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A STUDY OF THE ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN  
"THE PRINCESS", "THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY",  
AND ST. MAWR, BY D.H. LAWRENCE.

by

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## ABSTRACT

Lawrence's Letters dated September and October, 1924 give clear evidence that Lawrence considered St. Mawr, "The Princess", and "The Woman Who Rode Away" to be an organic group related in terms of theme, mood and setting. My interpretation of the archetypal patterns underlying these three works gives further evidence of their overall unity in symbolic and structural design, a design which consists of five major features:

- 1) a marked dependence on mythic patterns which manifest the psychic growth of the heroines, and structure that growth in terms of the heroic quest.
- 2) an emphatic change in mood from alienation and numb despair to hope and belief in fulfillment marks the onset of the quest, and separates each work into two distinct modes: satire and romance in St. Mawr, irony and romance in "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away".
- 3) the quest involves not only a rejection of social values and conduct but also a full acceptance of the living cosmos. This acceptance is sparked by a new relationship between person and place which entails the discovery that human growth and fulfillment is possible only through finding one's true identity within the whole fabric of nature.
- 4) a central concern with defining power in its positive aspects as the vitality and creativity of being, and in its negative aspects as the force and bullying of the will and ego. Power can either renew or distort and destroy life.
- 5) the major focus of the works is on the process of metamorphosis, or

death and rebirth, which promises the reintegration of man, society, and nature.

The New Mexican works show Lawrence exploring the existential process of maturation--how the spirit develops and comes to fruition, and striving to realize the furthest limits of human awareness through symbol and myth. These limits are expressed by means of the archetypal pattern of the quest which Lawrence uses to celebrate the unfolding and completion of the human spirit in all its beauty and vitality. Each work builds towards two climaxes: the moment of choice at which the heroine must decide whether her deepest loyalties lie with her family and her society, or with her deepest self; and the moment of illumination at which the heroine either accepts the responsibility of a freedom that is paradoxically a submission to the cosmic life force, or else loses courage and is broken by the battle of conscious and unconscious forces within her psyche.

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## CHAPTER I

### Biographical Notes

The summer has gone. It was very beautiful up here. We worked hard, and spent very little money. And we had the place all to ourselves, and the horses the same. It was good to be alone and responsible. But also is very hard living up against these savage Rockies. The savage things are a bit gruesome, and they try do down one. - But far better they than the white disintegration. - I did a long novelette - about 60,000 words - about 2 women and a horse- 'St. Mawr'. But it may be called 'Two Women and a Horse'. And two shorter novelettes, about 15,000 words: 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and 'The Princess'. 'St. Mawr' ends here. They are all about this country more or less. . . .They are all sad. After all, they're true to what is.

Letter to Catherine Carswell, 5 October 1924<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence's precis of his summer on the Kiowa Ranch near Taos, New Mexico is particularly relevant to my interpretation of the archetypal patterns underlying St. Mawr, "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away", since it corroborates my definition of the works as an organic whole. Lawrence clearly considered the works to be an aesthetic grouping in terms of genre, theme, mood and philosophical orientation, and other letters dated September, 1924 evidence his intention to publish them in a single volume.<sup>2</sup> Equally important, Lawrence places the works in the context of his life in New Mexico and implies a significant continuity between his experience and his art by associating St. Mawr not only with its setting on the Kiowa Ranch, but also thematically with his own affirmation of the 'white disintegration' and his belief in the necessity of a heroic struggle to regain the creative equilibrium between man, his civilization, and nature. It can be argued that St. Mawr is Lawrence's

response to America transformed into art, and other biographical sources further support the fact of an organic relationship between the works and Lawrence's experience. Most obvious is the striking correspondence between actual events and places as they are reported in the letters, diaries and reminiscences, and as they appear recast in the stories. In St. Mawr, Lawrence owes the descriptions of the manor house and graveyard in Shropshire and the trip to the Devil's Chair in Wales to his visit to Frederick Carter<sup>3</sup>; the descriptions of the Kiowa Ranch and its history to Mabel Luhan and the Hawks<sup>4</sup>; and the reflections on human existence and civilization to his essays, "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine".<sup>5</sup> In "The Princess", the trail ride he took with Brett up San Cristobal Canyon assumes an archetypal depth.<sup>6</sup> And "The Woman Who Rode Away" owes its ethnographic detail and religious symbolism to the Pueblos, particularly Taos and the Hopis, where Lawrence went with the Luhans to see the ceremonial dances<sup>7</sup>; the cave symbolizing the "Sacred Marriage" and possibly the motif of ritual sacrifice came out of a trip with Brett and Mabel to Arroyo Seco out of Taos<sup>8</sup>; while the descriptions of the miner and his wife and the mine came out of the trip Lawrence took with Kai Gotszche to Mexico City via Navojoa.<sup>9</sup> The transformation of these living experiences into episodes of major structural and symbolic importance in the works suggests the role art played for Lawrence in shaping and ordering the flow of his own experience. What gives these borrowings a critical significance is that they are not haphazard or piecemeal but rather express a continuity between Lawrence the man and the artist. Each of these borrowings is suffused with those ideas and feelings which are characteristic of Lawrence's complex response to America. The four elements which generally make up the facets of this response are his sense of the decadence of European civilization after the War; his rejection

of the bullyish and mechanical nature of American life; his sensitive appreciation of the land itself; and his intuition that the quick of a further civilization would spring from the ancient religious consciousness preserved intact from ancient times in the Pueblo cultures.<sup>10</sup>

Lawrence's appreciation of the land is many-sided: his letters generally record his liking for the Southwest and his ambivalence towards the vast expanse of desert baked under the hot sun, and the equally vast and more imposing stony peaks of the Rockies, as in the letter quoted to Catherine Carswell; his essays focus on either detailed, living descriptions of places, or on the existential questions he was able to consider under that almost religious influence and atmosphere. His first response to the land is described in terms of a religious awakening, tantamount to the consummation of his "savage pilgrimage".<sup>11</sup>

But the moment I saw the brilliant, proud morning shine high up over the deserts of Santa Fe, something stood still in my soul, and I started to attend. . . .In the magnificent fierce morning of New Mexico one sprang awake, a new part of the soul woke up suddenly, and the old world gave way to a new.<sup>12</sup>

This feeling is linked inseparably with his understanding--more spontaneous and empathetic than conscious--of the Pueblo and Aztec religions.

In the oldest religion, everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive. There were only deeper and deeper streams of life, vibrations of life more and more vast. So rocks were alive, but a mountain had a deeper, vaster life than a rock, and it was much harder for a man to bring his spirit, or his energy, into contact with the life of a mountain, and so draw strength from the mountain, as from a great standing well of life, than it was to come into contact with the rock. And he had to put forth a great religious effort. For the whole life-effort of a man was to get his life into direct contact with the elemental life of the cosmos, mountain-life, cloud-life, thunder-life, air-life, earth-life, sun-life.<sup>13</sup>

What seems to have impressed Lawrence most was the fact that the Indians lived in and were of the land, linked in spirit as well as destiny, in complete contrast to the attitude of the American homesteaders and



ranchers who lived on top of the land, trying to control it and form it to their vision, struggling constantly.

The trader who got the ranch tackled it with a will. He built another log cabin, and a big corral, and brought water from the canyon two miles and more across the mountain slope, in a little runnel ditch, and more water, piped a mile or more down the little canyon immediately above the cabins.<sup>14</sup>

For Lawrence, the land itself--stark and inhuman in the stony peaks and tangled forest of the Rockies and in the sun-baked, ocean-like expanse of desert--is stronger than man, and will either prompt him to further life --to enter the fourth dimension of being<sup>15</sup> --or engage him in a battle for control that will end in defeat and breakdown.

There! she said.. I have tamed the waters of the mountain to my service.

So she had, for the moment.

At the same time, the invisible attack was being made upon her. While she revelled in the beauty of the luminous world that wheeled around and below her, the grey, rat-like spirit of the inner mountains was attacking her from behind. She could not keep her attention. And, curiously, she could not keep even her speech. When she was saying something, suddenly the next word would be gone out of her, as if a pack-rat had carried it off. And she sat blank, stuttering, staring in the empty cupboard of her mind, like Mother Hubbard, and seeing the cupboard bare.<sup>16</sup>

Lawrence understands the unbreakable unity of spirit between the land and the Indians who further each other; to him it is terrible that both should be corrupted by the American democracy and the machine. But most of all, Lawrence reacts vehemently and angrily against the dreadful will of the American people--whether it is their will to destroy outright as in the Bursum Bill aimed against the Indians' system of landholding in conjunction with ceremonial duties, or the will of the patrons and culture-carriers/ carrion who will to show them off as 'pets'--Mabel Luhan.<sup>17</sup> Lawrence contends that the Indians are doomed by their failure to throw off a defeatist attitude, best exemplified by Romero in "The Princess".

They are strong, they seem healthy. They laugh and joke with one another. But their physique and their natures seem static, as if there were nowhere, nowhere at all for their energies to go, and their faces, degenerating to mis-shapen heaviness, seem to have no raison d'être, no radical meaning. Waiting either to die or to be aroused into passion and hope.<sup>18</sup>

Both Romero and Phoenix in St. Mawr represent Lawrence's opinion of the Indian who forsakes, or is forced to deny, his own culture and his own integrity: "...he is only fit for rapid absorption into white civilization, which must make the best of him."<sup>19</sup> This holds true for the white person who would forsake his own culture, as Mabel Luhan attempted (and succeeded as far as I can tell): Lawrence believes that she will be destroyed by the stored-up Indian revenge, as in "The Woman Who Rode Away".<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the most constructive aspect of Lawrence's feeling about America and Mexico is his passionate belief that man can return not to the lifeways but to the wisdom of primitive peoples, finding in the ancient symbols of mythology and ritual the means to revitalize the heart of modern civilization. The truth which Lawrence sees behind the masks of culture is that mankind has faced and faces but one problem: how to ensure the harmony between man and the cosmos on which all life depends. He does not deny the organic integrity of any cultural system, but he does insist that "Truth is one, the sages speak of it by many names".<sup>21</sup>

In summary, James Cowan concludes, rightly, that:

Lawrence's pilgrimages to the promise of America follows the pattern of the quest of the hero of romance, a paradigm which becomes the dominant structural and thematic image in his fiction of the period.<sup>22</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harry T. Moore, ed., The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence (New York, 1962), II, 814.

<sup>2</sup>Collected Letters, pp. 810, 813.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Nehls, ed., D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography (Madison, Wisconsin, 1958), II, 313-319.

<sup>4</sup>Composite Biography, pp. 338-339.

<sup>5</sup>D.H. Lawrence, A Selection from Phoenix, ed., A.A. Inglis (Middlesex, 1968), pp. 443-459.

<sup>6</sup>Composite Biography, pp. 359-361.

<sup>7</sup>D.H. Lawrence, Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places (London, 1956), pp. 43-79.

<sup>8</sup>Composite Biography, pp. 352-353.

<sup>9</sup>Composite Biography, pp. 261-262.

<sup>10</sup>Composite Biography, pp. 165, 184, 186, 202, 208, 209, 211, 284, 312, 340, 351, 359, 361, 363.. See also James C. Cowan, D.H. Lawrence's American Journey: A Study in Literature and Myth (Cleveland, Ohio, 1970), pp. 1-13.

<sup>11</sup>Collected Letters, p. 736.

<sup>12</sup>D.H. Lawrence, "New Mexico," A Selection from Phoenix, p. 127.

<sup>13</sup>"New Mexico," Selection from Phoenix, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup>D.H. Lawrence, St. Mawr / The Virgin and the Gypsy (Middlesex, 1971), p. 148.

<sup>15</sup>"Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine," Selection from Phoenix, pp. 453-454.

<sup>16</sup>St. Mawr, p. 155.

<sup>17</sup>Collected Letters, pp. 760-761.

<sup>18</sup>D.H. Lawrence, "The Princess," The Complete Short Stories (Middlesex, 1971), II, 482.

<sup>19</sup>"New Mexico," Selection from Phoenix, p. 129.

<sup>20</sup>My feeling is confirmed by a personal communication from Jim Nalbach who has been adopted into the Zuni Pueblo, and knew both Mabel Luhan and her son, John Evans, when he lived in Taos. June, 1973.

<sup>21</sup>Joseph Campbell, Hero With A Thousand Faces (New York, 1971), p.viii.

<sup>22</sup>Cowan, American Journey, p. 1.

## CHAPTER II

### Introduction

The New Mexican works--St. Mawr, "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away"--share an overall unity of symbolic and structural design enough to lead me to define the works as an organic complex. Considering them as a whole, I find a central pattern emerges with these particular and constant features:

- 1) a marked dependence on mythic patterns which manifest the psychic growth of the heroines, and structure that growth in terms of the heroic quest.
- 2) an emphatic change in mood from alienation and numb despair to hope and belief in fulfillment marks the onset of the quest, and romance in St. Mawr, irony and romance in "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away".<sup>1</sup>
- 3) the quest involves not only a rejection of social values and conduct but also a full acceptance of the living cosmos. This acceptance is sparked by a new relationship between person and place which entails the discovery that human growth and fulfillment is possible only through finding one's true identity within the whole fabric of nature.
- 4) a central concern with defining power in its positive aspects as the vitality and creativity of being<sup>2</sup>, and in its negative aspects as the force and bullying of the will and ego. Power can either renew

or distort and destroy all life.

- 5) the major focus of the works is on the process of metamorphosis, or death and rebirth, which promises the reintegration of man, society, and nature.

The New Mexican works show Lawrence exploring the existential process of maturation--how the spirit develops and comes to fruition, and striving to realize the furthest limits of human awareness through symbol and myth. These limits are expressed by means of the archetypal pattern of the quest which Lawrence uses to celebrate the unfolding and completion of the human spirit in all its beauty and vitality.<sup>3</sup> Each work builds towards two climaxes: the moment of choice at which the heroine must decide whether her loyalties lie with her family and her society, or with her deepest self; and the moment of illumination at which the heroine either accepts the responsibility of a freedom that is paradoxically a submission to the cosmic life force, or else loses courage and is broken by the battle of conscious and unconscious forces within her psyche.

