming child, at the close of the novel, with either indifference (its existence being no more than "a side issue") or anticipatory resentment, in so much as he fears that Connie may seek her fulfilment, not in their relationship, but in motherhood.

Such investigations do not bespeak of wholesale reconciliation of father with son, or indeed the "synthesis" of narrator with protagonists, but attest to Lawrence's continuing conflict with the father, which is in turn (partially) reflected in his inability to return to England. Even amidst the forceful assertions of Daniel Weiss' in *Oedipus in Nottingham* - whose entire critical thesis rests on the fact that there is a meaningful reconciliation with the paternal in Lawrence's work - a cautionary note appears in the concluding summary;

The shift from the parricidal Paul Morel running to his mother's arms while the father whines in the kitchen, to the "great blond child-man", Clifford Chatterley, fondling the housekeeper's breasts while the gamekeeper waits in the park, represents the total dilapidation of Lawrence's Oedipal longings and the perfection of his reactive anti-Oedipal vision of life. Along with the heroic contempt for the mother image in absolute decay comes full identification with the once-despised father. But for Lawrence, the man, I suspect, the shift was more apparent than real.* (my italics)

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* Indeed one of the abiding problems of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is its apparent failure to translate the professed concern with organic continuity into felt human terms, a feat which *The Rainbow* achieves almost effortlessly.

* *Oedipus in Nottingham*, ibid., p.109.
Lawrence's relations with the father however do not follow a simple trajectory. His late identification with his father, it should be recognised, is not as working-class individual but as a remnant of the nation's "pagan" heritage; Arthur Lawrence, no longer the boisterous and obstreperous miner, is re-cast as the very embodiment of England's dying vitality. This new identification or role assigned to the father (and by implication the mother) is neither empathetic in its personal or filial understanding, nor sympathetic in its forgiveness and reconciliation. The father is resurrected as a symbolic re-presentation, a figure who undergoes various incarnations during the final period, none of which are, in the end, satisfactory. The re-writing of Lawrence's early biography in the late essays is concerned less with the direct and factual re-telling of person, event and place, but rather, as John Worthen has noted "with the creation of a myth":

Between 1926 and 1929 he was establishing what 'home' now meant to him, and, in particular, the symbolic potential he had been coming to see in the life of his father...Lawrence's myth-making could hardly go further...his father is not presented as an individual; his is a symbol of the careless and independent male...unequivocally the symbol of old England itself: an old England suffering the "disaster" of change. Lawrence is quite unconcerned with the feelings he himself had experienced about his parents. He desires myth and symbol*.

Worthen I think is somewhat unjust in his castigation of Lawrence for being "unconcerned with the feelings he

himself had experienced about his parents", and the suggestion that personal emotion is sacrificed on the altar of high art. The process of self-creation during these last years is a complex one, in which ambivalence, in all quarters, abounds. What should be both acknowledged and emphasised here is that Lawrence's desire to ground his patria in his vanishing homeland was genuine and heartfelt, as indeed was his attempt to establish some sort of peace-pact with the paternal; that he could only achieve this in the ideal and and undefiled spaces of his art - through the medium of myth and symbol - is perhaps (to quote Williams) his "tragedy".

If Lawrence spent much of his life denouncing Daddy and disinheriting himself, he spent an equal amount of time compensating for his loss by incorporating the father principle in whatever ways were available to him: beyond the limiting complications of his Oedipal entrapment lay the liberating (paternal) arena of myth, religion, history and, most importantly, the creative arts - here, of course, Lawrence could engage with, embrace and embody the masculine father principle.

The father is the most powerful incarnation of the archetypal masculine; he embodies mature will, intelligence, and male generativity. Represented by sky imagery of the weather gods in myth, he is the primal seed that fertilizes Mother Earth and causes her unity to differentiate and bring forth manifold forms of life. In
comparison to the materiality of Mother Earth, the father is a mental or spiritual principle - the "creative wind-breath" or "pneuma" that breathes life into inanimate forms. The father's presence is perceived in the word or Logos, the divine and ordering intelligence which is the basis of male generativity. In the breath of the father are contained world-creating words, through his divine utterance offspring and knowledge come into being simultaneously and inseparably. This wind-spirit is most familiar to the Christian mind in the form of the New Testament's Holy Ghost.

It is as artist/wanderer that Lawrence most obviously incorporates the archetypal masculine. Like the wind (one of divinity's favourite forms) which bloweth where it listeth, the wanderer is unbound and goes where the mood takes him. Both wind and wanderer, in their ceaseless motion, display the masculine non-material aspect: similarly, in a figurative sense, the wanderer is as insubstantial as the wind, for he has neither home nor possession, and is in no way bound to society. The artist is a builder of things, creating something out of nothing, thereby complements the father's ability to create order from chaos. That Lawrence perceived the creative process as divinely inspired is made clear in Etruscan Places where he describes it as a concerted "act of attention" in which the religious sensibilities are brought to bear.
In theory, it is easy to measure the success of Lawrence's incorporation and expression of the masculine or father principle (even if it is just in terms of his prolific output), what is harder to ascertain is just how real this identification is beyond the self-enclosing circumference of the imagination. One is inevitably led to question such a 'reconciliation', to doubt its ability to bring about a living connection of the self with another, whether person or place. Lawrence's peace-pact with the paternal may enable him to anchor his patria only in the untethered and imaginative arena of his art? Like his story-telling it should be remembered, the wanderer's insubstantiality is only meaningful if temporary, ultimately it must find anchorage in the concrete in order to have meaning: if the wanderer fails on this count he is in danger of lapsing into abstraction, fantasy and unreality (i.e., artist as vagabond rather than scholar-gipsy). Ever since leaving England, Lawrence's perennial problem was one of how to achieve self-definition and permanence in a rootless society: to some extent he had allayed his fear and anxiety during the intervening years with the fallacious knowledge that he could (should he so desire) eventually return home; as of 1925-26 this illusion was denied him and he became unequivocally aware that he was finally homeless.

Where else then can the artist/wanderer go, if not home? The obvious answer is that he will eventually escape into
the undefiled and ideal spaces of his poetic prose and poetry. Although Lawrence's "physical vision", at its finest, was bodied forth in prose and verse, in reality, his vision in these last years, becomes increasingly less grounded in specific time and place. He shows a marked disinclination to root himself, particularly in twentieth century soil, least of all a modern England whose ground he pronounced irrevocably besmirched. England's limitation in this respect can be seen in the unfinished piece "Autobiographical Sketch" that is tucked away at the back of Phoenix. Ostensibly it appears to be a dry-run for one of his autobiographical discursive essays, that is a typically engaging concoction of diagnosis and prognosis, reflection and commentary. However, mid-way through without warning, the piece mutates into a space-age fantasy (a modern day Rip Van Winkle story) in which the narrator/protagonist, whilst walking through the Derbyshire countryside, falls asleep in one of the "everlasting" caves near Matlock. On awakening he discovers he has slept in one of these "earth's little chrysalis wombs" for a thousand years and it is now 2927, "the year of the acorn". The new age Merrie England into which he emerges proves to be a Lawrentian promised land in which the Midland mining village of Newthorpe is metamorphosed into a shapely New Jerusalem.

"Autobiographical Sketch" is an experimental articulation of the Lawrentian "dream of life", complete with phallic city and vegetative populace: "That was the quality of
all the people: an inner stillness and ease, like plants that come to flower and fruit\textsuperscript{a}. However, because it lacks any humour or redeeming irony it quickly lapses into absurdity; the prose, both weak and whimsical, fails to save the piece from self-indulgence. This fragment, though incomplete and unfinished, is worthy of attention on two specific counts. First, it shows Lawrence exploring the thematic possibility of a resurrection into a "civilisation" in which a fully integrated life in England is imaginable; that he must project his imagined community a thousand years hence is indicative not only of its intrinsic implausibility, but also the extent to which his faith in such an enterprise had, by this stage, unacknowledgably waned. Secondly, the collective artistic failings of the piece testify to the improbability of grounding such a vision in English soil. Indeed the piece forms a lamentation for the loss of a "sense of latent wildness and unbrokeness...in the pitch-dark Midlands nights", and for the taming or emasculation of the region's menfolk by the domineering and idealistic women - "This countryside is dead: or so inert, it is as good as dead". Lawrence's imagination required the bed-rock foundation of direct personal experience on which he could work his creative transmutations ("Autobiographical Sketch", of course, demonstrates the evolutionary process his ideas frequently underwent). In this respect Lawrence is not an imaginative writer in the obvious sense, but is rather like Sylvia Plath, whose literary genius lay in

\textsuperscript{a} Phoenix, ibid., p.830.
her ability to metamorphose her personal biography into one of universal significance. It wasn't until he had experienced the older civilisations of the Mediterranean - in particular the ancient region of Etruria with its underground network of tombs (subconsciously reminiscent of his mining heritage?) - that he recognised the visionary framework that enabled him to give full expression to his "dream of life".

This is not to suggest that the last works become any less evocative in terms of the depiction of landscape, or indeed cease to be informed by the "spirit of place"; rather, they undergo a process whereby the exactitudes of history are dissolved into the timeless and mythic quintessence of locale. In developing this a-temporal dimension, Lawrence's late work becomes parabolic in nature, existing in and out of time, belonging everywhere and nowhere.

It was the final de-camping to Europe that fostered this process. Lawrence's creative imagination had always responded well to Europe: when bruised and disillusioned during the desperate period of the post-war years the region had inspired some of his finest poetry*; once again, at the end of his life, it proved to be fertile and sustaining ground*. Not only did the Mediterranean

* I am referring specifically to the European sections of Bird, Beasts and Flowers.

* Having contemptuously rejected the post-war Europe in favour of America, Lawrence was forced at this time to re-evaluate his previous over-hasty assumptions. This he does - with a curious mixture of pride and humility - in his essay 'Europe v. America', where he confesses:
provide him with the regenerating sun, but areas in which the life he prized - and had so faithfully described in *Twilight in Italy* and *Sea and Sardinia* - survived and flourished undisturbed. From this life he drew vicarious strength incorporating its vitality into the language of his last works. That Lawrence required the fecundating presence of the primitive societies of the ancient Mediterranean is evident in his original utilisation of the comprehensive myth-bank at his disposal during this period. Above all, he required the diverse histories of these bygone races to bring about the apotheosis of his vision; for it is through his knowledge and empathy with the ancient cultures of Etruria, Egypt and Greece that he was able to subsume his own personal crisis into a grander scheme of mythic renewal.

Let us prepare now for the death of our present "little" life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos.

It is a question, practically of relationship...we are perishing for lack of fulfilment of our greater needs, we are cut off from the great sources of our inward nourishment and renewal, sources which flow eternally in the universe...It means a return to ancient forms...

The sense of isolation, followed by the sense of menace and of fear, is bound to arise as the feeling of oneness and individualism and personality, which is existence in isolation, increases.*

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I've been a fool myself, saying: Europe is finished for me. It wasn't Europe at all, it was myself, keeping a strangle-hold on myself...it's a relief to be by the Mediterranean, and gradually let the tight coils inside oneself come slack. There is much more life in a deep insouciance, which really is the clue to faith, than in this frenzied, keyed-up care, which is characteristic of our civilisation..., but which is at its worst, or at least its intensest, in America. (Phoenix, ibid., p.118)

By this stage Lawrence was too ill to live in temperate zones and he found some degree of solace and respite in European soil: "Whatever else I am," he wrote in 1927, "I'm European. And at the moment the desire to go far has left me." (Letters I, ibid., p.651)

In these terms Lawrence's return to the Mediterranean can be seen as a re-alignment and identification with the larger context of European civilisation, a return to our oldest, primitive origins - ubi beni, ibi patria - there to be united with the cosmos, reconciled with the father and buried in the mother. Only here could he, paradoxically, move both toward a new synthesis of self and accept the ultimate renunciation of individual identity, delivering himself up for the final dissolution of death.

Lawrence, in these last years in Europe, was looking not so much for ground upon which he could live, but a place in which he could die a meaningful death* and complete his journey into the "unknown": Last Poems testify as to the seriousness and serenity with which he undertook this last voyage. Saul Bellow has one of his characters memorably reflect that, "Death is the dark backing a mirror needs if we are to see anything": Lawrence, whose death was in full focus from an uncommonly early age, viewed and experienced life with an unparalleled vividness and a rare intensity of purpose. His "dream of life" was informed by his near proximity to death and necessarily articulated with greater urgency; and although frequently careless, it achieves a remarkable and unrivalled spontaneity. His cherished visions and

* In this respect he resembles the figure of Mrs Witt of St Mawr, who having lived a half-life, desires to experience a complete death.
inspired advocations of life are beautifully expressed, but they remain essentially unconnected and unrealisable. How strong can a man grow from contact with ideal soil, soil which is at best a sacred memory and at worst a projection of his own fantasies? Is not the primary feature of soil from which the dialectic of pride and humility may rise that it be other than the self which would be grounded in it? Such questions will inform the following consideration and discussion of some of Lawrence's last works.

*
The Flying Fish

The unfinished fragment "The Flying Fish" was written in Mexico City during the recovery period of Lawrence's near-fatal illness. The biographical parallels are obvious in a story, set in Mexico, which has its deracinated protagonist - Gethin Day - contemplating his return to England, whilst convalescing from a severe bout of malaria. Thematically the fragment, as we have it, is concerned variously with the return to and the reclamation of one's beginnings; the conciliation of one's forefathers; and the acceptance of one's patrimony*. At the time of its inception Lawrence originally had greater ambitions for the piece as Harry T. Moore explains:

When...[Lawrence]..read the incomplete manuscript version to Earl and Achenah Brewster in Switzerland in 1928, they wanted him to finish the story, but he said it had been "written so near the borderline of death, that I have never been able to carry it through in the cold light of day"...Lawrence told the Brewsters, "The last part will be regenerate man, a real life in this Garden of Eden", but the fragment remains a magnificent fragment.*

Moore's description of "The Flying Fish" is not, as one might suspect, hyperbolic: the extraordinary vividness and intensity of the prose is remarkable (even by

* R.E. Pritchard, in D.H. Lawrence: Body of Darkness (1971), observes that "The Flying Fish" forms the pattern for much of [Lawrence's] later work*. Pritchard goes on to add:

The parallel with Lawrence and his mother is clear in the story of the malaria-ridden Gethin Day called home from Mexico by the death of his much older sister Lydia (Lawrence's mother's name), whose criticisms have always unnerved him. Now the perturbed spirit is at rest, and he can return, "come into his own" - womb and tomb. (ibid., p.179.)

* The Priest of Love, ibid., p.508.
Lawrentian standards), its descriptive passages rivalling the opening pages of *The Rainbow*, for their vibrant immediacy and lucidity of vision*. That it remained only a fragment - considering both the quality of the writing and Lawrence's well-known propensity to re-work his texts - still seems strange. Although Lawrence excuses himself on the grounds that he could no longer engage with his own mortality, he is being somewhat disingenuous with the Brewsters; Lawrence, after all, was never one to balk at the darkness and each of the last works, either directly or obliquely, is a confrontation with human limitation, death and the journey to an imagined after-life. Rather, the clue to its incompletion lies in his personal sense of disillusionment, occasioned by the realisation that his paradise regained would never be discovered in English soil. By 1928 Lawrence was aware of both the failure of the piece's imaginative vision and the collapse of its mythic intent. In reality, "The Flying Fish" could not be fully realised until it was rewritten - in a different time and place - as *The Escaped Cock* (his last fictional work), where he felt able to depict "regenerate man" at home in the "Garden of Eden"; but by then, of course, his "Eden" was located on the ancient ground of sacred memory.

* The prose has a remarkable aural quality (by which I mean a musicality or lyricism that is usually reserved for poetry) that is, in part, attributable to the fact that Lawrence, being too ill to write, dictated much of the manuscript to Frieda.
Gethin Day is a singular character in Lawrence's fiction: he is not just the last of Lawrence's protagonists to be lured by the siren call of the American continent's dark promise, but the only one to emerge from his journeying intact and with a tale to tell. Unlike the majority of Lawrence's work written in America, the fictional gaze of "The Flying Fish" is focused on the emotional fall-out and aftermath of the hero's (over)exposure to its religio loci. Day is neither the victim of (as is the heroine of "The Woman Who Rode Away"), nor is he defeated by (as is the New England woman or Dollie Urquhart), America's latent energies; rather, he is transformed and revivified by his near-death experience, even to the extent that his understanding of himself and his circumstance is clarified as his insight deepens and becomes increasingly focused.

It quickly transpires that Gethin Day's quest for self-realisation is, in the broadest sense, a heroic one. In keeping with the comic tradition, Day's archetypal journey necessarily involves a return to his original point of departure. His mythic descent (the requisite 'death' or dissolution of consciousness) is symbolised by the near-fatal bout of "malaria". His subsequent period of recovery facilitates the assimilation of his darkly-begotten, febrile knowledge which, in turn, initiates his spiritual transformation and the desire to return to his ancestral home. This process of mythic reabsorption enables the, by now, regenerate hero to be restored to
his rightful patrimony (with all its attendant blessings). Having reached the desired end, he discovers he has come full circle and that his newly-acquired wisdom was prefigured, all along, in his beginning. Hence Day

... no longer resented the weight of family tradition, nor the peculiar sense of authority which the house seemed to have over him... he felt that home was the place.*

Despite its fragmentary form "The Flying Fish" deserves considered attention because it is the first piece of fiction which re-directs Lawrence's imaginative vision back toward his native Midlands (where he situates "Daybrook", the family seat). It is during his convalescence that Day first takes heed of his yearning to end his exile and return home to the family estate which, during his absence, he has inherited: "It did not matter that England was small and tight and over-furnished... He wanted to go home."* England's shores are never actually reached - the fragment ends aboard the "plague-ship" on the North Atlantic - and that the England of "The Flying Fish" is not merely re-membered, but one of mythic memory. The tale, therefore, is essentially a religious revery in which Day, who has confusingly lost his way, laments his exile and - despite profoundly felt misgivings - recognises the need for some sort of reparation and atonement with his past. In the midst of

his febrile imaginings Day comes to realize that the rebirth and integrative balance he seeks can only be achieved through the pieties of remembrance; which is to say, he must bring about a reconciliation with his forefathers and re-connect himself to the ground of his ancestors, in order that he may re-orientate himself and begin again.

