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FROM REALISM TO MYTH IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S SHORTER FICTION

THE MOVEMENT FROM REALISM TO MYTH
IN SELECTED SHORT STORIES
OF D. H. LAWRENCE

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ABSTRACT

The major emphasis of this thesis will be to demonstrate that there is a development of thought in Lawrence's short fiction. Through an examination of six tales spanning the years 1915 to 1928 this study will attempt to prove that Lawrence's frustration with the civilization he was part of manifested itself in his short fiction in a gradual movement from realism to myth.

In "The Thimble" Lawrence used the realistic mode to express his belief that individuals would awaken to the problems of the world, meet on a new plane of consciousness and work together toward a new relationship. However, in the years following 1915 Lawrence's faith in the individual lessened. He now believed a new element had to be introduced into the problematic world to change it in a positive manner. However, as we see in "The Ladybird" and "The Last Laugh", Lawrence became disillusioned. The old world would not be changed. Consequently, Lawrence believed it had to be annihilated in order that a new world could supersede it. This idea is established in "The Border Line" and carried to its logical conclusion in "The Woman Who Rode Away" in the sacrifice of a woman who is ostensibly a symbol of ego-conscious Western civilization. However, we see that the woman is not a valid representative of ego-consciousness but is instead a victim of that consciousness. Although Lawrence used the fable mode in an attempt to present a new and mysterious blood-conscious world we see he has actually moved nowhere at all but has only 'dressed up' the problematic ego-consciousness in his own idealistic garments.

In "The Man Who Died" we see that Lawrence has encompassed the experience of "The Woman Who Rode Away". The theme of rebirth into a new consciousness, which in turn creates a new world, has returned. The insistence is absent. The mythic mode allows Lawrence to present his vision in a generalized fashion; he does not have to adhere to a particular set of circumstances. In this way he can 'touch' a wider group of readers.

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INTRODUCTION

Criticism of Lawrence's shorter fiction often appears to be undertaken out of a sense of duty. Some studies of Lawrence, which focus on the novels, have, as a final chapter, their obligatory section entitled "The Tales".¹ There seem to be two methods of approach: one can either do a whirlwind tour of 'representative' stories from each of the volumes published, or, one can pick favourites from the canon and do more detailed work on those. Either approach contains inherent problems.

The whirlwind-tour approach, in trying to see as much as possible in the shortest amount of time, cannot offer much more than a sketchy, surface view of the landscape. The critic-tour~~guide~~, while explaining the beauties and faults of a particular landmark, mentions in closing that there are similar landmarks dotting the country and seems to imply that if you have seen one you have seen them all.² Consequently, with this approach, many works are done a critical disservice, and some important ones are ignored.³

¹Three examples of such studies are: Graham Hough's The Dark Sun (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959); F. R. Leavis' D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955); and Julian Moynahan's The Deed of Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

²See the close of Leavis' study of "The Ladybird"; D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, pp. 64-65.

³See Leavis' study of "The Woman Who Rode Away", pp. 273-275. Also, Leavis makes no mention whatsoever of "The Man Who Died".

The other approach, that of choosing favourite stories, also has problems. The 'favourites' often turn out to be everyone else's favourites as well and, consequently, our understanding and appreciation of a small number of stories grows while our awareness of the 'minor works' remains relatively static⁴; conditioned, as it often is, by the incomplete, and often throwaway, judgements of the tour guides.

These critical approaches to the shorter fiction persist in spite of the consensus that this large part of Lawrence's canon is unmistakably the work of genius. The prevailing judgement can be seen in the statements of a number of well-known critics of Lawrence.

F. R. Leavis believes the tales "constitute a body of creative work of such an order as would of itself put Lawrence among the great writers -- not merely among the memorable, but among the great."⁵ Graham Hough agrees with Leavis but we can detect a faint tone of condescension:

...because it is not in these shorter tales that the original exploration work is done, they are often superior in artistic organization to the long exploratory novels...and those who say, as many do, that Lawrence's best work is in his shorter pieces have much reason on their side. In sustained realization, in formal completeness there is certainly nothing to better the best of his shorter tales.⁶

Kingsley Widmer, virtually alone in devoting an entire book to the short fiction, writes: "...these fictions, I believe, constitute Lawrence's central writings.... I believe that Lawrence was at least among the best

⁴Julian Moynahan engages in a close study of a few of his 'favourites' after disposing of the rest of the canon in about five pages in a somewhat condescending and often irresponsible fashion. See The Deed of Life, pp. 175-180.

⁵D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 246.

⁶The Dark Sun, p. 168.

of the writers of short fiction in English in his time (1910-1930)."⁷

Julian Moynahan continues and amplifies the praise:

The common judgement that Lawrence's short stories and novellas contain a higher proportion of assured artistic successes than do his novels is substantially correct.... Certainly, Lawrence is a great writer of the shorter tale, and if he is less than Chekhov he still has no equal among English writers, who have failed, by and large, to make their mark in this form.⁸

George H. Ford makes his statement succinctly: "That Lawrence was the most outstanding master of the short story in English seems to me evident...."⁹

In their unity of opinion these judgements are quite impressive and the sincerity of them is, I am sure, not to be questioned. However, in light of the fact that Widmer's book is virtually alone in being devoted entirely to the short fiction, and considering that there are roughly 1500 pages of short fiction in Lawrence's canon, these impressive judgements do take on an element of the dangerous literary donnée, an assumption that since we all agree on the greatness of the tales there is no real need to subject them to rigorous study. This expansive attitude, combined with a relatively small amount of criticism (especially when we consider the amount of work still being done on the novels) brings to mind the attitude prevalent during Lawrence's lifetime, when it was

⁷The Art of Perversity (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), p. vii. There is another full length study. This is written in German by Adrian Hsia: D. H. Lawrence: Die Charaktere in der Handlung und Spannung seiner Kurzgeschichten (Bonn: H. Bouvier u. Co. Verlag, 1968). (D. H. Lawrence: The Character in the Plotting and Suspense of his Short Stories) This study is concerned with Lawrence's short story technique.

⁸The Deed of Life, p. 175.

⁹Double Measure (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p. 11.

tacitly assumed that Lawrence was a genius but very few people bothered finding out why.

Of course, I am not suggesting that the situations are identical; there is much criticism done and being done on Lawrence. However, the detailed study of the tales has tended to concentrate on a relatively small number of stories which are, for the most part, acknowledged as successes. A few examples are "Odour of Chrysanthemums", "The Prussian Officer", "The Horse Dealer's Daughter", "The Fox", "The Virgin and the Gypsy", "The Woman Who Rode Away", and "The Man Who Died". There are others that are praised (Leavis has been persistent in calling attention to "The Captain's Doll" and "St. Mawr") but on the whole the best criticism has focussed on approximately a dozen tales. The prevailing tendency in accounting for works which are considered slight efforts or obvious failures has been to say that they belong to Lawrence's youthful 'immature' period, his 'troubled' middle period, or his 'satiric' later period. These labels are convenient and do have a certain validity but they should by no means always be used to explain the failure of particular stories. To do so is to put the cart before the horse. A good example of this critical labelling passing for criticism can be seen in Julian Moynahan's dismissal of "The Ladybird": "'The Ladybird'...is, stylistically, Lawrence's ugliest story; its concern with 'mastery' suggests that it issued from the same unwholesome region of Lawrence's imagination in which the leadership novels had developed."¹⁰

¹⁰The Deed of Life, p. 178.

How, we may ask, is "mastery" to be equated with stylistic ugliness? And why do "mastery" and "leadership" imply unwholesomeness? Moynahan does not offer any answer to these questions with regard to "The Ladybird" but feels satisfied in 'slotting' this seventy-page story into a conclusion he arrived at through studying Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent. It, like the three leadership novels, is "unwholesome"; presumably because the Count mentions ideas somewhat similar to those in the novels Moynahan sees as failures.

Surely there is a need here for more detailed criticism of such shorter fictions as "The Ladybird". The development of Lawrence's thought in the novels has been critically documented by many fine studies. Books by Hough, Leavis, Ford, Moynahan, Daleski and Spilka¹¹ have all contributed to our understanding and appreciation of the novels and of Lawrence as a developing creative writer. However, similar detailed study has not been undertaken on the tales. One might expect to find similar developments of thought in the short fiction but often, as is evidenced by Moynahan's statement about "The Ladybird", this similar development has been assumed and not shown.

I propose to study selected short stories in an attempt to show clearly that a development of Lawrence's thought can be traced through the short fiction. A study of this kind can benefit Lawrence scholarship in that it may serve to pinpoint developments in thought more precisely. In the novels there are many themes being explored and the isolation of one

¹¹H. M. Daleski, The Forked Flame (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965). Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955).

for detailed study may mean that others are not given enough emphasis. In the tales, however, with their more limited focus, themes can be more readily defined and their interdependence can be more clearly examined. Consequently, problems which appear will be all the more apparent, and their causes will be more easily traced. A chronological study can allow us to study how Lawrence attempts to overcome problems of earlier stories in later ones. It can record the reasons for success or failure in this endeavour and thus can trace the development of Lawrence's vision.

A development of thought cannot be discerned by examining only an author's successes. Failure is necessary to success; a vision must grow. This being the case it would seem a worthwhile study to examine in depth a number of stories which contain problems in an attempt to discover whether the reasons for failure vary significantly at different periods of Lawrence's life. Further, a study of thematically related stories which succeed in what they attempt can show us how Lawrence overcame his problems or created new ones. This is not using the tales for the purposes of veiled biography, although some correlations between Lawrence's life and art are bound to appear; this kind of study can lead to an understanding of how Lawrence employed the tale as a significant vehicle for exploring the nature of his vision as it developed.

Graham Hough, in the passage quoted earlier (p.2), feels that there is no exploratory work done in the tales; exploration is solely the province of the novels. The tales are relegated to Lawrence's spare time: "The range and comprehensiveness of the plots, and the length at which they are treated seems, in fact, to be mainly decided by the amount

of time, material and energy Lawrence has to spare from his longer fictions." ¹² This type of statement, I believe, slips by us too easily, carrying with it assumptions which should be questioned. Does the fact that a tale of twenty pages takes less time to write than a novel of four hundred necessarily imply that the writer is any less engaged with his topic? Certainly the energies brought to the writing of a tale may be different from those employed in writing a novel but the assumption that they should be referred to as lesser does a disservice to the writer of tales.

What we are forced to, then, is a definition of 'exploratory'. Certainly the novel, the great novel, is exploratory in the sense that it "can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead.... the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life." ¹³ But surely the tale is, in its own way, exploratory also. The essential difference is one of range and focus. The novel, with its wider range of interest, focusses on many aspects of numerous themes, studying the interplay between them. In doing so it can lead us to a new perception of those themes. In this way it is exploratory. The tale, on the other hand, has a limited range and focusses more intently on a small number of themes. However, the interplay is still present. The difference is that problems which could be worked through in a novel

¹²The Dark Sun, p. 167.

¹³Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 94.

are often prevented their resolution in the tale because there is not enough time or space to work them out completely. However, the facing of problems can stimulate the reader to new awareness as effectively as in a novel. Often, the tale can be seen to be more exploratory than a novel with a similar theme in that the author will focus on a particular problem and bring all his energies to bear on it. In this way the reader can see the author grappling with a problem at close quarters whereas in the novel this problem would be only one aspect of a much larger scheme and the process of resolution would have a greater tendency to become blurred. If the problem is not overcome in the tale, at least the reader can clearly discern the reasons why. In this way he can be led to a new awareness.

With these basic, and, I fear, incomplete critical distinctions as general tools, I will examine a selection of stories, spanning the years 1915 to 1928, which show Lawrence attempting to discover a valid way in which to express his belief that the domination of our psyche by the mental consciousness of the ego is antithetical to fullness of being, that this domination prevents us having a vivid relationship with our fellow men or our world, and, consequently, that this domination by the ego must be overcome if we are to re-establish our connections with the cosmos.

The stories to be dealt with are "The Thimble" (1915), "The Ladybird" (1921), "The Last Laugh" (1924), "The Border Line" (1924), "The Woman Who Rode Away" (1924), and "The Man Who Died" (1927-1928). The selection of stories is not completely arbitrary. Together they illustrate a gradual movement from realism to myth; a movement showing Lawrence

attempting to overcome problems that are inherent in the realistic mode. Further, they can be seen as Lawrence's attempts to deal with an overriding frustration caused by the decadent civilization he was part of. Also, this study hopes to bring detailed criticism to certain stories which have been neglected because of their status as failures. "The Last Laugh" and "The Border Line" offer us an opportunity to determine what factors contribute to the failure of a Lawrence story and thereby we can better understand the reasons for success. "The Thimble" has had virtually no critical work done on it and this is unfortunate since this brief story is quite successful in what it attempts. Of greater significance, perhaps, is the fact that "The Thimble" is the forerunner of "The Ladybird". A comparison of the two stories, therefore, offers us an excellent opportunity to see a great writer working with artistic and personal concerns at close quarters. "The Woman Who Rode Away" will be examined closely because it illustrates clearly Lawrence's movement toward myth; however, a more substantial reason for studying this story is that its true significance has never been discerned. Critics have trusted Lawrence and not the tale. "The Man Who Died" has had much good criticism devoted to it but certain aspects of this story need further study. As well, it is the culmination of the movement to myth and illustrates just how far Lawrence's thought has progressed.

It has been said that often Lawrence's fiction succeeds in spite of itself. I hope to show that when Lawrence truly succeeds there has been much preliminary ground-work done. For this purpose I will be relying on the letters and non-fictional prose of Lawrence to support my argument.

I

"THE THIMBLE": A PERSONAL HOPE

"The Thimble"¹ is a sombre, personal story in the realistic mode. It deals exclusively with two people attempting to begin a new life together after their old, superficial relationship has been destroyed by the physical and mental pressures of the war. Our focus in the story is the young woman, as she realizes her separateness from her husband and comes to terms with that separation, thereby laying the foundation for a new relationship between them. In this story Lawrence is concerned with resurrection. In a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith (October 30, 1915) Lawrence states his attitude: "The fact of resurrection, in this life, is all in all to me now.... whether we dead can rise from the dead and love, and live, in a new life, here.... Having known this death, one cannot remain in death. That were profanity."²

As mentioned earlier, the story is sombre and personal. This sombre aspect is presented in a tone of grave seriousness which gains in significance by being juxtaposed to phrases manifesting a distinct lightness of tone. We can hear both these tones at work in the beginning paragraphs:

¹Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore eds., Phoenix II (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), pp. 53-63. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

²Harry T. Moore ed., The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), I, 372. Hereafter cited as Collected Letters.

She had not seen her husband for ten months, not since her fortnight's honeymoon with him, and his departure for France. Then, in those excited days of the early war, he was her comrade, her counterpart in a sort of Bacchic revel before death. Now all that was shut off from her mind, as by a great rent in her life.

Since then, since the honeymoon, she had lived and died and come to life again. There had been his departure to the front. She had loved him then. (p. 53)

The lightness of "those excited days" and "Bacchic revel" has its importance distinctly 'placed' by the unadorned seriousness of "a great rent in her life". The next paragraph succinctly introduces the theme of rebirth and also conditions our attitude to "love" in this story by placing the love she felt for her husband with the Bacchic revel, before the rent in her life, before her rebirth. The 'love' of this paragraph assumes the superficial aspect of her previous life.

Lawrence then devotes seven short paragraphs to the lighter tone. Here he outlines very briefly what the woman's previous relationship with her husband had been. We see, through the tone, that the superficial love was devoted to a superficial man: "Then came the shock of the war, his coming to her in a new light, as lieutenant in the artillery. And she had been carried away by his perfect calm manliness and significance, now he was a soldier." (p. 53)

This is not simply the cliché case of loving the uniform and not the man, although there is a strong element of that here. Lawrence often employs clichés in order to pierce through them to the reality underneath. In this way he makes the cliché carry meaning, makes us give the cliché an attention it would otherwise not have warranted. This is only one way in which the great writer transforms our language and opens to us new avenues for thought.

To return, then, to the cliché. The woman is "carried away" by her husband as "a soldier" but Lawrence is careful to point out what she is actually affected by -- his "calm manliness and significance." It is the element of manliness which the uniform brings out in him; a manliness he did not manifest "Before, as a barrister with nothing to do." (p. 53) We see, then, that it is not strictly the uniform she loves but the manliness as expressed by the uniform. Her love is superficial, responding, as it is, to a superficial manliness.

Caught up in their "Bacchic revel" he goes off to war and she busies herself making a nest. Suddenly, however, she comes down with pneumonia and he is wounded by the bursting of a shell. Both are laid by while they recover.

This brings us up to the story's present. Now, recovered from her illness, the woman prepares to meet her husband. Somehow, during her sickness in which she "lapsed into delirium", she has broken through the superficial reality to a deeper reality she had not known existed. She now realizes that somewhere within her husband there is a reality, a man, she has never seen:

Her illness lay between her and her previous life like a dark night, like a great separation. She looked back, she remembered all she had done, and she was bewildered, she had no key to the puzzle. Suddenly she realized that she knew nothing of the man she had married, he knew nothing of her.... he was an impression, only a vivid impression. What her own impression was, she knew most vividly. But what he was himself: the very thought startled her, it was like looking into a perilous darkness.... But there must be a man, another being, somewhere in the darkness which she had never broached.

The thought frightened her exceedingly.... (p. 54)

She now cannot bear to think of him as he was in their previous life.

She realizes that her image of him "was something false, it was something

which had only to do with herself." (p. 54) This explains her fear at his coming. The real man that is in him is totally alien to her image of him. That alien being will consequently, by his coming, destroy her image of him and in so doing will destroy her image of herself. She feels the superficial world coming apart around her and is terrified. She attempts to hold her crumbling world together by imposing her will upon it. If she can control herself completely she will be "quite impervious to him, quite oblivious of anything but the surface of him." (p. 56) She wants to retain the safety of superficiality. Lawrence comments on this phenomenon in an earlier letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith of August 16, 1915:

I am so sick of people: they preserve an evil, bad, separating spirit under the warm cloak of good words.... They all want the same things: a continuing in this state of disintegration wherein each separate little ego is an independent little principality by itself. What does Russell really want? He wants to keep his own established ego, his finite and ready-defined self intact, free from contact and connection.³

Essentially Lawrence is saying that people who thrust forward a finite, ego-dominated image of themselves are doing evil in that they are setting a barrier of superficiality between themselves and their fellows. They talk 'togetherness' and manifest separation, talk 'love' and produce hate.

The woman of the story, in her attempt to maintain her poise, sits rigidly 'self-contained' on her sofa, waiting for her husband. However, her nervousness is manifested by her hands which slide "backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards like a pleading, a hope, a tension of madness." (p. 57) The fingers gradually work down into the

³Collected Letters, I, 360.

crack at the end of the sofa and discover the thimble: "It was a thimble set with brilliants; it was an old, rather heavy thimble of tarnished gold, set round the base with little diamonds or rubies. Perhaps it was not gold, perhaps they were only paste." (p. 57)

In this thimble, the authenticity of which is doubtful, we are given a symbol of a separation-producing superficiality. The woman, pleased with the discovery that takes her mind off the impending visit, sits burnishing the thimble as the husband enters. She makes a conscious effort to occupy herself in this busy-work because "Her mind was in a trance, but as if she were on the point of waking, for the first time in her life, waking up." (p. 58) She is still terrified to face her husband without some intermediary; yet, now that she is conscious of a deeper self within him, she can also see how trivial the superficial relationship actually is. She is terrified of the new life yet repulsed by the old. We understand, then, when Lawrence tells us that her waiting for her husband "was one of the moments of deepest suffering and suspense which she had ever known." (p. 56)

In the extreme tension of their meeting the superficiality becomes palpable: "All she was, was purely accidental. It was like a sleep, a thin, taut, overfilming sleep in which the wakefulness struggles like a thing as yet unborn. She was sick in the thin, transparent membrane of her sleep, her overlying dream-consciousness, something actual but too unreal." (p. 59) The real self within her, now that she is aware of it, will not be kept down. While it struggles to emerge the trivial, superficial conventions seem to smother it. She becomes aware of a similar self within him: "So far-off he looked, like a child that

belongs almost more to death than to life. And her soul divined that he was waiting vaguely where the dark and the light divide, whether he should come in to life, or hesitate, and pass back." (p. 59) She lets the self have its way and finally awakes. Now she sees the situation in a new light. She realizes that her husband, contemplating the thimble, "was flickering with his old, easily roused, spurious interest in the accidentals of life." (p. 60) Seeing this she noticed that the "film of separateness seemed to be coming over her. Yet his white forehead was somewhat deathly, with its smoothly brushed hair. He was like one dead. He was within the realm of death. His over-flicker of interest was only extraneous." (p. 60) His interest in the thimble perpetuates the separation between them through its superficiality. However, she now knows that his true self is not engaged in the triviality but is wavering between death-in-life or real life. She breaks through the triviality in an effort to reach him. As they engage in a real talk about what had happened to each of them the falsity falls away: "The darkness of his eyes was now watching her, her soul was exposed and new-born. The triviality was gone, the dream-psychology, the self-dependence. They were naked in soul, and depended on each other." (p. 60)

Gradually they explore their new life as young children. They realize that they are still in a limbo because they are not in true contact with each other. He says that they must love each other and touches her hand:

"Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," she quoted, in her level, cold-sounding voice.