Lawrence recognizes that man belongs and must adapt to two separate but coterminous life systems, the organic and the cultural. His emphasis on the resulting conflict of loyalties within the human psyche is dramatically revealed by his contrasting the dynamic and spontaneous nature of living beings in tension with the static nature of social institutions. But Lawrence is further, and prophetically, aware of the dangerous ambiguities and conflicts that must arise when any culture asserts an illusory superiority and control over the organic system, as Western civilization in the 20th century has done. Against this one-sided consciousness premised on controlling and forcing which brings in turn disorientation, then collapse, Lawrence upholds the regenerative

power of the unconscious mind to integrate and renew both the personality and the culture.

To Lawrence, the deadening weight of history and tradition stems from the basic orientation towards control, and is the measure of human insecurity and fear. It is a man's fear that drives him to hatred and the will to conquer and modify rather than to love and create. It is man's fear that drives him to refuse the knowledge of living as spontaneous and creative responding to the changing flux of elemental relationships. This fear is institutionalized in the rigidity and predictability of patterned behavior, or conduct, which comprises the bulk of social relationships. The rigid sanctions for acceptable and deviant behavior show most clearly the irrational base of society in fear; these operate externally in the dogma and legal codes of all institutions, and internally in the psyche of each person. Under this weight of fear, creativity is sacrificed for an underlying tension of hostility and controlled anger, and reality is sacrificed to dichotomies and pragmatic rationalizations, resulting in man's alienation from his whole being and his whole environment. Lawrence finds this alienation to be all-pervasive in Western civilization, and to be destructively allied with the increasing power of science and technology to change and control the processes of natural life.

His art is a cry against this destructive mode of living, and a search for ways of living in harmony with reality. He stresses the necessity for restoring intuition, instinct and feeling to balance the rational and abstract. In this way, the dangerous split between mind and body can be healed, and the harmony between man and nature regained. Thus Lawrence's art focusses on the individual who, because of her

emotional complexity, cannot accept the narrow role defined for her by society and must find a new, fulfilling way of life. Through the individual's awareness and efforts to resolve her existential dilemma, Lawrence criticizes the failure of modern society to allow the life process to fulfill itself creatively in man.

Lawrence's orientation to reality is guided by his search inwards for self-knowledge, by his search outside himself to see the particulars of the world in detail, exulting in the uniqueness of his relationship to each and all, and by his stripping away the manifestations of individuality to find the impersonal "God-flame in everything".<sup>4</sup> Similarly, his art focusses on the whole psychic life of the heroine, exploring her inner depths in relation to a growing consciousness of self and other. It is in the individual psyche that the conflict between growing life and neurotic death is experienced most sharply, and where the inevitable battle between freedom and control must be decided. This battle is resolved according to one of three cultural patterns, since it is impossible for a man to revert to a primitive state of nature once he has been socialized. The individual can succumb to living only in the reality presented in society, but then he is doomed to submerge his emotions and imagination to the social will and to suffer the frustration of not accepting his unconscious self. These individuals, corpses, provide the fodder for Lawrence's satirical attacks, especially in St.

Mawr:

' . . . It's the animal in them has gone perverse, or cringing, or humble, or domesticated, like dogs. I don't know one single man who is a proud living animal. I know they've left off really thinking. . . . '

'We have no minds once we are tame, mother. Men are all women, knitting and crocheting words together.'<sup>5</sup>

Or the individual can try to pierce the illusions of his society and



regain the intellectual ideal of organic and social harmony. But if he fails to find the key which will dismiss the old and deeply ingrained patterns of his ego, then he cannot achieve the unity of his own self and is doomed to a fragmented life where "the only sensible thing is to try and keep up the illusion."<sup>6</sup> This vision of chaos and torment is the tragic vision of life, and represents one of the final and most challenging temptations which the hero must overcome.

Every new stroke of civilization has cost the lives of countless brave men, who have fallen defeated by the 'dragon', in their efforts to win the apples of the Hesperides, or the fleece of gold. Fallen in their efforts to overcome the old. . . and win to the next stage.<sup>7</sup>

The triumph of the hero lies in his attaining to the comic vision, "the wild and careless, inexhaustible joy of life invincible".<sup>8</sup> If the hero can sacrifice the narrow vision of his society and its time and place by putting to death his own personality, then he will be reunited with the living world and reborn into a universal wholeness and purpose.

Lawrence's major concern in St. Mawr, "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away" is to urge and celebrate this attaining to a state of being where man is in a new and vital relation to himself and to all life. This state of being marks the fullest flowering of the human spirit and promises the redemption of the barren world of frustrated and alienated individuals, and the renewal of the living connection and balance between man and nature. It promises the transformation of the modern waste land.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>My definitions follow those set out by Northrop Frye in Anatomy of Criticism: "Two things, then, are essential to satire; one is wit or a sense of humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack." (p. 224); "As structure, the central principle of ironic myth is best approached as a parody of romance: the application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic context which fits them in unexpected ways." (p. 223); "The complete form of the romance is clearly the successful quest, and such a completed form has three main stages: the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero. . . .The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth." (pp. 187-188).

In St. Mawr, the object of Lawrence's attack is the decadent society of the British upper classes and the deteriorated peasant class, and the superficial, film-stereotyped society of the American Southwest; the wit primarily grows out of the verbal battles between Rico and Mrs. Witt, whose observations of character are clear and deadly. A level of ironic humor is added by Lou who, as she grows more aware of being caught in the middle of the vicious power struggles between Rico and her mother, starts to comment not only on Rico's illusions but also on the negative, life-destroying aspects of Mrs. Witt's character.

In both "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away", Lawrence uses a number of fairy tale motifs, especially the 'Sleeping Beauty' and the 'Ogre', to emphasize the domestic problems and unhappiness of the two heroines, as well as to foil the readers' expectations of a 'happy ending'.

In all three works, the patterns of the romance are the heroic quest and the death and rebirth of the heroines.

Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New York, 1968), pp. 224, 223, 187-188.

<sup>2</sup>D.H. Lawrence, "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine," A Selection from Phoenix, ed., A.A. Inglis, (Middlesex, 1971), pp. 453-454.

Any creature that attains to its own fulness of being, its own living self, becomes unique, a nonpareil. It has its place in the fourth dimension, the heaven of existence, and there it is perfect, it is beyond comparison.

No creature is fully itself till it is, like the dandelion, opened in the bloom of a pure relationship to the sun, the entire living cosmos. (pp. 453-454).

<sup>3</sup>Frye adds further support to my interpretation of this mythic pattern:

Translated into dream terms, the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality. . . .Translated into ritual terms, the quest-romance is the victory of fertility over the waste land.  
Anatomy of Criticism, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup>Mervyn Levy, ed., Paintings of D.H. Lawrence (New York, 1964), p.

<sup>5</sup>D.H. Lawrence, St. Mawr / The Virgin and the Gypsy (Middlesex, 1971), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>St. Mawr, p. 164.

<sup>7</sup>St. Mawr, p. 160.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Campbell, Hero With A Thousand Faces (New York, 1971), p. 28.

### CHAPTER III

#### The Failure of the Quest in "The Princess"

"The Princess" fails to convey an essential organic unity: the narrative breaks apart into two distinct aesthetic entities which are causally connected in the development of the Princess, but lack consistency in point of view, time and space, characterization, symbolic mode, and significance. The failure of the story as an integrated whole corresponds to the failure of the heroine to undergo the essential psychic transformation from girlhood to womanhood in conjunction with the ritual of sexual initiation. The root of this failure lies in the conflict between archetypal patterns which inform her experience and constitute the plot.

Lawrence draws primarily on the archetypal cycle of the Persephone-Demeter myth to inform both the narrative and the meaning of "The Princess". Generally, the story follows the structure of the monomyth as it is described by Joseph Campbell: the separation or departure, the trials and victories of initiation, and the return and reintegration with society.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the story follows the mythic rape and transformation of Persephone from a virginal girl into a spiritual and creative woman. The narrative of "The Princess" is structured around the ritual of the "Sacred Marriage"<sup>2</sup> which culminates in the rape of the virgin and the union of the male and female principles. The meaning, however, transcends the ritual focus to concentrate on transformations within the virgin psyche, and signifies the epiphany of womanhood within

the soul.

. . .the mystery of the marriage of death expresses the transformative character of the Feminine as manifested in the experience of growing from girlhood to womanhood. Rape, victimization, downfall as a girl, death, and sacrifice stand at the center of these events, whether they are experienced through the impersonal god. . .or, as later, personalized and placed in relation to a male who is in every sense "alien".

But Kore is not merely overcome by the male; her adventure is in the profoundest sense a self-sacrifice, a being-given-to-womanhood, to the Great Goddess as the female self. Only when this has been perceived, or emotionally suffered and experienced in the mystery, has the heuresis, the reunion of the young Kore turned woman, with Demeter, the Great Mother, been fulfilled. Only then has the Feminine undergone a central transformation, not so much becoming a woman and mother, and thus guaranteeing earthly fertility and the survival of life, as by achieving union on a higher plane with the spiritual aspect of the Feminine. . .<sup>3</sup>

However, the triumphant celebration of womanhood is not the subject of "The Princess", but rather the failure of this rite de passage and the triumph of an infantile passion.

Lawrence has structured the narrative of "The Princess" on the conflict between two powerful archetypes: the "Electra" complex and the Persephone-Demeter cycle. The two patterns represent different and antithetical stages in female development: the early childhood characterized by a close father-daughter relationship, and the transition into womanhood initiated by a sexual experience which releases and fulfills the life-giving powers of the female. The aesthetic conjunction of these two archetypes cannot be under-rated as the experiences which inform the child psyche are crucial in their power to nourish or to inhibit and cripple the potential development of the maturing person.<sup>4</sup>

The parental 'script' that informs the Princess's young psyche is based upon the "Electra" archetype in its most severe and extreme form: the incestuous love of the father for the daughter and the alienation of

the daughter from her mother-rival. It is this incest that forms the root pattern of the Princess's mind, and accounts for the distortion of her emotional growth. With the ambiguous death of her mother, Mary Henrietta is deprived of a womanly model and remains fixated within her childish identity as Princess and consort to her King-father-spouse.

" . . . But Papa and I are such an old couple, such a crochety old couple, living in a world of our own."<sup>5</sup>

Lawrence repeatedly stresses the fairy tale element in reference to the Princess's childhood: she is one of the "sexless fairies", a "changeling", the last of the "royal fairy women". (pp. 479, 477, 475) At her birth, her father, the unrecognized King of Scotland, celebrated the continuation of his blood lineage and the end of his cursed isolation.

"Ah, so my little princess has come at last!" he said, in his throaty, singing Celtic voice, like a glad chant, swaying absorbed. (p. 474)

But the end of his curse is the beginning of the curse blighting the existence of the Princess. Colin Urquhart literally draws a magic circle--a thicket of thorns--around his daughter by explaining his peculiar dementia as the raison d'etre of existence.<sup>6</sup>

" . . . You peel everything away from people, and there is a green, upright demon in every man and woman; and this demon is a man's real self, and a woman's real self. It doesn't really care about anybody, it belongs to the demons and primitive fairies, who never care. . . . You are the last of the royal race of the old people; the last, my Princess. There are no others. You and I are the last. When I am dead, there will only be you. Which is why, darling, you will never care for any of the people in the world very much. Because their demons are all dwindled and vulgar. They are not royal. Only you are royal, after me. Always remember that. And always remember, it is a GREAT SECRET. (p. 475)

The Princess is locked away in the ivory tower erected by her father in his madness, a madness which is programmed and takes root in her unconscious. She is different, she is the last, she is unique: Colin effectively isolates her from even the possibility of an emotional

experience of other people as real, complex beings. Even her grandparents were "just a nominal reality" to her, until they appeared to threaten her security; then she treated them just as her father had, like "talking machines that had to be answered". (p. 474) Her grandfather was "fascinated" and "spell-bound" by his granddaughter (p. 476), but his love cannot compete with Colin's. Colin's teaching is thorough; she can trust only her father and learns to mistrust the reality of all other people and of the external world, to 'see through' the world outside except insofar as it threatens her world. Then, as is the case with the threat of her grandfather's will and its Plutonic conditions--"that she resided for six months in the year in the United States" (p. 478), she dons the protective disguise ordained by her father.

" . . . we are in exile in the world. We are powerless. . . . No, my Princess. Let us take their money, then they will not dare to be rude to us. Let us take it, as we put on clothes, to cover ourselves from their aggressions." (p. 478)

She is, in effect, imprisoned within her father's living drama, locked into the female lead with a controlling script to ensure that she always act in character, according to her author's intent. With a touch of Lawrentian irony, her father permitted her to read extensively--Zola, Maupassant, Boccaccio, the Nieblung poems, Tolstoi and Dostoevsky. "The latter confused her." (p. 477) The readings are consistent with her father's perceptions: fairy tales, sagas, social criticism and class consciousness. No wonder that "Strange and uncanny, she seemed to understand things perfectly, with the flush of fire absent." (p. 477), for while she is not limited in her movements outside the home, she edits the world either through her father's eyes or through a male author to whom Colin has delegated the role of royal tutor. Colin does not give her the key to the world: her own female emotions to experience and create the

world in her own mind. He conspires to keep her to himself by letting her 'know' and 'see' without the intense involvement necessary to shatter her world of illusions and come to real self-discovery and love. Colin uses the Princess to see his own reflection: she is his mirror.<sup>7</sup>

Lawrence ironically demeans the "Electra" archetype by shifting the authorial point of view from Lawrence the chronicler to Colin the Magus. Through the metamorphosis of Mary Henrietta into the Princess, the figure of Colin as king and magician emerges to transmute reality in the crucible of his madness and to overshadow person, place, and action in the story.<sup>8</sup> His dementia informs the whole being of his daughter, devours time, and polarizes the action between internal and external drama. Colin is the key character of the ironic romance: he is the power and the author informing the 'play within a play'. Using Colin in this manner to mirror his own art, Lawrence polarizes the drama itself and establishes an ironic relation between his archetypal mode and the mode of medieval romance.