Essentially what Lawrence advocates in "The Flying Fish" is the religious undertaking of ancestor worship; the pious project of honouring the father and through him the continuity and endurance of the old Law as it has existed through the generations. Implicit in Lydia's perspicacious, though mild, admonishment,

you would find far more room for yourself in Daybrook than in those foreign parts, if you knew how to come into your own...*

is the criticism that her brother, in denouncing and dishonouring his heritage, has in some vital way disinherited and betrayed his own identity and self: in other words, he has committed the self-begetting sin of denying his own source, the root of his own authority. In resuming the lapsed duty of filial obedience and addressing himself to the rites and rigours of atonement, Day discovers that he may receive and give both blessing and forgiveness. This fundamental restitution constitutes a ritual renewal in that it initiates the re-memberance

* Ibid., p.208.
and consummation of the bonds that bind him to his forefathers and the earth that issued them. This renewal of ancestral ties inaugurates Day's psychic disentanglement (through the disinterment and resurrection of his buried self), and provides him with the strength to bear not merely his solitude with grace, but (in theory) to proceed with his inherited and ordained task as the overseer of Daybrook.

The narrative is interspersed with excerpts from the Book of Days, written by Gethin Day's sixteenth century ancestor, Sir Gilbert, the original founder of Daybrook. Sir Gilbert's voice echoes across the generations bridging a historical fetch of almost four centuries. His immediacy is due, in part, to the vivid impressionistic language of his hieratic utterances; but also to the success of Day's religious regression, whose powers of mnemonic recovery are such that he admits, "My old ancestor is more real to me than the restaurant, and the dinner I have just eaten"* (the serious acknowledgement of this ancestral 'ghost' is in itself of course an act of propitiation). Day, like the reader, is mesmerised by the powerful pulse-beat of the language of this "secret family bible"; traditionally the book has been held in such reverence and authority that there are even rituals to be enacted before reading it. The Book of Days retains subliminal echoes of the old Law which resonate patriarchal certainty. Even the language with its

* Ibid., p.216.
mystical overtones, its complex tonalities and compound symbolism borrows, by association, biblical sanctity and absolutism:

"Daybrook standeth at the junction of the ways at the centre of the trefoil. Even it rides within the Vale as an ark between three seas; being indeed the ark of these vales, if not all England."*

The ancestral mansion of Daybrook is one of the great old houses of England (mentioned in Part I) that harbour and preserve the nation's quintessential spirit. The symbol of the "ark" encapsulates its essence, being both the ark amidst the flood (of contemporaneous madness), and the ark of the covenant which reconciles God and man, immortality and mortality. Daybrook is the containing vessel, "the womb, the arx, where life retreats in the last refuge" (here Lawrence draws upon the ancient Etruscan symbol of the ark "in which lies the mystery of eternal life"*); schematically, it represents a threshold space, where the living may meet the dead, the known the unknown, the sacred the profane; and as such it is understood to be both a haven and a frontier. But, as Book of Days specifies, just as the Ark is an empty vessel without its life-bearing cargo or life-giving covenant, so Daybrook without a living and rightful heir is effectively a barren womb. It is he who would inherit Daybrook that represents the way forward to salvation; it is only through the individual's fearless pursuit of

* Ibid., p.208.
* Etruscan Places, ibid., p.143.
self-hood that individuation, rebirth and resurrection may be achieved. The inheritor of Daybrook must needs be both pioneer and preserver of life, and through the fulfilment of his birthright (by which he, in turn, is countenanced) he will fend off the imminent threat apocalyptic of "floods".

"Nay...though I say that Daybrook is the ark of the Vale, I mean not the house itself, but He that Day, that lives in the house in his day. While Day there be in Daybrook, the floods shall not cover the Vale nor shall they ride over England completely."*

Without an appropriate heir the womb transmutes to tomb and all England is interred: or, to put it another way, if the personal fails to be sanctioned by some form of communal guarantee the culture must inevitably decline, abandoned as it necessarily is, to alienation, narcissism and solipsistic isolation.

Through the dialectical construct of the "lesser" and "Greater Day" - which forms the schematic framework of the piece - Lawrence demonstrates not only the nature of Gethin Day's free-floating ontological crisis, but also how he may achieve the integrative balance that will anchor his existence. Briefly, the "lesser", "little", or "common day" is the unreal, time-bound quotidian realm of the mannered human world; whilst the "Greater Day" is that of the a-temporal, natural and supernatural world in which the real permanence of the unremitting organic

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., p.208.
cycle of birth, life and death takes place: the mythic realm of the "Greater Day" both contains and consummates that of the "lesser day". Having abandoned himself to exile, Day is now "lost between the two days, the fatal greater day of the Indians, the fussy, busy lesser day of the white people"*. The "lesser day" of the white civilisation no longer has any reality for either himself or the American continent: "Spain had spent the energy of her little day here, now the silence, the terror of the Greater Day, mysterious with death, was filling in again"*. Equally, he is unable to endure the unmitigated exposure to the supra-reality of Mexico's "Greater Day:

It had cracked like some great bubble, and to his uneasiness and terror, he had seemed to see through the fissures the deeper blue of that other Greater Day where moved the other sun shaking its dark blue wings. Perhaps it was the malaria; perhaps it was his own inevitable development; perhaps it was the presence of those handsome, dangerous, wide-eyed men left over from the ages before the flood in Mexico, which caused his old connections and his accustomed world to break for him. He was ill, and he felt as if at the very middle of him, beneath his navel, some membrane were torn, some membrane which had connected him with the world and its day....Now he was sick from the soul outwards, and the common day had cracked for him, and the uncommon day was showing him its immensity, he felt that home was the place... It did not matter that England was small and tight and over-furnished, if the Greater Day were round about. He wanted to go home, away from these big wild countries where men were dying back into the Greater Day, home where he dare face the sun behind the sun, and come into his own in the Greater Day.* (my italics)

* Ibid., p.211.
The danger to which our attention is drawn is that pneuma unregulated - which is to say not housed by an appropriate ritual - can be potentially overwhelming, even annihilating (as many a Greek myth will testify*). Day's world is, in the profoundest sense, shattered; unless he leaves Mexico he knows he will die*. The gravity of this revelation is emphasised by T.S. Eliot whose dictum - "Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind cannot bear very much reality" - warns of the inherent danger of over-identification with, or exposure to, either the sacred or the profane world; similarly, as both writers are aware, to exclude one at the expense of the other is equally perilous. Eliot saw fit to utter his warning twice over: first, in Four Quartets the epiphany is one of 'paradise' (which corresponds to the acutely felt perception of the "living god" of Lawrence's "Greater Day"); and secondly, in Murder In The Cathedral the epiphany is one of 'hell' (where the reality of "the waste sad time/Stretching before and after" is comparable to the profane world of Lawrence's "lesser day"). Despite their ostensible differences (Anglican gentility versus a savage pre-Christian pneuma), the religious impulse which underwrites both "The Flying Fish" and Four Quartets is indeed very similar.

* For example, the myths of Actaeon/Artemis and Pentheus/Dionysus demonstrate this point conclusively.
* 'Die' - either literally or metaphorically - in the sense that he will become subject to the "fatal inertia" that defeated the protagonists in the American fictions.
What Lawrence and Eliot demonstrate in their respective works is that "home" - our place of origin - marks the point at which the personal may be absorbed into, and finally absolved by, the communal. In this respect "The Flying Fish" bears fruitful comparison with Four Quartets, for Lawrence's conception of Daybrook incorporates, and indeed concretises, the symbolic import of both the old house of Burnt Norton (whose "garden" is meant to represent the personal world of our first innocence and the abiding "Eden" buried at the centre of human consciousness), and the now distant community of Little Gidding. Historically, Daybrook and Little Gidding return to the point at which, the modern world began; that is the age (in terms of mythic history*) which

* In certain quarters, literary historians/mythographers, philosophers and artists promulgate the theory that a subject--object split occurred at some point during the Renaissance; hence the period is commonly considered to commemorate the birth of the modern age. In his critical work, Out of Ireland (Cheadle Hulme: Carcanet Press, 1975), Dudley Young gives a spirited synopsis (see in particular Chapter III, "The Spider's Eye") of this historico-cultural phenomenon:

There is a widespread agreement amongst those with a mythic interest in history that soon after 1600, Adam re-enacted the Fall: in Yeats's words, "Imagination, whether in literature, painting, or sculpture, sank after the death of Shakespeare" (E 396). While there are many versions of this story - T.S. Eliot's for example is called "The Dissociation of Sensibility" - the better ones recognize that philosophy must play a prominent part; indeed, some of them begin, as Yeats put it, with "that morning when Descartes discovered that he could think better in his bed than out of it" (A 192). Boileau put it even more succinctly when he said that Descartes had cut poetry's throat. (p.80)

Lawrence, whose governing terms are nearly always sexual, identifies 'the grand rupture' as being contingent upon "the appearance of syphilis in our midst"; the resultant "terror-horror" which originated in the diseased body, in turn, infected the "vital imagination" which meant that "the mental consciousness recoil[ed] in violence away from the physical, instinctive-intuitive." This original breach forms the topic of discussion in his essay, Introduction To These Paintings:

The history of our era is the nauseating and repulsive history of the crucifixion of the procreative body for the glorification of the spirit, the mental consciousness. Plato was an arch-priest of this crucifixion. Art, that handmaid, humbly and honestly served this vile deed, through three thousand years at least. The Renaissance put the spear through the side of the already crucified body, and syphilis put poison into the wound made by the imaginative spear. It took still three hundred years for the body to finish: but in the
marked man's 'fall' from universal harmony into isolate separation. "Little Gidding" is a poem which is simultaneously grounded in English history ("in place and time, now and in England") and transcendent to the temporal where - as a result of the "Midwinter spring" epiphany - "the timeless moment is England and nowhere". Through the complex process of mythic reabsorption the individual inner sanctum of the rose-garden (as perceived through one of those nostalgic "loops of time" mentioned in The Family Reunion) in "Burnt Norton" is reconciled to the communal in the symbolic community of "Little Gidding", in which time, history and place find a gravitational centre. Little Gidding is the point of arrival where the political, religious and literary vision are assimilated, both in and out of "time's covenant".

There is a movement in Four Quartets as a whole from a sense of dislocation in time and space in "Burnt Norton", where "all time is unredeemable", to a realization that at the heart of the illusory time-space-continuum (the world inhabited by the ego) there is both a real present and an abiding presence. The crucial difference between Daybrook and Little Gidding, of course, is that the latter had ceased to exist except in memory. In contrast what Lawrence envisages, in returning Day to the family

eighteenth century it became a corpse, a corpse with an abnormally active mind: and today it stinketh. (Phoenix, ibid., p.569.)

As Young points out, the idea central to these stories is that Renaissance man falls "from sensuous harmony into visual obsession".
estate, is the reality of a life lived in the profane world of the "lesser day" with the knowledge and faith that beyond, his world is circumscribed and consummated by the sacred realm of the "Greater Day". Such moments of realization occur (significantly) after Day's departure from Mexico when he catches glimpses of the "Greater Day" "showing through the cracks of the ordinary day"; they form life-orienting epiphanies which mark the point at which the two realms, the temporal and eternal, intersect*. Day's moments of profound comprehension inaugurate the longed-for transfiguration of the self and his world. Like the Ancient Mariner before him Day's loneliness, brittle vanity and narcissistic defensiveness (the familiar "restlessness" born of a tormenting desire and modern alienation) dissolve in the recognition and acceptance of the bonds of love and belonging; as Day gazes overboard, he similarly undergoes conversion, discovering the immanent presence of the sacred in the awe-ful splendour of the sea's teeming glory:

The sea was still and silky-surfaced, blue and softly heaving, empty, purity itself, sea, sea, sea... And still the ship did not pause, any more than the moon pauses, neither to look nor catch breath. But the soul pauses and holds its breath, for wonder, wonder, which is the very breath of the soul... People didn't like looking over the edge. It was too beautiful, too pure and lovely, the Greater Day... Gethin Day watched spell-bound, minute after minute, an hour, two hours, and still it was the same, the ship speeding, cutting the water, and the strong-bodied fish heading in perfect balance of speed underneath, mingling among themselves in some strange single laughter of multiple consciousness, giving off the joy of life, sheer joy of life.

* These epiphanies correspond to the moment of the Greek kairos and the Biblical Logos or Incarnation; the moment when all time is eternally present.
togetherness in pure complete motion, many lusty-bodied fish enjoying one laugh of life, sheer togetherness, perfect as passion. They gave off into the water their marvellous joy of life, such as the man had never men before. And it left him wonderstruck.*

The purgatorial gloom of the final pages casts a shadow over the sun-filled optimism of this preceding visionary euphoria. The mood of the piece alters dramatically, with the fragment unequivocally concluding;

The sun was gone, the blueness was gone, life was gone. The Atlantic was like a cemetery, an endless, infinite cemetery of greyness, where the bright, lost world of Atlantis is buried.*

Because of the truncated ending we never learn whether Day's newly-transplanted faith is capable of flourishing on home territory. The very fact that the piece is incomplete, as I have already suggested, testifies as to its innate implausibility; or, more specifically, it exposes Lawrence's lack of confidence in the process of mythic re-absorption under the circumstances prevailing in a contemporaneous England.

In the end however these matters do not detract from the tale's truth that Day's psychic entanglement, and subsequent collapse in Mexico, is attributable to his alienation and displacement: he is not so much a flying fish as a fish out of water. Indeed, the image of the flying fish suggests that, regardless of the pyrotechnic

* St Mawr and Other Stories, ibid., pp. 219, 220, 221.
* Ibid., p. 224.
display of its aerial flight, the flying fish (cannily mirrored in Daybrook's weathervane) must eventually return to its own watery element, without the sustenance of which it will eventually die. It is the admission of this simple wisdom that initiates Day's transformation and brings about the final acceptance of his patrimony, thereby prompting the return to his homeland. Lawrence's exploration of the abiding power of mnemic recovery, within what are effectively very limited parameters, is profound in its avowal of the religious regression intrinsic to such an undertaking. Day's prospective return to Daybrook does in fact constitute a ritual re-cognition, an invocation that is an act of propitiation, a pious re-memberance and consummation of the bonds that connect and bind us to one another and to our ground. Such pieties have the power to bestow perspective and provide the intensity, historical continuity, and range of emotion that bequeathes significance and meaning to the otherwise desolate condition of modern man. But "The Flying Fish" is doubly uncertain, as fiction and fragment, about this desired remedy.

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The Virgin and The Gipsy and Lady Chatterley's Lover

The Virgin and the Gipsy

These two fictional works are Lawrence's final word on his native Midlands*: The Virgin and the Gipsy was written prior to Lady Chatterley's Lover, although published posthumously*, and in many ways the novella exists as the thematic precursor out of which the novel evolved. For this reason it is occasionally overlooked being too slight to warrant considered attention, with the critical focus falling conspicuously on Lady Chatterley's Lover. This is somewhat surprising for the novella remains one of Lawrence's most achieved, humorous and devastatingly accurate comedy of manners: one can only assume that the reason for its comparative neglect

* Keith Cushman in his essay, "The Virgin and the Gipsy and the Lady and the Gamekeeper", (see D.H. Lawrence's "Lady"), writes:

The Virgin and the Gipsy and Lady Chatterley's Lover both present English characters in an English setting, and in a sense they are parables of return as well as parables of regeneration. Once more Lawrence was exploring the possibility of renewal in an expressly English context. Novella and novel constitute a homecoming for him...Lawrence's feelings about England would never be more than ambivalent. But in The Virgin and the Gipsy and Lady Chatterley's Lover he sought to end his long self-exile, to explore imaginatively England and the English. (ibid., p.156.)

Graham Hough, in The Dark Sun, has written:

In The Virgin and the Gipsy we feel a return to a long-neglected source of Lawrence's power - the profound feeling for certain aspects of English life, seen at its best in The Rainbow and Women in Love. (ibid., p.189.)

* The novella was written in the January of 1926, and not published until 1930. The reason for the delay in publication may well be attributable to the fact that the Saywell family, while recalling "The Daughters of the Vicar", evokes far more distinctly the plight of the Weekly family after Frieda's departure and divorce. Although the rector is not, and was presumably never intended to be, either an accurate portrait or even caricature of Ernest Weekly, the characters of the two daughters are based upon Frieda's own children, whom Lawrence got to know well during their adolescence and early adulthood; Barbara Weekly, in particular, spent a good deal of time with the Lawrences in Italy.
resides in the fact that its apparently light-hearted tone makes it all too easy to ignore the seriousness of its central simplicities. The criticism which does exist is generally favourable with such critics as Julian Moynahan and and F.R. Leavis ranking it amongst Lawrence's finest material*.

My contention here is that in The Virgin and the Gipsy we find the most hopeful and (somewhat ironically given its fabular form) realistic of his last tales. As a parable of human renewal and regeneration it is less laboured and insistent than Lady Chatterley (primarily because it is less ambitious), and its innate, intentional modesty enables Lawrence to bring about an, albeit precarious, rapprochement between his regenerative vision and the proffered mythic resolution; ultimately this allows him to ground both, at least temporarily, in his native homeland.