"No," he answered; "it takes time."

The incongruous plainness of his statement made her jerk with laughter. At the same instant her face contracted and she

said in a loud voice, as if her soul was being torn from her:

"Am I going to love you?"

Again he stretched forward and touched her hand, with the tips of his fingers. And the touch lay still, completed there. (pp. 62-63)

Finally words are left behind and the touch speaks for itself.

To come into touch after such a separation will be a slow, painful process. In a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell of September 9, 1915

Lawrence writes:

It is only the new spring I care about, opening the hard little buds that seem like stone, in the souls of people. They must open and a new world begin. But first there is the shedding of the old, which is so slow and so difficult, like a sickness. I find it so difficult to let the old life go, and to wait for the new life to take form.⁴

In this story Lawrence is letting two people shed the old world. He does not offer them a new one, ready-made, to enter but says that it will take time. Their connection has, however, been achieved and they will now rely on each other for support in protecting their new life from the spurious inroads of modern superficiality. The husband, as a final gesture, throws the thimble into the street where it disappears.

In trying to determine the significance of this story it is interesting to look once again at Lawrence's letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith of October 30, 1915:

One should give anything now, give the Germans England and the whole empire, if they want it, so we may save the hope of a resurrection from the dead; we English, all Europe. What is the whole empire, and kingdom, save the thimble in my story? If we could but bring our souls through, to life.⁵

⁴Collected Letters, I, 365.

⁵Ibid., p. 373.

In this passage we feel a profound urgency conveyed. Lawrence will offer the Germans the empire in order to save the 'hope' of a resurrection. For what, after all, does his thimble symbolize but the superficialities which come between human beings. And for him these superficialities extend to the nation and empire themselves. We should be prepared to simply throw them out the window as the husband throws out the thimble.

Here we run into a problem. The superficialities of life, the dominating egos, the 'white' consciousness that Lawrence sees suffocating us, cannot simply be thrown out the window. For the empire to offer itself up into German hands would not be the first step to shedding the old world. The empire would simply be accepting a new set of superficialities in place of its old ones. The fight would continue in much the same way.

In this story Lawrence confined himself, I think we can say wisely, to the realistic mode. However, the realistic mode carries inherent problems with it; the chief one being: how to make the reader share the experience of the characters and not simply observe it. We are presented, in "The Thimble", with two people grappling with personal problems. We can watch them move painfully into their new relationship and possibly we can gain from the observation in a vicarious manner, but can we, through reading this story, approximate the kind of rebirth they experienced? With regard to "The Thimble" we would have to say no.

I believe Lawrence tried to meet this problem but was defeated by the mode he chose to write in. However important the pneumonia or the face wound were to his characters' inner development, these incidents fail to touch us with a similar intensity. We may sympathize with the

characters and may 'understand' what they are going through but I doubt that we can really say that we feel it.

Six years later, in 1921, Lawrence rewrote "The Thimble" leaving little of the story in its original state. I believe much of what is good about "The Thimble" was lost in its transformation into "The Ladybird", but Lawrence was heading in a new direction and sacrifices had to be made. It is interesting that many of the elements of "The Thimble" turn up again in the late story "The Man Who Died" but, as I hope to show, Lawrence had a lot of journeying to do before he could give these elements a felt-truth which he failed to give them in 1915.

II

"THE LADYBIRD": FROM HOPE TO RESIGNATION

In "The Thimble" Lawrence established the problematic environment on the first page and then incorporated that environment into a symbolic thimble which is thrown out the window at the end of the story. The action of the story is ostensibly to elucidate this symbolic rejection of the superficial world, but, because of the intensely personal focus and limited setting, what actually is elucidated is only the relationship of the husband and wife. The symbolic thimble refers back to their superficial relationship not outwards to the superficial world. Lawrence may have felt his thimble referred to the nation and empire but there is no way within the story in which it could. The story contains no nation or empire to be symbolized, only one room in which a young couple undergo a painful discovery of each other.

It is only by extension that this story becomes anything more than a penetrating study of a single human relationship. It is only by extension that what goes on within that one room becomes symbolic of a process necessary to a vital life. The limited range and focus of the story demand that the reader extrapolate in order to find a significance which affects him. Consequently, a reader who does not extrapolate will in no way see "The Thimble" as relating to his life.

Lawrence, in reworking "The Thimble", appears to have felt that the lack of a visible environment, or world, for his characters to inhabit was detrimental to the story. By widening the scope of the story he could

hope to affect a wider audience. "The Ladybird"¹ devotes much space to the evocation of the milieu of war-time England. This is a penetrating study. Lady Beveridge, the philanthropic matron of the old order has her counterparts in Dickens' stereotypes (Mrs. Jellyby of Bleak House comes to mind). 'Stereotype,' as used here, does not refer to any failure on Lawrence's part in his creation of Lady Beveridge. In the milieu that Lawrence creates for us Lady Beveridge could not exist as anything other than a stereotype. That milieu is succinctly captured in the statement that, "The years 1916 and 1917 were the years when the old spirit died for ever in England." (pp. 43-44) The old spirit is the aristocratic tradition of which Lady Beveridge and her husband are the representatives.

If a stereotype is something that has become formalized and is unchanging then Lady Beveridge fits this description. Although the spirit of her age is dead "Lady Beveridge struggled on She felt she must give in, and just die. And then she remembered how many others were lying in agony. . . . So she rose" (p. 44) Lady Beveridge will not submit but holds high her ideals of pity, kindness, truth, and genuine love. However, in spite of all her love for humanity the "power slipped out of the hands of her and her sort" (p. 43) The word 'power', introduced here, becomes one of the central themes of the story. The power of the old, aristocratic order is dead and a new order is needed to replace it. Why, though, is the power of the old order dead? It is dead because it has come to be identified with the democratic ideals of love

¹Four Short Novels (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), pp. 43-109. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

and goodness. In the democratic England of the First World War the aristocratic power is out of place: "The new generation jeered at her. She was a shabby, old-fashioned little aristocrat, and her drawing-room was out of date." (p. 43) And the irony is that in some sense the aristocracy brought its destruction on itself. With its philanthropic ideals of love and goodness it paved the way for a political climate ostensibly based on those ideals. Leavis is correct when he says: "In Lady Beveridge's philanthropic idealism and its effects we recognize a familiar Lawrentian theme. She stands to her daughter (and to her husband) as Thomas Crich, the coal-magnate in Women in Love, stands to his proudly passionate wife."² Thomas Crich's philanthropy is resented by the miners; they care nothing for him. The more he gives them the more they recognize the inequality between him and themselves: "They were grateful to . . . the new owners, who had opened out the pits, and let forth this stream of plenty. But man is never satisfied, and so the miners, from gratitude to their owners, passed on to murmuring. Their sufficiency decreased with knowledge, they wanted more. Why should the master be so out-of-all-proportion rich?"³

In another passage about Thomas Crich Lawrence describes essentially the situation Lady Beveridge finds herself in. Thomas Crich was

trapped between two half-truths, and broken. He wanted to be a pure Christian, one and equal with all men. He even wanted to give away all he had, to the poor. Yet he was a great promoter

²D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 58.

³Women in Love (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), pp. 216-217.

of industry, and he knew perfectly that he must keep his goods and keep his authority. This was as divine a necessity in him, as the need to give away all he possessed -- more divine, even, since this was the necessity he acted upon. Yet because he did not act on the other ideal, it dominated him, he was dying of chagrin because he must forfeit it. He wanted to be a father of loving kindness and sacrificial benevolence. The colliers shouted to him about his thousands a year. They would not be deceived. ⁴

The difference between Lady Beveridge and Thomas Crich is that she is not conscious of her aristocratic power. She is conscious only of her philanthropic ideals. Therefore she does not understand the resentment she feels coming against her: "The guard knew her, and saluted as she passed. Ah, she was used to such deep respect! It was strange that she felt it so bitterly, when the respect became shallower. But she did. It was the beginning of the end to her." (p. 44) Certainly it is strange that she should feel the loss of respect bitterly. Her ideals are not aristocratic and do not imply that she should receive deep respect, yet she misses the respect bitterly when it is gone. We see that underneath her conscious philanthropic idealism she is fundamentally an aristocrat but does not realize that aristocracy is not founded on love. The egalitarian democratic world which is produced under the flag of love has no place for her. That is why, when talking to Basil, the Count says we need another word than love. He offers the aristocratic alternative: "Obedience, submission, faith, belief, responsibility, power," he said slowly, picking out the words slowly, as if searching for what he wanted, and never quite finding it." (p. 88) The Count's aristocracy will, however, not be based on heredity but on nature: " 'Not as a hereditary

⁴Ibid., p. 219.

aristocrat, but as a man who is by nature an aristocrat,' said the Count, 'it is my sacred duty to hold the lives of other men in my hands, and to shape the issue. But I can never fulfil my destiny till men will willingly put their lives in my hands.' " (p. 89)

Lord Beveridge had something of the natural aristocrat in him but the pressures of his wife's ideals and a growing democratic feeling have repressed his natural passion:

He was a passionate man, with a passionate man's sensitiveness, generosity, and instinctive overbearing. But his dark passionate nature, and his violent sensitiveness had been subjected now to fifty-five years' subtle repression, condemnation, repudiation, till he had almost come to believe in his own wrongness. His little, frail wife, all love for humanity, she was the genuine article. Himself, he was labelled selfish, sensual, cruel, etc., etc. (p. 93)

The Earl's family line has a history of passionate recklessness: "The earldom had begun with a riotous, dare-devil border soldier, and this was the blood that flowed on." (p. 47)

Daphne, as the offspring of philanthropic idealism and passionate recklessness, is diagnosed as having a problem:

Daphne had married an adorable husband: truly an adorable husband. Whereas she needed a dare-devil. But in her mind she hated all dare-devils: she had been brought up by her mother to admire only the good.

So, her reckless, anti-philanthropic passion could find no outlet -- and should find no outlet, she thought. So her own blood turned against her, beat on her own nerves, and destroyed her. It was nothing but frustration and anger which made her ill, and made the doctors fear consumption. (p. 47)

As Leavis says, "The diagnosis of Lady Daphne's case is convincing."⁵ We have been given a perceptive study of the social,

⁵D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 62.

moral, and, indirectly, political conditions which have shaped the milieu which produced Daphne. We see the old world as passing and the new order as being made up of people who wave the flag of idealism while, in Lord Beveridge's words, "Their one aim [is] to degrade and humiliate anything that was proud or dignified remaining in England." (p. 92)

In 1915, the year he wrote "The Thimble", Lawrence still maintained a profound belief in the people of England themselves. The war was a temporary madness which would finally jolt the people awake. Once awake the true spirit within them would come forth and repudiate the war and the disintegrating spirit which had caused it. In a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith (May 14, 1915) Lawrence expresses this belief. I will quote at length in order to indicate the intensity of the tone:

Believe me, in the end, we will unite in our knowledge of God. Believe me, this England, we very English people, will at length join together and say, 'We will not do these things, because in our knowledge of God we know them wrong.' We shall put away our greatness and our living for material things only, because we shall agree we don't want these things. We know they are inferior, base, we shall have courage to put them away. We shall unite in our knowledge of God -- not perhaps in our expression of God -- but in our knowledge of God: and we shall agree that we don't want to live only to write and make riches; that England does not care only to have the greatest Empire or the greatest commerce, but that she does care supremely for the pure truth of God, which she will try to fulfill.⁶

It is in this hopeful spirit that he wrote "The Thimble", showing two people preserving the hope of a resurrection. "The Thimble" expresses Lawrence's belief in the people by having the young man and woman awaken on their own, without being argued into a new awareness. The only external forces acting on them are the pneumonia and the face wound. Lawrence

⁶Collected Letters, I, 342-343.

believes the conditions of their decadent world will force the English people awake.

However, in 1915 the war still had a long way to go. It was only a week or so after Lawrence wrote "The Thimble" that The Rainbow was suppressed, and it was not until 1916 that Lloyd George and Horatio Bottomley came to power. These developments served to gradually destroy Lawrence's faith in the English. In October, 1917 he was forced out of Cornwall on suspicion of being a spy, and in late 1919 Lawrence left England for Italy.

By 1921 Lawrence had a truer vision of what had happened to England. Truly the old spirit had died. It was not simply reserving its energies in order to rush out again in triumph at some later date. It had died and decomposition had set in. As Lawrence said in a letter (November 10, 1921): "I feel very sick with England. It is a dead dog that died of a love disease like syphilis."⁷ The love disease aptly describes the high-flown idealism of post-1914 England. It is a superficial love, a surface, spiritual idealism which has no relation to reality but is used to justify 'getting on'. And the people are infected with the disease. Lawrence can no longer believe that they will awaken to the conditions they have created. He now believes some external pressure must be applied; the boil must be lanced, so to speak.

We find this belief surfacing strongly in 1921. A letter of January of that year gives us these sentiments: "If I knew how to, I'd really join myself to the revolutionary socialists now. I think the time

⁷Collected Letters, II, 673.

has come for a real struggle. I don't care for politics. But I know there must and should be a deadly revolution very soon, and I would take part in it if I knew how."⁸

It is these new leanings Lawrence is having toward struggle, power, and deadly revolution that lead him into problems in "The Ladybird". An external pressure needs to be applied to wake up, to bring to life, the dead spirit in the English people. This external pressure is personified in "The Ladybird" as Count Dionys.

Whereas in "The Thimble" both the husband and wife realized their plight individually and then worked together to nourish a spark of life into being between them; in "The Ladybird" both Daphne and Basil are seen as helpless. It is the Count who recognizes the potential in Daphne and gradually leads her to a rebirth. Daphne's 'case' is quite similar to the young woman's in "The Thimble". It has simply been given a much broader and firmer environmental foundation. Basil, however, has been totally changed. He becomes the epitome of the 'love' disease, what Lawrence, in this story, calls 'adoration-lust'. Lawrence's hope that individuals would recognize their plight has disappeared. Fortunately for Daphne the Count saves her. Basil, however, is left in his non-life.

⁸Ibid., pp. 639-640. These letters help us confirm our conclusions that an increasing frustration with England and English society played a major part in determining the nature of Lawrence's writing. This kind of statement could, I suppose, be cited as evidence of the 'intentional fallacy'. However, this is not the case. The conclusions are arrived at from the stories and based on these conclusions certain predictions can be made about the direction Lawrence's work is taking. The letters, and other biographical material, can be used to confirm certain predictions and conclusions and that is all. The outside material only supplements the text, it does not replace it.

In this connection it is interesting to notice what Lawrence has done with the war wound the husband received in "The Thimble". In that story the wound is very gruesome:

She looked up at the mouth that produced the sound. It was broken in, the bottom teeth all gone, the side of the chin battered small, whilst a deep seam, a deep, horrible groove ran right into the middle of the cheek. But the mouth was the worst, sunk in at the bottom, with half the lip cut away.⁹

Lawrence makes the wound gruesome in order to increase the significance of the woman's seeing beyond the destroyed surface handsomeness to the 'real' man buried behind it. The destroyed face becomes a useful symbol; one which informs the theme of superficiality running through the story.

In "The Ladybird" the wound has been toned down considerably and its significance has changed:

His face was gaunt, and there was a curious deathly sub-pallor, though his cheeks were not white. The scar ran livid from the side of his mouth. It was not so very big. But it seemed like a scar in him himself, in his brain, as it were. In his eyes was that hard, white, focused light that fascinated her and was terrible to her. He was different. He was like death; like risen death. (p. 78)

The wound, here, is not a symbol of insignificant superficiality masking a greater reality; the scar becomes a symbol of the true reality of Basil. It is seared into his brain. And the true reality is deathly. He is separated from life. He has undergone a rebirth, but only into the final state of living death. He no longer sees his wife as a woman but as a goddess. The love idealism has reached its logical conclusion in becoming a life-denying religion:

⁹"The Thimble", Phoenix II, p. 58.

He kissed her feet again and again, without the slightest self-consciousness, or the slightest misgiving. Then he went back to the sofa, and sat there looking at her, saying:

"It isn't love, it is worship. Love between me and you will be a sacrament, Daphne. That's what I had to learn. You are beyond me. A mystery to me. My God, how great it all is. How marvellous!" (p. 79)

Basil has no misgivings about his self-abasement before his wife. It is interesting to notice that Lady Beveridge also "had no misgiving regarding her own spirit." (p. 43) Lady Beveridge, who "was content that the men should act, so long as they breathed from her as from the rose of life the pure fragrance of truth and genuine love" (p. 43), is already on the pedestal Basil has just put Daphne on. Lawrence neatly shows us that the love consciousness is a stereotype which negates life.

Into this sterile, hopeless environment Lawrence brings Count Dionys Psanek. Psanek we learn, means outlaw, while the meaning of Dionys is, of course, obvious. In the Count we have the reckless, passionate, dare-devil that Daphne needs. Through his discussions with her Daphne comes gradually to recognize the superficiality, the sterility, of her life. She knows at heart that her relationship with Basil is absurd. Slowly she overcomes her fascination with the 'little' life and yields to the Count. In "The Thimble" the realization was brought about by the young woman's pneumonia and was verified when she could see a 'real' man behind her husband's ruined face. In "The Ladybird" the extreme war wound is transferred to the Count: "he lay there a bit of loose, palpitating humanity, shot away from the body of humanity." (p. 54) Daphne realizes "that the bonds, the connections between him and his life in the world had broken". (p. 54) Like the woman in "The Thimble" who wants to remain 'self-contained' so the strangeness of her husband won't

affect her, so Daphne wanted "to forget him [the Count], as one tries to forget incurable things. But she could not forget him. He came again and again into her mind. She had to go back. She had heard he was recovering very slowly." (p.54)

As the visits continue the Count gradually gets stronger, comes back to life. But what kind of life is he reborn into? It is here we run into problems.

Lawrence has seen that there is a need for an external agent to come into play and tip the balance of the world in favour of 'life'. When we say 'external' we mean external to the existing state of affairs. Now, in "The Ladybird" the existing state of affairs, the milieu of First World War England and the passing of the aristocratic tradition, has been evoked very perceptively. The Count is introduced into this environment from outside it; he is a prisoner of war. Since he is external to the existing sterile environment, Lawrence can give him a virility and 'life' without being called to account for violating the English milieu he has created. However, when this virility and 'life' are manifested through a poetic and prophetic mode which increasingly supplants the realistic and diagnostic mode in which the environmental milieu has been presented we find ourselves moved to critical reflection. How much licence does the fact that the Count is external to the milieu presented allow Lawrence? Leavis believes it allows him quite a lot: "The abnormality of his [the Count's] state of extreme weakness --- 'he lay there a bit of loose, palpitating humanity, shot away from the body of humanity' -- provides, to begin with, the licence for the poetic audacities of his

speech."¹⁰ Certainly we can agree that in states of extreme weakness persons will say strange things, things which refer, possibly, to something totally beyond the normal run of life. However, these statements, made in abnormal states, cannot always be said to be taken as seriously relating to our betterment. Yet, what the Count says in his weakened state, and also subsequently, when well again, is meant to be taken quite seriously.

I would like to make it clear that I am not necessarily saying that the content of what Lawrence gives the Count to say is absurd, or slight. What I am criticizing is the method of presentation. Whether the content of the Count's speeches actually is absurd or not is not in question, but the fact is that what he says does sound silly because of the environment it has been placed in. There are even hints that Lawrence himself was unsure of the validity of what he was doing. He has the Count comment on the absurdity of his poetic speech:

"You are like a flower behind a rock, near an icy water. No, you do not live too much. I am afraid I cannot talk sensibly. I wish to hold my mouth shut. If I open it I talk this absurdity. It escapes from my mouth."

"It is not so very absurd," she said. (p. 55)

Daphne reassures the Count that he is not talking absurdity and one wonders whether she is not reassuring Lawrence also.

Daphne's reassurance to the Count gives the stamp of approval to the poetic-mystic mode into which Lawrence is moving. Their relationship, defined, as it is, by the poetic language and the Count's foreignness, exists in a different dimension from that inhabited by Basil and the

¹⁰D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 61.