Mary Henrietta Urquhart. . . whose father calls her "My Princess" with multiple allusions to aristocracy of birth, social snobbishness, and the unreality of romance, strikingly resembles her sleeping prototypes. The Germanic Briar Rose Sleeping Beauty falls into her hundred-year sleep as the result of a curse laid upon her by the fairy who was not invited to the King's feast honoring her birth. The Norse Brynhild, as a punishment for disobeying Odin, is put to sleep until a man shall awaken her.<sup>9</sup>

Since Colin conjures up the explicit conventions of the fairy tale, Lawrence leads his readers to expect the fulfillment of the tale: to expect a prince to appear and do battle with the tyrant-father, break the evil spell, marry the Princess, consolidate the kingdom, and 'live happily ever after'. But Lawrence masterfully yields to these expectations, and then foils.

Lawrence inverts the pattern of the quest as the aging princess rejects her would-be prince only to "return" to an even deeper slumber than before. The result is a brilliantly realized



ironic romance.<sup>10</sup>

His purpose, however, lies further: to unmask the spell for what it is, the perversion whereby consciousness is imposed upon the child psyche and immature passions are stirred to awakening. Lawrence is not interested par se in the conventions attendant on the male's pursuit of the treasured female, but rather in the dynamic process whereby the female grows away from the parental male to find the singular treasure of her womanhood. Woman is no mere passive object symbolizing man's attainment of his self and love; she is equally involved in the sacred quest for life and reality. She must discover the powers of her woman's soul, the reality of her full being, if she is to live and give life. Thus Lawrence's artistic focus centres directly upon the female psyche to determine what impedes and what stimulates the process of individuation. The determining impediment to the Princess's discovery of herself is the archetypal incest; it is the direct cause of her failure to win independence and love. She remains locked into the fairy world of her father. The supreme irony of the romance lies in this opposition of the imaginary and the mythic worlds, as Lawrence uses their contrast to reveal the natural growth pattern of the child from narcissistic and idealistic romance to the vital acceptance of self & other in the communion of the sexual act, to the integration of self in body and mind which is symbolized by the seduction of Persephone by Pluto and the reunion of mother and daughter in the female mysteries.

The contrast between the modes of irony and archetypal romance is markedly evidenced in the narrative structure of "The Princess" where two distinct aesthetic parts meet and break apart. Part 1, based on the "Electra" archetype, functions as the 'play within a play' created by Colin; Lawrence dons his authorial persona only to formulate the problem,

analyze the causes, or describe the Princess in terms of her outer appearance and behavior. Part 2, based on the Persephone archetype, is the dramatic focus of the story; Lawrence assumes his omniscient persona, the setting is particularized and, simultaneously, is endowed with psychological reality, time is rendered both in terms of the continuous past and the symbolic present, and the Princess assumes her own feelings and ideas--she becomes a character in her own right and is no longer simply manipulated by Colin or Lawrence. The crucial point in the narrative where the transition from the ironic to the mythic mode occurs is the death of Colin. The Princess feels restless and rootless; she no longer has security or passion and feels compelled "to do something". (p. 480) For the first time, she stands without her father as an independent being. She is outside her childhood and, however reluctantly, feels the social pressures moving her to assume her role as an adult in the social milieu. This role lies in the attainment of the status of 'wife' as a matter of course, although Lawrence cannot resist pointing out the irony of an idealized union without love.

Not that she felt any sudden interest in men, or attraction towards them. No. . . .But marriage, that peculiar abstraction, had imposed a sort of spell on her. She thought that marriage, in the blank abstract, was the thing she ought to do. (p. 480)

In conjunction with her decision to travel west in pursuit of a suitable husband, the Princess's destiny begins to unfold. She is to be given one chance to discover herself in relation with other beings and mature into a fully sexual and loving woman. Through her spontaneous attraction to Romero and her acceptance of the "dark beam of a man's kindness which he could give her" (p. 484), she begins to experience an inner truth strong enough to shatter her world of sterile appearances and illusion, and to release her from the tyranny of Colin's spirit.

"Yes," she said, looking up at him with a sudden naive impulse of recklessness. (p. 486)

This "Yes" arises spontaneously from the Princess's deepest psychic depths--from her pristine unconscious, her soul, or "l'autre moi".<sup>11</sup> It is her own unique assent to life and to her essential self; it is the first unbidden and welcomed assertion of herself that she has been able to realize since her infancy, and it is a sign that Colin's power is losing its efficacy within her spirit. But her self is newly born; her quickness is still in its infancy and so her life hangs by a delicate thread. She is unskilled and untutored in experiencing her whole mind, and must be guided carefully so that her new life is not stifled. Her guide requires superhuman powers: he must be powerful enough to strangle Colin's hold forever, yet gentle and loving enough to unlock that trust and openness in herself necessary to her becoming one with her self and with him. It falls to Romero to guide her to 'see' and love in experiencing the relatedness of all living beings, rather than to see and blindly remain objective, for her "Yes" marks her desire to "see the wild animals move about in their wild unconsciousness" (p. 488) as the desire to 'be one with' rather than to merely 'examine'. It is ironic that Romero, despite his artistically endowed strengths, is merely human, and as lost and unskilled in listening to his inner self or in guiding another person through sheer intuition as most human beings.

The archetypal mode begins immediately the Princess answers the "call to adventure"<sup>12</sup> and sets out in search of her own soul. Her descent into the "secret heart" of the Rockies (p. 487) is in every sense a descent into herself; it is modelled symbolically on the descent into Hades where the sacred rites of initiation and transformation will take place.

The passage of the mythological hero may be overground, incidentally; fundamentally it is inward--into depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten

powers are reviviified, to be made available for the transfiguration of the world.<sup>13</sup>

From this point on, narrative and meaning are fused together in the strange symbiosis of psyche and place. Lawrence fulfills the mythic mode by charging the 'spirit of place' to both trigger and witness the heroic descent; this 'spirit of place' is utterly correlated with the psychic states of the Princess.

. . .there was still blue shadow by the sound of waters and an occasional grey festoon of an old man's beard, and here and there a pale, dripping crane's-bill flower among the tangle and debris of the virgin place. And again the chill entered the Princess's heart as she realized what a tangle of decay and despair lay in the virgin forests. (p. 490)

The Princess's soul is writ large upon the stupendous landscape of the Rockies; it is projected into the vastness of time and space so that her experience and her discoveries achieve a universal significance. As Woman, she journeys through the virgin tangle, noting the choking decadence and inability to flower and nourish life; she journeys through the vital forests, noting their beauty and the abundance of wildlife which fills her with wonder and eagerness to explore; she journeys to the top of the rocky summit, noting the dead spruce and the massive grey rocks which fill her with dreadful fear and revulsion so that she cannot stand this barrenness and wants to turn back. "She had not thought it could be so inhuman, so, as it were, anti-life." (p. 496) She is experiencing symbolically and yet literally herself in its potentialities as virgin, as mother, as cruel, living death. She is beyond the bounds of her social personality, her ego, and is experiencing herself wearing the multiple aspects, both potential and manifest, of God, of Atman.

He saw all these forms and faces in a thousand relationships to each other, all helping each other, loving, hating and destroying each other and become newly born. Each one was mortal, a passionate, painful example of all that is transitory. Yet none of them died, they only changed, were always reborn, continually had a new face: only time stood between one face

and another. And all these forms and faces rested, flowed, reproduced, swam past and merged into each other, and over them all there was something thin, unreal and yet existing. . .and this mask was Siddhartha's smiling face. . .<sup>14</sup>

The Princess is all she experiences in herself and in the world; she is in direct symbiosis with man and nature, and so the relations between place, psyche, and symbol assume a marked unity. Distinctions between subject and object are no longer valid: a change in perception correlates with changes in place and in feeling. There is no longer a boundary between inner and outer, person or place; the boundaries of self no longer hold with the ego or the skin, but merge in a dynamic interchange. Boundaries in fact do not exist; the earth, perhaps the universe, is one living organism, and what we call 'life' is the interlocking of 'separate' systems in an organic totality. Alan Watts gives perhaps the best analytical statement of this experience:

I begin to feel that the world is at once inside my head and outside it, and the two, inside and outside, begin to include or "cap" one another like an infinite series of concentric spheres. I am unusually aware that everything I am sensing is also my body--that light, color, shape, sound, and texture are terms and properties of the brain conferred upon the outside world. I am not looking at the world, not confronting it; I am knowing it by a continuous process of transforming it into myself, so that everything around me, the whole globe of space, no longer feels away from me but in the middle.

. . . Thus transformed into consciousness, into the electric, interior luminosity of the nerves, the world seems vaguely insubstantial--developed upon a color film, resounding upon the skin of a drum, pressing, not with weight, but with vibrations interpreted as weight. Solidity is a neurological invention, and I wonder, can the nerves be solid to themselves? Where do we begin? Does the order of the brain create the order of the world, or the order of the world the brain? The two seem like egg and hen, like back and front.<sup>15</sup>

This loosing of normal boundaries is the experience of becoming one with the world, in the transcendent manner of erotic union--the Biblical 'knowing'. This experience is in itself an archetype of the Creation Myths: the mountains' core, the Princess's soul, equals that symbolic

centre where Chaos is tranformed into Cosmos, where the unknown is made habitable.<sup>16</sup> This centre is the centre of the self and the centre of the world, the World Navel or the Place of Emergence which corresponds to "the inner chaos of the Rockies". (p. 493)

The chaos of the self lies in the forgotten and unknown powers of the total person; these powers surface unbidden in dreams, fantasies and meditation but the ego cannot use them as they threaten its integrity.<sup>17</sup> For the Princess spontaneity, openness, trust, love and sexuality are unknown and terrifying; she has never been aware of their existence within or without her, thanks to Colin's thorough teaching. But these are very real aspects of herself; these powers lie within her and have surfaced during her journey with Romero. She is, however, able to lose herself in experience only momentarily before her ego seeks to assert its powerful controls. Her life truly hangs in the outcome of this battle between the forces for self-discovery and self-control. She is anxious. In this state, the sun's going down, the bobcat's stare, the cold, the shadow, Romero's "quick force" conspire to play on her nerves and block the movements of her unconscious psyche. The vital meeting of self and other experienced as they flew down the "great hollow flank of the tawny mountain" (p. 499) should by rights be physically consummated. They have been lovers in spirit, and should celebrate this love by joining their bodies together in an ultimate merging. Instead, both the Princess and Romero have suddenly lost the core of themselves and are incapable of meeting.

They seemed far, far apart, worlds apart, now they were so near. (p. 502)

Significantly, they are lost in the cabin: in the realm of the 'house', social values rule and the ego regains its mastery over the total self.

In the cabin, the Princess returns to Colin's imposed values--she must be master--and Romero again becomes a servant. It is neither's fault, but rather a horrifying example of the strength of a socially defined 'self image' to interpret situations and define behavior.

She dreamed it was snowing and the snow was falling on her through the roof, softly, softly, helplessly, and she was going to be buried alive. She was growing colder and colder, the snow was weighing down on her. The snow was going to absorb her. (p. 503)

This nightmare describes the ego's taking mastery; it is the Princess's unconscious realization that she is smothering the core of herself, that she is dying.<sup>18</sup>

After her nightmare, the Princess undergoes the torments of a mind divided against itself--the "dark night of the soul"--as she rocks herself, shivering, towards Romero's warmth and love, and away from it to Colin's protecting restrictions that "no one should have any power over her, or rights to her." (p. 503) She is too anxious to hear and listen to her unconscious self--the flow is blocked by her frightened ego. In this state, she cannot remember vividly and trust her new experience of love as being one with, as both possessing and being possessed. Instead she remembers clearly her experience of Colin's love, but she cannot yet know that his love was actually power or bullying masquerading as love. And so she wisely fears power and possession, mastery and submission (an adequate description of legalized and idealized love, whether marital or parental); yet she also intuitively feels that love is not always destructive, but can be creative and essential.

"Oh, would not someone help her heart to beat?" (p. 503) Turning to Romero for the warmth of body and soul she so desperately needs, she is met by desire alone rather than by desire coupled with caring and understanding. To him, her all-too-human guide, she is no longer a child

to be cradled but a woman to be made, and a measure for his pride. Knowing this, her ego fears for its life. In this making, the child Princess--her ego--must die. Under this threat she cannot relax her guard.

As soon as he had lifted her in his arms, she wanted to scream to him not to touch her. She stiffened herself. Yet she was dumb.

And he was warm, but with a terrible animal warmth that seemed to annihilate her. He panted like an animal with desire. And she was given over to this thing. (p. 504)

Never has her divided mind, her divided self, been so cruelly tried; never has Colin's destructive power made her so much man's victim. She cannot even admit to herself that she had wanted wholly to know a physical fulfillment with Romero; after the rape, she can only rationalize that she had willed herself into the position of victim as a test intended to augment the strength of her ego.

She had never, never wanted to be given over to this. But she had willed that it should happen to her. And according to her will, she lay and let it happen. But she never wanted it. (p. 504)

The irony of this conclusion to the "Sacred Marriage" is that a gentleness on Romero's part could have rescued the Princess's body and soul and released her sexuality and love. Gentleness, a being open to the moment of experience between them and a trust in the reality of their spiritual merging, could so easily have unlocked her once-surfaced feelings, could have filled her soul and relaxed her frightened, stiffened body. Then, and only then, could she and Romero have been fulfilled in real coupling, in real communion. The lesson is that love--the merging with and glad acceptance of the world as oneself--cannot flower where there is control and a battle for power. Romero's bullying reinforces Colin's interpretation of the world and people as vulgar and ignoble; the Princess retreats into her childhood world and even finds an elderly husband to take the place of her father.