* Julian Moynahan in The Deed of Life, writes:


And Leavis, in D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, comments;

[The Virgin and the Gipsy] is one of Lawrence's finest things and is itself enough to establish the author's genius as major and as distinctively that of a novelist. The genius must be apparent to any reader in the ease and economy with which the rectory household is established (300-1)....The tale is a tenderly reverent study of virginal young life. As such it seems to me unsurpassable, and it has certainly never been surpassed. (ibid., p.304)
The Virgin and the Gipsy is a morality tale of apparent artlessness. There is none of the carnal theology and consequent sermonising of Lady Chatterley's Lover, for the tale's truth lies not in definitive act of sexual consummation but rather in the simpler - and therefore subtler - realisation that in the body's unity resides our being; which is to say, it is through the body that we come to know both the potential (the beginning) and the limitation (the death) of the self. That all knowledge should ultimately be grounded in these fleshly precincts is the pre-requisite to the reparation of our relations with the cosmos. To ignore such limitations, the tale warns, is to undercut and deny human freedom, for the binding circumference of body contains the paradoxical awareness that in the joyful acceptance of such constriction lies the ultimate source of liberation.

Yvette Saywell's dawning consciousness and consequent awakening to the potentialities of the body are delineated with humour, delicacy and insight into pubescent female imaginings. Her virginity (which is not only referred to in the title, but constantly underscored throughout the novella) at its most obvious is representative of her budding and inviolable life, her latent and unsullied potentiality. Julian Moynahan, in his perceptive study of the novella, expands on this central and thematic image, giving a brief delineation of
the English virgin's fate as traditional literary archetype:

The English virgin is an archetype through which that country's writers have expressed and re-expressed a communal ideal of freshness and fullness of unimpeded life. Furthermore, the vicissitudes of the virgin in her successive avatars is always a revelation of the capacity of the society, at particular stages of development, to accommodate and embody this ideal. One measure of the health of Elizabethan society is the ease and grace with which the heroines of Shakespearian comedy surmount obstacles and reach their romantic and matrimonial goals: "Jack shall have Jill...and all shall be well."*

Lawrence, characteristically, draws upon this (unchanging) tradition whilst simultaneously exploiting it for his own ends. The novella is manifestly concerned with the fate of the virgin in the declining culture of early twentieth century England, and how she may come into full-fledged being in what are obviously antithetical and repressive surroundings. That the Saywell family environment cannot accommodate its virgin energy without thwarting it beyond recognition is exemplified by the presence of the spinster Aunt Cissie, whose bilious neurosis pervades the narrative; similarly, Lucille's alternative - the (apparent) independence and distraction of a day-job - involves working herself into a state of nervous exhaustion: both stand as correctives to the mildly mutinous, yet indecisive, Yvette. Despite her discontent however Lawrence does not transport his heroine to a more sympathetic and accommodating setting

* The Deed of Life, ibid., p.211. For the full and illuminating discussion of the role of the English version in literature see pp. 211-213.
(as he does Lou Witt, Alvina Houghton, Dollie Urquhart); instead she remains at home to initiate a quieter change from within the accepted bastion of middle-class propriety, the rectory. This, of course, is in keeping with the romantic and comic mood of the piece which insists upon integration of its heroine into her rightful society.

In addition, Lawrence's depiction of Yvette's virgin potency goes beyond the traditional and by now debased twentieth-century definition (i.e., the medical fact of an unbroken hymen) to embrace the older, darker, self-(re)generating power of the primitive goddess. In this respect Yvette embodies the virginal essence befitting the ancient description espoused by Adrienne Rich of "she-who-is-unto-herself"*; which is to say, she is theoretically wo(man) enough to resist the mischievous beguilement of a by now corrupt and redundant Christianity (and by extension, culture). Equally, like her predecessor Lou Witt, there is an element of the vestal-virgin about her, in that having discovered the sacred flame of life it is her god-given responsibility to tend and preserve it*. Yvette as vestal virgin

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* Lemprière, in his Classical Dictionary, explains that the vestal virgins were followers of the Roman Vesta (Greek: Hestia), goddess of the hearth and home:

In her sanctuary a fire burned continually, tended by a number of virgins, who had dedicated themselves to the service of the goddess...The employment of the vestals was to take care that the sacred fire of Vesta was not extinguished, for if it ever happened, it was deemed the prognostic of great calamities to the state; the offender was punished for her negligence, and severely scourged by the high priest. In such cases all was consternation at Rome, and the fire was again kindled by glasses with the rays of the sun. (ibid., pp.658-59.)
however differs from Lou in one important respect: Lou Carrington's sacred flame is indigenous to the American landscape, and is identified as an emanating force that must be placated, and which can be either energising and/or enervating by turn or degree; Yvette suffers none of this destabilising ambiguity for her sacred flame is located within - what for Lawrence became the final temple - her body. This inner fire is attributed in part to pedigree, for Yvette is the direct inheritor of her ostracised mother's "great glow...of life"; "She-who-was-Cynthia" is described as being

...like a swift and dangerous sun in the home, forever coming and going. They always associated her presence with brightness, but also with danger; with glamour, but with fearful selfishness...Now the glamour was gone, and the white snowflower, like a porcelain wreath, froze on its grave. The danger of instability, the peculiarly dangerous sort of selfishness, like lions and tigers, was also gone. There was now a complete stability, in which one could safely perish.*

Implicit in this obvious distortion and petrifaction of her mother's memory is Yvette's own destined interment at the hands of her family; that she will be saved from such a fate is explicit in the old gipsy woman's prophetic warning:

"There is a dark man who never lived in a house. He loves you. The other people are treading on your heart. They will tread on your heart till you think it is dead. But the dark man will blow the one spark up into fire again, good fire..."*

* Ibid., p.62.
The balance of power in the Saywell household is firmly in the hands of its females, both present and absent ("She-who-was-Cynthia" lives on in her daughters' insurrectionist spirit, and is felt in the chill blast of the husband's entombment of her memory). The complex perpetuation of this subtle dynamic of power is skilfully executed as Lawrence, with both wit and economy, dramatises the atrophied condition of home life in the rectory. In the midst of the tale's rapid unfolding he not only provides a full analysis, but also gives explanation of the aetiology of the disease. The axis around which this sickness spins is unequivocally identified as the Mater. "Granny" is Lawrence's consummate portrayal of the abhorred Magna Mater who endeavours to stifle all life (existing apart from herself) at birth. The emotional asphyxiation practiced by this particular incarnation has been so successful that her offspring are incapable of escaping the umbilical bondage of her "ancient, toad-like obscene will". The "static inertia of her unsavoury power" has stunted all emotional growth and individuality which, in turn, has resulted in the fetid claustrophobia of the rectory; consequently the family remains entrapped and festering, "half dead round the base of a fungoid old woman!". There is not a single redeeming feature about "Granny"; she is condemned outright by Lawrence for her conniving emotional machinations and "parasitic agedness"*:

* It is possible here to see Lawrence's portrayal of Granny, entertaining though it undoubtedly
It was not as if the Mater were a warm, kindly soul. She wasn't. She only seemed it, cunningly. And the fact dawned gradually on the girls. Under her old-fashioned lace cap, under her silver hair, under her black silk of her stout, forward-bulging body, this old woman had a cunning heart, seeking forever her own female power.*

Arrayed against this entrenched and inisidious dominance is the fragile though potent force of the "mysterious fruit" of Yvette's "virginity". Because of her isolate vulnerability she is incapable of any focused or confrontational challenge to Granny's sovereignty; rather she must endure the loathsome atmosphere of the rectory and suffer the meaningless round of social events. Yvette however is far from being the mere prisoner of circumstances, Lawrence is quick to point out that her confinement to the rectory is in part imagined and that, is, as an hysterical response to the devouring mother. Lawrence's women, are always in a sense to be resisted, but rarely are they as all-engulfing as the Mater. Lawrence's antipathy toward the mother was still being played out during this last phase of his life and, if anything, as his own death approached he became more fervid in his denunciation of their various dominations. This can be seen in such works as 'The Lovely Lady', 'Mother and Daughter', and the quasi-incestuous relationship between Clifford Chatterley and Mrs Bolton (the 'Magna Mater' of the novel). The extent of his unresolved horror (and this is no exaggeration) in the face of such figures can be seen in a letter written a few months before he died, which describes his mother-in-law - with whom he had hitherto enjoyed the friendliest of relations - in the most denigratory terms:

It has rained and been bitter cold all the time we have been up here on this beastly mountain, and I have hated it, and only stayed because my mother-in-law got into a frenzy at the thought of going down, because she says it does her so much good here and gives her so much strength...She is 78, and is in a terror for fear she might die; and she would see me or anyone else die ten times over, to give her a bit more strength to drag on a few more meaningless years. It is so ugly and so awful, I nearly faint. I have never felt so down, so depressed and ill, as I have here, these ten days: awful! What with that terrible old woman, the icy wind, the beastly black forest, and all the depressing and fat guests - really, on wonders that anyone should be so keen to live, under such circumstances...[he goes on to complain of]. this awful atmosphere of old women who devour the life of everything around them. Truly old and elderly women are ghastly, ghastly, eating up all life with hogish greed, to keep themselves alive. They don't mind who else dies. I know my mother-in-law would secretly gloat, if I died at 43 and she lived on at 78. She would feel an ugly triumph. It is that kind of thing which does kill one. (Letters VII, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. pp.399-400.)

* The Virgin and the Gipsy, ibid., p.11.
in actuality, she is given every freedom: "There wasn't really a fetter to break, nor a prison-bar to file through, nor a bolt to shatter", the keys of her life were in her own hands and "there they dangled inert". Similarly, he endeavours to reveal the extent to which Yvette is not only the product of her middle-class upbringing, but that her rebellious nature is in fact superficial and that, in reality, she is governed by a deep-seated conventionality:

[Yvette] was born inside the pale. And she liked comfort, and a certain prestige. Even as a mere rector's daughter, one did have a certain prestige. And she liked that. Also she liked to chip against the pillars of the temple, from the inside. She wanted to be safe under the temple roof. Yet she enjoyed chipping fragments off the supporting pillars.*

Unlike Lawrence's previous heroines her rebellious desires are uncohesive: she lacks the motivation and will-power and inclination to break free of her perceived constraints. The real clue to Yvette's character lies in the remark that, "She alway wanted someone else to make a move for her, as if she did not want to play her own game of life"*; which is to say that it is not merely the rectory that Yvette is in need of rescuing, but her own restrictive passivity. At this juncture she is ready for searching and penetrative vision of her gipsy.

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* Ibid., p.149.
The Gipsy is a by now a familiar Lawrentian type (one which ranges from Annable, through Cicio, Romero, and Cipriano, and culminates in the final apotheosis of Mellors); typically he is the 'outsider', a classless or "natural aristocrat" who harries and undermines the social order from which he is excluded and alienated (certainly by temperament, if not choice). "To live outside the law you must be honest"*, ran the Sixties dictum; which is to say, the outlaw must possess a scrupulous integrity, one that is capable of tempering his law-breaking with principle, whilst making a virtue of defiance. The Gipsy's main efforts are directed not at destroying or challenging society (unlike Cipriano, who is essentially a terrorist, he is not a political animal), but rather toward a quieter subversion from within. That this apparent freedom-fighting should entail the rescue of an entrapped virgin - with her active complicity - from a society in the process of destroying itself, is seen to be not merely altruistic, but also a vital and insurrective gesture, the life-pulse of a dying breed.

The gipsy is also exploited as a figurative image and romantic type: just as Ursula Brangwen in The Rainbow dreams of being rescued by idealised knights and princes (indeed the entire cast of Tennyson's Idylls), so too is the gipsy a product of the sexual fantasy of an idle adolescent imagination. That Lawrence intended the gipsy

to be seen as such is made clear when at the end of the tale when he is finally named (that is personalised and given individual identity), and there is a consequent shift from the representative realm to the actual: as part of the bathetic process there is a concurrent diminishment in size and stature from the larger-than-life Romany spirit, to the commonplace, semi-illiterate figure of Joe Boswell. In this respect the gipsy fulfils a similar fictive role to that of the stallion in _St Mawr_; he is an initiator whose presence provides intimations of other ways of living and different modes of being, of which Yvette has hitherto been unaware.* Should we be left in any doubt as to the conventionality of this pubescent fantasy Lawrence draws our attention to the amusing reality of Yvette's youthful pragmatism, who even at the height of her self-indulgent infatuation can appreciate the necessity and practicality of his departure*: 

_Yvette, lying in bed, moaned in her heart: Oh, I love him! I love him! I love him! - The grief over him kept her prostrate. Yet practically, she too was*

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* The comparison is given greater validity when we compare Lou's affirmation of St Mawr's elemental power which confirms him as the only 'real' thing amidst so much modern giddiness, and Yvette's timid recognition of the gipsy's 'dark, complete power' and the later (almost rhetorical) enquiry of Major Eastwood, 'You think the gipsy is a real thing?' (ibid., p.127).

* Implicit also is the knowledge that Yvette can luxuriate in her infatuation only because the gipsy vanishes and does not compromise her in the eyes of her family and peers. In this respect, of course, Yvette differs radically from Alvina Houghton of _The Lost Girl_, who in many ways becomes the victim of her own fantasy when she runs away with her Cicio, only to be abandoned to her miserable and lonely fate amongst the Italian peasants. Yvette entertains no such fanciful notions of literal escape to greater freedoms; on the contrary, her fantasies are not only firmly anchored in a realistic understanding of her own needs, but exhibit an awareness of the toleration levies of her own social medium. A comparison of these respective fates (as meted out by their creator) is indeed indicative of the general scaling down of Lawrence's ambitions during this period.
acquiescent in the fact of his disappearance. Her young soul knew the wisdom of it.*

The gipsy's purpose then is to inaugurate the dawning of Yvette's consciousness and act as the focus for her burgeoning sexuality. Before his arrival she is like "one lost, or whose soul was stolen, she was not present in her body..."*; he is at once the potent catalyst whose presence ensures the grounding of her consciousness in her body, and the figure who serves as an antidote to the middle-class, Christian tendency toward the repressive denial of the flesh and an abstracted flight into a life of the willful spirit. In theological terms, he is her deliverance. Should this seem far-fetched the realisation is reinforced by the narrative's persistent allusions to the Christological drama and the concentration upon the symbolic detail of the resurrection motif. That there is an important salvatory element to the gipsy's role is emphasised throughout the text, both directly:

Far into the background was the image of the gipsy as he has looked round at her, when she had said: The weather is so treacherous. She felt rather like Peter when the cock crew, as she denied him. Or rather, she did not deny the gipsy; she didn't care about his part in the show, anyhow. It was some hidden part of herself which she denied: that part which mysteriously and unconfessedly responded to him. And it was a strange, lustrous black cock which crew in mockery of her.*

and indirectly, in that the story's chronolgy, in paralleling the Christological drama, coincides with the

* The Virgin and the Gipsy, ibid., p.174.
* Ibid., p.87.
seasonal renewal of Spring/Easter*. These religious motifs, it should be noted, are central to Lawrence's vision of human renewal with its reconciliation of the mind in the flesh and its necessary survival in a contemporary setting. The gipsy we learn from Eastwood is "a resurrected man"*, and having died one 'death' he is therefore qualified to rescue Yvette from her impending neurotic fate and show her the way to life renewed.

It is through the episode of the Window Fund that we witness Yvette's slow and painful emergence into a new state of physical awareness. Her reactions to the

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* Kingsley Widmer makes the following comment about this passage in The Art of Perversity:

Lawrence takes a favourite scene from the Bible, Peter's denial of Christ before the third cock crew, and by synecdoche uses the cock to represent the deepest of obligations. The virgin, like the disciple, defeats her own passions when she denies "the strange and lustrous black cock." This is not really obscure, of course, for we know that Lawrence and his heroine have a religious faith in the phallic prowess of the primitive dark gipsy: the metaphor of the Biblical "lustrious black cock" includes an erect dark penis. (ibid., p.185)

This is the sort of hyperbolic commentary that gives Lawrentian criticism a bad name; and presumably the kind of earnestly self-defeating and humourless criticism that John Bayley identifies as deriving from an all too common 'rigidly serious' and overly literal attitude toward the text (see reference to footnote on p.181 where he is quoted as warning, "Our responses to Lawrence is only intelligent, and therefore only beneficial, if it is light-hearted: not earnestly and rigidly serious"). If at any point the gipsy can be seen in the wholly reductive light of a 'walking penis' it is when he appears at the door of the rectory carrying the phallic candlestick holder, and this is delivered with ironic humour because it is to the bilious Aunt Cissie whom he endeavours to sell it. The symbolic candlestick can be seen as the imagistic equivalent of the phallus that Lawrence prided himself on including in all of his paintings. In a letter to Brewster, Lawrence explains how he placed a pictoral representation of the phallus in each of his pictures, "out of positive belief, that the phallos is a great sacred image: it represents a deep, deep life which has been denied in us, and still is denied".