Beveridges. We have learned that life for Basil and the Beveridges is made up of abstractions such as love, goodness, spirituality etc. And these abstractions are expressed in an abstracted, spiritual, philosophical language. We can get the tone of this language from nearly all of Basil's speeches. Here is one to Daphne:

"I knew", he said in a muffled voice. "I knew you would make good. I knew if I had to kneel, it was before you. I knew you were divine, you were the one -- Cybele -- Isis. I knew I was your slave. I knew. It has all been just a long initiation. I had to learn how to worship you." (p. 79)

This ecstatic rapture is abstracted from reality -- Daphne is not divine: "She could not finally believe in her own woman-godhead -- only in her own female mortality." (p. 82) In a dialogue between Basil and the Count we hear the same tone:

The Count's face had gone dark and serious.
 "But is this contact an aim in itself?" he asked.
 "Well" -- said the Major -- he had taken his degree in philosophy -- "it seems to me it is. It results inevitably in some form of activity. But the cause and the origin and the life-impetus of all action, activity, whether constructive or destructive, seems to me to be in the dynamic contact between human beings." (p. 86)

Lawrence neatly shows how far this statement is abstracted from reality by having Daphne, as she listens to the men talk, think: "Her husband was quite unaware of anything but his own white identity. But the Count still had a grain of secondary consciousness which hovered round and remained aware of the woman in the window-seat." (p. 87)

If Basil's life consists merely of words abstracted from reality then the Count, who keeps "track of Daphne" despite the words, must be closer to that reality. The problem Lawrence has to overcome is how to portray the Count as existing on a more 'real' plane of existence without falling into the trap of abstraction.

This is the eternal paradox for Lawrence -- trying to fight against abstraction by using language, itself with a tendency to abstraction. In "The Thimble" Lawrence solved this problem by avoiding lengthy dialogue. The young couple breaks through the film of separating superficiality and approaches contact. As the end of the story approaches their dialogue increasingly consists of short, terse statements. Finally she cries "Am I going to love you?". And his response : "Again he stretched forward and touched her hand, with the tips of his fingers. And the touch lay still, completed there."¹¹ Lawrence leaves dialogue behind and shows us the contact. We no longer hear about it, we see it.

In "The Ladybird" we have the same movement toward contact but it is expressed to a much greater extent through dialogue. Lawrence hasn't forgotten that dialogue is an impediment but he seems to see no other way to achieve his end. The following lengthy passage says a lot:

"But if you let me wrap your hair round my hands. You know, it is the hermetic gold -- but so much of water in it, of the moon. That will soothe my hands. One day, will you?"

"Let us wait till the day comes," she said.

"Yes," he answered, and was still again.

"It troubles me," he said after a while, "that I complain like a child, and ask for things. I feel I have lost my manhood for the time being. The continual explosions of guns and shells! It seems to have driven my soul out of me like a bird frightened away at last. But it will come back, you know. And I am so grateful to you; you are good to me when I am soulless, and you don't take advantage of me. Your soul is quiet and heroic."

"Don't," she said. "Don't talk!"

"It is because I can't help it," he said. "I have lost my soul, and I can't stop talking to you. I can't stop. But I don't talk to anyone else. I try not to talk, but I can't prevent it. Do you draw the words out of me?" (pp. 57-58)

¹¹"The Thimble", Phoenix II, pp. 62-63.

Instead of showing us, through the Count's relationship with his environment, that he is as a little child again, Lawrence has the Count tell us his condition. Daphne tells him not to talk anymore and the Count says she draws the words from him. Ostensibly, I suppose, we are to see here the Count responding to the potential for life he sees within Daphne -- deep responding to deep -- as it is phrased later in the story. But certainly, as we have seen from the non-verbal contact established in "The Thimble", Daphne's plea for less talk strikes us as more valid a direction for the story to take than that offered by the Count's poetic-prophetic dialogue. Yet, increasingly it is this dialogue we get.

Just as Lawrence felt a need to establish a firmer milieu in "The Ladybird" than he had in "The Thimble", a clearer base for diagnosing the problems he saw, he also felt just as strong a need for a firm environment in which to present his solutions to those problems. It was no longer enough to say it takes time. He wanted to offer the new world now. However, if the sterile environment presented is so because it consists only of abstractions then the new environment would naturally be expected to be as close to 'reality' as language would allow. This would mean getting clear of superficiality and abstraction. It would mean getting into contact with the natural world.

Lawrence seems to have felt this need to some extent. There are small scenes in "The Ladybird" which contrast positively with Basil's 'white' spiritual ecstasy. Unfortunately these scenes are far too few to give us a strong impression of validity. They serve as a springboard for Lawrence. He stands in his new found reality, gets his bearings, and then springs into poetic or prophetic abstraction once again. One such positive scene is as follows:

It was already late autumn, and some lovely days. This was the last of the lovely days. She was told that Count Dionys was in the small park, finding chestnuts. She went to look for him. Yes, there he was in his blue uniform stooping over the brilliant yellow leaves of the sweet chestnut tree, that lay around him like a fallen nimbus of glowing yellow, under his feet, as he kicked and rustled, looking for the chestnut burrs. And with his short, brown hands he was pulling out the small chestnuts and putting them in his pockets. But as she approached he peeled a nut to eat it. His teeth were white and powerful. (p. 72)

This is a truly vivid scene. We can see the Count as in and of his environment. And this environment is not the same environment which Basil exists in. Lawrence has given us this validity without any pushing or shoving, he has simply shown it.

One wonders if Lawrence consciously knew that it was in a scene such as the above that the new power lay. One wonders because only a page or so later the pushing and shoving of the prophetic mode has returned:

"What grudge have I against a world where even the hedges are full of berries, bunches of black berries that hang down, and red berries that thrust up. Never would I hate the world. But the world of man. Lady Daphne" -- his voice sank to a whisper -- "I hate it. Zzz!" he hissed. "Strike, little heart! Strike, strike, hit, smite! Oh, Lady Daphne!" -- his eyes dilated with a ring of fire.

"What?" she said, scared.

"I believe in the power of my red, dark heart. God has put the hammer in my breast -- the little eternal hammer. Hit -- hit -- hit! It hits on the world of man. It hits, it hits! And it hears the thin sound of cracking. The thin sound of cracking. Hark!" (p. 74)

Here we have all the frustration and resentment that we have seen in the letters. We realize that whatever Lawrence's ostensible purpose in writing this story may be, it is his desire to 'get back' at the world of men which gives it its impetus.

Although Lawrence must have felt a sympathy for the kind of world he presented in the 'picking chestnuts' scene, it cannot have been

sufficient for him. He tells Daphne how good that world is but where they end up is not in that world but in the dark bedroom where Lawrence finally abstracts the Count right out of humanity: "Then suddenly he felt her fingertips touch his arm, and a flame went over him that left him no more a man. He was something seated in flame, in flame unconsciousness, seated erect, like an Egyptian King-god in the statues."

(p. 103) We learn that the true reality for the Count, and we assume also for Lawrence as a result of his frustration with mankind, is the after-life; the underworld kingdom of Hades. This life, in this world, is, finally, only something to be endured: "He had no future in this life. Even if he lived on, it would only be a kind of enduring. But he felt that in the after-life the inheritance was his. He felt the after-life belonged to him." (pp. 103-104)

Lawrence does not go on to portray what life in the under-world will be like for the Count and Daphne. After all, he is not interested in death but in life. The problem with "The Ladybird" is that the symbolic death is not accompanied by a subsequent, fulfilling rebirth. His characters symbolically die to the 'little' life but the greater life they feel can only come into its own after actual death. Until then they must be resigned. They have established a contact with each other, like the couple in "The Thimble", but unlike that couple, who had hope that in time a completer contact, one that included their world, would be established; unlike that couple Daphne and the Count have no hope for this world. They must wait until after death.

In the final scenes of the story, the scenes in the dark bedroom, one gets the feeling that Lawrence was struggling against despair. The

action moves from the prisoner-of-war hospital to the estate of the Beveridges. We move from the modern world into the world of the fairy-tale:

It was a beautiful Elizabethan mansion, not very large, but with those magical rooms that are all a twinkle of small-paned windows, looking out from the dark panelled interior. The interior was cosy, panelled to the ceiling, and the ceiling moulded and touched with gold. And then the great square bow of the window with its little panes intervening like magic between oneself and the world outside Dionys wandered round the house like a little ghost (p. 97)

Lawrence seems to be distinctly pulling back from reality, returning to a time which he has already diagnosed as dead. Lawrence's external force, Count Dionys, who was inserted into the action, is now being drawn out of it again, and Daphne is drawn with him. But to where? To what purpose?

Lawrence has no answer to these questions. Yet, he keeps pulling farther back until we are in the dark bedroom in a scene of complete unreality:

But he [the Count] did not know what to do. He sat still and silent as she was still and silent. The darkness inside the room seemed alive like blood. He had no power to move. The distance between them seemed absolute.

Then suddenly, without knowing, he went across in the dark, feeling for the end of the couch. And he sat beside her on the couch. But he did not touch her. Neither did she move. The darkness flowed about them thick like blood, and time seemed dissolved in it. They sat with the small, invisible distance between them, motionless, speechless, thoughtless. (p. 103)

We learn that the Count has no place in the world, no future; that his inheritance will only come after death. And his inheritance will be quite substantial, he will be "master of the underworld. Master of the life to come. Father of the soul that would come after." (p. 104)

These grandiose titles carry no weight for us because of the circumstances under which they will come into being. There may be an

after-life, and Count Dionys may be the master of it, but we can never know until we get there. The assertion of these claims, made in a dark, blood-filled bedroom totally separated from the environment Lawrence evoked so well earlier in the story, does not strike us as a valid alternative to the problems seen in that environment but as an escapist fantasy tinged with wish fulfilment. As Leavis quite rightly says:

"There is a betraying obviousness -- it is of the order of sentimentality -- about the quality of the final, would-be clinching incantations."¹²

And these last pages are sentimental. They are the expression of a fantasy which has no grounding anywhere. Lawrence repeatedly calls to us to enter his world but we recoil, seeing there is no world to enter. The quality of the prose -- incantatory, and the method of incantation -- repeated insistence, betray, I believe, a lack of confidence on Lawrence's part. Daphne hears the call:

It was like a thread which she followed out of the world: out of the world. And as she went, slowly, by degrees, far, far away, down the thin thread of his singing, she knew peace -- she knew forgetfulness But underneath was a wild, wild yearning, actually to go, actually to be given. Actually to go, actually to die the death, actually to cross the border and be gone, to be gone. To be gone from this herself, from this Daphne, to be gone from father and mother, brothers and husband, and home and land and world: to be gone. To be gone to the call from the beyond: the call. It was the Count calling. He was calling her. She was sure he was calling her. Out of herself, out of her world, he was calling her. (pp. 100-101)

This prose betrays a lack of confidence because it is so insistent. A person totally confident would show the world we are being led into but Lawrence cannot show his -- it is beyond death.

¹²D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 64.

The language, tone, and imagery of the bedroom scene -- "The darkness flowed about them thick like blood" -- are unnatural, and we feel them an imposition on us. The best critic of this kind of unnaturalness is Lawrence himself. In his last book, Apocalypse, Lawrence criticized the book of Revelation and it is enlightening, in this context, to see just what he reacted against. Describing a passage about the four beasts Lawrence says:

A passage like that irritated and annoyed my boyish mind because of its pompous unnaturalness. If it is imagery, it is imagery which cannot be imagined: for how can four beasts be 'full of eyes before and behind', and how can they be 'in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne'? They can't be somewhere and somewhere else at the same time. But that is how the Apocalypse is.

Again, much of the imagery is utterly unpoetic and arbitrary, some of it really ugly, like all the wadings in blood, and the rider's shirt dipped in blood, and people washen in the blood of the Lamb. Also such phrases as 'the wrath of the Lamb' are on the face of them ridiculous. ¹³

In light of this criticism I do not think it is unfair to say that many of the Count's poetic and prophetic speeches, and also the evocation of the bedroom scene, appear to be, if not ridiculous, at least arbitrary and imposed.

In "The Ladybird" Lawrence was seriously concerned with finding solutions to the problems he could see in English civilization. As he diagnosed these problems deeply it became clear that something totally new and different would have to be invoked to clean up the mess. Through the Count, Lawrence tried to introduce this new element. However, newness alone is not enough. That newness must have a validity behind it

¹³Apocalypse (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 6-7.

which it is able to communicate convincingly. At this stage of his artistic development Lawrence could feel the validity but did not know how to express it adequately. He places the Count in the story as a harbinger of rebirth and then gradually draws him out of the environment he was to affect. This would be acceptable if the place to which the Count, and the reader, are drawn is a valid environment, but, as I hope I have shown, it is not.

The probable rebuttal to our rejection of the Count and the dark bedroom scene would be that our prejudices are standing in the way of our complete understanding of what Lawrence is doing. We cannot recognize a validity in the portrayal of the Count because our 'white' consciousness, developed through a 2000 and more year old affiliation with idealists such as Plato and Jesus, causes us to rebel vehemently at something different from our 'little' lives and to arbitrarily label darkness as something bad and, in the extreme, satanic and unreal. We have lost the ability to exist in a vital relationship with Mystery and must constantly attempt to analyze and understand the mystery. Since the portrayal of the Count is mysterious and we cannot understand it in the sense of putting it on a file card and forgetting it, since it strikes at our deepest prejudices, we simply put on our blinkers and refuse to look.

Is our alternative, then, simply to accept what Lawrence presents to us without question? If we question are we not falling into the trap our prejudices set for us? Is Lawrence's work to be seen, finally, as religion which we either believe or reject in its entirety? This would have unfortunate consequences for Lawrence's art. In the final analysis an unquestioning defense of Lawrence is as much putting on the blinkers

as a prejudiced rejection.

What criticism of Lawrence demands is discrimination. We must be able to rise beyond our prejudices, whether they are for or against Lawrence, and see what he is actually doing. It is only then that we can make a critical judgement.

And when we do rise beyond our prejudices, as far as we are able, we see that while Lawrence's ability to diagnose problems is remarkable, his ability to offer valid alternatives to these problems is sometimes tenuous. Even Lawrence acknowledges this by saying, in "The Ladybird", that the final resolution will only come after death. He has moved from a confident hope in "The Thimble" to a disillusioned resignation.

III

"THE LAST LAUGH" AND "THE BORDER LINE":

FROM CYNICISM TO RIGID POLARIZATION

In a letter to to E. H. Brewster (January 18, 1922) Lawrence wrote:

. . . I am kicking against the pricks. I have misinterpreted 'Life is sorrow.' That is a first truth, not a last truth. And one must accept it as one's first truth, and develop from that. I verily believe it.

The groundwork of life is sorrow. But that once established, one can start to build. And until that is established one can build nothing: no life of any sort. I begin to agree. I took it one must finish with the fact that Life is sorrow. Now again I realise that one must get there, and having arrived, then begin to live.

Good then: as a basis, Life is sorrow. But beyond that one can smile and go on.

Only -- only -- I somehow have an imperative need to fight. I suppose it depends how one fights.¹

In the conclusion of "The Ladybird" one can see Lawrence "finishing with the fact that life is sorrow". The world is not a place to be transformed but endured. Only the hope of vindication after death allows the Count to endure. He is not living and building but existing and waiting. He is certainly not smiling and going on. He has not succeeded in transcending sorrow but only in recognizing it.

In the letter to Brewster it appears that Lawrence sees that one must transcend the fact that life is sorrow. The phrase "smile and go on" carries a considerable significance. To be able to smile in the face of sorrow implies an ability to see beyond the sorrow, or see around it. It

¹Collected Letters, II, 685.

suggests a calm wisdom which recognizes the fact of sorrow but does not wallow in it. However, this sense of calm wisdom is somewhat undercut when we hear, in the next sentence, that Lawrence still has "an imperative need to fight". Here we have the old tone of the fighting Lawrence back again. These two distinctly different tones betray a confusion in Lawrence about how he should respond to the world. It is interesting that this letter to Brewster contains Lawrence's last minute decision to go to Ceylon instead of to America from his home in Italy. Lawrence feels awkward about his last-minute changes of mind: "We have made all arrangements to go to Taos, New Mexico. But we have booked no passage. Shall I come to Ceylon? Dio mio, I am so ridiculous, wavering between East and West."²

Lawrence decided for Ceylon and began his trek around the world which would eventually bring him back to Europe to stay. In October, 1925, back in England and about to leave for Europe, Lawrence wrote to Murry: "England just depresses me, like a long funeral. But I cease to quarrel. No good kicking against the pricks."³ And a month later, from Italy, he wrote to Brewster: "Nobody seems very lively nowadays. Time we made a new start."⁴ The tone is again calm but is not, as at the end of "The Ladybird", resigned.

The confusion noted in the January, 1922 letter to Brewster is

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 861.

⁴Ibid., p. 867.

manifested clearly in Lawrence's short story "The Last Laugh".⁵ From evidence in the letters we can conclude that this story was written in early 1924, probably in January. The pervading tone of the story is one of cynicism. We get the impression that Lawrence did not have very much faith in what he was doing. Lawrence himself makes a brief appearance as Lorenzo, "a thin man with a red beard". (p. 630) He establishes his attitude to the new world he is creating in Lorenzo's statement: "Look at it! A new world!" cried the man in the beard, ironically." (p. 630)

The irony and cynicism of the tone undercut any sense of seriousness we may discover in the story. Lawrence does not try to persuade or convince us of the validity of a new world as he had tried to do in "The Ladybird". Here he arbitrarily introduces Pan to Hampstead and records the results. The deaf woman, James, is granted a vision of Pan and her hearing is subsequently restored. Marchbanks, the 'serious' sardonic young man only hears the laughter until, at the end of the story, he too sees Pan. However, the sight kills him. The young 'doggy' policeman only sees and hears a thunderstorm. He is not as far gone as the 'serious' Marchbanks therefore he is not killed. However, because he is so doggy and 'limited' he is given a clubfoot.

The story reads almost like a 'programme fiction' horror story. I say 'almost' because in programme fiction the cynical tone is absent. There the author accepts the conventions of his form. Arthur Machen in his story "The Great God Pan" never for a moment lets the reader think that the story is anything but the truth. The tone is completely serious

⁵The Complete Short Stories (London: Heinemann, 1955), III, 630-646. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

and the method is investigatory. The suspense which is thus created lends the proper environment to the elements of horror. Poe's tales and Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes' stories manifest the same elements of seriousness. They successfully allow the reader to suspend his disbelief and go along for the adventure.

The real reason for failure in "The Last Laugh" is that Lawrence will not allow himself to write programme fiction. "The Last Laugh" could have been worked up into a first-rate horror story but Lawrence could not take the tongue out of his cheek. And the tongue-in-cheek tone makes us look for more than programme fiction in this story. And in our search for validity in this story we are disappointed at every turn. We find hints of the profoundly serious Lawrence at certain places but whenever something seems to be happening the cynicism comes in and undercuts it. An example of this can be seen in the change which comes over James the morning after seeing Pan:

She sat down before her window, in the sun, to think a while. She could see the snow outside, the bare purplish trees. The air all seemed rare and different. Suddenly the world had become quite different: as if some skin or integument had broken, as if the old, mouldering London sky had crackled and rolled back, like an old skin, shrivelled, leaving an absolutely new blue heaven.
(p. 641)

Here we see Lawrence reiterating a familiar theme. The old superficial world gives way to a new 'real' world. We remember how this was treated in "The Thimble": "She was sick in the thin, transparent membrane of her sleep, her overlying dream-consciousness, something actual but too unreal."⁶ Once this film is broken through, the young couple of "The Thimble"

⁶Phoenix II, p. 59.

emerge into a new reality: "The darkness of his eyes was now watching her, her soul was exposed and new-born. The triviality was gone, the dream psychology, the self-dependence. They were naked in soul, and depended on each other."⁷

This reaction to the new relationship they have entered is valid. However, I doubt that James' reaction to her new world can be said to be valid. It does not even command serious attention:

"It really is extraordinary!" she said to herself. "I certainly saw that man's face. What a wonderful face it was! I shall never forget it. Such laughter! He laughs longest who laughs last. He certainly will have the last laugh. I like him for that: he will laugh last. Must be someone really extraordinary! How very nice to be the one to laugh last. He certainly will. What a wonderful being! I suppose I must call him a being. He's not a person exactly.

"But how wonderful of him to come back and alter all the world immediately! Isn't that extraordinary. (pp. 641-642)

Why, we ask, did Lawrence give his resurrected woman such an insipid and facetious language and tone? I think the answer lies in the fact that Lawrence was reacting very strongly against 'seriousness' of the Marchbanks kind; the seriousness which must understand the mysteries of life and that cannot simply accept mystery. In a letter to Mabel Luhan (January 9, 1924) Lawrence comments on this:

I am sure seriousness is a disease, today. It's an awful disease in Murry. So long as there's a bit of a laugh going, things are all right. As soon as this infernal seriousness, like a greasy sea, heaves up, everything is lost. . . . Now it takes far more courage to dare not to care, and to dare to have a bit of a laugh at everything, than to wallow in the deepest seas of seriousness. . . . on your honour, Mabel, no seriousness. The seriousness of the Great God Pan, who grins a bit, and when driven too hard, goes fierce.⁸

⁷Ibid., p. 60.

⁸Collected Letters, II, 770-771.