Instead of a profound and beautiful consummation of the archetype of the "Sacred Marriage", Lawrence portrays a degraded version of bullying and brutality; it is this negative aspect of power which destroys the Princess's inner self and causes her to torture Romero unmercifully, which inevitably causes his death and sends her back to society where the power roles are known and manipulable, where her hopes of love are a madness and idealized love is proper, where "she married an elderly man, and seemed pleased." (p. 512)

What else is there when love fails to become manifest, and the spirit dies? "Though now she would have called him to her, with love."  
(p. 510)

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men".

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Campbell, Hero With A Thousand Faces, (New York, 1971), p. 36. See also note 12.

<sup>2</sup>John B. Vickery, "Myth and Ritual in the Shorter Fiction of D.H. Lawrence", in Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice, ed. Vickery, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1969), p. 303.

Vickery feels that "myth is neither concealed nor employed as a critical instrument. Instead it operates as a kind of second story, almost a double plot which illuminates the basic story by suggesting a link with man's earliest forms of belief and behavior." (p. 303)

I disagree, and argue that Lawrence's use of the two archetypes is crucial to both the structure and the symbolism of the narrative.

<sup>3</sup>Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, (London, 1955), p. 319. (Translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.) This archetypal pattern is essential to an understanding of "The Woman Who Rode Away" as well as to "The Princess".

<sup>4</sup>All the established theories of personality stress the importance of the child's early socialization in either determining or predisposing adult patterns of perception and behavior. In both Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence dwells on the traditional perversion whereby unfulfilled parents forsake each other to concentrate on their children, negating their children's chance for sexual and emotional fulfillment and so propagating the vicious circle. Lawrence understands psychic growth in terms of a natural sequence of emotional connection and repulsion which checks enforced conformity and maximizes the child's own needs for exploration and independence as well as for guidance and security. When a child is groomed to meet the emotional and sexual needs of a parent, the drive for independence is punished so that the child is made to feel responsible for the parent's well-being. This inversion destroys the autonomy of the child's emotional centres and supplants spontaneity with idealism; the child comes to think his or her feelings and sexuality and loses touch with all realities other than the intellectual, the ideal. Perception and cognition are then related to an ego which is "I" divorced from "me"; consciousness is imposed from the outside world and is no longer generated from the whole being.

This process of natural growth and its perversion constitutes subject and theme in "The Princess".

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence leaves Hannah's death conveniently ambiguous: it may be simply an artistic device to get rid of an unnecessary character, but I think it can also be interpreted thematically in terms of the "Electra"

archetype. Hannah had been merely the means to an end for Colin; she could not become his wife in spirit because he refused to become real to her. In effect, Colin killed her spirit by depriving her of the reality and vitality of her life so that her physical death is simply the continuation of the metaphor. "Mrs. Urquhart lived three years in the mist and gloom of her husband's presence. And then it broke her." (p. 473) Similarly, the child's jealousy of her mother as a rival to Colin's attentions could conceivably have led her to wish that Hannah would 'die' or 'go away'. If this were the case--and Lawrence is not explicit--the Princess could assume a magical connection between her childish wish and her mother's death. (Such situations have been well documented by Freud and by Ericson, etc.)

This quote is taken from "The Princess", The Complete Short Stories, II, (New York, 1961), p. 477. All references to "The Princess" are taken from this edition and will be noted by page in the body of the text.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Campbell, Hero, p. 62.

Campbell uses the imagery of the circle, the serpent, sleep and other types of parental spells common to myth and romance to "denote the magic circle drawn about the personality by the dragon power of the fixating parent." (p. 62) The curse put upon the Princess at her birth is given by Colin who, while released from his emotional isolation, imprisons his daughter in his isolation. Here too the curse of being motherless contributes to the child's failure to grow.

<sup>7</sup> The title of "The Princess" includes allusions to Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" and "The Princess" where the mirror imagery is equally appropriate.

<sup>8</sup> Two parallels come to mind here: The Tempest by Shakespeare, and The Magus by John Fowles. The similarities between Prospero and Colin, Miranda and the Princess are striking: both fathers are kings-in-exile and live in isolation with their daughters in a world of magic. As well, Colin compares to the fabled king in The Magus who defined the world for his son:

In your father's kingdom there are many islands and many princesses. But you are under your father's spell, so you cannot see them.

John Fowles, The Magus, Boston, 1969, p. 500

<sup>9</sup> James C. Cowan, D.H. Lawrence's American Journey, (Cleveland, 1970), p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Cowan, American Journey, p. 65.

<sup>11</sup> I have used these three words to describe the root source of the Princess's assent because Lawrence has a quibble about the most suitable word. I prefer 'herself'!

"By the unconscious we wish to indicate that essential unique nature of every living creature which is, by its very nature, unanalyzable, undefinable, inconceivable. It cannot be conceived, it can only be experienced. . . . By the unconscious we do mean the soul. But the word soul has been vitiated by the idealistic use. . . . So we must relinquish the ideal word

soul."

Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, New York, 1968, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Campbell, Hero, p. 36.

As James Cowan also points out, "The Princess" follows the structural pattern of the monomyth: 1) separation or departure, 2) trials and victories of initiation, 3) return and reintegration with society. The Princess's journey on horseback is her departure, including some early trials and victories such as becoming open to loving; the rape and its attendant trauma constitute the initiation; the murder of Romero and her 'rescue' constitute her return while her final marriage is the ironic reintegration with society.

<sup>13</sup>Hero, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha, (New York, 1957), p. 152.

<sup>15</sup>Alan Watts, The Joyous Cosmology, (New York, 1965), p. 35.

This seems to me to be what Lawrence means by 'knowing'.

"Knowledge is always a matter of whole experience, what St. Paul calls knowing in full, and never a matter of mental conception merely."

Psychoanalysis, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Chaos and Cosmos: chaos is the formless void; cosmos is man's home.

This distinction between the two, and the categorization of the Creation myths is attributable to Mircea Eliade; Myth and Reality, New York, 1968, pp. 142-3.

The World Navel: "is the symbol of continuous creation: the mystery of the maintenance of the world through the continuous miracle of vivification which wells within all things." "The World Navel, then, is ubiquitous. And since it is the source of all existence, it yields the world's plenitude of both good and evil." Hero, p. 41; p. 44.

<sup>17</sup>Often neither the person nor the culture can make use of powers or aspects of experience which threaten the established order with spontaneous change; such powers are deemed evil and terrifying--they are the result of diabolical possession, sorcery or psychosexual deviance.

<sup>18</sup>The underlining is mine. James Cowan refers to Lawrence's study of Poe in Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 79:

"All this underground vault business. . .symbolizes that which takes place beneath the consciousness. On top all is fair-spoken. Beneath there is awful murderous extremity of burying alive."

#### CHAPTER IV

##### The Quest and the Sacrifice in "The Woman Who Rode Away"

"The Woman Who Rode Away" is the story of a woman who could not bear any longer to lose her soul in domestic slavery and found a desperate courage to escape. It is the story of her search for herself, for freedom and fulfillment as a human being. But the record of her success is obscured: like the Princess, the woman fails to find herself and be reborn into a full understanding of being Woman. However, her failure is not personal; she is a victim to the "mastery that man must hold, and that passes from race to race."<sup>1</sup>

Like "The Princess", "The Woman Who Rode Away" is informed by the Eleusinian mysteries of feminine transformation--the Persephone-Demeter archetype. Both stories follow the movement of the rites of the "Sacred Marriage": rape, victimization, death and apotheosis into the Feminine.<sup>2</sup> The emphasis on these rites is, however, markedly different: while "The Princess" focusses on sexual initiation and the male-female relationship, "The Woman Who Rode Away" concentrates upon the darker aspects of sacrificial rape and death. Here the woman is the archetypal virgin sacrifice--like Persephone and the Corn Maiden--who dies to ensure the fertility and fullness of life. But the woman is also the scapegoat--the archetypal redeemer of sins--for she is made to bear and pay for the sins of the white race, male as well as female, in corrupting the source of life; this introduces the theme of conflict and power into the archetype of love and birth.<sup>3</sup> Lawrence tries to mystify her role as scapegoat,

and to play down the theme of racial conflict and revenge, by arguing that the cosmic godhead is opposed to "her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual". (p. 569) It is the fierce intensity of this opposition that demands resolution through the propitiatory rites of the blood sacrifice.

Yet Lawrence contradicts himself in accusing the woman of a selfish individualism for the woman does not even have a name. The woman, like the Princess, is primarily identified by the myth which she enacts, but her myth is the more abstract and impersonal because she has no name. Unlike the Princess who was formally christened "Mary Henrietta Urquhart" and called "Dollie" by her relatives, the woman has no such kinship or social recognition; even her American citizenship has been forfeited. Lawrence has withheld both private and public identity from her: in effect, she does not exist outside her domestic roles as wife and mother, or outside her destiny as female sacrifice. She is always portrayed as one sleeping or dead; she is allowed no form of rebirth except by the implication of the myth she enacts.

The dichotomy between appearances and reality determines the symbolic aspect of her story, as it does in "The Princess"; both stories are informed by the patterns of irony and romance. In contrast to the psychic validation given to the Princess by the repetition of fairy tale motifs, the motifs of romance provide the stagnating background from which the woman escapes, and also render her quest and sacrifice ambiguous.

Her husband, an orphan who grew up without love and turned instead to the security of things and social power, wears the guise of the tyrant-king:

He is the hoarder of the general benefit. He is the monster avid for the greedy rights of "me" and "mine". The havoc wrought by him is described in mythology and fairy tales as

being universal throughout his domain. This may be no more than his household, his own tortured psyche, or the lives that he blights with the touch of his friendship and assistance; or it may amount to the extent of his civilization. The inflated ego of the tyrant is a curse to himself and his world--no matter how his affairs may seem to prosper.<sup>4</sup>

He has grown rich by mining, mechanically sucking the earth dry of its treasure, and spitting out the refuse; he has conquered the earth, making "sharp pinkish mounds of dried mud out of the great green-covered, unbroken mountain-hills". (p. 546) He has lost whatever sense of the beauty and providence of Mother Earth was born to him<sup>5</sup>, and replaced this open responsiveness with the principles and machines of industry. His capitalism provides the energy and the tenacity of his character, and leaves him unable to love or trust anything except his own power. His works stink of fear, greed and destruction, for he must dominate and suck life from the earth and from his young wife. He is a businessman, and "marriage was the last and most intimate of his works". (p. 547) Like Midas who sacrificed his living daughter for the permanence of a gold statue, the husband exchanges his wife for an object "dazzling" and "admired to extinction", and love for a "sentimental income". (pp. 547-9) Just as he has unlimited property rights to his mine, so he assumes unlimited rights over his wife's person. She belongs to him, she is his property to control and dispose of as he wills: "Like any sheikh, he kept her guarded among those mountains of Chihuahua". (p. 547) But in this way, he leaves himself wide open to his cancerous fear of losing her to another man; to compensate for this threat, he virtually imprisons her in the compound of house, patio and mine, and watches her closely. It is not enough for him to trust his wife, but he will effectively guarantee her honesty and dictate her conduct. Certainly "He was a man of principles and a good husband." (p. 547)

Yet it is obvious that he is really a tyrant who acts out his role as husband and remains psychically untouched by any deep and sensitive response to his wife. He fears to build a relationship of vital trust and loving with her, and defends himself against this vulnerability and ecstasy by substituting an ideal image he can grasp and control for her real person. The existential truth of his being is that "essentially, he was still a bachelor." (p. 547) As R.D. Laing explains, this personality pattern is that of the schizoid person who protects himself from being engulfed and lost in intimacy with another by petrifying them with "an inner intellectual Medusa's head".<sup>6</sup> Perhaps more apt than this image of Medusa for the husband's defenses against intimacy with his wife are the guises of Midas whose desire for gold and permanence parallel the husband's for silver and security, and of Pygmalion whose desire to love the statue he sculpted parallels the husband's desire to love the ideal he has created of his wife. Because he has given external form to these inner defenses, the husband appears as well in the guise of the tyrant Minos who fashioned the labyrinth to hide the threatening Minotaur and secure his kingdom. The labyrinth is become the veins of silver in the mines, and the Minotaur is the real wife whose autonomy threatens her husband: he treats her "as if his wife were some peculiar secret vein of ore in his mines, which no one must be aware of except himself." (p. 548)

In spite of his being psychologically impoverished, the husband still appears whole and wields the clubs of respectable wealth, status and power in both his private and public circles. He is neither culturally nor psychically destroyed; rather it is his young wife who suffers and pays for his refusal of intimacy.