* The lineage of the Gipsy is an interesting one which takes us back to the groom, Lewis in St Mawr - "That gipsy was the best man we had, with horses", Eastwood asserts; but also forward to Mellors with whom, having likewise almost died of pneumonia, he shares a "resurrected" state: these characters share common features and histories which ultimately come together in the resurrected Christ-figure of The Escaped Cock. The distinguishing hallmark of these parallel biographies is the association with these men with an archetypal image of the masculine and with an earlier heroic tradition of combative quest that has been debased and destroyed by the ravages of modern industrialism; consequently they appear as a race apart in a society that cannot accommodate them in anything other than a peripheral role (i.e., gipsy, groom, gamekeeper).
family's indignation and moral outrage - at what effectively amounts to her innate insouciance - are described in quasi-sexual terms, and experienced by Yvette as a violation of the flesh: "[she] remained crushed, and deflowered and humiliated...Her whole flesh shrank as if it were defiled" (my italics). This perceived attack on the "mysterious fruit of her virginity" is all the more disturbing, coming as it does, directly from the rector. Not only does this serve to articulate the extent of Lawrence's loss of faith in the Church as Establishment, but in casting her father as the chief culprit he exposes the degenerative state of the Saywell household's accepted ethical system - where denial, hypocrisy, deceit, and the commonplace abuse of trust and power are the daily norm - whilst simultaneously giving the whole exchange a nasty and somewhat sordid incestuous undertone:

It was after all somewhat fantastic. Yet hurt she was: in her limbs, in her body, in her sex, hurt. Hurt, numbed, and half destroyed, with only her nerves vibrating and jangled. And still so young, she could not conceive what was happening.*

It is her violent response to the attempted defloration which activates the young virgin's (now focused) hostility toward her environment and, consequently, enables her to demystify the myths that have shrouded and falsified her mother's memory:

* The Virgin and the Gipsy, ibid., p.61.
Only dimly, after the row, Yvette began to realise the other sanctity of herself, the sanctity of her sensitive, clean flesh and blood, which the Saywells with their so-called morality, succeeded in defiling. They always wanted to defile it. They were the life unbelievers. Whereas, perhaps She-who-was-Cynthia had only been a moral unbeliever.*

This "dimly" apprehended knowledge allows her conscious re-alignment with her ostensibly sinful and amoral mother, which in turn gives her the courage to sanction and embrace the acknowledged kinship with the gipsy. From the outset, Lawrence's ongoing symbolic method has involved the ranging of the rank, closed, suffocating world of the rectory against the vivacity, fresh air and live open spaces of the gipsy camp; and as a result of her subtle shift in allegiance, Yvette can now identify with the world beyond the walls of the rectory, thereby inaugurating a new lease of bodily life:

The thought of the gipsy had released the life of her limbs, and crystallised in her heart the hate of the rectory: so that now she felt potent, instead of impotent.*

Yvette's awakening culminates in the climactic scene of the flood*, in which the landscape's latent energy is harnessed and brought to bear upon the corrupt and

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* Ibid., p.63.
* Kingsley Widmer makes the following comment on the significance of the flood in The Art of Perversity:

The flood of passion and baptism comes when the reservoir that controls the river beside the rectory breaks: '...an ancient, perhaps even Roman, mind tunnel, unsuspected, undreamed of, beneath the reservoir dam, had collapsed, undermining the whole dam.' The description of the cause of the flood summarises Lawrence's conviction that under Western Christian culture is the hidden but ever-present paganism that provides the true religion, the chaotic release into fulfilment. (ibid., pp.185-86)
corrupting rectory and its inhabitants. The profound transmutations initiated by the deluge-ridden, "world's end-night" are clearly to be interpreted as apocalyptic, the direct effect of the unleashing of sacred violence on a decaying and disbelieving culture. Lest we should doubt this violence is anything other than sacred in origin Lawrence goes so far as to identify (subtextually) the goddess responsible for pneuma's violent irruption: it is in fact the Greek Artemis* - goddess of hunting and patron of unmarried girls - who presides over the tale. Originally incarnate as a bear she also appeared as a lioness (in southern parts); it is in this form that we recognise her insignia in the imagery of the approaching flood, and her awesome, mesmeric presence is duly acknowledged by the astounded Yvette:

...around the bend of the river she saw a shaggy, tawny wave-front of water advancing like a wall of lions. The roaring sound wiped out everything. She was powerless, too amazed and wonder-struck, she wanted to see it.*

Artemis' strange commitment to both virginity and violence is also prefigured in her association with the moon (traditionally associated in the poetic mind with both inviolable purity and the lunar tides that govern both madness and childbirth), which unsurprisingly

* Artemis, Walter Burkert explains in Greek Religion (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985), is the "Mistress of the whole of wild nature...she herself is wild and uncanny" (p.149). She is an ancient and primitive goddess: sexually unspecific (though in no sense asexual like Athena), she is both a merciless killer and a protector of the newly born; she may indeed represent the perception that these two are intimately related in the sane mind.
* The Virgin and the Gipsy, ibid., pp.154-55.
appears, regenerate and in "perfect" new form, above "the chaos of the horrible waters".

The narrative's commitment to new life involves hastening the end of the old which means it is the Mater - deemed insufficiently pious, the root-cause of the evil abroad - who must be swept away in the chaos of the regenerating waters; whilst Yvette undergoes her final transfiguration via an oxymoronic death into resurrected life: "A terrible convulsion went through her curled-up white body, enough indeed to rupture her and cause her to die"*. The sexual connotation here is unmissable, as indeed are the sexual undercurrents and tensions of the whole piece: for thematic reasons it is important to recognise that relations between the virgin and the gipsy are not actually consummated*. That Yvette remains technically a virgin at the close is fundamental to the comic resolution of the piece, which insists on the heroine's assimilation into her own society and the subsequent ability of that society to embrace her virgin energies and be rejuvenated by her presence. Thus, Yvette awakens the following morning to emerge from the literal wreckage of an old life to begin anew amidst the remnants of her family; and of course, without the restrictive presence of the Mater's emotional thraldom and oppressive

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* Ibid., p.163.
I take it that the relationship remains physically unconsummated because Lawrence omits to state otherwise. There has been critical debate on this point, however if Lawrence had wanted to either imply or expressly state that coitus took place he would have undoubtedly done so; after all, one should remember this is the precursory tale to Lady Chatterley's Lover, and it is unlikely that he would have turned coy at this stage.
"female power", the whole family is now given dispensation to begin life anew. The ongoing sexual metaphor does however have a specific purpose in that it ensures the virgin's experiences are firmly anchored within the precinct of her body, for this is where all new life originally begins and its stirrings are first perceived and felt. "Be braver in your body" the gipsy woman warns Yvette, "or your luck will go"; so Lawrence properly locates bravery within the sphere of the body's circumference for this is where death first provokes our fear; and any attempt to engage with 'evil' (whatever its manifestation), is bound to come unstuck if it forgets such central simplicities. Luck, in this context, is identified as a divinely bestowed, procreative wealth of life abundant, the received fortune of a life-giving blessing.

The comic resolution of *The Virgin and the Gipsy* is credibly achieved, as indeed is the mythic reabsorption of its heroine into English society and the grander regenerative scheme of cyclical renewal; even to the extent that she is given an imagined future with marriage (at twenty-three) and children; proof as it were of a life rooted in fertile soil. There are none of the attendant problems in this piece that are subsequently encountered, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, with the flight into woodland pastoral (the harsh landscape of the Derbyshire Peaks refuses to entertain such fancy),
neither is there the dominating sexual ideology so prevalent in the later work. Ironically however, it is in the tale's major strengths that we may also identify its major weakness: ultimately it is impossible to ignore the fact the novella is essentially (for all its comic realism) a fairy-tale, and as such it remains at the mercy of the reductive, one-dimensional nature of its own medium. Thus, in terms of its failure to engage with the determining forces of the twentieth century - its debilitating politics, its dehumanising industrialism, the terminal corruption of the culture at large - the fantasy's insubstantiality proves incapable of housing a sustained and comprehensive articulation of Lawrence's vision, grounded as it unavoidably is in ideal soil (not so much of sacred memory in this instance, but of mythic space). Aware of its innate limitations, on this shaky foundation he went on to erect the scaffolding of Lady Chatterley's Lover, which necessarily took the novella's inherent contradictions and both compounded and exaggerated them.

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Lady Chatterley's Lover

In Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence develops and enlarges the central theme of The Virgin and the Gipsy into the major metaphysical statement concerning his conception of a "religion of life". We encounter the same thematic concern with securing the self's gravitational centre within the locus of the body, and the same defining schema of seasonal and mythic renewal which determines the body's "resurrection" into, and (re)-connection with, an animistic universe. Lawrence's regenerative program in Lady Chatterley is concerned to arrest the modern tendency toward abstraction via the institution of a "democracy of touch" which, although incapable of countering entirely an industrialised and monied culture's dehumanising banalities, does have the imagined potential to circumscribe, and therefore resist, the downward drift into formless nullity and spiritual torpor. The shaping concept of mythic renewal is more fully imagined than in The Virgin and the Gipsy, certainly in regard to its cultural, and historic context: during the course of the novel the beleaguered lovers are subjected to the annihilating might of an industrialised and secular society, as Lawrence explores

* The three available published versions of Lady Chatterley's Lover differ significantly one from another and for the purpose of certain arguments, these differences are more important than their similarities; however, for the sake of the argument pursued in the present context (combined with a limited amount of space) I have chosen to treat The First Lady Chatterley, John Thomas and Lady Jane and Lady Chatterley's Lover as constituting variations on a common text and I have drawn on each of them as seemed contextually appropriate. For a full and comprehensive discussion of the differences and developmental sequence of the Chatterley novels see Micheal Squires' The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983).
the extent to which their sexual and religious awakening (manifest in their summoned "tenderness") can undermine the negating powers of bodily cancellation. The prospect of human salvation as Lawrence envisages and portrays it is, in the end, debatable; what does endure however is the fine articulation of his last hope - that by way of our most intimate connection we may reconcile our differences, and by this consummation rejuvenate the body (politic).

To approach Lady Chatterley's Lover objectively is by now a problematic undertaking (if not almost impossible); its awesome reputation precedes it, precluding or pre-empting judgement. Unfortunately, the novel has become a cultural by-word for indecency and obscenity and its notoriety as a sexual tract is now established and, it would seem, ineradicable*. In part, of course, the novel invites this by way of its occasional didactic and bombastic seriousness, particularly in regard to the sexual sermonising (for the puritan Lawrence sex was obviously no laughing matter). In this respect the text has not withstood the test of time well; the jaded late-twentieth century reader, desensitized through over-exposure to all manner of uncensored sexual material, is no longer shocked by the frank and insistent discussion of sexual

* Evidence of this can be seen in the number of listener complaints prompted by the novel's serialisation on the BBC's 'Book at Bedtime' programme on Radio 4. There have only been two recent film adaptations of Lady Chatterley: the first, by way of commentary on the novel's reputation, featured the 'porn' actress, Sylvia Krystel; the second was Ken Russell's disappointing adaptation for the BBC and was also the subject of conflicting discussion regarding its degree of sexual explicitness.
subjects, rather (s)he is apt to find the novel's urgent pre-occupations tedious, if not downright ridiculous. In the main however, it is Lawrence's critics who have (in)advertently abetted the phenomenalisation of the novel: during the last generation or so there has been an increased tendency within academic circles to dismiss *Lady Chatterley's Lover* on the grounds of its insistent sexual pre-occupation and frequent vulgarity.

Two issues are at stake here. The first (and most injurious) involves the politicisation of Lawrence by the women's movement of the late Sixties and Seventies, which chose to ignore his challenge and misrepresent his ideas. It was the feminist critic Kate Millet who began the trend of depicting Lawrence as this century's arch misogynist*. In her polemical tract *Sexual Politics*, published at the close of the Sixties, she denounced Lawrence as the "most talented and fervid of sexual politicians"*, all the more dangerous for his "slydyngge" subtlety; "for it is through a feminine consciousness that his masculine message is conveyed"*. She dismisses *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as "a handbook of sexual technique"*, and a poor one at that (primarily because of the absence of foreplay and the gamekeeper's over-hasty ejaculations; which is to say, she condemns Lawrence on

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* Millett arguably took her cue form Simone de Beauvoir who was the first to examine Lawrence's works within the specific context of sexual politics (see *The Second Sex* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), pp.245-54).
* *Sexual Politics*, ibid., p.239.
* Ibid.
* Ibid., p.245.
the grounds of sexual technique as opposed to any literary or theological misdemeanour). Her commentary - particularly although by no means exclusively in relation to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* - is frequently unjust in its contempt, and, more seriously, inaccurate in its account of what Lawrence wrote or thought*. Since then Lawrence has been deemed politically and ideologically untouchable; and it has taken almost two decades to re-evaluate the judgement of Millett and other Feminist critics*.

The second and (more ongoing) issue concerns the partial failure to recognise the extent to which Lawrence exploits "the sex thing" as an ideological tool; again this involves evasion, though this time it takes the understandable form of an aversion to Lawrence's bullying exclusiveness. Those critics who fail to see the redemptive ideology implicit in his treatment and discussion of sex are in danger of falling into the same dismissive trap as the Feminists. The sex business *per se* is not of perennial importance: Lawrence's treatment of sexual matters in the novel is not only prescriptive but frequently evangelical, and to succumb to, or be sidetracked by, his ruinously narrow didacticism is to

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* For a spirited response to Millet's strident charges, see Norman Mailer's defense of Lawrence, Henry Miller (and himself) in *The Prisoner of Sex* (New York: Primus, 1971), where some of these inaccuracies are directly addressed.

evade or miss the novel’s central challenge. It took Lawrence’s literary descendant Henry Miller* to recognize the presence of the sacred at the heart of the sexual in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, and to point out that time and again when seeking the sacred Lawrence manages merely to be obscene. Apropos the novel Miller spiritedly comments,

...since there is no other way of making clear his message he does the crude and obvious thing, he performs a miracle for the crowd - he gives us a genital banquet. *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is no more the substance of Lawrence’s gospel than are the loaves and fishes which Christ distributed among the multitude; it is only evidence of unseen powers.*

The messianic spirit in which *Lady Chatterley* was conceived guarantees that the act of coitus is the feature of his carnal theology; and this is the area around which confusion coalesces, for not only is the sex business an inadequate vehicle for the task demanded of it, but Lawrence fails to make the clear distinction that

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* There is none of the bawdy oafishness so characteristic of his fiction in this fine appreciation of Lawrence (written in the Thirties at the height of Miller’s obsession, it was not published until the mid-Eighties); on the contrary, the work contains some of the most penetrating and visionary insights on this difficult writer to appear in print. In the main, this is attributable to the fact that Miller (similarly iconoclastic, although a mere junior-leaguer by Lawrentian standards) was temperamentally more akin to Lawrence than any other writer - except perhaps Norman Mailer.
* A Passionate Appreciation, ibid., p.175. Miller is not the only critic to object to Lawrence’s insistent treatment of sex in the novel: see, for example, Keith Sagar in *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, who charges the novel with “insistent and obsessive sexuality” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966, p.197) and laments that the “full orchestral accompaniment of Lawrence’s prose cannot quite reconcile us to the persistent indulgence in copulation” (ibid., p.198); David Parker in his essay “Lawrence and Lady Chatterley: The Teller and the Tale” (Critical Review 20 (1978)), faults the third version of the novel for its “narrow didactic preoccupation with sex” (p.36); Kingsley Widmer in his piece, “The Pertinences of Modern Pastoral: The Three Versions of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*” (Studies in the Novel 5 (Fall 1973)), maintains that the novel’s “reduction of erotic fulfillment and conversion to a highly specific, and quite likely idiosyncratic, sexuality may weaken the larger theme and exemplary role of the lovers” (p.300); and even F.R. Leavis in *D.H. Lawrence/Novelist*, complains of “the willed insistence on the words and facts must, it seems to me, whatever the intention, have something unacceptable, something offensive” (ibid., p.73).
it is through love that the sacred is apprehended rather than in it.

This is not to say that the sex business should be ignored; on the contrary, Lawrence is rarely given credit for his radical explorations into hitherto unarticulated areas of human experience*. Fundamental to Lady Chatterley is an authentic search for new and regenerative life and, by extension, an authentic language with which to give it utterance. The success of that search is dependant upon the fought-for achievement of "real" connections - with the self, the other and one's world. What Lawrence understood as phallic mysticism is, essentially, an effort to give back to sexuality its cosmic character: in order to begin again we must return to the very beginning, assess the extent to which our most intimate contacts have degenerated, and then set about repairing the damage. In his self-confessed capacity as "the priest of love" Lawrence determined to challenge, definitively, "the one insane taboo left: sex as a natural and vital thing"*: in order

* The exception to this is Lydia Blanchard's essay "Lawrence, Foucault, and the Language of Sexuality" - collected in D.H. Lawrence's "Lady" (ed. Michael Squires and Dennis Jackson, Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1985), where she concludes:

But to see that Lawrence is both creating a language of feeling and simultaneously calling into question the adequacy of that language is to see the very brilliance of the novel. Lawrence has not only created a language of love, a lover's discourse, but has also shown the limits of such a discourse, even at its most eloquent and persuasive. In addition to freeing us from the repression of sexuality, Lady Chatterley's Lover also frees us from the constraints of language itself. The novel achieves its brilliance through the tension it creates by drawing on traditional genres at the same time it calls those forms into question; the novel builds on the tension created by the simultaneous use of a variety of conventions. (ibid., p.31)

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.264.
to tackle this task honestly and directly he deemed it necessary not only to pioneer the detailed description of sexual intercourse, but also to find a language that would expose the roots of his culture's crisis.

