MALE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORK OF D. H. LAWRENCE

Robert C. Brandeis

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of male friendship in the work of D.H. Lawrence is one which continues to puzzle and disturb critics. To date, no one has attempted a systematic survey of the exploration and development of this theme throughout the relevant fiction and discursive writing. Comments on the homoerotic aspect of Lawrence's work are usually brief and dismissive, and make no attempt either to investigate its role in the larger context of the work, or to examine its motive force.

John Middleton Murry's "Story of D.H. Lawrence" was the first sustained attempt to discuss Lawrence's sexual ambivalence, and to suggest that Lawrence's failure to recognize or reconcile the homosexual elements within himself led to artistic and literary difficulties. But Murry's insistently Oedipal interpretation of Lawrence's life and work is characterized by an amateur disregard for psychoanalytic subtleties, and a personal involvement which affects the quality and conclusion of the discussion. Nevertheless, Murry was one of the first commentators to notice the relevance of certain biographical details to Lawrence's work; and if his study has been neglected, it is primarily due to Murry's personal relationship with Lawrence and the effect that subjective bias had on his later assessment of Lawrence's achievement.

A more professional study than Murry's "Story" is the apparently psychoanalytically sophisticated Oedipus in Nottingham, which begins with a disarming statement that "the status of Psychoanalytic criticism in the canon of respectable critical disciplines is no longer open to argument." However, Weiss' psychoanalytic approach does raise several important questions (and, indeed, reservations) about the application of the theory to Lawrence's work; all too often the work itself gets lost amidst the rhetoric of Weiss' analysis. In spite of statements which are suggestive or speculative rather than textually sound, such as the suggestion that "all of Lawrence's physical struggles between men are the wrestling of Jacob with the angel at the ford, ending in apocalyptic

1 Son of Woman (London, 1931).
2 Daniel A. Weiss, Oedipus in Nottingham (Seattle, 1962).
3 Ibid., p.4.
révélation", 4 Weiss' study is nevertheless highly stimulating, and attempts to indicate certain areas of Lawrence's achievement which have been unjustly condemned or ignored. 5

Both Murry's and Weiss' studies take for their starting-point the position that Lawrence was a divided personality, and that his own sexual difficulties were a result of this dichotomy within himself. H.M. Daleski approaches Lawrence's achievement as a novelist from the point of view of the dualities evident in the man and in the work. 6 Daleski relates the values of the artistic achievement to the sexual conflict evident in both the work itself and in Lawrence's life, in order to show that sexual meanings are an important aspect of the pattern of Lawrence's artistic development. Part of Daleski's approach is to emphasize how, on the basis of the dualities formulated in Lawrence's expository writings (especially the "male" and "female" principles), Lawrence, "though believing intensely in himself as a male, was fundamentally identified with the female principle." 7 This, on Daleski's view, resulted in a "breach" in Lawrence's nature, and "made it imperative for him to try to reconcile the opposed elements within himself." The Forked Flame views Lawrence's work "as a lifelong attempt to effect such a reconciliation," and though it is not the avowed purpose of this

4 Ibid., p. 31.

5 Lawrence's own reaction to psychoanalytic criticism may be gauged from his letter to Barbara Low of 16 Sept. 1916 (CL 475). Dr. Low had apparently sent Lawrence the July 1916 issue of the Psychoanalytic Review containing Alfred Kuttner's review of Sons and Lovers ("A Freudian Approach" reprinted in D.H. Lawrence and Sons and Lovers, ed. E.W. Tedlock (N.Y. 1965), pp. 78-100). Lawrence wrote that he "hated" the review, and that he thinks "complexes are vicious half-statements of the Freudians" and furthermore that his book "was, as art, a fairly complete truth; so they carve a half lie out of it..." Nevertheless, as R.F. Draper suggests (D.H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage (London, 1970) p. 7-8), "...since Kuttner's interpretation was the only one actually available to the general reading public of the day he must be considered as having made a useful contribution to the understanding of the novel. What he wrote might well be a half lie, but the corollary is that it also contained a half truth, and one which evidently required to be given prominence in 1915-16."


7 Ibid., p. 13.
study to "explain" Lawrence on the basis of the conflict between the male and female elements within him, judgements are necessarily forthcoming. Daleski also attempts to consider the other side of the sexual coin, though it is done not as part of the major purpose of the work, but as an almost subsidiary intrusion; the critic at times seems surprised that his study has thrown up these unusual suggestions, and even relegates to an appendix his discussion of the homosexual incident in The White Peacock. In spite of the single-minded direction of Daleski's study, it is important because it attempts to discuss in some detail an aspect of Lawrence's work which has been unjustly neglected.

Daleski builds upon the hint thrown out to Murry, and more specifically by Frederick Carter, Lawrence's friend and sometime collaborator, who recognized quite early that Lawrence's predisposition to "see the world from the feminine angle" was "to his disadvantage as a man, often disturbing his true balance of thought and perception." Daleski's investigation reveals that, on the contrary, it was to Lawrence's advantage, at least artistically, that he did "see the world from the feminine angle," and the conflict which developed within himself, to reconcile the "feminine angle" and his avowed masculinity, makes for some of the most penetrating fictional analyses of human relationships.

Graham Hough has recognized, in his discussion of the "Gladiatorial" chapter of Women in Love, that "it is as though Lawrence has all along an obscure realisation that it is not possible to found a whole way of life on the relation between man and woman, that a man must also play his part in the man's world..." he states that "there is clearly a sexual element in all this which Lawrence was unwilling to acknowledge." Hough further suggests.

8 Emile Delavenay's recent work, D.H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: A Study in Edwardian Transition (London, 1971) is the most sustained attempt to deal with Lawrence and homosexuality. Delavenay suggest that Lawrence followed Carpenter in writing about love and sex, and was greatly indebted to him for many ideas—the difference being that Lawrence wrote much better than Carpenter. This often diffuse and idiosyncratic study is nevertheless highly suggestive, and will be referred to in a later chapter of this discussion.


that the theme of male relations was never "very clearly understood by Lawrence," even though it plays a major part in the next three novels after *Women in Love*. The "obscure unease" with which the male characters greet the sexual element in their relations can be extended to include most of Lawrence's critics who raise the spectre of homoeroticism in the relevant works. Anthony West, for example, considers the "man-to-man scenes" in Lawrence's work "curiously embarrassing" and, as if to alleviate his own obvious discomfort, suggests that "almost certainly when Lawrence first took up this theme [of male friendship] he intended to write the curse of homosexuality out of friendship, to free men who felt emotionally drawn to each other in an un-vicious way, of the guilt feelings a corrupt society has imposed on such an entirely natural matter." But West, like most critics who comment on the "friendship" theme, assigns to Lawrence a sense of guilt "which makes him uneasy when it comes to this matter," and which "cuts him off from understanding much about its nature."

The critical consensus about homoerotic elements in D.H. Lawrence's fiction is that Lawrence "was unwilling to acknowledge" the sexual elements he "mysteriously" wrote into descriptions of male relationships, or that he was "uneasy" about the male friendship theme which he felt compelled to write about. The most recent book-length study of Lawrence relegates a comment on male homoerotic relationships to a long footnote at the end of the discussion, and states: self-consciously that this "unresolved problem" has been "deliberately ignored" because the author does "not now intend to go on to the next novels." One is justified, however, in expecting that in a volume discussing *Women in Love* (especially one whose origin was the critic's fascination with the character of Birkin), some attempt to discuss Birkin's expression of his need for a male friendship, would have been mandatory. But Miko simply reiterates the summaries of other critics and states that "the whole problem remains a bit confused" and even "causes trouble in the novels which follow." Furthermore, this most recent critical

12 Ibid., p. 129.
14 Ibid., p. 1.
discussion testifies to the critics' difficulty in seeing how an investigation of male relationships illuminates or offers "distinct and important lessons about Lawrence's method". It is puzzling that critics find it necessary to comment on this "disturbing" aspect of Lawrence's work, yet tend to dismiss it without adequate investigation.

I would like to suggest that a survey of Lawrence's exploration and treatment of male relationships reveals a development which will remove the "confusion" and "unresolved problems" usually associated with the male friendship theme. Commentators are apt to sidestep a direct confrontation with what appears to them to be Lawrence's unsavoury flirtation with homosexuality, by suggesting that he was unwilling to acknowledge the sexual elements in the man-to-man scenes—incidents which they find "curiously embarrassing." The embarrassment is a product of ignorance, for real understanding of what Lawrence was attempting, and accomplished, should not precipitate feelings of unease or embarrassment. The "confusion" surrounding the male friendship theme is also a result of the lack of any clear perspective from which to discuss it: if we examine the development of Lawrence's use of male friendship from its earliest appearance in The White Peacock through to what Anthony West calls "this mess of fondling and fainting" in The Plumed Serpent, any "confusion" or "unease" which surrounds Lawrence's use of homoerotic themes should be dispelled. In addition, by examining the homoerotic relationships in the context of the works in which they occur, we are readily able to discern that Lawrence considered such relationships to be facets of his investigation of the total reality of human existence.

Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock, tentatively introduces the male friendship theme which was to become a persistent concern throughout his career. Several aspects of the novel are therefore important to our discussion of Lawrence's treatment of male relationships, and many incidents in the narrative are anticipatory of homoerotic relations in the later work. One immediately striking aspect of the narrative is the effeminate nature of the

15 Ibid., p.289, n.41.
16 D.H. Lawrence, p.129.
narrator, Cyril—this is evidence, as Stephen J. Miko suggests, "that some conflict involving masculinity is important." The degree of importance is indicated by Lawrence's "sporadic attempts to achieve ironic distance by allowing one of the minor female figures to call Cyril "Sybil" or "Fat" throughout the book." This indication that Lawrence was aware of the nature of his narrator, moreover a narrator with whom he is identified, would tend to devalue the assertions that Lawrence was unaware or "unconscious" of the homosexual tendencies within his work. If he had any remaining illusions about his protagonist, they would have been quickly dispelled by the reviewer who thought the author of The White Peacock was a woman.

There are many indications throughout the novel of a homoerotic attraction between Cyril and his friend George Saxton. At one point Cyril explicitly reports that George "looked up as I entered, and I loved him when he looked up at me, and as he lingered on his quiet 'Hulloa' His eyes were beautifully eloquent—as eloquent as a kiss." Cyril is never happier than when he is working with George in the fields, which constitute a particular form of Arcadian paradise for him; George is identified with "the movement of active life" (253) which holds all of Cyril's attention. Most significant for the purposes of this discussion, it is "the motion of his limbs and his head, the rise and fall of his rhythmic body" which most affects Cyril, and he informs us that "it was at these times we formed the almost passionate attachment which later years slowly wore away" (253).

The most "passionate" expression of the homoerotic friendship theme occurs during and after the bathing scene in the chapter appropriately titled "A Poem of Friendship." Far from being simply an expression of "farm boys bathing naked in the companionship of

17 Towards 'Women in Love', p.29.
18 Ibid., p.29.
the scene is a paradigm of the homoerotic attraction between men which Lawrence was constantly to return to whenever he described either physical or spiritual intimacy between characters with whom he was sympathetic. The scene is replete with the intensity of intimate physical awareness between the men, particularly on the part of Cyril. The buoyancy of the water creates the sense of "vigorous poetry of action" in Cyril, but this is immediately transferred to George, his object of affection and attraction: "I saw George swimming on his back laughing at me, and in an instant I had flung myself like an impulse after him" (256). The watery embrace is forestalled, however, for as Cyril catches up with George and makes tentative physical contact, he is interrupted by "laughter from the bank. It was Emily."

The tone of regret evident in Cyril's cryptic statement of fact results in his throwing "handfuls of spray at her," causing Emily to blush and flee the scene. The men are thus once more alone, free from the intrusion of a woman who could not be part of their homosexual idyll. Lawrence leaves us in no doubt as to the intention behind the whole bathing scene, for the particular nature of Cyril's passionate love for George is expressed in terms which clearly indicate the homoerotic impulse behind their relationship. Cyril emphasizes the fact that George was "well proportioned, and naturally of handsome physique," and George in turn compares Cyril to "one of Aubrey Beardsley's long, lean ugly fellows" (257), which Cyril counters by referring to "many classic examples of slenderness." The friendly repartee between the men is an early form of the conflict which will characterize subsequent male relationships; indeed, Cyril's statement that he "had to give in, and bow to him" foreshadows the undertone of domination and submission which is a characteristic of Lawrence's interc homoerotic incidents.

The description of the drying after the swimming frolic is suggestive of the intimate rituals by which Lawrence will characterize homosexual situations in subsequent works. In The White

21 Anthony West, D.H. Lawrence, p. 128

22 The rivalry between a man and a woman for the affection of another man will form an important part of Lawrence's subsequent investigation of the role of male relationships within the context of marriage or courtship.
Peacock the ritual is a fairly overt homosexual experience for Cyril:

He saw I had forgotten to continue my rubbing, and laughing he took hold of me and began to rub me briskly, as if I were a child, or rather, a woman he loved and did not fear. I left myself quite limply in his hands, and, to get a better grip of me, he put his arm round me and pressed me against him, and the sweetness of the touch of our naked bodies one against the other was superb. It satisfied in some measure the vague, indecipherable yearning of my soul; and it was the same with him. When he had rubbed me all warm, he let me go, and we looked at each other with eyes of still laughter, and our love was perfect for a moment, more perfect than any I have known since, either for man or woman (257).

H.M. Daleski considers George "an unconscious projection of Lawrence's father," and suggests that the quoted passage "is expressive of a passionate love for the disguised father-figure." In support of his interpretation he proposes the fact that "George's potentially bright physical being accords with what we know of the decline of Lawrence's father," and that the disguise slips when George is said to hold and rub Cyril as if he were a child. This comparison is said to spring from Lawrence's deeply felt wish, and has its basis in the preceding incident when Lawrence describes an episode in which Cyril finds "two tiny larks" in a nest in the grass, and responds to "the warmth and security of the parental nest." Annable, the Gamekeeper in The White Peacock, and precursor of Mellors in Lady Chatterley's Lover, is also used by Daleski as supporting evidence for his interpretation of the bathing scene. Cyril reports that Annable treated him "as an affectionate father treats a delicate son" and liked "to put his hand on my shoulder or my knee as we talked" (173). Annable, then, like George, is "a projection of Lawrence's father."

In fairness, it must be admitted that Daleski does state that his "interpretation of the bathing scene deals with only one aspect of its meaning," and then intimates that the scene is "overtly concerned with the theme of male friendship." That there is a connection between the two motifs is not simply conjecture, for the classic pattern of homosexual development involves a search for

23 The Forked Flame, p. 313 et passim.

24 Ibid., p. 314.
a surrogate father, and the desire to be accepted by a dominant partner. But once having established that Lawrence may have been searching for a father-figure throughout his writing career, we are left only with that exclusive consideration.

The purpose of this discussion is not the psychoanalysis of D.H. Lawrence. While some psychoanalytic sexual hypotheses will be utilized in conjunction with certain aspects of the following study, they will be used only as additional collaborative evidence or as suggestive analyses leading to more significant insights about the nature of Lawrence's artistic response to male relationships.

The bathing scene in *The White Peacock* is a case in point. In this, Lawrence's first novel, the "effeminacy" attributed to Cyril may be viewed as a direct result of the absence of a dominant masculine personality in the household. It is simple to see in this situation a reflection of Lawrence's own childhood experiences; however, to suggest that the only thing Lawrence is doing is projecting his early experiences is misleading. Any attempt at an exclusively biographical explanation of the sexual proclivities of the protagonists in the novels would needlessly limit the scope of any interpretation. Initially, the absence of a dominant father-figure may have dictated a certain attraction towards members of the same sex, but to attribute a continuing unconscious homosexual tendency to all incidents of male attraction is, I think, to lose sight of what is actually occurring in the text.

Cyril may unconsciously desire a surrogate father figure, but his relationship with George is consciously intimate and passionate, and is characterized by strong physical attraction. In addition, Cyril enacts a female role, flirting with and exciting George, and deliberately provoking a prolonged homosexual contact. Cyril himself tells us that he left himself "quite limply" in George's arms, so that in order for George to get a better grip on him he was forced to put his arms round Cyril and press him against his own body. This action, by which Cyril means the actual physical contact between the two nude bodies, satisfies the "vague, indecipherable yearning" of his soul. A measure of Cyril's desire for acceptance is his statement that George felt the same way—something which he can never really know, but which is necessary for his own self-image. A similar pattern of behaviour is noticeable in Cyril's friendship.
with Annable, for he consciously seeks a relationship with him. Cyril reports that "all the world hated [Annable]" but that he himself "cultivated the acquaintance of the keeper." The attraction, like that for George, is physical—"his magnificent physique, his great vigour and vitality, and his swarthy, gloomy face" (172)—all draw Cyril to him. Cyril derives pleasure from Annable's seemingly innocent gesture of placing his hand on Cyril's shoulder or knee as they talked. Cyril attributes this to the way "an affectionate father treats a delicate son," but it should be emphasized that this comparison has not been part of Cyril's own experience. On the one hand, we can support the view that this is what Cyril does in fact desire; on the other, we can just as easily suggest that this is what Cyril would like to think it is, rather than what he instinctively knows it to be. The question, at least insofar as Cyril is concerned, is one of narrative reliability, for there are enough indications that Cyril is divided between two opposing forces—male and female—and like Lawrence himself experiences both: "...our love was perfect for a moment, more perfect than any love I have known since, either for man or woman" (257).

This last statement is significant, for it indicates an important development in Lawrence's future work. Whether we agree with John Middleton Murry that Lawrence was escaping "to a man from the misery of his own failure with a woman," or whether we take the more balanced view that Lawrence realized that it was not possible to found a whole way of life on the exclusive relation between man and woman, the homoerotic incidents in *The White Peacock* form the genesis of this important theme in Lawrence's work. The pattern of future homoerotic relations is adumbrated in *The White Peacock*. In this study I will show how Lawrence's growing concern with all facets of human relationship tends more and more to involve an attempt to understand and portray male homoerotic incidents.

Another aspect of male relationships which exists fairly contemporaneously with that presented in *The White Peacock* is

25 Son of Woman, p.119.
26 Hough, The Dark Sun, p.55.
revealed in the short stories "A Modern Lover" and "Strike Pay".27
The central character in "A Modern Lover," significantly named Cyril Mersham, is unusually aware of the masculine presence of Muriel's brothers and of his rival Tom Vickers. Cyril Beardsall's response to Emily's intrusion during the bathing scene in The White Peacock is very similar to Cyril Mersham's reaction to Muriel in the short story. Both men, it appears, would rather give their undivided attention to their male comrades, and not be disturbed by the intrusion of a woman. Mersham "hardened his heart and turned his head from Muriel" in order to give fuller attention to what we suspect is the real reason for his frequent past visits to the household—the companionship of Muriel's brothers. In the past, "their lives would draw together into one flame, and whole evenings long would flare with magnificent mirth, and with play"(4). In an attempt to recapture the past experience, if only imaginatively, Mersham turns from Muriel and gives himself to an appreciation of her brothers: "The boys had stripped to their waists, and had knelt on the hearth-rug and washed themselves in a large tin bowl, the mother sponging and drying their backs. Now they stood wiping themselves, the firelight bright and rosy on their fine torsos, their heavy arms swelling and sinking with life. They seemed to cherish the firelight on their bodies. Benjamin, the younger, leaned his breast to the warmth, and threw back his head, showing his teeth in a voluptuous little smile"(4-5). Cyril Mersham's homoerotic attraction to the brothers, and his perception of their natural vitality, is emphasized by the comment that "Mersham watched them, as he had watched the peewits and the sunset." Earlier, as he had approached the house, Cyril had seen the peewits rise en masse from a field, and "three-quarters of the scarlet sun...settling among the branches of the elms..." The rising of the birds and the sinking sun are echoed in the brothers' "heavy arms swelling and

sinking with life," for the brothers; like the landscape, are representative of past experience which Cyril hopes will "give him enough of the philtre of life to stop the craving which tortured him..."(2).

Muriel's brothers represent for Cyril Mersham the past idyllic comradeship which characterizes Cyril and George's relationship in *The White Peacock*. However, the attraction in the short story is never allowed to realize its potential, for it must be seen within the context of Mersham's attempted return to a state of existence which has irrevocably changed. *The White Peacock* experience is a vital continuing one, and thus is capable of supporting a more overt relationship between the men. In addition, the homoerotic attraction in both narratives has a basic similarity with the type of male activity revealed in "Strike Pay", and takes the innocent male experience revealed in that short story as the basis for its subsequent development.

Ephraim Wharmby's relationship with his mates is presented as innocent idyllic comradeship, with no hint of any deeper motive at work. The men out on strike are like schoolboys on holiday, and like boys they indulge in innocent childish play and traditional masculine entertainment. Male comradeship in this context appears to be a totally innocent sharing of male activity—indicated in *The White Peacock* by George and Cyril's companionable toil in the fields, but in their case given an added emotional and psychosexual dimension by the quite explicit homoerotic contact. The miners on strike, however, give no indication of any repressed homoerotic impulse—rather they present the opposite suggestion of completely natural, idyllic comradeship.

Characteristically, the conflict is precipitated by a woman, for as in *The White Peacock* and "A Modern Lover" it is a woman who attempts to come between the men. Ephraim Wharmby's relationship with his mates is resented and denigrated by his mother-in-law who believes that he has gone "off on the nines to Nottingham, drink and women"(52). But as the story shows, no women are involved, for the men are content to be with each other and draw strength from their common situation. The type of exclusive male activity revealed in "Strike Pay" is thus the starting point of Lawrence's larger consideration of that theme, and is usually basic to any elaboration.
of it. The male attractions revealed in "A Modern Lover" and "Strike Pay" coalesce to some extent in The White Peacock experience, but the novel has the advantage of being able to elaborate the homoerotic aspect of male behaviour, and explore, or at the very least, suggest important emotional and psychosexual possibilities. The relationship of Cyril and George in the novel thus provides a convenient starting point for our consideration of male relationships in Lawrence's subsequent work since it has as its basis both the innocent idyllic comradeship made so attractive in "Strike Pay" as well as the more explicit homoerotic attraction presented in "A Modern Lover".

Cyril's responses to his own relationship with George Saxton, and his perception of male attraction in others, establishes a homoerotic motif which we will see becoming increasingly important for Lawrence's conception of male relations. Cyril's response to a squad of Life Guards he sees when in company with George leads naturally into the situation Lawrence was later to describe in "The Prussian Officer": "We saw a squad of Life Guards enter the gates of the park, erect and glittering with silver and white and red. They came near to us, and we thrilled a little as we watched the muscles of their white smooth thighs answering the movement of the horses, and their cheeks and their chins bending with proud manliness to the rhythm of the march. We watched the exquisite rhythm of the body of men moving in scarlet and silver further down the leafless avenue, like a slightly wavering spark of red life blown along" (321).

The homoerotic attraction readily discernible in Cyril's reaction to the "erect" squad of soldiers is an early appearance of Lawrence's concern to develop a personal and social ethic of homosexuality. The erotic undertone to Cyril's appreciation of "proud manliness" is a product of his own desire to form some relationship with individuals whom he considers to be superior to himself; Lawrence's subsequent investigation of leadership and power is to a great extent a development of this aspect of male relations. It is advantageous, then, to begin our discussion of Lawrence's use of male relationships with a consideration of "The Prussian Officer", a short story which includes many of the concerns hinted at in Cyril's homoerotic admiration.
CHAPTER I

"The Prussian Officer": A Problem Articulated

"But in some men, in some small men, like bishops, the denial of marriage in the body is positive and blasphemous, a sin against the Holy Ghost. And in some men, like Prussian army officers, the denial of marriage in the spirit is an equal blasphemy. But which of the two is a greater sinner, working better for the destruction of his fellow-man, that is for the One God to judge."

The first two periods of D.H. Lawrence's creative life are characterized by a major interest in the relations between man and woman. The first period, represented by Sons and Lovers involves an attempt to cope with the problems generated by adolescent sexuality. The relationships examined most intensively are those between the writer, his parents, and other men and women. The second period, characterized by The Rainbow and Women in Love, attempts to create the "supreme art" which would reconcile the "law of the Woman" and the "law of the Man," for at this time Lawrence's conception of art was formulated in terms of Male and Female: "It needs that a man shall know the natural law of his own being, then that he shall seek out the law of the female, with which to join himself as complement. He must know that he is half, and the woman is the other half: That they are two, but that they are two-in-one."

An earlier, similar statement was made in 1914 in a letter to A.W. McLeod:

I think the only re-sourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman. I think the one thing to do, is for men to have courage to draw nearer to woman, expose themselves to them, and be altered by them; and for women to accept and admit men. That is the start—by bringing themselves together, men and women—revealing themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy, which it will take a big further lapse of civilization to exploit and work out.

1 Phoenix, "Study of Thomas Hardy", p.476.
2 Ibid., p.515.
3 Ibid.
Because the source of all life and knowledge is in man and woman, and the source of all living is in the interchange and the meeting and mingling of these two: man-life and woman-life, man-knowledge and woman-knowledge, man-being and woman-being.4

Primacy is given to the man-woman relationship then, because on it is posited the foundation of society and the basis of knowledge. Implicit in this prescription is the male-female duality with its accompanying dissolution and transcendence:

Love is a coming together. But there can be no coming together without an equivalent going asunder.

... But all force, spiritual or physical, has its polarity, its positive and its negative.5

But the love between a man and a woman, when it is whole, is dual. It is the melting into pure communion, and it is the friction of sheer sensuality, both. In pure communion I become whole in love. And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality. I am driven from the matrix into sheer separate distinction. I become my single self, inviolable and unique, as the gems were perhaps once driven into themselves out of the confusion of the earth. Then in the fire of their extreme sensual love, in the friction of intense, destructive flames, I am destroyed and reduced to her essential otherness. It is a destructive fire, the profane love. But it is the only fire that will purify us into singleness, fuse us from the chaos into our gemlike separateness of being.6

The theory of love and art revealed in the above quotations, along with the situations of love discussed, are dramatized in most of the fiction contemporaneous with, or which followed from, these pronouncements.

The short story "The Prussian Officer" stands in a central position in relation to the above themes, not only because those themes are the controlling factors of the relationship between the orderly and the officer, but because the story introduces an area

5 Phoenix, "Love", p.151.
6 Ibid., p.154.
of concern which, in one form or another, was to be relevant to Lawrence's major creative work for the rest of his life: the nature and importance of male relationships. In "The Prussian Officer" Lawrence sees the relationship between the men in terms of an analogue of "marriage," in which both partners gradually grow to an awareness of each other, and in the process are "burned into essentiality... into sheer separate distinction." It should be noted, however, that the relationship is necessarily doomed to failure, but in the process of our discussion we will see how the treatment of love transposes the male "marriage" into different terms, and can therefore be seen in a fresh and important perspective.

At the beginning of the relationship the officer and the orderly are separate entities, ignoring each other as well as denying their own individual selfhood: "...the orderly scarcely noticed the officer any more than he noticed himself. It was rarely he saw his master's face: he did not look at it." The other men accept the officer as "inevitable" for he is "merely impersonal," but to his orderly he "was at first cold and just and indifferent...So that his servant knew practically nothing about him"(96). The orderly is simply a servant, waiting on the officer, preparing his food and cleaning up after him; in fact, he enacts the role of the wife in a loveless marriage, with neither partner taking any account of the other on any level but a purely practical and superficial one. However, "the change gradually came" in the form of physical homoerotic attraction: "The orderly, having to rub him down, admired the amazing riding muscles of his loins" (96). But the attraction is still mechanical, for the officer is a machine—"one of the best horsemen in the West." It remains for the officer to awaken to the orderly, and in turn to arouse the orderly as well: "Gradually the officer had become aware of his


8 Daniel A. Weiss, Oedipus in Nottingham, p.71, recognizes that "the orderly's submission has in it the feminine qualities of self-surrender and passive acceptance" but his insistence that the reader is "being conditioned throughout the story to accept the actions of both men in their relations with each other as ambivalent" is only partially true. The men's actions are ambivalent, but Lawrence is not pressed to "condition" the reader to what is self evident from the narrative.
servant's young vigorous, unconscious presence about him. He could not get away from the sense of the youth's person...as the young soldier moved unthinking about the apartment, the elder watched him, and would notice the movement of his strong young shoulders under the blue cloth, the bend of his neck" (97).

The officer, however, attempts to resist what Lawrence calls "great blind knowledge", for he does not want to reveal himself: "He did not choose to be touched into life by his servant. He now very rarely looked direct at his orderly, but kept his face averted, as if to avoid seeing him." (97) The clue to the officer's dilemma is his refusal to be "touched into life," for he is essentially a "dead soul" whose attempts at human relationships inevitably fail: "Now and then he took himself a mistress. But after such an event, he returned to duty with his brow still more tense, his eyes still more hostile and irritable" (96). The officer lacks the courage to "draw nearer" to individuals, to "expose" himself to them "and be altered by them," and while denying life to himself he does not choose to admit the spontaneous "instinctive sureness of movement" which attracts him to his orderly. This repression cannot be maintained in the face of the unconscious demands made upon him by the orderly. In spite of himself, the officer's "tense, rigid body" is flushed by the "warm flame" of the youth's presence, and gradually they begin to "melt into pure communion:"

Once, when a bottle of wine had gone over, and the red gushed out on to the tablecloth, the officer had started up with an oath, and his eyes, bluey like fire, had held those of the confused youth for a moment. It was a shock for the young soldier. He felt something sink deeper, deeper into his soul, where nothing had ever gone before.... Some of his natural completeness in himself was gone, a little uneasiness took its place. And from that time an undiscovered feeling had held between the two men (97).

The ritualistic context of the spilt wine and "eyes bluey like fire" heralds a minor communion which prefigures the later actual consummation in blood which takes place under the hot sun. The fire in the officer's eyes becomes a major physical and psychological image throughout the story.

Previous to the spilt wine incident we are told that it irritated the officer "to see the soldier's young, brown, shapely
peasant's hand grasp the loaf or the wine bottle," and that it "sent a flash of hate or anger through the elder man's blood."
The sacramental "loaf" and the "wine bottle," traditional symbols of communion, are here linked with the "flame" of awareness and are reminiscent of the duality and its accompanying dissolution and transcinnence which Lawrence discusses in his article on love: "love...when it is whole, is dual. It is the melting into pure communion, and it is the friction of sheer sensuality, both. In pure communion I become whole in love. And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiaity." At this point in the story the relationship has not as yet become "whole" nor has the "melting into pure communion" occurred. What has happened is that both have become aware that they are not complete in themselves: "Some of his [the orderly's] natural completeness in himself was gone, a little uneasiness took its place. And from that time an undiscovered feeling had held between the two men"(97). There has been a shock of recognition brought about by their mutual exposure, and what follows is, in Lawrence's terms, "the interchange and the meeting and mingling" which is "the source of all living." For, as we have seen, the orderly and the officer have not been "alive" to each other previous to the confrontation over the spilt wine.

They do not, however, welcome the new awareness, because each feels that he has lost a part of himself in the confrontation, or has been forced to recognize a part of his being which has been repressed. The orderly wishes to recapture his "neutrality as servant" and does not want "to be forced into personal interchange with his master." The officer, as well, recognizes that "the young soldier's being had penetrated through [his] stiffened discipline... and [he] was not going to allow such a thing as the stirring of his innate self." Both retreat from each other, but the retreat is dictated by social as much as by personal attitudes. The orderly attempts to "shut himself off" and when the officer rages at him grows "more mute and expressionless." The officer, who previously had "kept himself suppressed," now allows the undercurrent of passion to surface and so becomes "infuriated" at even the sight of the orderly's scarred thumb; he grows more and more violent as

9 Phoenix, p. 154.
he feels the "hot flame" of awareness run in his blood.

It must be observed that at this juncture in the story a transference of character and emotion has occurred: the Prussian Officer gives vent to his instincts in the way in which the orderly had acted before. Previously, it was the orderly who had "received life direct from his senses, and acted straight from instinct." Now it is the officer who does so while the orderly becomes as "cold and indifferent" as the officer had been: "And he became harsh and cruelly bullying, using contempt and satire. The young soldier only grew more mute and expressionless"(99). What we have then is effectively a "motion of melting, fusing together" insofar as each now partakes of the other. But this is still only a half measure, for they have not as yet experienced "the intense, frictional, and sensual gratification of being burnt down, burnt apart into separate clarity of being, unthinking otherness and separateness." The officer's passion develops a kind of autonomy as he fails to acknowledge it: "The officer tried hard not to admit the passion that had got hold of him. He would not know that his feeling for his orderly was anything but that of a man incensed by his stupid, perverse servant. So, keeping quite justified and conventional in his consciousness, he let the other thing run on"(100). The captain may have approached the "intense frictional and sensual gratification of being" when he beat the orderly, but even then he attempts to deny the experience to himself. The beatings are accompanied by the "flame" of "friction" and "sensual gratification:

"The hands of the officer twitched and seemed full of mad flame.... Suddenly the smile lit like a flame on the officer's face, and a kick came heavily against the orderly's thigh"(100, 102). But the officer attempts to extinguish it, and his being continues to function on two levels: "Deep inside him was the intense gratification of his passion, still working powerfully. Then there was a counter action, a horrible breaking down of something inside him, a whole agony of reaction"(103). He drinks himself into oblivion until he "had fought off the realization of what he had done." In so doing, he of course refuses the possibility and validity of a realized relationship with his orderly: "He refused the event of the past night—denied it had ever been—and was successful in his denial.

10 Phoenix, p.154.
He had not done anything—not he himself"(103).

Similarly, the orderly also drinks, not to erase the experience, but because "he was parched." He spends the night "inert, relaxed in a sleep that was rather stupor than slumber, a dead night of stupefaction, shot through with gleams of anguish."(104). The orderly seems to accept what had happened, and becomes aware that now, in spite of his inertia, everything is "inevitable." they have "revealed themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge," and now "It was between him and the Captain.

There were only the two people in the world now—himself and the Captain"(104). But the orderly also attempts to deny the existence of the officer when, the next morning, he takes the tray to the captain's room and feels himself "put out of existence" and submits "to his own nullification." However, this is the servant's reaction to his master, representative of the social rather than the deeper personal relationship, for when he feels himself beginning to "regain himself" and the captain grows "vague, unreal," he notices the officer's hand tremble as he takes the coffee, and the personal situation manifests itself once more: "...he felt everything falling shattered. And he went away, feeling as if he himself were coming to pieces, disintegrated"(105).

This feeling persists, for on the maneuvers that day he senses the invisible bond between them: "The orderly felt he was connected with the figure moving so suddenly on horseback; he followed it like a shadow, mute and inevitable and damned by it. And the officer was always aware of the tramp of the company behind, the march of his orderly among the men"(96). Neither has been able to deny the existence of the other; they are now part of each other, and begin to enact the final part of the drama in a landscape of glare and shade which reflects the duality of their relationship.

As the first section concludes, the orderly has one thought in mind, "to save himself," for "under the presence of the horseman...he was disembowelled, made empty, like an empty shell. He felt himself as nothing." The nullity of the orderly is not a "reduction to essential otherness" which is the result of "pure communion," for the captain is forcing the orderly to deny himself totally, and not gain a new selfhood or "otherness" as a result of
the relationship. What is being forced upon the orderly is not a "source of life and knowledge" brought about by an "interchange and meeting and mingling of two," but a source of death: the complete subjection of his individual will to the tyranny of the other. And as the soldier marches in the glare and heat of the sun, the world fades: "Sometimes it was dark before his eyes, as if he saw this world through a smoked glass, frail shadows and unreal"(106). The "flame" of the officer begins to burn in the orderly. This reciprocation recalls the earlier reaction provoked in the orderly by the officer's action of flinging "a heavy military glove into the young soldier's face. Then he had the satisfaction of seeing the black eyes flare up into his own, like a blaze when straw is thrown on a fire"(99). It is the flame of passionate awareness of the need to salvage his unique selfhood; "But as the horse slowed to a walk, coming up the last steep path, the great flash flared over the body and soul of the orderly.... The back of his head felt as if it were weighted with a heavy piece of fire...The tension grew in the orderly's soul. Then again, seeing the Captain ease himself on the saddle, the flash blazed through him"(107).

In this second section of the story, the captain and the orderly are now in a landscape ablaze with the heat of the sun and of their tension. For now the physical landscape merges with the psychological one, and the "flame" which leaps "into the young soldier's throat" when he hears the officer's command, is the same flame which makes the captain's veins run "hot." It is now that the orderly who "received life direct through his senses, and acting straight from instinct" is forced to allow his instinctive drive for self-preservation to manifest itself, and the "melting into pure communion" takes place.

