The Questing Self: Representations of Women and Femininity in some of D.H. Lawrence's Writings

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Abstract

The crux of much of Lawrence's writing seems to focus on revivifying a dead civilization, a wasteland of soulless industrialized mechanization. In this paper, I focus on the idea of mythic quests as represented/depicted in Lawrence's "The Plumed Serpent" and in some of his short stories like The Woman who Rode Away, St Mawr, The Princess, Sun, towards rejuvenating and revivification of Western culture and civilization. Women characters are often the protagonists in these writings and become the conduits and bearers, signifying new possibilities for reviving culture and civilization through a realization of the elemental forces of nature and revitalized relationships between man and woman. In Lawrence's work, there is a distinct split between the modern woman and the idea of the eternal feminine as the site of the project of cultural revival, and while Lawrence sees the first as destructive, it is the second that is seen as offering possibilities and holding out hope for Lawrence's project. Much of the feminist criticism of Lawrence's work veer between these extremes, of attacking Lawrence's work for its appropriation of the feminine or trying to understand and explain it . The paper explores some of Lawrence's quest fiction through close textual study to assess Lawrence's representation of some of his women characters so as to ascertain the validity of many feminist accusations.

Keywords: journey, quest, women, organic, mythic

Lawrence's focus on the primacy of man-woman relationship caused his work to come under the critical scrutiny of second-wave feminists in the late sixties and the early seventies of the 20th century. With the onset of difference or third-wave feminism, Lawrence's assumptions were explored and examined in terms of the now foregrounded issues of sexual difference, gender, the body, "*écriture féminine*" and sexuality. Prominent milestones in the feminist critique of Lawrence's oeuvre is the political reading of Lawrence formulated by second-wave feminists, particularly Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millett.

One of the most stringent critiques of Lawrence is by Kate Millett in "Sexual Politics", which follows a line of argumentation initiated by Simone de Beauvoir in "The Second Sex." Beauvoir had pointed out the tendency in Lawrence, along with other writers, to view women as being defined as the "Other"—a categorization unacceptable to Beauvoir, but which was to provide a firm ground to the

third-wave French feminists like Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. "Lawrence," says Beauvoir, "believes passionately in the supremacy of the male" (1972, 248). Millett's attack on Lawrence was to be more scathing, as she goes further in the exposure of his phallocentric and misogynistic tendencies. In her highly influential book, she calls Lawrence "the most talented and fervid of sexual politicians" and comments that Lawrence "is the most subtle as well, for it is through a feminine consciousness that his masculine message is conveyed" (Millett 71). This "feminine consciousness and its deployment makes Lawrence "a sexual politician". Her argument in "Sexual Politics" indicts Lawrence beyond all possibility of doubt.

Throughout his fiction and non-fiction, Lawrence's denunciation of the ego ideal is unequivocal. In "Democracy," he states: "Nothing in the world is more pernicious than the ego or spurious self, the conscious entity with which every individual is saddled" (*Phoenix* 710).

In her book, Lawrence and Feminism, Hilary Simpson sought to place Lawrence's changing attitudes to women within the perspective of the contemporary women's movement. She not only shows the limitations of Millett's approach, she also opens up areas through which to develop a fuller comprehension of Lawrence's conflicting concerns regarding the man-woman relationship. She gives an account of Lawrence's shift "from a liberal, pro-feminist position before the first world war to the rabid post-war vision of women as a destructively dominant sex, and of programmes for masculinist revolution" (Simpson 90).

The paper adopts a methodology of close reading, eschewing the obvious mediations of theories of post structuralism or deconstructive readings. However, to go back to Lawrence's own idea of trusting the tale and not the teller, one is also tempted to read his writing against itself, with the result that many of Lawrence's ideas undo themselves.