Lawrence's quest was effectively a modernist* one, intent upon evolving a fresh language with which to challenge and counteract traditional discourses, ways of representing the private and social world which he perceived as sterile or corrupt. "All the great words" Constance Chatterley laments, "were cancelled for her generation":

...love, joy, happiness, home, mother, father, husband, all these dynamic words were half-dead now, and dying from day to day. Home was a place you lived in, love was a thing you didn't fool yourself about, joy was a word you applied to a good Charleston, happiness was a term of hypocrisy you used out of cant, to bluff other people, a father was an individual who enjoyed his own existence, a husband was a man you lived with and kept going, in spirits. As for sex, the last of the great words, it was just a cocktail term for excitement that bucked you up for a while, then left you more raggy than ever.*

In creating a language which would guarantee the sincerity and integrity of what is uttered, Lawrence resorted to the scatalogical: his range is, of necessity, limited and the reiteration of monosyllabic expletives risks becoming, by the end of the novel, over-insistent, repetitive and tedious. Whatever one thinks of the

* For a discussion of Lawrence's engagement with modernist aesthetics see Tony Pinkey's D.H. Lawrence (in particular pp. 135-148).
* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.62.
outcome, it was a risk deliberately taken, and if Lawrence is to be accused of anything it is of a misconception as to the power of a single writer to divert the current of meaning into his own channel. Lawrence's exploitation of 'shock' inherent in words like "fuck" and "cunt" is similarly double-edged in that their impact comes from obscene associations which may prove too strong to overcome. Even allowing for the fact that such a register is intended to challenge the reader's complacency, and force the reassessment of accepted prejudices, the effect is antithetical to the one Lawrence sought, i.e., the self-containment of an honest, unconscious and natural utterance which springs directly out of felt human experience. Lawrence's language is ambitiously overburdened by the attempt to re-originate 'obscenity' as a vocabulary both popular and sacred; the redemptive vulgarity he sought to achieve is no match for the unredeemed vulgarity with which his words were indelibly marked. By contrast Philip Larkin in his poem "High Windows" makes use of the scatological in a way that evades Lawrence: his success resides in the fact that he demands no more of the word than its crude and literal meaning:

When I see a couple of kids And guess he's fucking her and she's Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm, I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives--*

* High Windows, ibid., p.17.
Which is to say, sex is secularised, and consequently liberated from the threat of procreation, social responsibility, and disassociated from guilt. The difference is that Larkin uses the word 'fuck' to unburden sex of meaning, whereas Lawrence ambitiously overburdens its meaning in his attempt to articulate his schema of phallic regeneration.

There is also the problem of the paradoxical nature of his endeavour in Lady Chatterley. The major thematic concern is to identify the modern tendency toward abstraction, as witnessed in the self-inventing wordiness and classifying-closure of Wragby (Clifford "with his celluloid soul...doesn't have feelings, he only has streams of words about feelings"*), and redirect human energy toward a concrete communication of "touch" which, because of its potential to by-pass language, can overcome the possibility of deceit, hypocrisy and corruption implicit in the empty currency of words. Yet by definition, for a writer to be able to speak of these things - and depict the hitherto unexpressed "secret passional places of life" - he must do so with, even the most rudimentary, language. The danger here is that the writer becomes unavoidably implicated in the process he originally sought to resist, and that which he desired to preserve and sanctify is similarly subject to the same process of degeneration. Lawrence has been condemned on these grounds, with critics arguing that he would have

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.194
done well to take heed of his own bitter indictment of a sterile Wragby which destroys sex and rarifies love through the lepidopterist tendencies of its discourse; the novel's failure is conceived of in terms of what Scott Sanders describes as the inappropriate use of the "tools of consciousness to define and defend the unconscious"*, and T.H. Adamowski describes the intrusive narrative voice in Lawrence's novels as "the light of consciousness which gives the lie to the dream of darkness"*.

Lawrence's justification is, in part, that desperate times require desperate remedies: that it should be necessary to trespass into such privacies at all is merely symptomatic of the general impoverishment of the era in which he lived. In preceding ages, the lovers silent dialogue (inherited from tradition and religious thinking) had kept sex, to some degree, mysterious and sacred, making love a precious and above all secret matter, which arguably protected the longevity and intensity of what, by Lawrence's time, was beginning to appear trivial or exhausted. Sex and love inevitably suffer from the collapse of old ways and traditions* built into a culture, and for this reason Lawrence looked

* "Character and Consciousness: D.H. Lawrence, Wilhelm Reich, and Jean-Paul Sartre", University of Toronto Quarterly 43 (Summer 1974), pp.311-34.
* Lawrence identified the Great War as being responsible for delivering the last and final blow to England's traditional ways (see Part I), and the post-war years as those in which England lapsed into the 'silence' of defeated inarticulacy as opposed to the former fecundating 'silence' of mysterious and natural ignorance (for a full discussion of this contrast see 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside', Phoenix, ibid., p.133).
to them as the barometers of social climate. Once that which was sacred is no longer insulated from the larger cultural and historic forces - shrouded no more in darkness and mysterious silence (caught out of history) - the private life becomes a simulacrum of conflicts in the public realm and is revealed in all its fragility and vulnerability. In a modern secular (sexual) society, the crises of a decadent culture seem to be played out in the dramas of private life, which subsequently displace matters of public importance in the minds of individuals. In common with many other writers in the aftermath of the War (Eliot, Hemingway, Joyce) Lawrence saw in the relations between men and women both an actual and a symbolic location of the conflicts which the War had exposed or caused.

Constance Chatterley's rooms at Wragby are exclusively feminine (in no way can her bedroom be construed as a shared space), accommodating the masculine - in the form of the aspiring guttersnipe Michaelis - only for the purpose of temporary gratification (with the accompanying diminishment of the phallus to masturbatory "tool"). The sexual explicitness of the novel (replacing earlier metaphorical obscurity) enables Lawrence to outline the extent to which modern love-making has degenerated in the name of progress and liberation. The young Connie, having lived a bohemian life has necessarily indulged in her share of sexual experimentation in which the mind's supremacy reduces the body to a laboratory of sensations;
her disappointments in this sphere are compensated (just) by the fact that she has managed to cultivate a degree of spiritual detachment (the consequence of denying the body's autonomy) which she construes as "freedom":

For of course, being a girl, one's whole dignity and meaning in life consisted in the achievement of an absolute, a perfect, a pure and royal freedom. What else did a girl's life mean? To shake of the old sordid connections and subjections.*

The hollow triumph of this female emancipation is the assured subjugation of the other to the will of the dominant partner. The age of reciprocally enriching passion expires and the sexual politics of power comes into play; coitus, liberated and emptied of meaning, becomes the sterile and enervating battle ground of tactical manoeuvring:

But a woman could yield to a man without yielding her inner, free self...A woman could take a man without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power. Rather she could use this sex thing to have power over him. For she had only to hold herself back, in the sexual intercourse, and let him finish and expend himself without herself coming to the crisis; and then she could prolong the connection and achieve her orgasm and her crisis while he was merely a tool.* (my italics)

Sex for both partners under such circumstances becomes a battle of wills, which can be nothing other than humiliating and unsatisfactory. Just how such dynamics operate is revealed in Connie's relationship with the

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.7.
* Ibid., pp.7-8.
playwright, Michaelis. Connie's dissatisfaction centres on Michaelis' speedy love-making, and means that in order to achieve her own climax she must learn "to hold him, to keep him there inside her when his crisis was over". Despite his apparent willingness to comply in this arrangement - "he was generous and curiously potent: he stayed firm inside her" - Connie eventually becomes the recipient of Michaelis' hostility and resentment, as he accuses her of wilful manipulation in failing to achieve simultaneous orgasm:

"You couldn't go off at the same time as a man, could you? You'd have to bring yourself off! You'd have to run the show!"*

Connie is genuinely shocked by his vicious and unexpected outburst, primarily because "that passive sort of giving himself was so obviously his only real mode of intercourse"*, but also she feels vindicated in her actions on the grounds of Michaelis' sexual inadequacies: "like so many modern men, he was finished before he had begun. And that forced a woman to be active"*. In a state of mutual incomprehension the lovers move from untimely climax to parting crisis, revealing in the process the real reason for the failure their sexual relationship. From their respective positions of guarded hostility and recrimination, neither is willing to relinquish their aggressive and acquisitive energies in favour of a

* Ibid., p.53.
* Ibid., p.54.
* Ibid., p.54.
reciprocal and fecundating exchange, one which would involve a real generosity of emotion and spirit. Connie's (acquired) gratification merely increases her sense of bodily alienation, granting her little more than a "mechanical confidence in her own powers", and culminates in the collapse of her faith in the modern male. Michaelis, suffering both a direct attack upon his manhood and (self-invented) identity, retreats once again into his own insubstantiality. The degree to which modern manhood has declined (at least in metaphorical terms) is nicely exemplified in the inversion of the traditional gender bias of sexual exploitation: it is Constance Chatterley who is now Lady of the Manor indulging in sexual dalliance with her social inferiors. In highlighting the social inequality of the lovers Lawrence also explores the extent to which class conflict enters the sexual arena. Despite his considerable success Michaelis is nothing more than a "down-at-heel Dublin street-rat", whose presence is begrudgingly tolerated by a supercilious aristocracy in the name of passing entertainment: his belittlement (in every respect) lies in his relegation to the position of court jester, his standing dependent upon English upper-class whimsy. Michaelis doesn't even have the marginal dignity and social confirmation afforded by Mellors' job and salary. It is therefore unsurprising to discover that he derives a degree of vengeful gratification (alien to Mellors) from his covert and clandestine cuckolding of the aristocracy: in this context his initial premature
ejaculation is doubly significant in that it can be viewed in terms of comic foolishness (over-eager delight in the face of forbidden pleasures), and aggressive acquisitiveness (the smash-and-grab tactic of a thief in the night). In addition, his hasty climax is of course directly related to his intrinsic insubstantiality which, in turn, is symptomatic of his refusal to engage meaningfully with either anything or anyone: "Mick", Lawrence tells us, "couldn't keep anything up. It was part of his very being, that he must break off any connection"*. Sexual involvement similarly threatens to reduce Michaelis to a child; stript of defences between his lovers thighs he fears both engulfment and extinction in her overwhelming presence, thus his rapid expenditure assures the expeditious return of his "effrontery", and a cunning reassertion of what remains of his manhood and individuality*.

The modern sexual scenario succinctly and finely delineated in the opening chapters is a depressing one, founded on mutual mistrust and wilful hostility, with each partner fearing the power with which (s)he invests the other. Admittedly, this is not new, the perennial problem of sexual penetration has always been - for either sex - the achievement of equity in the presence of asymmetrical dynamics. For the female the anxiety is one

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* Ibid., p.31.
* Mark Spilka identifies the underlying emotional issue as one in which "Michaelis...climaxes quickly out of some unexpressed fear of giving himself up to the act with real generosity of feeling". See his essay, "On Lawrence's Hostility to Women", in Lawrence and Women.
of phallic tyranny, understood and apprehended in terms of the penis as mutilating weapon; the underlying psychodrama being one which casts the male as rapist. For the male the equivalent fear is of a female mana which would house, contain, envelop and ultimately engulf him; the nightmare vision of woman as womb-tomb infantilizer. Entrenched in their respective defensive and uncompromising positions neither Connie nor Michaelis are capable of understanding the stalemate of their sexual entrapment*.

Lawrence's programme of regeneration entailed taking his lovers out of the bedroom (where sex is considered beyond redemption) and transplanting them amidst England's fertile woodland where, they can re-learn original innocence, relinquish their violence, and resurrect a bygone tenderness. Central to this mythic shift is Lawrence's notion of phallic mysticism which seeks to re-invest sex, or rather sensuality, with its religious and cosmic nature. In the various essays which surround the novel*, Lawrence is careful to distinguish between sexuality, which he viewed as an acquired (largely mental) attitude shaped by cultural conditioning, and sensuality, which has its primitive origins in the animal

* In this respect the delineation of the dynamics and consequent breakdown of Connie and Michaelis's love affair is done with far greater delicacy, accuracy and economy than the retrospective analysis of Mellor's failed marriage to his wife Bertha. There is, for example, none of the apportioning of blame in the former relationship that is so characteristic of the latter. In comparing these two accounts of 'bad' sex it is easy to see the way in which doctrinal element of Lawrence's carnal theology distorted not merely his vision, but also his prose.
* See, A Propos Lady Chatterley's Lover, "Pornography and Obscenity", "Sex versus Loveliness", and "The State of Funk".
instincts and is rooted in a pagan (or animistic) apprehension of one's relation with the universe, the self and the other. The efforts of both Connie and Mellors are directed toward re-connection with not just their own bodies but also their world, with which, to differing degrees, they have lost touch. This profound sense of deracination is unequivocally identified as the basis of Connie's (and by extension her generation's) ontological crisis;

Vaguely, she knew herself that she was going to pieces in some way. Vaguely, she knew she was out of connection: she had lost touch with the substantial and material world.*

For Lawrence it is the body which becomes the symbol of this lost unity, and the focus of his regenerative vision. The mind may entertain the most fantastical flights of fancy, but it is anchored within the body, with all forms of mental aspiration tethered to this point of fixture. The whole corpus of thought resides in the flesh and it is only through the body (and the dark gods within) that we may (re)connect with the universe, and resist the modern hegemony of mind and spirit. In such bodily awareness we find our true centre of gravity, the vital axis upon which we may turn with the world's daily turning. The act of coitus in this context becomes the ultimate expression of the body's communion with the ever-evolving "quick of the universe". "Sex", Lawrence explains in A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover, is not a

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.20.
fixed or static phenomenon but is subject to ceaseless
and changing "rhythm of the year"; "what a maiming of
love", he laments,

when it was made a personal, merely personal
feeling, taken away from the rising and the setting
of the sun, and cut off from the magic connection of
the solstice and the equinox! This is what is the
matter with us. We are bleeding at the roots,
because we are cut off from the earth and sun and
stars, and love is a grinning mockery...marriage is
no marriage that is not basically and permanently
phallic, and that is not linked up with the sun and
the earth, the moon and the fixed stars and the
planets, in the rhythm of days, in the rhythm of
months, in the rhythm of quarters, or years, of
decades and of centuries.*

Connie's painful restoration of these fundamental
connections enables her to discover - through the
flowering of sexual desire - her rootedness in nature.
Her awakening therefore goes beyond the merely sexual, to
heal the false dichotomies of mind and body, the rigidity
of the class structure, and the dislocation of human
separation from nature. Lawrence charts the narrative
progression of her initial alienation from the natural
world,

The wood was her one refuge, her sanctuary.
But it was not really a refuge, a sanctuary,
because she had no connection with it. It was really
only a place where she could get away from the rest.
She never really knew the spirit of the wood itself
- if it had any such nonsensical thing.*

through her moment of revelation (she "received the shock
in her womb"), in the form of the unmindful gamekeeper

* Ibid., p.20.
whose numinous "perfect, white, solitary, nudity", speaks
to her of the concrete possibility of life elsewhere
("beyond that, a certain beauty of a pure
creature...revealing itself in contours that one might
touch: a body!") , to the final full-blown epiphany of her
sexual ecstasy:

...passion overcame her, and the body of the man
seemed silken and powerful and pure god-stuff, and
the thrusting of the haunches the splendid,
flamboyant, urgent god-rhythm, the same that made
the stars swing round and the sea heave over, and
all the leaves turn and the light stream out from
heaven. *

The re-centering of Connie's consciousness involves the
relinquishing of "mechanical" energy in favour of an
organic "forest" energy, whose fertilities breed a
profound awareness of, and participation in, an animistic
universe:

The trees seemed to be bulging and surging, at
anchor on a tide, and the heave of the slope of the
park was alive. She herself was a different
creature, sensitive and alert, quietly slipping
among the live presences of trees and hills and a
far-off star.

...Time was a full soft urge, with no minutes
to it. And the universe ceased to be the vast clock-
work of circling planets and pivotal suns, which she
had known. The stars opened like eyes, with a
consiousness in them, and the sky filled with a
soft, yearning stress of consolation. It was not
mere atmosphere. It had its own feeling, its own
anima. Everything had its own anima.
The quick of the universe is in our bodies,
deep in us. *

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Sex of this order is by no means straightforwardly achieved; a long and systematic initiation into phallic mysticism is demanded of its neophytes*. Nature's regenerative power - as invoked by the lovers in their sacred grove - is a complex form of the sublime. Although never called upon by name, it is Dionysiac in origin, involving the dying of Old life and the birth of New. The coming and going of this mysterious god marks a period of profound instability, a marginal time of excess and ecstasy in which pneuma is both unhoused and unregulated. In this orgiastic excitement the boundaries between the self and other dissolve and the ecstasy of violence meets the ecstasy of sexual abandonment. Under appropriately ritualized circumstances the disturbing frenzy of self-abandon, necessarily attendant upon his presence, is magically transformed and returned as a deeply enlivening rebirth; if however the god is resisted or in some way mis­taken, madness, mutilation and death ensue (as Pentheus' story brutally testifies). Lawrence reveals the extent to which Connie, during her love-making, is caught up in the confusion of this state of "flux": her 'death'

* For a discussion of Lawrence's buried mystical allusions see Frank Kermode's essays "Lawrence and Apocalyptic Types" (Modern Essays, London: Fontana, 1971) and "Spenser and the Allegorists" (Renaissance Essays, London: Fontana, 1971), which describes the "direct relation between the amorous action of Lady Chatterley and Lawrence's exposition of the Opening of the Seals" in the Book of Revelation:

These seals, he held, were the seven centres or gates of "dynamic consciousness". The old Adam dies in seven stages; at the climactic seventh he is also reborn. Lawrence develops this idea in terms of initiation ritual: the opening of the last seal is compared to "a stark flame...clothed anew" in Hades. "Then the final flame-point of the eternal self of a man emerges from hell"; and, finally, this moment is related to the emergence of the initiate from the goddess's temple, dazed and ecstatic. "The cycle of individual initiation is fulfilled...The initiate is dead, and alive again in a new body". Then there is silence in heaven. (p.28)
involves not only the renunciation of the old domineering tendency to "run the show", but equally, the awareness that amidst the euphoria of her new-found ecstasy - her sacred hunger - she must regulate her appetite and resist the frenzied desire (born of carnival violence) to mutilate, annihilate, and ultimately consume, her lover:

Ah yes, to be passionate like a bacchante, like a bacchanal, fleeing wild through the woods. To call on Iacchos, the bright phallos that had no independent personality behind it, but was pure god-servant to the woman! The man, the individual, let him not dare intrude. He was but a temple-servant, the bearer and keeper of the bright phallos, her own.