Significantly, it occurs once again during a meal: "...he saw the captain stoop and take a piece of bread from the tree base. Again the flash of flames went through the young soldier, seeing the stiff body beneath him, and his hands jerked"(109). Earlier, it had been the officer who felt the "flash" when he saw the "young brown, shapely peasant's hand grasp the loaf or the wine-bottle," but now that there has been a complete reversal of roles, the communion/consummation is the orderly's. The parallel
extends further, for previously the captain reacted when the orderly had spilled the wine; now it is the officer who drops the bread, and when he presses open the lid of the mug, "the young soldier started" for it is obvious that we are presented with a reenactment of the earlier scene:

The orderly watched the lip of the mug, and the white hand that clenched the handle, as if he were fascinated. It was raised. The youth followed it with his eyes. And then he saw the thin, strong throat of the elder man moving up and down as he drank, the strong jaw working. And the instinct which had been jerking at the young man's wrists suddenly jerked free. He jumped, feeling as if it were rent in two by a strong flame.

The communion which had begun in the first section and been repressed is now given its freedom, and the strangulation of the officer becomes a consummation, a "pure communion" for the orderly.

The sexual nature of the murder seems to be obvious, and becomes even more explicit when read in conjunction with Lawrence's two expository statements quoted earlier. The 1914 letter to McLeod, and the essay on "Love" to which I have been referring throughout this discussion, assume major importance in this context. In them Lawrence has spelled out his major artistic and doctrinal concerns of the period, concerns which find a more elaborate expression in The Rainbow and Women in Love. Since we can consider "The Prussian Officer" contemporaneous with these two major works, the short story takes on added importance insofar as it not only reveals an early attempt to grapple with the theory in more compact and demanding form, but also betrays the direction which Lawrence's artistic development was to take.

In the essay Lawrence speaks of love as "strictly a travelling," and goes on to condemn those who believe that "it is better to travel than to arrive" as adhering to the "essence of unbelief". Lawrence's view is that "we travel in order to arrive"—we do not travel in order to travel. At least such travel is mere futility:

And love is a travelling, a motion, a speed of coming together. Love is the force of creation. But all force, spiritual or physical, has its polarity, its positive and its negative...in arriving one passes beyond love, or, rather, one encompasses love in a new transcendence. To arrive is
the supreme joy after all our travelling.11

It is therefore fair to consider the military manoeuvres, the "march," in "The Prussian Officer" as symbolic of this voyage. The very first sentence of the story is indicative of the relationship between the two men as revealed thus far: "They had marched more than thirty kilometers since dawn, along the white, hot road where occasional thickets of trees threw a moment of shade, then out into the glare again"(95). The constant shift from "glare" to "shade" is surely parallel to the antagonism and nullity revealed in the relationship between the orderly and the captain. The "march" itself is more of a quest, for it is on the march that the consummation occurs and the orderly is "destroyed" and reduced to essential otherness in the "friction of intense destructive flames."

We have seen how the "fire" and "flame" imagery has become much more dominant in the second section, and it is through the agency of the "flames" that the orderly rebels against being "a nonentity among the crowd," and finds his new identity. The flames become synonymous with this force in the orderly, and it is a force which whether "spiritual or physical has its polarity, its positive and its negative." The murder, then, is the transference of spiritual force into physical, for the consummation is achieved through intense physical action: "...the orderly, with serious, earnest young face, and underlip between his teeth, had got his knee in the officer's chest and was pressing the chin backward over the farther edge of the tree-stump, pressing with all his heart behind in a passion of relief, the tension of his wrists exquisite with relief"(110). It is evident, however, that both spiritual and physical force are present—the "serious young face"..."all his heart behind a passion of relief"—in the same way that both physical and spiritual force are present in sexual consummation. The orderly experiences both spiritual and physical pleasure in the contact: "And it was pleasant too, to have that chin, that hard jaw already slightly rough with beard, in his hands." The detail of the jaw "slightly rough with beard" adds to the intensity

11 Phoenix, p. 151.
of the tactile pleasure that the orderly experiences, and from this point the description becomes more and more explicitly sexual:

He did not relax one hair's breadth, but, all the force of all his blood exulting in his thrust, he shoved back the head of the other man, till there was a little 'cluck' and a crunching sensation. Then he felt as if his head went to vapour. Heavy convulsions shook the body of the officer, frightening and horrifying the young soldier. Yet it pleased him, too, to repress them. It pleased him to keep his hands pressing back the chin, to feel the chest of the other man yield in expiration to his strong, young knees, to feel the hard twitchings of the prostrate body jerking his own whole frame, which was pressed down on it...Then, with a start, he noticed the nostrils gradually filled with blood. The red brimmed, hesitated, ran over, and went in a thin trickle down the face to the eyes. (110).

There can be no doubt that Lawrence is revealing a sexual union; the choice of descriptive language and the prose rhythms make this quite clear. The orderly exults "in his thrust," and the officer's body convulses as the neck is snapped. When the neck of a man is broken, as in execution by hanging or strangulation, the man ejaculates, and here it is the "convulsions" of ejaculation which "frighten and horrify" the orderly, for essentially he is grasping the officer in a sexual embrace, and feels him "yield" and expire. The blood which fills the nostrils of the officer is also the blood of sexual initiation and consummation, and has its parallel with the spilt wine of communion, for now the orderly is in the process of becoming "whole" or self-fulfilled: "And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality. I am driven from the matrix into sheer separate distinction. I become my single self, inviolable and unique." And from this point on the orderly becomes a separate being. He has transcended his relationship with the officer, for after the consummation the captain becomes an object with no personality and no human identity for the orderly:

12 Weiss, p.91, suggests the obvious by stating that "the nature of the relationship is frankly undisguised" but does greater service by quoting Havelock Ellis's Studies in the Psychology of Sex (Philadelphia, 1928), III, 151, which mentions "the impulse to strangle the object of sexual desire."

13 Phoenix, p.154.
"It shocked and depressed him... The body, twitched and sprawled there, inert. He stood and looked at it... It was a pity it was broken... It was extinguished now" (ll0).

The orderly now leaves the realm of his previous existence and slowly comes to an awareness of the possibilities of his new condition: "It surprised him that the leaves were glittering in the sun, and the chips of wood reflecting white from the ground. For him a change had come over the world. But for the rest it had not—all seemed the same. Only he had left it. And he could not go back" (lll). He feels himself "divided from the others," for by his action he has not only severed his social connection with the world, but has transcended his own existential condition. With a "heavy relief in [his] soul" he has been "purified into singleness": "He had gone out from everyday life into the unknown and he could not, he even did not want to go back" (lll). The orderly seems to have discovered an alternate and different existence which clearly puts him beyond the influence of conventional reality, and which only reinforces his separation from the natural environment: "Tree trunks, like people standing grey and still, took no notice as he went. A doe, herself a moving bit of sunshine and shadow, went running through the flecked shade... And he was sick with pain... He felt lost, quite dazed with all this" (lll-ll2).

His "single self" is taking advantage of the potentiality created by the murder of the officer, for in effect the "consummation" has been a release, and now "his consciousness went racing on without him." The orderly's racing consciousness makes him subliminally aware of the duality of his previous relationship with the officer: the conflict had been between the instinctive natural responses of the orderly and the oppressive will of his master. The orderly, who had thought he had confidence in his "natural completeness in himself," was dislodged from this position and a vague uneasiness, which quickly became concrete, took its place. Now, after the murder which resulted in a "heavy relief in his soul," the orderly is paradoxically more alienated than before, for he is not only "divided from the others" but divided within himself.

Thus, in the third section of the story, when the orderly awakens from his first stupor, and becomes aware of his surroundings
"a great pang of fear went through his heart," for he realizes that while for him a change has come over the world, for the rest it had not; this irrevocably reinforces his isolation. Yet within his isolation he is aware of a kind of peace. This tranquility does not persist, for his isolation forces him to the recognition that he had gone beyond himself, and the renewal of his fear is the desire to return to the world, to the "big, bright place of light... the town, all the country." When he notices a woman walking through a field of corn he desperately desires to communicate with her, but "he had no language with which to speak to her. She was the bright solid unreality. She would make a noise of words that would confuse him, and her eyes would look at him without seeing him"(114). Language is no longer a means of communication, for words are simply "a noise" in the orderly's new reality. And under the hot sun, in this last major section of the story, the orderly "in the friction of intense destructive flames" comes to a vision of purified singleness: "There was thick, golden light behind golden-green glitterings, and tall, grey-purple shafts...He was divided among all kinds of separate things"(114-115).

His new condition, and his consciousness of the fact that he "was amid the reality, on the real, dark bottom" is the result of his attempt at reconciling the duality which his relationship with the officer forced him into—the conflict between his sense of himself and the oppressive will of the officer. The orderly's sense of selfhood, threatened by the officer, developed into a passion for distinctness and separateness which could have only one conclusion. The communion/consummation in the clearing in the forest resulted in a "relief" and momentary peace for the orderly, for he had achieved at the same time a conjunction and separation, a duality of existence which Lawrence suggests is the ideal situation of relationships. But this new existence results, as we have seen, in the consciousness of singleness and alienation, with no possibility of a conjunction with any other individual, and as a result the orderly's being disintegrates: "He was divided among all kinds of separate things. There was some strange, agonized connection between them, but they were drawing farther apart. Then they would all split"(115-116).

In the midst of his psychic and physical disintegration, the
orderly has a final moment of lucidity, and staring at "the glittering mountains" till his eyes go blank, perceives that "There they ranked, all still and wonderful between earth and heaven...and the mountains, as they stood in their beauty, so clear and cool, seemed to have it, that which was lost in him" (116). The orderly's final recognition and vision of the mountains is reminiscent of the the Rainbow symbol uniting earth and heaven; essentially a pledge of faith in the context of the novel, between man and the universe and between man and man. The orderly's quest, much like Ursula's in The Rainbow, is based upon a passionate desire for distinctness and conjunction. However, unlike Ursula, for whom the potentiality of communion is distinct at the end of the novel, the orderly is only aware that, having partaken of it, it is now lost to him. The result for the orderly is a separate distinction lacking the redeeming conjunction with the officer's essential otherness. He has failed to attain the permanent duality which for Lawrence forms the basis of a realized relationship.

In the story, Lawrence has examined the basic elements of conflict within the relationship of the orderly and the officer, with the view to presenting a creative resolution. The resolution depends, in the words of his letter to McLeod, on "gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy" which in turn creates a new configuration in the relationship—the duality of separation and conjunction. The result of Lawrence's endowing the orderly with a capacity for an exposed response to life, is that he derives from his reactions to the officer a sense of new life in himself, and a sense of the destruction of the self he thought he was:

....now he had got beyond himself. He had never been here before. Was it life, or not life? He was by himself. They were in a big bright place, those others, and he was outside...he was outside, here, in the darkened open beyond, where each thing existed alone. But they would have to come out there sometime, those others. Little, and left behind him, they all were. There had been father and mother and sweetheart. What did they all matter? This was the open land. (113).

The orderly's intuition of the new reality to which he can potentially transcend is reinforced by the last sentence of the story: "The bodies of the two men lay together, side by side, in the mortuary,
the one white and slender, but laid rigidly at rest, the other looking as if every moment it must rouse itself into life again, so young and unused, from a slumber"(116). The orderly has recognized a new life in the singleness to which he has been reduced, and Lawrence emphasizes that his reduction is potentially a creation by contrasting the two bodies: the officer's is "rigidly at rest," while the orderly's "must rouse itself into life again." The final sentence therefore, suggests that the orderly has potentially discovered the "natural law of his own being" which, as Lawrence states in the Study of Thomas Hardy, dictates that "every man starts with his deepest desire, a desire for consummation...a desire for completeness, that completeness of being which will give completeness of satisfaction and completeness of utterance."\textsuperscript{14}

The consummation and transcendence which Lawrence envisages on the basis of this law can, however, only be attained through the sex act, for it is the sex act, with its creation of physical and spiritual neutrality, which results in "the melting into pure communion." It is this communion/consummation with its attendant transcendence which provides the possibility for creative self-fulfilment. Thus, it is on the basis of consummation that the attempt can be made to discover the unity which Lawrence desired in a dualistic world.

But it is obvious that this type of consummation can only occur between a man and a woman, for once the man has discovered his own being, he must "seek out the law of the female with which to join himself as complement. He must know that he is half, and the woman is the other half: that they are two, but that they are two in one." The man and woman, then, are transcended in consummation, which, while uniting them is greater than either, and in this resides the potentiality for creative resolution. The sex act, therefore, epitomizes Lawrence's dualistic conception of love, for, as he states in the essay on Love:"In pure communion I become whole in love, and in pure fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality...I become my single self." Consummation, then, is the means whereby "a man shall know the natural law of his own being."

\textsuperscript{14} Phoenix, p.515.
For Lawrence, love is also a social force, and part of the natural law of being: "A man shall poignantly and personally recognize that the law of another man's nature is different from the law of his own nature, that it may even be hostile to him, and yet is part of the great Law of God, to be admitted; this is the Christian action of 'loving thy neighbour...'"\textsuperscript{15} It is also a duality:

There must be brotherly love, a wholeness of humanity. But there must also be a pure, separate individuality, separate and proud as a lion or a hawk..."In the duality lies fulfilment. Man must act in concert with man.... But man must also act separately and distinctly...moving for himself without reference to his neighbour. The two movements are opposite, yet they do not negate each other. We have understanding. And if we understand, then we balance perfectly between the two motions, we single isolated individuals, we are great concordant humanity, both...\textsuperscript{16}

There is obviously a similarity in the conception of "brotherly love" and "sexual love". Man's movement towards man in "brotherly love" is similar to his "melting into pure communion" with women, and the retreat to self is similar to the "clarity of being" achieved in the "fierce passion of sensuality". The ultimate purpose for Lawrence of both brotherly love and sexual love is to bring the opposite forces into a liberating relation—a transcendence of the duality to creative self-fulfilment.

It should now be clear that the transcendence Lawrence desires occurs through the agency of consummation/communion. I would like to suggest that the murder of the Prussian Officer, which I have shown to be replete with sexual allusions, is in fact an attempt on Lawrence's part to see personal relations between men in terms of sexual love, for it is only through sexual consummation that creative fulfilment can be achieved. Furthermore, since Lawrence portrays human existence as a combination of sexual and brotherly love, and since what he demands for complete creative awareness is the reconciliation of the dualities within both, it follows that the basis for the reconciliation is consummation. The conflict of the

\textsuperscript{15} Phoenix, p.515.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.155-156.
orderly and officer in the story is a major indication of the
direction which Lawrence's exploration of male relationships was
to take, and the enactment of a homoerotic ritual consummation
establishes a pattern which we will see developed throughout
Lawrence's subsequent work.

It must be emphasized that "The Prussian Officer" is a most
significant early treatment of the complexities of Lawrence's
investigation of male relationships. The realization that "the
greatest and deepest human desire, for consummation, for Self-
Knowledge"\textsuperscript{17} can only be achieved within the context of a love
relationship, leads Lawrence to recognize the androgyny of man
and to evolve a theory of love which justifies its existence:
"In love, in the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes
pure, that which is female in me is given to the female; that
which is male in her draws into me, I am complete, I am pure male,
she is pure female."\textsuperscript{18} The relationship of the officer and orderly
obviously partakes of this analysis, for as I have indicated above,
the two men enact an analogue of marriage in an explicitly homo-
erotic situation culminating in a consummation which is itself
analogous to a heterosexual love relationship.

Lawrence's attempt to resolve or explain the mechanism of male
and female elements co-existing in one individual, and incidentally
to suggest a justification for the dominance of one or the other,
is surprisingly close to Sandor Ferenczi's distinction between the
"subject-homo-erotic" and the "object-homo-erotic". The former
fulfils the passive or feminine role, while the latter is tormented
by repressed phantasies, is aggressive, and has obsessive relation­
ships with men.\textsuperscript{19} More specifically, Ferenczi suggests that "an
object-homo-erotic knows how to love the woman in a man; the pos­
terior half of a man's body can signify for him the anterior half
of a woman's...."\textsuperscript{20} Ferenczi's comment can thus be seen to correspond
\textsuperscript{17} Phoenix, p.468.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} "The Nosology of Male Homosexuality (Homo-erotism)," in Sex in
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p.261.
quite closely to Lawrence's attempt at homoerotic justification, and the subsequent suggestion of some positive value inherent in male relationships.

The sexual-sadistic cruelty evident in the story and an integral part of the psychosexual relationship between the men, has its ostensible basis in Lawrence's own perception of Prussianism and his insight into sex and cruelty which he outlined to Edward Garnett: "Cruelty is a form of perverted sex...soldiers, being herded together, men without women, never being satisfied...as a man never is from a street affair, get their surplus sex and their frustration and dissatisfaction into the blood, and love cruelty. It is sex lust fermented makes atrocity." The cruelty of "The Prussian Officer" with its strong undertone of sexual attraction and gratification, will become part of Lawrence's subsequent description of male homoerotic relations, but will never quite reach the intensity evident in this most explicitly sexual sadistic relationship.

The elements which contribute to the cruelty in "The Prussian Officer" are derived from Lawrence's observation and awareness of a particular militaristic condition. However, within the context of the theory of love outlined earlier, violent, "fierce passion" is a necessary prelude to the levelling into "separateness of being" which at this point for Lawrence is an integral part of creative consummation. The claims Lawrence wished to make for male relationships derived from his awareness not only of his own ambivalence, but of the androgyny implicit in his theories of human relationships. The pattern of the relationship evident in "The Prussian Officer" is thus a convenient and important basis from which to examine Lawrence's investigation of male homoerotic

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21 CL 156.

22 Havelock Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Vol. III, ch. 2, "Love and Pain," p. 109, describes several conditions which occur in Lawrence's treatment of homosexuality either in "The Prussian Officer" or in subsequent incidents: "The strong man is more apt to be tender than cruel, or at all events knows how to restrain within bounds any impulse to cruelty; the most elaborate forms of sadism...are more apt to be allied with a somewhat feminine organization. Also p.172: "Pain acts as a sexual stimulant because it is the most powerful of all methods for arousing emotion."
relations, and is indicative of a commitment which will extend to the end of his life.
CHAPTER II

Sons and Lovers: The Suspicion of Homoretic Attraction

An early attempt to investigate the special nature of male relationships in the context of the theory outlined earlier, occurs in Sons and Lovers between Paul Morel and Baxter Dawes. Paul's attempts at creative self-fulfilment or, in Lawrence's terms, "communion," with Miriam and Clara are self-evident, but the reader may well find peculiar Paul's gentle solicitude and developing affection for Baxter, estranged husband of his current mistress.

Lawrence deals with the relationship in two chapters, appropriately entitled "Baxter Dawes" and "The Release." The appropriateness of the latter is of primary significance because of the nature of Paul's relationship with his mother; that is, her death signifies for Paul a "release" from physical or immediate bondage to her. It is even more so because of the Baxter imbroglio. Paul's feelings for Baxter are unusual given the normal course of events; however, because Paul is on a quest for creative self-fulfilment and is attempting a form of self-integration, he feels drawn to Baxter in spite of the ill feeling between them:

Paul and he were confirmed enemies, and yet there was between them that peculiar feeling of intimacy, as if they were secretly near to each other, which sometimes exists between two people, although they never speak to one another. Paul often thought of Baxter Dawes, often wanted to get at him and be friends with him. He knew Dawes often thought about him, and that the man was drawn to him by some bond or other. And yet the two never looked at each other save in hostility.¹

Ostensibly, the reason for the bond is Clara, for it is not unusual for men who have had an affair with the same woman to become friends, or at least feel an attraction for each other. It is as if Lawrence recognized that, on a purely psychological level, there exists the need for friendship with the "other man" in order to feel close to the woman, or to vicariously "possess" her once again. This is further complicated by feelings of self-pity and

inadequacy on the part of Dawes, and guilt on the part of Paul.

We must also recognize that Baxter may function as a "father figure" for Paul. Given the unsatisfactory and tortured nature of Paul's relationship with his father, his subsequent relations with Baxter can be seen as an attempt to supply for himself what had been missing in the family circle. If we pursue this further, it becomes clear in terms of psychoanalytic theory, and indeed in terms of what is explicit and implicit in the novel, that Clara may represent Mrs. Morel; thus Paul's guilt feelings about intruding between his mother and father precipitate his self-conscious attempts at befriending Baxter and reconciling Clara to him. The situation is further complicated by Paul's sexual relationship with Clara, which is similar to his unconscious desire for his mother. Thus, by befriending Baxter he not only atones for his seduction of another man's wife, but also for his desires for his mother and his ill-treatment of his father. By reconciling Baxter and Clara, Paul is subconsciously attempting to reconcile his own parents and efface his intrusion.

Important as this may be to a psychoanalytic interpretation of the novel, and to an explanation of Paul's character, it still does not consider the importance of the male relationship in the larger context of Lawrence's creative effort. It is evident, in view of Paul's quest as it develops through the novel, that something more than a psychoanalytic case study is intended by Lawrence. The deeper significance of the situation is readily made clear if we closely examine the passage quoted above, in which Lawrence describes the nature of the attraction between Paul and Baxter. In the paragraph, Lawrence's description moves from the particular to the general and back to the particular again, in order to universalize the experience and then to suggest a specific examination of it. From the statement that Paul and Baxter "were confirmed enemies, and yet there was between them that peculiar feeling of intimacy, as if they were secretly near to each other," Lawrence shifts to the general situation and qualifies it by stating that such feeling "sometimes exists between two people, although they never speak to each other." Further evidence that Lawrence was attempting to explore this type of relationship in its larger context is suggested by the discussion that Paul is having in the
The aristocracy,' he continued, 'is a really military institution. Take Germany, now. She's got thousands of aristocrats whose only means of existence is the army. They're deadly poor, and life's deadly slow. So they hope for war. They look for war as a chance of getting on. Till there's a war, they are idle good-for-nothings. When there's a war, they are leaders and commanders. There you are then—they want war!'(416).

The discussion is significant because Lawrence utilizes the relationship between two Germans, an aristocratic officer and his orderly, in the story "The Prussian Officer", which deals with precisely the same emotions evidenced by Baxter and Paul in this situation. It is more than coincidence that Paul is discussing German aristocrats, for at the time Lawrence was writing Sons and Lovers war with Germany was threatening, and Lawrence, as we shall see later in this study, was concerned with the will-to-power and its effects on human relationships. More than this, however, is to the point, for the discussion centres on the self-fulfilment attained by the officers during war: "when there's a war, they are leaders and commanders," for without wars to give direction and meaning to their existence "they are idle good-for-nothings." Similarly, both Paul and Baxter are seeking self-fulfilment and direction in their lives, Paul in relation to his mother and himself, and Baxter, cast adrift from his wife, is sadly in need of a directive and constructive element in his life. Thus, both Paul and Baxter are "idle good-for-nothings" because nothing creative can come of the lives they are currently leading. Both are seeking, and are in need of, creative self-fulfilment; or, in terms of Lawrence's theories of love relationships, they are seeking a reconciliation in communion and consummation of the brotherly love/sexual love duality. Consummation of this type is specifically
dealt with, as we have seen, in "The Prussian Officer", and will be further developed in *Women in Love*.

In *Sons and Lovers*, and specifically within the context of the relationship I have been discussing, we can readily see an early attempt at formulating and utilizing the theories and methods of narration for male relationships in terms of the reconciliation of the duality of brotherly and sexual love, and thus the achievement of creative self-fulfilment. The relationship of Paul and Baxter is in effect a rehearsal for that of the Prussian officer and his orderly, and a comparison with their relationship as outlined in the previous chapter will show the direction which Lawrence's exploration of this particular aspect of human reality was taking.

The two relationships are a mixture of hostility and reserved admiration. Paul and Baxter, we are told, "were confirmed enemies, and yet there was between them that peculiar feeling of intimacy, as if they were secretly near to each other;" also, both are drawn to each other by "some bond or other," yet they "never looked at each other save in hostility." In addition, Paul feels sorry for Baxter's condition, and his feelings of hostility, concern, and gentle affection exist simultaneously: "He hated Dawes, wished something could exterminate him at that moment; and at the same time, seeing the wet hair on the man's forehead, he thought he looked pathetic"(418). More specific and explicit is the statement that "Paul had a curious sensation of pity, almost of affection, mingled with a violent hate, for the man"(418). Similar feelings exist between the Prussian Officer and his orderly, but its expression is necessarily different and more abstract, for in "The Prussian Officer" Lawrence was attempting to give dramatic expression to an abstract theory.

At the beginning of the orderly's service both men tend to ignore each other, and the officer holds himself aloof and impersonal. Gradually a change occurs, and both begin to admire each other: "The orderly, having to rub him down, admired the amazing riding-muscles of his loins." And the officer becomes aware of "his servant's young vigorous, unconscious presence about him. He could not get away from the sense of the youth's person"(97).

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2 "The Prussian Officer", p. 96 *et passim*. 
Both, however, resist "the feeling of intimacy" that exists between them, and attempt to deny the "bond": "[the officer] returned to duty with his brow still more tense, his eyes still more hostile and irritable" (96). He makes a conscious effort to avoid a direct confrontation with his orderly: "He did not choose to be touched into life by his servant. He now very rarely looked direct at his orderly, but kept his face averted, as if to avoid seeing him." (97).

The situation is almost exactly that of Baxter and Paul: "Paul... saw again distinctly the man's form as it approached him. Dawes still walked erect, with his fine shoulders flung back, and his face lifted; but there was a furtive look in his eyes that gave one the impression he was trying to get unnoticed past every person he met, glancing suspiciously to see what they thought of him. And his hands seemed to be wanting to hide... There was a tiredness and despair on his face..." (440). Baxter, like the Prussian Officer, refuses to be "touched into life" at this point in his relationship with Paul; in his general condition he is essentially a "dead soul" who lacks, like the officer, the courage to "draw nearer" to individuals, to expose himself to them "and be altered by them."

The identification now seems obviously to be between Baxter and the officer, with Paul corresponding to the orderly. Thus, Paul's condemnation in the pub of German aristocrats becomes much more significant, and as a result, its immediate effect is to cause Baxter to be exceptionally hostile, and to attempt to fight with Paul because he seems instinctively to recognize its relevance to his condition. Paul, in the context of the actual conflict, expresses the same emotion and revelation that the orderly does, but in the process is vanquished by Baxter (officer), at least physically, and as a result gains what appears to be a greater understanding not only of his own dilemma, but of Baxter's as well.

Some time later Baxter gets an opportunity to administer to Paul the desired beating. Paul, having left Clara, is accosted by him on his way to Daybrook Station. As they begin to fight, the similarity with the orderly's action in "The Prussian Officer" becomes evident. Both Paul, and later the orderly, act from "pure instinct"; both experience "pleasure" and both are "blind" and "unconscious" of what they are doing: "He was a pure instinct,
without reason or feeling. His body, hard and wonderful in itself, cleaved against the struggling body of the other man; not a muscle in him relaxed. He was quite unconscious, only his body had taken upon itself to kill this other man"(445). The description is of Paul as he attempts to strangle Baxter, but the parallels with the orderly are immediately recognizable: "And the [orderly's] instinct which had been jerking at the young man's wrists suddenly jerked free. He jumped....And in a second the orderly, with serious, earnest young face, and underlip between his teeth, had got his knee in the officer's chest and was...pressing, with all his heart behind in a passion of relief...He did not relax one hair's breadth, but, all the force of all his blood exulting..."(110). Paul's psychological state is similar to that of the orderly both during and after the murder, but the former's is obviously not as developed as is his:

Morel gradually came to himself. He knew where he was and what had happened, but he did not want to move. He lay still, with tiny bits of snow tickling his face. It was pleasant to lie quite still. The time passed. It was the bits of snow that kept rousing him when he did not want to be roused. At last his will clicked into action. 'I mustn't lie here,' he said; 'it's silly.' But still he did not move. (446).

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The orderly] came to with a start. His mouth was dry and hard, his heart beat heavily, but he had not the energy to get up. His heart beat heavily. Where was he—the barracks—at home? There was something knocking. And, making an effort, he looked round—trees, and litter of greenery, and reddish, bright, still pieces of sunshine on the floor. He did not believe he was himself, he did not believe what he saw....He made a struggle towards consciousness, but relapsed. Then he struggled again. And gradually his surroundings fell into relationship with himself. (112).

The orderly's stupor and Paul's inaction are manifestations of the same desire: both want "distinction" and "conjunction." As has been indicated earlier, this is only possible through "communion," and in Sons and Lovers peculiar attempts at communion are made by Paul after his fight with Baxter when, paradoxically, he feels a greater "connexion...more than ever since they had fought"(461).
Paul also feels "guilty" and "more or less responsible" when he finds out that Baxter is in hospital. Because of his own suffering or "state of mind" he feels "an almost painful nearness to Dawes, who was suffering and despairing, too." The final reason for the connexion, however, is that "they had met in a naked extremity of hate, and it was a bond. At any rate, the elemental man in each had met" (461).

It should be noted that the officer and the orderly also meet on their "elemental" levels; like Paul and Baxter, their relationship is founded on a conflict of opposites. The "fear, mistrust, hate, and misery" which characterize Baxter's look when Paul visits him in the hospital is also the condition of the orderly in his subservience to the officer. The officer is "infuriated" with the orderly and becomes "harsh and cruelly bullying, using contempt and satire"—exactly the response Baxter revealed in the pub incident with Paul, and which he now continues when Paul visits him. The initial reaction of both men when confronted with each other in the hospital is indicative of the nature of their relationship and of the similarity with that of the officer and the orderly: "Dawes looked swiftly with his dark, startled eyes beyond the sister at Paul. His look was full of fear, mistrust, hate, and misery. Morel met the swift, dark eyes, and hesitated" (462). Both men recognize each other's essential self through the agency of their eyes—a device Lawrence uses to a greater extent in "The Prussian Officer," and later in Women in Love, to indicate immediate and instinctive recognition of kindred spirits. Here, each recognizes and is "afraid of the naked selves they had been," for, as we had been told earlier, the "elemental man in each had met," and they had been revealed each to the other. Now Dawes, in the throes of self pity and pride, will not easily let Paul approach: "Dawes was thinner and handsome again, but life seemed low in him....He lay staring across at the wall opposite, as if to believe Morel was not there. Paul felt his heart go hard and angry" (462-463).

As a result of the beating administered by Baxter, Paul has come to a new understanding of himself. It is an understanding which prompts him to seek self-fulfilment in a relationship with Baxter, since his attempts at "conjunction" or union with Miriam and Clara seem to have failed. Baxter, however, is not ready for
what Paul has to offer: "It was evident he dared not face the world again... Dawes glanced at him quickly. The man's dark eyes were afraid to meet any other eyes in the world"(464). Baxter, then, lacks the self confidence and desire to encounter the external world and the perverse friendship which Paul offers. Thus, the result of the first hospital visit for Paul is exasperation; "The strong emotion that Dawes aroused in him, repressed, made him shiver"(465); nevertheless, Paul persists in his attempts; "Morel went to see Dawes once or twice. There was a sort of friendship between the two men, who were all the while deadly rivals. But they never mentioned the woman who was between them"(467).

During Baxter's convalescence Paul's mother's health deteriorates and he does not see much of Clara; in fact, we are told that "Usually he was with men," as if the world of men was an antidote and an escape from the confused and incomplete reality of his personal relationships with women. As a substitute, Paul turns more and more to Baxter, who by that time had gone to a convalescent home near Nottingham: "Between the two men the friendship had developed peculiarly. Dawes, who mended very slowly and seemed very feeble, seemed to leave himself in the hands of Morel"(470). In spite of resigning himself to Morel's care, Baxter is still uneasy about Paul's ministrations to him: "'You shouldn't get up,' said Paul. Dawes sat down heavily, eyeing Morel with a sort of suspicion. 'Don't you waste your time on me,' he said, 'if you've got better to do.' 'I wanted to come," said Paul" (472, 473). And in the conversation which follows, both men acknowledge their current inaction and decide that they must make "a new start of some sort." They also, for the first time, "definitely" mention Clara, and this serves to establish a new level of intimacy between them, for their mutual suspicion seems to lessen.

Mrs. Morel's illness worsens, and Paul drifts "restlessly from place to place." He sees Clara, but does not make love to her; neither is his attempt to reconcile Baxter to her successful; "the three of them were drifting forward" with little or nothing resolved between them. After Mrs. Morel's death, Paul goes to the sea for a few days, where Baxter is convalescing at a Skegness
nursing home. He is nearly well again, and his time in the home being up, he comes to Paul's lodging.

Once again the two men are thrust together in an intimate atmosphere, and their relationship seems to progress. We are told that, in spite of the "big reserve" between them, they "seemed faithful to each other," and indeed, "Dawes depended on Morel now" (488). Dawes knows that Paul and Clara had practically separated, and this gives him greater courage to draw nearer to Paul and let himself be dominated by him: "'I told the landlady your wife was coming.' 'Did you?' said Dawes, shrinking, but almost leaving himself in the other's hands" (489). Dawes' attitude is characteristic of the dual nature of his relationship with Paul: on the one hand, he is dependent upon him, and on the other, he reproaches himself, if only unconsciously, for that dependence: "Dawes glanced at him again, with dark eyes that agreed with everything the other would say, perhaps a trifle dominated by him" (489). Yet in spite of his dependence, Dawes' easy camaraderie is at times an indication of his independence, or at least his desire for superiority. When Paul admits that he feels in "a lot bigger mess" than Dawes, Baxter replies solicitously, "In what way, lad?" and speaks "caressingly" in sympathizing with him: "I know—I understand it,... But you'll find it'll come all right." However, in spite of his attempts otherwise, there is still in his manner the self-pitying tone and feeling of inadequacy: "Dawes knocked his pipe in a hopeless fashion. 'You've not done for yourself like I have,' he said. Morel saw the wrist and the white hand of the other man gripping the stem of the pipe and knocking out the ash, as if he had given up" (490).

Paul attempts to give Baxter some feeling of self-assurance and some form of self-confidence, because "those brown eyes, full of the consciousness of failure, almost pleading for reassurance, for someone to re-establish the man in himself, to warm him, to set him up firm again, troubled Paul." The subdued conflict within the relationship is now the attempt at re-establishing Baxter's masculinity—"to warm him, to set him up firm again,"—to re-establish the masculinity of which Paul had robbed him by his affair with Clara. This is further complicated by both men's attempt at self-realization and self-fulfilment, since both were
"drifting" with no mooring place in sight. Paul has been cast adrift by the death of his mother and the failure of his love relationship with Miriam and Clara. Baxter was drifting because of the breakdown of his marriage and his inability to come to terms with his own sense of inadequacy and failure. Both men then "recognize the stress of passion, each in the other" (490); the desire to transcend their present condition and fully encounter what reality offers. Ironically, it is Paul who can rescue Baxter because throughout the novel Paul had been shown to be the most "adrift" of all, and perhaps the greatest failure. It is within this failure that he finds the resources to attempt to re-establish Baxter. He instills in him a sense of importance and pride by denying his own importance to Clara: "She never really hitched on to me—you were always there in the background. That's why she wouldn't get a divorce...That's how women are with me...They want me like mad, but they don't want to belong to me. And she belonged to you all the time. I knew" (491).

This is the admission which Baxter had unconsciously desired, for immediately "the triumphant male came up in Dawes. He showed his teeth more distinctly... 'Perhaps I was a fool' he said. 'You were a big fool,' said Morel. 'But perhaps even then you were a bigger fool,' said Dawes. There was a touch of triumph and malice in it....Then they did not talk any more. The instinct to murder each other had returned. They almost avoided each other" (491). After Paul's admission of defeat and Baxter's consequent expression of victory, both revert to the basic hostility they betrayed earlier in their relationship. However, with the return of this instinct also comes the affectionate concern which characterized the early stages of the conflict:

They shared the same bedroom. When they retired Dawes seemed abstract, thinking of something. He sat on the side of the bed in his shirt, looking at his legs. 'Aren't you getting cold?' asked Morel.
'I was looking at these legs,' replied the other. 'What's up with 'em? They look all right,' replied Paul, from his bed.
'They look all right. But there's some water in 'em yet.' 'And what about it?' 'Come and look.'
Paul reluctantly got out of bed and went to look at the rather handsome legs of the other man that were covered with glistening, dark gold hair (492).
We are now back to the equivocal world of instinctual responses and the ambivalent relationships based upon them. The return of the "instinct to murder" signifies that the progress Paul and Baxter have made in their somewhat hesitant relationship has not been permanent. They have been involved in a struggle of wills for dominance, and as soon as one of them achieves ascendancy, the other feels compelled to disrupt the new configuration. Therefore, when "the triumphant male came up in Dawes," Paul attempts to reassert himself, or rather to reassert the situation wherein both men were more or less of equal status. Lawrence's uncertainty as to the progress and direction of such a relationship is revealed in the constantly shifting emotions and reactions of one to the other. Thus, after the admission of an "instinct to murder" by both of them, they significantly, share the same bedroom. Their furtive attempts to ignore their instincts are reminiscent of lovers' tentative gestures towards reconciliation.

The dialogue reveals both a desire and a reluctance to approach each other, and the affectionate concern is tempered slightly by the underlying sense of struggle and inevitable separation. The intimation of the ultimate failure of the relationship is mitigated by the attempt at actual physical contact; an unconscious method of enforcing an emotional and psychological identity. Baxter's insistence that Paul touch his leg to feel the water under the skin leads ultimately to the admission that Paul has a weak chest, and thus to an actual physical identification in illness. This identification finally reduces both men to the same level of inadequacy and resolves the struggle for superiority: "'You're not much of a man with water in your legs.' 'I can't see as it makes any difference,' said Morel. 'I've got a weak chest.'" (492).