At thirty-three she really was still the girl from Berkeley, in all but physique. Her conscious development



had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested. Her husband had never become real to her, neither mentally nor physically. . . .Only morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery. (p. 547)

Because her husband is hidden from her, the young wife cannot come to know him as he really is, and any possibility of experiencing and sharing love is thus denied her. Since she is defended against her, she can meet no response to her needs in him so that she is unable to grow into or beyond her roles as wife and mother. Without knowing and feeling that her husband sees, trusts and appreciates her, she cannot possibly bear the psychic fruit of her real womanhood; it is just this vital recognition and nourishment that he withholds from her. He deprives her of any fulfillment of her spiritual, emotional and sexual needs, and isolates her from even the possibility of learning just how deprived and enslaved she is by keeping her prisoner within the patio gates. He literally condemns her to a barren servility from which there is no escape, except that he miscalculates the wisdom and force of the Unconscious, the organic imperative behind her nervous breakdown which compels her finally to "get out". (p. 548)

At the same time, the young wife is a naive and unfortunate victim of the vicious myth of the American Dream, accepting the cultural equation that the possession of certain external qualities certifies the reality of inner virtue. Lawrence begins her history with the ironic "She had thought that this marriage, of all marriages, would be an adventure." (p. 546) It is quite clear that the young wife married not a mere man but a culture hero, like Horatio Alger or Benjamin Franklin: a self-made hero whose age assured her of his wisdom and breadth of experience, whose riches assured her of his moral goodness and exemplary character, and whose foreign travels assured her of his cosmopolitan

sophistication; in short, an excellent husband! She is inexperienced in human relationships and naively accepts the culturally-defined image of masculinity, believing that the image is the reality; with marriage too, she assumes that acting out the role of wife or mother guarantees its reality and validates the marriage. The irony is that of course she learns her mistake, but too late: "When she actually saw what he had accomplished, her heart quailed." (p. 546) The evidence of his ruthless domination surrounds her and weighs on her emotionally, but, like a quail already snared, she is utterly vulnerable and far too threatened by her total dependence on her husband to confront him consciously. Her only defense is to divide and, ultimately, to destroy herself. Consciously she submits to her husband, passively obeying his commands, enduring his touch, and bearing his children; unconsciously she knows nothing of the real bonds between man and woman, or mother and child. She knows nothing of her sexuality or her emotions, even her frustration is projected onto the "flowers that were never very flowery to her". (p. 547) Her psyche remains untouched and virginal, but sterile. But she is unable to sustain the cost of this self-destruction, and suffers the impasse of a nervous breakdown where she retreats into her girlhood dreams and recognizes her need of "being free as she had been as a girl, among the hills of California". (p. 550) These memories serve to cancel out the barren years she has passed under her husband's "spell" (p. 548), and give her the courage to renounce the ties to her husband and children that bind her to those barren years so that she can be free to start again. Only when she begins to grow anew and bring forth fruit will she no longer be "void as only the undiscovered is void". (p. 548)

Lawrence makes it clear that the woman has a right, it not a duty to herself, to escape: her marriage is a cruel parody of the "Sacred Marriage"

for she experiences no sexual awakening, no living, and no transformation into womanhood. It is impossible for her to grow into herself and know her divine aspects--to merge with the Great Mother--when her husband, the 'other' through whom the transformation is worked, refuses to show himself to her or to affirm her spirit.<sup>7</sup>

The "Sacred Marriage" is ultimately the one archetypal pattern open to women, and traditionally woman has been portrayed passively rather than actively, as the prize bestowed on the questing hero.

Woman. . . represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know. . . . And if he can match her import, the two, the knower and the known, will be released from every limitation.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of the failure of marriage in "The Woman Who Rode Away" is this twofold: it reveals the impotence of the husband in terms suggestive of the spiritual decadence of his society, and passes on the responsibility for the heroic quest and the renewal of society to the woman. But the one ritual path open to her is initiation into the mysteries of life through sexual union with the male principle (god, priest or man) and transcendence of the barrier of 'other', and through complete union with the multiple and paradoxical aspects of herself (the Divine Mother as life-creator and life-destroyer). The essence of this initiation is the passage from death to new life: the limited, socially-defined self (ego) must sacrifice its illusory autonomy and die, so that the whole self, the divine self, is reborn in innocence and harmony with the universe. This passage from death to rebirth is symbolized as a journey to the World Navel where the hero is flooded with the realization that he is inseparable from and interchangeable with the cosmos: ". . . the hero as the incarnation of God is himself the navel of the world, the umbilical point through which the energies of eternity break into time."<sup>9</sup>

But no one who has failed to kill his ego can bear this inner/outer revelation, for the ego asserts not the unity of all being--that All is God--but the division, the illusion, that 'I' am God-'you' are not. "And to be God is obviously the ultimate power trip."<sup>10</sup> To find again the primal unity of all being and to be filled with love means that the illusion of power, the false independence of 'I' which creates conflict, must be forfeited. Or, in Lawrence's words: "One has oneself a fixed conscious entity, a self which one has to smash. . .and creep forth tender and overvulnerable, but alive."<sup>11</sup> This is the challenge facing the woman. Her destiny lies in forsaking the narrow and sterile vision of her society, and equally her socially-defined ego, to venture alone into the unknown realm not only of the Chilchuis but also of the fullness of human consciousness. Her journey is a sacred one, a pilgrimage to beg of the Chilchuis the wisdom of living in harmony with rather than in opposition to the natural ways of the universe. It is primarily a quest to lose the falsely independent, deadening ego self, and to gain herself in the wholeness of being in direct relation with the vital flow of the world; to discover that,

Heaven and earth and I are of the same root,  
The ten-thousand things and I are of the same substance.<sup>12</sup>

The woman's dreams of "being free as she had been as a girl" (p. 550) express both her rejection of the empty social bonds of marriage, and her psychological readiness to hear and respond to the heroic summons. This call to destiny comes seemingly by chance in the midst of a speculative conversation on the primitive life of the Chihuahua Indians. Significantly, this conversation is polarized between two stereotyped 'white' attitudes which are equally uninformed, emotional and biased; but both serve to ridicule the woman's response which is primarily religious. She is

neither gushingly naive nor derogatorially superior, but rather open and receptive to her intuition of the fuller scope of the Chilchuis way of living in close harmony with nature.

Lawrence's word about the "monotony of her life" and her longing to be "free" (pp. 549-550) makes clear that the call is to spiritual passage from constriction to freedom.<sup>13</sup>

In this passage, Cowan notes only part of the whole context describing the woman's quest: it is clear that Lawrence indeed characterized her quest as a search for spiritual freedom and fulfillment, but it is equally clear--indeed emphasized by the emotional tone and repeated qualifications--that Lawrence mocks the woman and her quest. By aligning her response with the emotionally effusive yearning for 'primitivism'--"it must be wonderful, surely it must" (p. 549)--relative to the more rational. 'sophisticated' dismissal of the Noble Savage, Lawrence makes the woman appear ridiculous and pathetic rather than open and receptive.

Lawrence exhibits an extraordinary ambivalence towards the woman, which is finally resolved by the projected hostility of the Chilchuis against "her kind of womanhood" (p. 569), and culminates in her death sentence. At first this hostility is potent but controlled, masked underneath his championing of spontaneity and living values: through the woman's eyes, he condemns the destructive energies and will-to-power of her "idealist" (p. 548) husband, and his mechanical mode of living. But Lawrence describes the husband far more sympathetically than the wife: he is 'vital', 'dynamic', "wiry: and "full of energy", while she is "large", "dazed", in a "stupor of subjected amazement" and "beginning to grow stout". (p. 547) In addition, Lawrence in the role of omniscient author, scornfully degrades her call as being merely an "echo", merely a "foolish romanticism more unreal than a girl's" and symptomatic of an adolescent passion for feeling important by having a "secret" and a "destiny";

similarly, her preparations for the journey are merely "her crazy plans". (pp. 549-550) Moreover, his comments from pages 549 to 556 slyly imply that the woman is always deficient--her ego or ego-loss is always inappropriate to the circumstances; this method of undermining her progress is in blatant contradiction to the symbolism of her progress:

She lay. . .feeling like a woman who has died and passed beyond. She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious. (p. 552)

Despite the double negative which gives the woman a quality of childlike openness (or stupidity, depending on point of view), the passage graphically describes her spontaneous ego-loss, and unites her with the World Navel in an experience of cosmic consciousness. This consciousness is naturally fragile, and the sacrifice of the ego one of cycles--up and down, in and out. Lawrence is sensitive to this alternation within the woman's psyche as she passes alone but attuned to the inner forces directing her to the spiritual womb of the Chilchuis where she will be guided into cosmic being; but this sensitivity is twisted because Lawrence is biased in emotionally defining this archetypal process negatively as though it were the woman's personal fault that her socially-defined and entrenched self will not easily disappear. His ambivalence destroys the integrity of the symbolic patterns by rendering the action ambiguously in terms of the archetypes and the hostile intrusions of the omniscient narrator.<sup>15</sup>

In light of this ambivalence, it is important to note that the criticisms of the woman are founded on Lawrence's use of the bawdy fabliau plot of the May-January marriage; it is indicative of his hostility that this plot has been so often used by misogynists to warn men of the dangers of intimacy with women.<sup>16</sup> Here the archetypal


significance of the failure of the "Sacred Marriage" and the psychic necessity that compels the woman to undertake the heroic quest are overshadowed by the ribald stereotypes of the sex-hungry young wife and the jealous senex amans whose failing powers do not match his passion. The woman is belittled and reduced to a type of the beautiful blonde wife who has traded her youth and sexual favours for the wealth and status of an elderly husband--only to find that she has made a bad bargain. Medieval plots and Hollywood scripts provide the standard escape and revenge motif: the cuckolding of the affair. Lawrence chooses to substitute a mental seduction whereby a young engineer, one of those visitors the husband felt particularly threatened by, "put the idea into her mind". (p. 548) The wife is tempted and succumbs to desire; thus her desire is rendered ambiguous--it is primarily a response to spiritual summons, but clouded by the sexual undertones of the fabliau plot. This ambiguity serves to draw attention to the virginal qualities of the woman requisite to her initiation into the cosmic embrace (she is Kore, or maiden)<sup>17</sup>, but also to reserve the expected seduction scenes until the climax of her adventure. This expectation of the sexual and titillating severely degrades the rites symbolic of the soul's reunion with the body, its temple. The woman's meeting with the guides emphasizes her fears of being attacked and raped. These fears grow more intense during her investiture, and her purification and ritual anointing in the kiva (the temple symbolizing the Place of Emergence of the World Navel).<sup>18</sup> The significance of these rites lies in breaking all ties with the woman's past and defining her new role and status as one who is destined for the gods. However, the description of these rites plays on the sexual implications behind the woman's being stripped naked and being washed and massaged, ignoring the traditional symbolism of the cleansing of sin and the marking of royalty.

Even the final ritual of sacrifice with its cosmic symbolism of the embrace, the all-creative lingam, is profaned and degraded by the ribald expectations built into the May-January marriage. The 'climax' is thus ambiguous: a spiritual tuning-in mirrored and aped by a physical turn-on. In this context, it is significant that Kate Millett has observed that the sacrifices of a white woman by savages belongs to the well-established genres dealing with colonial frontiers in the American South and West, Africa and Asia. This motif "serves to titillate the white male, intimidate 'his woman', and slander the persons upon whom the white male has shifted the burden of his own prurient sadism."<sup>19</sup> Where love and love's peace is lacking in relations between the sexes or between races, the cosmic unity of man, of being human together in a living universe, is degraded into power struggles. Ironically the conflict engendered by a lack of love is a contest to trick or steal love; but love can only be given freely, it cannot be won or stolen, though it is implicit in every contest.<sup>20</sup>

Love has to spring spontaneously from within: and it is in no way amenable to any form of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together: but though love cannot be forced on anyone, it can be awakened in him through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative.<sup>21</sup>

It is extremely important to recognize that this dualistic interplay between the archetypal and the stereotyped plots springs from Lawrence's own ambivalence towards both the woman and the Chilchuis. His positive feelings and intuitions are strong and render the story consistent as a monomyth where the Chilchuis serve as archetypal priests-teachers, and the cacique as a sage or as Tezcatlipoca<sup>22</sup> whose sacred function is to initiate the woman into the mysteries of being-in-the-cosmos. But his negative feelings constantly undercut this religious experience and render the story ambiguously in terms of a power struggle between men and women,



and between the dark and white races: "The mastery that man must hold, a and that passes from race to race". (p. 581) Is it mastery of male over female, of Indian over white cultures, or is it really the triumph of love over māyā which is necessary to further the whole development of the earth in relation to the universe in relation to the galaxies in relation to the Cosmic Mover/the All-Creative Void?<sup>23</sup> "The Woman Who Rode Away" is aesthetically an interweaving of love and hostility, a true pattern of the  Yin and Yang; it is fitting that ultimately the symbol of Tezcatlipoca governs and redeems the stereotyped plots.

Tezcatlipoca, the second and black son of Ometotl, is "the mirror of day and night"; he "who illumines and who obscures with his smoke".<sup>24</sup> Tezcatlipoca is one and the same as Christ, as Buddha, as the Guru, the Sage, as Janus--he is the Son and the Way to the Creator:

Mother of the gods, father of the gods, the old god  
spread out on the navel of the earth,  
within the circle of turquoise.  
He who dwells in the waters the color of the bluebird, he  
who dwells in the clouds.  
The old god, he who inhabits the shadows of the land of  
the dead,  
the Lord of fire and of time.<sup>25</sup>

Texcatlipoca, like Janus, looks both ways--towards the Creator and the world, towards winter and spring; he is male and female, parent and child, youth and age, human and divine, yin and yang; he is Love. Thus the cacique as Texcatlipoca is "Master of the Two Worlds"<sup>26</sup>; he is the way of initiation for the woman who is identified by the blue of her tunic and its embroidered scarlet and green flowers as the Aztec goddess of art, xochiquetzalli<sup>27</sup>; he is the way of redemption for her husband, January, who has failed to grow in love and wisdom, to live at once as God and man.

However, the Nahuatl particularly characterized Tezcatlipoca as the

son "who had more authority and power. . . .He was born black."<sup>28</sup> In this light, the cacique is one driven to use his knowledge for power (sorcery<sup>29</sup>): he sacrifices the woman to obtain not merely her redemption but the triumph of his people over hers. Like her husband January, the cacique looks through the woman to see only his cultural idea of her; he is a more enlightened tyrant. He sees the woman as fulfilling a role in Nahuatl mythology: she is a symbol, a poem, a messenger, a prayer-offering to the Creator, she is,

The blue wind, the go-between, the invisible ghost that belonged to two worlds, that played upon the ascending and descending chords of the rains. (p. 574)

Before the woman is sacrificed, she grows in understanding the undercurrent of hate which makes human sacrifice an ambivalent symbol reflecting the essential unity of Man and the conflict between the races of men:

She listened, watching him closely, as one enemy watches another who is speaking with double meaning. (p. 571)

But, like Christ, she assents to her death and is filled with hope and compassion for her enemy/friend: "She knew she was a victim. . . .She wanted it." (p. 577) At the same time, her submission is not yet complete: she understands her death as final--". . .her soul sickened and felt wan" (p. 579)--and has not yet grown into the understanding that death leads to union with the Creator, to the most Sacred Marriage, and that she will not be wasted but will give life as the Divine Mother.

The battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another.<sup>30</sup>

The Aztec rites of human sacrifice were completed by the tearing out of the divine victim's heart and offering it as food to the Sun/Creator, and by the ritual eating of the victim's flesh.<sup>31</sup> This cannibalistic rite, parallel to the Christian Eucharist, celebrates the mystery of eating

whereby death gives life, and the gift of life from plants and animals to man is made sacred by the ultimate gift of man to God and to men.

Similarly, the rite of burial in the ground celebrates the sacred cycle whereby the disintegrating body nourishes the life in the seeds that provide animals and man with food, shelter, clothes, beauty, music and the artistic inspiration which gives men understanding and joy.

Whatever the artist makes  
is an image of reality;  
he seeks its true appearance.<sup>32</sup>

The great failure of the sacrifice motif in "The Woman Who Rode Away" is that Lawrence leaves the woman's sacrifice ritually incomplete: the woman is neither eaten, nor buried, nor risen from the dead to return home to teach her husband and love her children. Lawrence's archetypal pattern is only two-thirds complete: the quest and the sacrifice demand to be fulfilled by the return of the hero from eternity into time.<sup>33</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>D.H. Lawrence, "The Woman Who Rode Away", The Complete Short Stories (New York, 1961), II, p. 581

All references to "The Woman Who Rode Away" are taken from this edition, and will be noted by page in the body of the text.

<sup>2</sup>Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (London, 1955), p. 319. (Translated from the German by Ralph Manheim).

<sup>3</sup>John B. Vickery, "Myth and Ritual in the Shorter Fiction of D.H. Lawrence", in Vickery, ed., Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1969), pp. 301-303.

Vickery says of this story that it deals "directly and as part of the narrative with the myth of the reviving god and his worship through rites of separation, initiation, propitiation, and ordination." (p. 303)

I feel that Lawrence does not explore the archetype of the reborn god (dess) except by implication; his focus is on the dying god and rites of propitiation. (See page 15)

James C. Cowan, D.H. Lawrence's American Journey (Cleveland, Ohio, 1970), pp. 74-78.

Cowan gives the sources of the scapegoat motif in terms of the Aztec and European solar calendars and the annual rites. He gives a very pertinent description of the woman's parallel to Christ: "her age, thirty-three; her journey of three days, a metaphorical descent into hell; her ritualistic anointing with oil and perfume; her sign of peace to the ancient cacique; her cup of filiquour; an analogy to the chalice of the Last Supper; her being stripped for the sacrifice; and finally her death for being stripped for the sins of her race and the redemption of the world." (p. 77) He also notes her associations with Mary: "the color blue and her bloneness suggesting the "queen of heaven". (p. 77) Unfortunately he does not recognize these parallels in terms of the Pueblo, Yaquis and Huichol, and Aztec rituals to realize the extent to which Lawrence united the attributes of the World Saviours in the woman's quest and sacrifice. But Cowan's insights do point the way to the supercession of Roman Catholicism by the Old Ways renewed in The Plumed Serpent: when God is the same, and man is the same, only the names change.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Campbell, Hero With A Thousand Faces. (New York, 1971), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Here it is appropriate to note a letter from the Hopi Nation which illumines the husband's attitude. Paying attention to the "way of Nature" is what Lawrence called knowing the 'spirit of place' with all one's senses and with caring; hence the real beauty of his natural descriptions

and, for me, the zenith of his art.

The white man, through his insensitivity to the way of Nature, has desecrated the face of Mother Earth. The white man's advanced technological capacity has occurred as a result of his lack of regard for the spiritual path and for the way of all living things. The white man's desire for material possessions and power had blinded him to the pain he has caused Mother Earth by his quest for what he calls natural resources.

T.C. McLuhan, ed., Touch The Earth: A Self-Portrait of Indian Existence (New York, 1972), p. 170.

<sup>6</sup>R.D. Laing, The Divided Self (Middlesex, 1966), p. 76.

Such a schizoid individual in one sense is trying to be omnipotent by enclosing within his own being, without recourse to a creative relationship with others, modes of relationship that require the effective presence of him to other people and of the outer world. He would appear to be, in an unreal, impossible way, all persons and things to himself. The imagined advantages are safety for the true self, isolation and hence freedom from others, self-sufficiency and control. (p. 76)

<sup>7</sup>Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, p. 319.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Campbell, Hero, p. 116.

<sup>9</sup>Hero, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup>Alpert/Baba Ram Dass, Remember, Now Be Here (San Cristobal, New Mexico, 1971), p. 86.

<sup>11</sup>D.H. Lawrence, Letter to J.O. Meredith 2 November 1915. Quoted in Cowan, American Journey, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>Sojo (Zen monk-scholar), quoted in Alan Watts, Psychotherapy East & West (New York, 1970), p. 129.

<sup>13</sup>Cowan, American Journey, p. 71.

<sup>14</sup>Lawrence is also ambivalent towards the Chilchuis, but this ambivalence is very complex--a mixture of overwhelming awe and appreciation drawn from his sensitive perceptions and intuitions about the Pueblo peoples, and of a proud and angry resentment drawn from rather nasty experiences gleaned while he was travelling in New and Old Mexico.

First of all, the Chilchuis are essentially fantastic characters imagined and idealized by Lawrence; it is useless to speculate on an actual tribal model such as the Huichols of Nayarit. (See Cowan, p. 76) The Chilchuis in fact seem to owe most to Lawrence's experiences at Taos Pueblo and his understanding of their way of life: the religious fabric of their lives which is symbolized in the architecture and planning of the pueblo around the plaza with its underground kiva; the solar calendar governing all religious activities: music, dance, theatre, painting and weaving, pottery, medicine, education, herding and agriculture; a social

organization based on ceremonial duties and status. Even the barring of burros and wagons or cars during the "time of keeping still" previous to the Winter Solstice, and the sacred cave of Taos--the water-dripping cave symbolizing the cosmic embrace, show their influence on Lawrence's imagined portrayal of the ancient ways. As for the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms and cacti, the use of peyote by the rebellious youth was a large issue at Taos at the time of Lawrence's visits. (See Elsie Clews Parsons, Taos Pueblo, Menasha, Wisconsin, 1936, pp. 74-116). The use of hallucinogens as spiritual helpers was of course far more evident in the ceremonies of the Huichols and the Tarahumaras of Nayarit and the Yaquis of Sonora, and preserved in the Aztec codices. (See Bennett & Zingg, The Tarahumaras, Chicago, 1935; Carlos Castaneda, A Separate Reality: Further Conversations With Don Juan, New York, 1971; Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico, New York, 1902; Fray Diego Duran, Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar, Norman, Oklahoma, 1971).

The Chilchuis seem to be the dramatic embodiments of Lawrence's description in "New Mexico" (Phoenix, ed., A.A. Inglis, p. 129) of the Indian as "what he seems to me to be, in his ancient, ancient race-self and religious-self." But Lawrence does not confine himself to realizing in the Chilchuis "the old, old root of human consciousness still reaching down to depths we know nothing of. . . ." ("New Mexico", p. 130). Instead of imagining the Indians as they had lived before the Conquest, he chose a compromise: the tribe lives isolated in an integral harmony with the cosmos, but in fierce hatred of the white conquerors, their sterile religion and their culture. The major difficulty is that this compromise portrait is not balanced: the two poles of harmony and hatred, of ancient and contemporary, are at odds in Indian and Lawrentian experience. From the Pueblo peoples Lawrence learned more of the ancient ways of peace because they had been spared the worst excesses of the Spanish, Mexicans and Americans; from the Indian peoples of Mexico Lawrence learned and felt the pervasive mistrust and hostility of a subject race towards the white conquerors. In terms of the ambivalence distorting the story, it is important to realize that for the Pueblo peoples Lawrence carefully edits the contemporary and individual from the ancient and tribal, from the religious. (See "New Mexico", p. 130). But for the Mexicans, he cannot make such allowances as the racial barriers are too strong. Lawrence of course sides with the underdog against the master, but this is an abstract position not borne out by his own actions, described in "The Mozo" and in "Walk to Huayapa" (Mornings In Mexico, London, 1965, pp. 9-35):

But we don't belong to the ruling race for nothing. Into the yard we march. (p. 19)

This hostility shows itself in "The Woman Who Rode Away" where the woman, like Lawrence, demands to be treated by the Chilchuis as a person, as an individual rather than a class, but instead is stared down and looked through, and finally victimized by their hatred, despite her classifying them as "just natives" (p. 553).

<sup>15</sup>F.N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey CHAUCER, (Boston, 1961), p. 9.

Robinson confirms that the type of the senex amans, the aged husband, as well as the cuckolding of the aged husband by his young wife--the "Pear-

tree Episode"--are universal folklore motifs. He goes on to point out that the Merchant, whom Chaucer characterizes as a man who is unhappily married, uses the story of January and May "to give point to his bitter condemnation of matrimony and of the women to whose evil devices it exposes men". (p. 9)

<sup>16</sup>The Great Mother, p. 319.

<sup>17</sup>Frank Waters, Book of the Hopi (New York, 1971), p. 30

<sup>18</sup>Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York, 1970), p. 286.

<sup>19</sup>Alan Watts, Psychotherapy East & West (New York, 1970), pp. 144-214.

<sup>20</sup>Meher Baba, quoted in Ram Dass, Remember, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup>See Ram Dass, Remember, pp. 4-6; Lao Tsu, Tao Te Ching (New York, 1972), (Translated by Gio-Fu Feng and Jane English); Leon-Portilla, Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind (Norman, Oklahoma, 1963), pp. 32-33 (Translated by Jack Emory Davis).

<sup>22</sup>Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man (New York, 1961), pp. 249-298.

<sup>23</sup>Miguel Leon-Portilla, Aztec Thought and Culture, p. 90.

<sup>24</sup>Aztec Thought and Culture, p. 32. From the Codice Florentino, Book VI (unpublished), fol. 71, v.

<sup>25</sup>Hero, p. 229.

<sup>26</sup>Fray Diego Duran, Book of the Gods and Rites, and the Ancient Calendar (Norman, Oklahoma, 1971), pp. 238-244; plate 25.

## CHAPTER V

### The Quest for Atonement in St. Mawr

St. Mawr, like "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away", is primarily a study in the transformation of the Feminine<sup>1</sup>, and focusses on the spiritual development of Lou Witt from an initial egotism and confusion to a deeper understanding of her own inability to love and an acceptance of the failure of her marriage, an acceptance which leads her finally to the joyful realization of her further purpose and fulfillment as a Woman. The archetypal pattern which underlies her transformation is the heroic quest to bring her life back into harmony with the Source of life itself, the quest for "atonement with the Father".<sup>2</sup> The quest for atonement grows out of Lawrence's concern with the ominous estrangement of modern society from its own roots in, and kinship with, the natural world, and it emphasizes the universal nature of Lou's quest: she is Everyman and Everywoman who must forgo the corrupted vision of a society which serves only its own selfish ends, and ignores the further claims and purpose of life as a whole. The rites of the "Sacred Marriage", central to both "The Princess" and "The Woman Who Rode Away", are of secondary importance and represent the completion and the further promise of the ritual of atonement in St. Mawr: the promise of the Virgin dedicated to the service of her unseen Lord is the promise of their fruitful union and the renewal of all life.<sup>3</sup> However, Lawrence does not portray the ritual of the "Sacred Marriage", but only alludes to its promise, leaving the conclusion of Lou's quest open to ambiguity, but



also emphasizing that the transforming power of ritual lies not so much in its performance as in understanding its significance. This emphasis is consonant with Lawrence's satirical portrayal of modern society in St. Mawr where the sacred rituals of life are performed but only as a matter of social form, having no inner substance and bearing no issue. The sacred rites of passage (sexual initiation and marriage, death and burial), and the life-supporting rituals of the household and the community are equally empty so that the whole fabric of life in the modern world is undermined and betrayed into sterility and barrenness.

And every civilization, when it loses its inward vision and its cleaner energy, falls into a new sort of sordidness, more vast and more stupendous than the old savage sort. An Augean stables of metallic filth.<sup>4</sup>

In St. Mawr Lawrence exposes the inner chaos and hypocrisy of modern society, and condemns the hubris of modern man cut off from the living universe and defying the primal power which sustains, destroys and renews all life. This is a theme repeated in "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine", written at the same time as St. Mawr, where Lawrence concludes that man will persist in this defiance until he is "abandoned as a failure in creation, as the ichthyosaurus was abandoned".<sup>5</sup> In St. Mawr, however, Lawrence acknowledges the probability of a tragic outcome by stressing the almost-impossible nature and scope of the Herculean task of recycling the spiritual and material wastes of modern society; but he prefers to explore the possibility of atonement and redemption. The essential vision of St. Mawr is apocalyptic rather than tragic in affirming the power of life to triumph over evil--the stagnant, the artificial, the sterile and the petty in man and his civilization.<sup>6</sup> Lawrence's problem was not merely to expose this evil, but to trace its origins and uproot it so that the healthy aspects of man's being could surface and grow to

fulfillment: "to find symbols of sufficient sterility to embody the moral waste land of contemporary life and a myth potent enough to transform it".<sup>7</sup> The one myth potent to work this miracle of redemption is the "Pan-mystery [of] the flame-life in all the universe",<sup>8</sup> or the mystery of indwelling Godhead. Lawrence uses the dual nature of Pan to advantage in St. Mawr where Pan functions first as the Goat God whose power "overturns the reason and releases the forces of the destructive-creative dark", and second as the Great God who grants the "wisdom of Omphalos, the World Navel".<sup>9</sup> The first allies the power and vitality of the animal world to the task of healing the split between mind and body, reuniting man with nature, while the second reveals the mystery of the Godhead omnipresent in all created things: "the hidden fire. . . alive and burning in this sky, over the desert, in the mountains" (p. 147). Pan then is both guardian and guide to the mysteries of initiation in which the will of man is reconciled to the larger will of Life, and redemption achieved.