So, in the flux of new awakening, the old hard passion flamed in her for a time, and the man dwindled to a contemptible object, the mere phallos-bearer, to be torn to pieces when his service was performed. She felt the force of the Bacchae in her limbs and her body: the woman gleaming and rapid, beating down the male.

But while she felt this, her heart was heavy. She did not want it. It was known and barren, birthless.*

Without the appropriately regulated erotic ritual - which is to say without due reverence for the other - the mutilating ecstasy goes beserk, and where one would expect regeneration and rebirth there is nothing but a deathly and "barren" destruction. Inevitably, such violence unleashed upon the other (particularly in the form of one's lover), is violence ultimately directed toward the self, in so much as one's lover is in a sense

Not everyone is in agreement with Kermode's reading of Lawrence's allegory: Mark Spilka in his chapter "Lawrence Up-Tight: Or, The Anal Phase Once Over" (Renewing the Normative), with specific reference to 'Lawrence and Apocalyptic Types', maintains that as 'a reading (a conflation really) of two very different novels..[Women in Love and Lady Chatterley's Lover, Kermode]..has everything ass-backwards' (ibid., p.105).

oneself; such a death, twice-lived, is doubly sorrowful and rightly requires some form of lamentation. The lovers' separate renunciations (via the gradual paring down of their social selves) involve a final coming together in the wounded nakedness of their respective vulnerabilities: through such exposure they begin to learn the necessary reverence which enables them to initiate some sort of restitution and reparation of the bonds that bind, consummate and give meaning to our being. It is through the sexual magic of Lawrentian "tenderness" that human violence is countered, absorbed, repaired and transformed into love: a love, moreover, that has the abiding strength to minister to the fear of death* in an age where divinity has absented itself, more or less permanently. For Lawrence, the realisation of the death of God (and the father) gave primacy to the necessity for regeneration over generation, making coitus a sacred act that, honestly encountered, required a sublime leap of faith: "And his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative"*. The healing erotic impulse, and the "tenderness" it summons, is profoundly religious,

* Lawrence was, of course, addressing the novel to a dying nation. As such it is populated with characters who are either dead or dying, even Mellors' spirit of isolate self-preservation at the beginning of the novel is very close, in mood, to death itself: thus Connie perceives, "a pallor of isolation about him...she felt a curious difference about him, a vividness; and yet, not far from death itself" (ibid., p.68); and again, "she could feel the black void of despair inside him. That was the death of all desire, the death of all love: this despair that was like the dark cave inside the men, in which their spirit was lost" (ibid., p.206). It is this imminent death (of both the individual and the civilisation) that is transformed symbolically by the 'petit mort' of intercourse into "a religion of life": most memorably during the scene of "the phallic hunting out" when "the sensual flame of it passed through her bowels and breast, she really thought she was dying: yet a poignant, marvellous death" (ibid., p.247).

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.279.
in so much as it involves the reparation of unities broken by experience, and beyond that the retrieval of a Unity both all-encompassing and sempiternal.

For all its brilliance however, Lawrence's gospel of phallic regeneration is not immediately accessible to the reader. Another kind of prophetic voice is heard in the book: the voice of denunciation and lamentation (on the degenerate state of modern sexuality) or, even harder to take, the voice of prescriptive rejoicing. On this point Henry Miller perceptively notes:

"Lady Chatterley's Lover is one of his most extreme expressions. The phallic mystic! Phallic obviously enough, but where is the mysticism? It is there well enough for those who know him and understand him, but it is implicit in the work rather than explicitly available.*

A good working knowledge of all three versions of the novel (combined with no small amount of perseverance and sympathetic patience) is required to do full justice to this final articulation of Lawrence's vision. This is not to say that it is in any way confused, or poorly expressed; on the contrary, Lady Chatterley's Lover is undeniably a much-flawed masterpiece: rather, the faults (such as they are) originate in the friability of that vision, its thematic and stylistic failings being the direct result of its inescapable and heartfelt uncertainties.

* A Passionate Appreciation, ibid., p.175. Similarly, Julian Moynahan in The Deed of Life, although admiring Lawrence, argues that the reader of Lady Chatterley "fails to achieve any deep realization of the sexual mystery" (ibid., p.163).
This inevitably brings us back to the novel's paradoxical foundation: that which Lawrence seeks to express is, by his own definition, inexpressible. He overcomes this technical contradiction, to some extent, by describing the physical and emotional intricacies of his lovers' sexual encounters, but stops short of an examination of its immediate religious significance: at this point what he cannot provide with metaphor, imagery and intimation, he calls upon a reverential "silence" to supply. Effectively, in the midst of his narrative, he performs a priestly invocation of the "unknown" - the unconscious, preternatural realm which exists beyond knowledge and language (the mysterious darkness around which his poetry clusters) - he thereby enters upon sacred and "holy ground", space upon which neither lovers, nor narrator, dare trespass with discourse. Thus the lovers in their passionate transport transcend the limits of the self and known reality, to apprehend a dark and fecundating mystery which, in the quiet confirmation of their post-coital intimacy requires neither comment nor analysis, but duly remains shrouded in reverential and "unfathomable silence":

And this time his being within her was all soft and iridescent, purely soft and iridescent, such as no consciousness could seize...And afterwards she was utterly still, utterly unknowing, she was not aware for how long. And he was still with her, in unfathomable silence along with her. And of this, they would never speak.*

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.175.
The voice out of the uttermost night, the life! The man heard it beneath him with a kind of awe, as his life sprang into her. And as it subsided, he subsided too and lay still, unknowing.*

Such silence may or may not help to clarify the understanding of Lawrence's phallic mysticism; in the end one has to accept that it is deliberately represented as ungraspable. *Lady Chatterley* remains Lawrence's most self-consciously literary work, whose central message paradoxically insists that our self-proliferating wordiness is a poor substitute for a more fundamental communication. The book proffers this new communication as the only defence against its own endemic and apocalyptic despair: as the gamekeeper says, "so many words, because I can't touch you. If I could sleep with my arm around you, the ink would stay in the bottle".*

The novel's main premise then is a precarious one, for although Lawrence's defence of human "tenderness" is poignantly executed, the word itself belies its own frailty. Confidence in the power of human tenderness to endure is limited, and like the woodland potencies from which it derives its strength, its life-span one senses is finite. In many ways Lawrence offers "tenderness" almost as a panacea (the ghost of something stronger that once was and is now no longer possible), and its apotheosis in the novel comes perilously close to

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* Ibid., pp.183-84.
* Ibid., p.301.
despairing resignation. It is barely capable of withstand ing even the mildest of challenges for, in the end, its assumptions are overly reductive and simplistic. All evil is finally rationalised into the outside world of industrialism or the "mental life" of Wragby Hall: it is a pastoral in which no guilt devolves upon the lovers, and whose blithe innocence cannot hope to survive the onslaught of modern secular life beyond the idyll of their sacred grove and faery cottage. This in itself implies a certain failure of human concern, indicating the point at which Lawrence's misanthropy perhaps got the better of him. Characters like Tom Brangwen, Ursula, Birkin, even Lilly and Somers find they are implicated in humanity (despite their continual efforts to detach themselves) in a way that Connie and Mellors are not: rather, they remain cocooned by the security of "m'lady's" private income. There seems to be no conceivable compromise or imagined middle ground, the stark options being wholesale subsumption by an industrial technology (as with Clifford and the miners) or the guaranteed isolation of a farm (the typical solution to nearly all Lawrence's marriage novels) somewhere in Scotland.

By the time he completed Lady Chatterley, Lawrence had lost all faith and hope in England or the English people. This is reflected in the characterisation of the figures which populate the novel, in that they are not fully realised beings, but representative figures whose
symbolic function, and specific role within the grand schema of the novel, are never out of sight. In reality the novel is less about people than it is about sex, and even here the body of faith is in sex as Nature (regenerative) rather than sex as a human (procreative), which again suggests some sort of novelistic crisis with the human concern. Finally sex itself is discredited becoming, as it does, overburdened and damagingly prescriptive; as such, of course, it cannot fail to deliver itself up for ridicule. Time and again in the novel, Lawrence's earnest proselytizing fails to appreciate the innate absurdity of the form his message takes; this is particularly true in regard to salvatory power with which he invests the phallus, which is, in the end, unable to fulfil the task expected of it. The apocalyptic gravity with which he has Dukes announce the end of "our civilisation" is condemned to a "bottomless pit" is hardly reinforced by the solemn-faced assertion that "the only bridge across the chasm will be the phallus!" Such grandiose notions concerning the power of human genitalia (even in a symbolic capacity) are not even redeemed by a smattering of Aristophanes' comic seriousness: at this point reader and novelist part company.

It is, however, all too easy to dismiss the later sections of *Lady Chatterley* on the grounds of their narrow didacticism (from which the novel has difficulty
recovering), and overlook the fact that they conceal the novel's more powerful uncertainties. Many of these doubts centre on the figure of the gamekeeper who, in a vital sense, proves inadequate for the role demanded of him. The real question concerning Mellors is, what does he have to offer Connie? The obvious answer is children. Lawrence however disputes this, insisting that procreation is a secondary concern in their relationship. This is reinforced when he reveals Connie's exploitation of the gamekeeper-as-sperm-bank to be symptomatic of her old "mental" consciousness that willfully manipulated others for its own ends. The real basis of their relationship, he emphasises throughout, is not the forthcoming child (which is considered a "a side issue") but the "forked flame" of passion they have "fucked...into being". If then, as the novel claims, it is Mellors' natural virility that is of abiding consequence (issues such as class, income, boorishness and inarticulacy all pale beside it) what does this tell us about Lawrence's hope for a resurrected masculinity?

Initially, Mellors is portrayed as a folkish 'wild man of the woods' who, whilst he maintains his enigmatic isolation, derives his strength from England's woodland potencies and his solace from its melancholic consolations; which is to say, in the gamekeeper Lawrence

* The folkish figure of the 'wild man of the woods' has figured prominently in both English and European mythologies/folk-lore. For a full and comprehensive discussion of this archetype, and its continuing significance, see Robert Bly's (unfairly maligned) study of masculinity, Iron John (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).
invests his dying hope for the natural recovery of England's manhood. However as he moves during the course of the novel from the representative realm (the sacred grove) to the actual (an industrialised society) there is a concurrent diminishment in Mellors' all-round stature: the transition from wood to world is marked by a physical bodily shrinking. In a crucial sense, Mellors is revealed to be impotent in his dealings within a social realm, either in terms of its daily stress (the brutal and scandalous encounter with his wife), or it mundane ambitions (the refusal to "get on"): once the social realm is symbolically re-entered, via divorce, re-marriage and familial (not to mention financial) obligation, Mellors' role as "phallus-bearer" comes under direct threat. The reader's confidence wanes in conjunction with Lawrence's deteriorating faith in the gamekeeper's ability to withstand the powerful forces arrayed against him. When the problem of the future is faced and dramatised openly the novel, it seems, can do nothing other than maintain its fine poise between faith and despair. Mellors' essential incompetence within the social sphere augurs ill for the lovers' conjoined lives; the best he can come up with by way of resolving their dilemma is the same negative compromise his creator knew: to become a wanderer on the face of the earth.

It was insoluble. He could only think of going to America, to try new air. He disbelieved in the dollar utterly. But perhaps, perhaps there was something else.
Lawrence indicates that nothing less than Mellors' masculinity is at stake in their relationship. If he is to retain his individual freedom and bodily separation (the defining dialectic being one of physicality and abstraction) he must demonstrate his practical independence in a concrete fashion: failure to do so carries the imminent threat of the unfortunate Egbert's fate. The unfolding drama is a depressingly simple one in which Connie, witnessing her lover's essential incompetence in practical matters, will become disillusioned, and eventually contemptuous; and Mellors, only able to mitigate her burgeoning discontent by allowing her undisputed mastery of him, must sacrifice his manhood in the name of the holy family: servitude and insubstantiality await in the wings, and Mellors' masculinity is irrevocably defeated. It would seem then that the novel's inescapable reality is one which has difficulty imagining the gamekeeper as anything other than a gigolo (as indeed the title would imply) and this it is at pains to point out is untenable, except in the sphere of socially unconsummated dalliance. So Mellors' gravely explains to Connie,

I've no business to take a woman into my life, unless my life does something and gets somewhere, inwardly at least, to keep us both fresh. A man must offer a woman some meaning in his life, if it's going to be an isolated life, and if she's a genuine woman.--I can't just be your male concubine.*

* Lady Chatterley's Lover, ibid., p.176.
England's manhood, Lawrence seems to suggest, can only survive unchallenged and in isolation.

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The Escaped Cock

The Escaped Cock is the last and most unusual of Lawrence's short fictions. Thematically it belongs with "The Flying Fish", in that it returns to the idea of a resurrected and "regenerate man" who endeavours to live a "real" and individuated life on earth ("this Garden of Eden"). The resurrection theme, so prevalent in his work throughout the closing years, is here taken to its ultimate and unhindered conclusion in the twice-born, apotheosised figure of "the man who died". The tale's singularity is, in the main, attributable to the fact that The Escaped Cock is Lawrence's only fictional piece in which the mythopoeic imagination is given free and unfettered range: consequently, he is able to wrestle with, and articulate fully, the great religious experiences (and dilemmas) of his life. In this respect the tale can be viewed - as it is by many critics* - as the expressive culmination of his career as a writer, the completion of his life's work. Much of Lawrence's late

* The general critical concensus regarding the novella is generally highly favourable. Graham Hough, in The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence, observes that it "represents the consummation of Lawrence's work" (ibid., p.190); Mark Spilka, in The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), describes it as Lawrence's "last bequest to his readers, his final vision, and in a poetic sense, the crown of his accomplishment" (p.219); George H. Ford, in Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D.H. Lawrence, calls it Lawrence's "archetypal story" (ibid., p.105), noting that it was "the same story he had been retelling throughout his career is here re-embodied with a striking finality of effect" (ibid., p.104-5); Eugene Goodheart, in The Utopian Vision of D.H. Lawrence (London: University of Chicago Press, 1963), refers to it as the "masterpiece of the 'final period'...It is a kind of grand summation of Lawrence's principal themes" (p.149); Robert H. MacDonald's essay "The Union of Fire and Water: An Examination of the Imagery of The Man Who Died" (D.H. Lawrence Review, vol 10, Spring 1972) where he describes the theme as "the most explicit statement of [Lawrence's] philosophy, and the language of the story contains the most sustained rhetoric of his fiction" (p.34); Larry LeDoux - 'Christ and Isis: The Function of the Dying and Reviving God in The Man Who Died' (D.H. Lawrence Review, vol 5, no.2, Spring 1972) - describes the piece as a "triumph of an artistic and mythopoeic imagination" (p.132).
fiction is in a sense unfinished, inconclusive or unresolved, with each successive work evolving from a recreation of that which preceded: in contrast, The Escaped Cock has an air of finality, resolution and completeness about it which defies re-imagining. An unprecedented note of (quiet) self-containment and unforced certainty is sounded, as authorial hesitancy (hitherto manifest in his doctrinaire insistence) disappears and the narrative tension relaxes, even to the point where the story manages to encompass comfortably its own indefinite ending.

Significantly, it is Lawrence's only work that is not grounded, at least ostensibly, in a twentieth century context; rather the tale refuses to engage with the modern world and returns, in both time and mood, to an indeterminate past of biblical origin. Although the story is (loosely) based upon the Christian Gospel (from which it derives much of its initial impact and strength) recognisable detail eventually recedes as the narrative passes over into the rootless territory of sacred memory and mythic space; here Lawrence finally relinquishes his attempts to anchor his vision in any form of realism. The earlier failure of the mythic intent in "The Flying Fish" is acknowledged, addressed and subsequently resolved by transmuting the action into the private and personal sphere of mythical enclosure. A distinctive feature therefore of both The Escaped Cock and Last Poems is the increasing tendency to dissociate themselves from the
happenings of the contemporaneous world, as past and present converge in a vision of poetic conflation or compression. Aside from the novella, this is particularly apparent in such poems as "The Greeks are Coming" and "The Argonauts", which bridge the historical fetch – what Lawrence refers to as "the Minoan distance"* – to the extent that the ancient past is perceived, and indeed portrayed, more vividly than the the immediate present:

Now the sea is the Argonauts' sea, and in the dawn Odysseus calls the commands, as he steers past those foamy islands; wait, wait, don't bring me the coffee yet, nor the pain grillé.
The dawn is not off the sea, and Odysseus' ships have not yet passed the islands, I must watch them still.*

This is neither an invocation (a religious revery), nor an act of mnemonic recovery of the type witnessed in "The Flying Fish", rather it forms the living apprehension of a perpetual mythic return, in which the exactitudes of history are dissolved into the a-temporal quintessence of locale, and where past, present and future converge (in and out of time).