It is of course natural, given the fact that the conflict is about the possession of a woman, that Baxter should be worried about his virility, but what is of even more significance is that Paul, who had possessed the woman, should admit to being "not much of a man." This admission, in view of his relationship with his mother, is not surprising, but that he should admit to it in the context of his relationship with Baxter certainly suggests a more meaningful interpretation of the whole Baxter episode.

The fact that both express at the same time a desire and a
reluctance to approach each other, suggests the confusion of motives and feelings in their relationship. The hesitancy and reluctance, combined with passionate expression, is an obvious indication of this confusion. Even more important is that the confusion can be considered in terms of sexuality. We have seen the parallels with the relationship in "The Prussian Officer;" Paul and Baxter have not progressed that far. For Lawrence, the only permanent thing was "consummation in Love or Hate."3 We have seen that consummation between the Orderly and the Officer. Paul and Baxter, on the other hand, approach and attempt consummation but do not succeed in achieving it. There are too many hindrances, both psychological and social, which prevent it. Nevertheless, Lawrence is attempting to bring their relationship to some sort of resolution, and in that context to reveal his own feelings about male relationships. The reasons for his inability to achieve this will be revealed as the discussion progresses; it is, however, sufficient to suggest at this point that the Sons and Lovers experience, as revealed in the Paul/Baxter relationship, is a firm beginning towards what was to be a long quest to give adequate expression to male homoerotic relationships and their effect upon personal and social activity.

Paul and Baxter's relationship is conceived and treated as if it were between a man and a woman; Paul would appear to represent the female (in the singular sense in which his mother is "female") and Baxter the male. Thus, Baxter's dependence upon Paul finds its parallel in Paul Morel's family, and Paul's relationship with his parents. Paul, who should be behaving as a man, is instead emulating his mother and behaving like her. That his mother is the mainstay of the family and has usurped the role of the father further complicates and distorts Paul's attitudes and behaviour. He is attracted to Baxter because of what he represents and because of his (Paul's) own attempts at self-fulfilment. We have already seen the development of the relationship to the point at which both men are identified in their physical weakness; this weakness is surely symbolic of their psychological, emotional, and temperamental inadequacy, as well as their failure to establish valid relationships. The situation gains in complexity by the sexual confusion outlined above.

3 CL 359.
It was suggested earlier that immediately after the return of the "instinct to murder" there is an attempt at reconciliation, and that this attempt is seen in the context of a lovers' quarrel. Significantly, Lawrence tells us that "they shared the same bedroom," and that "when they retired Dawes seemed abstract, thinking of something." The tone of this passage is one of expectation, and the straightforward, almost objective narration hovers on the brink of revelation. And indeed the revelation comes, for as soon as Paul expresses concern about whether Baxter is cold or not, Dawes insists that Paul look at and touch his legs, ostensibly to feel the water under the flesh. Paul, as the hesitant lover, is reluctant to do so, but his reluctance is betrayed for the uncertainty of desire which, in fact, it is, by his appreciation of the "rather handsome legs of the other man that were covered with glistening, dark gold hair." The physical detail, which is both sensual and erotic, is almost exactly the same response which Lawrence gives to the orderly when he murders the officer. It will be remembered that that particular episode was both a physical and symbolic consummation, and at the climactic moment the orderly finds that "it was pleasant, too, to have that chin, that hard jaw already slightly rough with beard, in his hands" (110). The similarity of the attention to detail is too exact to be coincidental; both Paul and the orderly are attracted by what seems to be an incongruous detail. It is not, however, incongruous in terms of the attempt at communion and consummation finally revealed in "The Prussian Officer" that Paul should pause and be affected by the "rather handsome legs of the other man." The result of his attraction is a failed communion because the identification at the end of the episode is one of inadequacy, both physical and spiritual, and ultimately both men are broken:

"Dawes had been driven to the extremity of life, until he was afraid. He could go to the brink of death, he could lie on the edge and look in. Then, cowed, afraid, he had to crawl back, and like a beggar take what offered" (495-6). Similarly Paul feels "crumpled up and lonely...for ever behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn towards death" (495).

Paul and Baxter have clearly failed in their attempt at
communion and conjunction. Unlike the orderly in "The Prussian Officer," both "go to the brink of death" and then "crawl back;" they cannot face what reality has revealed about them. As a result of his relationship with the officer, the orderly has derived a sense of new life in himself, as well as a sense of the destruction of the self to which he had been committed. Unlike Paul and Baxter, the orderly can be "on the edge" and not only look in, but enter: "...now he had got beyond himself. He had never been here before...He was by himself...He was outside, here, in the darkened open beyond"(113). The orderly, then, has an intuition of a new reality to which he can potentially transcend, and in recognizing a new life, is not afraid to commit himself to it. Paul and Baxter have not as yet reached that state, for both have withdrawn from any realization of the "natural law of their own being," a law, which, as explained earlier, dictates that "every man starts with his deepest desire, a desire for consummation...a desire for completeness, that completeness of being which will give completeness of satisfaction and completeness of utterance."^4

It is only on the basis of consummation and communion that the possibility for creative self-fulfillment exists. Paul, however, has failed to achieve any form of communion or consummation and drifts through the days isolated and entranced, with a "strained look in his eyes, as if he were hunting something." Like the orderly, Paul is adrift; he is dislodged from whatever secure position he thought he occupied, and now finds himself in a different existence:

Everything seemed different, so unreal. There seemed no reason why people would go along the street, and houses pile up in daylight. There seemed no reason why these things should occupy the space, instead of leaving it empty. His friends talked to him; he heard the sounds, and he answered. But why there should be the noise of speech he could not understand.

He was most himself when he was alone...there was pure forgetfulness, when he lapsed from consciousness...It hurt him so, that things had lost their reality(498).

The orderly also perceived that "a change had come over the world," and the reason for that change was that "he had left it,"

^4 Phoenix, p.515.
and thus feels himself "divided from the others." Paul is not part of his friends' world, for when he hears them speak he wonders "why there should be the noise of speech." Their isolation is also reinforced by their separation from the natural environment. To the orderly "tree trunks, like people standing grey and still, took no notice as he went. A doe, herself a moving bit of sunshine and shadow, went running through the flecked shade...And he was sick with pain...He felt...quite dazed with all this"(111-112). For Paul as well, things had lost their reality: "The first snowdrops came. He saw the tiny drop-pearls among the grey. They would have given him the liveliest emotion at one time. Now they were there, but they did not seem to mean anything. In a few moments they would cease to occupy that place, and just the space would be, where they had been"(498). And like the orderly, he is not only "divided from the others," but divided within himself:

Far away he could hear the sharp clinking of the trucks on the railway. No, it was not they that were far away. They were there in their places. But where was he himself...He was not thinking of anything. It was easier so. There was no wrench of knowing anything. Then, from time to time, some other consciousness, working mechanically, flashed into sharp phrases(499).

This "other consciousness," symptomatic of the divided self, carries on a dialogue with the original self, and functioning as a "spirit of alternatives," forces Paul into a recognition of his present death-like state. The result of this recognition is a desire for death—"he wanted to give up"—which Paul then suppresses: "He would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done. He would not own that life had beaten him, or that death had beaten him"(501). While this conflict continues, Paul's isolation and sense of self-conflict is irrevocably reinforced: "Always alone, his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and was nothing himself"(501).

Like the orderly, Paul crashes about in a kind of stupor, running down streets as if he were mad; indeed, "sometimes he was mad; things weren't there, things were there. It made him pant." He cannot relate to people around him, and feels out of touch with reality:
There was something between him and them. He could not get into touch. He did not want them; he did not want his drink...On the threshold he stood and looked at the lighted street. But he was not of it or in it. Something separated him. Everything went on there below those lamps, shut away from him. He could not get at them. He felt he couldn't touch the lamp-posts, not if he reached. Where could he go?...There was nowhere for him. The stress grew inside him; he felt he should smash.

It is evident that Paul is psychologically and emotionally disintegrating. His self-pitying tone and expressions of inadequacy are reminiscent of the whining of Baxter. It appears that the wheel has come full circle, for Paul is now as "lost" as Baxter was; in fact, he is in a much worse condition. Paul's feeling that "there was nowhere to go...there was nowhere for him," and the build-up of stress inside him until "he felt that he should smash" is similar to the orderly's perception that "He was divided among all kinds of separate things," that "there was some strange, agonized connection between them but they were drawing farther apart," and finally that "they would all split."

The orderly, however, has a final moment of lucidity; in his recognition and vision of the mountains, he sees a symbolic pledge of faith between man and the universe and between man and man. However, the orderly's quest, based upon a passionate desire for distinction and conjunction, fails, and he is only aware that, having partaken of it, it is now lost to him. He has been reduced to separate distinction without a living conjunction with the officer, and in the process fails to obtain the permanent duality which for Lawrence forms the basis of a realized relationship.

Paul, as well, has a moment of lucidity when "in despair he thought of Miriam. Perhaps—perhaps—?" Here, Paul thinks, may be his salvation. But after an evening spent with her, he realizes that she is not really what he wants, and feels "the hate and misery of another failure:"

He could not bear it—that breast which was warm and which cradled him without taking the burden of him. So much he wanted to rest in her that the feint of rest only tortured him. He drew away.

His attempt at "conjunction" with Miriam fails, for he realizes that "she could not take him and relieve him of the responsibility
of himself. She could only sacrifice herself to him...Her sacrifice, then, was useless." Paul is "unresponsive" to Miriam because he cannot achieve "separate distinction" with her—she would not "relieve him of the responsibility of himself," and unlike the orderly, who acts on his own behalf in his attempt at emancipation, Paul fails to do even that. He fails to gain "great blind knowledge" which would result in a new configuration in the relationship. Thus, Paul's final vision is similar to the orderly's at the end of "The Prussian Officer," but without the possibility of salvation.

The orderly becomes aware that "...now he had got beyond himself. He had never been here before. Was it life or not life? He was by himself...he was outside, here, in the darkened open beyond, where each thing existed alone..."(113). Paul as well has a similar insight:

Everywhere the vastness and terror of the immense night which is roused and stirred for a brief while by the day, but which returns, and will remain at last eternal, holding everything in its silence and its living gloom. There was no Time, only Space. Who could say his mother had lived and did not live?...Where was he?...He could not bear it. On every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him, so tiny a spark, into extinction, and yet, almost nothing, he could not be extinct.(510).

Paul, it would seem, hovers on the brink of surrender to his dead mother and to the "immense dark silence" which envelops her: "'Mother,' he whispered. 'Mother.' She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside her"(510). There are, however, several statements in these paragraphs which hint at his resistance and refusal to surrender. Paul's almost automatic resistance is shown in the statement "he could not be extinct," instead of "he would not be extinct." The "could" implies that there is something beyond both himself and his mother to which he is committed, something over which he has little or no control. Had the statement read "would," the implication would then be that he had consciously decided not to surrender, and perhaps more significantly, that he had overcome his defeat. Paul gazes up at the sky and realizes his own insignificance and inadequacy in the face of the vastness of his quest: "So much, and himself, infinitesimal."
He makes one final attempt to clutch at and hold his mother; "'Mother!' he whispered—'mother!' He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her." However, he relaxes his grasp: "But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly"(511). Thus, Paul's determination leads him to the life-giving town, where presumably he will continue the quest for conjunction and self-fulfilment.

The orderly has a similar perception and determination:

When at last he turned, looking down the long, bare grove... he saw the mountains in a wonder-light, not far away; and radiant. Behind the soft, grey ridge of the nearest range the further mountains stood golden and pale grey, the snow all radiant like pure, soft gold....He roused on to his elbow and stared at the gleaming mountains. There they ranked, all still and wonderful between earth and heaven (114/116).

Both Paul and the orderly are attracted by the "glow" of the city and the mountains, and Paul descends to the town, while the orderly attempts to ascend towards the promise of the mountains. The mountains symbolize for the orderly his potential transcendence into a new order of being; this is reinforced by the last sentence of the story. Lawrence emphasizes that the orderly's reduction is potentially a creation by contrasting the two bodies: the officer's is "rigidly at rest," while the orderly's "must rouse itself into life again." The orderly's emancipation, then, is made much more convincing and possible. The final symbol of the mountains "ranked all still and wonderful between heaven and earth" is of course Lawrence's "Rainbow," and all that it implies. Paul's liberation, on the other hand, is questionable, though the final paragraph of Sons and Lovers is generally accepted to signify his emancipation:

Paul Morel at the end is of necessity and by virtue of his own free act released from the maternal bondage which, if long continued, would have destroyed him.  

He turns, at the end, to seek for life in new places..."The

city's gold phosphorescence' beckons, like the 'dusky
gold' of Morel's 'flame of life, like the pollen and
the half-moon, towards the unknown—full of the richness
and promise of life.\footnote{Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence
(Cambridge, 1966), p. 34-5}

The last word in Sons and Lovers \textit{[quickly]} is attesting
not only to the hero's desire to live but also to his deep
ability to do so.\footnote{Harry T. Moore, The Life and Works of D.H. Lawrence
(New York, 1951), p. 105.}

...at the end of Sons and Lovers, we know, we have
experienced the fact that Paul Morel has achieved a
kind of half-realized, or jigsaw success, consisting
of mixed elements of life, warmth, creative vision,
incipient manhood, and most important of all, a belief
(almost) in life itself; and this is the nutritive force
which enables him, at the end, to become a man, and to
turn quickly toward the glowing city, away from his
mother.\footnote{Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence
(Indiana, 1955), p. 85.}

These assertions notwithstanding, the end of Sons and Lovers
does not exemplify a complete "emancipation"\footnote{Sagar, p. 35}
or even a "purgation"\footnote{Seymour Betsky, "Rhythm and Theme: D.H. Lawrence's Sons and
Lovers," The Achievement of D.H. Lawrence, ed. Frederick J.
Hoffman and H.T. Moore (Oklahoma, 1953), p. 143.}. Throughout the novel Lawrence shows Paul denying con-
nections which might bind him and others to life and to each other.
Instead he attempts to define and find a union in the greater-than-
human universality which he felt at moments of strong emotion.
This, however, could only be attained by isolating himself from
his partner and thereby separating and denying rather than uniting
and fulfilling. When Miriam yielded to Paul, "She relinquished
herself to him, but it was a sacrifice in which she felt something of
horror. This thick-voiced, oblivious man was a stranger to her"
(350). Miriam is not united with him, he is parted from her, and
achieves no satisfaction: "He was physically at rest, but no more." The cause of Paul's failure is his association of love with death, with its resultant pleasures:

....he felt as if nothing mattered, as if his living were smeared away into the beyond, near and quite lovable. This strange, gentle reaching-out to death was new to him...To him now, life seemed a shadow, day a white shadow; night, and death, and stillness, and inaction, this seemed like being. To be alive, to be urgent and insistent—that was not-to-be. The highest of all was to melt out into the darkness and sway there, identified with the great Being(350).

Paul was convinced that through experiencing intense emotion in his lovemaking he would become free to discover his own self. The identification with "the great Being" was, however, a move towards death, and a loss of the self: "To be rid of our individuality, which is our will, which is our effort—to live effortlessly, a kind of conscious sleep—that is very beautiful, I think; that is our after-life—our immortality"(351).

During the week spent with Miriam, Paul attempted to experience the depth of feeling which he believed was a release and a rebirth of the self, but inevitably, "there remained afterwards always the sense of failure and of death. If he were really with her, he had to put aside himself and his desire. If he would have her, he had to put her aside"(354). Paul's quest, then, leads towards death and the obliteration of self. He is left unfulfilled, and each successive attempt results in failure because the obstacle to fulfilment was the agent of his destruction, and only confirmed his failure: "But why had he the dull pain in his soul? Why did the thought of death, the after-life, seem so sweet and consoling?"(354). Paul attempts to cure "the dull pain in his soul" through his relationship with Clara Dawes, and again he fails. Clara was simply a vehicle for his passion, and he could not have a complete love relationship with her because passion was not enough. It did not form a bond between them, and Clara became simply a catalyst for self-destruction. Paul, in being committed to the cult of transcendent experience, is condemned to the loss of his soul. The highest experience for him turns out to be the negation of experience, and he succumbs to the contending
forces within him. At the end of the novel we find Paul "refusing to surrender but overwhelmed because the means of victory have been denied from the beginning."\textsuperscript{11}

Thus, the last paragraph, which seems to be an affirmation of life, a rebirth, and a purgation, can only have this meaning if all that has occurred before in the book is ignored. Though the last paragraph does, indeed, read like an affirmation, it contradicts and negates everything that Paul has experienced up to that point. The transition to the affirmation in the last paragraph is too sharp: the shift from "he could not be extinct" to "he would not give in...he would not take that direction," is too abrupt. It is too consciously a hastily-written and contrived conclusion, as if Lawrence wanted to put a fast end to *Sons and Lovers* in order to get on with what was to follow. Furthermore, most current editions of the novel print "whispered" instead of "whimpered" in the sentence "'Mother!' he whispered,—'Mother!'" The manuscript that went to the printer (now in the possession of the University of California)\textsuperscript{12} reads "whimpered." Since it appears both in Lawrence's final manuscript and in the first editions of the novel, it is unlikely that he changed it at a later date. This original reading would suggest that Paul is still very much committed to his mother, and is "whimpering" at his loss like an orphaned pup. He is not "whispering" a farewell to her spirit, but begging for her return. Paul has not transcended the ties of his mother, nor has he achieved salvation; for Lawrence, salvation comes from the attainment of a separate, mature self through shared passion. Paul, however, never achieves this state, and at the end of the book is still oscillating between life and death.

Paul's oscillation between life and death is a product of the psychological and emotional alignment developed throughout the course of the novel, and finds its psychosexual analogue in his attempts at both male and female relationships. Paul Morel's attitude towards Baxter is characterized by ambivalent expressions of love and hate, hostility and solicitude; on the exclusively


\textsuperscript{12} Harry T. Moore, "A Postscript," Tedlock, p.63.
Oedipal interpretation of Paul's behaviour, it is possible to affirm that the "relationship between the father and son in [the] novel is the relationship upon-[which] Lawrence was to draw for the rest of his life." On this view of course, Baxter is the "surrogate father" and Paul "makes the parricidal gesture against his rival...denies it; allows himself to be beaten; and, in full flight, gives up his rivalry and regresses to his old dependency on his mother, once more a child."

The psychoanalytic interpretation of Paul's and indeed of Lawrence's behaviour, and the too exclusive application to the works, results in the kind of conclusion which lends itself all too easily to circular and unproductive analysis. To see all of Lawrence's work in terms of "psychoanalytic confession" as Weiss does, leads inexorably to imply a static quality in the art: "a psychological meridian of Greenwich from which all other explorations must be conducted and to which they must return in that great circle course Lawrence's mind pursued." Which is not to suggest that there is little to learn from an exclusively Oedipal interpretation of Lawrence's life and art; on the contrary, a psychoanalytic approach may reveal certain truths not otherwise evident. The only qualification to demand is that one use the results of such an investigation with circumspection and caution.

That Lawrence was attempting a "conciliation, with honor, of the father, a conciliation that proceeds in a steady line of descent from father to rival, to friend, to positive identity between the father image and the son," provides a clue to his subsequent treatment of male relationships. The psychoanalytic view would have it that Lawrence was tending towards a fusion of the "filial and paternal strains," but to suggest that his total artistic conception was subservient to a search for a father, is to sadly demean the acuteness of Lawrence's analysis of personal and social

13 Weiss, _Oedipus in Nottingham_, p.75.
14 _Ibid._, p.76.
15 Weiss, p.73-74.
16 _Ibid._, p.75.
relationships. Nevertheless, it is fair to agree that Lawrence's concern with male relationships, and indeed the fictional representation of characters in search of a friend or lover, stems from the absence of a dominant male in his early family situation.

Paul's relationship with Baxter then, is an indication of the type of male relationship Lawrence was capable of depicting at this stage in his development. The limitation imposed on Paul by his own responses to the other characters in the novel are counterpointed by his attempt at communion with Baxter. However, the psychological and social restraints which prevent the desired resolution in terms of the other characters, also limit the possibilities of communion with the chosen male partner. It appears that Lawrence is as yet unable to present male consummation as a viable alternative to failed heterosexual resolutions; the situations he is concerned with do not have the potential necessary for the achievement of male communion. Nevertheless, the attempt continues to place male friendship, and the possibilities of greater homoerotic communion, within Lawrence's consideration of the attributes of love and its place in all human relationships.
CHAPTER III

"Love Among the Haystacks" and Others: Conflict and Masculine Comradeship

The male relationships in "The Prussian Officer" and Sons and Lovers have important similarities with those found in "Love Among the Haystacks." According to David Garnett, the story was written in July and August of 1912, which places it directly in the middle years of the composition of Sons and Lovers (1910-13). Immediately after the completion of Sons and Lovers Lawrence wrote "The Prussian Officer;" in it he continued his exploration of the direction and implications of male relationships. Since "Haystacks" is central in composition and conception to the two works discussed in the previous chapters, a close examination of the male relationship developed in it should be singularly revealing.

The parallel situations of "Haystacks" and "The Prussian Officer" are immediately obvious. Both stories are centred round the conflict of two men who are at the same time attracted and repelled by each other. This conflict is enacted in a similar physical and psychological landscape, and the men are related by obvious physical attributes. The brothers Maurice and Geoffrey in "Haystacks" may be considered as early counterparts of the officer and the orderly in "The Prussian Officer," as they share corresponding physical, emotional and psychological characteristics. Geoffrey more closely resembles the officer as he is older than Maurice, has "blue eyes," and like the officer, betrays a repressed "self-consciousness." Maurice, like the orderly, is careless, instinctive, "well built" and has a "young moustache like black fur" which, like the orderly's, serves as a focal point for quasi-

1 D.H. Lawrence, Love Among The Haystacks and Other Pieces, with a reminiscence by David Garnett (London: The Nonesuch Press, 1930). But see The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, ed. Aldous Huxley (London, 1932) p.19, a letter to Edward Garnett of January 7, 1912 which may be "the first possible mention of this story" according to E.W. Tedlock in The Frieda Lawrence Collection of D.H. Lawrence Manuscripts (Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1945) p.42, who suggests that if it is indeed "Love Among the Haystacks" then "it must belong to the Croydon teaching period, 1908-1911."
erotic attraction.

It would be erroneous at this point to attempt to establish a strict parallel relationship between all the attributes of the four men. Neither Maurice nor Geoffrey exactly correspond to their counterparts. In fact, what may be more significant is that there is a mingling or confusion of attributes between them: each brother shares characteristics of both the officer and the orderly. Thus while Maurice is handsome like the officer, he has a black moustache like the orderly, and while Geoffrey has blue eyes like the officer, he is heavy and well built like the orderly. These shared characteristics, while perhaps superficial, nevertheless reveal a continuation of Lawrence's investigation of the nature of male relationships. Thus, the situation of the brothers in "Haystacks" may reveal the type of attraction and conflict which is the central concern of "The Prussian Officer."

In "Haystacks" this attraction and conflict is seen in the context of the competition for a woman and its resultant complications, but in "The Prussian Officer" the conflict is isolated and relates only to the relationship of the two men. Lawrence's treatment of his theme in "The Prussian Officer" has progressed to the point where he can examine male relationships in isolation without the demand for superficial external factors which initiate the investigation. Later, in Women in Love for example, the external factors are by no means superficial but are an integral aspect of the male conflict. In "Haystacks," however, what I have called the superficial external factors—the brothers' mutual attraction for Paula Jablonowsky and their respective growth to experience and

2 An interesting biographical detail which may have had some influence on the composition and development of the story, is suggested by Jessie Chambers in the "Chambers Papers" quoted in Emile Delavenay, D.H. Lawrence: L'Homme et la Geneese de son Oeuvre (Paris, 1969), Vol. II p.683: "He caught the essential characteristics of my two brothers, and their attitude to one another with great sureness. It is the only time he really put them in his work other than merely referring to them...of course there is not a shred of factual foundation for the story. Lawrence and my eldest brother once slept out a night in those fields, and felt starved to death in the morning." Jessie Chambers also writes, p.685: "Again, what do you make of his desire for a man's friendship—a theme that occurs in many books, and occurred also in Lawrence's life? It is surely rather strange."
awareness—is ostensibly the plot upon which Lawrence predicated the nature of male conflict in those circumstances, and proceeded to explore it, but only to a slight degree. Nevertheless, the similarities with "The Prussian Officer" are too many and too exact to be dismissed lightly, for it is evident that Lawrence's concern with male relationships was a progressive process of which "Haystacks" forms an early part.

"Haystacks" shares with "The Prussian Officer" not only the main characters' physical and emotional attributes, but almost an exact duplication of setting and psychological atmosphere created by that setting. The central action in "Haystacks" with which we are concerned is enacted, like that of "The Prussian Officer" in an atmosphere of intense heat, "glare" and "blinding sunlight."

The "suffocating heat" of "The Prussian Officer" echoes the "molten glow of the sward...in which the hot, sweet scent of hay was suffocating" of "Haystacks." The similarity of landscape and the descriptive language utilized to evoke it are far from accidental, and reveal a conscious attempt to place the male conflict in a context which will reflect and elaborate the emotional and psychological tension of the situation.

The fields where the hay stacks are being built, "were golden green, and they shone almost blindingly in the sunlight. Across the hill, half-way up, ran a high hedge, that flung its black shadow firmly across the molten glow of sward. The stack...rose dishevelled and radiant among the steady, golden-green glare of the field...a great slightly-hollowed vessel into which the sunlight poured, in which the hot, sweet scent of hay was suffocating" (7). It is in this atmosphere, on a haystack which is like "an altar reared to the sun" that the brothers enact the conflict which forms the first part of the story, a conflict which reflects in miniature that of the officer and orderly.

The brothers' conflict centres about their attraction to the foreign governess at the neighbouring vicarage for which they are unsuitably prepared, being "both fiercely shy of women" and having

3 Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories, Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1970), p.7. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses immediately following the quotation in the text.
"grown up virgin but tormented." The governess, who "had seemed to prefer [Geoffrey] at first...had taken to Maurice," the younger brother, and now "Geoffrey sullenly suffered." As they wait in the smouldering heat on top of the stack for the next load to come up, Maurice begins in his "careless and debonair" way to goad his brother:

His grey eyes, as he taunted his brother, were bright and baffled with a strong emotion. His swarthy face had the same peculiar smile, expectant and glad and nervous, of a young man roused for the first time in passion. 'Tha sees,' he said. 'Tha thowt as tha'd done me one, didna ter?' He smiled as he spoke, then fell again into his pleasant torment of musing.

Geoffrey, "a heavy, hulking fellow," whose "brother had the best of him" reacts characteristically: "His blue eyes were unsteady, they glanced away quickly; his mouth was morbidly sensitive. One felt him wince away, through the whole of his great body. His inflamed self-consciousness was a disease in him." After a few more bandying comments during which it is revealed that Maurice had met the governess the previous night, he taunts Geoffrey with a final "tha sees what tha missed my lad," and throws himself on his back in the hay: "There was absolutely nothing in his world, then, except the shallow ramparts of the stack, and the blazing sky. He clenched his fists tight, threw his arms across his face, and braced his muscles again. He was evidently very much moved, so acutely that it was hardly pleasant, though he still smiled."(8)

The brothers' relationship at this point in the narrative seems fairly straightforward and facile, consisting as it does of friendly taunting based upon the competition for the affections of a young girl, with the victor emphasizing his superiority to the loser who is "tormented" by vague feelings of jealousy and inferiority. Geoffrey is "self-conscious," and "morbidly sensitive" to the fact that he had not only been rejected by the girl, but "bettered" by his younger brother and therefore doubly injured. This simple statement of the situation is deceptively misleading, for Lawrence instils into it an emotional and psychological significance which
elevates it far above the commonplace event it appears to be.

As suggested above, it is the setting, and the atmosphere evoked by that setting, which intensify the emotional tension and place it in a physical context which elaborates the conflict. Thus the blinding sunlight and suffocating heat are an externalization of the passion which exists between the brothers. It provides a suitable landscape, both symbolic and realistic, against which the author attempts to resolve their conflict on "an altar reared to the sun." The heat and glare of the oppressive atmosphere are also intimations of the repressed violence which exists beneath the surface of the brothers' relationship. This violence seeks expression through the tension created by the competitive situation.

The same situation exists in "The Prussian Officer." The oppressive heat and stifling atmosphere are also indications of the repressed emotions and violence of the orderly and officer. Indeed, the officer's awakening consciousness of the orderly's presence is described as "a warm flame" and partially manifests itself in the description of the officer's "steely blue eyes" glowing "like fire;" a prelude to his initial acts of violence which similarly ignite the orderly. On manoeuvres, the orderly is later aroused to almost the same emotional pitch as the officer, and fixates on him as he commands the troops from horseback. Feeling himself "disemboweled, made empty," he notices the officer's "moustache and mouth and chin were distinct in the sunshine"(105).

In "Haystacks," Geoffrey is similarly aroused. Standing above his reclining brother, he "could just see his red mouth, with the young moustache like black fur, curling back and showing the teeth in a smile." He looks away "out across the country" which "lay under a blaze of heat;" silent and brooding, the view "made Geoffrey...sick"(8). As Maurice begins to taunt him again, he "coiled within himself, and looked down at the handsome lips moving in speech below the brown arms of his brother." Geoffrey "flushed with hate, and had an impulse to set his foot on that moving, taunting mouth, which was below him"(9).

The similarities between the quoted passages from "Haystacks"

4 See for example "The Prussian Officer" p.99, 102.
and "The Prussian Officer" are clearly emerging as verbal echoes. The attention and fixation on particular parts of the antagonists' bodies—the orderly's scarred thumb and the officer's moustache, Maurice's "young moustache like black fur" and his handsome lips and brown arms—all serve as focal points to which the conflicting passions and violence are directed. The psychological reactions to these feelings are also counterpointed by the incidents in both stories. Geoffrey, like the orderly who is "made empty" and feels himself "put out of existence," is also "made sick" by the "large view" of the countryside. After his impulse to kick Maurice on his "handsome lips," he feels his "heart swelled within him, and things [go] dark. He could not see the landscape."

The nullification aroused in both Geoffrey and the orderly can be attributed, in Lawrence's terms, to the growing awareness of their antagonists' "essential otherness" and their "separate distinctiveness." This aspect has been amply elucidated in the earlier discussion of "The Prussian Officer." In Geoffrey's case, however, this awareness, while superficial at the beginning of the story, is nevertheless caused by his recognition of Maurice's attempt at superiority and egoism; an attempt derived from Maurice's knowledge of the governess' preference for him. Geoffrey's self-consciousness and lack of confidence or "self-realization" force him to react with feelings of violence and hate towards a man for whom he had previously felt sincere affectionate friendship and "brotherly love." Geoffrey, like the orderly, who had been forced by his rank and position into a state of subservience, "mute and expressionless," and who had been "nullified" by the officer, feels the danger of "sinking into a morbid state" and "sullenly suffers." Like the orderly, he is forced into a position where the only way of redeeming himself and asserting his own "distinctiveness" is by giving expression to his ambivalent feelings of love and hate.

The brothers' attitudes towards each other, and to themselves, are similar in nature and manifestation to that of the officer and orderly; however, Lawrence's treatment of those attitudes is more diffuse and heterogeneous than the more straightforward consideration in "The Prussian Officer." Both Geoffrey and Maurice share feelings and tensions which in "The Prussian Officer" are exclusively the province of either the officer or the orderly. Maurice, for
example, expresses the same nullification as his brother and the orderly, though ostensibly for different reasons. During the initial bantering on the haystack, when he throws himself "in the bed of hay," he feels that "there was absolutely nothing in his world, then, except the shallow ramparts of the stack, and the blazing sky"(8). This perception is amazingly similar to that of the orderly who, while on the march, feels himself "as nothing, a shadow creeping under the sunshine" and as relapsing "into vacancy."

After he murders the officer these feelings are intensified—"a change came over the world"—and he experiences his inviolable separateness. Geoffrey experiences similar sensations; in fact, his are more readily identifiable with those of the orderly.

Immediately after suppressing his desire to kick Maurice, Geoffrey's "heart swelled within him, and things went dark. He could not see the landscape." A comparison of this awareness with the orderly's—"sometimes it was dark before his eyes, as if he saw this world through a smoked glass, frail shadows and unreal. It gave him a pain in his head...."(106)—suggests a more concrete identification of, not only psychic tension, but also of stylistic and symbolic description. This evidence, along with the motifs of heat and flame, points to Lawrence's utilization in "The Prussian Officer" of those elements which formed his early attempt at investigating aspects of male tension and conflict in "Haystacks."

The parallels are more numerous and significant than I have suggested above. The climactic moment in "The Prussian Officer" is the murder of the officer; in "Haystacks" the point of maximum tension is reached during the struggle between the two brothers on top of the stack. While it is necessary to state that the incident in "Haystacks" is not of similar intensity and thematic importance, it nevertheless remains representative of a paradigm of behaviour which Lawrence investigates in different ways in *Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love* and the later novels.

After the initial impulse to violence, Maurice and Geoffrey begin building the stack with a new load of hay. Geoffrey's previously repressed violence is slowly rising to the surface once again as he waits in the intense sunlight to throw the fork loads of hay to Maurice, "the blue tines of his fork glittering in expectation." The description of the hay fork is an externalization
of Geoffrey's repressed desire to injure Maurice, and is emphasized not only by the sinister fork, but also by Geoffrey working "mechanically, like an animal" and "glancing with satisfaction at Maurice's moiled condition"(12). It is Geoffrey's intention to make things difficult and uncomfortable for Maurice in order to exhaust him by deliberately placing the hay as far as possible from where his brother wants it. Maurice tries valiantly to keep up, striding "swiftly and handsomely across the bed, but the work was too much for him....'Wheer dost think thou'rt hollin it, fool!' panted Maurice, as his brother flung a forkful out of reach. 'Wheer I've a mind,' answered Geoffrey"(12). As Maurice's anger mounts, his physical condition mirrors the emotional state precipitated by Geoffrey: "He felt the sweat trickling down his body: drops fell into his long black lashes, blinding him, so that he had to stop and angrily dash his eyes clear. The veins stood out on his swarthy neck. He felt he would burst, or drop..."(12-13).

As the brothers begin to "draw in" the stack, the animosity between them grows and develops into an actual physical confrontation. Geoffrey prods a corner of the stack until it sways; in response to Maurice's warning, he prepares to prod it again, thus antagonizing Maurice to the point where he "sprang across, and elbowed his brother aside," causing him to fall "grovelling" in the hay. As Geoffrey rises to his feet Maurice sneers at him and continues working:

...he neared where his brother stood like a sullen statue, leaning on his fork-handle, looking out over the countryside. Maurice's heart quickened in its beat. He worked forward, until a point of his fork caught in the leather of Geoffrey's boot, and the metal rang sharply. 'Are ter going to shift thyself?' asked Maurice threateningly. There was no reply from the great block. Maurice lifted his upper lip like a dog. Then he put out his elbow and tried to push his brother into the stack, clear of his way. ...straightway the two brothers set themselves against each other, like opposing bulls, Maurice trying his hardest to shift Geoffrey from his footing, Geoffrey leaning all his weight in resistance. Maurice, insecure in his footing, staggered a little, and Geoffrey's weight followed him. He went slithering over the edge of the stack(13-14).

What immediately emerges from the above description of the brothers' conflict, is its essentially adolescent nature. The brothers'
behaviour and comments are childish, but the emotions arising from them are mature and complex. This is made clear by their attitudes and posture, and by the significance given to them by the atmosphere and landscape. Their antagonism has been aroused by the competition for a woman, and Lawrence is careful to tell us that since the "whole feminine sex had been represented by their mother" they were consequently "fiercely shy of women" and behaved like "dumb louts" in their presence. Their awakening consciousness is therefore also an encountering of the unknown, not only in the external world, but within themselves. The brothers are learning about themselves and each other within the context of a larger awareness. That the men had "grown up virgin but tormented" only increases the complexity of their discovery, for their previous relationship, characterized by a silent but sincere affection, is now threatened by forces for which they are ill prepared. In this atmosphere, heightened by the "heat" and glare, they are forced to a recognition.

Geoffrey, the older and previously superior brother, has lost his advantage—the woman preferred his younger brother—and his lack of confidence arouses feelings of hate and violence which are directed at Maurice. As they work the haystack (anticipatory of Will and Anna gathering sheaves in The Rainbow) their emotions rhythmically intensify until they can no longer be contained. Both are reduced to instinctive mechanical action: Geoffrey moves "mechanically, like an animal," and Maurice, "careless and debonair," moves "like a dog." Both "set themselves against each other like opposing bulls," and are reduced to a contest of strength initiated by aroused male potency.