Lawrence and Fiction

The crux of much of Lawrence's writing seems to highlight the novel as an organic form. The novel portrays the whole of man alive, down to his fingertips, it is the "one bright book of life"[1]. In the modern world which is teetering on the brink of despair, Lawrence, in many of his novels and shorter fiction portrays questing women who undertake difficult, often tortuous journeys to revivify a splintered civilization, to put the whole of man's experience in one organic form. Discussing the future of the novel in 'Surgery for Novel-or a Bomb', he writes:

> …The Gospels…are novels with a clue for the future, a new impulse, a new motive, a new inspiration…Plato's dialogues are queer little novels. It seems to me it was the greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split. They used to be one, right from the days of myth. Then they went and parted… with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and that beastly Kant. So the novel went sloppy, and the philosophy went abstract-dry. The two should come together again, in the novel. And we get modern kind of gospels,

and modern myths…[2]

The two-fold task of the modern writer as envisioned by Lawrence is to integrate the split categories of fiction and philosophy and to present us with new feelings in a new way. In order to accomplish this dual and not unrelated functions, Lawrence, in his fiction, often makes women the bearer of varied contemporary philosophical and mythical ideas. By casting these ideas into various discursive modes – mythic, symbolic and dialectic – he attempts to convey the feminine as the bearer of an energizing impulse, which would help resurrect a dead civilization and a waste land.

Like other contemporary literary authors such as James Joyce and T.S. Eliot[3], Lawrence increasingly uses mythic ideas and the mythic mode. The purpose is to poetically embody the sterility of the contemporary waste land modern civilization had reduced itself to, as well as to adumbrate a way out of it. In order to do so, he draws on contemporary ideas made current by Sir James G. Frazer in The Golden Bough (1890), and, to a lesser extent, Arnold Van Gennep in Les Rites de Passage (1909).

Similarly, Lawrence's "thought adventures" often show a continuity of interest when compared to the works of Friedrick Nietzsche (1844-1900). Lawrence's own philosophy is often shaped in relation to Nietzsche's, and this particularly true with reference to the idea of the dark God Dionysus [4]. What is of immediate interest is the fact that the Dionysian is described in terms which find a striking parallel in myth and ritual. The key concepts of both are the primacy of the instinct; further, both are based on a primordial unity between man and nature and, finally, both concern themselves with areas of human life which lie beyond cognition and rationality.

These mytho-philosophic ideas inform a whole group of Lawrence's stories written in the later period, and are further developed in The Plumed Serpent (1926). 'The Woman Who Rode Away' (1924) St. Mawr (1924) 'The Princess' and 'Sun' all concern themselves with the idea of rites of passage, initiation rituals and the instinctual life-impulse embodied in natural forces, as well as the idea of the dark god.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that Lawrence's various statements and explorations of the dark god – whether it is Quetzalcoatl or Attic or Osiris or other versions of pre-Christian pagan deities – is a conglomeration and crystallization of a set of ideas indicated in his novels of the preceding period. This conception of a god beyond the Christian love ethic, is in a sense Lawrence's counter to and attack on the mechanization of modern bourgeois civilization.

The important novels of the Great War or middle period, The Rainbow (1915) and especially Women in Love (1920) initiate a powerful polemic against the destructive forces of mechanization in modern civilization. These negative forces are represented by the mine-owning Crich family, and come to the fore in the character and relationships of Gerald Crich. This soul-less devotion to the machine on the one hand, and a decadent aestheticism on the other, represented by Hermione Roddice and her group at Breadalby, threaten to disrupt and destroy vital and organic forces in man and nature.

The organic view of life in nature is evident in the Ursula- Rupert Birkin relationship, which is

a contrast to the Gudrun-Gerald relationship. His constant attempt is to restore a sense of connection between man and man, man and woman and man and nature. A powerful dialectic is thus generated between the two sets of characters. This dialectic, within the broad matrix of organicism versus mechanization, can be recast as the primacy of being (which includes desire and passion) as opposed to will. Desire is positive since it is:

> in any shape or form, primal, whereas the will is secondary, derived. The will can destroy, but it cannot create. [5]

The question of the will leads to discussions of the will to power in the novels on leadership, Aaron's Rod (1922) and Kangaroo (1923), where Lawrence both draws on and qualifies Nietzschean ideas. Rawdon Lilly in the closing pages of the novel Aaron's Rod refers to the outmoded ideals of Christianity and feels that religion and love and a religion based on love is a disease. A similar sentiment is expressed in The Lost Girl (1920):

> …the puerile world went on crying out for a new Jesus…when what was wanted was a Dark Master from the underworld. [6]