This apparent timelessness means that both The Escaped Cock and Last Poems have a curiously free-floating or disembodied quality. Such a fundamental sense of disconnection however is not due to any particular failing on Lawrence's part, but is one of the unavoidable

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* "Middle of the World", The Complete Poems, ibid., p.688.
* "The Argonauts", ibid., p.687.
hazards of the mythopoeic medium. T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (though in a very different fashion) address the problems of time, history and personal/national identity, and have the same disembodied quality. Eliot, whose method in such matters is always more formulated and coherently articulated than Lawrence's, informs us that the mythic process enabled him to shore the fragments of myth and tradition against the ruinous destiny that awaited mankind in the waste land of modern Europe. When, at the close of *The Waste Land*, he declares his intention to "set my lands in order", he is effectively striving for some sort of anchorage in the temporal flux, some intimation of meaning in personal experience that will stay the overwhelming and impersonal forces of history; which is to say, the mythic method provided a means

...of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.*

In *Four Quartets* Eliot effectively completes the devaluation of history that he began in *The Waste Land*: this he achieves by means of subverting the way in which Western civilisation perceives the historical process; that is a diachronic trajectory, compatible with a notion of time which is linear, deterministic and fatalistic. This is substituted with a mythic cyclical mechanism (an essentially synthetic view of the historical process)

that harbours an a-temporal stasis at core*. Eliot thereby creates an enchanted world where the principle of causality (the very basis of histiography) disappears and history becomes a "pattern of timeless moments".

Central to both Eliot and Lawrence's macrohistoric view of things is the move into a mythic dimension. The defining schema of The Escaped Cock is one in keeping the regenerative cycle; thus the seasons' annual renewal initiates a process of mythic reabsorption and implies a supra-temporality, where "all time is eternally present". The mythic enterprise, despite (indeed because of) its capacity to create an a-temporal, untroubled realm, is hazardous for there is an unavoidable risk that rather than providing a solution (or alternative) to the inherent problems of realism it loses touch with historical reality and lapses into escapist fantasy. To myth-makers such as Stephen Dedalus "history...is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake"*, however to awake from history into myth is the equivalent of escaping from nightmare into a state of permanent insomnia. Such a supposition is confirmed a half century later by Saul Bellow's intellectual hero Humboldt - the Mozart of "gab" - who does indeed battle with insomnia, and and describes the backwash of the historical process as "a nightmare during which he was trying to get a good

* This image of history is essentially Spenglerian (as expounded in his histiographical work, Decline of the West (1926-29). What Spengler and Eliot effectively offer the reader is the opportunity of participating in the monumental and petrified return of the centuries.
night's rest"*. Bellow's joke is obviously at Joyce's expense and, as Freud tells us, such humour frequently conceals a sublimated hard-core reality: implicit in Bellow's wit is the perspicacious observation that the supra-temporality of myth does indeed provide an ideal refuge from the exigencies of history; but like any refuge, it should only be used as a half-way house, for there is always the inherent danger that the writer discovers, only too late, that (s)he has set up camp in a vacuum.

The retreat into the idealised and undefiled spaces of mythopoeic poetry or prose may, therefore, undermine the meaningfulness of the expressed, but essentially unconnected, vision. The purpose of this final meditation is to consider just how real the last articulation of Lawrence's vision actually is: or to put it another way, to what extent is The Escaped Cock either the projection of a dying (and impotent) man's wish-fulfilment fantasy or the timely offering of a sacred memory?

R.E. Pritchard, in D.H. Lawrence: Body of Darkness, is of the (minority) opinion that the tale is a "narcissistic and compensatory fantasy"* in which any meaningful "involvement with reality" is impossible as real connections are displaced by notions of "private salvation and escape"*. He concludes:

* Humboldt's Gift, ibid., p.4.
* Ibid., p.196.
For all its beauty, this fable has the false simplicity of wish-fulfilment; there is no attempt to grapple with reality, and the language is extremely 'rhetorical', filled with repetition and poeticism.*

The charge, I would argue, is both unfair and damagingly reductive; to view *The Escaped Cock* exclusively in such limited terms ignores the central and complex challenge of the piece. In order to understand Lawrence's underlying purpose, and the defining impulse of the novella's mythic intent, it needs to read in conjunction with, and considered in the light of, his other short stories and essays of the period*; in particular, "The Flying Fish", "The Sun", "The Risen Lord", *Apocalypse*, "Insouciance" and "Hymns in a Man's Life". For present purposes the most important of these accompanying works is "The Flying Fish", where Lawrence first embarked upon the mythic enterprise which finds its culminating expression, and final distillation, in *The Escaped Cock*. The intervening years between these two works saw Lawrence's inescapable failure to re-patriate; the resultant disillusionment, frustration, heartfelt misery and despairing grief are, as I have suggested, considered, articulated and challenged in *all* the writings of this period. *The Escaped Cock* constitutes Lawrence's final attempt - rendered homeless and on the

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* Ibid., p.197.
* This is not to say that the tale cannot be read in isolation, rather the true complexity and depth of the novella is more apparent when read contextually. I am not alone in this opinion: Keith Sagar, in *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, maintains that the essay "The Risen Lord" needs to be read as 'almost a third part to the story' (ibid., 222).
verge of death as he indubitably was - to ground his patria and accomplish his erstwhile tentative peace-pact with his paternal (and by extension, though to a lesser degree, maternal) heritage. Having at last achieved the realization (and articulation) of his vision - a true connection with the cosmos established via the consummation of the sacred marriage - he was then free to deliver himself up for meaningful burial, united with the father and buried in the mother.

* Like "The Flying Fish" The Escaped Cock is a latter-day parable in which the protagonist, after abandoning a mistaken mission, finally comes into his own. Unlike Gethin Day however, the bestowed patrimony of the un-named man who died* is not the inherited family estate, but the blessed heritage of a living circumambient universe, the kingdom of heaven here on earth. Significantly, both tales begin at the same point with the hero/protagonist emerging from the dissolution and chaos of 'death' to his transformation and rebirth; the difference being that only in the latter tale can Lawrence bring about any kind of mythic totality or satisfactory resolution. The first

* Lawrence's nomenclature is nearly always significant, never more so when he refrains from naming. The most memorable instance of this occurs in The Virgin and the Gipsy, where the gipsy's name is withheld until the closing sentence; similarly in 'The Rocking Horse Winner' Paul's toy animal remains unnamed thereby underlining its inhuman and demonic function (it should be noted that the rocking-horse fulfils the same symbolic function as St. Mawr, in that it is a medium through which the protagonist connects with 'other worlds'). The man who died remains nameless for (at least) two reasons: first, so as not to detract from the evocation of the original mythologies from which his persona is derived (the Christian Jesus, the Egyptian Osiris); and secondly, there is a sense in which this Christ/Osiris figure is potentially everyman.
part of story chronicles the painful re-emergence of the man who died into an initially isolate and personal world of reflection; the second part charts his poignant resurrection to a life of the body and the subsequent discovery of his living connection with the teeming phenomenal universe*. His bodily re-awakening is accomplished through the sacred marriage with the Priestess of Isis whose erotic healing initiates his conjugation with "the living incarnate cosmos". The consummation of their relationship is doubly significant for not only does it minister to his own wounds, literal and metaphorical (in that her tendance re-unites mind with body, spirit with flesh), but also enables him to ascend to the Father, the God of Life; which is to say, Lawrence is able to imagine fully (and indeed execute) a re-union with the paternal and thereby come to terms with his God*.

* Lawrence's own jaunty description of the piece reads thus:

I wrote a story of the Resurrection where Jesus gets up and feels very sick about everything, and can't stand the old crowd any more - so cuts out - and as he heals up he begins to find what an astonishing place the phenomenal world is, far more marvellous than any salvation or heaven - and thanks his stars he needn't have a mission any more.


* Harry T. Moore, in The Priest of Love, recounts how Brewster 'recalled that towards the end of his life Lawrence no longer objected to the word God and said, 'I intend to find God: I wish to realize my relation with Him' (ibid., 620). The Escaped Cock and Last Poems are the two works in which he specifically explores - or more accurately, re-negotiates - and resolves this relationship. See, for example, such poems as "The hands of God" where Lawrence declares: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God./But it is a much more fearful thing to fall out of them.../Save me, O God, from falling into ungodly knowledge.../Let me never know myself apart from the living God!" (The Complete Poems, ibid., p.699); and "Pax" - "All that matters is to be at one with the living God/to be a creature in the house of the God of Life." (Ibid., p.700).
In order to bring about his ascension to the Father the man who died must undergo two separate resurrections. Part I of the novella is concerned with the first of these resurrections, the more familiar return from the grave into the "phenomenal world" of the living, and the renunciation of a life past. It is through his observations of the tethered cockerel that the man who died comes to realise that it was nothing other than personal hubris which had prompted his erstwhile mission and teachings:

I wanted to be greater than the limits of my hands and feet...I would embrace multitudes, I who have never truly embraced even one woman, or one man.*

"My public life is over", he reflects, "the life of my conviction and my mission, the life of my self-importance"*. What replaces this crusade of the mind (the life of becoming) is the knowledge that in the sheer simplicity of being lies the true nature of self-fulfilment. Despite the ignominy of his imprisoned state the self-assertive cock is still able to fulfil his god-given responsibility to be, to assume his vital and unconscious place within the "phenomenal world", which is the body of "the God of Life":

The sun burned with great splendour, and burnished the young cock brighter. But the peasant kept the string renewed, and the bird was a prisoner. Yet the flame of life burned up to a sharp point in the cock, so that it eyed askance and haughtily the man who had died. And the man smiled, and held the bird

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* The Escaped Cock, ibid., p.24.
** Ibid.
dear, and he said to it: Surely thou art risen to the Father, among birds.—And the young cock, answering, crowed.*

The lesson unconsciously imparted by the cock is therefore straightforward, and also deeply religious. Down the ages religious writers have similarly celebrated the daily marvel of life's continuing abundancies, such gratitude and thanksgiving Lawrence (amongst others) believed was apt to be forgotten by the contemporary mind, cloistered within the walled seclusion of the modern city, and increasingly obsessed with its self-proliferating abstractions. The novella celebrates what Lawrence variously calls "the living cosmos" or the kingdom of "the Risen Lord", and in this riotous universe he places his resurrected protagonist who must similarly learn to relinquish his ego and accept that "only life is lovely"*. The man who died effectively enters the kingdom of God on earth, and slowly awakens to the realisation that everything around him is part of an animistic universe, the living expression of an irrepressible and procreative life-force that is the true source of our immortality:

* Ibid., p.28.
* "The Risen Lord", Phoenix II, ibid., p.576). Lawrence, in this essay, imagines or speculates as to the nature of his new kingdom, to which Christ returns, "risen in the full flesh!":

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and it's going to be. Men have risen from the dead and learned not to be so greedy and self-important. We left most of that behind in the late tomb. Men have risen beyond you, Mammon, they are your risen lords...The earth is the Lord's and is given to the men who have died and had the power to rise again...For man has been dispossessed of the full earth and the earth's fulness for long enough. And the poor women, they have been shoed about manless and meaningless long enough. The earth is the Lord's fulness thereof, and I, the Risen Lord, am here to take possession. For now I am fully a man, and free above all from my own self-importance. I want life, and the pure contact with life....Because only life is lovely...life, the beauty, the beauty of life! (ibid., p.576)
It was the necessity to live, and even to cry out the triumph of life... The brave sounds rang out, and though they were diminished by the cord round the bird's leg, they were not cut off. The man who died looked nakedly onto life, and saw a vast resoluteness everywhere flinging itself up in stormy or subtle wave-crests, foam-tips emerging out of the blue invisible, a black-and-orange cock, or the green flame tongues out of the extremes of the fig-tree. They came forth, these things and creatures of spring, glowing with desire and with assertion. They came like crests of foam, out of the blue flood of the invisible desire, out of the vast invisible sea of strength, and they came coloured and tangible, evanescent, yet deathless in their coming. The man who died looked on the great swing into existence of things that had not died, but he saw no longer their tremulous desire to exist and to be. He heard instead their ringing, ringing, defiant challenge to all other things existing.*

Such wondrous gratitude and marvellous lyricism has been matched by (significantly) the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins; the following example is of particularly noteworthy because of the similarity in language and imagery:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each  
hung bell's  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out its broad name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves - goes its self; myself it speaks and spells,  
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.*

* The Escaped Cock, ibid., p.21.  
* Quoted from "As Kingfishers catch fire", Oxford Authors: Gerard Manley Hopkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.129. There are any number of Hopkins' poems which could be quoted in this context although in light of the imagery employed in The Escaped Cock, "God's Grandeur" is of particular interest:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the core of oil  
Crushed. (ibid., p.128)
The man who died is, as yet, incapable of such assertive self-expression and must remain on the periphery, a mere spectator. It is not until he encounters the Priestess of Isis that he is able rid himself of his enforced isolationism and his *noli me tangere*, tomb-ridden state. Part II chronicles this second resurrection, the slow and painful ascent into the flesh. The priestess is similarly incomplete, she too is patiently awaiting her fulfilment in bodily union with another. In their coming together and the tender consummation of their relationship they are both drawn back into the mainstream of life. The sexual union is unequivocally perceived to be their epiphany, what Lawrence describes elsewhere as "the exquisite orgasm of coition/with the Godhead of energy that cannot tell lies"*; and the act of *coitus* is described in epiphanic terms as "the great atonement, the being in touch", not merely with each other but the whole of the living universe. Because of the tale's mythic nature Lawrence is now able to eliminate the aspects of gender warfare that had burdened his depictions of sex in the earlier works; consequently it is described and experienced in what he sees as its essential and uncomplicated form. Without the resentment and hostility that had clouded the relations of Connie and Mellors, the sexual union, as a means of apprehending the sacred and revitalising the soul, now becomes clear. Lawrence unashamedly portrays the sexual act as a preternatural happening in which the body is considered to be the

* The Complete Poems, ibid., p.481.
rightful place of worship, the original and final temple or sacred space.

In 1913 Lawrence had declared, "Sex is the fountain head, where life bubbles up into the person from the unknown"*; he returns to this image in The Escaped Cock, where the godhead is apprehended in the "raging" phenomenal world as the fountain-head of all life ("life bubbles everywhere...it bubbles variously"). Religious awareness, the tale suggests, lies not in the comprehension but the cognisance of this fact which, in turn, renders knowledge truly carnal in its realisation of the godhead*. Under such circumstances sex, when approached with due reverence (i.e., regulated by the proper erotic ritual) is a "baptism of fire", whereby the participants, transformed by the flames of desire, achieve the sacred peace of passional communion. In theological terms, sex becomes a means of salvation, a sacramental act through which one attains "a state of grace"*. "I am risen!", declares the man who died during coitus; the pun signifying not merely his state of fleshly tumescence but also his ascent to the father and the establishment of his living participation in, and connection with, the cosmos:

Magnificent, blazing indomitable in the depths of his loins, his own sun dawned, and sent its fire

* Letters II, ibid., p.102.
* Significantly, Lawrence had stated in the 'Foreword to Sons and Lovers' that 'Woman...is the door for out in-going and our out-coming. In her we go back to the Father' (Sons and Lovers, ibid., p.471).
* See The Complete Poems, ibid., pp.472 and 485.
running along his limbs, so that his face shone unconsciously.

He untied the string on the linen tunic and slipped the garment down, till he saw the white glow of her white-gold breasts. And he touched them, and he felt his life go molten.—Father! he said—Why did you hide this from me?—And he touched her with the poignancy of wonder, and the marvellous piercing transcendence of desire.—Lo!" he said—This is beyond prayer.—It was the deep, interfolded warmth, warmth living and penetrable, the woman, the heart of the rose!—My mansion is the intricate warm rose, my joy is this blossom!*

That Lawrence was, in the broadest sense, seeking some kind of paternal blessing and reconciliation in this last fiction is (according to earlier versions of the text) conclusive. In the notes to his edition of The Escaped Cock, Gerald M. Lacy explains how the novella evolved from an earlier, though unfinished, short story entitled "The Man Who Was Through with the World"*. The tale's protagonist — named (unfortunately) Henry the Hermit — is a misanthrope who, though aspiring toward a state of holy hermitage, fails to achieve his desired end because of a fundamental lack of definite direction or religious purpose. In the second version — the preliminary text, entitled "The Escaped Cock" — Lacy shows how the man who died has developed from this "purely misanthropic and visionless stage". In this text the detail, imagery and content are more recognisable:

* The Escaped Cock, ibid., p.57.
* Keith Sagar in The Art of D.H. Lawrence, dates the composition of this unfinished tale as 27 February - 8 March 1927 (ibid., p.171).
* The preliminary short story, entitled "The Escaped Cock" and was sold to The Forum by 8 October 1928 (appearing in the February issue the following year). The short story is the approximate equivalent of Part I of The Escaped Cock, although thematically, as Lacy points out, they are not identical (see ibid., p.141).
once again, as in "The Flying Fish" we encounter the
dialectical construct of the "inner" and "outer" worlds,
which similarly correspond to the sacred and profane
realm. What is of particular interest however is that in
the second version ("The Escaped Cock") "the inner air"
(the sacred) is specifically equated with "the Father".
As Lacy puts it:

Unlike Henry, he [the man who died] has risen to a
new life - but most assuredly not the new full life
of the final version. In the Forum version, the man
who died is a bit bewildered at his resurrection, he
fails completely to understand its meaning, and all
he can resort to are numerous cliches: "But now I
must ascend to my Father," and "Now may I stand
within the Father." (It should be noted that
successive manuscript drafts indicate that Lawrence
attempted to alter "the Father" phrase in the final
draft, and most of them were revised to a less
strictly specific and orthodox phrase.) But even
though he has some religious development beyond
Henry the hermit, the first man who died is by no
means clear about "the Father" who appears so
important to him: "Now I belong to my Father, though
I know not what he is, nor where he is"...The final
man who died is much surer of himself; he doesn't
assume an almost ridiculous (satirical?) stance
before Madeleine, asking such revealing questions as
"What will be the outcome, since now I am dead and
risen...?" In contrast, the final man who had died
knows, perhaps intuitively, that his task is to
"take my single way in life." Furthermore the first
man who had died says that he must "wait for my
Father to take me up again" while the final man who
had died is quite content to "wait on life."*

The gradual editing of specific reference to the father
is indicative of Lawrence's developing ambition for the
piece. Rather than being simply the occasion for the
resolution of his own abiding sense of Oedipal
entrapment, it is opened up to embrace the whole of

* The Escaped Cock, ibid., p.145.
patriarchal culture, thus allowing him to resolve his vestigial religious ambivalence and bring about a conciliation with his God. In this respect The Escaped Cock comes nearer to a reconciliation with Christianity than anything Lawrence ever wrote.