Their conflict is complicated, however, by what appears to be, by comparison with "The Prussian Officer," vague homoerotic sensations. The description of the brothers' relationship is heavily charged with an ambiguous sensuality: Geoffrey is acutely aware of Maurice's "red mouth, with the young moustache like fur," his "handsome lips" and "brown arms." The sensual particularity of this description, and the emotion aroused by it, are strongly reminiscent of the murder in "The Prussian Officer." This, it will be remembered, takes place in a "bright clearing," a "brilliant cup of sunshine," resembling in symbolic value the "slightly hollowed
vessel," the haystack which rears like an altar to the sun.

The officer is aware of the orderly's "glistening sun-inflamed, naked hands"; the orderly is fascinated by the officer's "thin, strong throat" and, during the murder, by the "pleasant" sensation of the "jaw already slightly rough with beard". The murder of the officer has been discussed in terms of communion, consummation, and the orderly's growing awareness of his own selfhood. Similarly, the brothers' conflict is one constituent of the path to awareness and experience, and the "altar" haystack is a symbolic attempt to embody their loss of innocence. This is suggested primarily by Geoffrey's reaction after he forces Maurice off the stack, and is remarkably like the orderly's behaviour after he murders the officer.

After the murder the orderly feels alienated and isolated from the world; his condition is indicated by his near comatose state: "For him a change had come over the world....He had left it....He could not bear contact with anyone now....His consciousness went racing on without him....He had not the energy to get up....He lay perfectly still, as if dead...."(111-112). Geoffrey also shares this experience: "Then a flush of darkness came over him....He had not the strength to move....He filled with sudden panic....waited in terrible suspense....He stood sullenly erect on the stack, not daring to go down, longing to hide in the hay....He was so lonely"(14-16).

For the orderly the ordeal has resulted in a new awareness and a transcendence to a different state of being, but for Geoffrey this is not possible. He had momentarily attempted to approach transcendence but had failed: "...if he could only extinguish himself, he would be safe. Quite frantically, he longed not to be. The idea of going through life thus coiled up within himself in morbid self-consciousness, always lonely, surly, and a misery, was enough to make him cry out"(16).

Geoffrey's hostility is a direct result of his feelings of alienation, for he is "a man who could not bear to stand alone." Like the orderly, he searches for conjunction with another human being; unlike him, he lacks the intensity of being and awareness which would bring this about. He is consumed by a perverse fear of the "vast confusion of life surrounding him", and, confronted by his helplessness, mistrusts himself in any attempt at communication.
Geoffrey's desire for completeness and consummation is not as acutely felt and expressed as that of the orderly, occurring as it does early in Lawrence's treatment of this particular aspect of human relationships. Discernible in it, however, is the pattern which Lawrence was to use several more times—an initial conflict with another man which leads to some new awareness or partial resolution. In "Haystacks" the partial resolution is Geoffrey's recognition of Lydia Bredon: "The young woman looked at Geoffrey, and he at her. There was a sort of kinship between them. Both were at odds with the world....Again she looked at Geoffrey. He seemed to understand her"(24-25), and the optimistic final comment that they "kept faith one with the other."

In "The Prussian Officer", however, the resolution is final and complete. It reveals a capitulation to a new state of awareness and existence. The resolution in "Haystacks", although it follows a common pattern, is vastly different, necessarily because the solution avoids a concrete confrontation and awareness between the two brothers. Maurice is "peculiarly happy" but "Geoffrey was still sullenly hostile." His hostility is only partially relieved by the promise of "faith" between him and Lydia. The depth and intensity of conflict and emotion exchanged between the brothers, as well as the obvious parallels with "The Prussian Officer" situation, would lead us to expect a more forceful resolution. All that is revealed, however, is that "since the quarrel neither brother had spoken to the other. But their silence was entirely amicable, almost affectionate." Though they have both been deeply moved—"underneath, each felt a strong regard for the other"—the situation between them appears to have remained static, thus undermining to some extent the strong emotional tension revealed on the haystack.

The brothers' affectionate regard and amity in the context of their hostility is also strongly reminiscent of the situation in Sons and Lovers in which Paul and Baxter share many of the same feelings. We are told that Paul and Baxter "were confirmed enemies, and yet there was between them that peculiar feeling of intimacy, as if they were secretly near to each other...although they never spoke to one another"(416). Their relationship, like the brothers', is one of mixed hostility, admiration and gentle
affection, and is also characterized by a disturbing attention to erotic physical detail. This attention, as we have seen, is shared by the officer and orderly as well. Another shared quality is the psychological and emotional state arising from the actual scenes of physical conflict. After Paul fights with Baxter he lapses into the same stupor as did both the orderly and Geoffrey. He is inert, and desires the same extinction and nullification which overcame them. Geoffrey shares with Baxter the sense of "morbid self-consciousness," drifting through life "lonely, surly, and a misery," desiring only to "extinguish himself" and longing "not to be." Both are in the throes of self-pity and wounded pride, and both, conscious of failure, are urgently in need of reassurance. Baxter achieves this through Paul's self-negation in his relationship with Clara, and Geoffrey in his recognition of Lydia with whom he could "keep faith." In both cases failing masculinity has been reasserted through the agency of immediate and instinctive recognition—Baxter of Paul, and Geoffrey of Lydia. In order that Geoffrey be prepared for his new role, he had first to contend with his feelings for Maurice in the same way that Baxter had to conquer Paul in the fight, and thus begin his recuperation.

A further parallel is suggested by the role that the mother plays in the lives of the brothers and in the condition of Paul. The mother is a strong force in their lives and directly influences their relationships with other people. In fact, the mother's influence and presence has instilled in them a basic hesitancy and reluctance to encounter people on a revealed emotional level. The fact that Geoffrey and Maurice are "fiercely shy of women" is a direct result of "the whole feminine sex [being] represented by their mother;" a proud woman who conditioned them to hold "the common girls as beneath them," and consequently caused them to grow up "tormented."

Paul's "tormented" condition is also, as has been recognized, a result of the influence of his mother, and a definite cause of the psychological and emotional disintegration in his relationship with Miriam, Clara, and particularly with Baxter. Geoffrey shares with him the "terror" of the "vastness" of life and the feeling that "there was nothing in his world" except the "immense dark
silence." Both are forced to attempt to come to terms with, and conquer their abhorrence of the terrors which life holds for them, and both seek a new reality to which they can potentially transcend. Paul's recognition of his "other consciousness" leads him to a confrontation with his divided self and an awareness of his death-like condition. His search for "great blind knowledge" and "separate distinction" leads to the equivocal ending of the novel—the suggestion that once attracted by the glow of the town, he will now continue in the realization of his goal.

Geoffrey is also "divided" in his feelings, but the narrative situation of "Haystacks" is not as complex as that of Sons and Lovers. Geoffrey's "other consciousness" hovers just beneath the level of awareness and manifests itself in a parody of the physical conflict in "The Prussian Officer" and Sons and Lovers. However, rather than condemn the action in "Haystacks" as parody, one must recognize the story as an early grappling with the theme; as such it betrays the increasing concern Lawrence will devote to it in the later fiction. "Haystacks" is also remarkable in so far as it reveals a maturity of style and theme which are brought to fuller expression in The Rainbow and Women in Love.

I have already suggested the parallel between the gathering of the sheaves by Anna and Will and the brothers' contest on top of the stack. A further and perhaps more significant parallel is the situation of Tom Brangwen and Geoffrey in relation to women. Both are attracted to a "foreign" woman, and her name, Lydia, is the same in both cases. The men have been conditioned by mothers who "looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond," in an attempt to partake of this "other world," "this higher form of being"(10). In both cases this "other world" is represented by a foreign governess at a local vicarage; the curate signifies rank, superiority, and education. Thus, Tom Brangwen also grows up "tormented," forced by his mother to attempt to partake of the educated "activity of man in the world at large," while he is temperamentally aligned

to the "blood-intimacy" of the land; creating a "divided self" of his consciousness.

The pursuit of the "other world" creates an attraction in Tom for men who represent or partake of that world. The pattern for this behaviour had been created in his youth:

He had loved one warm, clever boy who was frail in body, a consumptive type. The two had had an almost classic friendship, David and Jonathan, wherein Brangwen was the Jonathan, the server. But he had never felt equal with his friend, because the other's mind outpaced his, and left him ashamed, far in the rear...Brangwen always remembered his friend that had been, kept him as a sort of light, a fine experience to remember(17-18).

Tom's "love" for the boy and the world he represents manifests itself years later when Tom, now twenty-four years old, goes with two of his friends to Matlock, "a famous beauty spot." He meets and makes love to a "handsome, reckless girl" who had been "neglected for an afternoon by the man who had brought her out." That evening Tom sees the other man, "small, middle-aged...with iron grey hair and a curious face...but interesting, in its way almost beautiful. Brangwen guessed that he was a foreigner," and watches him "with all his eyes." As Tom stares fascinated, the man surveys the room, and "Brangwen marvelled over the cold, animal intelligence of the face," and the round brown eyes. Then "the old face turned round on him, looking at him without considering it necessary to know him at all"(24).

The experience has a strange effect on Tom, for after dinner he "sat motionless in the hall...too much moved and lost to know what to do." The stranger approaches and offers him a cigarette which he accepts "fumbling painfully with thick fingers, blushing to the roots of his hair." He then looks "with his warm blue eyes at the almost sardonic, lidded eyes of the foreigner," who sits down beside him and begins a conversation. The presence and behaviour of the man has a decided effect upon Tom, who "loved" him "for his exquisite graciousness, for his tact and reserve, and for his ageless, monkey-like self-surety." Brangwen is "excited" and "transported" at the man's attention, and at "the fine contact," and flushes "like a girl when the other did not understand his idiom"(25).
This episode is significant because it reveals another incident of male contact which is similar in several important ways to those we have been discussing. It is clear that Tom's "love" for his clever schoolboy friend, and for the stranger at the hotel, stems primarily from the fact that both are alien to him and represent a world to which he aspires. The stranger is foreign, and as such is part of the "activity of man in the world at large" to which Tom's mother assigned so much importance. Both the stranger and Tom's young friend are intelligent and "educated", further aligning them with the world which lies beyond the "blood-intimacy" of the farm and the men who work it. Their basic superiority and "self-surety" is what Tom lacks, and what they represent is that which, in his "other consciousness," he desires to confront.

The description of Tom's attraction to these men falls into the already familiar pattern of experience which we have discussed in relation to "The Prussian Officer", Sons and Lovers, and "Haystacks". Once again we note the acute attention to physical detail qualified by quasi-erotic emotional and psychological judgements. Tom's childhood friend is a "warm" intelligent boy, "frail" in body, and the relationship is an almost classic David and Jonathan one with Tom as the subservient partner. The same attributes are noticed in his relationship to the foreign stranger, where Tom's feminine subservience is emphasized by his "flushing like a girl," his uneasy fumbling discomfort, and his fascination with the "fine contact." This situation is similar to those of Paul and Baxter and of the officer and orderly. In them we have seen the form in which the subservient nature of the men manifests itself in the context of their relationship; and it is now evident that those elements are also present in Tom's situation. The "warm, clever boy," frail and "a consumptive type" is a direct echo of Paul's "weak chest," and the fascination which the stranger holds for Tom is similar to, although not as intense as, that between the orderly and the officer. Tom's "blushing" and "flushing like a girl" shares the same imagery encountered in "The Prussian Officer" and "Haystacks", and his reaction after leaving the stranger is remarkably like the reaction noticed in the male relationships we have previously discussed.

Tom shares with the orderly, Paul and Geoffrey, the feeling
of alienation and nullification. His agitation takes the same form as theirs does, and his reaction to this agitation is strikingly similar. Like them, holies "staring out at the stars," feeling "his whole being in a whirl" and questions his very existence—"What was it all? There was a life so different from what he knew it....What did everything mean? Where was life...?"(25).

He also experiences a psychic agitation similar to the stupors of Paul and the orderly and the "darkness" of Geoffrey:

He wanted something to get hold of, to pull himself out. But there was nothing....Then a fever of restless—

anger came upon him. He wanted to go away—right away....

A hot accumulated consciousness was always awake in his chest, his wrists felt swelled and quivering, his mind became full of lustful images, his eyes seemed blood-flushed. He fought with himself furiously....And still, he could not get free. He went to sleep in drunken unconsciousness...(26-28).

Tom is attempting to obliterate "his own consciousness," to somehow reconcile his "divided-self" to the reality which his consciousness reveals. It is significant that his quest finds its first impulse as a direct result of male relationships which partially force him to a recognition of the true situation. The "warm, clever" schoolboy and the "sardonic, lidded eyes" of the foreign gentleman, emphasize his own deficiencies and arouse a curious feeling which demands expression. Tom, in attempting to deny his own individuality, is forced to repudiate his manhood, that which it depended upon for preservation and development. His individuality was attracted to the "other world" and its male representatives—the boy and the foreign gentleman. His "manhood" is indicative of the "blood-intimacy" which inhibits the total capitulation to the world his "individuality" demands, and thus Tom finds himself divided and impotent to act. His quest is therefore an attempt to unify his consciousness, to find distinction and consummation in the reality which his world offers. But Tom's world consists of the recognition he obtained in the context of the male relationships he has experienced, and the promise which that recognition revealed. His subsequent relationship with Lydia, the Polish lady, is an attempt to unify these two experiences, and the novel reveals his partial success.
It is evident, then, that Tom is divided between two worlds: the masculine one of his agrarian ancestry, and the feminine promise of the world beyond. It has been indicated that his reaction to his childhood friend and to the foreign stranger have been feminine in nature, as evidenced by the description of his response to them. In retrospect, the same feminine attributes are discoverable in the situations of Paul and the orderly, as well as to a certain extent in Geoffrey. The recurrence of this in The Rainbow is an indication of the continuation of Lawrence's concern with male relationships and the reconciliation of homoerotic elements in the individual.

At the end of "The Prussian Officer" the orderly perceives the "glittering mountains" ranked "all still and wonderful between earth and heaven." This scene constitutes his final recognition and vision. The orderly's vision is reminiscent of the rainbow symbol unifying heaven and earth, and is essentially a pledge of faith between man and the universe and between man and man. The orderly's quest was based upon a passionate desire for distinction and conjunction, a search which finds its counterpart partially expressed in the quest of Tom and Ursula in The Rainbow, and more explicitly, as we shall later see, in Birkin's search in Women in Love. The rainbow symbol in the above context is also representative of the attempt to unify the consciousness of the "divided-self," and finds its first expression in the novel in Tom's situation. Tom's dilemma is complicated by the demands made upon him by the homoerotic elements of his own being. Similar demands are elaborated and dramatized later in the novel in the context of the homogenic relationship of Ursula and Winnifred.

Characteristically, the Ursula/Winnifred relationship shares the descriptive technique observed in the situations I have already discussed. The actual physical consummation is described in terms which utilize the psychological and emotional imagery noted earlier, and thus may be considered to continue the singularity of vision encountered in the previous works.

The relationship emerges as part of Ursula's quest for "separate distinction", a desire in her for "complete independence, complete social independence," and for adventure in the "mysterious man's world"(334). These desires are in essence an elaboration and
continuation of Tom's, which precipitated a dilemma, the possibilities of which "might seize upon her at any moment out of the unknown" (335). This awareness of the "unknown," and her subsequent relationship with Winifred, are partially developed by her reading of As You Like It, which gives her a sense of "enrichment."

The choice of this particular play is significant; one of its major devices is the confusion of male/female identity, with women masquerading as men and men as women. That the play should have an effect upon Ursula in view of her subsequent behaviour is self-evident, for to some extent she partakes of similar experiences.

At this point in her life Ursula shares a similar attitude towards life with the other characters I have been discussing. We are told that she is "unformed, palpitating, essentially shrinking," seeking "form or being" in an attempt to discover her selfhood; feeling alienated and suffering "agonies when she thought a person disliked her." In the midst of this identity crisis Ursula, like the orderly, Paul, Geoffrey and Tom before her, finds that "a queer awareness exists between herself and her class-mistress," a strange awareness which gives way to "the unspoken intimacy that sometimes connects two people." This is the same awareness remarked upon in the earlier relationships and, like them, is characterized by acute physical and emotional feeling which leads ultimately to a sexual commitment. The relationship is emphasized by the same imagery of sun, glare and heat which occurred in "The Prussian Officer" and again in "Haystacks":

Winifred Inger felt a hot delight in the lessons when Ursula was present, Ursula felt her whole life begin when Miss Inger came into the room. Then, with the beloved, subtly-intimate teacher present, the girl sat as within the rays of some enriching sun, whose intoxicating heat poured straight into her veins (336).

Ursula's heart "burned in her breast" as she is aroused to the sheer masculine physicality of Miss Inger's "strong" loins and "calm, free limbs," desiring to know if Winifred "loved her too", and "with blazing heart" feeling "that if only she could speak to her, touch her, she would know" (337). Her opportunity arrives when Miss Inger is to take the swimming class; Ursula "trembled and was dazed with passion." In the water Ursula is aroused by her awareness
of her mistress' white cool flesh and "firm limbs" desiring only to "hold them, hug them, press them between her own small breasts!" As they race to the end of the pool, Miss Inger swings herself round and catches Ursula "round the waist in the water, and held her for a moment against herself. The bodies of the two women touched, heaved against each other for a moment, then were separate." (338). Ursula, secure in the fact that "love was now tacitly confessed," waits "in inflamed bliss" for further progress, which comes some time later when Winnifred invites her to tea at her secluded bungalow on the Soar. Their emotional and psychic tension is again emphasized by the "warm rain" and "stifling" atmosphere suffused by an "electric suspense." They undress for a swim, and "Ursula could hardly speak. The other naked woman stood by, stood near, silent. Ursula was ready." As they walk towards the river Winnifred holds Ursula close to her:

....and by the side of the water, she put her arms round her, and kissed her, And she lifted her in her arms, close, saying, softly:
'I shall carry you into the water.'
Ursula lay still in her mistress's arms, her forehead against the beloved, maddening breast.
'I shall put you in,' said Winnifred.
But Ursula twined her body about her mistress. (340).

Ursula's apparent communion and consummation has been achieved, but only on a transitory physical level. Her reaction after the event is evidence of a deeper dissatisfaction and confusion which, to some extent, is shared by the orderly, Paul and Tom. Ursula's commitment to her passion is quickly reversed when the "ice-cold" rain showers down on her "flushed, hot limbs" and she feels a "deep bottomless silence" welling up in her. The silence is that of alienation and nullification, indicated by her feeling that a "bottomless darkness" was upon her. All she desires at this point is to escape, like Paul Morel, from the "great inner darkness and void" (341). Like Paul she feels herself to be in a vortex, at the centre of "lights and people" who swirl around her but leave her untouched. She feels within her the "void reality of dark space," which is analogous to the orderly's consciousness of being "amid the reality; on the real, dark bottom."

Both have sensed the confusion of their divided selves, and
the consciousness of their dilemma initiates a desire to escape and discover a different reality. They are aware of their alienation, and the orderly's extreme sense that "he no longer belonged to the world...he had gone out from everyday life into the unknown, and he could not go back" is echoed, to a lesser extent, by Ursula's confession that "she did not want to meet anybody....She did not want to talk, she was alone, immune." What Ursula thought she required was the "presence of other people, the external connection with the many" to cancel her sense of being a "non-existent thing." Her attempt at communion has momentarily failed, for she feels herself to be only an object for use, and perhaps abuse, by Winnifred. The desire for a full flowering of the relationship has suffered a setback, because instead of the promise being fulfilled, Ursula is instead extinguished. She submits to sensation instead of self-establishment; the physical relationship has failed to establish the priority of creative self-fulfilment, and Ursula, like Paul Morel and Tom, must continue the quest.

The Ursula-Winnifred relationship must be seen in the context of the male relationships previously discussed. The homoerotic nature of these is obvious, and it is interesting that Lawrence applied the same techniques to a discussion of homosexual female relationships. In spite of the fact that the Ursula-Winnifred relationship is presented as a perversion (in marked contrast, it should be emphasized, to male homoerotic relationships) it is nevertheless important because it reveals not only Lawrence's confusion about the relative value of homogenic relationships for men and women, but also his willingness to explore the implications of the common attributes of this unique aspect of human relations. Lawrence thereby hoped to discover the value that homogenic relationships have in the creation of a valid basis for encountering the realities of human experience.

We must recognize, however, that Lawrence is presenting a female homoerotic relationship as ultimately negative because of the demands of the plot, and of Ursula's personal development. Ursula uses Winnifred as another stage in her quest, and at the time of their physical and emotional consummation, the experience is valuable and meaningful. Therefore, though Ursula's relationship with Winnifred fails to present the potentiality of communion as a
distinct possibility, it nevertheless shares with male homoerotic experiences the ability to stimulate awareness and consciousness.

The impulse towards greater awareness, and the potentiality of communion, is a distinct possibility for Ursula as it is for the male protagonists who share homoerotic relationships. Ursula thus joins with the other characters I have been discussing in the special promise of homogenic relationships. This promise is submitted to the most rigorous test and discussion in the Gerald-Birkin relationship in *Women in Love*, the theory of which has been prepared for in the works so far discussed, and which is elaborated in the narrative of the unpublished "Prologue" to the novel.
Women in Love has been called "Lawrence's most perfectly integrated study of disintegration"; the disintegration explored in the novel is that of "a living man and woman embracing the social destiny offered by industrial Western society in the early twentieth century."¹ This inclusive comment attempts to summarize the complexities of the novel by attributing the disintegration to the all pervasive effect of "industrial Western society." The many aspects of the novel cannot, however, be expressed so easily. While the "disintegration" in the novel does revolve around the concept of social destiny, all the characters in the novel do not embrace this destiny. Only one, Gerald Crich, fully commits himself to a mechanistic, sterile, industrial world; the others only live in its shadow.

One of the central aspects of Women in Love which has not received the critical attention it merits, is the function of male relationships in the overall pattern of the novel, and its connexion with the total reality of human existence. Essentially, the theme of male relationships which we have seen developing in the works previously discussed, is dramatized in the relationship of Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich. Birkin's attempt at "love and eternal conjunction" with Gerald, is carefully prepared for by the Hermione episodes, which serve to illustrate the kind of relationship Lawrence was concerned with rejecting, in favour of the more vital, and comprehensive one of love, available to the two men. The conclusions arrived at from Birkin's significant act of rejecting Hermione, and the awareness of the inadequacy of his relationship with her, leads him to formulate a kind of homoerotic manifesto. Lawrence thus establishes the theoretical basis of the Birkin-Gerald relationship which then ensues.

It is necessary first to locate the novel in the context of Lawrence's theory, which provides the thematic basis on which the

¹ Moynahan, The Deed of Life, p.88.
novel is shaped, and which illuminates the meaning of the Hermione episodes. Lawrence admitted the destructiveness of *Women in Love* in a letter to Waldo Frank, one of the editors of *Seven Arts* magazine:

There is another novel, sequel to *The Rainbow* called *Women in Love*. I don't think anybody will publish this, either. This actually does contain the results in one's soul of the war: it is purely destructive.... It is wonderful and terrifying, even to me who have written it (CL 519).

Although Lawrence himself did not "embrace the social destiny" of the war, he was profoundly affected by it: his comments about *The Rainbow* reveal the type of influence which is at work in the various relationships of the characters in *Women in Love*:

...I knew, as I revised the book, that it was a kind of working up to the dark sensual or Dionysic or Aphrodisic ecstasy, which does actually...burst the world-consciousness in every individual. What I did through individuals, the world has done through the war (CL 519).

He is obviously preoccupied with individual reactions to the world and to other individuals. The concern is mainly with the effect of the world on individual human consciousness, on human relationships, and ultimately on himself as artist and man:

The novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one's experience as a writer and man.  

One of the conclusions he abstracted from his experiences was the need for "polarity" in human relations, and for the development of consciousness, or total awareness: "consciousness develops on successive planes. On each plane there is the dual polarity, positive and negative." Polarity in human relationships results in a


proper relation between opposites. Lawrence sees the achievement of polarity as a basic need for the development of the individual and human conduct:

No human being can develop save through the polarized connection with other beings. This circuit of polarized unison preceds all mind and all knowledge. It is anterior to and ascendant over the human will. And yet the mind and the will can both interfere with the dynamic circuit, an idea...can arrest one whole process of psychic interaction and spontaneous growth.4

Polarity between individuals, as well as psychic polarity (polarity between psychic forces within the individual), is achieved as a result of extended conflict. The personalities involved must engage each other in a "contest," when the conflict is transcended, polarity is achieved. There still remains, however, a state of tension that is sustaining and life-creating.

This basically is the theoretical background against which the various relationships are developed in the novel. However, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that the sole purpose of Women in Love was to show Lawrence's theory of polarity at work in the relationships of the major characters. Clearly, polarity plays an important part in the conception of the characters' personalities, in the conflicts, and the eventual resolution; it is the basis for the novel's episodic structure and fabric which initiate alternating cycles of creation and decay, both involved with, and indifferent to, the human lives they encounter. Most important is that the dramatization of Lawrence's theories of polarity in the novel is meant to forward the characters' development of total awareness, and thus save them from a world of dissolution.5

The structure and action of the novel make clear, however, that some of the characters, namely Hermione, Gerald, Gudrun, and Loerke, lack the resources to encounter and overcome the chaos of of their own lives in a world in the process of decay. They are

4 *Psychoanalysis*, p.244.

5 Colin Clarke in *The River of Dissolution: D.H. Lawrence and English Romanticism* (London, 1969) discusses Lawrence's attitude to corruption, dissolution and disintegration, especially Chapters II and III.
unable to utilize "polarity" to realize total awareness, in order that their integrity or "truth in being" can manifest itself in the context of their relationships. This failure is essentially a failure of creativeness, and as such predisposes the individuals involved to reduction and disintegration.

The novel also reveals the inverse of this predicament. Birkin and Ursula represent the kind of individuals who, in the context of their romantic and sexual relationships, are able to achieve "truth in being." The integrity and creativeness which thus manifest ensure their survival in a world of chaotic dissolution. The destructiveness of dissolution is averted, perhaps permanently overcome, by the developing distinctiveness which is assured by their spiritual and physical union. For Gudrun and Gerald, no such possibility exists; this is made evident from the very beginning of the novel in the imagery used to describe them. When Gudrun first sees Gerald, she recognizes that "there was something northern about him that magnetized her. In his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice." She asks herself "Am I really singled out for him in some way, is there really some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes only us two?"(16). Gerald and Gudrun are thus metaphorically linked by the death grip of arctic cold; the snow and ice symbolize their progressive deterioration toward inanimate matter, from which condition there is no resurrection.

In marked contrast to this is Birkin and Ursula's response to the natural animate world of plants and animals. This is revealed early in the novel in the "Class-Room" chapter, in which their reactions to the catkins strongly contrasts with the "...strange, almost mystic-passionate attraction..." which "the little red pistillate flowers" have for Hermione(41). Her propensity for self-dramatization, self-conscious will, and false sensation and passion, is directly opposed to Birkin's spontaneity and vitality which, he states, "...is a fulfilment—the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head—the dark involuntary being"(47).

Ursula recognizes, almost unconsciously, his natural vitality:

Ursula was watching him as if furtively, not really aware of what she was seeing. There was a great physical attractiveness in him—a curious hidden richness, that came through his thinness and his pallor like another voice, conveying another knowledge of him. It was in the curves of the brows and his chin, rich, fine, exquisite curves, the powerful beauty of life itself. She could not say what it was. But there was a sense of richness and of liberty.

The physical and spiritual aspects of Ursula's awareness of Birkin can easily be contrasted with Gudrun's perception of Gerald, for here there is no dissolution and death. Birkin reflects a vital, natural integration with nature which is usually reserved for plants and animals; as such, it carries with it the very promise of fulfilment and creativity which is denied to Gerald.

These contrasts, established early in the novel, represent the criteria by which all the major characters are examined. The method is basically dualistic, for the novel reveals that the reality it portrays is projected and structured in terms of pairs of opposites, and this reality is best reflected by the social and personal relationships experienced by the characters. The major recognition of the novel is conveyed by the two opposed couples, Gerald-Gudrun, Birkin-Ursula. Their individual and collective attitudes are played off against other minor characters who are part of their world.

The Birkin-Ursula relationship is initiated by Birkin's reaction to the life-attitude exemplified by Hermione, and by his own search for a valid standard by which to approach the world and live in it. Birkin rejects the abstract spiritual intimacy which Hermione considers to be the bond between them; she tries to "know" Birkin, and this, Lawrence stated, is deadly:

To know a living thing is to kill it. You have to kill a thing to know it satisfactorily. For this reason, the desirous consciousness, the SPIRIT, is a vampire.

One should be sufficiently intelligent and interested to know a good deal about any person one comes into close contact with. About her. Or about him.

But to try to know any living thing is to try to suck the life out of that being.

Hermione's "love" for Birkin is based on a doctrine of possession and on an intellectual-spiritual concern. It thus typifies what for Lawrence is a fatal character flaw: the possession of spirituality without the accompanying animalism. This is made abundantly clear in the "Class-Room" chapter, when Birkin attacks Hermione for her failure:

....knowledge means everything to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don't want to be an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them. It is all purely secondary—and more decadent than the most hide-bound intellectualism. What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism, this love of yours for passion and the animal instincts? ...you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness. It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours. Only you won't be conscious of what actually is: you want the lie that will match the rest of your furniture(45).

The main reason for Birkin's reaction is Hermione's misinterpretation and perversion of his doctrine of spontaneity and instinctual knowledge:

But your passion is a lie....It isn't passion at all, it is your will. It's your bullying will. You want to clutch things and have them in your power. You want to have things in your power. And why? Because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality. You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to know(46).

For Lawrence, "to know" is to possess, and possession is destruction: "....oh men, beware a thousand time more of the woman who wants to know you, or get you, what you are. It is the temptation of a vampire fiend, is this knowledge."8

Birkin seems intuitively to realize what is wrong with a world inhabited by people like Hermione (and Gerald), and in his attack on her makes this abundantly clear. His own search for a valid and vital standard by which to overcome the condition he notices around him, settles "at this point," on the statement that he will seek his own satisfaction in sensuality, which "...is a fulfilment—the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head—the dark involuntary being. It is death to one's self—

8 Ibid.
but it is the coming into being of another"(46-7). He is prepared to suggest by way of solution the destruction of man, but realizes that that is not really the path to wholeness and sanity: "...When the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness—everything must go—there must be the deluge. Then you find yourself in a palpable body of darkness, a demon—"(47). Birkin firmly believes that the individual himself must realize his creative potential if he is not to succumb to spiritual death: "You've got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being"(48). Hermione, who exists under the compulsion of her will, is obviously inimical to Birkin's conception. He becomes more decisive and rejects her attempt to impose her will upon him.

Hermione must be the dominant will in the relationship; she sees Birkin as an obstruction to the development and exercise of her power. When she coerces Birkin into explaining what knowledge he derives from copying the Chinese drawing (98-99), he forces her, as F.R. Leavis points out, "...to admit to herself an awareness of 'unknown modes of being'. To understand him is to recognize her awareness of such modes in herself; unknown and unknowable, in the sense that they cannot be reduced to terms of the 'mental consciousness'. This recognition is insufferable to her; it is a recognition that the reality of life is something she can have no command over and cannot take into her possession."9

Birkin's relationship with Hermione reaches its explosive, climactic moment in the boudoir scene in the "Breadalby" chapter. Birkin wanders into Hermione's room where she is writing letters. He sits down with his back to her, picks up a book and becomes "minutely attentive to his author"(116). His presence, and his deliberate disregard for Hermione, serve as the trigger for the release of all her frustrations and pent up anger:

Her whole mind was a chaos, darkness breaking in upon it, and herself struggling to gain control with her will, as a swimmer struggles with the swirling water....darkness seemed to break over her, she felt as if her heart was

bursting. The terrible tension grew stronger and stronger, it was most fearful agony, like being walled up(116).

Because he has forced her to recognize that she could never command or possess the reality of life, Hermione realizes that the "wall" is Birkin, that "his presence [is] destroying her." It is this recognition which causes her to lose control and strike out at Birkin with the paperweight:

She must break down the wall—she must break him down before her, the awful obstruction of him who obstructed her life to the last....
Terrible shocks ran over her body, like shocks of electricity, as if many volts of electricity suddenly struck her down. She was aware of him sitting silently there, an unthinkable evil obstruction....A terrible voluptuous thrill ran down her arms—she was going to know her voluptuous consummation. Her arms quivered and were strong, immeasurably and irresistibly strong....What delight in strength, what delirium of pleasure! She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last....
Then swiftly, in a flame that drenched down her body like fluid lightning and gave her a perfect, unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction, she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head(117).

The evidence which emerges from the above passages suggests that Hermione is too intense, and overcharged with the wrong type of passion. The motive force driving her passion is mental in character; it works through the understanding and is activated by pure will, requiring for its satisfaction only spiritual and mental intimacy. Lawrence deliberately utilizes words and phrases with sexual connotations in order to emphasize the doctrinal significance of Hermione's action, as well as its sexual nature.

Any natural responsiveness Hermione might possess is stifled by her all-consuming will and compulsion for a purely mental intimacy, exactly those things which Lawrence considers essentially destructive. To achieve "polarity" there must be a mingling and opposition without strict subjugation, a subjugation which Hermione insists upon. Since this mingling is partly achieved in sexual relations, Lawrence's ironic subtlety takes on added significance in these passages. Hermione has repressed natural physical passion
in favour of a false spiritual one which is destructive to Birkin, and ultimately to herself. Birkin, as her lover, is limiting Hermione's ability to achieve domination over him by the fact of his physical possession of her, and by his criticism of her for wanting her "animalism" in her head. Hermione must therefore attempt to deny his hold on her, and in the process of freeing herself, achieve her "consummation." The only method of doing so is to destroy Birkin, for if he is no longer present physically, she will have him spiritually. His physical presence will no longer disrupt her psychic ecstasy. By wounding Birkin, she also achieves a pseudo-sexual satisfaction, for her consummation, although ironically described in physical terms, is in fact spiritual: "She was right, she was pure. A drugged, almost sinister religious expression became permanent on her face"(118, my italics). The sense of Hermione's dissolution into a spiritual limbo is further reinforced by the "permanent" expression on her face.

The blow Hermione unleashes on Birkin's head shatters the crystalline bond between them, and dissolves any romantic feelings he might have had for her:

Hurriedly, with a burrowing motion, he covered his head under the thick volume of Thucydides, and the blow came down, almost breaking his neck, and shattering his heart.

He was shattered, but he was not afraid...he seemed to himself that he was all fragments, smashed to bits(118).

Birkin has not been caught unawares, for he had expected an action of this sort, and if not consciously admitting its possibility, was unconsciously prepared for it: "Yet his movements were perfectly coherent and clear, his soul was entire and unsurprised (118, my italics). As Birkin staggers from the room, Hermione is left immobile by his parting remark: "It isn't I who will die. You hear?" She then lapses into a trance-like sleep. When she awakens, she justifies her action by saying to herself that "...she had done what must be done. She was right, she was pure" (118-119). Birkin had tortured her and therefore "she was perfectly right..." Hermione considers herself "pure"; she has cleansed herself in one violent moment by an action which reinforces her "spiritualism," but from which she emerges alienated
and alone. Lawrence intends that her 'victory' be interpreted as a loss. Her apparent purification is, in reality, a decay. She has been cursed by Birkin's parting words, and branded with the "drugged, almost sinister expression [which] became permanent on her face."

Birkin, on the other hand, has now been released from Hermione's destructive grasp, and is on the threshold of an attempt to reach a new understanding of, and sensitivity to, his situation. "Barely conscious," he escapes from Hermione's wrath to the primitive, unpopulated "...wild valley-side, where were thickets of hazel, many flowers, tufts of heather, and little clumps of young fir-trees, budding with soft paws"(119).
His escape to nature functions for him as a release from Hermione, from the oppression of the society she represents, and ultimately from himself. Birkin attempts a complete communion with nature:

He was aware that he could not regain his consciousness, that he was moving in a sort of darkness. Yet he wanted something. He was happy in the wet hillside, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers....He took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses, moving his feet softly among the primroses, his legs, his knees, his arms right up to the arm-pits, lying down and letting them touch his belly, his breasts. It was such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact(119).

Birkin's behaviour is reminiscent of that of the other characters discussed in the previous chapters, notably Paul Morel in Sons and Lovers, and the orderly in "The Prussian Officer:" The situation is familiar, for after their individual conflicts, both Paul and the orderly are in a trance-like, "barely conscious" state, and attempt to create some order out of the chaos of their emotional and psychological reactions. Like the orderly, Birkin has had a traumatic experience which necessitates an attempt to relate his individual reality to nature, and thence back to the world and society. The major difference here is that Lawrence's thinking has progressed to the point at which he can depict Birkin as instinctively knowing what he desires, both from himself, and from existence. Birkin senses in nature a cyclic union which for the moment is beyond him, and, more important, is lost to the kind of society he perceives about him. The ritualistic
associations of the orderly's sacrifice in the clearing in the forest, the conflict on the "altar" reared to the sun in "Love Among the Haystacks," and Birkin's purgation/rebirth/initiation ceremony, forcefully reinforce this thesis.