Lawrence's dissatisfaction with Christianity and the love ethic, his belief that it is the instinctual impulsive forces which govern life and his conception of the task of the novelist as a unifying one find a natural corollary in the idea of Dionysus. It is the Dionysian ecstasy which enables man to undertake a descent into darkness, perceive beyond the veil of nature to its essence in oneness and to express this vision in symbols. Yet, while believing in unity- formal, aesthetic, and finally, unity of being – he recognizes that there can be no rest, no cessation from conflict…For we are two opposites which exist by virtue of our inter-opposition. [7]

The Greeks, according to Nietzsche, lived by a constant tension of two opposing principles, the Apollonian and the Dionysiac[8]. It is the fusion of these two principles of art which made Greek drama possible. "The philosophical calm of the sculptor- God, Apollo, however, does not take cognizance of the fecund darkness in man which is the "vast infinite source and origin." [9] Existing at the other pole from the measured restraint of Apollo, the Dionysian emotion is the "terrible awe which seizes upon man, when he is suddenly unable to account for the cognitive forms of a phenomenon, when the principle of reason… seems to admit of an exception. If we add to this awe the blissful ecstasy which rises from the innermost depths of man…we shall gain an insight into the nature of Dionysian. [10]

What is perhaps more vital from Lawrence's view is that

> under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but Nature which has become estranged, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man.[11]

The darkness of Dionysos is also the "darkness of the old Pan" [12], referred to by Morgan Lewis is St. Mawr (1924-25). The darkness of the old Pan is paralleled within the human anatomy in

the solar plexus, and the dark forces within. It is the descent into the darkness of themselves, replicated in terms of a quest to a primitive barbaric dark world that Lawrence's female protagonists undertake in some of his later fiction.

In 'The Woman Who Rode Away', 'Sun', 'The Princess', 'St. Mawr' and 'The Plumed Serpent' the female protagonists undertake journeys, sometimes to remote places far from civilization. At a symbolic level, the journey is from sterility to potential fruitfulness and regeneration. Thus, the unnamed woman in 'The Woman Who Rode Away' is trapped in the "lifeless isolation" of the Sierra Madre. Occasionally, we are told,

> 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 portals, the hopeless covered market-place, where, the first time she went, she saw a dead dog lying … Deadness within deadness.[13]

This apathy and sterility expressed through the imagery of death and decay is echoed in the social satire of St. Mawr and in the first part of The Plumed Serpent. It is this experience of the death consciousness which launches the protagonists on their quest for a more fulfilling way of life, imaged as regeneration or rebirth.

The first stage in the works mentioned above is thus one of alienation or separation from the surrounding environment, which gain added impetus with a summons or "call to adventure" [14]. This call, to start on a quest occurs during a chance conversation one evening at her husband's ranch, when she hears about the Chilchui tribe of Indians:

> She felt it was her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvelous Indian of the mountains. ('WRA', p.549).

This group of Indians consists of the descendants of the Montezuma and the old Aztec kings as its members. Further, they retain the bloody rituals of their ancient religion.

The woman's feeling of "strange elation" (p.552) is comparable to the resurgence of wonder in Kate, in The Plumed Serpent, on seeing the newspaper article on the return of the old gods of antiquity to Mexico. Lou Carrington in St. Mawr similarly calls for a resurgence of a sense of wonder. Mrs. Witt, riding in the woods with Lewis, hears the excitement of magic and wonder in the groom's voice, when he sees a falling star. Lawrence's journey to New Mexico aroused a similar sense of wonder, evident in his account of mornings in Sante Fe.

Further, in the journey undertaken by the questing protagonist, there are certain transitional rites or rites of passage to signify the dying to an old life, before rebirth can take place in the new. Thus, the woman experiences a symbolic death:

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

> and meant something big and mysterious. ('WRA', p.552).

Her destination to the "roof of the world" ('WRA', p.560) is identifiable as the journey to the World Navel, Campbell's term for the center of the earth. In addition, the center of the earth is associated with her own solar plexus. The descent into darkness becomes in anatomical terms a quest for, and a realization of, the solar plexus in each of us. Unlike the woman who crosses the required threshold at various stages of the journey, the princess in the story 'The Princess' fails to do so and experiences only fear and revulsion on seeing the "inner chaos of the Rockies".[15]

The journey along the road of trials involves a threat of loss of identity, an idea which fills the princess with horror. In the unnamed woman's case, the choice to go ahead is made possible because of her surrender of any sense of conscious volition:

> And if she had had any will of her own left, she would have turned back, to the village, to be protected and sent home… But she had no will of her own ('WRA', p.553).