St. Mawr's vision of redemption is rooted in the archetypal process of death and rebirth, which follows the organic process of metamorphosis in its twin rhythms of disintegration and regeneration. These elemental rhythms form the narrative structure of the novel where disintegration--both the decadence of modern society and the gradual sloughing off of the ego centred in that society--is expressed through satire and irony, and its complementary rhythm of regeneration is expressed through the heroic quest.<sup>10</sup> The tension between these two polar rhythms creates the conditions necessary for further growth and finally for resolution, so that the dual structure of St. Mawr is itself symbolic of the transformation undergone by the heroine, Lou Witt.

The story of St. Mawr is essentially episodic in form, the

several episodes becoming, as the book progresses, shorter in length, less dramatic in conception, and barer of interpersonal conflict. The curve indicates, in fact, the progress of Lou from confusion and immersion in the world of her husband to a state of solitary self-knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

St. Mawr expresses the nature of Lou's quest in this movement away from the competing and discordant towards the peaceful and centred: her rejection of the world for the further mystery and fulfillment of the spirit. St. Mawr in fact moves towards silence, the silence beyond opposition "where the stillness simply speaks" (p. 160). As Joseph Campbell explains, the quest of the hero moves towards the stillpoint where the world of eternity breaks into the world of time, and the One becomes the Many: the wisdom of the World Navel. The hero faces one last decision: either to return to his society and teach his fellow-men the mystery of their true nature as Sons of God, or to pass beyond life into eternity, into the Void enclosing and containing all created things. If the latter, the quest of the hero becomes the quest of the saint:

The pattern is that of going to the father, but to the unmanifest rather than the manifest aspect. . . Not the paradox of the dual perspective, but the ultimate claim of the unseen is here intended. The ego is burnt out. Like a dead leaf in a breeze, the body continues to move about the earth, but the soul has dissolved already in the ocean of bliss. . . . Once the hidden profile of God has been discovered, myth is the penultimate, silence the ultimate, word. The moment the spirit passes to the hidden, silence alone remains.<sup>12</sup>

This is the meaning behind Lou's "turning to the unseen spirits, the hidden fire, and devoting herself to that, and that alone" (p. 146). Once Lou gives herself over to "the hidden fire" which purifies and renews, she is granted the wisdom of the World Navel and transcends ego and destiny to become "one of the eternal Virgins, serving the eternal life". (p. 146).<sup>13</sup>

Lawrence begins Lou's story by revealing her inner despair and confusion: she has never failed to get anything she really wanted, and

yet nothing has made her happy or fulfilled.

Lou Witt had had her own way so long, that by the age of 25 she didn't know where she was. Having one's own way landed one completely at sea. (p. 11)

She feels lost and rootless, with a "lurking sense of being an outsider everywhere" (p. 11) which she tries to cover up by attempting "to fit in, to make good" (p. 14). Her whole life is a child's game of make-believe and attending to appearances; like one of Rico's paintings, on the surface everything is charming and elegant, but underneath is nothing but confusion and unresolved tensions. Lou is alienated from herself, afraid of her doubts and her anger, afraid of her sexuality and her frustration, and unable to rebel against social pressures. She is afraid to listen and trust in her feelings to guide her, and can see no way out of her situation so she steels herself to "keep holding on, in this life, never give way, and never give in" (p. 22).

Lou's quest begins dramatically when she encounters the stallion, St. Mawr, and is "startled" to find herself in touch with a real horse rather than the ideal accessory she had planned to complete the "pretty-pretty picture" (p. 18) of her life with Rico:

She was startled to feel the vivid heat of his life come through to her, through the lacquer of red-gold gloss. (p. 21)

The shock of feeling the hot, potent life of St. Mawr flood into her own body makes Lou realize the intense difference between the ideal and the real, and precipitates the first breakthrough of her own emotional growth:

But now, as if that mysterious fire of the horse's body had split some rock in her, she went home and hid herself in her room, and just cried. (p. 22)

This emotional release restores some of the repressed potential Lou has for coming to terms with her situation, and signifies her readiness to

overcome the fears which have kept her isolated from others and alienated from herself. By refusing to confront her deepest feelings and doubts, Lou had built up an unconscious shell to protect her from her own unhappiness; she dared not feel too much or look too closely at Rico or their marriage for fear of what she might learn. But St. Mawr has unexpectedly penetrated this defense and broken its stranglehold on her feelings, opening her to the integrative, healing powers of the unconscious.

Lou is spontaneously drawn back to her experience of St. Mawr, and his image takes root in her psyche where it assumes god-like proportions and powers:

Almost like a god looking at her terribly out of that everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse; great, glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question, and containing a white blade of light like a threat. (p. 22)

St. Mawr thus becomes the representation of Pan who controls all the vital, instinctual forces of the animal kingdom: power, intuition, will, potency or fertility, and beauty. These vital forces, which Lou has repressed in complying with the ideal and platonic nature of her marriage to Rico, are the more terrifying and dangerous to her. She is quick to sense not only the promise of a further life but also the threat of being overwhelmed "Gushing from the darkness in menace and question, and blazing out in the splendid body of the horse" (p. 23). However, Lou feels compelled to risk the consequences and trust in St. Mawr who alone "gave her some hint of the possibility" (p. 34). This giving of her trust releases the protective and inspiring powers of Pan in St. Mawr, and Lou senses "another sort of wisdom" (p. 34) in him which reassures her of his ability to guide her. Under St. Mawr's guidance, Lou comes to trust in the wisdom of her own body, and regains more awareness of herself and her surroundings. Where she had avoided her fears of intimacy

and inadequacy, she is now able to feel her tension and numbness, and to realize their source in the hostility between Rico, herself, and her mother:

. . .it was always an unspoken, unconscious battle of wills, which was gradually numbing and paralyzing her. She knew Rico meant nothing but kindness by her. She knew her mother only wanted to watch over her. Yet always there was this tension of will, that was so numbing. (p. 33)

This discovery further confirms Lou's faith in St. Mawr, and she resolves to follow him into "another darker, more spacious, more dangerous, more splendid world than ours" (p. 34). But she does not yet understand that she cannot reconcile the new world St. Mawr promises with the world that Rico offers.

The next problem Lou encounters is to decide whether her loyalties are to her family and society, or to her deepest self. This problem is tantamount to deciding whether or not to choose the heroic quest; this decision is first expressed in terms of choosing between Rico and St. Mawr, but the terms are gradually expanded to include not only Rico but also Mrs. Witt, Phoenix, and even St. Mawr. As Joseph Campbell points out, the heroic quest begins with the separation or departure of the hero from his society (the known) and his crossing the threshold into the unknown. The purpose of the quest--the initiation into the true divinity of the Self and the world--cannot be achieved without the hero's discovery of his true independence, an independence which entails the discovery that all the vital powers of the guide are also the powers of his Self.<sup>14</sup> For Lou to begin her quest, she must leave behind her the security of her family and follow St. Mawr, but she must also leave St. Mawr behind her and rely on herself alone. This is not a denial of Pan in St. Mawr, but rather the recognition of Pan in herself, and the recognition of the further mystery of the Great God Pan.

The beginning of this process of separation coincides with the family's move to Shrewbury, a move which affords Lou time and opportunity for character study and for sorting out her confusion. Mrs. Witt had already settled into village life, watching and analyzing the villagers with a critical eye for their failures and scandals as if "the whole thing [were] staged complete for her" (p. 37). In particular, she was fascinated by the graveyard opposite the manor house and spent hours watching and dramatizing funeral services--an entertainment Lou finds disgusting, and as perverse as her fascination with "psychic vivisection" (p. 38). Both serve to forewarn Lou of her mother's refusal to live except through destroying other, weaker people, a refusal which later grows into an obsession with her own death:

'I want death to be real to me--not as it was to that young girl. I want it to hurt me, Louise. If it hurts me enough, I shall know I was alive.' (p. 93)

Unlike Mrs.

Unlike Mrs. Witt, Lou instinctively recognizes that wit and sarcasm alone serve only a destructive purpose and thus are as much a defense against living fully as a protection against attack. Her rejection of Mrs. Witt's way of life affirms Lou's choice of the more complete life St.

Mawr promises:

'Ah, no, mother, I want the wonder back again, or I shall die. I don't want to be like you, just criticizing and annihilating these dreary people, and enjoying it.' (p. 58)

As for Rico, immediately he and Lou arrive at the house, he engages Mrs. Witt in a new round of "their duel and their duet" (p. 39), which leaves Lou with no hope for any change issuing from either her husband or her mother. He then sets out for Corrabach Hall to begin a new set of social engagements, which Lou finds "intensely thrilling and so innerly wearisome" (p. 39). She hates the frantic business of always "'enjoying ourselves'" (p. 73), but she gives in to it and to Rico, even going so far as to put

on a "simper" equal to Flora Manby's (p. 59). However, Lou reacts against these pressures by escaping to the back garden where she can sit quietly watching the servants go about their domestic business, or brood on her marriage and "the complete futility of her living" (p. 45). Even more important, Lou learns how to relax her defenses and lose herself in the exquisite peace and beauty of the garden, becoming one with the garden in anticipation of her experience of the World Navel at Las Chivas:

She had learned the new joy: to do absolutely nothing, but to lie and let the sunshine filter through the leaves, to see the bunch of red-hot-poker flowers pierce scarlet into the afternoon, beside the comparative neutrality of some foxgloves. The mere colour of hard red, like the big oriental poppies that had fallen, and these poker flowers, lingered in her consciousness like a communication. (p. 50)

But both Rico and Mrs. Witt, as well as the servants, intrude upon her peace: Rico to back up her reprimand to Phoenix and create a scene; Mrs. Witt to scold her for doing "nothing" (p. 50), and then to cause a scene by forcing Lewis to let her cut his hair. Rico's intrusion occasions his riding off to Corrabach Hall; he arrives the picture of "a hero from another, heroic world" (p. 44) and conquers Flora's heart. Next day he returns home with the Manby party, determined to organize a riding party to the Devil's Chair in Wales where he can again show off on St. Mawr in front of Flora. It is obvious to Lou that Rico's vanity is fed by Flora's attentions, and that she must decide soon whether she will give up Rico or fight Flora for him. Mrs. Witt's intrusion occasions a deep conversation between mother and daughter, in which Mrs. Witt plays 'devil's advocate' and forces Lou to define her ideas and grow further into a conscious understanding of the vital force within St. Mawr. Later that night, the artist, Cartwright, explains the Pan myth, distinguishing between the Great God who is "the hidden mystery—the hidden cause" (p. 62), the Goat God who symbolizes the perfected



balance of the instinctual and the intellectual powers in man and man's place within the cosmos, and "the fallen Pan with goat legs and a leer" (p. 64), whose sexual appetites and exploits are hollow imitations of the once-great rituals of fertility. Mrs. Witt and Lou are the only ones who respond sincerely to the Pan myth; they continue their earlier conversation, and Lou is forced to make the very hard, tearful admission that she cannot see Pan in Rico as she can in St. Mawr. The events immediately following serve to make her decision between them final and public; they also contain the seeds of her realization that she must go beyond St. Mawr.

Next day brings the excursion to the Devil's Chair: Rico, piqued at St. Mawr, Mrs. Witt, and Lou for thwarting the little show he had planned to his advantage, ignores his horsemanship to attend to the impression he is making on the Manbys. When St. Mawr "shied sideways as if a bomb had gone off" (p. 73), Rico was caught off guard and "pulled the reins viciously, to bring the horse to order" (p. 74). St. Mawr, already frightened, reacted to Rico's violent temper by rearing; Rico fought back but went too far in trying to force his will on the horse, and so pulled the horse back on top of himself. There is a terrible scene with Rico cast as the fallen, suffering hero and St. Mawr as the devil responsible for the accident; Lou is panicked and, unable to side either with the horse or with the man, escapes to bring help. On her way, her horse shies too; Lou, unlike Rico, looks to see what has frightened Poppy and finds a dead adder.

There it lay, also crumpled, its head crushed, its gold-and-yellow back still glittering dully, and a bit of pale-blue belly showing, killed that morning. (p. 76)

The three images--of Rico and the snake lying "crumpled" (p. 74), and of St. Mawr and the snake lying with their bellies exposed in agony--touch

off a terrible, hysterical vision of evil in Lou's mind:

Mankind, like a horse, ridden by a stranger, smooth-faced, evil rider. Evil himself, smooth-faced, and pseudo-handsome, riding mankind past the dead snake, to the last break. (p. 78)

In her hysteria, Lou sees in mankind the tragedy of a nature divided against itself, and feels a dreadful violence gathering its hidden forces for revenge just below the controls of reason, a revenge which strikes at the heart of life itself and threatens "a rapid return to sordid chaos" (p. 77). Out of this vision comes a new understanding which maps out for Lou the future directions of her quest for atonement:

The individual can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself. Try to hold fast to the living thing, which destroys as it goes, but remains sweet. And in his soul fight, fight, fight to preserve the life that is in him from the ghastly kisses and poison-bites of the myriad evil ones. Retreat to the desert, and fight. But in his soul adhere to that which is life itself, creatively destroying as it goes: destroying the stiff old thing to let the new bud come through. (p. 79)

That Lou is overwhelmed by her experience of evil is clear when she tortures herself with terrible doubts that perhaps St. Mawr, rather than Rico, is "meanly treacherous", "brutal", and "should be shot" (p. 80). Her doubts in fact reveal how deeply her faith and trust in St. Mawr has been shaken, and signal the coming of her independence. Lou is faced with a moral decision that can be decided either by conforming to society's biased verdict of St. Mawr's guilt, or by forming her own independent judgment. It is significant in terms of her readiness to begin the quest that Lou withstands the temptations to conform, and elects to stand on her own, going directly to St. Mawr to learn for herself whether or not he deserves death. Once again she encounters St. Mawr, this time to find a horse rather than a god. She enters into his "great animal sadness" (p. 82), intuitively understanding that his despair is like her own, and that his outbursts are a form of self-defense. Lou

realizes that he is not mean or petty but frustrated in his deepest nature, that he is unfulfilled in the service of men like Rico:

She knew that the horse, born to serve nobly, had waited in vain for some one noble to serve. His spirit knew that nobility had gone out of men. And this left him high and dry, in a sort of despair. (p. 83)

Lou then decides to save St. Mawr from Rico who would have him shot, and from Flora Manby who would have him gelded. But she is powerless to act, feeling inadequate to rebel openly against society--Rico, the Vyners and the Manbys--and stalling as long as possible before she is compelled to make a move. In fact, it is Mrs. Witt who acts for Lou, handling the Vyners and arranging to take St. Mawr to America, and leaving Lou alone to decide the direction her life will take.