Birkin's intuitive perception, and convinced knowledge, of the ultimate dissolution of the world he lives in leads him to behave as he does among the flora of the valley; the previous chapters in the novel make his reaction perfectly understandable. His fatal encounter with Hermione is a culmination of all he has experienced up to that point in the novel—the Crich wedding, the class-room conversation, the conversation with Gerald in the train, the demi-monde of Bohemian London, and its counterpart in Breadalby society. All of these experiences support Birkin's conviction that a new beginning is necessary, and that the old society must be replaced with "something better" (60).

Lawrence dramatizes this recognition throughout the episodes describing Birkin's relationship with Hermione, but its cumulative effect is revealed as he thrashes among the young fir-trees, thistle, and hyacinths:

> How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, waiting for him, as he waited for it; how fulfilled he was, how happy!

> Why should he pretend to have anything to do with human beings at all? Here was his world, he wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, and himself, his own living self (120).

Birkin's behaviour reveals the extent of his understanding of the destructive society represented by Hermione. The natural world as a positive value which is completely indifferent to man, is apprehended by Birkin as a means of salvation from the destructive processes of the society he rejects. However, he is still very much committed to the world of men. It is that world, which precipitates the whole episode, and to which he must return: "It was necessary to go back in the world." This statement is qualified by his comment that "he now knew where he belonged. This was his place, his marriage place, the world was extraneous." Birkin now feels himself to be free, and rejoices "in the newfound world of his madness," preferring that to the "regular
sanity" of the world (120).

Lawrence would have us believe that with the world of nature as a catalyst, Birkin has broken free of "the old grief," "the old ethic," and will be able to exist unencumbered in his "new state." Birkin's weariness of humanity makes him look for an alternative, which he momentarily finds amidst the flora. His escape is necessarily limited, for he has never really left the world. Birkin feels the oppressiveness of other people, and expresses this depression through his fear of having been observed. He then extends this "dream terror" to an idealistic conception of existence on an island, "like Alexander Selkirk, with only the creatures and the trees." Birkin's image of himself as Selkirk, perfectly summarizes his situation as an explorer, encountering the unknown, yet isolated from the very people who could benefit from the discovery. Birkin, then, is at a crossroads in his life. In rejecting Hermione and the destructive ego she represents, he is committing himself to the establishment of "polarized connection with other beings" as the foundation for the new development of humanity.

The Hermione episode is clearly of utmost importance in the recognition and establishment of Birkin's subsequent relations with the other characters in the novel. It is Hermione who distills Birkin's instinctive feelings about her and society to the point where he can no longer live with them, and attempts to purge himself; in the process clarifying his destiny. Birkin's rejection of Hermione establishes the series of contrasts which inform the relationships examined in the novel, and also suggest the direction of Birkin's new approach at establishing himself with Ursula. The positive and negative values inherent in the relationships are emphasized by the opposition of the dark "macabre repulsiveness" of Hermione, and the vitality and colour associated with Ursula.

It is clear that after Birkin's rejection of Hermione and what she represents, he turns to Ursula because she extends to him the promise of positive creativity. Nor is Ursula indifferent to Birkin, for she acknowledges that "she was held to him by some bond, some deep principle," with the promise of "new life" inherent in their conflict. Birkin and Ursula are meant to carry the
responsibility of illustrating, within the novel, the possibilities of establishing a true "polarized connexion," thus defeating the dissolution of modern society. This preoccupation of the novel is succinctly stated in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious:

The amazingly difficult and vital business of human relationships has been laughably underestimated in our epoch. All this nonsense about love and selflessness, more crude and repugnant than savage fetish-worship. Love is a thing to be learned, through centuries of patient effort. It is a difficult, complex maintenance of individual integrity throughout the incalculable process of interhuman polarity.

The establishment of "interhuman polarity" and "love" is a lengthy and difficult process, but one which Birkin continues to attempt, after some false starts, throughout the novel. Birkin and Ursula, unlike the other characters, are acutely aware of the disintegration and dissolution of life which the novel chronicles. Their mutual acknowledgement of the social situation is what initially brings them together; their growing awareness of the fact that their relationship is really all they have to combat the chaos around them adds to this relationship the impetus of an anxiety to create an independent consummate self, which would counter and replace the lack of self which degrades the world.

Birkin asserts this when he tells Gerald that "The old ideals are dead as nails—nothing there. It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman—sort of ultimate marriage—and there isn't anything else". Birkin's desire for a new type of relationship with Ursula is based upon the recognition that the rejection of the society he lives in also involves a rejection of the relationships which that society forces on individuals, and that "the old way of love" must be replaced by one which is not contaminated by a disintegrating world.

Birkin attempts to formulate a coherent statement of his beliefs and desires in several conversations with Ursula, and in his sick-bed meditations. The "Mino" chapter gives an early indication of the type of relationship he thinks he desires with
her at that point:

"There is," he said, in a voice of pure abstraction, "a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there that I would want to meet you—not in the emotional, loving plane—but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures, I would want to approach you, and you me. And there could be no obligation, because there is no standard for action there, because no understanding has been reaped from that plane"(162-3).

Birkin is advocating a return to "primal desire," a state in which they can encounter each other without the preconceived ideas, and conditional responses, of what he considers to be the degraded selves of the "old ethic." His plan is to start afresh on a different plane "beyond," where, he states, "there needs only the pledge between us, that we will both cast off everything, cast off ourselves even, and cease to be, so that that which is perfectly ourselves can take place in us....What I want is a strange conjunction with you—not meeting and mingling;—you are quite right—but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings—as the stars balance each other"(163-4).

Ursula, however, objects to Birkin's demands because he is too insistent, and has lapsed at this point "into weariness and faithlessness." His insistence on "male dignity" and "higher understanding," derived from his observation of the Mino's behaviour towards the intruding female cat, is, as H.M. Daleski points out, "inconsistent with Birkin's interpretation of its symbolism...for Mino's behaviour is hardly illustrative, as he maintains, of a desire to bring the female cat into 'a pure stable equilibrium, a transcendant and abiding rapport with the single male'...the Mino remains unchallenged in his manly singleness...because he has had the good fortune to encounter a self-less female, so utterly lacking in an independent being of her own...." It is evident that Ursula is not a "self-less female," and far from lacking an independent will of her own,

10 The Forked Flame, pp. 173-4.
she is fully aware of the impasse her life has come to: "to live mechanised and cut off within the motion of the will, to live as an entity absolved from the unknown, that is shameful and ignominious.... There is complete ignominy in an unreplenished, mechanized life" (216). Unlike Gerald and Gudrun, Ursula will not submit to the "unutterable anguish of dissolution," and must eventually join Birkin in a relationship which would counter "a life that is a repetition of repetitions."

Birkin's meditation upon what F.R. Leavis calls "the need of some norm for the relation between men and women other than what Gerald and Gudrun enact," reaches a tentative formulation in the "Man to Man" chapter. Birkin desires to be free from the "old way of love" which he categorizes as the restraint and hindrance of marriage and children. Domestic satisfaction, and the "hot narrow intimacy between man and wife," is abhorrent to him because the "horrible privacy" is so exclusive as to preclude any outside disinterested relationship. The alternative for Birkin, is, ironically, another type of exclusiveness: "He wanted to be single in himself, the woman single in herself.... he wanted a further conjunction, where man had being and woman had being, two pure beings, each constituting the freedom of the other" (223-24). Birkin's desire for a distillation into purity is arrived at by denying that men and women are "unbroken fragments of one whole," instead, he believes that they are "the singling away into purity and clear being, of things which were mixed;" and sex, rather than being "the still aching scar of laceration" when men were broken off from women, is "that which remains in us of the mixed, the unresolved." However, Birkin would have it that this unresolved mixture is further refined by passion, and as a result, "that which is manly being taken into the being of the man, that which is womanly passing to the woman," until we are left with "two single beings, constellated together like two stars" (225). Birkin then goes on to formulate a doctrine which, while purporting to have an immediate and direct applicability to man-woman relationships, has instead a logical orientation to male conjunction:

11 D.H. Lawrence Novelist, p. 179.
In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture. The process of singling into individuality resulted into the great polarization of sex. The womanly drew to one side, the manly to the other. But the separation was imperfect even then. And so our world-cycle passes. There is now to come the new day, when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference. The man is pure man, the woman pure woman, they are perfectly polarized. But there is no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love. There is only the pure duality of polarization, each one free from any contamination of the other. In each, the individual is primal, sex is subordinate, but perfectly polarized. Each has a single, separate being, with its own laws. The man has his pure freedom, the woman hers. Each acknowledges the perfection of the polarized sex-circuit. Each admits the different nature in the other.

H.M. Daleski notices in Birkin's meditations a line of thought which derives from *The Rainbow* but which in *Women in Love* "curves in a new direction." The ideal relationship which Lawrence aims for in *The Rainbow* can be considered as the "two in one," symbolized by the rainbow arch, while the relationship Birkin desires is a "mutual unison in separation." Though both "suggest a coming together in a union which does not obliterate singleness, it seems...that in the earlier phase the emphasis is on unison, whereas in the later it is on separateness...." Since Birkin is preoccupied with the idea of 'single, separate being', "the shift in emphasis is due to Lawrence's growing awareness of the extent to which individuality is threatened in the 'man's world' [of *The Rainbow*]," and to his "changed valuation of the significance of sexual intercourse." Previously, sex had a transcendent value, but Birkin thinks of sex "as a functional process, not a fulfilment" (223), for if it is considered to have a transcendent value, man and woman must be incomplete in themselves. From this, Birkin posits a "pure man" and "pure woman" who are "fulfilled in difference," independent of sexual conjunction. "Manhood and Womanhood," suggests Daleski, "outside of the sexual relation are no longer to be regarded as achievements, as the consummation of selves which have male and female components, but as singular blessings." In spite of its apparent obscurity,
Birkin's meditations and his tentative conclusions, are identifiable with the direction of Lawrence's thought to the establishment of "the new day." Throughout the remainder of the novel Lawrence attempts to inaugurate the new day which will redeem Birkin and Ursula.

The single most important fact, for our present purposes, to emerge from Daleski's observations, is that Lawrence, who previously believed in the profound significance and virtue of male-female union, both physical and spiritual, as presented in the study of Hardy and the Phoenix essay on love, has now changed position to the point where Birkin is presented as fearing women ("Moony" chapter), and is wary of polarised union with them. Now he desires a state of being which would create "pure men" and "pure women," and where "sex would revert to the level of the other appetites."

The conclusion to be drawn from this new, or at least different approach, given the context of Birkin's relationship with Gerald, is that Birkin is drawn to him in an effort to satisfy previously repressed desires which form no part of his relations with women. A tentative reason for the change in Birkin's approach can be found in his meditation upon pure men and pure women. Birkin essentially desires a male state of being uncontaminated by the female, where the man "has his pure freedom" and where "each has a single separate being." What emerges from this passage, however, is a definite suspicion that Birkin fears women; his previous relationship with Hermione provides the basis for his reaction. Thus, instead of evolving a doctrine aimed at deriving a new "norm for the relation between men and women" he is, in fact, creating insurmountable obstacles to its achievement. These obstacles are made manifest when Birkin attempts to achieve his "new day" with Ursula. The obscurity of the "Excurse" chapter suggests the difficulty Lawrence has in making the Birkin-Ursula relationship convincing, and it is ironic that the only completely convincing relationship in the novel, that of Gerald and Gudrun, is condemned as destructive.

On the other hand, Birkin's sudden confrontation with the problem of "love and eternal conjunction between two men," and his realization that "it had been a necessity inside himself,"
derives ultimately from his doctrine of purity and singleness of being, and is at least as meaningful and valid as his relationship with Ursula. Inherent in Birkin's theories is the fact that singleness of being or "purity" can only be achieved with someone of the same sex, and, of course, in Birkin's case, it is a man. If, as he suggests, the "new day" is to see "pure man" with no horrible, merging, mingling self-abnegation of love" with woman, and "only the pure duality of polarization" will reign supreme, "free from any contamination of the other," then we can conclude that these conditions can only be met within the context of a homogenic relationship. Birkin's conditions of "purity" are met by the integrity of gender intrinsic to male relationships. Most important, between two men the man's "laws" remain inviolate, untouched by the contaminating influence of the opposite sex. This homoerotic bond to which the doctrine has logically led, substantially accounts for the novelist's failure to realize, in a truly persuasive way, the man-woman relationship between Birkin and Ursula. The sense of sexual ambiguity which underlies the entire passage points to Lawrence's own uncertainties, at this point in his life and career, about the precise direction in which his consideration of male relationships was leading, and about the personal consequences to his central character of attempting to establish an actual human correlative for the doctrine.

Birkin, then, is "suddenly confronted with another problem—the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men. Of course this was necessary—it had been a necessity inside himself all his life—to love a man purely and fully. Of course he had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it" (231).

The open admission of love for a man indicates an obvious and completely revealed attempt on Lawrence's part to widen his sexual ethic. It is also indicative of an important advance in self-understanding. Far from being an isolated attempt related solely to the presentation of Birkin, the tentative gropings towards the question of male relationships has already been seen in the work previously discussed. The character of Birkin, and the incidents involving male relationships in Women in Love, and in the suppressed "Prologue," stand at the end of a series of works which were inexorably progressing toward what must be a
succinct statement about Lawrence's attitude to male love. At the same time, it stands at the beginning, as we shall later see, of a more explicit utilization of "male conjunction" and ultimately, a revaluation of that concern.

Birkin's sudden awareness, in the "Man to Man" chapter, that love and eternal conjunction with a man was "a necessity inside himself," introduces a theme to the novel proper, which Lawrence had explicitly and candidly dealt with in the unpublished "Prologue", or first chapter, of the novel.\(^\text{13}\) We have already discussed the apparent shift in Lawrence's thought as revealed in Birkin's attempt at arriving at positive modes of being in a relationship meant to transcend a disintegrating world. The basis for this change has been carefully prepared in the highly explicit "Prologue." The nature of the relationship between Birkin and Gerald, as outlined in the prologue, exists on the level of unspoken awareness, and it is not until much later in the novel, in the "Man to Man" chapter, that Birkin expresses his ideas of male friendship and love to Gerald.

The description of the Gerald-Birkin attraction begins in terms which echo those of the male relationships previously discussed: "The acquaintance between the two men was slight and insignificant. Yet there was a subtle bond that connected them" (Phoenix II, 92). The "subtle bond" between Paul and Baxter, the Prussian Officer and the orderly, Geoffrey and Maurice, has developed so that it is no longer subtle, and the intention becomes clear. Birkin and Gerald "each looked towards the other, and knew the trembling nearness." Significantly, the "bond" is again established amidst the trappings of mystical ritual, this time on a mountain where the three men "were very close together, and lifted into abstract isolation...another state of being...an intimacy that took no expression, but which was between them like a transfiguration" (92). The return to reality precipitated by coming off the mountain causes a "sudden extinction." The friends part company without referring to, or speaking about,

\(^{13}\) First published in Texas Quarterly, VI (Spring 1963), and reprinted in Phoenix II, (London, 1968), pp. 92-108. References will be to Phoenix II.
their "transcendant intimacy;" but "there remained always, for
Birkin and for Gerald Crich, the absolute recognition that had
passed between them then, the knowledge that was in their eyes
as they met at the moment of parting. They knew they loved
each other, that each would die for the other" (93).

The "embarrassing fire" and the "inflammable intimacy"
which Lawrence describes as existing between the two men is
reminiscent of the officer and orderly in "The Prussian Officer,"
including the similar use of fire and heat imagery to indicate
some type of sacrificial passion. The identification is made
complete by the information that Gerald was "hard in his muscles
and full of energy as a machine", and more specifically, that he
was "a hunter, a traveller, a soldier...giving orders to some
subordinate". Birkin, like the orderly, is described as being
"quiet and unobtrusive", and his eyes are "alive like fires" (93).
That Birkin and Gerald are in a direct line of descent from the
officer and orderly, and share common elements with Paul, Baxter,
Geoffrey, and Maurice, is further evidence of a sustained and
progressive interest in male relationships. In Women in Love,
however, this interest is brought to fruition, and a definite and
explicit attempt is made to show exactly in what sense male
relationships can function as part of Birkin's "new day".

In the "Prologue" Birkin is still depicted as a man in
conflict with himself and with the world Hermione represents.
She is essentially the same character we meet in the "Breadalby"
chapter in the novel proper, but the "Prologue" Hermione reveals
in a much more explicit metaphor the exact psychological nature
of her destructiveness. Hermione is a high priestess of "mental
and spiritual flame" serving her god Birkin: "Like a priestess
she kept his records and his oracles, he was like a god who would
be nothing if his worship were neglected" (94). Birkin's godhead
is, of course, a construct of Hermione's own personal limitations;
he would only cease to be god-like if her worship were withdrawn.
However, we should recognize at the same time that Lawrence has
indeed imparted some extraordinary superhuman characteristics to
Birkin. This aspect of his character will be discussed at a later
point.

The recognition of Hermione's idealization causes Birkin to
attempt to withdraw from her and seek an alternative, and hence positive, relationship. To accomplish this he is forced to become "a lustful, shallow, insignificant fellow running in all the common ruts"(95), as if by denying the spiritual vampirism of Hermione and committing himself to brute reality, he can somehow escape the all-consuming spiritual degradation.

The major way in which Birkin attempts to escape is by fostering and emphasizing his relationship with Gerald, which is anathema to, and beyond the comprehension of, Hermione: "Hermione could not understand the affection between the two men.... She knew that Birkin was, as usual, belittling his own mind and talent, for the sake of something that she felt unworthy.... But he plunged on triumphantly into intimacy with Gerald Crich, excluding the woman, tormenting her"(95).

Birkin's relationship with Gerald is not unworthy, for Lawrence has been careful to give it an almost religious intensity. He describes their moment of recognition in Biblical terms: "Each looked towards the other, and knew the trembling nearness", as if they had partaken of a genuine communion blessed by a holy spirit residing on the mountain top. The men's unspoken friendship for one another is constantly reinforced by reference to spiritual, as well as physical, feelings of unity:

"Birkin did get a greater satisfaction, at least for the time being, from his intercourse with the other man, than from his spiritual relation: with her (Hermione). It satisfied him to have to do with Gerald Crich, it fulfilled him to have this other man, this hard-limbed traveller and sportsman, following implicitly, held as it were consummated within the spell of a more powerful understanding. Birkin felt a passion of desire for Gerald Crich, for the clumsier, cruder intelligence and the limited soul, and for the striving, unlightened body of his friend. And Gerald Crich, not understanding, was transfused with pleasure. He did not even know he loved Birkin.... He felt a great tenderness towards him, of superior physical strength, and at the same time some reverence for his delicacy and fineness of being.

All the same, there was no profession of friendship, no open mark of intimacy. They remained to all intents and purposes distant, mere acquaintances. It was in the other world of the subconscious, that the interplay took place, the interchange of spiritual and physical richness, the relieving of physical and spiritual poverty, without any intrinsic change of state in either man(96)."
The feelings of superiority and compassion shared by both men for the other has its immediate basis in the depiction of Paul and Baxter in *Sons and Lovers*. In addition, the situations of Paul and Birkin in relation to women are almost parallel in development and crisis. Birkin's love relationship with Hermione comes to the same disastrous conclusion as does Paul's with Miriam:

He did not love Hermione, he did not desire her. But he wanted to force himself to love her and to desire her. He was consumed by sexual desire, and he wanted to be fulfilled. Yet he did not desire Hermione. She repelled him rather. Yet he would have this physical fulfilment, he would have the sexual activity....

She was hopeless from the start. Yet she resigned herself to him. In her soul, she knew this was not the way.... She was wise; she thought for the best. She prepared herself like a perfect sacrifice to him....

And oh, it was all such a cruel failure, just a failure. This last act of love which he had demanded of her was the keenest grief of all, it was so insignificant, so null. He had no pleasure of her, only some mortification.

Like Paul, Birkin then turns to other women of "purely sensual, sensational attraction", and, like him, becomes "blind, unconscious to the greater half of life". Eventually, however, he recognizes that he achieves no real fulfilment either in sensuality, or in his spiritual and aesthetic relationship with Hermione, and realizes that he "must unite the two halves of himself, spiritual and sensual". Birkin, though, is aware that he could not do this deliberately, "It must happen to him". As a result, he feels himself incomplete, and like Paul Morel, at a crisis point in his life: "He knew that he was not very far from dissolution".

Birkin then turns toward a man. Paul Morel had cultivated a friendship with Baxter Dawes out of several confused feelings of guilt and attraction, and their hesitant, fumbling relationship was, as we have already seen, a weak, though primary indication of Lawrence's feelings about male relationships. In Birkin's case, the recognition, while deriving from a similar background, is much more explicit and personally honest. The degree of self-knowledge available to him is much greater than that available to
Paul Morel, and thus he is able to admit to himself, and ultimately to another man, that "although he was always drawn to women, feeling more at home with a woman than with a man, yet it was for men that he felt the hot, flushing, roused attraction which a man is supposed feel for the other sex....the male physique had a fascination for him, and for the female physique he felt only a fondness, a sort of sacred love, as for a sister."

What follows this initial self-confession, and extends to the end of the "Prologue", is a sustained, and partially dramatised chronicle of Birkin's homogenic feelings, and his emotional and psychological predilection for male-oriented relationships. A fairly lengthy quotation is necessary at this point to reveal completely Birkin's progressive understanding of his commitment:

In the street, it was the men who roused him by their flesh and their manly, vigorous movement, quite apart from all the individual character, whilst he studied the women as sisters, knowing their meaning and their intents. It was the men's physique which held the passion and the mystery to him....The soul of a woman and the physique of a man, these were the two things he watched for, in the street....Why was a man's beauty, the \textit{beauté mâle}, so vivid and intoxicating a thing to him, whilst female beauty was something quite unsubstantial....But it was plastic form that that fascinated him in men, the contour and movement of the flesh itself....

....He had several friendships wherein this passion entered, friendships with men....He loved his friend, the beauty of whose manly limbs made him tremble with pleasure. He wanted to caress him.

But reserve...kept him from any demonstration. And if he were away for any length of time from the man he loved so hotly, then he forgot him, the flame which invested the beloved like a transfiguration passed away....

So he left his old friends completely, even those to whom he had been attached passionately, like David to Jonathan. Men whose presence he had waited for cravingly, the touch of whose shoulder suffused him with a vibration of physical love, became to him mere figures, as non-existent as is the waiter who sets the table in a restaurant.

....Yet, every now and again, would come over him the same passionate desire to have near him some man he saw, to exchange intimacy, to unburden himself of love to this new beloved.

It might be any man....How vividly, months afterwards, he would recall the soldier who had sat pressed
up close to him on a journey from Charing to Westerham....

In his mind was a small gallery of such men: men whom he had never spoken to, but who had flashed themselves upon his senses unforgottably, men whom he apprehended intoxicatingly in his blood. They divided themselves roughly into two classes: these white-skinned, keen-limbed men with eyes like blue-flashing ice and hair like crystals of winter sunshine, the northmen...isolated, individual; and then the men with dark eyes that one can enter and plunge into, bathe in, as in a liquid darkness, dark-skinned, supple, night-smelling men, who are the living substance of the viscous, universal heavy darkness.

His senses surged toward these men, towards the perfect and beautiful representatives of these two halves. And he knew them, by seeing them and apprehending them sensuously....

He asked himself, often, as he grew older...would he ever be appeased, would he ever cease to desire these two sorts of men....

...He could never acquiesce to his own feelings, to his own passion. He could never grant that it should be so, that it was well for him to feel this keen desire to have and to possess the bodies of such men, the passion to bathe in the very substance of living, eternal light, like eternal snow, and the flux of heavy, rank-smelling darkness.

...There would come into a restaurant a strange Cornish type of man....Birkin would feel the desire spring up in him, the desire to know this man, to have him, as it were to eat him, to take the very substance of him. And watching...Birkin would feel the rousedness burning in his own breast, as if this were what he wanted, as if the satisfaction of his desire lay in the body of the young, strong man opposite.

...And it would seem as if he had always loved men, always and only loved men.

Gerald Crich was the one towards whom Birkin felt the most strongly that immediate, roused attraction which transfigured the person of the attracter with such a glow and such desirable beauty....In both men were the seeds of a strong, inflammable affinity.

Birkin's admission of his attraction towards men, is basically a revelation of repressed homosexuality. The description of his attitudes is remarkably close to a clinical analysis of that condition, although it is here dramatized in the context of his overall relation to a society in dissolution.
2. "Gladiatorial"

Birkin's 'confession' should be considered in the perspective established by his rejection of Hermione, and his theorizing about unique methods of establishing human relationships. As we have seen, the novel proper traces and dramatizes the Birkin-Hermione conflict to its irreversible conclusion, but the "Prologue" establishes a positive alternative for Birkin by revealing his predilection for male relationships. The "Prologue" states in no uncertain terms, that it was "inevitable" that Birkin and Hermione "were running to the end of their friendship," that "his feeling of hostility...had grown now to an almost constant dislike," and that "his reaction against Hermione was the strongest movement in his life"(107-108). In spite of the inevitability of his rejection, Birkin is faced with the encroaching "abyss" of the unknown—he will be cast adrift like the other characters we have encountered, and forced, like them, to reestablish his individuality in a world of subjective chaos.

It would appear then that Birkin's other existence, his commitment to men, does not manifest itself in time to save him the agony of his withdrawal from Hermione, or the "dream terror" of his communion with nature. However, his admission in the "Prologue" that "it would seem as if he had always loved men, always and only loved men"(107), surfaces during his sick-bed meditations, and influences his attempt to establish a new norm for human relations. Birkin's theory of a "new day," established on the basis of "pure men" and "single separate being," can only be realized as we have seen, within the context of a homogenic relationship. Thus, it is significant that when Gerald visits the convalescing Birkin, he stimulates and evokes an admission which Birkin had unconsciously suppressed since its exposure in the "Prologue"—the admission that "to love a man purely and fully," had been "a necessity inside himself all his life," and that he had, as we already knew from the "Prologue," "been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it"(ML 231). Evidently, the male attraction outlined in the "Prologue," dormant during Birkin's conflict with Hermione, is now resurrected by that very
conflict, and by his theories of purity. Gerald's arrival reveals that "the two men had a deep, uneasy feeling for each other," and that "Gerald really loved Birkin"(226); their relationship, or at least Gerald's conscious attitude towards Birkin, consisting of protectiveness, "offering the warm shelter of his physical strength."

The lengthy passage from the "Prologue" quoted above, makes perfectly clear that Birkin is attracted by men of "vigorous" beauty, "whose limbs made him tremble with pleasure." Obviously Gerald is such a man; he fits into one of the two classes of men whom Birkin "apprehended intoxicatingly in his blood" It is toward Gerald that Birkin feels most strongly "that immediate roused attraction which transformed the person of the attracter with such a glow and such desirable beauty." The relationship between the two men, as established in the "Prologue," is reintroduced in the novel proper, especially in the "Man to Man" chapter, where the situation is similar to that in Son and Lovers when Paul Morel ministers to the convalescing Baxter Dawes. What emerges in both instances is a committed concern for the weaker partner of the moment, but with an undercurrent of meaning which only becomes explicit in Women in Love. Birkin's admission of his attraction and love for men, and for Gerald in particular, has affected his view of society and human relations to the extent that he must now consider the role of male love in any attempt at establishing his "new day."

Significantly, in the same chapter in which Birkin derives his theory, he proposes to Gerald that they swear a Blutbrüderschaft, "to love each other...implicitly, and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of going back"(232). Birkin's request has been prompted by the recognition, within the context of his theory, that "purity of being," as he establishes it, can only be achieved with a partner of the same sex. This had led directly to his confrontation: "with another problem—the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men," and to his admission that it was "a necessity inside himself all his life." The suppressed "Prologue" explicitly and irrefutably supports this admission, and quite naturally prepares the way for Birkin's request for a pact of blood-brotherhood with Gerald.
Gerald however, hesitates and suggests that they postpone the ceremony until he understands it better. His refusal is not a negation, nor is it a final rejection, for "his face shone with a certain luminous pleasure. He was pleased" (232). Gerald's attraction to Birkin, and his obvious feelings for him, are again revealed as he takes his leave:

Gerald came near the bed and stood looking down at Birkin whose throat was exposed, whose tossed hair fell attractively on the warm brow, above the eyes that were so unchallenged....Gerald, full-limbed and turgid with energy, stood unwilling to go, he was held by the presence of the other man. He had not the power to go away.

"So," said Birkin. "Good-bye," and he reached out his hand from under the bed-clothes, smiling with a glimmering look.

"Good-bye," said Gerald, taking the warm hand of his friend in a firm grasp. "I shall come again. I miss you down at the mill."

The eyes of the two men met again. Gerald's, that were keen as a hawk's, were suffused now with warm light and with unadmitted love, Birkin looked back as out of a darkness, unsounded and unknown, yet with a kind of warmth, that seemed to flow over Gerald's brain like a fertile sleep (235-36).

The description is a reiteration of the relationship established in the "Prologue," and thus, instead of supporting Gerald's refusal to enact a Blutbrüderschaft, only places it in temporary abeyance. Lawrence is suggesting that the attraction is so compulsive that Gerald will be unable to withdraw permanently from Birkin. Birkin's vulnerability, emphasized by his exposed throat and "warm brow," attracts Gerald, who, "full-limbed and turgid with energy," is obviously in the dominant position. Birkin's weakness, therefore, is one of the things which attracts Gerald; his desire to feel himself able to control and dominate all those with whom he comes into contact is fulfilled, at least vicariously, in his relationship with Birkin. Birkin, on the other hand, is perfectly content to give himself up to one of the "perfect and beautiful" specimens of male "purity" which attracts him, and fulfills his desire to apprehend them "intoxicatingly in his blood." Both men are thus able to fulfill a deeper need in each other's company. Their "moment of passionate approach" is
conveyed and prolonged by the "light" and "warmth" suffused between them, and by the promise inherent in the description of Birkin as "unsounded and unknown."

Birkin has openly admitted his love and attraction for Gerald, but Gerald hesitates to commit himself to something he only intuitionally feels and understands. Lawrence stresses the disparity between the two men, insofar as their own admission of love is concerned, by having Gerald postpone the brotherhood ceremony, and by telling us, in the penultimate paragraph of the chapter, that Gerald's eyes "were suffused with warm light and with unadmitted love" (236, my italics). Nevertheless, in spite of Gerald's reticence, we know that both men are attracted to each other, and more specifically, that both men love each other. The only difference is that Birkin has arrived at the position where he can openly admit his love. Gerald has yet to do so. The impetus of the affair, then, lies with Birkin. He had achieved a position (previously revealed in the "Prologue"), where his admitted need for a male relationship has led him to devise a theory which would give the necessary intellectual and spiritual justification for its pursuit.

Admittedly, the "Man to Man" chapter presents the theory first, and then Birkin's sudden confrontation with the problem of "love and eternal conjunction between two men." However, Birkin immediately reveals that male love "had been a necessity inside himself," though that aspect of his character has already been shown in the supposed "Prologue." The situation can, of course, be considered in two ways. On the one hand, we may examine the theory as developing exclusively from the "Prologue"; on the other hand, we can consider the theory, and indeed the complete chapter, on the basis of the information contained in the "Prologue." However, the important consideration is that, regardless of the particular position from which we choose to approach Birkin's derivation of his theory, we are still left with the same conclusions as to the use to which Lawrence puts it in the novel. In spite of the fact that he is evolving a doctrine aimed at developing a new approach to the relationship of men and women, Birkin is creating obstacles to its achievement. This is understandable in view of his expressed predilection for
for male relationships, and becomes more explicit in terms of his doctrine of purity and singleness of being, which can only be achieved with someone of the same sex.

Birkin's love for Gerald and the special relationship he desires with him, must be seen within the context of the contradictions inherent in his theory. Basically, Birkin wants the best of both worlds, but the defences he establishes against women, and his admitted attraction towards men, tilts the balance in favour of male relationships while he is ostensibly pursuing a relationship with Ursula. The extent of Birkin's confusion is evident, not only in the sections of the "Man to Man" chapter we have been discussing, but also in the highly significant "Moony" chapter. Birkin's dilemma is partially revealed in the scene in which he stones the reflection of the moon on the surface of the pond. His attempts to destroy the image of the moon has been correctly interpreted as a symbolic reaction against women, and specifically against those female powers inimical to men. However, immediately after this there follows a partial reconciliation with Ursula and an attempt to impose his will upon her.

All of Birkin's earlier meditations about new forms of relationships have brought him to a position where Ursula can say that he only wants to achieve his own ends: "You don't want to serve me, and yet you want me to serve you. It is so one-sided!"(281). Ursula has hit on the crux of the contradiction in Birkin's theory, the fact that he "only wants [himself]." Birkin responds with rage: "'No,' he said irritated, 'I don't want to serve you, because there is nothing to serve. What you want me to serve is nothing, mere nothing. It isn't even you, it is your mere female quality. And I wouldn't give a straw for your female ego—it's a rag doll!'"(282).

It is evident from Birkin's reactions that the earlier stoning of the moon's reflection is related to his abhorrence of Ursula's "mere female quality," and her "female ego." This in turn leads him to consider the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's, especially a statuette of a West African woman, "in dark wood, glossy and suave....He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished, beetle face, the astounding long elegant body, on short, ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks,
so weighty and unexpected below her long loins" (285). The statuette represents that which he does not want: "a further sensual experience—something deeper, darker, than ordinary life can give," and from which he tries to escape—"knowledge in dissolution and corruption" (286). Significantly, the statuette is of a woman, and Birkin's earlier action in stoning the moon and in attempting to dominate Ursula, leads directly to his thoughts about the symbolic value of the carving. The statuette then, can be related to an aspect of Birkin's fear of women, and it is not surprising that after rejecting the values the statue represents, he turns his thoughts to Gerald and his place in "the knowledge of dissolution."

Birkin reinforces the contradictions and confusions inherent in his attitudes by turning to Gerald at this particular point in his reverie: "Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of those strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow" (287). Gerald is here considered to be part of the "dissolution and corruption" of the world symbolized by the statuette, and by association, is grouped with Ursula, the moon image, and all who partake of the destruction. Gerald, however, is noticeably male, while all the others are, or represent, female being. Birkin appears to have muddled his thinking, for Gerald has previously been suggested as an alternative to the female relationships, symbolized by the African carving and the moon image. The "Prologue," it will be remembered, presented Gerald as one of the two classes of men to whom Birkin was attracted, and for whom he had a special love. Furthermore, we must also contend with the brotherhood ceremony Birkin attempted to perform with Gerald, which was meant to provide an alternative relationship to that with Ursula. Now, however, Gerald is considered to be part of the very existence Birkin is rejecting; the inconsistency of his views is immediately reinforced by what is essentially a repetition of his earlier theory in the "Man to Man" chapter:

There was another way, the way of freedom. There was the paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely
state of free proud singleness, which accepted
the obligation of the permanent connection with
others, and with the other, submits to the yoke
and leash of love, but never forfeits its own
proud individual singleness, even while it loves
and yields(287).

Once again we are faced with Birkin's attempt to have the
best of two worlds, "free proud singleness," and "permanent
connection," thus supporting Ursula's earlier condemnation;
"You only want yourself"(282). Unfortunately, Ursula's insight
into Birkin's limitation is correct, and her perception is
vindicated when he attempts to put his invidious theory into
practice—on the one hand by proposing marriage to her, and on
the other, by attempting a union with Gerald. In spite of
Birkin's perception of the "doom" which accompanies Gerald, he
is still irrevocably attracted to him, partially because of his
inmate homoerotic feelings, and partially because of the intellec-
tualization of those feelings into his theory of "purity" and
"singleness." We have already seen how Birkin's theory can only
be enacted with someone of the same sex, for his conditions of
"purity" are only met by the integrity of gender intrinsic to
male relationships. In addition, the male "laws," when enacted
between two men, are untouched by the contaminating influence
of the female. Thus, after Birkin's abortive marriage proposal to
Ursula, he turns to the only relationship in which, according to
his theory, he can find true fulfillment: "After the fiasco of
the proposal, Birkin had hurried blindly away from Beldover, in
a whirl of fury....He went straight to Shortlands. There he
found Gerald...."(300).

Gerald literally welcomes Birkin with open arms, but his
immediate reaction is a "pure gleam of relief," for Gerald had
been in the doldrums accompanying a man "who is completely and
emptily restless, utterly hollow"(300). The moods of both men
are ostensibly similar: Birkin is deflated and injured as a
consequence of his rejection by Ursula, and Gerald is lethargic
and bored. The solution to Gerald's problem is blandly but
meaningfully listed as the choice of drink, hashish, Birkin,
and women. Only these things "would rouse him make him live";
unfortunately, none are available to him at the moment. Thus, Birkin's unscheduled arrival supplies one of the possibilities for relief—"to be soothed by Birkin." Relief for Birkin is however much more difficult to achieve, for it is clear from his previous theorizing that nothing short of "the paradisal entry into pure, single being" will suffice.