The loss of the assertive will and individuated personal selfhood is followed by a transcendence or sublimation whereby the individual identity is enlarged into a cosmic one. This subsuming of the individual identity into a cosmic identity occurs when she accepts her sacrificial role. In Kate's case, it is in her apotheosis or incarnation as Malintzi that this process is accomplished.

The woman's passage from a willed, mental consciousness to a kind of acceptance of the ancient gods is depicted in stages, during the prolonged testing and questioning by the Indian chiefs. The woman's intention, only vaguely realized, reveals to serve the gods of the Chilchui because she is weary of her own god, the white man's god. She is dressed in blue, the colour of the dead, of "what goes away and is never coming back", ('WRA', p.574) in order to underline the process of transformation or metamorphosis to sacrificial victim. In The Hero with a Thousand Faces(1949) Campbell highlights the mythic aspect of this process. The road of trials,

> is the process of dissolving, transcending or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past…the original departure into the land of our trials represented only the beginning of the long and really perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination.[16]

The Princess, in the story of the same name, on the other hand, remains fixated and is a failed initiate as she is unable to dissolve or transcend the infantile images of her past.

The woman undergoes a ritual purification by being bathed and "rubbed with oil in a strange, hypnotic massage" ('WRA', p.576-77) and a ritual purgation induced by a strong herbal drink mixed with drugs. The vomiting effects a "symbolic regurgitation" of her old life and afterwards, she feels "as if all her senses were diffused on the air" ('WRA', p.565). Her final intimation of her own death comes to her when she hears the primeval, powerful and savage music and drumbeats of the Indians.

> She seemed at last to feel her own obliteration…Her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual, was to be obliterated again, and the great primeval symbols were to tower once more…womanhood was to be cast once more into the great stream of impersonal passion ('WRA', p.569).

The woman is now prepared to undergo initiation, which in her case is to be ritual slaughter by the Indians. Thus, the Indian myth of redemption and solar creation myth is related to the woman by the young Indian, at this stage:

> We know the Sun, and we know the moon. And we say, when a white woman sacrifice herself to our gods, then our gods will begin to make the world again, and the white man's gods will fall to pieces. ('WRA', p.570).

It is in a sense this knowledge of the sun that Juliet arrives at, on an instinctual level in the story 'Sun'. In the solar myth of creation, the sun is the powerful male principle which enters the cave of the moon, representative of the female principle, and fertilizes her. The woman in the story has to be sacrificed to the sun in order to be reborn to passional consciousness and achieve cosmic identity, and effect the rebirth of the Indians. For her sacrifice to be efficacious, the woman must be identified with both the ritual scapegoat of primitive tribal societies and the white man's god. Thus, as Cowan points out,

> She is identified with Christ as sacrificial victim in a number of significant parallels; her age, thirty-three; her journey of three days; her cup of liquor, an analog to the chalice of the Last Supper; and finally her death for the sins of her race and the redemption of the world. [18]

The woman enacts both the myth and ritual of the Dying and Reviving God and the Scapegoat, outlined in Books Four and Nine of the twelve-volume edition of The Golden Bough (1890). The ritual of Dying God or killing of the ageing kind was combined with the periodic expulsion of evil in the form of a scapegoat. According to Frazer in The Golden Bough:

> It is supposed that the order of the nature, and even the existence of the world, is bound up with the life of the king or priest…His life (however) is valuable so long as he discharges the duties of his position…worshipped as a god one day, he is killed as a criminal the next.[19]

Later, a substitute was symbolically invested with divine powers and sacrificed, to ensure the fertility of the land and the well-being of the king. In sun-worshipping communities like that of the Aztecs, the effigy of Huitzilopochtili (Sun of the Center) fashioned "out of seeds of various sorts, which were kneaded into a dough with the blood of children" [20], was sacrificed and eaten by the Aztecs in the festival of the Winter Solstice on the shortest day of the year.