Pan does go fierce in this story, killing Marchbanks and crippling a policeman, as well as destroying a church. James is given a new life and her hearing is restored, we assume because she is not affected with the disease of seriousness. That she is not is only too apparent. Her lack of seriousness manifests itself, however, not in a healthy ability to laugh at seriousness while existing in a 'real' relationship with mystery, but in an insipid superficial imitation of this ability.

That James' new life is superficial is to be expected in a story which is in itself superficial. Although Pan comes back to "alter the world immediately", Lawrence, as Widmer observes, "hasn't bothered to provide much world, or character, to be altered; shattering churches, policemen, and intellectuals remains supernatural trickery".⁹

And this is the case. At least in "The Ladybird" Lawrence seriously diagnosed the problems and then truly attempted to meet them. If that tale fails because we cannot accept the validity of the Count, then this tale fails even more because Lawrence has not even tried to create an environment to carry his vision.

A recognition that life is sorrow may enable one to "smile and go on" but it certainly would not evoke a cynical laugh at that life. The cynicism in this story, far from providing a transcendent view of life, appears to be a defensive measure on Lawrence's part. The world appears so bleak that Lawrence will not really face it but will bring in Pan to alter things immediately. Pan, in this story, becomes the deus ex machina; he settles the old scores and offers new life. However, as with

⁹The Art of Perversity, p. 56.

that theatrical device, Pan does not convince us even though he is an interesting bit of spectacle. The cynical tone betrays Lawrence's confusion. He hated the seriousness but could not let himself go all the way and simply laugh at it. As well as laughing he sneaks in his own seriousness in the theme of rebirth. His resurrection theme, however, is tarred with the same cynical brush. Lawrence knows Pan is unconvincing but the alternative would be to face the sorrow head on, a step painful in the extreme.

In a letter to Edward Garnett (April 22, 1914) Lawrence wrote something which seems pertinent in this connection:

. . . primarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that. And my Cockneyism and commonness are only when the deep feeling doesn't find its way out, and a sort of jeer comes instead, and sentimentality, and purplism. But you should see the religious, earnest, suffering man in me first, and then the flippant or common things after.¹⁰

In "The Last Laugh" the deep feeling did not find its way out because it was no longer all that deep. The theme of rebirth is presented in the story but it is cloaked in a jeer. Lawrence wanted to believe in the efficacy of rebirth but was finding it harder and harder to in light of the world around him. More and more he was becoming convinced that Pan had to get fierce, had to fight back. As he says in a letter to Mabel Luhan (December 27, 1923): "I am due to go to the Midlands to my people, but don't bring myself to set out. I don't want to go. It's all the dead hand of the past, over here, infinitely heavy, and deadly determined

¹⁰Collected Letters, I, 273.

to put one down. It won't succeed, but it's like struggling with the stone lid of the tomb."¹¹ In "The Last Laugh" the religious and earnest Lawrence has been held somewhat in abeyance. The beliefs expressed are essentially the same as they have been but the cynical expression of them shows us a Lawrence who is extremely frustrated and moving quickly toward a violent despair.

Whereas in "The Ladybird" the Count's hatred of the world of men is not manifested in overt violence, in "The Last Laugh" the violence is quite clearly present. In "The Ladybird" Lawrence attempted to introduce an external force to effect a change in the world. However, the Count proved to be unequal to the task. The problematic world Lawrence had created was too powerfully 'there' to be affected by a little enemy alien. Lawrence drew the Count out of the world again and left him waiting for death.

In "The Last Laugh" Lawrence introduced an even more external force into the world of England. He went to the supernatural and brought back the mythic great god Pan. With Pan Lawrence had the power he wanted. Because Pan is supernatural he could effect the changes needed and would still be beyond the claims of 'reality'. If anyone challenged the validity of Pan they could be labelled too serious and would be apt to be struck by lightning. As we have already noted, this type of supernatural force is fine in a horror story but when the tone demands that we read the story as something more than we run into critical problems.

¹¹Collected Letters, II, 765.

The point to be observed is that Lawrence is moving gradually away from the 'realistic' mode toward the supernatural-mythic mode. He is being driven, by the problems of the realistic, modern world, into a world in which these problems do not apply. Yet we cannot say this is wholly escapist fantasy. The real world, the world of the problems, is never left totally behind. Even in "The Last Laugh" it is to Hampstead that Pan comes, not to some Arcadia. Lawrence's supernatural-mythic element is always determined by the problems of the actual world. Lawrence would not be dealing with Pan if England did not need him.

The problem, of course, is that the supernatural-mythic elements are not 'of' the actual world and therefore cannot truly be said to be valid when presented as agents of change in that world. As Widmer says, "Perhaps basic artistic failure shows itself in the forced pastiche of literary myth and social realism."¹² Lawrence tried to overcome this problem in various ways. In "The Ladybird" he left Count Dionys a man but ascribed to him a vision which extended beyond human boundaries. In this way he hoped to remain within the limits of actuality but also to introduce elements from beyond it. As we have seen this attempt failed. In "The Last Laugh" Lawrence went directly to the supernatural and tried, through his attack on seriousness, to make us accept the mystery. However, the supernatural element was too contrived and the failure in validity was apparent.

In February, 1924 Lawrence tried once again to overcome this

¹²The Art of Perversity, p. 50.

problem. "The Border Line"¹³ combines the social realism of "The Ladybird" with the overt supernaturalism and violence of "The Last Laugh". In doing so the story becomes a clear example of mixed modes. However, the problems one expects from stories employing mixed modes do not as readily apply in this case. The reason for this can be seen in the title "The Border Line". As well as being the border between France and Germany the border in the story also becomes the border between the natural and mythic worlds. As well, the evocation of the spirit of place in Germany supports the mythic element by giving it an environment to inhabit. This was a problem Lawrence had faced and been defeated by in "The Ladybird" where, try as he might, he could not present the Count in an environment which was convincing.

In a letter to Frederick Carter written from New Mexico (June 3, 1924) Lawrence wrote: "The winter, and the visit to Europe, was curiously disheartening. Takes one some time to get over it. As for the war, it changed me forever. And after the war pushed the change further."¹⁴ The visit to Europe included the side trip into Germany of February, 1924. This disheartening visit produced "The Border Line". As we have seen from our studies of "The Thimble" and "The Ladybird", Lawrence was changed by the war. "The Thimble" recorded his desire to save the hope of a resurrection in this life. But, as Lawrence says, the years after the war changed him even more. In "The Ladybird" the hope of

¹³The Complete Short Stories, III, 587-604. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

¹⁴Collected Letters, II, 793.

resurrection in this life has almost been extinguished. Lawrence appears disillusioned and resigned. The superficial civilization which arose after the war appeared even more crass and materialistic than the one preceding the war. "The Last Laugh" recorded Lawrence's cynical response to this world.

Lawrence, however, could not remain cynical for long. His profound seriousness as a man and writer would not be kept down. He had a responsibility to life, even as a prophet of doom, and would not shirk it. Therefore, when he detected a new feeling in Germany in 1924 the cynicism disappeared and a sort of desperate hope returned. In a letter to S. S. Koteliansky (February 9, 1924) we see the hope expressed:

Germany is queer -- seems to be turning -- as if she would make a great change, and become manly again, and a bit dangerous in a manly way. I hope so. Though everything is poorer, terrible poverty, even no tram-cars running, because they can't afford the fares, and the town dark at night, still there is a certain healthiness, more than in France, far more than in England, the old fierceness coming back.¹⁵

The key words in this passage are "manly", "dangerous" and "fierceness". All these elements contribute to a "healthiness" Lawrence sees in Germany but which is lacking in England and France.

The difference Lawrence feels in Germany is not in the people but in the country itself. In "A Letter From Germany" written just before his return to Paris Lawrence elaborates on his feeling:

But at night you feel strange things stirring in the darkness, strange feelings stirring out of this still-unconquered Black Forest. You stiffen your backbone and you listen to the night. There is a sense of danger. It is not the people. They don't seem dangerous. Out of the very air comes a sense of danger,

¹⁵Collected Letters, II, 727.

a queer bristling feeling of uncanny danger.

Something has happened. Something has happened which has not yet eventuated. The old spell of the old world has broken, and the old, bristling, savage spirit has set in. The war did not break the old peace-and-production hope of the world, though it gave it a severe wrench. Yet the old peace-and-production hope still governs, at least the consciousness. Even in Germany it has not quite gone.

But it feels as if, virtually, it were gone. The last two years have done it. The hope in peace-and-production is broken. The old flow, the old adherence is ruptured. And a still older flow has set in. Back, back to the savage polarity of Tartary, and away from the polarity of civilized Christian Europe. This, it seems to me, has already happened. And it is a happening of far more profound import than any actual event. It is the father of the next phase of events.¹⁶

The people of Germany do not manifest the new feeling; the place does so. Lawrence defines the change in terms of 'polarity'. The civilized Christian "peace-and-production" pole has been broken with and the flow has shifted back to the savage pole of Tartary.

In "The Border Line" Lawrence uses this polarization as the basic structural framework of the story. The movement is from the civilized Christian world of England and France to the savage, dangerous world of Germany. It is essentially a mythic framework: a movement from consciousness to unconsciousness, from light to dark, from weakness to strength, from superficial to real, from the Christian world to the pagan world, from the female world to the male world.

However, as well as this mythic framework, Lawrence also employs the realistic mode in his presentation of Katherine Farquhar. Her train journey through the French-German border country becomes a microcosm of the greater mythic movement. The ghost of Katherine's former husband, Alan Anstruther, who returns to her from the dead, becomes the link between

¹⁶Edward D. McDonald ed., Phoenix (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), p. 109.

the realistic and mythic world, between the microcosm and the macrocosm.

The realistic evocation of Katherine's past life with her two husbands manifests once more Lawrence's remarkable diagnostic perception. The polarization which structures the story is established in the difference between the two husbands. The first husband, Alan Anstruther, is "that red-haired fighting Celt" who "had had a weird innate conviction that he was beyond ordinary judgement. . . . Even stark naked and without any trimmings, he had a bony, dauntless, overbearing manliness of his own." (p. 588) Philip, the second husband, on the other hand, "was a little black Highlander of the insidious sort; clever and knowing." (p. 589) As he says: "My strength lies in giving in -- and then recovering myself. I do let myself be swept away. But, so far, I've always managed to get myself back again." (p. 590) Alan, however, never gives in. He "just asserted himself like a pillar of rock, and expected the tides of the modern world to recede around him. They didn't." (p. 589). The tides of the modern world don't recede around Alan. He thinks he is a born lord but he is in a world made up of little people. The lordly people have no place. Katherine, the daughter of a German baron, realizes the lack of lordly people in her world:

Her world, she had realized, consisted almost entirely of little somebodies. She was outside the sphere of the nobodies, always had been. And the Somebodies with a capital 'S' were all safely dead. She knew enough of the world today to know that it is not going to put up with any great Somebody; but many little nobodies and a sufficient number of little somebodies. (p. 588)

Katherine, like Lady Beveridge in "The Ladybird", is the idealistic aristocratic woman. She believes that her love should be the motivating force of the world. As Alan prepares to go off to war this desire in her is expressed:

She only wanted to alter everything, to alter the past, to alter all the flow of history -- the terrible flow of history. Secretly somewhere inside herself she felt that with her queen-bee love, and queen-bee will, she could divert the whole flow of history -- nay, even reverse it. (p. 591)

However, as we saw in "The Ladybird", the aristocratic tradition is not, or should not be, based on love, but on power. As Alan looks at her before leaving she realizes, for a moment, "That, as he said, only the cold strength of a man, accepting the destiny of destruction, could see the human flow through the chaos and beyond to a new outlet. But the chaos first, and the long rage of destruction." (p. 591) Once Alan leaves she recovers the assurance of her ideals. Alan does not return from the war and Katherine feels a sense of triumph: "The queen-bee had recovered her sway, as queen of the earth; the woman, the mother, the female with the ear of corn in her hand, as against the man with the sword." (p. 591)

Katherine then marries Philip and Lawrence very perceptively takes Basil's "adoration-lust" a step further to uncloak the essential hypocrisy of love dominated, "peace-and-production", modern civilization:

She realized, however, the difference between being married to a soldier, a ceaseless born fighter, a sword not to be sheathed, and this other man, this cunning civilian, this subtle equivocator, this adjuster of the scales of truth.

Philip was cleverer than she was. He set her up, the queen-bee, the mother, the woman, the female judgement, and he served her with subtle, cunning homage. He put the scales, the balance in her hand. But also, cunningly he blindfolded her, and manipulated the scales when she was sightless.

Dimly she had realized all this. But only dimly, confusedly, because she was blindfolded. Philip had the subtle, fawning power that could keep her always blindfolded. (p. 592)

Here we have, restated, the dilemma of Lady Beveridge who, with all her philanthropic idealism, could not understand when the power slipped out of her hands. If we extrapolate a little further we see that

this deification of woman and the ideals attributed to her was manipulated by the English of the nineteenth century to rationalize their imperialistic conquest of the empire. The missionaries went in first to propagate the love idealism but were soon followed by the profiteers.

We can see this pattern being played out still today, but, as Lawrence says, the modern version is much more subtle. Lawrence knew, and saw the fallacy behind, women's liberation. He knew that this liberation was actually a greater enslavement of women. Saying women were equals with men only meant that the cloud of deification was removed. Now women could be more directly exploited and the exploiters could rationalize their actions by saying that women were free and how, therefore, could they be exploited. We see this phenomenon in today's world of fashion and women's magazines such as Cosmopolitan,¹⁷ where the clichés of women's liberation, individuality, freedom etc., are used to turn the wheels of big business. And while avidly swallowing all the clichés the women are actually being told how to dress, what to read, how to look, and, most insidiously, how to think.

But of course, in our modern world, with the triumph of peace-and-production and universal equality it is not only the women who are exploited, we all are. And we are all exploiters also. The peace-and-production, 'everyone is equal' ethos produces people who live at the expense of others. By the end of his life Lawrence could see this clearly. In his introduction to Dostoievsky's The Grand Inquisitor

¹⁷The recent establishment of the woman's magazine Chatterley is a telling comment on our times.

Lawrence wrote: "with the masses making the terrible mad mistake that money is life, and that therefore no one shall control the money, men shall be 'free' to get what they can, we are brought to a condition of competitive insanity and ultimate suicide."¹⁸

But, to return to "The Border Line". Katherine feels suffocated by Philip's blindfolding and desires escape. The memory of Alan gives her a certain relief:

And sometimes the bony, hard, masterful, but honest face of Alan would come back, and suddenly it would seem to her that she was all right again, that the strange, voluptuous suffocation, which left her soul in mud, was gone, and she could breathe the air of the open heavens once more. (p. 592)

She undertakes a journey to Germany to see her sister and to meet Philip and passes into the border country: "With sudden horror she realized that she must be in the Marne country, the ghastly Marne country, century after century digging the corpses of frustrated men into its soil. The border country where the Latin races and the Germanic races neutralize one another into horrid ash." (p. 593) Later in the story we get a further elaboration of the significance of the border country: "But the train waited and waited, as if unable to get away from that point of pure negation, where the two races neutralized one another, and no polarity was felt, no life -- no principle dominated." (p. 599)

Without the dominating principle there is no true life, only an endless nullification passing as life. On the train, after drinking her half-bottle of "white" wine, Katherine sleeps and the actuality of her life becomes apparent to her:

¹⁸Phoenix, p. 286.

And as she slept, life, as she had known it, seemed all to turn artificial to her, the sunshine of the world an artificial light, with smoke above, like the light of torches, and things artificially growing, in a night that was lit up artificially with such intensity that it gave the illusion of day. It had been an illusion, her life-day, as a ballroom evening is an illusion. Her love and her emotions, her very panic of love, had been an illusion. She realized how love had become panic-stricken inside her during the war.

And now even this panic of love was an illusion. She had run to Philip to be saved. And now, both her panic-love and Philip's salvation were an illusion.

What remained then? Even panic-stricken love, the intensest thing, perhaps, she had ever felt, was only an illusion. What was left? The grey shadows of death? (p. 594)

In "The Ladybird" Lawrence saw no alternative but to wait for death. The vindication would come beyond death, if anywhere. In "The Border Line" this attitude of resignation is absent. The new spirit Lawrence had felt in Germany gave him a hope that something would happen in this life. The new spirit will be "the father of the next phase of events". This new spirit is the antithesis of the Christian, civilized, peace-and-production ethos. It is demonic, savage and destructive. The Strasburg cathedral, the central image of the story, captures the significance of the new spirit:

There it was, in the upper darkness of the ponderous winter night, like a menace. She remembered her spirit used in the past to soar aloft with it. But now, looming with a faint rust of blood out of the upper black heavens, the Thing stood suspended, looking down with vast, demonish menace, calm and implacable.

Mystery and dim, ancient fear came over the woman's soul. The cathedral looked so strange and demonish heathen. And an ancient, indomitable blood seemed to stir in it. It stood there like some vast silent beast with teeth of stone, waiting, and wondering when to stoop against this pallid humanity.

And dimly she realized that behind all the ashy pallor and sulphur of our civilization, lurks the great blood-creature waiting, implacable and eternal, ready at last to crush our white brittleness and let the shadowy blood move erect once more, in a new implacable pride and strength. Even out of the lower heavens looms the great blood-dusky Thing, blotting out the Cross it was supposed to exalt.

The scroll of the night sky seemed to roll back, showing a huge, blood-dusky presence looming enormous, stooping, looking down, awaiting its moment. (pp. 595-596)

With this image we move into a world similar to that seen in Yeats' "The Second Coming". The world the cathedral image, and Yeats' poem, inhabit is not the 'realistic' world but a mythic world. This mythic world has no relation to the realistic, personal world of Katherine Farquhar. It deals with the world in collective terms; the "blood-dusky Thing" is waiting to "stoop against this pallid humanity", not simply against the individual Katherine Farquhar.

The mythic world the cathedral inhabits is given a certain validity because an environment, in this world, has been provided for it. As Katherine progresses further into Germany the new environment becomes apparent:

. . . the earth felt strong and barbaric, it seemed to vibrate, with its straight furrows, in a deep, savage undertone. There was the frozen, savage thrill in the air also, something wild and unsubdued, pre-Roman. . . . some spirit was watching, watching over the vast, empty, straight-furrowed fields and the water-meadows. Stillness, emptiness, suspense, and a sense of something still impending. (p. 599)

The spirit is watching over a "vast, empty" landscape. It has no concern with Katherine Farquhar. The spirit is savage, and essentially inhuman. Our 'human' reference has been established through the realistic evocation of Katherine and her environment. Since this new environment is opposed to the civilization we have had established, and since our human reference points are in that established civilization, then the new spirit and its environment must be seen as inhuman. This is borne out in a further description of the new environment:

It was the land beyond the Rhine, Germany of the pine forests. The very earth seemed strong and unsubdued, bristling with a few reeds and bushes, like savage hair. There was the same silence, and waiting, and the old barbaric undertone of the white-skinned north, under the waning civilization. The audible overtone of our civilization seemed to be wearing thin, the old, low, pine forest hum and roar of the ancient north seemed to be sounding through. At least, in Katherine's inner ear. (p. 600)

The mention here of "the old barbaric undertone of the white-skinned north" might suggest a human element in the new, savage spirit, but this potentially human element still has no relation to the civilized humanity that the "blood-dusky Thing" is waiting to crush. Katherine is seen to be observing this new environment, she is not part of it. Truly, there is no way she can be part of it because she belongs to the waning civilization. She belongs to a humanity that Lawrence has condemned to death. When the 'Thing' "crushes our white brittleness" she will be crushed along with the rest of the civilization she belongs to. Even her recognition that her civilization is 'artificial' cannot save her. The polarities Lawrence is dealing with do not allow for individual salvation. Individual salvation goes down in the flood along with the Christianity which spawned it. Or, at least in the terms Lawrence is employing, it should.

This is where we confront problems in "The Border Line". Lawrence establishes two mutually exclusive environments. One is sick and the other is healthy. The healthy one is fierce, savage, barbaric and will come into being only through the annihilation of the sick, weak, civilized environment. At the moment the weak environment is in power, but its power is waning. The new environment is waiting to break forth in "implacable pride and strength." We see all this through the eyes of a woman who is a product of the sick civilization. She recognizes her

sickness and sees no alternative but death. This is all fine, as it should be. The new environment is inhuman, it has no place for her. Her time is up and death will end her age and usher in the "next phase of events."