The situation at the beginning of the "Gladiatorial" chapter reveals both men to be in a state of extreme agitation; thus they are susceptible to the rousing of previously suppressed psychological and emotional impulses. Both men desire an escape from the impasse their lives had come to. Gerald recognizes that "he had done all the work he wanted to do—and now there is nothing," and Birkin, having been rejected in his attempt to enact his theories with Ursula, is now led by the logical consequence of the theory to the one individual with whom "eternal conjunction" is a possibility. Birkin recognized this earlier, in the "Man to Man" chapter, when he attempted to persuade Gerald to swear a brotherhood oath with him, but for various reasons Gerald was hesitant, and suggested that they postpone the attempt. Now, however, time and circumstance have come together with Gerald's ennui, and the recognition of his attraction to Birkin, to suggest that the wrestling episode is in fact an attempt at the brüderschaft Birkin earlier desired.

It would be folly to suppose that the wrestling bout is purely a physical encounter, for its emotional effect upon the two men suggests something beyond a physical conflict. The whole encounter can be considered as an attempt to put Birkin's theory into operation, for as we have already suggested, the logical enactment of the theory is only to be found in a relationship between men. To this end, the apparent physical disparity between the two men is neutralized in the course of the bout itself. Birkin, initially described as "white and thin...more a presence than a visible object," and Gerald, "concrete and noticeable, a piece of pure final substance"(303-4), become "two essential white figures working into a tighter, closer oneness of struggle, with a strange octopus-like knotting and flashing of limbs"(305).

While the men are wrestling, it is evident that all their differences—physical, psychological, and social—are levelled;
this is dramatically realized in the following description: "Often, in the white interlaced knot of violent living being that swayed silently, there was no head to be seen, only the swift tight limbs, the solid white backs, the physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness" (305).

We are obviously meant to consider the actual physical conjunction as representing the kind of spiritual union Birkin formulates in his theories. The "entry into pure single being" is achieved by the elimination of the differences originally inherent in the knot of "swift, tight limbs" with no head visible. To reach this point of momentary ego-dissolution, or "oneness," the men become "accustomed to each other, to each other's rhythm," and obtain "a kind of mutual physical understanding:"

They seemed to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper against each other, as if they would break into a oneness.

So the two men entwined and wrestled with each other, working nearer and nearer....Birkin seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic foreknowledge every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some hard wind. It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence interpenetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into the very depths of Gerald's physical being (304-5).

Birkin is the major instigator of the brotherhood ceremony, and, as the protagonist, is forcing "conjunction" and "oneness" on Gerald, though it must be recognized that Gerald is a willing partner in the attempt. Thus, the description of Birkin seeming "to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk," and interfusing "his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it into subjection," had important affinities not only with Birkin's ordeal among the fir trees as described in the "Breadalby" chapter, but also with the behaviour of the protagonists in Lawrence's earlier work.

Birkin's ordeal in the "Breadalby" chapter was a direct result of his rejection of Hermione, and his desire to formulate
a new existence for himself. The purgation/rebirth ceremony among the vegetation was his method of creating a new order, and somehow integrating himself with the much more responsive natural world. It will be remembered that Birkin feels the "cool, subtle, touch all over him," and the "subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood...they really came into the blood and were added on to him. He was enriched now immeasurably, and so glad" (119-20). This process appears to be similar to that which occurs in the "Gladiatorial" chapter, not only in tone and descriptive language, but also in the thematic value the description is meant to convey.

Birkin seems to "penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk," and to interfuse his body through the body of the other" in the same way that the "subtlety" of the vegetation interfused itself into him. In fact, the statement which reveals that it was Birkin's "physical intelligence" which entered into Gerald, substantiates the experience described in the earlier chapter. The primary focus of both incidents is the desire for integration and "oneness" on the one hand, and escape into a more amenable relationship on the other. In both cases Birkin has suffered a traumatic experience immediately before his attempted integration: in the "Breadalby" chapter it was the conflict and eventual rejection of Hermione, accompanied by actual physical violence; in "Gladiatorial" Birkin is reacting to his failure with Ursula. Both incidents are of primary and immediate importance to Birkin's subsequent relationships, not only to himself, but also to all the individuals he encounters.

We have seen that immediately after the conflict with Hermione, Birkin takes to his bed and formulates the theory upon which he will construct the basis of his relationship with Ursula. When he fails in his proposal to Ursula, he falls back upon what was inherent in his theory, and indeed in his life—a relationship with a man, and in particular, as we have discovered from the "Prologue," with Gerald Crich. That being the case, Birkin's compulsion to achieve "eternal conjunction" with Gerald, must be considered ultimately as a desire for freedom; given the similarities noted between the wrestling bout and the incident among
the hyacinths and fir trees, we can only conclude that Birkin is finally enacting not only his much desired brüderschaft ceremony, but is also attempting "the way of freedom...the paradisal entry into pure, single being"(287).

The wrestling bout also has very definite affinities with similar behaviour in Lawrence's earlier works. Beyond the actual physical contact and conflict, are the surprisingly similar emotional and psychological reactions of the characters involved. The two incidents most readily and strikingly identifiable with the "Gladiatorial" bout, are the fights between Paul and Baxter in Sons and Lovers, and the orderly and officer in "The Prussian Officer". In all three cases Lawrence is depicting a conflict of physical and spiritual will for domination, even though the attempt to subjugate the respective partners is not always consciously recognized. In "Gladiatorial", Birkin attempts to bring Gerald's body "subtly into subjection," ostensibly, in view of his theories, in order to eliminate all differences, but in reality to overcome his own physical limitations. The fact that his action is described as "subtle," and that Gerald's body is a "diffuse bulk," only serves to emphasize that what is occurring should also be read on a symbolic or extra-physical level.

Paul and Baxter's conflict is directly due to competition for the latter's wife, but it is also infused with an extra-physical meaning due to the emotional and psychological condition of both antagonists. Thus, the attempt at subjection wavers between first one, then the other, as they jockey for position. As each recognizes and admits his limitations to the other, they draw closer together until they are identified in adversity, and their special relationship finally enables Paul to begin to see the way clear of his condition.

The subjection described in "The Prussian Officer" is literally based upon the military hierarchic structure. However, the orderly's spirit will not permit him to be totally destroyed; it is this very spirit which attracts the officer, and causes him to attempt complete subjugation in a psycho-sexual manner. In all three cases the attempt at subjection initially stems from an impulse to freedom, either emotional, psychological, physical or social, and is then complicated, as it must necessarily be, by
the situation in which the character finds himself. Furthermore, the relationships developed between the antagonists are based upon mutual attraction, and upon the developing idea of "freedom" and "the paradisal entry into pure single being...a lovely state of free proud singleness." In all cases it will be remembered, the condition is approached or momentarily experienced, and then the individuals must continue, if they are able, their separate quests.

The three male relationships discussed above share this experience to varying degrees of intensity and significance. The intensity of the experience may be said to be proportional to the degree of freedom Lawrence feels he has, or is able or willing to allow, in his depiction of the implications of the respective male relationships. Thus, the tentative and hesitant movements of Paul and Baxter in *Sons and Lovers*, give way to an almost clinical investigation of a type of male relationship in "The Prussian Officer", and finally reaches an explicit description of homosexual love desires in the "Prologue" to *Women in Love*, with a possible eventual relationship in the novel's "Gladiatorial" chapter. The psycho-physical reaction of at least one of the individuals involved in the relationship, is always depicted as a stupor or a sense of inertia. During this half-conscious state, the character involved in the experience perceives the external, and indeed the internal world, in a completely new and different way, and this eventually causes him to approach reality with a new sense of personal direction.

Paul Morel approaches this experience during his fight with Baxter when he becomes "pure instinct," and his body begins to act on its own, leaving Paul "quite unconscious." When he is knocked down his consciousness paradoxically returns, and even though "it was pleasant to lie quite, quite still," he attempts to rouse himself to some type of movement, but feels that though "his will clicked into action" he could not move. When Paul has "sufficiently pulled himself together" to get up, we find that he is sick and dazed, even though his brain is clear. In a stupor-like state he reels about, "walking blindly," and continually feeling the ground "fall away from him as he walked."
also overcome by a sensation of dropping into space, and all his reactions contribute to the nightmare quality of his journey home to his mother. It is obvious that Paul is disoriented, though not as a direct result of the physical beating, for we are told that "his brain was clear." Something else must be causing Paul's reaction, and an indication of what that may be, can be deduced from the short dialogue he exchanges with himself: "'I musn't lie here,' he said; 'it's silly....'I said I was going to get up,' he repeated, 'Why don't I?'" The inertia which overcomes Paul seems to affect half his being, for the other half can objectively recognize the situation, and question the lack of response to it. Paul's question betrays a basic lack of self-knowledge which inhibits his attempts at "communion" and "conjunction." His stupor-like state forces him to recognize, at least partially, that his own inadequacy and lack of self knowledge is the major culprit in his present condition. As a result of this insight, Paul then goes on to attempt communion with Baxter, and feels a greater "connexion...more than ever since they had fought". This result suggests that for Paul, a change has come over the world, as indeed he recognizes later in the novel as he drifts through the days, isolated and entranced.

The orderly in "The Prussian Officer" also experiences a similar condition, but due to the much more explicitly developed male relationship in the story, his reaction is more intense and deeply felt. The orderly's stupor or "brainstorm," while ostensibly due to sunstroke, is in fact a reaction to his feelings about the officer, and their culmination in the ritualistic murder. The fact that Lawrence is much more explicit about the homosexual nature of the attraction between the two men, results in the description of the orderly's intensified reaction to the circumstances of the relationship. It is almost as if Lawrence was attempting to impose some notion of censure upon the orderly's

14 *Sons and Lovers*, pp.446-7.
behaviour. However, as we have already shown in the earlier part of our discussion, the orderly's behaviour is definitely part of a thematic progression inherent in Lawrence's treatment of male relationships. Thus, the similarity to Paul Morel's behaviour, as well as its greater intensification, suggests a deeper commitment on the orderly's behalf to the experience of homosexual attraction, and at the same time, a greater sense of alienation from external reality.

The orderly finds himself in a totally new and different plane of reality, where, it will be remembered, he has "the sense of being divided from the others," and where "he had gone out from everyday life into the unknown and he could not, he even did not want to go back".\(^7\) At the same time, he wanders about in a progressively intensifying stupor or semi-conscious state, even occasionally losing consciousness completely. The impression conveyed is that the orderly is slowly entering a new world, and the periods of lengthening coma-like delirium and exhaustion, are the gradual introduction to "the unknown" of which he eventually partakes.

With this in mind, as well as its embryo form in Sons and Lovers, we can turn back to Birkin's experience in Women in Love and suggest a parallel situation. Birkin is also attempting to move gradually towards a new existence; the major difference is that he is consciously attempting it, at least until the "Gladiatorial" chapter, when the ritualistic overtones of the wrestling bout suggest that this is the moment when he emulates the orderly, and momentarily "crosses over" to, or partakes of the "unknown." However, in the "Prologue" to Women in Love and in the novel itself, it becomes increasingly more evident that Birkin's predilection is towards a relationship with a man; in fact, this state of affairs is made explicit. In view of this more honest and open approach, the orderly's experiences gain in significance, and a comparison of certain aspects of them are invariably instructive in relation to the Birkin and Gerald experience in "Gladiatorial."

\(^7\) "The Prussian Officer", p.111.
It will be remembered that after the orderly succumbs to the realization of his alienation, he loses consciousness in an "incoherent race of delirium," precipitated by exhaustion, pain, and "an intolerable great pulse in his head". He regains consciousness in a disoriented state, questioning his position or place in the world:

Where was he?—The Barracks—at home? There was something knocking. And, making an effort, he looked round—trees, and litter of greenery, and reddish, bright, still pieces of sunshine on the floor... He did not believe what he saw. Something was knocking. He made a struggle towards consciousness, but relapsed. Then he struggled again. And gradually his surroundings fell into relationship with himself.... Somebody was knocking.... Then everything went black. Yet he did not believe he had closed his eyes. He had not. Out of the blackness sight slowly emerged again. And someone was knocking.... He lay down again exhausted, and his consciousness lapsed.... All his blood seemed to be darting and creeping in his head. And yet he could not move.

Birkin undergoes an almost identical experience in the "Gladiatorial" chapter, when, after wrestling for some time, "Gerald lay back inert on the carpet, his breast rising in great slow panting, whilst Birkin kneeled over him, almost unconscious" (305). The position of the two wrestlers exactly mirrors that of the officer and orderly at the climactic moment of the murder, when the orderly, in the superior position, knelt over the strangled body of the officer. Birkin's reaction to the new configuration of their relationship, is remarkably similar to that of the orderly's:

Birkin was much more exhausted. He caught little, short breaths, he could scarcely breathe any more. The earth seemed to tilt and sway, and a complete darkness was coming over his mind. He did not know what happened. He slid forward quite unconscious over Gerald, and Gerald did not notice. Then he was half conscious again, aware only of the strange tilting and sliding

18 Ibid., p.112.
19 Ibid., pp.112-3.
of the world. The world was sliding, everything was sliding off into the darkness. And he was sliding, endlessly, endlessly away.

He came to consciousness again, hearing an immense knocking outside. What could be happening, what was it, the great hammer-stroke resounding through the house? He did not know. And then it came to him that it was his own heart... And the beating was painful, so strained, surcharged. He wondered if Gerald heard it. He did not know whether he was standing or lying or falling(305-6).

It is immediately noticeable that both Birkin and the orderly are disoriented, and hypersensitive to the stimuli of their immediate environments. This is understandable given the traumatic shock both have experienced, but it can be argued that their experiences are not of the same degree of intensity, for in one case a murder is depicted, and in the other, a wrestling bout between friends. However, by utilizing the same tone and descriptive language, Lawrence appears to suggest that both incidents, and their effects upon the respective combatants, should be considered as expressing a similar intensity of feeling and meaning. This can be substantiated by the fact that Birkin and the orderly are enacting a type of physical and spiritual consummation. We have already discussed the orderly’s consummation with the officer, and it now becomes clear that a similar, though much more subdued, implication is intended in the "Gladiatorial" chapter.

Gerald, like the officer, lies inert upon the ground, apparently dead. Birkin is exhausted from the exertion of the wrestling match in the same way that the orderly was exhausted after his struggle with the officer. However, in the latter case the exhaustion was partially sexual, for the ritual murder in the forest clearing was, in addition to its other implications, a sexual consummation. The conclusion to be drawn from the almost exact repetition of incident and description, and in particular Birkin’s reactions, is that the wrestling bout in "Gladiatorial" is meant to convey a sexual consummation between Gerald and Birkin; it also implies that Birkin has achieved much more than the brotherhood ceremony he desires.

In addition, Birkin suffers the same aftereffects as the
orderly does. He is disoriented and unable to relate to the external reality about him. Instead, he turns inward, and then projects himself outwards to enclose the external world; he projects his own heartbeat so that it appears to resound throughout the house, and he begins to question his own responses. Both men feel alienated because of their desires and actions, and due to their estrangement, project themselves to fill the gap created by their alienation. Part of this reaction may be an unconscious attempt to compensate for the guilt feelings precipitated by the original desires, though Lawrence nowhere directly hints at this possibility. However, we must consider it because of the way in which we have seen the theme develop throughout the work under discussion, from the initial tentative expression in The White Peacock and Sons and Lovers, to the more explicit study in "The Prussian Officer," and the ultimate admission in the "Prologue" to Women in Love. The hesitancy evidenced in the early work by Lawrence's failure to come to terms with his attitudes towards male relationships, lends some support to the 'guilt' explanation, but does not completely explain the characters' behaviour. We must therefore consider, as we already have to some degree, the thematic context in which Lawrence places the antagonists in each case.

We have already discussed Birkin's attitude towards male relationships as it appears in the suppressed "Prologue," and the subsequent development of his theory for a new mode of existence. It now appears that in the "Gladiatorial" chapter the possibility exists for him to achieve all that he desired. Indeed, like the orderly, Birkin finds himself in the perfect position to enact all that his conscious and unconscious impulses direct. The obvious parallels with the behaviour of the other antagonists in earlier male relationships, as well as the explicit revelation of Birkin's homosexual desires, have laid an impressive foundation upon which he can be seen to attempt his idea of "eternal conjunction" with a man.

Ultimately, then, the wrestling bout can be interpreted not only as an enactment of Birkin's theories of male conjunction, but also as a symbolic sexual consummation similar to that
experienced by the officer and orderly. The description of the "physical junction of two bodies clinched into oneness," together with Birkin's penetration "into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk," must be read as both a symbolic and literal consummation. On the basis of Birkin's admission in the "Prologue" of his homosexual love for Gerald, we are forced to consider the wrestling match as the momentary culmination of his desires; at the same time however we must recognize that within the thematic context established in the novel proper, Birkin is attempting the spiritual brüderschaft he requested in the earlier "Man to Man" chapter.

H.M. Daleski sees the wrestling match as embodying "the typically 'male' desire for a 'melting into pure communion,' for a 'fusing together into oneness,'" and suggests that this is "allowed expression only in relation to a man; for in such a relation, it seems, there is no defensive compulsion, as there is in regard to a woman, to realize the 'otherness' of the partner." This observation is fairly well founded, for during the bout, the two men do indeed "fuse together into oneness," and, as I have shown by comparison with "The Prussian Officer" incident, they do attempt, if not completely achieve, a kind of communion/consummation. But Daleski stops his argument short by suggesting that "we can be reasonably confident, I think, that Lawrence did not intend his description to be overtly homosexual in character". We can be nothing of the sort, for the "Prologue" makes perfectly clear in which direction Birkin's desires lie, and furthermore, Daleski neglects to consider what follows the passage he chooses to quote. His quotations stop where "Gerald lay back inert on the carpet," the exact point at which the real evidence begins.

We have seen how what follows places the Gerald/Birkin relationship in the context of the previous male relationships we have discussed. It is therefore meant to represent the spiritual union Birkin desires, for as he states later in the novel: "We want something broader. I believe in the additional

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20 The Forked Flame, p.184.
21 Ibid., p.185.
perfect relationship between man and man—additional to marriage....
Not the same—but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred" (397-98). The wrestling bout is an attempt to accomplish just that, or if not able to immediately achieve it, at least begin the process which will culminate in its consummation.

Birkin and Gerald are presented during the bout, and especially after they fall exhausted, as two lovers becoming "accustomed to each other, to each other's rhythm," until "they got a kind of mutual physical understanding" (304). In addition to the physical understanding, and of greater significance, is the expression of a spiritual and emotional comprehension:

[Birkin] put out his hand to steady himself. It touched the hand of Gerald, that was lying out on the floor. And Gerald's hand closed warm and sudden over Birkin's, they remained exhausted and breathless, the one hand clasped closely over the other....Gerald's clasp had been sudden and momentaneous (307).

This final contact reveals that Gerald has admitted and expressed the attraction between them. His hand clasp which "had been sudden and momentaneous," evokes the completely expected response from Birkin, whose hand "had closed in a strong warm clasp over the hand of the other." This paragraph which describes the simple action of a hand clasp, thereby sums up what has been accomplished by the wrestling bout between the two men. In fact, this final contact is enacted while both men are still, to some extent, under the spell cast by their "conjunction." However, as "normal consciousness" ebbs back, and the two men return to full awareness of what had occurred, they reiterate the complex meaning that the wrestling had for them; indeed Lawrence is careful to reveal that "the wrestling had some deep meaning to them—an unfinished meaning" (307).

Birkin attempts to explain what this meaning is, though it is acknowledged that both men intuitively know what they have shared:

"We are mentally, spiritually intimate, therefore we should be more or less physically intimate too—it is more whole."
"Certainly it is," said Gerald. Then he laughed
pleasantly, adding; "It's rather wonderful to me."

"Yes," said Birkin. "I don't know why one should have to justify oneself."
"No."

"I think also that you are beautiful," said Birkin to Gerald, "and that is enjoyable too. One should enjoy what is given"(307-8).

The irony, of course, is that Birkin is attempting to justify himself, while at the same time denying the need for justification. In spite of what both men have shared, there is still an inherent reticence about acknowledging the full impact and implication of what has passed between them. That is why Lawrence is forced to admit that "there were long moments of silence between their words," and that the meaning of the wrestling bout was "an unfinished meaning." Nevertheless, the barrier met with in the earlier work has been crossed, and Birkin can now suggest that for two men to be physically intimate is "more whole." Since wholeness of being is a desirable quality for the Lawrentian hero, its achievement within the context of the wrestling bout suggests that the brotherhood pledge Birkin desired has been enacted.

The "Gladiatorial" chapter then, stands at the apex of Birkin's relationship with Gerald, and of the wider consideration of the function of male relationships in Lawrence's work. The dramatized action of the chapter is also the closest Lawrence has come to portraying the actual physical aspects of male homosexuality within the context of a particular love relationship. It is important therefore to attempt to discover, as accurately as possible, what Lawrence's attitude towards homogenic love was, and why that attitude came to be explicitly expressed in Woman in Love at that particular moment in his career.
3. Lawrence, Birkin and Male Comradeship

Our discussion thus far has revealed a definite development, of deepening intensity, in Lawrence's utilization of male homo-erotic love relationships. In addition, we have seen that in the "Prologue" to *Women in Love*, Lawrence has explicitly stated Birkin's homosexuality, and then gone on to integrate that concern into the overall thematic and dramatic content of the novel proper. Thus, H.M. Daleski's statement that "we can be reasonably sure...that Lawrence did not intend the description in "Glabiatorial" to be overtly homosexual in character," must be reconsidered in view of the development of Lawrence's attitude toward male relationships which we have been explicating.

Daleski ignores the suppressed "Prologue", either because he had not seen it (though it was published two years before his own book), or because he regarded it as primarily a suppressed piece of writing. However, as the previous section has made clear, the "Prologue" is extremely important to any consideration of the Birkin/Gerald relationship as it develops in the novel, and is even more important in charting the development both of Lawrence's attitude towards homosexual relationships, and of his novelistic treatment of them.

We must first consider the fact that Lawrence's overt statements, and representation of homosexual relationships occurs in *Women in Love*, and not in any earlier work. The explanation of this fact, lies in a complicated compilation of biographical and intellectual influences and concerns which reach a climax during the composition and revision of the novel, and then continues to a lesser degree (as we shall later see), throughout the remainder of the canon.

*Women in Love* had its genesis as part of *The Sisters*, which went through three revisions between March 1913 and its completion by mid-May 1914, at which point it was called *The Rainbow* (CL 276). Lawrence began to rewrite the novel by December 1914, and decided to split the material into two volumes (CL 306), which became *The Rainbow* (published 1915) and *Women in Love* (privately printed 1920). *The Rainbow* section was finished by March 1915 (CL 328),
and the rewriting of the *Women in Love* section, which Lawrence now referred to as *The Sisters*, was begun in April 1916 (AH 348) and completed by June, though revisions and expansion continued until November (CL 485). In the process the title was changed to *Women in Love*, though Frieda wanted it to be called *Dies Irae* (CL 480).

During this period of intense creativity, several important biographical occurrences developed which have immediate relevance to our discussion. Since the incidents in Lawrence's life have for the most part been accurately and endlessly chronicled, our purposes will be better served if we first summarize the major biographical incidents of the relevant period, and then focus on those which are of immediate importance at this point in the present study.

After Lawrence's elopement with Frieda, his personal life took on a more settled aspect when she obtained her divorce and they were able to marry. In the summer of 1913 Lawrence met John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield; at Kingsgate, Kent, he was to meet Edward Marsh and Herbert and Cynthia Asquith. Lawrence met S.S. Koteliansky, and was with him on "the famous walk in the Lake district," when war was declared; out of this was born the idea of the idealistic colony 'Rananim.'

Nineteen fourteen saw the publication of "The Prussian Officer," and Lawrence's marriage. During the first half of 1915, the Lawrences met Ottoline Morrell and Bertrand Russell, and in March of that year *The Rainbow* was completed, published in September, and suppressed on November 15. In the autumn, Lawrence joined a publishing venture with Murry and Katherine Mansfield, and published his essay "The Crown" in the three issues of *The Signature* which resulted from this scheme. He also met Dorothy Brett and Aldous Huxley, "who are in the following decade to be among his staunchest friends" (CL 305).


Koteliansky (CL 405), Lawrence writes: "Here already one feels a good peace and a good silence, and a freedom to love and to create a new life. We must begin afresh—we must begin to create a life all together—unanimous. Then we shall be happy. We must be happy. But we shall only be happy if we are creating a life together." Lawrence's optimism and his desire to "begin afresh" also includes John Middleton Murry, who along with Koteliansky, was to have a significant effect upon Lawrence's attitude towards the male relationships he was attempting to create and enact.

By November 1916 Lawrence had completed *Women in Love*, but due to the suppression of *The Rainbow* could not find a publisher. The year 1916 and most of 1917 was spent in Cornwall, writing, visiting, and being traumatically examined for war service. In October the Lawrences were expelled from Cornwall on suspicion of spying. The end of the war saw the beginning of Lawrence's restless travelling, and 1920 the private edition of *Women in Love* published in New York in May.

In the "Foreword" to *Women in Love* which was written for the American edition, but not published with the novel, Lawrence states:

This novel pretends only to be a record of the writer's own desires, aspirations, struggles; in a word, a record of the profoundest experiences in the self. Nothing that comes from the deep, passionai soul is bad, or can be bad. So there is no apology to tender, unless to the soul itself, if it should have been belied.

Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfilment. New unfoldings struggle up in torment in him, as buds struggle forth from the midst of a plant. Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is the passionate struggle into conscious being.²³

The unpublished "Foreword" appears to read as a justification of the material dealt with in the novel. It is also a confession of Lawrence's own conflicts as novelist and man: "The creative,

spontaneous soul sends forth its promptings of desire and aspiration in us. These promptings are our true fate, which is our business to fulfil....Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along." These statements have unusual poignancy when read in the context of the concern with male "friendship" as revealed in the novel.

That Lawrence had been interested in the intricacies of male relationships for a long while, is relatively easy to ascertain. In fact, Lawrence's awareness and analysis of his attraction towards men, his desire "to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along," is evident (as early as 2 December 1913) in a letter to Henry Savage. A propos of Richard Middleton's work, he suggests that:

....a man with dramatic capabilities, needed fertilising by some love. And it never was fertilised. So he destroyed it, because perhaps it had already begun to corrupt. I believe, he would have loved a man, more than a woman: even physically: like the ancients did. I believe it is because most women don't leave scope to the man's imagination—but I don't know. I should like to know why nearly every man that approaches greatness tends to homosexuality, whether he admits it or not: so that he loves the body of a man better than the body of a woman—as I believe the Greeks did, sculptors and all, by far. I believe a man projects his own image on another man, like on a mirror. But from a woman he wants himself re-born, re-constructed. So he can always get satisfaction from a man, but it is the hardest thing in life to get one's soul and body satisfied from a woman, so that one is free from oneself. And one is kept by all tradition and instinct from loving men, or a man—for it means just extinction of all the purposive influences. And one doesn't believe in one's power to find and to form the woman in whom one can be free... (CL 25a-52).

The suggestion that "a man projects his own image on another man," and that "it is the hardest thing in life to get one's soul and body satisfied from a woman," are two ideas which Lawrence was to explore in Women in Love. Significantly, this was the novel he was engaged in writing (albeit in different form) at this time. The other revealing statement, that "nearly every man that approaches greatness tends to homosexuality, whether he
admits it or not," succinctly sums up Lawrence's dilemma which was developing at that time, and was to continue for some considerable time in the future. The operative phrase, "whether he admits it or not," is the basis for the conflict not only in Lawrence's psyche and personal relationships, but in the composition of *Women in Love* as well. Thus, the "Foreword" to the novel is a late summation of Lawrence's "profoundest experience in the self," and his attempt in *Women in Love* "to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along."

In many ways, the "Foreword" is a justification not only of the desires and behaviour portrayed in the novel, but also of Lawrence's own experiences during this period.

Lawrence's concern with male relationships, as expressed in the letter to Henry Savage, is characterized by the repetition of the phrase "I don't know," and "I don't know what I am talking about," as if he intended to apologize for his interest in that particular aspect of human relationships. We have seen however, that as early as 1911, in *The White Peacock*, Lawrence was beginning to explore male relationships, and his preoccupation with 'male friendship' was to continue for quite some time. Recently, Emile Delavenay has established significant early links between Lawrence and Edward Carpenter; socialist, mystic, and champion of homosexual liberation.

Delavenay's study reveals that Alice Dax, the mutual friend of Lawrence and Jessie Chambers, socialist, suffragette, and member of the Hopkin circle who were friendly with Carpenter, owned most of Carpenter's works, and that "Jessie was sure that Lawrence had read all the books on Mrs. Dax's shelves, being a frequent visitor to her house at Eastwood and later at Shirebrook." In addition, "Alice Dax lent Jessie Chambers Carpenter's book *Love's Coming of Age*, possibly in its 1906 enlarged edition. The evidence of the Chambers papers suggests that this loan may have taken place around 1909-10." Delavenay neglects to mention that


25 *Lawrence and Carpenter*, p.21. (Hereafter referred to as *L&C*.)

26 *L&C*, p.22. The 'Chambers Papers' referred to are those
this edition includes for the first time in a popular edition, the essay "The Intermediate Sex"27 part of which had first appeared in 1894 in a privately printed pamphlet titled "Homogenic Love, and its place in a Free Society."28

"The Intermediate Sex" is a discussion of the individuals who exist "on the dividing line between sexes—that while belonging distinctly to one sex as far as their bodies are concerned, they may be said to belong mentally and emotionally to the other," and who instead of "forming a love-union" with someone of the opposite sex, "tended to contract romantic friendships with one of their own sex."29 Delavenay suggests that, if "internal evidence in Sons and Lovers, found in the relationship between Miriam (Jessie) and Clara (Alice)" in which "Clara persuades Paul to try with Miriam 'the great experiment of sex'," then "it is safe to assume, from that triangular relationship that Lawrence had also borrowed from Alice Dax and read Love's Coming of Age, the sub-title of which is 'a series of papers on the relation between the sexes'."

It follows that Lawrence would have also read the following passages in 'The Intermediate Sex' chapter, in which Carpenter, after outlining the "very general characteristics of the Intermediate race," goes on to "describe more in detail," first what may be called the extreme and exaggerated types of the race:

In the male of this kind we have a distinctly effeminate type, sentimental, lackadaisical, mincing in gait and manners, something of a chatterbox, skilful at the needle and in woman's work, sometimes taking pleasure in dressing in woman's clothes; his figure not unfrequently

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27 The 'Prefatory note to twelfth edition' London, 1923, states: "Since the publication of this book (in 1896) times have much changed. The whole subject of sex has been swept out into a larger orbit, and new conclusions have been arrived at and widely accepted. An enlarged edition including the chapter on 'The Intermediate Sex' was called for in 1906...."

28 The Labour Press Society, Manchester (for private circulation).

betraying a tendency towards the feminine, large at the hips, supple, not muscular, the face wanting in hair, the voice inclining to be high-pitched, etc; while his dwelling-room is orderly in the extreme, even natty, and choice of decoration and perfume. His affection too is often feminine in character, clinging, dependent and jealous, as of one desiring to be loved almost more than to love.  

Carpenter then defines the "more normal type of Uranian man":  

...we find a man who, while possessing thoroughly masculine powers of mind and body, combines with them the tenderer and more emotional soul-nature of the woman—and sometimes to a remarkable degree. Such men, as said, are often muscular and well built, and not distinguishable in exterior structure and carriage of body from others of their own sex; but emotionally they are extremely complex, tender, sensitive, pitiful and loving, "full of storm and stress, of ferment and fluctuation" of heart; the logical faculty may or may not, in their case, be well-developed, but intuition is always strong; like women they read characters at a glance, and know, without knowing how, what is passing in the minds of others; for nursing and waiting on the needs of others they have often a peculiar gift; at the bottom lies the artist-nature, with the artist's sensibility and perception. Such a one is often a dreamer, of brooding reserved habits, often a musician, or a man of culture, courted in society, which nevertheless does not understand him...(143-44).  

Lawrence's reading of these passages would most likely have precipitated something akin to a "shock of recognition," for with his acute perception and interest in self-knowledge, he would not have failed to notice the many striking similarities between himself and Carpenter's description of both exaggerated, and "more normal types of the Uranian man." Much biographical evidence exists, both in reminiscences about Lawrence and in his own letters, to suggest the many parallels between Carpenter's categorizations and Lawrence's own behaviour.  

Lawrence has always been characterized by those who knew him,  

30 K.H. Ulrichs, the Austrian writer, called people having the special variations of the love-sentiment, Urnings, from Uranos, Heaven: his idea being that Urning-love was a higher order than ordinary attachment. (Carpenter, p.133).
as a "delicate and sensitive child." His preference for female company is well-documented, and this led him to be branded as effeminate by his school fellows, for the fact that "he was more in the company of girls than boys." It is obvious that the constant taunts of his contemporaries had a measurable and lasting effect upon him, for in spite of the fact that he acted "as though he cared no jot, his eyes were full of anger and mortification."

George H. Nevill remembers him as "a thin, pale, weakly lad, always scrupulously clean, neat and tidy...he would much more often be found with girl companions than with boys. He had a high-pitched, girlish voice which always rose in pitch with the least excitement," and Albert Lamb concludes that "Lawrence was the most effeminate boy I knew."

Lawrence's domestic skills may have been compensation for his frailty, but his sister reports his early interest in cooking, and delight in emulating his mother by dressing in her apron. In later years, Lawrence was to take great pride in sewing, and preparing meals for his friends, as well as decorating the many residences he was forced to occupy. John Middleton Murry also reports Lawrence's great skill at nursing, and suggests that "Lawrence was in his element looking after someone, especially..."


32 William Edward Hopkin, CB I, p.25.

33 Hopkin, CB I, p.23.

34 CB I, p.23. from London Mercury XXIII March 1931.

35 CB I, p.32. original publication.

36 CB I, pp.13-14

37 CL453-60 letter to Mark Gertler: "I have just made a pouff,e--a sort of floor cushion, . . square, and like a mound—and on the black cover, all round, I have stitched a green field, then house,. . barns, haystacks, animals, men and women..."


39 CL 359. Also Reminiscences, p.67.
someone rather stupid about his body." Lawrence was later to utilize this incident to advantage in Aaron's Rod, when he describes Lilly ministering to Aaron in the Covent Garden flat.

It is evident then, that almost all the characteristics of "Uranian man" are reflected to a greater or lesser degree in Lawrence's behaviour and sensibility, both at the time when he would have read Carpenter's description, and throughout his later life. The effect of this almost fortuitous correspondence is not to be lightly dismissed, for Lawrence was forced to recognize his androgynous nature; this recognition is not only discernible throughout his work, but was to be a profound influence on his writing career. However, at this stage of his acquaintance with Carpenter's work (about 1909-10), Lawrence was not yet ready to acknowledge fully the validity and effect of it upon his own life for, as Delavenay recognizes, "his most systematic uses and fuller understanding of its contents belong to a later period of his life."^41

Lawrence's acceptance of a teaching post at Croydon in 1908, necessitated his removal from Eastwood, and during the next few years he gradually loses contact with the "progressive clique" who had introduced him to Carpenter: "I seem to have lost touch altogether with the old 'progressive' clique: in Croydon the socialists are so stupid, and the Fabians so flat. It would have been jolly to talk with you about things"(CL 63). This lament to W.E. Hopkin suggests that Lawrence's interest in the Hopkin circle discussions had not waned. In fact Olive Hopkin, in a letter to Emil Delavenay, suggests "that Lawrence would be present when Edward Carpenter and his books would be discussed," and Mrs. Enid Hilton, daughter of W.E. Hopkin, goes so far as to remember a visit by Lawrence in company with her parents, to Carpenter's cottage.42

The groundwork for Lawrence's interest in male relationships may thus be laid to his early acquaintance with the

40 Reminiscences, p.53.
41 L&C, p.22.
42 Ibid., pp.24-25.
philosophy of Edward Carpenter, and the 'advanced' discussions of the Hopkin-Dax circle. Along with this initiation, is the fact of his developing conception of his own nature, and the conflict precipitated by his emotionally insecure youth. Delavenay's study reveals that the Carpenter influence comes to full fruition after 1915, when Lawrence "turns his attention... to what Carpenter called 'homogenic love' and the 'comradeship of males',' and suggests that the reasons for this "are probably to be found in Lawrence's experience during those years; whatever they may be." One of the most significant experiences for Lawrence during those years was his relationship with John Middleton Murry, a relationship which was of course to have a profound influence on Women in Love in general, and the "Gladiatorial" chapter in particular.

Lawrence first met Murry in the early summer of 1913 when he had contributed a story to Rhythm, the periodical edited by Murry and Katherine Mansfield. Murry's one "vivid picture" of the meeting is of them "sitting on opposite sides of an omnibus" with Lawrence looking "slim and boyish." It appears that Lawrence was immediately attracted to Murry, and in his singular way, invited them (Murry and Katherine) to his cottage in Kent. Due to Murry's financial straits, he didn't "take the invitation quite seriously," and Lawrence wrote a characteristic scolding letter chastising Murry for "a piece of obtuseness" on his part, and for the fact that he should be "one of the people who should have a sense of proportionate values" (CL 214). The initial meeting, invitation, and scolding letter, in many ways characterizes the special relationship which was to develop between the two men. Their relationship is in part a series of misunderstandings and recriminations, and indeed, had they not taken themselves and their relationship so seriously, it may, with slight exaggeration be considered a comedy of errors.