The woman in the story 'The Woman Who Rode Away' is symbolically invested by the old cacique, whose death will probably coincide with her own sacrifice ('WRA', p.573). The two are thus identified, and both deaths will pave the way for the redemption and rejuvenation of the community, and the coming of age of the young Indian, the future cacique. Most of the stories in this group portray and enact the first two stages of the quest myth that of separation and initiation. To Lawrence, however, the return motif is of fundamental value, and is portrayed in 'The Man Who Died' (1927). Though death is an important rite of passage by means of which man can pass on to the next stage, Lawrence criticizes the Christian Church for its insistence on the Crucifixion to the exclusion of the resurrection, in 'The Risen Lord'. Whether the religion depicted in 'The Woman Who Rode Away' is a projection of Lawrence's own consciousness into the Mexican scene, or a derivation from the existing Nahuatl religion of Aztecs; personal belief is inextricably integrated with the rituals and values of an ancient religion. The author draws on both and finds a common basis for them in his cyclic view of history and myth. This is clear in The Plumed Serpent where Don Ramon draws on the idea of the return of Quetzalcoatl, in order to usher in a new revolution and revelation in Mexico.

The mythic elements present in 'The Woman Who Rode Away' are developed, amplified or merely suggested in the related stories of "The Princess", 'Sun', St. Mawr and the novel The Plumed Serpent. The various stages of the long, arduous journey to inaccessible heights or across turbulent stretches of water, which is symbolic of the inner landscape, the guide or instructor who is to help initiate the questing protagonist, the regenerative power of natural forces, especially the sun, the regenerative value of sacrifice and the loss of personal identity, are some of the seminal features in these stories.

Thus, Juliet in 'Sun', Lou Carrington and Mrs. Witt in St. Mawr and Kate Leslie in The Plumed Serpent cross stretches of water, while the Princess, in the story of that name, rides uphill for a trip around the Frijoles Canyon. 'Sun' starts with the Atlantic crossing, from the sterility of New York to warm and potentially regenerative Italy. The sea seems "to heave like the serpent of chaos that has lived for ever".[21] Juliet is "out to sea" ('S', p.528), in transition from one stage to another, in a state of suspension, characterized as liminal (limen meaning threshold in latin). This liminal stage, where she is poised on the brink of a sea-change is suggested by the changing landscape which mirror her psychological state. "And though the Atlantic was grey as lava, she did come at last into the sun" ('S', p.529). The simile is an interesting one as lava suggests volcanic changes or disruptions. Lou in St. Mawr experiences a "queer, transitory, unreal feeling, as the ship crossed the great, heavy Atlantic" ('SM', p.134). She longs to get away from the north with its snow and its "idealized Christianized tension", from the horrors of man's "unnatural life and his heaped-up civilization" ('SM', p.135) to the warm south with its great porpoises and flying fishes. All familiar spatio-temporal markers disappear on the passage out, "in a grey curtain of rainy drizzle, like a death, and she, with not a feeling left" ('SM', p.133).

Kate Leslie's journey across the lake to Sayula similarly marks the death of the old self and

indicates a possibility of rebirth. Thus, the water is described as "sperm-like" and "lymphatic"[22] marking its potential as a fertilizing medium. The Princess, in contrast, views the "tangle of decay and despair in the virgin forests" ('P', p.490). Shown as a failed initiate, her desire "to be taken away from herself" ('P', p.503) makes her capitulation to Romero a willed submission. She recoils in revulsion and is then intent only "on getting her own back" ('P', p.504). There is no enhancement of her personal identity and she remains permanently fixated within a set of carefully fostered virginal delusions. Her story is an ironic inversion of the quest myth and results in negation. In mythic terms,

> the hero's flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless…All he can do is to create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration.[21]