This period gives Lou time to reject outright the empty artifice and hypocrisy of Rico's world, including his demand of her for "at least a blinding pretence of intimacy" (p. 125), and to sever all ties with her past life. It also gives her time to outgrow her dependence on St. Mawr as her guide, and to realize that her greatest desire is to be left alone, in anticipation of the fulfillment of her quest:

'Noli me tangere, homine! I am not yet ascended unto the Father. Oh, leave me alone, leave me alone! That is all my cry to all the world.' (p. 125)

St. Mawr has been vital to Lou up to this point: he has opened her to a fullness and richness of experience she had never dreamed possible, and given her a glimpse of the Great God Pan hidden in all living things. He has been instrumental in spurring her on to a deeper, more comprehensive awareness of herself, and in preparing her to choose between remaining trapped in Rico's world or beginning a new life. More than this he cannot give her, for, as Alan Wilde explains, St. Mawr is too limited and negative a symbol to contain the essence of the All:

However magnificent, he is only slightly more adequate than his masters at suggesting the shape of the new and better life Lou hopes for. His energy is largely the energy of opposition, and aversion to the Ricos of the world is the source of his effective being, driven as he is by their suppressed hatred into his own wild outbursts.<sup>15</sup>

Once Lou finds the courage to break away from the old and begin the new, she must reject St. Mawr as she has rejected Rico. All she can do to prove herself worthy of St. Mawr's gifts is to prove herself worthy to be his master. If she can go beyond him to realize the "flame of nobility" (p. 83) within herself, then he will serve her willingly and be fulfilled. His nature will no longer be frustrated and violent, "Reversed, and purely evil" (p. 77).

The allegiance between Lou and Mrs. Witt against Rico and the emasculated world he upholds is also based in opposition and dependency. Lou has relied too much on her mother to protect her and to act for her, and she must learn to rely on her own powers. Lou comes to understand that she and Mrs. Witt stand poles apart in their essential attitudes towards life, that they are in fact deadly enemies; she must stand up against her mother to fight for her own life and her own vision. Mrs. Witt has found life barren of any sustaining joy or creative purpose, admitting, but only to herself, that "her nature was a destructive force" (p. 102). She has spent herself in an unrelenting crusade to destroy those who failed to command her love and her respect, and she has self-righteously destroyed everyone with her contempt and acid wit, with the one exception of Lewis who found her superior attitude repulsive and kept himself aloof from her. She would destroy Lou as well by ridiculing her search for "something bigger" (p. 164), except that Lou stands up to her at last:

'And no doubt you are right about men,' she [Mrs. Witt] said at length. 'But at your age, the only sensible thing is

to try and keep up the illusion. After all, as you say, you may be no better.'

'I may be no better. But keeping up the illusion means fooling myself. And I won't do it.' (p. 164)

Mrs. Witt is actually a victim of her own egotism: her indomitable pride, her belief that she has been betrayed, her cynicism and her contempt for others has kept her guarded and separate.

She had put so much out of her reckoning: soon she would be left in an empty circle, with her empty self at the centre.  
(p. 107)

She is unable to trust anything outside herself, and unable to give herself freely over to any living experience because she considers life only in terms of a contest. She is always poised for an attack and a counter-attack, and for victory; because she has never been defeated, she knows only her own strength and others' weakness--and her own emptiness. Finally, Mrs. Witt comes to live only for her own death, wanting Death to hurt her, to defeat her at last so that she can lose herself in the final ecstasy of dying. But she fears that even death will betray her and cheat her out of the last possibility of defeat, of redemption:

She felt she might pass out as a bed of asters passes out in autumn, to mere nothingness. - And something in her longed to die, at least. positively: to be folded then at last into throbbing wings of mystery, like a hawk that goes to sleep. Not like a thing made into a parcel and put into the last rubbish-heap. (p. 104)

Mrs. Witt cannot understand that Lou has gone beyond her vision of life as a perpetual contest, resolved one way or another by death, and that Lou's deepest need is for peace. It is outside her experience, so that she can neither understand nor feel the pleasure and joy Lou knows in being unguarded: the merging of self and other, the perfect, fluid relation of inner and outer. And because she cannot understand, she must scorn Lou's belief in becoming one with the "wild spirit more than men" (p. 165), in the same way that she had scorned Lou's joy in doing

"nothing" (p. 50). Because her fulfillment can only come out of a defeat, she cannot accept that Lou's fulfillment can only come out of a complete surrender. In the end, the contest between mother and daughter cannot be resolved except as a stalemate, a tie:<sup>16</sup>

'You've never lived yet: not in my opinion.'

'Neither, mother, in my opinion, have you,' said Lou drily. And this silenced Mrs. Witt altogether. (p. 163)

Lou, once she recognizes that her mother has betrayed herself into an intellectual trap by taking the absurd position of refusing to decide either "to die" or "not to die" (p. 140), stands alone, taking the entire responsibility for her life; she is ready to begin the "trials and victories of initiation",<sup>17</sup> the final trial being the contest between mother and daughter examined in the preceding paragraph. Lou's initiation begins with her setting out to look at a small ranch that is for sale in the New Mexican Rockies; this is a striking parallel to the beginning of her quest when she followed Mr. Saintsbury to look at the stallion he had for sale. But Lou now has a larger understanding of the responsibility of ownership, as well as an understanding of the responsibility she owes to herself, both learned through surrendering herself to Pan in St. Mawr. It is understood that her commitment to the ranch in which Pan is manifest more diversely and more completely will necessarily be even greater than her commitment to St. Mawr. Moreover, Lawrence uses the possible relationship between Phoenix and Lou to reinforce her understanding of the demanding relationship of the master to the servant:

She had no desire to fool herself that a Phoenix might be a husband and a mate. No desire that way at all. His obtuseness was a servant's obtuseness. She was grateful to him for serving, and she paid him a wage. Moreover, she provided him with something to do, to occupy his life. In a sense, she gave him his life, and rescued him from his own

stillness, the sanctuary and altar, of her soul where she sacrifices ego to become "one of the eternal Virgins, serving the eternal life". (p. 146)

The rites of Vesta, the Divine Mother, which celebrate the Feminine role in sustaining the sacred flame of life, signify both the purification in preparation for, and the consummation and issue of, the "Sacred Marriage".

The fire-in-the-hearth, the life-contained-within-the-vessel (both the womb and the flesh), is symbolic of the union of the male and female principles and the continuous mystery of creation and birth.<sup>18</sup>

Once Lou has penetrated the mystery of her soul and committed herself wholly to the service of the Godhead within, she is also granted the revelation of the Godhead without. The world around her is also become the sacred temple of "the hidden fire. . . alive and burning in this sky, over the desert, in the mountains". (p. 147) Lou's quest for atonement is over: she is at one with the hidden Godhead and the universe, and through her and around her "the energies of eternity break into time".<sup>19</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (London, 1955), p. 319.  
Quoted in my chapter on "The Princess", pages 15-16.

In *St. Mawr* Lawrence presents the rites of the "Sacred Marriage" through the symbolism of the Vestal Virgin guarding the sacred flame, signifying the conclusion of Lou's quest and her apotheosis into the Feminine. The conclusion of *St. Mawr* follows the *heuresis* or reunion of mother and daughter, but Lou and Mrs. Witt cannot be reunited as one, although they are reconciled to each other's differences.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Campbell, *Hero With A Thousand Faces* (New York, 1971), pp. 126-149.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, *Hero*, pp. 308-314.

Campbell points out the universal nature of the Motif of the Virgin who conceives through the mana or grace of the Creator and brings forth a Divine Son destined to become the redeemer of his people:

"The virgin will give birth to a son: he is the one to save his people from their sins." *Matthew 1:21*

Because Lawrence stresses the decadence of modern society and its need for a world-redeemer to renew society's inner vision and begin the Herculean task of restoring the living balance of nature, it is possible to consider that the rites of the "Sacred Marriage" contain the further hint of another Virgin Birth.

<sup>4</sup>D.H. Lawrence, *St. Mawr / The Virgin and the Gypsy* (Middlesex, 1971), p. 160.

All references to *St. Mawr* are taken from this edition, and will be referred to by page number in the body of my text.

<sup>5</sup>D.H. Lawrence, "Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine", *A Selection from Phoenix*, ed. A.A. Inglis, (Middlesex, 1971), p. 456.

The full quote would be:

Either he will have to start budding, or he will be forsaken of the Holy Ghost: abandoned as a failure in creation, as the ichthyosaurus was abandoned. Being abandoned means losing his vitality. The sun and the earth-dark will cease rushing together in him. Already it is ceasing. To men, the sun is becoming stale; and the earth sterile. But the sun itself will never become stale, nor the earth barren. It is only that the clue is missing inside men. They are like flowerless, seedless



fat cabbages, nothing inside.

. . . . .

We have tried to build walls round the Kingdom of Heaven: but it's no good. It's only the cabbage rotting inside. (pp. 456-459)

<sup>6</sup>I feel that Lawrence was too ambitious in trying to make one quest such as Lou's, despite its universal nature, bear the entire weight of this triumph, accounting for much of St. Mawr's vagueness and sweeping generalizations. For example, see pages 76-79 where Lou's vision of evil includes an analysis of socialism, bolshevism and fascism

<sup>7</sup>James Cowan, D.H. Lawrence's American Journey (Cleveland, 1970), p. 81.

<sup>8</sup>D.H. Lawrence, Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine (Philadelphia, 1925), p. 121. Quoted in Patricia Merivale, "D.H. Lawrence and the Modern Pan Myth", Texas Studies in Language and Literature, 6, pp. 229-300.

<sup>9</sup>Campbell, Hero, p. 81.

Merivale, in her essay "D.H. Lawrence and the Modern Pan. Myth" (p. 301), describes this wisdom of the World Navel explicitly:

She [Lou] feels herself welcomed by the spirit of the New Mexican landscape, where a god is to be found "as shaggy as the pine-trees, and horrible as the lightning", a vision which others, less willing or worthy, had found to be evil and malevolent (pp. 149, 153).

The wisdom of the World Navel is the knowledge that Good and Evil, Self and Other, are one.

<sup>10</sup>While Lawrence uses satire to expose the hypocrisy and artifice behind the facade of Lou's society--which she later describes as its "cardboard" quality (p. 119), he uses irony to show how Lou grows into a sensitive and just appraisal of her family and friends, and the heroic quest to give her search for the "Unfallen Pan" (p. 63) its religious depth and significance.

<sup>11</sup>Alan Wilde, "The Illusion of St. Mawr: Technique and Vision in D.H. Lawrence's Novel", PMLA, 79, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup>Campbell, Hero, pp. 354-355.

<sup>13</sup>The fact that she becomes anonymous emphasizes her transcendence of the ordinary world of ego, while her resolve to "mind the dirt, most carefully and vividly avoid it, and keep it away from her" (p. 147) implies that Lou is drawn to become more and more pure in herself until she is worthy to become one with the hidden presence, in the manner of the saint.

<sup>14</sup>Campbell, Hero, pp. 36-39.

<sup>15</sup>Alan Wilde, "The Illusion of St. Mawr", p. 168.

<sup>16</sup>I agree with Alan Wilde that the conversation between Lou and Mrs. Witt involves "a reversal to the earlier manner [of satire], a stylistic sign, it would seem, of Lou's (or of Lawrence's?) impatience with a solution that must, by its very nature, remain so hypothetical" (Wilde, p. 169). However, I do not agree that Lou's defense of her experience and her vision is "the one absolutely false note in the novel" (Wilde, p. 169). I feel that the vagueness of Lou's speech, which Wilde dislikes, is successful insofar as it reveals the difficulty she finds in expressing the inexpressible--her experience of God, hidden behind and yet manifest within herself and in the world around her, and the possibility of a future that is unknown, that does not conform to a rational design.

<sup>17</sup>Campbell, Hero, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup>Campbell, Hero, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup>Campbell, Hero, p. 41.

## CONCLUSION

Lawrence was engaged in exploring the process of human maturation in "The Princess", "The Woman Who Rode Away", and St. Mawr. He focussed specifically on the process of female maturation, and considered the means whereby the transition from girlhood to womanhood involving both a physical and a spiritual transformation could be achieved within the female psyche.

The complicating factor in these works was Lawrence's belief that the transition into adulthood by means of the normal social rituals of sexual initiation, marriage and motherhood was no longer possible, because modern society had become too decadent for its once-effective religious rituals to effect the inner or spiritual transformation into the Feminine, even if the physical and social transition into womanhood was achieved. The problem facing each of the heroines in "The Princess", "The Woman Who Rode Away", and St. Mawr is that each one finds she is incapable of growing up within her society and finds it necessary to go beyond the protecting but smothering limits of her society to encounter the real and dangerous world beyond. Her journey beyond is an individual rite of passage, given its structure and meaning by the archetypal patterns of the heroic quest and the "Sacred Marriage".

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