Initially the Lawrence-Murry relationship appeared idyllic,

43 L&C, p.38.
44 Reminiscences, p.33.
45 Ibid., p.34.
with Frieda and Katherine almost relegated to the roles of second-best companions. Murry remembers "Lawrence darting like a schoolboy, in and out of the waves as they slipped up the flat brown sand," and "the four of us bathed naked in the half-light." Later, after the Lawrence's had been to Italy for a few months, they returned, and Murry and Katherine were witnesses at their wedding. "The time of being jolly together had really begun," but it was not to last: the war intervened. Lawrence found out about the declaration of war during a walking tour of the Lake country with Horne, S.S. Koteliansky, and Lewis, the Vickers engineer whom Lawrence had met in Italy and whose parents had a cottage in Westmorland. The "famous walk in the Lake district" was an auspicious moment for Lawrence, for it marked the beginning of a life-long relationship with Koteliansky, a relationship which is characteristic in that it made more demands upon Koteliansky than upon Lawrence. In any case, the Murry-Koteliansky circles soon intersected, and both men figure in Lawrence's attempt to found a community of friends, 'Rananim,' in an attempt to counter the horror of the war.

As the relationship with Murry grew, it soon became clear that Lawrence's demands upon him were too intense to be easily accommodated, but Murry attempted to cope. It is evident that a warm affection existed between the two men, an affection which Lawrence was to foster, and Murry to retain. Murry's admission of this attraction is significant in the light of the novelistic treatment Lawrence was later to give it: "Lawrence loved men, and he kindled love in them. I had never felt for a man what his letter made me feel for him. It was a new thing, a unique thing, in my experience." When Murry became ill on the way to visit Lawrence at Greatham in Sussex, he was immediately put to bed on arrival, and nursed through his illness. The incident is highly reminiscent of the Paul-Baxter situation in Sons and Lovers.

46 Reminiscences, p.35.
47 Ibid., p.38.
48 Rananim, p.xviii.
49 Reminiscences, p.36.
and even includes a parallel for their conflict over possession of Clara. In this case however, the conflict was for possession of Murry himself, for Lawrence had become jealous of an "intimate friendship with a man" which Murry had formed. Lawrence attempted to force the helpless Murry into the admission that his love for the man was wrong, but to no avail. Finally, they compromised; Murry did not admit that his affection was "either wrong or blind," but did admit "quite candidly," that "it was all over" between them, and Lawrence "was content." However, Murry's total capacity for affection was now directed towards Lawrence himself, which was obviously what Lawrence deeply required. The result of this petulant conflict was that a communion of sorts had been established between them, and Murry admits that "it was good between\sup2\textsuperscript{50} better than I have ever known with a living man."

Naturally however, this communion was not a stable arrangement, for the men were soon quarrelling again. Typically, Lawrence desired an "intellectual agreement" which Murry felt constrained to give, but which Lawrence, though he felt it should be natural between them, "strove to obtain." Murry's reaction to this insistence, and particularly the mode of expressing his feelings, significantly reveal the type of relationship which existed between them: "I was like a woman instinctively humouring her husband by accepting his arguments and principles, although in fact they are quite indifferent to her.\sup2\textsuperscript{51} Clearly, Murry felt that Lawrence was forcing a kind of "spiritual marriage" on him, and though he appeared to be sympathetic to the implied union, his intellectual obstinacy prevented a full commitment to it.

Murry was "enchanted" by Lawrence's vision of 'Rananim': "a community established on the assumption of goodness in its members, instead of on the assumption of badness," but gradually he realized that the conception of it had changed to the point where, in Murry's view, "the bond of the new society..."

\sup2\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p.54 et passim.

\sup2\textsuperscript{51} CB I, p.277. Quoted from Murry, Between Two Worlds, pp. 332-38.
was to be soldered by the melting down of personality in surrender to some great and all-inclusive religious purpose."  

52 Murry perceptively recognizes that one of the elements which contributed to the "creed" which Lawrence tried to impart to him, was "an instinctive, infra-personal sense of solidarity with men—the true, deep, gregarious experience, which Lawrence had known as a child and longed to renew, which he simultaneously desired and repudiated." Murry's analysis of this element in Lawrence's "creed" appears to be quite correct, for our discussion in the previous chapters has shown exactly this desire/repudiation pattern at work in the fiction. It is not surprising therefore, to find it applied to Lawrence's own personal relationships with men, and particularly to his relationship with Murry.

Murry, however, attempts to minimise his own involvement with Lawrence, or at least to excuse his behaviour in their relationship, by suggesting that he was totally ignorant of the elements which constituted it. It would appear though, that his own attraction to Lawrence, and, as we have seen, his attitudes towards him, would strongly suggest, at the very least, a compliance with the demands made upon him. The whole Lawrence-Murry relationship is so entangled with conflicting points of view, reminiscences, and self-justifications, as to be almost impossible to unravel properly. What can be discerned is that Lawrence was attempting to establish a relationship with Murry which would satisfy his ambiguous desire for a "comradeship of males," a desire which was to have at least one important parallel in *Women in Love*.

As Lawrence's ideas for his Utopian society developed, he attempted to draw Murry and Katherine deeper and deeper into them, until at the end of December 1915, his application for a passport to "the new world" refused, he settled on a site closer to home: Cornwall. The Lawrences first settled at Porthcothan, and in March moved to Zennor, where, there being two cottages available, he wrote to Murry: "...[w]e gladly await you, if you feel like coming. It would be so splendid if it could but come off: such a lovely place: our Rananim" (CL 440). When the

52 Ibid., p. 277, et passim.
Murrys arrived in early April, the dream began to go sour: "But we are as yet rather strange and unaccustomed to each other. It is so difficult to reestablish an old footing, after a lapse during which we have all endured a good deal of misery." The footing was never really reestablished, and even Murry recognized that "from the beginning the experiment was a failure."

Lawrence at this time was writing "the second half of The Rainbow" (CL 449), which was of course to become Women in Love. Murry reports that at times Lawrence "was positively terrifying: a paroxysm of black rage would sweep down upon him, and leave us trembling and aghast. Sometimes he hated me to the point of frenzy." The love/hate relationship with Murry was to a large degree an extension of Lawrence's reaction to the war, but was also a result of his desire to come to terms with his feelings about the possibilities of a committed relationship with other people. Murry was the testing-ground for his theories, for at this time Lawrence was attempting to reconcile his confused attitudes towards male relationships with their place in his life. Part of this attempt may be seen in what Lawrence called his "philosophy": "My dear Kot, this time at last I have got it. Now you would not tell me, if you read it, that I shall write it again. This time, my dear Kot, I have put salt on its tail: I've caught the rabbit: like the old hare in Tartarin. My dear Kot, it is the new word, at last" (CL 429).

The "philosophy" which Lawrence refers to is in all likelihood the unpublished Goats and Compasses. It was scheduled for inclusion in the abortive "Rainbow books and Music" publishing scheme, which was instituted primarily to print The Rainbow—"the novel by Mr. D.H. Lawrence, which has been so unjustly suppressed." The prospectus also announced, "if sufficient money is forthcoming," the publication of "Mr. Lawrence's philosophical

53 Rananim, p.78.
54 Reminiscences, p.78.
55 Ibid.
Unfortunately the manuscript of Lawrence's "new word" is lost, but the work was certainly completed, for Cecil Gray read the work in typescript in 1916. He remembers it as being "a bombastic, pseudo-mystical, psychophilo-philosophical treatise dealing largely with homosexuality—a subject, by the way, in which Lawrence displayed a suspiciously lively interest at the time." 57

It is not too fanciful to suggest that some of the ideas Lawrence wrestled with in Goats and Compasses, finally came to be expressed in Women in Love. The reasons for this supposition are not difficult to discern, for in addition to the "Prologue" to the novel written in 1916, 58 and the "Gladiatorial" chapter, there is the evidence of Lawrence's attempt at a realized male relationship with Murry, which closely follows the Birkin/Gerald situation.

Lawrence's desire to draw Murry into a total commitment with him, resulted in the attempt to convince him "to swear to be his blood-brother," 59 and thus enact a sort of inviolable sacrament between them. Murry, like Gerald in the novel, withdrew "timidly," for he sincerely believed that he was already Lawrence's blood-brother, and "did not see the need of any kind of sacrament": "If I love you, and you know I love you, isn't that enough?" 60


57 Cecil Gray, Peter Warlock, p.114. Quoted in CB I, p.582 n. 248. Gray goes on to reveal that "there were two typescript copies of the book. Lawrence himself destroyed the one, while the other, which Philip Heseltine had in his possession, was gradually consumed by him some years later, leaf by leaf, in the discharge of a lowly but none the less appropriate function." Gray's attitude toward Lawrence is made abundantly clear by his last statement, and indeed all his comments on Lawrence must be viewed from the proper perspective.


59 Reminiscences, p.79, also CB I, p.375.

60 Ibid.
But it wasn't enough, for Lawrence needed an actual physical representation of the union, a representation which in some mystical way would inviolably bind the men together.

Murry reports that "the theme, or at least the germ of it," in *Women in Love*, "was the relation and the situation between the four of us," and that a few of the episodes between Birkin and Gerald were "taken from conversations between Lawrence and me." One of these episodes is the interchange in chapter twenty-five, when Birkin tells Gerald that he believes "in the additional perfect relationship between man and man—additional to marriage."
The other episode, also from the same chapter, is Lawrence's suggestion that Gerald "accept Rupert's offer of alliance, to enter into the bond of pure trust and love with the other man, and subsequently with the woman. If he pledged himself with the man, he would be able to pledge himself with the woman." The novel reveals that Gerald refuses to do so, and thus comes to disaster. Murry of course "...[did] not believe that this was ever more than an idea or a theory with Lawrence," but the intensity with which it is dealt in the novel, and the very fact that Lawrence attempted to initiate it in his own personal relations, belies Murry's dismissal. The suggestion that Murry and Lawrence enact a blood-brotherhood ceremony shows the depth of Lawrence's belief and commitment, and at the same time betrays the confusion that he was faced with in attempting to reconcile his feelings about men. The additional evidence of his commitment to discover a solution is amply illustrated by his energy in writing his "philosophy" and attempting to transmute it into a viable living experience.

The failure with Murry did not, however, precipitate a total rejection of a 'male ideal,' for on 21 November 1918, Lawrence was writing to Katherine Mansfield: "I do believe in friendship. I believe tremendously in friendship between man and man, a pledging of men to each other inviolably" (CL 565), and as late as the summer of 1919, in a letter to Godwin Baynes, Lawrence states à propos of Whitman: "I believe in what he calls 'manly

61 *CB I*, p.377.
62 *CB I*, p.378.
love, the real implicit reliance of one man on another; as sacred a union as marriage; only it must be deeper...\textsuperscript{63} It is exactly this which Lawrence desired with Murry, and when it failed, he attempted to give it reality in \textit{Women in Love}.

Undeniably, the Murry experience dictated, to a large degree, the pattern of Birkin and Gerald's relationship in the novel, but it was not the only experience Lawrence could draw on. The others include his continuing friendship with Koteliansky, and his agrarian idyll with the Cornwall brothers, Stanley and William Hocking.

Lawrence's relationship with Koteliansky began on the eve of the First World War, and was to continue until Lawrence's death in 1930. It is for the most part a relationship conducted by post, or at least ostensibly so, for Koteliansky seldom left his St. John's Wood flat, while Lawrence of course roamed the world. The two men met fairly often when Lawrence was in England, and out of their relationship grew a literary collaboration which saw Lawrence emerge as a translator of Russian Literature, or more specifically, as "editor" of works which Koteliansky had translated and which Lawrence "remade" into "proper" English.\textsuperscript{64}

Their relationship was not solely one of literary necessity, for there grew between them an affection which saw Koteliansky become "a tower of strength"\textsuperscript{65} for Lawrence. It was from him that Lawrence obtained the name 'Rananim' for the Utopian society which he desired to establish; the collected correspondence between them "emphasize[s] that the kind of human relationship which Lawrence envisaged for the inhabitants of Rananim existed between Lawrence and Koteliansky...mutual trust, dependability, generosity, frankness, and integrity..."\textsuperscript{66} Typically, Frieda

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, p.501.


\textsuperscript{65} Rananim, 138.

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Ibid.}, xxxv.
did not get on at all well with Kotelyansky, for, as she was later to admit her jealousy about Lawrence's relationship with Murry, so she expressed similar feelings about Kotelyansky: "He did not like me, but he loved Lawrence and used to cheer Lawrence by roaring Russian songs at him....Yes, he loved Lawrence. Ja!" Frieda and Kotelyansky "were seldom on good terms," and many of Lawrence's letters end with a cryptic "greetings from Frieda," as if Lawrence was attempting to suggest that his affection for Kotelyansky was shared by her.

Frieda's attitude towards the male relationships Lawrence formed is understandable in view of the emotional and theoretical claims he made for them. Part of this reaction is reflected in the "Prologue" to Women in Love, specifically in Hermione's attitude to Birkin's commitment to Gerald. Another aspect of the same situation is revealed in Ursula's inability to comprehend Birkin when he laments the loss of Gerald at the end of the novel. Frieda's reactions, and Lawrence's novelistic treatment of them, suggest the confusion and antagonism which resulted from his attempt to live according to his ideas of "male friendship." Clearly, the demands were too great upon those who could not share in the intensity of those feelings, and consequently resulted in alienation and frustration.

Nevertheless, Lawrence persisted in attempting to find a workable formula whereby he could maintain the integrity of his relationship with Frieda, and at the same time form a "male friendship" which would not compromise his marriage. Once again, this situation is reflected in Women in Love, when, as we have already seen, Birkin's theories of male relationships are fraught with inconsistencies and contradictions—an indication that Lawrence had yet to achieve the compromise he desired.

The period spent in Cornwall is thus characterized by the intensity of Lawrence's explorations of the potentialities of male relationships. The Hocking brothers, who were neighbouring farmers at Higher Tregerthen, loom large in Lawrence's interest at this time. To some extent they were the means of a temporary

68 Rananim, p.xxiv, xxv, also 138, 252, etc.
escape from the realities of his immediate situation. In their company Lawrence could re-live the idyllic period of his youth, and the carefree experience of his relationship with the Chambers brothers at the Haggs. Lawrence became actively involved in helping the Hocking brothers with hay-making and harvesting, and gave French lessons to Stanley Hocking—a definite parallel to his relationship with the Chambers.

Lawrence's interest in these Cornish farmers became almost obsessive, for in them he believed he perceived the germ of the "new man" which would emerge from a crumbling society. His relationship with them, and particularly with Stanley Hocking, is re-lived with candid accuracy in Kangaroo, but it suffices for the moment to recognize that Lawrence was attracted to them because they not only represented his 'idyllic past;' but also the possibilities of a workable future. Stanley Hocking remembers Lawrence as "rather effeminate. His was a feminine disposition on the whole. . . he was so tall and thin and delicate."69 This recollection, and indeed Lawrence's whole relationship with the brothers and what they represented for him, becomes part of "the ever-recurring obsession in Lawrence's work—beginning with the early White Peacock and continuing unbroken until Lady Chatterley and other works—with the leit-motif of the virile man of the people...."70

In this context it is significant to recall Lawrence's treatment of Cyril's relationship with George Saxon in The White Peacock, a relationship which Middleton Murry suggests has "the tremor of authenticity," and which "has more of reality in it than any of the love affairs in the book."71 Murry also suggests that "for the original of George and Edgar [of Sons and Lovers] he must have felt something for which the best name is the simple one of love." Though Harry T. Moore attempts to deny Murry's "contention" that "what genuine and unhesitating passion there was in Lawrence's life before his Mother's death went to a man,

69 CB., I. p.368.
70 Ibid., p.437, from Cecil Gray, Musical Chairs.
71 Murry, Son of Woman, p.38.
not a woman" by invoking the evidence of Lawrence's "early love affairs, if not with Louie Burrows at least with Jessie Chambers and the married woman in Eastwood who introduced Lawrence to physical love," he nevertheless fails to consider that there may possibly be some truth in Murry's insight. At the very least, we have seen that Lawrence was confused and divided about his own nature, but through the work of Carpenter, he became sensitized to his situation, and found in Carpenter, as we shall see, a possible direction for his attraction.

Lawrence's early experience then, returns at the time, and in the context of his growing relationship with Koteliansky and his attempt at "brotherhood" with Murry. It is significant that during this period he is working out his "philosophy" which finds an explicit place in Women in Love and in the "Prologue" to the novel. In addition, the reference in the "Prologue" to "a strong Cornish type of man, with...full, heavy, softly-strong limbs," which causes "the desire to spring up in [Birkin], the desire to know the man, to have him," is directly related to Lawrence's relationship with the Hocking brothers, and his attempt not only to come to terms with his attraction towards "male friendship," but also to vindicate it by transforming it into something of paramount importance.

Lawrence's transformation of his confused ideas about his own nature in relation to his attraction towards men, finds its first tentative expression in the character of Birkin in Women in Love. Emile Delavenay has shown the cumulative effect of the works of Edward Carpenter on Lawrence's thought and writing, and successfully suggests "a renewal of Lawrence's interest in Carpenter in 1916," as well as its early influence when he wrote the "Study of Thomas Hardy". The effect of this influence is brought to fruition in the conception and depiction of Birkin as a Uranian superman figure.

Lawrence's attraction towards the idea of the superman derives from many sources, not the least of which is Carpenter and his interest is esoteric lore, an interest which Lawrence

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73 L&C, p.206 et passim.
was to seize upon and refine with his own experience and imagination. In many ways the superman is a pursuit of Lawrence's "old idea of the...utterer, a mystic justification of his Messianic view of himself," a view which shares with Carpenter an attempt "to establish a permissive morality which will liberate the homosexual from social and legal reprobation," and which would attack "the conventional morality at the base of all ethical thought on sex." The ultimate effect of this attitude is a conception of love and sex as a regeneration: "the prime object of sex is union, the physical union as the allegory and expression of real union." Lawrence echoes this belief in the "Hardy" essay by utilizing an abundance of botanical and floral metaphors, and specifically in his statement that "the final aim of every living... creature, or being is the full achievement of itself;" and as Delavenay points out, "Lawrence does mean 'itself' and not the next generation."

This conception of love is basic to almost all of Lawrence's depictions and analyses of character and relationships, but finds its first complete utilization as a motive for human endeavour in *Women in Love*, specifically in the character of Birkin as the means for the dissemination of it to the 'new world.' Lawrence has come to the view that the developing role of love in the emerging civilization is a transference from a material, to some other plane of being, and his "realism, if it is to be properly understood, has to be seen and interpreted in the light of his search for that 'other plane of being', both in love and in sex." In both Carpenter and Lawrence, this search is of a mystical nature, and is explored from the point of view of the regeneration of the individual; Carpenter exploring it without women, and Lawrence between 1913-14 with women, but after 1915 with "important

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74 *L&C*, p.195.
76 *Love's Coming of Age*, p.28.
77 *Phoenix*, p.403.
78 *L&C*, p.196
79 *L&C*, p.199.
reservations about women." Lawrence's reservation finds expression in his interest and exaltation of male comradeship, a theme present in his work from the beginning, which coalesces in Birkin in *Women in Love*, and leads to *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent*, and important statements in several of the essays after 1920.

The shift in emphasis in Lawrence's work, from the viewpoint of an explication of "love between man and woman"(CL 172), to that of an exploration of the comradeship of males, can be interpreted as a result of his experiences of love and sex in marriage, and his "meditation and probable re-readings of Carpenter's and of other works at the same time, coinciding with his insistence... on the problem and theory of male friendship." From Carpenter, and from his own readings in mysticism and esoteric lore, Lawrence derived a physiological view of the nature of sexual characteristics; he utilized these ideas by following Carpenter in an endeavour to come to terms in his own mind with the attempt "to show that homosexual tendencies are neither degenerate nor hereditary." This is accomplished in both writers by the evolution of a "theory of the origin of the individual soul or ego" which serves as an "explanation of the mixture of male and female characteristics in the individual."

That Lawrence was interested in this particular aspect of the individual, is readily discernible in the "Hardy" essay, especially by his interest in the homosexuality of Michelangelo, who he sees as "containing too much of the female in his body.... for his own body is both male and female." Delavenay shows how Carpenter's influence may have been at work not only on the "Hardy" essay in late 1914, but also during the writing and revision of *Women in Love*. In addition to the consideration of Michelangelo, Carpenter also refers to Melville; it is "a striking

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80 *loc.*, p. 201.
83 *pace* Daleski, *The Forked Flame*, p. 33: 300-301
84 *Phoenix*, p. 458.
coincidence" that Lawrence became absorbed in Melville in 1916, reading *Omoo* and *Typee*, two books "quoted by Carpenter in *The Intermediate Sex*, à propos of 'the most romantic male friendships' in vogue among Polynesian islanders." Carpenter, quoting Melville, also suggests that "though little inclined to jealousy in ordinary love matters, the Tahitian will hear of no rivals in his friendship," and if we consider the vagaries of Lawrence's relationship with Murry, and especially the failure at 'brotherhood' which occurred in 1916, then Lawrence's attitudes toward male friendship begin to have not only a source but a direction.

This direction makes itself felt in the final version of *Women in Love* which Lawrence was writing during this period. In fact, Birkin is shown being tempted by an obscene "African way," an "awful African process," and is obsessed by the problem of "eternal union with a man." This again is an echo of Carpenter, for "in the first American edition [of *Women in Love*] ...the 'African way' is replaced by a 'Polynesian way'," and *The Intermediate Sex* refers to "Polynesian male friendships" and "betrothal ceremonies between comrades among 'the Balonda and other African tribes'." Delavenay concludes that "Lawrence was very probably 'documenting' his conception of Birkin's character" from the many diverse sources mentioned above, as well as from Rolland's *Life of Michelangelo*, about which he wrote to Lady Ottoline Morell on 7 April 1916 (CL 445).

Lawrence's concern with male relationships thus came under a crystallizing influence, and at the same time seemed to offer not only a justification for his obsessive interest, but a purpose towards which to direct it. In the letter to Lady Ottoline mentioned above, Lawrence thanks her for the loan of Thucydides, and comments upon the author's "simplicity and...directness of

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85 _L&C_, p.207.
86 _Ibid._
87 _Ibid._
88 _Ibid._, p.208.
89 Heinemann, 1912.
the most complete culture and widest consciousness. I salute him. More and more I admire the true classic dignity and self-responsibility." Immediately afterwards he comments on Michelangelo: "[He] reverted back into the old Catholic form.... But he was the new thing as well.... But where is our Reformation, where is our new light," and looks for a way out of "our old mire of 'Love Thy Neighbour'." Herein lies a clue for the direction in which Birkin, and Lawrence's later heroes were to travel. Thucydides' "classic dignity and self-responsibility" were the ideals Lawrence was attempting to depict in Birkin, and it is significant that Birkin protects himself from the wrath of Hermione, the destructive "priestess," by shielding his head with a copy of that volume. It is Birkin who is to follow Michelangelo and be "the new thing"; it is his purpose to lead civilization to the "new light" and look "for a way out." Birkin becomes the embryo bisexual god, descendant of Michelangelo, who had "turned his eyes to the Great God of Power and Might, whose sons we are" (CL 445).

In brief, Birkin becomes the advance guard of the bisexual superman, a concept which owes much to Carpenter's description of the attributes of Uranian man. Lawrence appears to develop Carpenter's idea based on individuals of "mixed temperament" who may be the heralds of an "important change in nature": ⑨ "We do not know, in fact, what possible evolutions are to come, or what new forms of permanent place and value, are being already differentiated from the surrounding mass of humanity." ⑩ This mystic idea is followed by the messianic element in the role of the emerging species: "just as worker bees have differentiated from others, it may be that at the present time certain new types of human kind may be emerging, which will have an important part to play in the societies of the future." ⑪ It is in these terms that Lawrence conceives of Birkin's role in the destructive society of Women in Love, for the "new men" will be "the teachers of

⑨ L&C, p.209.
⑩ Intermediate Sex (1952, 9th impression), p.11.
⑪ Ibid.
future society" due to their "immense capacity of emotional love." Delavenay draws the valid analogy between this conception and Lawrence's statements in "Education of the People," which he considers "a series of papers marked by a deep reaction against woman as mother, and as 'the goddess in the machine of the human psyche';" he suggests a further analogy in the "Whitmanesque apology of friendship between comrades, 'sacred and inviolable as marriage," which "gives a special, mystical role to teachers as priests," and as "expressions of 'the living religious faculty.'" Carpenter's influence thus becomes much clearer, especially if we recall the almost exact way in which Lawrence himself fulfilled the Uranian attributes discussed earlier. Birkin becomes "a combination of systematic literary creation and a projection of Lawrence's psyche," the 'Reconciler' between man and woman, love and law. Lawrence seems to have envisaged in Birkin a priest of love, and "a type of Messianic forerunner of a new heaven and a new earth, one of the hopes of mankind after the cataclysm of 'decay and decomposition' in the autumn of a dying world." Thus Carpenter's depiction of Uranian man as possible saviour, along with Lawrence's recognition of homosexual tendencies in his own nature, find expression and purpose in Birkin as potential superman, and partially satisfies Lawrence's own 'Messianic' tendencies to "turn one's eyes from the world" and bring into being "another world, a world as yet uncreated"(CL 446).

For Lawrence, as for Birkin, "everything lies in being, although the whole world is one colossal madness, falsity, a stupendous assertion of not-being"(CL 446). The path to salvation is to "try for...a free, natural, unstrained relationship, without exclusions or enclosures"(CL 444). This is the formula Lawrence utilized in his conception of Birkin's action,

93 [Intermediate Sex, pp.14-15.]
95 Ibid., p.211.
96 Phoenix, pp.514-16.
97 L&C, p.220.
and the need for relationships "without exclusiveness or enclosures" leads naturally and inevitably to Birkin's attempts with Gerald. Once again, Carpenter "offers Lawrence a pattern (and, in an autobiographical construction of his novel, a way of escape):" 98 "There are all possible grades of sexual inversion... from that in which the instinct is quite exclusively directed towards the same sex, to the other extreme in which it is normally towards the opposite sex but capable, occasionally and under exceptional attraction, of inversion towards its own—this last condition being probably among some peoples widespread, if not universal." 99 Clearly, this is the justification not only for Lawrence's own feelings, but for Birkin's actions as well, and coupled with the whole concept of Uranian man as harbinger of a new heaven and new earth, explains a great deal about the permutations Lawrence's concern with male relationships was to develop.

From the foundations in Carpenter which we have been discussing, Lawrence was to attempt to build upon the idea of the heroic role of Uranian man, and as we shall later see, was to come via Whitman and others, to a concept of "democratic" behaviour built not only upon political naivety, but also upon an obsessive concept of his personal role. This development was to occur later, after Lawrence had investigated further the possibilities of male communion, exclusive of a political ideology.

Part of this investigation is, as we have seen, Birkin's attempt with Gerald, and coalesces around the "Gladiatorial" chapter when Birkin desires a greater commitment than Gerald is able to give. Gerald is only able to acquiesce and comply superficially with Birkin, for he is after all unable to commit himself to any greater extent. The failure is not one of temperament, but ultimately of existence, for Gerald and Birkin belong to two divergent streams of civilization, and this is realized in the imagery of the novel which treats them as diametrically opposed forces—life versus death. Nevertheless, Birkin and Gerald's attraction for each other transcends the literal imagery of the novel, and while Birkin at times admits the differences between

98 L&C, p.217.
99 Intermediate Sex, p.56.
them, the nature of his commitment precludes his outright rejec-
tion of the hope for union with him.

Birkin's dilemma is that he wants the best of all possible
worlds, and has structured his theory of being accordingly. Thus,
during the course of the conversation after the wrestling bout,
Birkin comes to a recognition which has been the operative force
in his relationships throughout the novel: "He was looking at
the handsome figure of the other man, blond and comely in the
rich robe, and he was half thinking of the difference between
it and himself—so different; as far, perhaps, apart as man from
woman, yet in another direction. But really it was...the woman
who was gaining ascendence over Birkin's being at this moment.
Gerald was becoming dim again, lapsing out of him" (309).

Birkin vacillates between Gerald and Ursula. He desires
them both, but cannot have them in the ways he wants. His
attitude betrays a basic immaturity of thought and idea, for as
we have seen, the contradiction inherent in his theory, which
tends towards male relationships, while ostensibly focusing on
a female one, is also the contradiction in his nature. Birkin's
weakness is the lack of recognition of the potentiality of his
development, for he is still the bisexual god in embryo only.
His weakness is also the fact that not completely recognizing
his limitations, or the limitations of the society in which he
exists, he wants more than it is possible to achieve at that
moment, and attempts to force Gerald to acquiesce totally to his
desire. When the possibility no longer exists for the immediate
achievement of his purpose, he gradually shifts focus to the
alternate possibility which had never really been far away. Thus,
when he thinks of the difference between himself and Gerald, and
possits the impossibility of ever achieving the "conjunction" he
desires, he redirects his attention to Ursula (who, incidentally,
also fulfils the Uranian role which Carpenter describes), and
decides to make another attempt with her. Ultimately, it is the
difference between the two men which precludes the type of relation-
ship Birkin seeks.

Birkin's desire for, and belief in, "the additional perfect
relationship between man and man—additional to marriage," only
meets Gerald's approval insofar as he says he "feels it," whereas Birkin believes almost implicitly in it. Gerald cannot accept Birkin's offer, for in spite of being "elated" at the fact of the offer itself, he cannot commit himself totally to it: "There was a numbness upon him, a numbness either of unborn, absent volition, or of atrophy" (398). The dichotomy is manifest, for Birkin is committed to bring about the birth or creation of "a world as yet uncreated," a world which would rise out of the "atrophy" of the civilization which Gerald represents. Even though Birkin may realize the gulf between them, he still attempts, or at least hopes, to bring about a union with Gerald. Indeed, at the end of the novel, when all possibility for "conjunction" with Gerald is gone, he regrets the fact, and admits to Ursula that he still needs Gerald: "You are enough for me, as far as a woman is concerned. You are all woman to me. But I wanted a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal...I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love" (541).

Birkin's recognition of his role in an emerging civilization, necessitates "two kinds of love," a conception derivative of Carpenter's theories of Uranian superman or hero. The validity of that concept for Lawrence, demands that Birkin not surrender to Ursula's condemnation of two kinds of love as "false and impossible," and leaves Birkin at the very end of the novel with his convictions intact. His refusal to believe that "two kinds of love" is impossible, lends an optimistic note to Lawrence's conception of the role of male relationships, a conception which sees the possibility of "male comradeship" as a "reconciler" between divergent facets of human relations. It is this function of male relationships, as depicted in several of Lawrence's short stories of the period, which we must now examine, and consider the ways in which they complement and advance the potentiality of male relationships revealed in Women in Love.
CHAPTER V

The Short Stories: From "The Old Adam" to Monkey Nuts

The short stories which have the greatest relevance to the present discussion were written between the years 1913 and 1920. One is able to trace in them both the development of Lawrence's attitude towards male relationships, and his utilization of that theme to advance the claims he wished to make for them. The discussion of the relationships in *Women in Love* has revealed Lawrence's characteristic method of dealing with divergent facets of human experience. Essentially, the basic structure for analysis is the proverbial "triangle" of relationships, though complicated in a characteristic Lawrentian fashion by substituting the "other man" for the "other woman." Thus, the pivot for the interaction of, for example, Birkin with Ursula and Hermione, is the presence and influence of Gerald upon Birkin. This influence can not be dismissed lightly, for Lawrence himself was aware of its possibilities; and if we do not dismiss out of hand John Middleton Murry's revelations, male friendship must be considered as crucial to the establishment and stabilization of the Birkin-Ursula relationship.

The issue of male relationships emerges as central to Birkin's theory, and indeed practice, of person conjunction. In order for Birkin to feel completely free to commit himself to marriage with Ursula, it is necessary for him to have an "additional perfect relationship between man and man—additional to marriage." It is clear at the end of the novel that Birkin firmly believes in the possibility of such a triangular relationship, a belief which declares the necessity of "two kinds of love" to complete self-fulfilment in marriage and in society. Birkin attempts to do what Gerald refuses—that is, to "pledge himself with the woman"—and is at last able to come to some terms with his relationship to Ursula. Thus, it is finally Birkin's willingness to believe in and practice the demands of a male relationship which contributes, at least in part, to his success in reconciling himself to marriage with Ursula.
One of Lawrence's fundamental interests in depicting male relationships was the exploration of the way in which they affected the several aspects of human interaction. Birkin's obsession with men, as described in the "Prologue" to *Women in Love*, clearly had a decisive influence on the termination of his relationship with Hermione. In addition, the internal, and indeed external conflict, precipitated by his attempts at an "additional relationship" with Gerald, hindered his complete "conjunction" with Ursula. Throughout the many hindrances and shortcomings directly due to the intrusion of male erotic feelings, Lawrence never loses sight of the fact that male relationships may be a positive force in personal intercourse.

Birkin's belief at the end of the novel in the possibility of "two kinds of love" suggests a positive conception of the role of male relationships as a "reconciler" of human conflict. However, in several of the short stories male relationships or male comradeship are presented as a definite hindrance or destructive force in the establishment, or re-establishment, of a valid meaningful relation between man and woman. The situation of some of the stories is also complicated by the protagonists' transference of affection or erotic feeling from the woman to the man, so that at the end of the story the male relationship is presented as supplanting, and taking precedence over, that already established between the man and the woman.

The three short stories with which I am presently concerned—"The Old Adam," "The Blind Man," and "Monkey Nuts"—reflect the triangular structure of the conflict noted in *Women in Love*. All three are based upon the theme of rivalry between two men and a woman: "The Old Adam" and "The Blind Man" are concerned with the attempt by a second man to gain precedence over the husband for the physical or spiritual attentions of the wife; "Monkey Nuts" reverses this conflict, to portray a rivalry between a man and a woman for the "comradeship" of another man. This important reversal is significant insofar as it utilizes the discoveries Lawrence investigated in the two earlier stories, as well as the conclusions he presented in *Women in Love*. In fact, as we shall see in the course of this chapter, the reversal progresses naturally from Lawrence's examination of the
permutations available in the relationships depicted in "The Old Adam" and "The Blind Man."

"The Old Adam," written possibly by 1911 but almost certainly by 1913, is an early attempt at exploring the tensions created by an unacknowledged rivalry between two men for the attentions of a woman. This triangular conflict is complicated by the theme of male "comradeship" to the point where masculine friendship becomes the focus of the tension in the story.

Ostensibly, the story concerns itself with an "exploration of marital polarity," focusing on Gertie Thomas's highly charged flirtatious conversation with Edward Severn, her aesthete boarder. The other apex of the ménage à trois is Mr. Thomas, a "good-looking," "thickly-built man of forty," whose "brown eyes were of the emotional, affectionate sort, lacking pride or any austerity." The contrast with Severn is immediately apparent, for Severn, "tall and thin, but graceful in his energy," was "one of those who attract by their movement, whose movement is watched unconsciously," and who had a "diffident, ironic bearing" (23).

Mrs. Thomas has obviously been aware of the difference between the two men for some time, and the incident which Lawrence chooses to dramatize for us in the story, quite clearly shows that Mrs. Thomas's perception of Severn has moved beyond the "unconscious" level. The discord in the house is dramatized against the background of a summer thunder storm, an obvious analogue for the storms raging within the principal characters:

'Look,' he said, 'at the lightning.'
Mrs. Thomas started at the sound of his voice, and some of the colour went from her face. She turned to the window. There, between the cracks of the venetian blinds, came the white flare of lightning, then the dark. Several storms were in the sky. Scarcely had one sudden glare fluttered and palpitated out, than

1 Sagar, p.16. Roberts, A71.


3 The Complete Short Stories, Phoenix edition, p.31. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses immediately following the quotation in the text.
another covered the window with white. It dropped, and
another: flew up, beat like a moth for a moment,
then vanished. Thunder met and overlapped; two
battles were fought together in the sky(29).

The fluttering and palpitation of the lightning is meant as
a direct illumination of the rising and subsiding emotions within
Severn and Gertie Thomas. The near-visible erotic tension between
them in the half-lit room, has been adequately prepared for by
the "peculiar, brutal, carnal scent" of the irises wafting in
from the garden, and by their dalliance with the child, "wild
and defiant as a bacchanal." Mrs. Thomas, "full-bosomed and
ripe" becomes increasingly aware of Severn's sexual attraction
to her, and the lush, heavy atmosphere of the room, as well as
her own awakening; yet repressed, desire for him, is counter-
pointed by the leaping flashes of lightning.