Romero with his "fine demon" ('P', p.483) the young Indian in 'WRA', Morgan Lewis with his knowledge of and belief in the Celtic and Druidic myths in St. Mawr, Ramon and Cipriano in The Plumed Serpent are all guides, sometimes literally as in the case of Romero, who lead the protagonists from one life to another. Phoenix, despite the symbolic value of his name, is treated satirically. Kate's apotheosis follows the deification of her guides, Ramon and Cipriano. While the former presides over the religious aspect of her initiation and transcendence, the latter is to initiate her into the impersonality of sex and passion, beyond "intimacy" and "satisfaction" ('PS', p.439-40). Kate grows towards a notion of selfhood which is beyond the satisfaction and assertion of the individual ego, though this process is not straight forward or unambivalent. "I'd better abandon some of my ego, and sink some of my individuality" ('PS', p.456). This is the culmination of the process which begins on her fortieth birthday, when she feels she has crossed "a dividing line" ('PS', p.54). Tired of the senseless brutality and decadent aestheticism of modern Mexico she decides to undertake a journey to a more fulfilling mode of existence. The novel traces the various stages of her quest to the heart of old Mexico and its ancient religion, myth and ritual. Questioning and doubtful at first, she is gradually drawn into Don Ramon's religio-political struggle. Kate's marriage by Quetzalcoatl to Cipriano, her birth as Malintzi all constitute the stages of her quest. Similarly, Lou Carrington at Las Chivas in the closing pages of St. Mawr feels that she is experiencing "the beginning of something else, and the end of something that's done with" ('SM', p.163). Mrs. Witt, in a striking parallel to Mrs. Moore in A Passage to India, feels that she is on the verge of dissolution and death. Juliet in 'Sun' feels a "power… greater than herself" ('S', p. 535) flowing within her, and her known consciousness and will become secondary.

Another dimension of the mythic explored in this group of stories in the regenerative and transforming power of natural forces, for instance, the sun. St. Mawr, the horse, symbolizes this triumph of nature and darkness of Pan. The horse is "an incarnation of the transcendent and imminent mystery of being, prelapsarian and phallic". [22] In The Virgin and The Gipsy the old dam bursts, with its water gushing forth in apocalyptic fashion. Similarly, in The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot (1922) death by

water offers the promise of a transfiguration of some kind.

It is around this aspect of the mythic that the story "Sun" is structured. The Sun is endowed with revivifying power and potency is implicit in all solar as well as seasonal myths. In 'Apocalypse' (1931), Lawrence discusses that:

> In the centuries before Ezekiel and John, the sun was still a magnificent reality, men drew forth from him strength and splendor, and gave him back homage and luster and thanks. But in us, the connection is broken, the responsive centers are dead. Our sun is a quite different thing from the cosmic sun of the ancients…We have lost the cosmos by coming out of responsive connection with it, and this is our chief tragedy.[25]

In the story, the protagonist, Juliet regains a sense of "responsive connection with the cosmos by "mating" ('S', p.532) with the sun. This responsive connection with the elemental is indicated by her affinity to the Cypress tree, which is elsewhere emblematic of the ancient Etruscan civilization.

The mythic mode permits Lawrence to achieve a fine balance between realism and symbolism. These two elements are finely welded in The Plumed Serpent where the discussion of religious, political and cosmic ideas does not detract from particular or individual detail. Rather, they add to the archetypal theme and significance of the novel, where the "individual's life is at the same time also the life of eons of the species".[26] Kate's odyssey, or pilgrimage, into the heart of Mexico and her discovery of the dynamics of the Aztec religion are perfectly orchestrated and integrated. The new venture towards God through the "natural religious sense"[27] of wonder adumbrated in all the other stories of this group culminate in The Plumed Serpent.

It is this "spirit of mystery and wonder"[28] and a sense of participation in a mystical ceremony that draws together the religious theme and mythic mode in the novel. Kate's experience and the hymns of Quetzalcoatl evince a mythopoeic sense of the mystery of the cosmos. The stress on the "universal, cosmic aspect of the religion as against its humanistic aspect"[29]; it is the latter which is evinced in the love ethic of Christianity.

The burden of the religious theme in Lawrence is in a sense an impassioned plea for unity and totality of life and thought. He, thus, carries forward the Nietzschean critique of schisms in life, thought and experience seminal to Western theology, philosophy, epistemology and thought. These schisms can be bridged only through a responsive connection with the cosmos. At the same time, despite Lawrence's interest in philosophy, his fiction is not merely a vehicle used to express a particular philosophical view, as it is in the hands of a philosophical novelist like Sartre. There is no abstraction of experience, but its lived and complex totality. Thus, an attempt is made to dismantle and resolve the Western metaphysical and philosophical schisms between mind and matter or body, reason and feeling, being and will, moral distinctions between good and bad, not through compromise and simplification, but by suggesting a basis of universal, lived

experience on which these varied conceptions rest.