But Lawrence does not leave Katherine waiting for death. He has a ghost appear and save her. One reaction to this supernatural element might be that Lawrence is evading the demands that the realistic mode makes upon him. Graham Hough takes this line:

As the woman penetrates into Germany the ghost of her former husband comes to claim her, finally defeating his successor in a scene of grisly and cruel power. If Lawrence's energies had been working at full stretch it would have been presented as a psychological process, a change in the woman's mind by which the old scenes, the landscapes and towns where her life was really rooted also reactivate the old love that had really dominated her life. The bit of ghostly machinery evades this necessity; and this means that the job is not really done, the story becomes far less serious than it promised to be.¹⁹

It is far too easy, when examining a failed work of art, to speculate on how the author would have written it had his "energies . . . been working at full stretch". Often this speculation does not take into sufficient account what has been done in the story. In this case, for example, Hough feels Lawrence should have had the familiar scenes of Katherine's childhood reactivate her love. Her coming home would give her a sense of place, and in turn she would realize that her 'place' was by her former husband's side, at least in spirit since he is , after all, dead. However, in the story, the Germany we are presented with is not the Germany of Katherine's childhood: "She knew the country so well. But not in this present mood, the emptiness, the sullenness, the heavy,

¹⁹The Dark Sun, pp. 187-188.

recoiled waiting." (p. 600) There is a new spirit in this Germany and, as we have seen, Katherine is separate from it. To try and reactivate Katherine's love through a psychological process whereby the landscape of youth reminds her of her place would be for Lawrence to be working at cross-purposes. He wants the landscape to be alien, he wants it to be the environment of "the blood-dusky Thing". There is a mythic element to this story which Hough seems to have overlooked.

Lawrence is not evading the claims of a realistic portrayal. He is not primarily concerned with a realistic portrayal. He has taken the realistic solutions as far as he can and has arrived at the "grey shadows of death". Hough would like to see the husband return within the limits of realism, as a memory. But Lawrence has already done this. Crossing the Channel Katherine's love for her former husband is reactivated in a way Hough would approve:

It came to her on the boat crossing the Channel. Suddenly she seemed to feel Alan at her side again, as if Philip had never existed. As if Philip had never meant anything more to her than the shop assistant measuring off her orders. And escaping, as it were, by herself across the cold, wintry Channel, she suddenly deluded herself into feeling as if Philip had never existed, only Alan had ever been her husband. He was her husband still. And she was going to meet him. (p. 592)

Lawrence rightly observes that Katherine's living in the memory of her former husband is a 'delusion'. The man is dead, is not living with her and never will be. This is the only 'solution' the realistic mode could have come to. Katherine could have divorced Philip and lived the rest of her life in a delusion. There is, however, another way a realistic portrayal could have been concluded. Katherine could realize that her life is a delusion and wait resignedly for death. This, however, is not a solution. But it is realism in its starkest form. It is essentially

nihilistic. This is the state of Katherine when she sees no alternative to her artificial life but the "grey shadows of death". For Katherine, then, as Hough would have her, to go on into Germany and have her love reactivated would be for Lawrence to be covering ground already covered within the story. No new element could be introduced.

But with the cathedral and the new environment of Germany Lawrence does introduce a new element; a mythic element which is in direct opposition to the 'realistic' world presented in the first half of the story. The problem with the ghost is not that he is an evasion, on Lawrence's part, of responsibility to the realistic mode but that he comes back to 'save' a woman from a situation she cannot be saved from. The new spirit is barbaric, savage, destructive. It is not a 'saving' spirit. There is no place in it for humanity as we know it.

In "A Letter From Germany" Lawrence stated the kind of humanity the new spirit represented:

. . . it all looks as if the years were wheeling swiftly backwards, no more onwards. Like a spring that is broken, and whirls swiftly back, so time seems to be whirling with mysterious swiftness to a sort of death. Whirling to the ghost of the old Middle Ages of Germany, then to the Roman days, then to the days of the silent forest and the dangerous, lurking barbarians.²⁰

These "lurking barbarians" are beyond our comprehension. They exist, or existed, in a totally different world. There is certainly no connection between them and Katherine Farquhar. Yet Lawrence wants to save Katherine from her dead, delusory world. He could have introduced a band of barbaric German tribesman who capture Katherine and teach her their

²⁰Phoenix, p. 110.

ways, but Lawrence knew this would appear ludicrous. Besides, they would probably have simply killed her. Instead of this Lawrence went to the supernatural. Rather than seeing the ghost as an evasion of responsibility to the realistic mode, an evasion which is the result of a lack of energy, we see the ghost as a desperate attempt on Lawrence's part to avoid the implications of his vision. In the use of the ghost we see the humanness of Lawrence, the lover of life, asserting itself for the sake of a woman.

This assertion of life, however, has unfortunate consequences for the art of the story. It is purely sentimental; sentimental in a way we cannot see as valid. The sentimentality is blatant in the following passage: "She now knew the supreme modern terror, of a world all ashy and nerve-dead. If a man could come back out of death to save her from this, she would not ask questions of him, but be humble, and beyond tears grateful." (p. 598) She must submit to the mystery and submit she does. And the mystery, the new cruel, destructive spirit, has manifested itself to her in the shape of a man:

No matter what the man does or is, as a person, if a woman can move at his side in this dim, full flood of contentment, she has the highest of him, and her scratching efforts at getting more than this, are her ignominious efforts at self-nullity.

Now she knew it, and she submitted. (p. 597)

Lawrence has established a polarity of life and death in this story. The civilized Christian world is dead and the barbaric, savage new world is alive. He has also said these worlds cannot exist side by side. If they do they are in a constant battle of self-nullification because there is no dominating principle. What must happen, then, is that the healthy savage world will destroy the dead world and become the dominating principle. This is shown clearly in the death of Philip at

Alan's hands.

Into this clear-cut polarization Lawrence introduces salvation. The woman from the dead world is allowed access to the living one. But we have seen that the new world has no place for her at all. Lawrence gets around this problem by saying that if she will completely submit she will be saved, she will be allowed access. And, of course, the complete submission means asking no questions about the world she has moved into. We are back into the world of delusion.

Lawrence's vision is barbaric, savage and inhuman. But Lawrence is writing for humanity. He bypasses the paradox by conjuring up a supernatural world where the problems do not apply. As Katherine says after her first meeting with Alan, "She must not rupture the spell of his presence." (p. 597) And it is a spell, just as her artificial world was a spell and just as her dreaming of Alan on the Channel crossing was a spell.

We see, then, that there is an element of evasion in Lawrence's use of the supernatural in this story. But it is not the 'realistic' world he is evading; he is evading the stark cruelty of the new world he envisions. In "The Woman Who Rode Away" Lawrence does not evade his vision but presents it in all its macabre horror. And, as Graham Hough says, "to see it for what it is . . . is an important step towards turning away from it."²¹

²¹The Dark Sun, p. 139.

IV

"THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY": THE CUL-DE-SAC

In "The Ladybird" we see Lawrence's division of human consciousness into head-knowledge and blood-knowledge beginning to take on moral values. The Count is meant to represent a life-affirming reality while Basil's ecstasies are clearly to be seen as life-denying. In "The Border Line" these poles are more clearly defined and more values are attributed to them. The blood-knowledge is now explicitly sexually potent, as seen in the phallic cathedral and the virile ghost, while the head-knowledge is sterile, as seen in Philip. Further, the blood-knowledge has become distinctly male while the head-knowledge is female. Alan Anstruther is a potent man (although a ghost) while Philip is effeminate, looking in fawning awe at his friend Alan. Finally, the blood-knowledge is powerful and destructive, while the head-knowledge is weak and to be destroyed. Alan stands firm like a rock whereas Philip's strength is in giving in and recovering himself.

Lawrence takes the polarity to the mythic plane as well. The whole of Western Christian civilization is designated as weak, female, sterile and concerned only with head-knowledge. The new world felt in Germany is powerful, male, potent and lives through the blood. At the furthest extremes of this polarity we see the head standing for death and the blood standing for life. Lawrence states the case in a letter to Mabel Luhan, February 7, 1924: "it seems to me, the life that rises from the blood itself is the life that is living, while the life that rises

from the nerves and the brain is the life that is death."¹

But Lawrence ran into a problem in "The Border Line". According to the polarity established, Katherine Farquhar could not be saved. The destructive, blood-conscious world was to annihilate the weak head-conscious world. She would have to be destroyed as well, unless a movement as vast as this was to be allowed to spare select individuals. Lawrence knew that sparing Katherine would be breaking the boundaries of the polarity but he also realized that to save her he had to. The paradox Lawrence was facing was that his new potent world of blood-consciousness, which ostensibly stood for life, was manifesting death. Eventually there might be a new "phase of events", a new world in which death was not manifested, but to get there it appeared a long road of destruction would have to be travelled, along which individual people would have to be killed. Lawrence saved Katherine at the expense of his story.

In "The Woman Who Rode Away"² we can see that Lawrence is not overcoming this problem but circumventing it. In this story the woman is never named. She is not given the status of an individual but is only outlined. Lawrence does not save this woman but systematically denudes her of personality and finally even of life. She becomes the sacrifice which Lawrence could not let Katherine become.

Even though the woman has "aroused from her stupor of subjected

¹Collected Letters, II, 776.

²The Complete Short Stories, II, 546-581. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

amazement" (p. 547) and desires "to visit the Chilchui Indians -- to see their houses and to know their gods" (p. 554), a desire which implies that she is rejecting her old life, Lawrence knows there can be no compromise. One cannot go back. As he said in Studies In Classic American Literature:

The truth of the matter is, one cannot go back. Some men can: renegade. But Melville couldn't go back: and Gauguin couldn't really go back: and I know now that I could never go back. Back towards the past, savage life. One cannot go back. It is one's destiny inside one.³

The woman, then, cannot escape into the past. She is a product of her time and cannot avoid being so. And Lawrence's response to her time, since it cannot go back, is to annihilate it.

If we return to the original terms of the polarity, head-knowledge versus blood-knowledge, the implications of the vision take on ironic significance. What Lawrence has been railing against is the tyranny of the mind over the body. The denial of the body and the living in abstraction and ideals has resulted in death-in-life. What his vision advocates is not only the freeing of the body but, in its extreme, a denial of the mind. And in wanting to deny the mind, the head, he is ironically idealizing the body, the blood. So he falls into the trap he had diagnosed so clearly. In his essay on Hawthorne, Lawrence had recognized this potential problem:

You can't idealize the essential brute blood-activity, the brute blood desires, the basic, sardonic blood-knowledge.
That you can't idealize.
And you can't eliminate it.
So there's the end of ideal man.
Man is made up of a dual consciousness, of which the two halves are most of the time in opposition to one another -- and will be so as long as time lasts.

³Studies in Classic American Literature (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 144.

You've got to learn to change from one consciousness to the other, turn and about. Not to try to make either absolute or dominant. . . .

You've got to be able to do both: the mental work, and the brute work. But be prepared to step from one pair of shoes into another. Don't try and make it all one pair of shoes.⁴

In "The Woman Who Rode Away" Lawrence is trying to "make it all one pair of shoes". The world of the head, the world of Western civilization, is to be annihilated and the world of the blood, the primitive tribe, is to assume dominance. The truly ironic aspect of this story is that nothing really changes.

In Studies in Classic American Literature Lawrence presented a very important critical guideline:

The artist usually sets out -- or used to -- to point out a moral and adorn a tale. The tale, however, points the other way, as a rule. Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it.⁵

This critical statement is highly useful in a study of "The Woman Who Rode Away". For in this story we do find two "blankly opposing morals". There is the moral of Lawrence which is stated clearly by Graham Hough: the woman is

a symbol of the whole 'white' consciousness, the ego-life of Western civilization, sick of itself, dying on its feet, and almost willing to perish that a new kind of life may come to birth in the world, even a new kind of life in which it can bear no part. This is the dedicated self-destructiveness of a life that has reached the end of its tether; the end of an order, and its supersession by another which negates all existing values so

⁴Ibid., pp. 112-113.

⁵Ibid., p. 8.

thoroughly that the change can be symbolized only by a willed and horrible death.⁶

But there is also the moral that the tale itself points. In this moral the woman becomes the symbol of victimization; victimization carried on with a relentless disregard for life. This process spans the whole tale and is carried out in a quite similar fashion by both the woman's husband and by the Indians who capture her. The Indians only complete, in a more 'adorned' fashion, the job of killing the woman which her husband has started quite effectively.

There is a symbol of Western civilization in this story but it is not the woman. It is her husband. And the civilization he represents is not one that is "almost willing to perish that a new kind of life may come to birth in the world". Certainly the world he inhabits, and has helped to create, is dying or dead but in no way is he willing to perish. He simply adapts himself:

Her husband was never still. When the silver went dead, he ran a ranch lower down, some twenty miles away, and raised pure-bred hogs, splendid creatures. At the same time, he hated pigs. He was a squeamish waif of an idealist and really hated the physical side of life. He loved work, work, work, and making things. His marriage, his children, were something he was making, part of his business, but with a sentimental income this time. (pp. 547-548)

The power to adapt combined with idealism forms a powerful weapon for destruction. And this combination, manifested in the husband, is an appropriate symbol for a civilization which exploits natural and human resources and when they run out adapts itself, finds new resources. This is certainly a road to destruction but it is cloaked under ideal labels. In our day these labels are familiar in terms such as Gross National

⁶The Dark Sun, p. 146.

Product, higher standard of living etc. And Lawrence knows what this process leaves behind:

. . . in his battered Ford car her husband would take her into the dead, thrice-dead little Spanish town forgotten among the mountains. The great, sun-dried dead church, the dead portales, the hopeless covered market-place, where, the first time she went, she saw a dead dog lying between the meat-stalls and the vegetable array, stretched out as if for ever, nobody troubling to throw it away. Deadness within deadness. (pp. 546-547)

Hough interprets this scene in a manner worth commenting on:

The little Spanish town is dead, for it represents an alien civilization, unable to keep alive among the blank ferocious hills. The Church is dead because it represents a rootless and alien faith. The whole scene exists powerfully in its own right; but it is also a grim symbol of Western civilization withering amid the terrifying powers of nature with which it has no living connection.⁷

The point here -- one that Hough seems to have missed -- is that this scene does not represent Western civilization but only the wreckage that Western civilization leaves in its wake. Western civilization as seen through its representative, the woman's husband, is not withering but is adapting itself to continue its exploitive life. Certainly the husband is not in connection with nature but neither is he dying of his lack of connection. His little world is secure enough. He has built it so. He has isolated himself from nature, created his own little paradise: "the walled-in, one-storey adobe house, with its garden inside, and its deep inner veranda with tropical climbers on the sides". (p. 546)

It is the husband who represents Western civilization, not the dead town. The town is a victim of that civilization. It is used by the civilization and its death is the result of such use. So with the woman.

⁷Ibid., pp. 141-142.

Like Philip, in "The Border Line", who set Katherine on a pedestal and subtly blindfolded her, thus maintaining the actual power himself, so the husband of the woman in this story "admired his wife to extinction" but "morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery." (p. 547) To him she is simply a possession without any being of her own: "He was jealous of her as he was of his silver-mine: and that is saying a lot." (p. 547) Because he keeps her in an "invincible slavery", confines her in the prison of their "walled-in" house, treats her as a thing instead of a person, it is no wonder that her "conscious development had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested." (p. 547)

She is a victim of exploitation at the hands of her husband. He has "kept his spell over her" (p. 548), kept her a "dazed woman" in a "stupor of subjected amazement." (p. 547) Of course the husband is not consciously manipulating her, he does not want to drain her of life, "He was a man of principles, and a good husband" (p. 547), but still she loses her being. Similarly the husband would feel the silver-mine was good for the natives, it would provide jobs etc. Unfortunately the mine makes people dependent on it and when the silver runs out the town dies. The will of the husband, based on ideals, good principles, manifests death for those around him.

We see, then, that if Western civilization is to undergo annihilation it is the husband, as the symbol of that civilization, who should be annihilated. Lawrence, however, makes the woman the sacrifice. But we have seen that she is only a victim. She has already been sacrificed on the altar of her husband's will. By her sacrifice of being her husband's prestige and possessions and power were increased. How, then, can her literal sacrifice, on the altar of the Indians, be seen as

an annihilation of Western civilization? It is the same process being repeated. The only difference is that the Indians have been given religious ritual and myth to adorn the same process of exploitation. And it is exploitation. If the husband received power from keeping his wife in moral subjection the Indians are to receive even more by killing her. There will be no new world once the knife falls. All that will happen, according to the myth, is that the power that the white husband holds will be transferred to the Indians. There will be no vital connection with the cosmos, despite what the created myths say, there will only be new masters looking for new victims. For a power that is gained by sacrifice will have to be kept by sacrifice, which means that victims will be found, they are essential to the system.

It is surprising how similar the Indians and the husband are. They are both very adaptable. The husband can take a loss and emerge powerful on a hog ranch. The Indians also know how to deal with problems: "They're so far from everywhere, the government leaves 'em alone. And they're wily; if they think there'll be trouble, they send a delegation to Chihuahua and make a formal submission. The government is glad to leave it at that'." (p. 549) This sounds ironically similar to Philip's method of 'giving in and recovering himself' seen in "The Border Line". In that story Philip was killed off. He was the representative of Western civilization and he and his cunning methods of obtaining power at Katherine's expense were destroyed. Katherine, Philip's victim, was saved. In "The Woman Who Rode Away" the primitives, the harbingers of Lawrence's new world, are the "wily" ones and the victim, the woman, is not saved but sacrificed.

The Indians, also like the husband, see the woman as a thing:

"He looked at her with a black, bright inhuman look, and saw no woman in her at all. As if she were some strange, unaccountable thing, incomprehensible to him, but inimical." (p. 555) She is described as a possession, in terms of income: "And they showed no more sign of interest in her than if she had been a piece of venison they were bringing home from the hunt, and had hung inside a shelter." (p. 557)

The Indians, contrary to their myths of connection with nature, and their insistent rituals, are as separated from the terrifying forces of nature as the husband in his "walled-in" paradise. The Indian valley is a Shangri La. After crossing the treacherous cliff face the woman and her captors descend into the Indian's valley:

And the track curved round and down, till at last in the full blaze of the mid-morning sun, they could see a valley below them, between walls of rock, as in a great chasm let in the mountains. A green valley, with a river, and trees, and clusters of low flat sparkling houses. It was all tiny and perfect, three thousand feet below. Even the flat bridge over the stream, and the square with the houses around it, the bigger buildings piled up at opposite ends of the square, the tall cottonwood trees, the pastures and stretches of yellow-sere maize, the patches of brown sheep or goats in the distance, on the slopes, the railed enclosures by the stream-side. There it was, all small and perfect, looking magical, as any place will look magical, seen from the mountains above. The unusual thing was that the low houses glittered white, white-washed, looking like crystals of salt, or silver. This frightened her. (pp. 558-559)

Lawrence has moved his woman from one manufactured paradise into another. And both have the glitter of silver about them.

Even sexual similarities are to be seen between the Indians and the husband. Of course we are to see the Indians as primitively and powerfully male but their sexual potency is described in terms curiously like those used to describe the husband: "Her husband had never become

real to her, neither mentally nor physically. In spite of his late sort of passion for her, he never meant anything to her, physically. Only morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery."

(p. 547) And the Indian is described as follows:

It was curious, he would sit with her by the hour, without even making her self-conscious, or sex-conscious. He seemed to have no sex, as he sat there so still and gentle and apparently submissive with his head bent a little forward, and the river of glistening black hair streaming maidenly over his shoulders.

Yet when she looked again, she saw his shoulders broad and powerful, his eyebrows black and level, the short, curved, obstinate black lashes over his lowered eyes, the small, fur-like line of moustache above his blackish, heavy lips, and the strong chin, and she knew that in some other mysterious way he was darkly and powerfully male. (p. 567)

The description of the husband implies impotence and, as a contrast, the Indians are said to be "darkly and powerfully male". In neither case, however, is sexuality manifested. In fact they both appear sexless. The maleness of the Indians is manifested only as power, as is the maleness of the husband. And in both cases the power is achieved at the expense of the woman. While the husband dotes on his wife and never quite gets over "his dazzled admiration of her" (p. 547) he is simultaneously "downing" her, stripping her of her being. The Indians likewise put the woman on a pedestal, so to speak. They "fumigate" her, strip her, costume her. But at the same time they imprison her and drug her, force her to "succumb to their vision" (p. 574).

This parallel structure of the husband and the Indians could potentially be seen as very subtle irony on Lawrence's part. He could be seen to be having a go at sentimental romantics who idealize the Indians, seeing them as living in a valley paradise enveloped in mystery and wonder. He could be only setting us up for a rude awakening, showing us

that under the cloak of mystery the Indians manifest the same corruption and exploitation and sterility that we desired to escape from. He could be but unfortunately he isn't. It is only too apparent that Lawrence does sympathize with the Indians. Their vision is Lawrence's vision.