Lawrence's fundamental oppositions to the teachings of the modern Church were articulated early in his career*. In 1914 he wrote:

...the moderns today prefer to end insisting on the sad plight. It is characteristic of us that we have preserved, of a trilogy which was really Prometheus Unbound, only the Prometheus Bound and terribly suffering on the rock of his own egotism. But the great souls in all time did not end there. In the medieval period, Christianity did not insist on the Cross: but on the Resurrection: churches were built to the glorious hope of resurrection. Now we think we are very great, whilst we enumerate the smarts of the crucifixion.*

In the same letter he goes on to proffer the suggestion that,

*  Gerald Lacy maintains that it was around the time of writing Sons and Lovers that Lawrence's important transition (i.e., his withdrawal from the Church) took place. He quotes Paul Morel's own decision to reject the Christian teachings: "[Paul] was setting full sail toward Agnosticism, but such a religious Agnosticism".

Religion was fading into the background. He had shovelled away all the beliefs that would hamper him, had cleared the ground, and come more or less to the bedrock of belief that one should feel inside oneself for right and wrong, and should have the patience to gradually realise one's God. (The Escaped Cock, ibid., p.134)

It is not until The Rainbow however that Lawrence discusses the processes whereby he came to his decisions, in the novel he does so through the consciousness of Anna Brangwen (although it should be noted that her vehement opposition to the Christian teachings is complicated by the fact they are deeply implicated in the power struggle with her husband - see the 'Anna Victrix' chapter).

*  Letters II, ibid., p.248.
resurrected in the bodies, and acknowledging the Father, and glorying in his power, like Job.*

Such ideas were not fully formulated until the July of 1929 when he wrote his essay "The Risen Lord" which argues for an understanding and an apprehension of Christianity in which "Christ is risen in the full flesh!":

The Churches loudly assert: We preach Christ crucified! - But in so doing, they preach only half of the Passion, and do only half their duty. The Creed says "Was crucified, dead, and buried...the third day He rose again from the dead." And again, "I believe in the resurrection of the body..." So that to preach of the Christ Crucified is to preach half of the truth. It is the business of the Church to preach Christ born among men - which is Christmas; Christ Crucified, which is Easter, till November and All Saints, and till Annunciation, the year belongs to the Risen Lord: that is, all the full-flowering spring, all summer, and the autumn of wheat and fruit, all belong to Christ Risen.

But the Churches insist on Christ crucified, and rob us of the blossom of the year...*

Christ rises, whe He rises from the dead, in the flesh, not merely as spirit. He rises with hands and feet, as Thomas knew for certain: and if with hands and feet, then with lips and stomach and genitals of a man. Christ risen, and risen in the whole of His flesh, not with some left out...It is only part of the great mystery which is all wrong. The virgin birth, the baptism, the temptation, the teaching, Gethsemane, the betrayal, the crucifixion, the burial and the resurrection, these are all true according to our inward experience. They are what men and women go through, in their different ways. But floated up into heaven as flesh-and-blood, and never set down again - this nothing in all our experience will ever confirm.*

* Ibid., p.249.
* Phoenix II, ibid., p.571.
* Ibid., p.574.
It is these grievances with which he so obviously takes issue, and imaginatively re-casts, in the novella. Lawrence, like many writers throughout history, was intrigued by the personality of Christ. As Leslie M. Thompson explains, the milieu that fostered such an interest had been germinating for years, though Lawrence went much further than anyone else in his development and depiction of the motif of Christ's physical return*. In addition, he was keenly aware that the Christian myth in the modern age was in need of re-vitalization. Lawrence's imaginative solution consists of combining the Christian with pagan mythology (thereby uniting our parent cultures). This is achieved by conflating Christ with the dying and reviving gods of Middle Eastern mythology (from which the Christian Jesus arguably evolved*), an identification which not only suggests the grounding of the Gospel in ancient archetype, but also creates a new myth capable of re-vitalizing Christianity and and re-awakening modern man to an awareness of, and participation in, the natural rhythms of his own and the world's body*.

* See his essay, "The Christ Who Didn't Die: Analogues to D.H. Lawrence's The Man Who Died", D.H. Lawrence Review, vol 8, (Spring 1975), where Thompson's maintains that "it hardly seems possible that [Lawrence] was unaware of similar ideas so pervasive in the literary and cultural atmosphere of the time", and was undoubtedly influenced by them. For a full discussion of Middle Eastern mythology see S.H. Hooke's Middle Eastern Mythology: From the Assyrians to the Hebrews (1963), which discusses the probability of the Christian Jesus evolving from the dominating cultures and mythologies of the region.

* Critical opinion on the credibility of this new myth is divided. George Fiderer in his essay "D.H. Lawrence's The Man Who Died" (American Imago, XV, Spring 1968) maintains:

Life, death, and rebirth are the mythical common denominators of both the Egyptian and the Christian polarities. The dialectical theme of life, and rebirth through death, provides the underlying structure of The Man Who Died. Furthermore, the basic opposition of Egyptian and Biblical elements, the negation of Christ by Osiris, results in a fusion, Christ-Osiris, greater than either root.
Chronologically the tale's narrative action is synchronised with the patterns of seasonal renewal, subtly shifting from one cycle to the next as the man who died moves from his initial resurrection through to his final realisation and apotheosis. The emergence from the tomb (the first resurrection) coincides with the spring, the time of life's natural resurgence. Through the ensuing summer and ripening autumn he recovers his strength and patiently learns to be alone, accustoming himself to his singular, wandering state. In January he meets the Priestess of Isis, who initiates his second resurrection and their child is conceived in the Spring. The enactment of the sacred marriage is, in keeping with the regenerative cycle, a celebration of an ancient

In contrast Graham Hough, in *The Dark Sun*, argues:

> The invented myth is given density and immediacy by its dependence on the great public myth. In the second part the myth stands alone, and like all products of the pure personal imagination, it is thinner than what history or the mythopoetic faculty of a whole culture supplies. (ibid., p.251)

The most perceptive analysis of Lawrence's position is proffered by Dorothea Krook in *Three Traditions of Moral Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959):

> It is not intended to be, as some reader's have thought, a rewriting of the Gospel story of the Resurrection using the materials and methods of modern anthropology - the kind of enterprise that has become familiar in this century since the appearance of *The Golden Bough*...Lawrence's story, though it does draw upon some of the less abstruse discoveries of modern comparative religion, does not belong with this kind of reinterpretation. It is a strictly imaginative possibility: what the resurrection of the man who died might have been, what it might have meant, if the imaginative possibility set out in the fable had been realised, if the man who died had in fact received that extension of his vital experience which is the story's crux. *The Man Who Died*, accordingly, is not to be taken as a literary exercise in applied anthropology, but as a product of the imagination of a man who, despite his many spots of commonness, possessed a developed moral and religious sensibility and the true prophetic temper, caring passionately about the salvation of the world and being in the highest degree serious in his treatment of moral and religious matters; and possessed also in an unusual degree the poet's gift, by which he could render his moral and religious ideas in the form of a fable exhibiting all the concreteness and immediacy distinctive of the poetic mode of apprehension. (p.261-62) (my italics)
fertility rite, commemorated by all pagan religions. However, the tale's mythic totality encompasses more than just the seasons' annual renewal, spanning as it does entire cultural epochs. Graham Hough, in The Dark Sun, has noted that The Escaped Cock effectively forms an "allegory of the course of Christian civilisation", as perceived by its creator:

The death of the prophet is also a symbol of the death of the Christian dispensation. Christian civilisation is dying after two thousand years. But the story of man is a continuity, and no culture ever really dies: it comes to life again, to a new life, which it is at first incapable of realizing and is unable to face. The passion and death of the prophet are the death-agonies of Christian culture...and the second part of the story is a foreshadowing of the new dispensation that is to come. But it is a new dispensation that is only reached by death and rebirth. The fleshly tenderness that is to replace Christian love in the new order can never be pristine, unembarrassed pagan delectation. The one thing a post-Christian can never be is a pagan, C.S. Lewis has remarked; and Lawrence is showing his sense of this. Christianity may be brought into touch again with the old nature mysteries of death and rebirth, as it is in this tale; but they will be changed in the process. The fleshly healing is painfully, almost fearfully accepted by the priestess and the prophet, after years of deprivation and a season of anguish; and so it must be in the history of Western man...Their is the "little day", as it always has been, under any dispensation. But to encompass the greater day will be the task precisely of those who have most completely submitted to the old spiritual disciplines. True, the mission of Christianity has to be rejected, but it has been lived through before it has been rejected, and nothing can ever be the same again. If a new order is to come into being, it will in all its splendor and joy be the inheritor of the Christian abnegation and suffering.*

Lawrence had of course learnt during his American period that a dying civilisation could not simply rejuvenate

* The Dark Sun, ibid., p.252.
itself by adopting, wholesale, another's cultural tenets and beliefs. A new religion must evolve out of the death of the old, if it is to be at all meaningful. In this respect Lawrence's specific choice of the complementary Isis/Osiris myth is worth examining in more detail, particularly when one considers that there were any number of variants upon the theme of the dying/reviving god from which he could have chosen. The finest exposition of the Isis/Osiris myth (that I have come across) occurs in Dudley Young's Origins of the Sacred*, where he explains some of the religious complexities that coalesce around the figure of the incarnate dying god, Osiris:

[He] is the spirit of the life that is always departing, almost absent in its presence, almost present in its absence. He is the setting sun in search of the moon, the wounded or dying King, almost 'the notion of some infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing'. The nonphilosophical souls on the banks of the Nile would find him unequivocally twice a year, in the cutting of the corn and the planting of the seed. These are the two dramatic moments of the agricultural cycle, and both were experienced as epiphanies of the dying god, moments in which his presence could be felt as disappearance. The harvested sheaves were the dismembered body of the mutilated god, just as the treading of the seed into the Nile mud was a trampling of the god into rotteness and darkness. In both cases it is we who mutilate the god, and we do it in the hope of life's renewal; and in both cases our violence is accompanied by lamentation.*

* Origins of the Sacred: The Ecstasies of Love and War, see "The Lamentations of Isis/Osiris" (ibid., pp. 242-57). The literature on Osiris is vast, but for sheer encyclopaedic detail, James Frazer's study of Osiris and the agricultural corn-gods in the The Golden Bough (1922) remains unrivalled.

* Young's account of what he describes as "the monophysitical genius of the Egyptian mind" - although enlightening, lucid and clear - is unavoidably complex and lengthy. I have therefore extrapolated only the aspects of the myth that are relevant to the present discussion of The Escaped Cock.

* Origins of the Sacred, ibid. p.251. Young adds a cautionary note concerning regarding the distortions that a contemporary approach to Osiris may incur, which is worth including here:
Osiris' distinguishing feature therefore is his hiddeness: perpetually on the point of vanishing he is difficult to discern, even to the point that in his dismembered state he seems to disappear altogether into oblivion. This is where the goddess Isis enters, for it is she who keeps Osiris alive by mourning his absence and bearing him in mind; patiently calling him forth in the knowledge that even when he appears to have disappeared altogether, it is she who must bring him back into existence, she who must search for and find him, she who must re-member him. It is for this reason, Young notes, that,

...in the first centuries after Christ, Isis became the dominant goddess throughout the Mediterranean world, it was not the fruitful womb that stood out but the sorrowing eye of tendance, which promised that the sufferings of violence can be borne and redeemed in the heart that commennrorates them.*

There is little doubt that Lawrence understood the profundity and complexity of the Egyptian myth: this is evidenced not only in his individualistic adaptation of the mythic material, but also in his insistence that it is "Isis Bereaved, Isis in Search" (as opposed to "Isis, ...

...it is worth insisting, particularly because we necessarily approach Osiris through many centuries of Christianity, that this dying god was conceived in confidence and strength, not in poverty of spirit. Beginning simply as the barley that comes and goes, he gradually evolved into the power that comes in its going, that waxes from its waning; and although he became otherworldly in his decadence, for many centuries he was right here and now, concealed but immanent, present in his absence. It was only because the Egyptians were spiritually so richly settled in a world where the eye was filled with seeing and the ear with hearing that they dared to isolate the dying fall as the most real thing...(ibid., p.250)

Mother of Horus") who presides over the tale. Lawrence's intuitive grasp of sacred matters was (bar the occasional aberration) remarkably refined: in order to find a way forward Lawrence again advocated a return to the beginning, "back, back down the old ways of time", to our known origins in the ancient world; a final pilgrimage, that is, to our parent culture. From lessons learned though his reading of Egyptian mythology Lawrence maintained the modern mind could also inestimably profit; for, as Young advises, what distinguishes the Egyptian myth from its Mediterranean counterparts is its ability to address directly our mutilating cruelty (as witnessed in the murderous epiphanies of the sacrificial divinity), and thereby identify the means by which we may properly cancel, preserve and redemptively transform our sacrificial instincts, via the lamentation and tendance of the goddess*. Much of this wisdom was preserved in Christianity, but a great deal was lost, not least in the suppression of the goddess*. For in the end, of course, it is Isis' lamenting and attentive heart which encompasses and sustains the whole story - the simple wisdom of which prompts Young to conclude:

Such intimacy and reconciliation between god and goddess, masculine and feminine, Nature and culture,

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* Its true genius, Young notes, resides in the recognition that such containment is to be sought within those instincts themselves, and not beyond. It should also be noted here that the spirit of Isis is preserved (albeit in shadowy form) in the figures of Mary Magdelene and Mary, the mourning Mother of Christ.  
* Isis is discernible (just) in the figures of the Mary, Mother of God and Mary Magdelane, both of whom mourn the dead Christ; with this split however comes the considerable marginalisation of the goddess's powers.
is unique among ancient civilisations. The major goddesses of Mesopotamia, Crete, Greece, and India are all formidable and impressive in their various ways, but none of them manages to align either their violence or their tenderness with that of their consorts, as Isis does.*

Lawrence's recognition of the power that is the goddess's (i.e., the elemental 'Female') to bestow, does not involve any relegation or subjection of the feminine: on the contrary, there is a deep-seated acknowledgement of mutuality (the redressing of age-old inequalities), a balance and a potential harmony; and it is here that Lawrence's notion of "tenderness" achieves its apotheosis and definitive expression.

Where the peace-pact with the Father is fully imagined and executed, reconciliation with the Mother remains outwardly unresolved. If the Priestess of Isis is accepted as the distillation of an ideal personification of the feminine, then account must be taken of the shadowy figure of her mother, ever at her back. The priestess' mother is reminiscent of the wicked mother of folklore and fairytale, and there is undoubtedly a sense that she represents the more malevolent aspect of the feminine that Lawrence is apparently still perturbed by. Unsurprisingly, she is portrayed as avaricious, power-hungry, domineering and above all a malicious schemer; as such she stands in direct opposition to the man who died. Her desire to oust the man who died from her daughter's affection and esteem is viewed in terms of an

* Origins of the Sacred, ibid., p.257.
anticipated, and largely expected, persecution (which borders on paranoia); in the end, it is from her activities that he flees. It is not so much a measure of the tale's reality that such a figure of subterfuge and malevolence exists, rather it is indicative of Lawrence's ongoing preoccupation with the asphyxiating mother. There seems to be a conscious effort here on Lawrence's part to unravel his life-long ambivalence regarding the Female; an effort, that is, to separate the abiding confusion between Wife and Mother. As I have already mentioned it is specifically Isis as Wife who is invoked and not Isis as Mother - thus facilitating Lawrence's safe projection of residual hostility onto the priestess' mother. Such a separation, however, remains suspiciously forced and unconvincing.

The Escaped Cock effectively concludes the religious regression that began in "The Flying Fish", in so doing it demands a return to the primitive bed-rock of European culture. In a monumental act of mnemic recovery Lawrence passes into the rootless territory of mythic space ("the Greater Day"), there to call forth a timely offering of sacred memory as a means of ensuring historical continuity, cultural renewal, and his own absolution. In traditional materialist terms this may well be construed as essentially unreal, in that his vision is fundamentally disconnected and free-floating, therefore meaningless. It should be remembered however that
Lawrence's chosen medium here is the mythopoeic, which although capable of containing escapist fantasy does not, in his use of it, lapse into mere wish-fulfilment. When considered in this context the reality of the expressed vision lies not in the anchorage in specific time or place, but in the ability of the symbolic and mythic material to bespeak more than is uttered. On this subject Mircea Eliade writes:

It is useless to search archaic language for the terms so laboriously created by the great philosophical traditions: there is every likelihood that such words as "being," "nonbeing," "real," "unreal," "becoming," "illusory," are not to be found in the language of the Australians or of the ancient Mesopotamians. But if the word is lacking, the thing is present; only it is "said" - that is, revealed in a coherent fashion - through symbols and myths.*

Such commentary is particularly appropriate in regard to Lawrence's final prose-fiction which, in the end, courts the supra-real as a means of achieving mythic resolution for his own, and his society's, cultural and religious crises. The Escaped Cock should be read (and accepted) for what it is - a fabulous parable; with the realisation that had we but world enough and time to address, and be directed by, our sacred hunger then it would not be necessary to transfer such human longing onto the technological playing-fields of industry and commerce.

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