The paper has attempted to illustrate that while Lawrence's representation of women as the source of disruption in a sterile culture positions women somewhat problematically, it simultaneously locates women as the source of change. In this schema, the 'modern' Hermione Roddice(Women in Love) is rejected in favour of Kate Leslie(The Plumed Serpent), Lou Carrington(St Mawr) and Juliet(Sun). This schema also seems to replicate the gender-blindness of much of modernism's plural strands. Almost a hundred years after Lawrence's Mexican journey, it is time to revisit his oeuvre through multiple ideological filters and epistemic pathways. Similarly, almost a hundred years after the advent of high modernism, it is important to revisit modernist texts without preconceived opinions or biases to re-evaluate their aesthetic credo as well as ideological blind spots. If reading Lawrence in the present moment is challenging from the perspective of woke politics, the resurgence and triumph of right-wing politics the world over, could make us rethink Lawrence's many representations of the feminine and of women who are in quest of "strange Gods."(Eliot, 1934)

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NOTES

1. Lawrence, "Why the Novel Matters", p.167.
2. Lawrence, "Surgery for the Novel-or a Bomb", p.517-8.
3. T.S. Eliot, in his article on Ulysses discusses the mythic method: "In using the myth Mr. Joyce (in Ulysses) is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him… It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering of giving a shape and a significance to… contemporary history… Psychology, ethnology and The Golden Bough have concurred to make possible… the mythologic method" (The Dial, April 1923, p.403).
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy in the Spirit of Music*, ed. W.H. Wright. The Philosophy of Nietzsche. (NY: The Modern Library, 1954).
5. Lawrence, *Phoenix II*, p.103.
6. Lawrence, The Lost Girl cit. Kingsley Widmer, "Lawrence and the Nietzschean Matrix. D.H. Lawrence and Tradition. ed. Jeffrey Meyers (London: The Athlone Press, 1985). p.120.
7. Lawrence "The Crown", *Phoenix II*, p. 368.
8. F. Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy ed. (The Philosophy of Nietzsche (NY: The Modern Library, 1954) p.954).
9. Lawrence. "The Crown", *Phoenix II*, p.368.
10. F. Nietzsche, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, p. 955.
11. Ibid., p.955.
12. Lawrence, *St. Mawr and the Virgin and The Gipsy* (London: Penguin Books, 1950) 16th rpt. 1984. p.110. All quotations from this text hereafter are from this edition henceforth, referred to as 'SM', with page numbers given.
13. Lawrence, "The Women Who Rode Away", The Collected Short Stories, Vol.2, Phoenix ed. (London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1955) p. 547. All quotations from the story are from this edition of the text referred to as 'WRA', with page numbers indicated.
14. Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, p.17.
15. Lawrence, "The Princess", The

Collected Short Stories, Vol.2. Phoenix ed. p.491. All quotations from this story are from this edition of the text referred to as 'P' with page numbers indicated.

16. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.*
17. Cowan, *D.H. Lawrence's American Journey*, p.73.
18. Ibid. p.77.
19. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p.194.
20. Ibid., p.568.
21. Lawrence, 'Sun' *The Collected Short Stories*, Vol.2 (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955) p.528. All quotations from this story are this edition of the text, referred to as 'S', with page numbers indicated.
22. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* 13th rpt.1981, 1st pub. 1926 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1950) p.97. All quotations from the novel hereafter are from this edition of the text, referred to as PS, with page number indicated.
23. Campbell, *The Hero A Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed.
24. Cowan, *D.H. Lawrence's American Journey.*
25. Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, Cit. J. Cowan, D.H. Lawrence's American Journey.
26. C.G. Jung, Psychological Reflections, Ed. J. Jacobi 1st pub. 1945 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961) p.129.
27. Lawrence, 'Hymns in a Man's Life', *Phoenix II,* p.598.
28. G.K. Das, "D.H. Lawrence's Mexican Experience: Some Connections with Foster's India", *Yearly Review*, 1 (Dec.1987) p.87.
29. Ibid., p.89.