The vision is one of vital connection with the cosmos, a connection which is prevented by a dominant ego-consciousness. Under the influence of the drugged drink the woman experiences this vision:

Afterwards she felt a great soothing languor steal over her, her limbs felt strong and loose and full of languor, and she lay on her couch listening to the sounds of the village, watching the yellowing sky, smelling the scent of burning cedar wood, or pine wood. So distinctly she heard the yapping of tiny dogs, the shuffle of far-off feet, the murmur of voices, so keenly she detected the smell of smoke, and flowers, and evening falling, so vividly she saw the one bright star infinitely remote, stirring above the sunset, that she felt as if all her senses were diffused on the air, that she could distinguish the sound of evening flowers unfolding, and the actual crystal sound of the heavens, as the vast belts of the world-atmosphere slid past one another, and as if the moisture ascending and the moisture descending in the air resounded like some harp in the cosmos. (pp. 565-566)

This is a very vivid passage and contrasts positively with the insistence and compulsion experienced throughout the rest of the story. Unfortunately its validity is undercut by the fact that it is a drug induced vision and especially when we know that it is only a preliminary to the woman's actual death. Under these circumstances the woman's experience of the vision becomes gratuitous. We wonder why he did not kill her and have done with it.

But Lawrence could not simply have done with the woman. He had other purposes for her. By experiencing the vision she could be made to succumb to the vision; she would recognize the folly of her ego-conscious life and willingly submit to be sacrificed.

As the drugged state continues and the ritual drumming and dancing increase the woman comes to realize the significance of her situation:

For hours and hours she watched, spellbound, and as if drugged. And in all the terrible persistence of the drumming and the primeval, rushing deep singing, and the endless stamping of the dance of foxtailed men, the tread of heavy, bird-erect women in their tunics, she seemed at last to feel her own death; her own obliteration. As if she were to be obliterated from the field of life again. In the strange towering symbols on the heads of the changeless, absorbed women she seemed to read once more the Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin. 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. Strangely, as if clairvoyant, she saw the immense sacrifice prepared. (pp. 569-570)

The problem here is that the woman is simply not a convincing symbol of highly-bred white womanhood. As Widmer says, "The somnambulistic American seems decidedly underbred rather than overbred, and quite lacks the 'intensely personal and individual nature' that the story demands and claims to negate."⁸ And this is certainly the case. We have seen her subjected to her husband, a slave to him, a thing. The only act of will we have seen on her part, if it can be called an act of will, is her riding away. Now, quite arbitrarily it seems, she is to be seen as a symbol of ego-conscious womanhood and further, as Hough has pointed out, as a symbol of ego-dominated Western civilization. Her character, as it has been developed, simply will not carry all the symbolic weight Lawrence has heaped on it.

⁸The Art of Perversity, p. 33.

To be a symbol of Western civilization the woman's character, her will, would have to be developed more fully, yet if it was so developed it would be hard for us to accept her almost willing submission to the Indians.⁹ Without the character development, however, the woman does not stand up as a valid symbol of ego-dominated Western civilization.

To clarify this point it is helpful to employ Coleridge's definition of a literary symbol: "It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is the representative."¹⁰ As a symbol of ego-dominated Western civilization the woman fails to meet Coleridge's criteria. Because she has not been shown to possess a highly developed ego-consciousness she cannot "render intelligible" a reality

⁹In "None of That" (1924) and "The Princess" (1924) Lawrence develops his willful women more fully and in both cases submission is the last thing they want. Both these women act as valid symbols of Western civilization. Neither of them is a victim. They both are exploiters, wanting to use the Indians for their own ends. In both stories the Indians respond violently to this exploitation. They become exploiters also, using physical rape where the women had used mental rape.

Lawrence does not idealize the Indians in these stories. What is shown is that either extreme of the mind-body polarity manifests cruelty and destructiveness toward life. This is a bleak vision and is especially suited to the satiric presentation these stories give it. But satire, although a good tool for exposing folly, only indirectly leads beyond the satiric awareness to a different vision. A new vision can never be fully presented in the satiric mode.

In "The Woman Who Rode Away" Lawrence is concerned with the new vision but is employing a theme, extreme mind-body polarity, which is better suited to satire. Consequently, when satiric notation should be underlining the presentation of the Indians, the bodily extreme, what we get is a manufactured vision imposed artificially upon the presentation of the Indians. The effect is not one of validity but of compulsion.

¹⁰"Samuel Taylor Coleridge", in David Perkins, ed., English Romantic Writers (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1967), p. 503.

which manifests such a nature. And her riding away and voluntary submission of the vestige of ego she has been shown to possess certainly acts against her abiding "as a living part in that unity of which [she] is the representative".

Her husband, on the contrary, does meet Coleridge's criteria. As a man who "hated the physical side of life" and who loved "work, work, work, and making things" he does render intelligible a reality based on ego-consciousness. And he doesn't ride away but adapts himself to setbacks, truly abiding "as a living part in that unity of which [he] is the representative".

We see, then, that the tale establishes a symbolic pattern contrary to the one Lawrence intended to establish. It is the husband, not the woman, who symbolically illuminates our understanding of Western civilization. The woman does, however, function in the symbolic pattern of the tale. As said earlier, she is a symbol of victimization.

Seen in this light the woman fulfills Coleridge's criteria for the literary symbol. She, like the blighted town and the exhausted silver mine, is a victim of her husband's ego-conscious exploitive reality. She "partakes" of a quite different reality than that of her husband. Her selfhood is dead or decaying just as the town and landscape she inhabits is dying. Her husband exists in a reality which sees the world as an endlessly potential power source. She is an exhausted shell of a person while he is a little "dynamo of energy". Dynamos, however, need fuel and she has virtually been used up stoking his engines.

Victims, by the very meaning of the word, cannot exist alone. For every victim there must be a victimizer. Therefore while elucidating the

state of the victim the woman is simultaneously elucidating the state of the victimizer. The woman's deadness is explained by and explains the husband's exploitation. Her reality can only be understood in relation to her husband's reality and vice versa. Her reality is that of the victim, his that of the victimizer. Together, their relationship itself becomes the symbol of a process of victimization.

Lawrence has quite clearly seen the ravages of modern Western civilization. Unfortunately the woman, only a victim of that civilization, is made to carry the brunt of the blame for these ravages. Lawrence has confused his target in this story. The story reveals the husband and his exploitation as the target but Lawrence evidently did not fully understand what his story was revealing to him. He attacks the obvious instead of going behind the scenes and attacking the real problem. The woman becomes a scapegoat upon which Lawrence vents his vehement hatred of the modern world.

An analagous situation might serve to illuminate what is happening in this story. Reservations, full of tar-papered shacks, half-clothed Indian children, and their unemployed alcoholic parents, are a commonplace in Canada. If we do not completely close our minds to, and avert our eyes from, these facts, we recognize that there is a real problem in our country. We feel a certain amount of guilt but see no way to alleviate the suffering. To appease our consciences we often turn the problem around, saying there are jobs if the Indians will look for them. Because there are many alcoholics among these people we conclude, in our superiority, that Indians are lazy drunks who will not accept responsibility. What we first felt as our problem now becomes their problem and we feel correct in castigating

them. In this way we only perpetuate the problem since no self-respecting employer would hire a drunken bum, he could only stand to lose if he did so; the evidence of this is clear, we see it in every reservation. What we have, then, is a vicious circle which perpetuates and worsens the lot of the Indians. The real problem, of course, is our society which is based on economic power. Originally, at the time of colonization, the Indians were seen as a threat to this economic power. They were a totally different civilization. Consequently they were suppressed by open force and the suppression and victimization has gone on, subtly, even unconsciously, ever since.

In "The Woman Who Rode Away" we see this process of victimization at work not only in the relationship between the husband and wife but between the Indians and the woman as well. But the Indians, with their myths of vital connection with the cosmos, represent Lawrence's vision. We see, then, that it is not the Indians victimizing the woman but Lawrence himself. He tries to shift the blame onto her by saying she represents ego-conscious womanhood and Western civilization, a conclusion the tale itself proves false. In this unnamed woman Lawrence found the scapegoat he needed. He could attack the problems of society vehemently while all the time perpetuating the problematic system.

I am not saying that Lawrence was conscious of what he was doing -- the power expended attempting to validate the life of the Indians argues the reverse very strongly -- but when we understand the symbolic pattern the tale itself establishes, and when we see Lawrence unsuccessfully attempting to impose another pattern of the story, we conclude that there is a degree of personal motivation in Lawrence's sacrifice of the woman.

A quotation from Frieda Lawrence is worthy of comment at this point:

In his heart of hearts I think he [Lawrence] always dreaded women, felt that they were in the end more powerful than men. Woman is so absolute and undeniable. Man moves, his spirit flies here and there, but you can't go beyond a woman. From her man is born and to her he returns for his ultimate need of body and soul. She is like earth and death to which all return.¹¹

This passage by no means explains the story but, combined with other observations we have made and with statements in the story itself, it helps us to understand Lawrence's attitude toward the woman.

Frieda says woman is "absolute and undeniable" and that Lawrence "dreaded" women. In the story we clearly see the Indians regarding the woman as something totally other than themselves and also as "inimical". The woman is a threat, a danger to the Indians. And well she might be. She is the raw resource that created her husband's power. Indirectly, then, she is very powerful. But only indirectly. She is only a source of power for those who exploit her. First and foremost she is a victim. Lawrence seems to see only the power, or potential for power, that she represents. As a living human being she does not exist. The Indians, and indirectly Lawrence, kill her, not to destroy Western civilization, though this is the moral offered, but to gain power for themselves. Lawrence's personal motivation becomes apparent in the last line of the story: "The mastery that man must hold, and that passes from race to race". (p. 581)

This last line of the tale carries a completely different tone from the early scenes showing the woman as vassal to her husband. There,

¹¹"Not I, But the Wind . . ." (London: Heinemann, 1935), p. 57.

whether Lawrence intended it or not, the disgust for the husband created in us a sympathy for the woman. At the end of the story the realistic evocation of the husband and his world has been left completely behind. The only remnant of that world is the woman who is still being victimized. But now she is seen as an object of loathing. Lawrence has created a world to support his loathing. The Indians are given the knife and their whole culture demands that they wield it. If they are to survive they must sacrifice a human life. Is this culture that thrives on the sacrifice of victims really so different from the culture of the woman's husband? Hough says it is an order "which negates all existing values . . . thoroughly". But does it? The values of the husband are those of the Indians. Both their systems turn upon the same things, power, exploitation, sacrifice. Victims are essential to both. They are supposed to be opposite ends of the mind-body polarity but they appear very similar in what they manifest. To see how vitally potent the Indians are we need only look at their sacrificial altar. There we see the potent sexuality of a life in connection with the cosmos:

At last she could tell that the dancers were moving forward no more. Nearer and nearer she came upon the drums, as to a lair of mysterious animals. Then through the bushes she emerged into a strange amphitheatre. Facing was a great wall of hollow rock, down the front of which hung a great, dripping, fang-like spoke of ice. The ice came pouring over the rock from the precipice above, and then stood arrested, dripping out of high heaven, almost down to the hollow stones where the stream-pool should be below. But the pool was dry. (p. 579)

Sterility fairly leaps out of this scene. Even nature has been made to "succumb" to Lawrence's vision. The phallic icicle, dripping into a dry pool on the shortest day of the year can in no way convince us of the validity of making a vital connection with the cosmos. The woman will

make the connection, at the expense of her life.

And what of the reader? Can he accept Lawrence's fable as valid? Can he accept it as seriously dealing with our problematic world? I would say only a superficial reading of this story could accept it as that. F. R. Leavis, and it is very rare for him to do so, makes such a superficial reading:

Her succumbing seems to us an inevitable process, so strong is the spell worked by the tale. The rites, the ceremonies, the colours, all the strangeness of the Indian world, are evoked with irresistible actuality, and with them the quiet certitude of the Indians, and the hypnotic effect produced upon the woman. . . .

The whole thing is an astonishing feat of imagination. If we do not, in reading it, think of it as a feat, that is because it all seems so real. And this reality derives from the intensity and profound seriousness of Lawrence's interest in human life. . . . The poetic power of the tale is, in its creative way, an earnestness and profundity of response to the problems of modern civilization.¹²

How can elements such as "spell" and "hypnotic effect" contribute to "irresistible actuality"? Certainly any work of literature is a "spell" in that it is created on paper from words, but when that art employs drugs and hypnotism to create a new reality within the story is not the element of artificiality swaying the balance into invalidity? The woman's succumbing is not "inevitable" in any terms of actuality. She was drugged.

The real problem with the story is not only that the woman, the victim, was cruelly murdered but that we, the readers, are drugged into accepting the sacrifice as valid. In that way we too become victims and Lawrence's art becomes exploitive. The insistent and repetitious drumming and dancing, the drug-induced myths of connection, the arbitrary use of nature to underline Lawrence's moral, the false symbolical value that is

¹²D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 275.

insisted upon, all these devices serve to blind us to the fact that nothing in this story has changed from beginning to end except our attitudes. At the beginning of the story we sympathized with the woman, at the end we prepare, with an impersonal fascination, to watch her die. How can this be said to be a "profundity of response to the problems of modern civilization"? It is a perpetuation of those problems and cannot be seen as valid or profound, even if it is unconscious.

Lawrence weaves wonderful spells. It is the critic's responsibility to determine the significance of what he has in front of him, not to be hypnotized into succumbing to a vision of blood.

There is a very great significance to be seen in "The Woman Who Rode Away" if we are careful to trust the tale and not the artist. We learn that the concept of annihilation of self, of ego-consciousness, when taken to the extreme, to the point that it becomes religious doctrine, is fallacious. The fallacy lies in the fact that the doctrine of annihilation, to implement a program for change, even if only a program for annihilation, must inevitably employ the same life-denying tactics as does the ego-conscious system it wishes to supplant. Consequently the ego-consciousness is not annihilated but only dressed in new idealistic labels. The husband, who exploited natural and human resources in the name of "good principles", "work, work, work, and making things", the Protestant work ethic, is replaced by the Indians who simply carry on the same exploitation in the name of their ideal; the vital connection with the cosmos.

We realize, then, that the vision glimpsed in "The Border Line", carried to its furthest extreme, as it is in "The Woman Who Rode Away", brings us, ironically, back to our point of departure. At the end of the

story we realize, if we have not let ourselves be hypnotized, that it has all been a spell, a conjuring trick, and we are still on the slab of stone of our minds, still annihilating the physical side of life, still caught up with our white consciousness. Lawrence, and we with him, has arrived in a cul-de-sac.

V

"THE MAN WHO DIED": THE MYTHIC RESOLUTION

In "The Woman Who Rode Away" Lawrence set out to symbolically annihilate the mental consciousness of Western civilization. It was to be replaced by the blood consciousness of the primitive world. Lawrence's response to the tyranny of the mind had not always been this extreme. In Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious he had acknowledged the role of the mind:

True, we must all develop into mental consciousness. But mental-consciousness is not a goal; it is a cul-de-sac. It provides us only with endless appliances which we can use for the all-too-difficult business of coming to our spontaneous-creative fullness of being. It provides us with means to adjust ourselves to the external universe. . . . This is the use of the mind -- a great indicator and instrument. The mind as author and director of life is anathema.¹

A comment by F. R. Leavis is useful at this point:

Lawrence is insisting that thought, which necessarily involves mental consciousness, is indispensable. But he insists at the same time that the thought demanded by life is not an affair of mental consciousness alone -- or rather that vital mental consciousness is neither apart in the individual human being, separated off, nor dominating, initiating and controlling.²

We see, then, that the mental consciousness is an integral part of man's psyche. It is indispensable in "the all-too-difficult business of coming to our spontaneous-creative fullness of being". Why then, we ask, did Lawrence set out to dispense with mental consciousness in "The Woman Who Rode Away"?

¹Fantasia of the Unconscious/Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 249. Hereafter cited as Psychoanalysis.

²Thought, Words and Creativity (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976), p. 23.

An observation made in Lawrence's essay on Edgar Allan Poe may shed some light on the problem:

Moralists have always wondered helplessly why Poe's 'morbid' tales need have been written. They need to be written because old things need to die and disintegrate, because the old white psyche has to be gradually broken down before anything else can come to pass.

Man must be stripped even of himself. And it is a painful, sometimes a ghastly process. . . . For the human soul must suffer its own disintegration, consciously, if ever it is to survive.³

I believe that what we are witnessing in the movement from "The Ladybird" to "The Woman Who Rode Away" is the gradual breaking down of the "old white psyche". This is a process of disintegration; a separation of the old psyche into its constituent parts. As Lawrence says, this is a necessary process if we are to survive. We must be able to consciously recognize how the problematic psyche works if we are ever going to be able to remedy the problem. This is a process of analysis and is, therefore, dangerous because, since we begin our analysis from the vantage point of our old established psyche, inevitably it is the mental consciousness which will be conducting the analysis. And the mental consciousness is a cul-de-sac. To quote Lawrence again:

The brain is, if we may use the word, the terminal instrument of the dynamic consciousness. It transmutes what is a creative flux into a certain fixed cypher. It prints off, like a telegraph instrument, the glyphs and graphic representations which we call percepts, concepts, ideas. It produces a new reality -- the ideal. . . . Ideas are the dry, unliving, insentient plumage which intervenes between us and the circumambient universe, forming at once an insulator and an instrument for the subduing of the universe. The mind is the instrument of instruments; it is not a creative reality.⁴

We see, then, the danger of relying on mental consciousness to

³Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 70.

⁴Psychoanalysis, p. 247.

provide solutions to the problems it can help us discern. The most it can offer us is an ideal; a static, uncreative concept. And even if we turn, then, to the unconscious, the spontaneous-creative life of the blood, we must be very careful not to let the mental, ideal consciousness be our guide in this direction. For if we do let our ideal consciousness guide us we will inevitably find only an "inverted reflection of our ideal consciousness".⁵

This is what occurred in "The Woman Who Rode Away". Lawrence, through his perceptive analysis of the old psyche in "The Ladybird" and "The Border Line", had recognized how completely the psyche of Western civilization was tyrannized by the mind. He saw how completely separated we were from the vital cosmos, how life had come to be determined by ideals and abstractions, how the universe had become a colossal mechanism, shorn of its mystery. This perception spurred him to action. We must remake our connections with the cosmos, we must get back the mystery, we must renounce abstraction and ideal. The insistence that we find in "The Ladybird", "The Border Line" and "The Woman Who Rode Away" betrays the problem. Lawrence had idealized 'mystery'; the connection with the vital cosmos had become a 'concept'.

Consequently the movement of "The Woman Who Rode Away" is actually no movement. The mental, ideal consciousness controls the direction Lawrence is taking and the result is that we sacrifice one tyranny for another. The process of victimization carried on by Western civilization in the name of idealism is carried on in the same way by Lawrence's

⁵Ibid., p. 212.

Indians. All that has changed are the idealistic labels. As Isaiah Berlin writes: "Any attempt to explain human conduct in terms of, or to dedicate human beings to the service of, any abstraction, be it ever so noble -- justice, progress, nationality -- . . . always leads in the end to victimization and human sacrifice."⁶

The mental consciousness always leads us into a cul-de-sac. Idealism is perpetuated only at the expense of vital human life. If we, then, persist in letting our mental, ideal consciousness determine our life a tragic vision of man will inevitably result. It is interesting to quote Graham Hough at this point:

. . . however much Lawrence may hate fixity and achieve a poetic and metaphysical exaltation by glorifying the flux, man is also a being who has a passion for the absolute, the changeless, the unconditioned. This predicament is a tragic one, perhaps the root of all tragedy. Yet Lawrence fails or refuses to see it in a tragic light.

Man is in love, and loves what vanishes,

What more is there to say?

Yeats' stoic question, for all its laconic brevity, contains the essence of this tragedy as nothing in Lawrence does.⁷

This passage does not tell us very much about Lawrence but it does serve as an example of the tyranny of the mind that Lawrence was fighting against. Hough, and Yeats also if the small quotation is any guide, is a tragic idealist. He desires "the absolute, the changeless, the unconditioned" while realizing he cannot have them. Does this awareness spur him toward throwing off the shackles of illusory idealism? No; instead he says the nature of man is tragic and, therefore, because he does not recognize this tragic nature in Lawrence he believes Lawrence's thought

⁶Isaiah Berlin, as quoted in Allen Wheelis, The Moralists (Baltimore: Penguin, 1974), p. 32.

⁷The Dark Sun, p. 258.

suffers a "serious limitation".⁸ The limitation, however, appears to be in Hough's thought, not Lawrence's. To show this clearly we need only quote Hough's closing remarks to his study of "The Woman Who Rode Away":

I should say for myself that "The Woman Who Rode Away" is his [Lawrence's] completest artistic achievement. It is also his profoundest comment on the world of his time.

Of course a value judgement is implied, if not an absolutely clear one. For Lawrence "the life that arises from the blood" is generally the supreme value, and he would always prefer to welcome a destructive blaze than fan a dying flame. With this judgement we may disagree; if civilization as we have known it is to continue, we must. (my underlining)⁹

We have already shown, in our examination of "The Woman Who Rode Away", that Hough misread the actual significance of the tale. He accepted the symbolic pattern offered by Lawrence without recognizing that it had been imposed upon a deeper symbolic pattern. The deeper symbolic pattern showed us that any form of idealism can only be maintained at the expense of human life. But Hough did not see this; he only saw Lawrence advocating the destruction of "civilization as we have known it" and recoiled in fear. And in recoiling back into the security of "civilization as we have known it" Hough is placing himself firmly at the side of the woman's exploitive husband, and, even more ironically, at the side of the Indian wielding the knife.

Even though Lawrence ended in a cul-de-sac in "The Woman Who Rode Away" at least he was fighting against the tyranny of the mind. Unlike Hough, he did not submit to it. A letter Lawrence wrote to Carlo Linati (January 22, 1925) could have been addressed to Hough. I quote at length because this letter illuminates a further development in my argument:

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 146.

But really, Signor Linati, do you think that books should be sort of toys, nicely built up of observations and sensations, all finished and complete? -- I don't. To me, even Synge, whom I admire very much indeed, is a bit too rounded off and, as it were, put on the shelf to be looked at. I can't bear art that you can walk around and admire. A book should be either a bandit or a rebel or a man in a crowd. People should either run for their lives, or come under the colours, or say how do you do? I hate the actor-and-the-audience business. An author should be in among the crowd, kicking their shins or cheering on to some mischief or merriment. That rather cheap seat in the gods where one sits with fellows like Anatole France and benignly looks down on the foibles, follies, and frenzies of so-called fellow-men, just annoys me. After all the world is not a stage -- not to me: nor a theatre: nor a show-house of any sort. And art, especially novels, are not little theatres where the reader sits aloft and watches -- like a god with a twenty-lira ticket -- and sighs, commiserates, condones and smiles. -- That's what you want a book to be: because it leaves you so safe and so superior, with your two-dollar ticket to the show. And that's what my books are not and never will be. You need not complain that I don't subject the intensity of my vision -- or whatever it is -- to some vast and imposing rhythm -- by which you mean, isolate it on a stage, so that you can look down on it like a god who has got a ticket to the show. I never will: and you will never have that satisfaction from me. Stick to Synge, Anatole France, Sophocles: they will never kick the foot-lights even. But whoever reads me will be in the thick of the scrimmage, and if he doesn't like it -- if he wants a safe seat in the audience -- let him read somebody else. ¹⁰

The "vast and imposing rhythm" that Lawrence is objecting to here is a mental construct which "intervenes between us and the circumambient universe". It is the artistic ideal which gives superiority to those who can perceive it. If one can live in ideals 'life' need never touch them. But, as Lawrence says,

in life we have got to live, or we are nothing. . . . and only in the novel are all things given full play, or at least, they may be given full play, when we realize that life itself, and not inert safety, is the reason for living. For out of the full play of things emerges the only thing that is anything, the wholeness of a man, the wholeness of a woman, man alive, and live woman. ¹¹

¹⁰Collected Letters, II, 827.

¹¹"Why The Novel Matters", Phoenix, pp. 537-538.

As Allen Wheelis says, "Life is the referent of value. What enlarges and enriches life is good; what diminishes and endangers life is evil. We put aside the question of whose life, for upon that reef the ships of Christ himself break asunder."¹²

The mention of Christ, by Wheelis, leads us to Lawrence's most important statement on tragedy and idealism. Hough sees Lawrence as limited because Lawrence does not manifest a tragic nature. In relation to the following quotation it is Hough who appears limited:

The Gospel came to tell us we were all saved. We look at the world today and realize that humanity, alas, instead of being saved from sin, whatever that may be, is almost completely lost, lost to life, and near to nullity and extermination. We have to go back, a long way, before the idealist conceptions began, before Plato, before the tragic idea of life arose, to get on our feet again. For the gospel of salvation through the Ideals and escape from the body coincided with the tragic conception of human life. Salvation and tragedy are the same thing, and they are now both beside the point.

Back, before the idealist religions and philosophies arose and started man on the excursion of tragedy. The last three thousand years of mankind has been an excursion into ideals, bodilessness, and tragedy and now the excursion is over. And it is like the end of a tragedy in the theatre. The stage is strewn with dead bodies, worse still, with meaningless bodies, and the curtain comes down.

But in life, the curtain never comes down on the scene. There the dead bodies lie, and the inert ones, and somebody has to carry on. It is the day after. Today is already the day after the end of the tragic and idealist epoch. Utmost inertia falls on the remaining protagonists. Yet we have to carry on.¹³

We have to carry on. The question is, of course, how? Lawrence had asked this question, if we remember, in a letter to E. H. Brewster in 1922. I have quoted this letter once already (p.41) but it warrants quoting again:

¹²The Moralist, p. 8.

¹³"A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover", Phoenix II, pp. 510-511.

The groundwork of life is sorrow. But that once established one can start to build. And until that is established one can build nothing: no life of any sort. I begin to agree. I took it one must finish with the fact that Life is sorrow. Now again I realize that one must get there, and having arrived, then begin to live.

Good then: as a basis, Life is sorrow. But beyond that one can smile and go on.

Only -- only -- I somehow have an imperative need to fight. I suppose it depends how one fights.

We have the record of how Lawrence fought in "The Last Laugh", "The Border Line", and "The Woman Who Rode Away". The cul-de-sac he arrived in shows us clearly that the mental consciousness, although a good instrument for ferreting out problems, is tragically limited in its suggestion of alternatives. Lawrence realized this also.

In his short essay "Europe V. America", written in late 1925 or early 1926, Lawrence commented on his American experience:

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. And that strangle-hold I carried over to America; as many a man -- and woman, worse still -- has done before me.

.....
No, 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 civilization, but which is at its worst, or at least its intensest, in America.¹⁴

And in a letter to Witter Bynner (March 13, 1928) Lawrence commented on the kind of human relationships we see in "The Ladybird", "The Border Line", and "The Woman Who Rode Away", and posited a new relationship:

On the whole I agree with you, the leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, ich dien sort of business. So you see I'm becoming a lamb at last, and you'll even find it hard

¹⁴Phoenix, p. 118.

to take umbrage at me. Do you think?

But still, in a way, one has to fight, but not in the O Glory! sort of way. I feel one has to fight for the phallic reality, as against the non-phallic cerebration unrealities. I suppose the phallic consciousness is part of the whole consciousness which is your aim. To me it's a vital part.¹⁵

Lawrence learned a new way to fight. A way which worked toward an integration of the psyche as opposed to a disintegration of it. A way which pointed toward a "spontaneous-creative fullness of being" instead of into a cul-de-sac. We have the record of that fight in "The Man Who Died".

It is tempting to see "The Man Who Died"¹⁶ as a record of Lawrence's personal disillusionment. If we approach the tale in this way, we can easily agree with Richard Aldington, in his introduction to Lawrence's Apocalypse, that "The Man Who Died" "is the only thing in his work which looks like a confession of defeat."¹⁷ The central figure of the tale, Lawrence's reborn man, is, in this interpretation, a symbol of Lawrence himself. Once the parallel between Lawrence and the man who died is established, the tale becomes transparent. Aldington interprets it for us:

He did not doubt love, for the triumph of love is still his theme, but he doubted both the love he had given to mankind in general and all his own efforts as a writer. It would have been better, he seems to imply, just to live out a life of love, and not try to give love to all.¹⁸

¹⁵D. H. Lawrence: Selected Letters (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), pp. 166-167.

¹⁶St. Mawr and The Man Who Died (New York: Vintage, 1959), pp. 163-211. Further references to this story will be followed by a bracketed page number.

¹⁷Apocalypse, p. xx.

¹⁸Ibid.

That there is some validity in this reading cannot be denied; the autobiographical element in Lawrence's fiction is well documented. But to read the story in the way Aldington proposes is to ignore the most important point about the tale -- the fact that we have it in front of us. If Lawrence is doubting his efforts as a writer and implying that one would do better living love than giving it, then why did he even bother to write the tale? The man who died doubts the validity of his mission, certainly, but I believe we must look elsewhere for Lawrence's personal motivation.

I do feel, however, that doubt was one of the motivating forces behind "The Man Who Died", but it was not doubt about his mission as a writer; rather, it was doubt about the manner in which the message might be delivered.

It is interesting that within "The Man Who Died" there is no character, other than the man himself, who has to be convinced of the validity of the Lawrentian vision. In most of Lawrence's works the Lawrentian male is seen convincing the unawakened female, with varying success, to lapse out of her 'white' consciousness. In this tale, however, that element of overt argument is absent. Both the man who died and the priestess have lapsed out on their own and both have seen that it is necessary for them to have sexual communion with one of their kind before they can truly become part of the greater life.

The only other characters in the stories we have looked at who compare to the man who died and the priestess are the young couple in "The Thimble". They came to a mutual realization of their need for each other without having to be argued into it by another person. They broke through

the film of superficiality which enveloped them and came together on a more real plane of consciousness -- "and the touch lay still, completed there."

In "The Man Who Died" the themes of 'touch' and rebirth into a greater life reappear. However, Lawrence is not simply returning to old 'tried and true' themes. In the years since "The Thimble" he has gained new awareness and he brings this awareness to the old themes to overcome problems he had encountered with them originally. The basic problem with "The Thimble" was that it appealed only to the mental consciousness of the reader. We observed the symbolic rebirth of the young couple but we did not feel it. The story did not affect us personally. Since it was written in such a personal mode we saw the rebirth as a personal problem of the young couple. We were allowed to witness it but we were given no vantage point from which to partake in the movement of the story. The characters were individual beings quite separate from us. Further, the rebirth they experienced could not be tested for its validity because there was no point of reference against which to measure the significance of the rebirth other than a page of sketchy satirical background at the beginning of the story.

Lawrence remedied these problems in "The Man Who Died" by employing the parabolic-mythic mode. However, as we have seen from our study of "The Woman Who Rode Away", itself in the realm of myth and fable for the most part, the mythic mode is not immune to the tyranny of the mind. Lawrence had to be extremely careful in his use of language not to fall prey to abstraction; not to let the mental consciousness determine the direction the story would take.

In "The Ladybird", through the presentation of Basil, we saw Lawrence registering his distaste for abstraction. In consequence we expected the Count to be given a more vital language. Lawrence, however, was unable to give the Count this new language and instead padded the Count's abstractions with an insistent and compulsive tone. The mental consciousness was still running the show.

At the writing of "The Man Who Died" (part one April 1927, part two summer 1928) Lawrence was seeing abstracted language as more and more of a trap. This element of doubt about abstraction can be seen clearly in Lady Chatterley's Lover, written at almost the same time:

all the brilliant words seemed like dead leaves, crumpling up and turning to powder, meaning really nothing, blown away on any gust of wind. They were not the leafy words of an effective life, young with energy and belonging to the tree. They were the hosts of fallen leaves of a life that is ineffectual. . . . It was words, just so many words. The only reality was nothingness, and over it a hypocrisy of words. 19

and again: "She was angry with him, turning everything into words. Violets were Juno's eyelids, and windflowers were unravished brides. How she hated words, always coming between her and life."²⁰ These passages remind us of similar ones in "The Man Who Died":

The Word is but the midge that bites at evening. Man is tormented with words like midges, and they follow him right into the tomb. But beyond the tomb they cannot go. Now I have passed the place where words can bite no more and the air is clear, and there is nothing to say. (p. 180)

and again: "The man who had died said no more, for his say was over, and words beget words, even as gnats." (p. 182)

There is a necessary distinction to be made here since, on the

¹⁹Lady Chatterley's Lover, p. 47.

²⁰Ibid., p. 87.

surface, these quotations carry an inherent contradiction -- Lawrence is using language to rail against language. The distinction to be made is between dead language and living language, between words which are like "dead leaves" and words which are "the leafy words of an effective life, young with energy and belonging to the tree." The dead language belongs solely to the mental consciousness; it is abstract and uncreative. The living language, on the other hand, belongs to the integrated psyche and is creative. This distinction is clarified by F. R. Leavis as he discusses the differences in verbal presentation between Lawrence's expository works and his fiction:

What varies with the different modes is the reader's sense of a gap between the verbal presentation of the directed thought and that on which the thought is directed. In the art the felt separation between the creatively used words and the piece of living they have the function of evoking is at a minimum. One is not kept conscious of Lawrence -- not kept actively aware of him as a personal voice expounding or aiming to evoke.²¹

In the expository works, on the other hand, the "clear expository efficiency of the argument means that you are conscious all the while of D. H. Lawrence expounding."²²

The need, then, for Lawrence in his later period, was to find a mode of expression in which "the felt separation between the creatively used words and the piece of living they have the function of evoking is at a minimum." In Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence attempted to meet this need by turning to dialect and taboo words. This mode of expression is not as highly abstracted from reality as is civilized discourse. The ultimate

²¹Thought, Words and Creativity, p. 22.

²²Ibid.

statement on the evils of abstraction is presented in the portrayal of Tommy Dukes. He is the Lawrentian male whose life consists merely of words. When asked what he believes in, he responds, humourously:

"Oh, intellectually I believe in having a good heart, a chirpy penis, a lively intelligence, and the courage to say 'shit!' in front of a lady."

"Well, you've got them all," said Berry.

Tommy Dukes roared with laughter. "You angel boy! If only I had! If only I had! No; my heart's as numb as a potato, my penis droops and never lifts his head up, I dare rather cut him clean off than say 'shit!' in front of my mother or my aunt. . . . God! when one can only talk! Another torture added to Hades! And Socrates started it."²³

Dukes knows all the words but can do nothing with his knowledge. Lawrence commented on this phenomenon in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover":

It is the Deed of life we have now to learn: we are supposed to have learnt the Word, but, alas, look at us. Word-perfect we may be, but Deed-demented. 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.²⁴

It is not surprising that Dukes lays the blame with Socrates. Although he lacks potency, Dukes is intellectually an astute Lawrentian male and for Lawrence Plato, Socrates, and Jesus were the grand Idealists "teaching that the only happiness lay in abstracting oneself from life, the daily, yearly, seasonal life of birth and death and fruition, and in living in the 'immutable' or eternal spirit."²⁵

The obvious way back, then, to a real life, is through a rejection of abstraction as much as possible. In language this means having the separation between the evocation and the "piece of living" being evoked

²³Lady Chatterley's Lover, pp. 37-38.

²⁴Phoenix II, p. 510.

²⁵Ibid., p. 511.

at a minimum. However, for a story of rebirth into a vital connection with the cosmos one needs a mode of expression which can accommodate a steadily integrating movement. A mode, such as the realistic, dealing with 'actuality' as it does, lends itself more to analysis than to synthesis. If a synthesis is presented, as for example in "The Thimble", it will be extremely localized since the 'actual' world is so obviously 'out of connection'. To change the world, to bring it into connection, in the realistic mode is not possible. "The Last Laugh" was Lawrence's cynical comment on that possibility.

Lawrence saw the parabolic-mythic mode as a possible solution. Parabolic statement is not analytic but synthetic. In analytic argument one starts with a concept and proceeds to break it down into its constituent parts to see how it operates. In a synthetic statement, on the other hand, one begins with various components and gradually gives them a greater validity by combining them as a unified whole. The impetus of the synthetic statement is the desire to see a whole that is greater than the perceptible parts whereas the motivation of an analytical argument lies in the desire to understand a perceived whole through study of what it is composed of.

For Lawrence's purpose in "The Man Who Died" the synthetic statement is more suitable. He is attempting to show us that beyond our little life there is a greater life which we need to come into responsive connection with: "we must get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and universe."²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 510.

The parable is rooted in common understanding, giving the recipient of it a familiar vantage point. The constituent parts of the parable are recognized, and, as the story moves forward, the reader is carried through the various connections until a unified whole is seen. This whole may not be understood in analytical terms, but a sense of completeness and rightness is felt. The reader of the parable feels an atmosphere of meaning which has not been experienced before. To understand the meaning involves analysis and analysis ultimately nullifies the movement that has been made; one is simply returning to the constituent parts one began with. Lawrence presents this idea through the musings of the man who died and the priestess after the sexual union which has brought them into real contact with life: "And he said: 'I will ask her nothing, not even her name, for a name would set her apart.' And she said to herself: 'He is Osiris. I wish to know no more.'" (p. 208)

In part one of Lawrence's tale, the vantage point supplied for the reader is the story of Christ's resurrection. This, however, is only one component of the story. Also presented to the reader is the sensuous description of the young cock and the vital nature of which he is a part. What the parable must do is carry us with the man who died as he recognizes his need to become part of the greater life and consequently rejects his ministry. If the reader allows himself to be carried on the connective flow of the tale, instead of prejudicially calling Lawrence sacrilegious, then he can be said to be recognizing, to some degree at any rate, the validity of the greater life along with the man who died. For in this story the reader plays a more important role than in most of Lawrence's fiction.

In the stories we have studied, with the exception of "The Thimble", abstraction, insistence and compulsion, both mental and physical, are used to convince or coerce one of the characters into a dubious new world. However, as Lawrence says, "Ideas are the dry, unliving, insentient plumage which intervenes between us and the circumambient universe." Consequently, unless our critical faculty is lulled into hypnosis, as can happen in "The Woman Who Rode Away", we realize that all we are being offered is ideas and that there is no new world to enter. In "The Man Who Died" however, the insistent tone is gone. And as for ideas; the man who died is rejecting them and responding to a new vital world that is all around him. The reader, seeing no fraudulent world but only a truly alive one, has a serious choice to make. Instead of being left outside the story to watch Lawrence living love instead of giving it, we are drawn into the story, if we 'lapse out' and allow ourselves to be, and accompany the man who died through a symbolic rebirth.

The young gamecock is the symbol of a vital nature existing outside the world of words. We are presented to him as the story opens:

There was a peasant near Jerusalem who acquired a young gamecock which looked a shabby little thing, but which put on brave feathers as spring advanced, and was resplendent with arched and orange neck by the time the fig-trees were letting out leaves from their end-tips. (p. 163)

The bird is presented as existing in harmony with the cycle of the seasons; he "put on brave feathers as spring advanced". However, the language of this passage is doing much more than this. The precision of Lawrence's choice of words demands attention. The one word, "acquired", defines the 'life' of the peasant. The bird, the symbol of vital life, is something he can 'acquire'. The one word has shown the peasant to be separate from

'life'. The "fig-trees were letting out leaves from their end-tips." The word "end-tips" pulls us up closer to leaves than we would normally ever come. We are 'there', experiencing the birth of new leaves. The trees are "letting out" their new leaves. We see the bud gradually unfolding, opening to make way for the leaf to emerge into the world. And they are "letting" them out; they are not forcing or pushing. This is the epitome of acquiescence.

But this passage does not simply refer to itself. The bird was "shabby" but is now "brave" and "resplendent". Here is the theme of rebirth presented. Also, the fig-trees with their end-tips refer quite directly to the man who died's speech to Madeleine at the tomb:

I wanted to be greater than the limits of my hands and feet, so I brought betrayal on myself. And I know I wronged Judas, my poor Judas. For I have died, and now I know my own limits. Now I can live without striving to sway others any more. For my reach ends in my finger-tips, and my stride is no longer than the ends of my toes. (p. 174)

The man who died realizes his own limits -- his finger-tips. And his limits correspond to the limits of the fig-tree -- end-tips. In rejecting the mission the man who died frees himself to make a connection with life. And for the reader this is a validity that is difficult to resist once it is perceived. Therefore, paradoxically, by giving up the insistent, compulsive mission he had had in earlier works, Lawrence has found a far more valid and convincing medium in which to present vital life.

But, to return to the story. The peasant, fearful of losing his gamecock, ties the bird to a peg in his yard. However, even within his limited environment, the cock still "pranced with quivering, rocking fierceness upon such of his harem as came nonchalantly within range, and gave off the invisible lure. And still he crowed defiance to the cock-

crows that showered up out of limbo, in the dawn." (p. 164) Even though prevented from fulfilling his life in a natural fashion, the cock never succumbs: "Underneath, however, the life in him was grimly unbroken." (p. 164)

In the opening two pages -- the prologue -- we have an opposition set up between the natural, vital world and the narrower world of the walled-in peasant's yard.²⁷ When the cock breaks the string and escapes from the confines of the yard, the theme of rebirth is clearly introduced. However, we are still simply observers of a rooster. The vitality of life which he experiences is separate from us; we are not in 'connection' with it. Our connection can only come when our familiar vantage point, the Christian resurrection story, is swept from under us by the man who died's rejection of it and we are left to sink or swim.

At the outset, the man who died is portrayed as being separate from the vital life of nature:

He felt the cool silkiness of the young wheat under his feet that had been dead, and the roughishness of its separate life was apparent to him. At the edges of rocks he saw the silky, silvery-haired buds of the scarlet anemones bending downwards. And they too were in another world. In his own world he was alone, utterly alone. (p. 168)

This observation of nature of the man who died concurs with our own; he is separate from it. In his aloneness, he lies in the peasant's yard. It is here that he recognizes the surge of life in the bird: ". . . the young cock crowed. It was a diminished, pinched cry, but there was that in the

²⁷ When we compare the movement of this story, from the walled-in peasant's yard to a connection beyond it with a vital cosmos, to the movement of "The Woman Who Rode Away", from a walled-in adobe house to a Shangri La valley walled-in by mountains, we see clearly the positive development of Lawrence's thought.

voice of the bird stronger than chagrin. It was the necessity to live, and even to cry out the triumph of life." (pp. 170-171) This surge of life does not limit itself to the bird but spreads to all life:

The man who had died looked nakedly on life, and saw a vast resoluteness everywhere flinging itself up in stormy or subtle wave-rests, 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. (p. 171)

As the waves of life flow over the man who died, virtually forcing him to acknowledge its vitality and reject his separation, so we, in our separateness, are being forced to a decision. Finally, the compulsion of life becomes irresistible for the man who died: "the destiny of life seemed more fierce and compulsive to him even than the destiny of death. The doom of death was a shadow compared to the raging destiny of life, the determined surge of life." (p. 172) He goes to Madeleine, in the garden, and there rejects his mission in favour of his life: "'now I am glad it is over, and the day of my interference is done. The teacher and the saviour are dead in me; now I can go about my business, into my own single life.'" (p. 174)

It is with the rejection of the mission that the reader's first real choice must be made. The separation from life has been established and the only way to become connected again is through rejecting the Christian myth on which we stand. The choice is made even more difficult because our only human contact in the tale so far, the Christ-figure himself, is rejecting Christianity. The man who died recognizes a validity in life and goes for it. The question the tale puts to the reader is whether or not he too sees a validity in life, whether he wants to be connected with life or wants to stay separate from it.

It is this urgency that could not be 'felt' in "The Thimble". The realistic, personal mode had forced the synthesis, the rebirth, to be too personal and localized to affect us. Consequently we watched it happen, and understood the process, and probably agreed with it; however, it never really touched us. In "The Man Who Died" the parabolic mode allowed Lawrence a much greater synthesis. A connection could be made with the world of nature, the vital cosmos, as well as between two individuals. And because Lawrence used the Christian myth he could be sure of capturing attention, an attention that was necessary if the power of the tale was to have an effect.

And this tale does have an effect. Many readers have felt, and future readers will feel, that Lawrence has gone too far. Lawrence expresses his disgust and regret at this attitude in a letter to Maria Huxley written in April 1928, when the second part of the story had not yet been written:

Really, people are swine, the way they try to make one feel in the wrong. -- The Forum sent me letters written by people who read my story, "The Escaped Cock", that The Forum published in February. Really, they're funny -- I am the enemy of the human species, have committed the unpardonable sin, etc., etc., -- and a story good as gold.²⁸

The man who died, having made his decision for life, returns to the peasant's home where he is confronted by the peasant's wife: "He knew she wished he would desire her, and she was youngish, and not unpleasant. And he, who had never known a woman, would have desired her if he could."

(p. 177) The man who died does not have a sexual relationship with this woman, but not because of any Christian idea of denying the flesh. He

²⁸D. H. Lawrence: Selected Letters, p. 170.

forgoes this experience because the woman is not prepared to give but only to take: "She wanted the embrace of his body. But her little soul was hard, and short-sighted, and grasping, her body had its little greed, and no gentle reverence of the return gift." (p. 177) This episode with the peasant woman serves two purposes: firstly, it makes the man who died aware of his sexuality; and secondly, it elucidates for him the kind of sexual relationship which is necessary to a fulfilling and total rebirth into life:

Risen from the dead, he had realized at last that the body, too, has its little life, and beyond that, the greater life. He was virgin, in recoil from the little, greedy life of the body. But now he knew that virginity is a form of greed; and that the body rises again to give and to take, to take and to give, ungreedily. Now he knew that he had risen for the woman, or women, who knew the greater life of the body, not greedy to give, not greedy to take, and with whom he could mingle his body. But having died he was patient, knowing there was time, an eternity of time.
(pp. 177-178)²⁹

At this point the reader has to choose whether or not to accept sexual union as the means to complete connection with life. This choice, however, is not as difficult as the last one. For a reader who has recognized the validity of a vital life, and has subsequently moved beyond the Christian framework, it is not a great step to take to see a responsive connection with life relying for validity upon the primary source of life -- sexual union.

At the end of part one, the man who died releases the young cock

²⁹We remember the husband's statement in "The Thimble" -- "it takes time" -- and we remember how in the following stories Lawrence was impatient and wanted to "alter the world immediately". Again we see that Lawrence has 'come through'.

into the phenomenal world, thereby enabling it to remake its connections with the life it had been torn from. Likewise, the man who died must go on into life where his final connection awaits him.

All the components of Lawrence's invented story have now been presented: the vital nature, the rejection of the little life, and the necessity of sexual union. The second part of the tale gives no new components; it simply connects the ones already given into a vital, potent relationship.

The pagan myth of Isis and Osiris, presented in the second part of the tale, is not used in the same way the Christian myth was. The Christian myth gave the reader a familiar vantage point from which he could be drawn into the story. But the reader who has felt a validity in the tale to this point no longer needs a particular point of reference. He is willing to be carried on the flow of life as it is manifested to him by the tale.

The pagan myth is not offered as an alternative to Christianity. Lawrence is not advocating worship of pagan deities, but is concerned with conveying to us the need to remake our connections with the rhythms of life. This is why he employs only a specific part of the Egyptian myth, that of Isis in Search. The pagan religious framework is as incomplete as is the Christian framework. What is needed is a vital sexual union which gives and takes, ebbs and flows, in tune with the rhythms of nature.

The Egyptian myth does, however, set up echoes of pagan cycles of death, birth and fertility. Isis searches for the body of Osiris in order to be made pregnant by him. With the rebirth of Osiris comes fertility to the woman and also the the landscape. Lawrence adapts this myth by having the man who died become the lost Osiris and supply the missing phallus Isis

is searching for. Lawrence's new myth becomes a completion of both the Christian resurrection story and the myth of Isis in Search. This completion through sexual union results in new life for the human race, symbolized by the priestess' pregnancy; and new life for nature, symbolized by the coming of spring.

But, of course, the Christian and pagan religions also symbolize the duality of man's nature. Christianity, with its idealism, symbolizes the mental consciousness, and the pagan religion, with its fertility cycles, symbolizes the passional or blood consciousness. By combining the two poles through a symbolic sexual union Lawrence is integrating man's divided psyche. The sexual union symbolizes the creativity which is inherent in the integrated psyche.

The second part of the tale opens in January of the following year, approximately nine months after the action of part one. The nine months that the man who died spent in the phenomenal world prior to meeting the priestess can be seen to be representative of the nine month human gestation period. For nine months the man who died has been alive without being "in touch" with life. He is the unborn baby, developing and growing until he is ready for contact, ready to be born.

Lawrence also uses the January setting in order to set up an opposition between the sterile life we have come to associate with winter and the greater vital life which 'encompasses' the sterility. The first human action we witness reinforces our recognition of the separation that exists between nature and the 'little' life. Two slaves are killing pigeons for the evening meal. They are described as "performing some sacrifice, or working some incantation". (p. 186) Their ritual is not in harmony with

life but is performed upon life. In a beautiful passage Lawrence has one of the pigeons escape from the slaves. The bird becomes a symbol of vital life which cannot be controlled by the little life: "A black-and-white pigeon, vividly white, like a ghost escaped over the low dark sea, sped out, caught the wind, tilted, rode, soared and swept over the pine-trees, and wheeled away, a speck, inland." (p. 186) Here, again, we see the precision of Lawrence's language. The circular rhythms of life are captured in this passage which draws a circle in prose. We are not told that the bird circled back to land, we are shown it, and further we can feel the exhilaration of the flight into freedom.

The result of the bird's escape, for the male slave, is rage at being thwarted in his attempt to control life. He manifests his rage by beating the female slave and then copulating with her like an animal. There is no reciprocal give and take in this sexual union: "in an instant he was covering her in the blind, frightened frenzy of a boy's first passion. Quick and frenzied his young body quivered naked on hers, blind, for a minute. Then it lay quite still, as if dead." (p. 187) This scene is a measure of how far Lawrence has come since "The Woman Who Rode Away" when we remember that in that story sacrifice, incantation, control of life, and sterile sexuality had all been endorsed as a valid avenue toward vital connection with the cosmos. It comes home to us quite clearly just how much Lawrence's vision, in "The Woman Who Rode Away", was dominated and directed by the mental consciousness alone. We can only be thankful that Lawrence found a way out of that cul-de-sac and went on to give us "The Man Who Died" by which the experience of "The Woman Who Rode Away" is distinctly 'placed'.

There are, however, people who will never recognize the significance of "The Woman Who Rode Away" , or the slave scene in "The Man Who Died". Their mental consciousnesses have too tight a rein on them. Widmer appears to be one of these people. His interpretation of the slave scene is as follows:

The vagabond Christ and the Lady of Isis come into their first contact by a scene they jointly witness. A slave girl kills a pigeon and is interrupted by a slave boy who first beats her and then, in a natural reversal of emotion, puts his "hand between her thighs" and covers her with his body on the open rocks in "the blind frightened frenzy of a boy's first passion. . . ." Oddly enough, this scene of vivid natural sexuality does not, apparently, achieve real passion in the eyes of the watching unresponsive Christ and the disdainful priestess. The intercourse of the two children serves as a contrast to the agonized and ritualized coitus, soon to take place, between the religious figures. Despite some of Lawrence's polemics to the contrary, the dramatic ordering and the metaphoric language of the fictions seem to indicate Lawrence's lack of interest in simple and natural sex.³⁰

All we can say to someone who takes this scene of rape as "simple and natural sex" is that we now understand why he entitled his book The Art of Perversity.

But, to return. The sexual union of the slaves, symbolizing the sterility of the 'little' life, is set in opposition to the potent sexual union of the priestess and the man who died. It is significant that they both watch this performance and turn away from it. They are separated from the little life and associated with natural rhythms and harmonies. And their sexual union, when it occurs, still in January, is a potent, healing one, resulting in fulfilment for both of them. There is no attempt to control life; they become part of it.

³⁰The Art of Perversity, pp. 208-209.

In order to emphasize and reinforce the contact with life, Lawrence has the relationship continue into the spring: "So the days came, and the nights came, and days came again, and the contact was perfected and fulfilled." (p. 208) The rhythmic quality of the prose emphasizes the true connection between man and the rhythms of life and nature. The relationship is in contact with the flow of life and will go where life carries it, as nature follows the seasons:

Plum blossoms blew from the trees, the time of the narcissus was past, anemones lit up the ground and were gone, the perfume of bean-field was in the air. All changed, the blossom of the universe changed its petals and swung round to look another way. The spring was fulfilled, a contact was established, the man and the woman were fulfilled of one another, and departure was in the air. (p. 209)

The rebirth of nature in the spring of the year is accompanied by the new birth of humanity both in the fulfilling relationship between the man and woman and in the foetus within the woman's womb.

But "departure was in the air". The flow of life cannot be contained. The little life, however, will constantly try to assert its limiting power over the greater day, and its little influence must be avoided: "Yet he must go. For here on the bay the little life of jealousy and property was resuming sway again, as the suns of passionate fecundity relaxed their sway." (p. 209) It is at this point that the mental consciousness must come into play again. However, it does not dominate the psyche but only protects the man who died from the threats of the slaves: "Not twice! They shall not now profane the touch in me. My wits against theirs". (p. 210)

The mental consciousness is now in a proper relation to the rest of the psyche, no more will it dominate. As the last words of the man who died to the priestess emphasize, the connection is complete:

what is between us is good, and is established. Be at peace. And when the nightingale calls again from your valley-bed, I shall come again, sure as Spring. . . . all is good between us, near or apart. The suns come back in their seasons: and I shall come again. (p. 210)

The last sentence -- "So let the boat carry me. To-morrow is another day." -- shows that the mental consciousness, after procuring the boat for the escape, has relaxed again.

The components of Lawrence's story have come together to form a greater whole. Our final response is a feeling that we have arrived somewhere, but also a feeling that any analysis of our point of arrival is futile. We can analyze the steps taken to arrive here, as I have attempted to do, but to attempt to analyze the greater life we have felt in some degree would result in the kind of abstraction which drove Ursula, in Women in Love, to cry, "Ah -- ! Sophistries!", and which drove Lawrence, in "The Woman Who Rode Away", into a cul-de-sac.

The truly satisfying element of this tale is that the receptive reader is brought to a new awareness by the synthetic statement. He feels the validity of the greater life even though he cannot, finally, articulate what the validity is. It is easy to say that the story need not bother us because the mythic characters are safely distanced from our little life, and for many people this is probably true; Widmer is an example. But, as I hope I have demonstrated, this need not be the case. This story draws us in and allows us to contribute; but only if we are willing. There is no compulsion here, except the compulsion of life itself.

This study has attempted to illustrate that the development of Lawrence's thought can be witnessed through the movement from realism to

myth in his short fiction. We began with "The Thimble", a personal story in the realistic mode. The theme of rebirth governed the tale and was quite successfully evoked. The couple saw through the superficiality of their life and approached contact on a more 'real' plane of consciousness. The throwing away of the thimble symbolized the rejection of the superficial life they had been living and endorsed the real life they had embarked upon. The story was an expression of Lawrence's belief that individuals would recognize and reject the falsity of their superficial lives. Consequently, the story was a record of two people doing exactly that. It assumed that we would recognize the need for rebirth and accordingly would sympathize with the efforts of Lawrence's protagonists. It assumed that the hope the author felt was shared by the reader. The problem with the story is that it can do nothing to a reader who does not see the necessity of rebirth, who is satisfied with things as they are, who does not recognize that he lives in a superficial world. The response, in a case such as this, would be either to simply not understand what Lawrence was going on about, or, and this is the more likely response, to see the story only as an interesting study of two people learning to live together in marriage. The reader is safely insulated from the true significance of the story by the fact that it is so personal. He has witnessed an episode in the lives of two people who are distinctly separate from him and whose lives are distinctly not his own. The story may be an interesting comment on the lives of the young couple but in no way does it affect the reader; the circumstances of their lives are too different. The significance of the story, the breaking through the superficial, circumstantial life to find a new 'reality', is undercut by the use of an

intensely personal set of circumstances. The new life the couple finds will, consequently, be seen as valid only to them in their particular circumstances. The personal circumstances prevent the reader from participating, prevent the story from awakening anyone to a realization of their need for new life.

In "The Ladybird" it appears that Lawrence has recognized this problem to a certain degree. The circumstantial, superficial world has been expanded to include English society during the First World War. In this way Lawrence hoped to provide the reader with a frame of reference which he could see as applying to himself as well as to the characters who lived in it in the story. Also, however, Lawrence appears to have recognized that individuals will not awaken to the falsity of their world on their own, but need to be prodded. Consequently, he has introduced the Count whose job it is to awaken Daphne. However, since we are to be convinced to reject our old life, we must be able to see that it is worthwhile to do so. Lawrence needs to offer us a new, valid world to move into. He cannot simply offer a 'personal' resolution because, as we have seen in "The Thimble", this would alienate his readers. He must offer a world which is general rather than specific, which can appeal to each of us instead of to select individuals. Here Lawrence ran into problems. He was unable to evoke this valid reality and turned instead to insistence and compulsion. The world he evokes in the scene in the dark bedroom in the fairytale mansion is, we concede, quite 'other' than the world of England evoked earlier, but the 'otherness' is closer to fantasy and unreality than to a new valid reality in which we would see the efficacy of participating. Lawrence, frustrated and resigned, left the Count waiting

to be vindicated after death.

"The Last Laugh" cannot be seen as a serious attempt to overcome the problems encountered in "The Ladybird". Its interest lies in the fact that overt violence is introduced through the supernatural introduction of the mythic god Pan. Quite arbitrarily, one person is reborn and another is killed. The cynical tone betrays Lawrence's frustration with his world and the violence indicates that what was insistent persuasion in "The Ladybird" is fast becoming overt coercion.

"The Border Line" gives the 'two worlds' of "The Ladybird" symbolic value in a mythic structure. The world of English society seen in "The Ladybird" is enlarged again to become the world of Western civilization. The Count's world is also enlarged, becoming the savage world of post-war Germany. The destructive tendencies seen in the Count's speeches, which were manifested in "The Last Laugh", now become the motivating spirit of the new world. The two worlds become representatives of Lawrence's concepts of 'head-knowledge' and 'blood-knowledge'. The ego-conscious world, which perpetuates the superficiality of life, suppresses and hopes to extinguish the blood-consciousness. The blood-consciousness responds violently. In this story the response comes in the form of a ghost who saves the woman and kills her husband. The problem is that the woman should not be saved, if the story's polar structure is not to be violated. The old and the new worlds, which, in "The Thimble", were seen to be actually one world viewed from different planes of consciousness, are, by "The Border Line", mutually exclusive. The ego-conscious world of Western civilization must be annihilated. There can be no movement between them. The kind of rebirth experienced by the woman in "The Thimble" is also

experienced by Katherine Farquhar, yet, it does not give her hope but leads her to contemplating the "grey shadows of death". Lawrence is beginning to despair. The old world cannot be escaped but must be destroyed. Yet to destroy it means destroying Katherine as well. He allows a ghost to save her while her husband dies, as he should according to the story's rigid polarity. Since she should also die but is instead saved we see that Lawrence is actually reacting against the implications of his vision.

In "The Woman Who Rode Away" Lawrence lets the vision dominate and arrives in a cul-de-sac. The polarity is established again and the woman, ostensibly as a symbol of ego-conscious Western civilization, is sacrificed. However, she is not an adequate symbol of ego-consciousness. She is only a victim; first to her husband's machinations and then to those of the Indians. The world of the Indians, rather than being a valid reality, is seen to be an idealistic fantasy. The myths of connection only serve to justify the victimization and murder of the woman. Lawrence, governed by his concept of dual consciousness, has left behind the theme of rebirth and turned to annihilation. The fable mode, employed for the majority of the tale, does not enable Lawrence to offer the reader a valid world free of the strictures of personal circumstances; all it does is make the cruelty appear impersonal and tends to obscure Lawrence's personal motivation -- a desire for the power "that man must hold". Far from awakening readers to their need for rebirth, this story shows us what insistent compulsion can do to a once healthy desire.

In "The Man Who Died" the healthiness has returned. Lawrence has plumbed the depths of despair and returned somewhat subdued. No more will he persuade through insistence and compulsion. This does not mean he will

not attempt to wake people up; it means he will find a more effective and valid way. The use of the myth of Christ's resurrection is brilliant. At one and the same time it captures the reader's attention, makes him realize that the story affects him; and also the mythic landscape, being a general one, not subject to personal circumstances, allows the reader a participation denied him in "The Thimble", and even more in the later stories we have studied. In place of the compulsion seen in the earlier stories, "The Man Who Died" uses an extremely precise language to evoke exactly what is happening. The descriptions of life beyond the boundaries of the 'little' day are vivid expressions of power and motion. They are far from 'realistic' evocations but are felt to be more real. Reading "The Man Who Died" is like looking at a Van Gogh painting. A Van Gogh painting of flowers in a vase may not be as 'realistic' as a photograph of the same flowers but we know it is more alive. We cannot completely 'explain' how a Van Gogh painting works, we simply feel it working. Likewise, finally, we cannot completely explain the greatness of "The Man Who Died" but we can appreciate it. Lawrence does not use any coercion in this story, he simply removes the barriers of circumstance which previously impeded the real participation of the reader. This does not mean, of course, that every reader is going to accept what is offered, but it does mean that no reader will be able to come away untouched. Wayne C. Booth, discussing Lady Chatterley's Lover, makes this clear:

Whatever may be said by Laurentians of the weaknesses in my own real character that might account for my refusal, I simply cannot read his polemic without smiling when I should be panting, scoffing when I should be feeling awe. Whether I should blame myself or Lawrence for this, I can never be quite sure. Perhaps we are both partly at fault. Even if I cannot resist blaming him, at least a little, it is difficult to know whether his failure to carry me along is a failure of craftsmanship or a fundamental

incompatability that no amount of craftsmanship could overcome. But it is impossible for me to conclude that incompatibility of beliefs is irrelevant to my judgement of Lawrence.³²

Booth was touched by Lady Chatterley's Lover, even if he did not accept what was offered. He is tempted to blame his lack of acceptance on faulty craftsmanship on Lawrence's part but admits that he is unsure if this is the cause. I believe that "The Man Who Died" would touch him even more and leave him even less sure of where to lay the blame if he still rejected what the story presented.

There is a development of thought to be seen in Lawrence's shorter fiction, but, finally, we must recognize that 'thought', for Lawrence, means more than we usually mean by the word. It seems appropriate to repeat a quotation of F. R. Leavis:

Lawrence is insisting that thought, which necessarily involves mental consciousness, is indispensable. But he insists at the same time that the thought demanded by life is not an affair of mental consciousness alone -- or rather that vital mental consciousness is neither apart in the individual human being, separated off, nor dominating, initiating and controlling.

We see, then, that as well as presenting a movement from realism to myth, the stories we have studied show us Lawrence overcoming the domination of mental consciousness and moving toward a "spontaneous-creative fullness of being".

³²The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 138-139.

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