The tragedy Lawrence perceives in this situation is that
Severn is completely unconscious of the direction of his arousal:
"....there was a pain in his chest that made him pant, and an
involuntary tension in his arms, as if he must press someone to
his breast. But the idea that this someone was Mrs. Thomas would
have shocked him too much had he formed it. His passion had run
on subconsciously, till now it had come to such a pitch it must
drag his conscious soul into allegiance...and blind emotion, in
this direction, could not carry him alone"(30). For Severn to
be "complete" and "fulfilled" in the Lawrentian sense, he should
commit himself to the fullest possible expression of feelings.
That he does not, suggests an inherent character weakness, and
that perhaps he is awaiting something else to fully awaken his
"conscious soul into allegiance."

Into this atmosphere of repressed passion and unfulfilled
erotic tension, walks Mr. Thomas, apparently completely unaware
of the emotionally-charged psychic battleground occupied by his
wife and the wounded Severn. His only immediate reaction to the
situation is his discontent with the fact that his wife already
has had supper, a reaction which, Lawrence is careful to explain,
is directly due to his not being able to "bear that these two
should sit reading as if he did not exist"(31).
The relationship between Thomas and Severn is a familiar one in the context of the types of male relationships I have previously discussed. As an early excursion into the theme of male comradeship, albeit a secondary theme in the structure of the narrative, the story has more in common with the early novels than with the explicit treatment of male homoerotic feeling in *Women in Love*. Nevertheless, "The Old Adam" must be considered as part of the evolving investigation of the need for erotic male comradeship in addition to, and coexistent with, conventional marriage.

Lawrence's treatment of this motif is, as we have already seen, basically the depiction of a friendly relationship between two men, punctuated by periods of hostility which represent sublimated erotic feelings. The conflict in the relationship is precipitated by an attempted conscious manifestation of those feelings; thus Severn and Thomas, "although as a rule the two men were very friendly, there came these times when, for no reason whatever, they were sullenly hostile"(31). The hostility in the story takes two forms: at first it is confined to intellectual rivalry, and then it escalates into an actual physical encounter.

Characteristically, the conflict revolves about Mrs. Thomas, for Thomas, "always courting his wife," at the same time "insultingly" overlooks Severn. During the political discussion, significantly about the Woman's Bill, Severn contradicts his landlord, and this elicits "a look of joy at the white clad young man" from Mrs. Thomas. Her husband, whose "brown eyes" were full of hate," essays another rhetorical assault upon Severn in order to redeem his bruised ego, but once again "Severn flipped the sense out of it with a few words"(33). That Severn has the upper hand is obvious, and Lawrence reinforces the young man's superiority by emphasizing his physical position, "looking down scornfully, straight into the brown eyes of his senior all the time, so that Thomas writhed"(33).

Mrs. Thomas, far from being an innocent spectator, inflames the "battle of words" by taking her husband's side, thus angering Severn to the extent that he does not pity "the forlorn man" as
he would have done had she not sided with Thomas. Once again she vicariously experiences erotic arousal, for as she glances at Severn "from time to time" she experiences "a little ecstasy" which lights "her fine blue eyes." The erotic tension and rivalry which lies behind the behaviour of the three participants, and which is counterpointed by Thomas "always courting his wife," delineates their respective positions in the household, and sets the scene for the final confrontation between the two men.

Coexistent with the rivalry for the attention and possession of Mrs. Thomas, is the attempt by the men to achieve the understanding which would place their own relationship on the intimate stable level necessary to satisfy Lawrence's idea of male comrade-ship and its role in marriage. The "sullen silence" evident in the heated discussion between the two men, is a change from their usually friendly relations, though at other times this same hostility manifests itself for no observable reason. What emerges, however, is that Mrs. Thomas is the catalyst which forwards the hostility, and is also the dominant force in both men's lives, though they are not particularly prepared to acknowledge her as such.

The argument between the two men ends on a note of continued hostility and childish petulance: "Severn uttered his last phrases, and would say no more. Then Thomas cracked his knuckles one after the other, turned aside, consumed with morbid humiliation, and there was silence"(33). Severn, we are told, "would have spoken some conciliatory words to his landlord," but "he could not bring his throat to utter his purpose." Both men are revealed in their obstinancy, and their inability to meet each other as they obviously need and desire, is directly due to the unsatisfactory nature of their respective relationships to each other and to Mrs. Thomas.

The actual physical fight between them is prefaced by Mrs. Thomas's request that they bring down the maid's box preparatory to her leaving the household, a dismissal which Severn considers unjust, and which arouses "an impulse of hate towards womankind," but more specifically, momentarily towards Mrs. Thomas, the agent of the dismissal. Severn's reaction is another indication of his immaturity of awareness
not only about himself, but about the position Mrs. Thomas occupies in his relationship with her and her husband.

Mrs. Thomas, "full-bosomed and ripe," is the "mistress of the situation; both men were humble before her." Unconsciously, the men are affected and inhibited by her overwhelming presence. They are prevented from giving full expression to their need for each other, a need which is dictated by the necessity to have an existence independent of her constant presence—be it physical or emotional.

As the men become engrossed in the task which removes them from Mrs. Thomas's sphere of influence, a task which significantly is purely physical and requires a degree of mutual cooperation, the comradeship returns between them: "it was surprising how friendly the two men were, as soon as they had something to do together, or when Mrs. Thomas was absent. Then they were comrades, Thomas the elder, the thick-set, playing the protector's part, though always deferential to the younger, whimsical man"(34). This relationship, it should be noted, is exactly the opposite of the one the men endure in Mrs. Thomas's presence. The previous verbal battle testifies to that state of affairs, for then Thomas was not playing a protector's part, nor was he "deferential to the younger, whimsical man." Now, however, as they begin to act in consort to move the heavy tin trunk, Thomas, significantly, becomes concerned about the physical well-being of Severn: "'I had better go first,' said Thomas kindly, 'and if you put this round the handle, it won't cut your fingers.' He offered the young man a little flexible book from his pocket. Severn had such small, fine hands that Thomas pitied them"(34).

It becomes obvious, then, that the "friendly" relationship between the two men is at least partly physical in nature, for Thomas's concern about Severn's "small, fine hands," is symptomatic of a deeper, more intense physical attraction. This attraction is partially expressed by casting himself in the role of the younger man's protector. The physical nature of the relationship between them is further revealed when Severn once again turns his attention to Mrs. Thomas and jokes lightly with her: "Thomas, waiting at the brink of the stairs, saw the young man tilting his bare throat towards the smiling woman, and
whispering words which pleased her"(34). Immediately Thomas reverts to his former irascible self, and "in his most grating and official tones" speaks sarcastically at Severn in order to get his attention back to the matter on hand.

It is significant that the single thing which arouses Thomas's ire is not so much the fact that Severn is paying attention to his wife, but rather that he is exposing "his bare throat" towards her. This development is interesting in so far as it shows Thomas's jealousy directed not at his wife, but at Severn, indicating that the true rivalry is between Thomas and his wife for the possession of Severn, rather than between Thomas and Severn for the admiration of Mrs. Thomas.

Once again the conflict is enacted in terms of superiority and inferiority, and, just as Severn looked down at the seated Thomas during their verbal encounter, now he hovers on the stairs above, with "three-quarters of the heavy weight pressed on Thomas." Indicative of the 'pecking order' in the household, "Mrs. Thomas watched the two figures from above"(35).

As the men move the heavy box down the stairs, Severn once again exchanges pleasantries with Mrs. Thomas, eliciting "a little chuckle" from her. Her presence above them, and her attention to Severn, kindles the conflict anew; "Thomas, very red and flustered, glanced irritably back at them, but said nothing"(35). Once more, repression, the psychic flaw in them all, manifests itself, and leads inexorably to the climactic encounter between the two men.

As a result of his overt flirtation with Mrs. Thomas, and the conflicting emotions resulting from his relationship to her husband, Severn "was feeling particularly reckless" as he felt "his house-slippers unsafe on the narrowed, triangular stairs"(35). The "subconscious instinct" which "made the risk doubly sweet when his rival was under the box," is directly due to his ambivalent feelings about his landlord, and his repressed erotic attraction for Mrs. Thomas. The degree of Severn's ambiguous emotional and immature responses is perfectly conveyed by Lawrence's observation that "Severn would not knowingly have hurt a hair of his landlord's head"(35).
The psychological acuteness of Lawrence's analysis of Severn's condition is apparent when the "subconscious instinct" which made the risk of a fall "doubly sweet" is unconsciously translated into action. Severn slips on the stairs, but he does so "quite accidentally." It is easy to view the "accident" as unconscious wish-fulfillment, because this is the only way in which Severn's confusion of feelings and motives about his double relationship can manifest itself in relative safety. Severn, unable, or subconsciously unwilling, to commit himself fully, is brought to a psychological crisis which he is unable to recognize, and thus his subconscious provokes an incident which he will no longer be able to ignore: "The great box crashed as if in pain, Severn glissaded down the stairs, Thomas was flung backwards across the landing, and his head went thud against the banister post. Severn, seeing no great harm done, was struggling to his feet, laughing and saying: 'I'm awfully sorry-----' when Thomas got up. The elder man was infuriated like a bull. He saw the laughing face of Severn and went mad. His brown eyes flared"(35).

Severn's laugh of relief and refuge, which Thomas constantly interprets as a humiliating sneer, serves as the red flag which infuriates him "like a bull." All control is lost and Thomas launches himself at Severn, fetching "the younger man two heavy blows, upon the jaw and ear." Severn, unconscious of the humiliation, real or imagined, which he has been causing in Thomas, and having been "brought up in a religious college in France...had never been struck in the face before." The humiliating blows release the latent tension in Severn, and "he instantly went white and mad with rage":

With open, stiff fingers, the young man sprang on his adversary. In spite of the blow he received, but did not feel, he flung himself again forward, and then, catching Thomas's collar, brought him down with a crash. Instantly his exquisite hands were dug in the other's thick throat, the linen collar having been torn open. Thomas fought madly, with blind, brute strength. But the other lay wrapped on him like a white steel, his rare intelligence concentrated, not scattered, concentrated on strangling Thomas swiftly. He pressed forward, forcing his landlord's head over the edge of the next flight of stairs. Thomas, stout and full-blooded, lost every trace of self-possession; he struggled like an
animal at slaughter. The blood came out of his nose over his face; he made horrid choking sounds as he struggled (35-36).

This incident is very similar to that encountered in "The Prussian Officer," though it concludes in a different way. In both cases the fight heralds a type of consummation/communion, but whereas in "The Prussian Officer" it ends in death and partial positive disintegration, here it leads to a more complex realignment. As in "The Prussian Officer" the struggle between Severn and Thomas is partly sexual in nature, and specific physical and emotional details are emphasized which lead to consummation. Severn's exquisite hands, "itself an erotic and physically charged phrase, tear Thomas's linen collar open, literally and metaphorically exposing the older man's "thick-set" masculine body for ravishment. Severn lies "wrapped on him like a white steel" all his being concentrated for the first time in the story on "strangling Thomas," a euphemism, as in "The Prussian Officer" for sexual consummation. And Severn succeeds, for "the blood came out of ___ Thomas's ___ nose over his face; he made horrid choking sounds as he struggled."

This incident, like the one previously discussed in "The Prussian Officer," also has strong ritualistic overtones, for Thomas is described as being "like an animal at slaughter." In "The Old Adam," however, there is a "congregation" watching in absorbed silence: "Mrs. Thomas stood against the banisters, motionless in a trance of horror and remorse" (36). The ritual rape/sacrifice has served to usurp her role in the household; she is no longer the "priestess," the "mistress of the situation," and both men are no longer "humble before her." Their struggle on the altar/staircase has been enacted in isolation, their desire and emotion "concentrated" only on each other. For all intents and purposes "Mrs. Thomas was absent," and the two men were alone to enact their homoerotic sacrifice to each other.

The immediate result of the consummation is to firmly establish the communion between the men which, due to the overbearing influence and demands of Mrs. Thomas, had previously only been transitory. Significantly, Mrs. Thomas is immobile, she can
only stand "watching," and "for a long time she dared not move."(37) The consummation between the men has established a communion which results in Severn's usurping the role of Mrs. Thomas. He becomes the male comrade as well as the surrogate wife: "He put his arms round the heavy man, and raised him, saying tenderly: 'Let me help you up.'"(36). Not only has Severn become surrogate wife, but the struggle has also reversed the previous relationship of the men. Now it is Severn who enacts the "protector's part," and Thomas who is "deferential" to the younger man: "No, stand up; you're best standing up,' commanded Severn sharply, rearing his landlord up again. Thomas managed to obey, stupidly"(36).

Severn ministers to Thomas in the way in which Mrs. Thomas should have done: "The young man bathed his landlord's face and temples and throat. The bleeding ceased directly, the stout man's breathing became a series of irregular, jerky gasps, like a child that has been sobbing hard....he looked up with dazed, piteous brown eyes, mutely wretched and appealing"(36). The inversion precipitated by the consummation also transforms Severn into a Mother/Father surrogate. Thomas is "like a child" sheltered and comforted on his mother's breast, but he is also the child protected and deferential to the authoritarian, yet gentle father. Severn feels the appropriate emotions of a parent-lover (as he had earlier with the child), and Lawrence attributes to him the conventional parental feeling that "he would willingly, at that moment, have given his right hand for the man he had hurt."

The parental analogy is appropriate to Lawrence's own psychological and emotional state, and the biographical elements in Sons and Lovers, to use only one example, do much to explain this development. However, this aspect of the male relationship depicted in "The Old Adam," while important to an understanding of its evolution, is secondary to the purpose which Lawrence is attempting to attribute to it. From the perspective of Birkin's relationships in Women in Love, we can observe a movement towards the establishment of a male relationship in addition to, and outside of, the conventional marital state. And indeed, Severn
and Thomas are quickly consolidating their erotic friendship to
the disadvantage of Mrs. Thomas, who, had she been other than
she was, would have recognized the destructive influence she
wielded over the household, and over the two men in her life.

Mrs. Thomas suffers for her inability and limitation. She
can only observe the enactment of a communion between her husband
and Severn; her psychological and emotional inertia brings her
to "the crisis of her life" and she can only watch helplessly
as it passes. Her only possible response is "remorse":
"...she passed over into the bitter land of repentance...the
rest of her life must be spent in self-abnegation"(37). In
surrendering her role to Severn, she has given up all possible
hope of "grace" in love, and "harmony in living...henceforth she
was dead." Mrs. Thomas, then, can only take "a fierce joy in the
anguish of it," for her personal limitation and overbearing
influence have left her devoid of any saving understanding. She
has been supplanted as "mistress" by Severn: "'Come,' said
Severn [to Thomas], full of pity, and gentle as a woman. 'Let
me help you to bed'"(37). Severn, "gentle as a woman" begins
to undress Thomas and prepare him for bed. The inversion is
complete. After the violence and passion of consummation and
masculine communion, the two men, actually and metaphorically
arm in arm, retire to the tenderness and mutual affection of the
marriage bed.

Mrs. Thomas, her role completely usurped, can now only
behave as the excluded spectator, affecting a show of emotion
which she cannot actually find within her: "At this point Mrs.
Thomas came in. She had taken her part; she was weeping also"(37).
Severn, now the accepted partner of Thomas, "locked up the house,
put everything in order," and Mrs. Thomas, coming down for some­
thing speaks to him "more formally than a landlady at the sea­
side would speak." The previous relationship between them has
been shattered, for Severn has rejected her in favour of Thomas.
The allegiances of the household have been rearranged, with Mrs.
Thomas the outsider, "formal" and "cold," while Severn, the
following morning, has only tenderness and affection for his
"friend" Thomas.
The two men seal their relationship in the light of day, with "grasped hands," and "to the end of their acquaintance, Severn and Thomas were close friends, with a gentleness in their bearing, one towards the other" (38). Mrs. Thomas, "on the other hand" was "only polite," and we may assume that this politeness also extended towards her husband. She treats Severn "as if he were a stranger," and indeed, she has cast him in that role out of a feeling of jealousy and rivalry, for she has lost the inverted Lawrentian 'battle of the sexes'.

Lawrence's insistence upon the concept that men must develop a relationship and camaraderie outside of conventional marriage, received its most explicit statement, as we have seen, in Women in Love. In that novel, male homoerotic relationships have evolved to the point where Lawrence can begin to insist upon them as a necessary adjunct to all interpersonal relations, and as a mediating force between individuals whose relationships are not normalized or fulfilled within the context they establish for themselves. If this is the case, then the situation in "The Old Adam" may be construed as a failure, insofar as Mrs. Thomas, at the end, dedicated to "self-abnegation," has extinguished her own personality owing to a misplaced sense of personal failure, though this failure is predicated upon her inability to face and overcome her limitations. Ideally, the formation of a consummated communion between Severn and her husband should have functioned not only as a "reconciler" of her own disintegrated personality, but as a force which united the three of them in their "separateness."

The fact that the male relationship in "The Old Adam" does not accomplish all that Lawrence thought it should have done, must not be construed as a failure of that particular Lawrentian idea. Rather, it must be seen within the context of Lawrence's evolving examination of that aspect of human relations, as well as within the context of his own involvement with male homoeroticism as discussed in the previous chapter. The relationship explored in "The Old Adam" is but one stage in the pattern of Lawrence's treatment of male relationships, and the obvious analogies with "The Prussian Officer" and the early novels, direct us not only to the explicit statements of Women in Love,
but to the eventual transformation of Lawrence's ideas of the function of male friendship.

"The Blind Man," written and completed in 1918, also revolves around a characteristic triangular conflict, and has much in common, in broad outline, with "The Old Adam." However, being written after the intense investigations of Women in Love, it is much more compact and finely written than the earlier story. In addition, it utilizes several of the conclusions arrived at in the novel to amplify and underline the conflicts involved.

The story shares with "The Old Adam" a similar alignment of individual forces in the erotic triangular rivalry. In "The Blind Man," however, these forces are much more explicitly treated, and the conflict between the opposing selves much more distinctly drawn. The basic structural and thematic conflict in the story is between the worlds of 'light' and 'dark'; the significance of the polarities is inverted by Lawrence's characteristic concern to show the positive value inherent in 'darkness.' Maurice Pervin, blinded and disfigured in Flanders, lives a "very full and strangely serene" life, "almost entirely alone" with his wife. The menial work on their farm "gave him satisfaction," and he was "peaceful with the almost incomprehensible peace of immediate contact in darkness," sharing "a whole world, rich and...invisible" with his wife(347).

Maurice and Isabel partake of an intimacy which excludes the external world, yet at times the "rich glamour would leave them" and "a weariness, a terrible ennui" would overcome Isabel and be a burden to her. Maurice, as well, "sometimes had devastating fits of depression" and a "black misery" would overtake him, making his presence unbearable to his wife. In an effort to forestall the "dread" which "went down to the roots of her soul" at these times, Isabel would will their spontaneous cheerfulness to continue. However, the strain of forced will was too much for her, and "she schemed for a way out" by inviting

4 Sagar, p.99, Roberts, C72.

5 *The Complete Short Stories*, Phoenix ed. Vol. II.
friends and attempting to give her husband "a further connection with the outer world."

Isabel's scheme is doomed to failure, because after their "great year of blindness and solitude and unspeakable nearness," other people appear "shallow, prattling, rather impertinent" (348). Isabel's dilemma is that she desires to possess Maurice totally and utterly, for he has become a "tower of darkness" for her and she longs for the organic relation he embodies. She has become totally dependent upon the vitality, potency, fusion, and social isolation Maurice represents, and cannot face the lack of these qualities in the friends who represent the world outside of the farm. At the same time, however, her old friendship with her cousin Bertie Reid, "a Scotsman of the intellectual type, quick, sentimental, and on his knees before the women he adored, but did not want to marry" (349), attracts her as well, and she longs for the intellectual relation possible with him.

The two men in Isabel's life are thus shown to be direct opposites, and represent the two extremes of her dilemma: "Maurice Pervin was different. He came of a good old country family....He was passionate, sensitive, perhaps over-sensitive wincing—a big fellow with heavy limbs and a forehead that flushed painfully. For his mind was slow, as if drugged by the strong provincial blood that beat in his veins. He was very sensitive to his own mental slowness, his feelings being quick and acute" (349). For Isabel, Maurice, represents everything that is physical, while Bertie embodies the world and ideas, detached and impotent, yet strangely attractive to her. Maurice is "a terrible joy to her," but also a "terrifying burden"; one way of alleviating the burden is to attempt to embrace another and opposite type of experience—an experience which is part of her old pre-marital existence.

At one time, soon after her marriage, she did attempt to get both men together, for she felt that "if each could have the clue to the other there would be such a rare understanding between them" (349). The experiment did not work, though, for Maurice met Bertie's "slightly ironical attitude" with a "resentment" which sometimes developed into "stupid hatred." At this point
in their acquaintance both men are apparently jealous of the Isabel lost to them: Bertie because he cannot comprehend the physical intimacy between Isabel and Maurice, and Maurice because he cannot share the intellectual intimacy existing between Bertie and Isabel. Though the failure between the men is "puzzling" to Isabel, she accepts it as being part of men's freakishness and unreasonableness, and tells Bertie that "for her husband's sake, she must discontinue" their friendship.

Part of Isabel's dilemma, and the cause of her periodic discontent, is her "one great article of faith...that husband and wife should be so important to one another, that the rest of the world simply did not count"(349). Isabel's exclusiveness is of course anathema to Lawrence's idea that there must be a committed experience outside of, and coexistent with, marriage, both for men and for women. Isabel's "possessiveness" in which Maurice "took as much satisfaction" as she did, causes everything external to it to fade into insignificance, so much so, that when friends did visit, they sensed the mutual exclusiveness of the couple, and "retired abashed," to come no more.

Maurice's injury does, of course, help to perpetuate this mutual dependency, but at the same time it camouflages the damage which the isolation does to their individual personalities. Maurice has almost completely withdrawn from the world under the excuse of his blindness, though he will not admit that to himself. Isabel, on the other hand, utilizes his injury as an extension and justification of her "article of faith"; thus the past year of Maurice's blindness is also one of "unspeakable intimacy" for their marriage. However, with Isabel due to give birth shortly, their isolation will be shattered by another individual who will demand all her "love and attention." The problem of their total mutual dependency will be intensified: Isabel asks herself what will then become of Maurice, for she feels that she will "be at peace," and will be able "to luxuriate in a rich physical satisfaction of maternity"(348). The satisfaction of maternity creates a feeling of lethargy within her, and she feels herself forced to make an effort to remember Maurice, who hovers "like an ominous thunder-cloud" on the fringes of her consciousness.
The problem is partially resolved when Bertie writes to renew the friendship, and Maurice tells Isabel to invite him for a visit, a request the motives of which are rather obscure to her, for she believed that Maurice didn't care for Bertie at all. The change discernible in Maurice's attitude when he states that he "might feel differently now," is due not only to his perception of Isabel's feelings about maternity, but also to the insight gained in his dark world of blindness. Maurice has discovered a new way of perceiving the immediacy beneath all things, and has developed a "blood-prescience" and "blood-contact" with the world, a method of perception which is partially shared by Isabel, but alien to her.

Maurice belongs to the dark, and while Isabel has through Maurice some affinities with it, she is also drawn to the world of light represented by her previous relationship with Bertie. The internal conflict between the diverse experiences manifest in the two men is emphasized when Isabel, expecting Bertie to arrive at any moment, goes out into the stormy night to call Maurice from the barn: "It was very dark. The wind was roaring in the great elms behind the out-houses. When she came to the second yard the darkness seemed deeper. She was unsure of her footing. She wished she had brought a lantern. Rain blew against her. Half she liked it, half she felt unwilling to battle"(352).

It is significant that the closer she gets to where Maurice is working, the deeper the darkness becomes. As she enters the exclusive realm of Maurice's world, and leaves the comfortable dining-room with the round communal table glowing "softly under the light," and "glittering" with its white cloth," she becomes "unsure of her footing" and wishes that she had brought a lantern. The lantern, as representative of the world to which Bertie belongs, would help her to the transition to the "well of darkness" where Maurice worked. As it is, however, she finds that she "half liked it, half she felt unwilling to battle" against the bitter-sweet darkness of Maurice.

Isabel's ambiguity of desire and perception is reinforced by her experience in the barn, the "well of darkness" which is
representative of the "unspeakable intimacy" in which she lives with Maurice. Lawrence attempts to convey the quality of this intimacy by describing Isabel's reactions to the horses in the stable, and her husband's place among them. When she first enters the barn, it is as if she is entering another world, and indeed she is, for she begins to experience the almost unconscious organic universe in which her husband exists—a world representative of "the new way of consciousness" which Maurice has substituted for sight.

The first thing, in addition to the overwhelming darkness which greets Isabel in the barn, is the "smell of horses" and the perception of "hot animal life," which, along with her awareness of "the presence of the dark hindquarters of the horses," causes "something wild to stir in her heart"(353). The horses are "terrifyingly near to her in the invisible," and amongst them "actively intermingled" she can "hear and feel" her husband. Isabel perceives the invisible world of the barn as "a strange swirl of violent life" which makes her "giddy," and causes her desperation at the unsuccessful attempts to see her husband in the darkness.

Isabel's desperation is a product of her inability to let herself be contained by the organic darkness and the "new way of consciousness" which sustains Maurice. Her husband's invisibility is a reflection and a reminder of her own shortcomings; consequently, "she was afraid of him" and "shrank away" from his "dark shape." Isabel's inability to partake completely of Maurice's world, serves to negate her desire to "possess" him, and thus leaves her adrift in the darkness of incomprehension. Her nervousness at being unable "to see him, to look at him" is a measure of her failure to grasp the truth revealed to him in his blindness, and her conscious identification of Maurice with the horses in the stable is indicative of her inner conflict.

Lawrence's use of the horse symbol is reminiscent of the similar scene in The Rainbow when Ursula "knows" and "feels"
the presence of the horses in the dark and rain-swept field. Ursula perceives the horses "looming in the rain," and feels the deepening weight of their presence as she knows "without looking" that the horses were moving near. Ursula, like Isabel, is also aware of the "presence of the dark hindquarters of the horses," and also experiences "in a lightning of knowledge their movement travelling through her." In both cases their individual reactions to the presence of the animals provides an analogy for their inner conflict, and both instances reveal the horse as "the great sensual male activity" which is usually repressed and invisible. 7

Maurice's "intermingling" with the horses, and his strange almost mystic involvement with the "hot animal life" of the farm is representative of the blood-consciousness which exists beyond the social and intellectual world of Bertie and Isabel's "delicate and refined" surroundings. The scene in the barn serves to emphasize not only Maurice's difference in relation to the external world, but also to reveal Isabel's inner conflict between the exclusiveness of her husband and her longing for an intellectual social involvement. Isabel's conflict also includes her attempt at maintaining the fiction that nothing at all matters outside of her marriage, a fiction, which in view of Lawrence's identification of Maurice with the horse symbol, is something in which Maurice does not completely acquiesce: he does have a life apart, and this other existence in which he "seemed to know the presence of objects before he touched them" and through which he was "carried on the flood of a sort of blood-prescience," effectively excludes Isabel, though at times he is a "tower of darkness" for her.

Maurice's dark existence is predicated upon the positive value of his "sheer immediacy of blood-contact with the

7 Another reaction to the atmosphere and the animals in the "stillness and calmness" of a barn, only one with a more positive result, occurs in Chapter Two of The Rainbow when Tom carries the child Anna into the barn during Lydia's childbirth. In that instance however, "a new being was created in her for the new conditions," and the experience is represented as establishing a closer communion between the participants. (Penguin edition pp.78-80)
substantial world," and as long as he is able to maintain this, he has no need for the "intervention of visual consciousness." Maurice is the embodiment of all that is vital and potent "beyond," and indeed "beneath," the "shallow prattle" and uninformed presumption of the negative external society. However, the exclusiveness of his own existence and relationship with Isabel creates periodic discontent, and manifests itself by causing the "flow" of the "rich suffusion" of his state to be "checked and thrown back." The result is a feeling of "shattered chaos," and his problem becomes a search for some means to regain control "of his powerful and conflicting elements" (356).

The "conflicting elements" within Maurice can be schematized by dividing them into the dual tension created by his "new way of consciousness" and the demands of the social world. Maurice's new consciousness is a direct result of his blindness, but has been prepared for by the exclusiveness of his marriage. Set against this insular experience is the frequency of his chaotic attacks, an indication that something is lacking in his self-contained universe. What is lacking, of course, is a commitment outside of his marriage, a marriage which at times both Isabel and he feel to be stifling. The invitation to Bertie, then, becomes the way in which he attempts to unite the conflicting elements, and instill a degree of stability and fulfilment into his marital relationship. Specifically, Bertie's arrival begins a familiar pattern of experience the impetus of which is directed at establishing a male relationship to set beside the marriage. We shall see, however, that the establishment of male comradeship is complicated by Maurice's attempt to impose his own mysterious selfhood on Bertie.

Bertie's imminent arrival causes "little tremors of unreasonable exasperation" to run through Maurice, and he is forced to exercise extraordinary care in even the mundane action of shaving himself. Maurice is apprehensive about the intrusion of an unknown quality into his secluded world, and his "unreasonable" reaction is also due to his misgivings about introducing another man, and an old friend of his wife's, into the previously exclusive household. Maurice's hypersensitivity manifests itself
upon the arrival of Bertie when he overhears Isabel exchanging pleasantries and information: "...a childish sense of desolation had come over him, as he heard their brisk voices. He seemed shut out—like a child that is left out. He was aimless and excluded, he did not know what to do with himself" (356).

Lawrence carefully explains Maurice's state of mind by repeating the words "child" and "childish," as if to suggest on the one hand, a basic innocence and lack of maturity, and on the other, a petulant desire to be included in the experience of adults. Maurice is, of course, aware that these feelings are not in keeping with "a man, dark and powerful," and becomes infuriated with his own weakness. This weakness is derived from his dependence "on the support of another." His intuition of weakness is supported by Isabel when she sees him enter the dining-room, for she thinks him "cancelled"—almost a nonexistent personality, though, paradoxically, physically he is "strong-blooded and healthy."

Maurice appears "cancelled" because he is not yet complete; he has not committed himself to a consciousness independent of his wife, and for this reason his ostensible dependence upon her "enraged him." His rage is also directed at Bertie, for, in spite of the fact that he is superior to him, both physically and spiritually, Maurice "hated Bertie Reid," though at the same time he recognises that his hatred "was nonsense" and "the outcome of his own weakness" (357). Maurice's reactions to Bertie are similar to those of Thomas to Edward Severn in "The Old Adam" and to most of the other male relationships we have examined. The familiar pattern of dependence and superiority manifests itself again, and will inexorably lead to the expected inversion, though containing the ironic conclusion which derives from the weakness inherent in both men.

The inversion of position occurs almost immediately, for in spite of Maurice's self-acknowledged "weakness," he is constantly described as a "powerful man," a "tower of darkness," and when confronting Bertie across the dining-room table, sits in "a curious monolithic way...erect and distant" (357-58). Maurice is indeed a man of "conflicting elements," for in addition
to his superior strength which has an almost mystic quality—emphasized by the identification with the horses, the "fatal flaw" of the scars on his brow, and his "monolithic" posture (reminiscent of Birkin in the "Excurse" chapter of *Women in Love*)—he is also "delicate" in his movements and perception. This delicacy is noticed with slight amazement by Bertie, who "without knowing what he did, picked up a little crystal bowl of violets from the table, and held them to his nose," which prompts Isabel to ask him to give them to Maurice.

The violets serve to delineate the configuration between the three of them, for violets "under Aunt Bell's south wall" belong to Bertie and Isabel's past, and are not shared by Maurice. Aunt Bell was "a curious old girl," though this streak of "freakishness" in the family is not, as Isabel emphasizes to Bertie, "in you and me"(358). Maurice is thus excluded from their shared intimacy, though Bertie has been influenced by the "delicacy" which he observes and shares with Maurice. This common characteristic prompts his unconscious desire, and when he places the bowl of flowers against Maurice's "large, warm-looking fingers, Maurice's hand closed over the thin white fingers of the barrister"(358). Maurice's reaction to the flowers is an uninvolved and curt reply to Isabel's question about them, for they are not part of his intimacy with her. What is significant, however, is the erotic overtones to his contact with Bertie, for here is something which he can experience and appreciate. The difference between the men is emphasized by the contact of their hands, but the fact of their touch indicates a much deeper and basic similarity. Both men are "delicate" in their individual ways, yet this strikes a common chord in both which "disturbs" Bertie, and causes Maurice to remain aloof and "silent."

Maurice's silence and aloofness is also something he shares with Bertie, though in the barrister it manifests itself in a quite different way. Bertie is a bachelor, and while he has intellectual relationships with women, he cannot approach them physically. He is afraid of women, and cannot "escape his own weakness"(359). In contrast to Bertie feeling himself to be a "neuter," Maurice is vital and potent, yet unable, like Bertie,
to fully commit himself. At the core of both men, however, there is the desire to do so, Bertie because he is more comfortable with a masculine relationship, and Maurice because he feels the need to overcome his "dependency." The expansion of Bertie's limited consciousness would result in his ability to partake of the special perception which exists beyond the limited social "bothering" of his world. Maurice wants to initiate Bertie into the mysterious "indefinable" strength and immediacy which is the basis of his existence; in effect, he desires to complete a communion which began with the touching of hands across the dining-room table.

The climactic action occurs in Maurice's territory, the vital dark underground of the soul represented by the barn. Significantly, unlike Isabel earlier, Bertie shrinks completely from the rain and the dark, and carries a lantern. The rain and the darkness "had a nervous effect on him" for he retreats from anything suggesting the fecundity and mystery of an existence alien to his own. He "unconsciously entered [the barn] and shut the door behind him"(362), irrevocably committing himself to Maurice's domain. The fact that he enters "unconsciously" is indicative, not only that some basic instinct within him is now directing his action, but also that he is attempting to remain consciously uninvolved with that which he cannot yet comprehend. Bertie is divided between two conflicting, if not fully articulated, desires. On the one hand, he is subconsciously motivated to align himself to the vital masculine existence with Maurice, but, on the other hand, he recoils from the degree of commitment demanded by that desire.

Maurice wished to avoid becoming "a dead weight" to Isabel, for they are "always alone" together. One way to overcome his feeling of dependence is to take the initiative and broaden the immediate horizon of the exclusive farm society by forming a relationship with Bertie. His attempt to get to "know" Bertie is, of necessity, physical, and he asks to be allowed to "touch" him, though "the lawyer shrank away instinctively"(363). The attempt at communion is in effect a pseudo 'blood-brotherhood' ritualistic ceremony, and centres around Maurice's "fatal flaw"—his scar.
In order for Maurice to "know" Bertie he must touch him, a parody perhaps of the laying-on of hands, for through the semi-erotic physical contact, Maurice hopes that a lasting and valid relationship will be formed. The irony, of course, is that Bertie, however much the "conflicting elements" within him are predisposed to a male relationship, cannot bring himself to the total commitment inherent in Maurice's request, so he is forced "out of very philanthropy" to acquiesce. Bertie "suffered as the blind man stretched out a strong naked hand to him," recoiling from all that is vital in Maurice, though not, it should be emphasized, from the homoerotic aspect of the attempt. Maurice "laid his hand on Bertie's head, closing the dome of the skull in a soft, firm grasp, gathering it, as it were; then shifting his grasp and softly closing again, with a fine close pressure, till he had covered the skull and the face of the smaller man, tracing the brows, and touching the full, closed eyes, touching the small nose and the nostrils, the rough, short moustache, the mouth, the rather strong chin. The hand of the blind man grasped the shoulder, the arm, the hand of the other man. He seemed to take him, in the soft travelling grasp"(363-64).

The scene is, in effect, a homoerotic seduction, for Maurice's caress seemed "to take" Bertie completely, the "strong naked hand" possessing and enclosing him in its grasp. Bertie is "annihilated" by the experience, "unable to answer" Maurice, for the touch has exposed the very self he wished to repress, and momentarily forced him into a complete close contact which previously he had been "unable to enter" with anyone.

The ritual is only half completed, for Maurice desires a reciprocal caress from Bertie: "Touch my eyes, will you?—touch my scar." Bertie "quivered with revulsion," not, however, at the erotic contact which he unconsciously desires, but at the fact of the scar, which is an extension of his own flawed personality. The scar emphasizes for Bertie his own inability for the "close contact" which he desires but is unable to attain. However, he is still "under the power of the blind man, as if hypnotised"(364), for Maurice has seized upon the very real desire within him, and momentarily controls it: [Bertie] lifted his
hand and laid the fingers on the scar, on the scarred eyes. Maurice suddenly covered them with his own hand, pressed the fingers of the other man upon his disfigured eye-sockets trembling in every fibre, and rocking slightly, slowly, from side to side. He remained thus for a minute or more, whilst Bertie stood as if in a swoon, unconscious, imprisoned. Then suddenly Maurice removed the hand of the other man from his brow, and stood holding it in his own"(364).

For Maurice, Bertie's touch is obviously a sexual consummation and a spiritual communion: "'Oh, my God,' he said, 'We shall know each other now, shan't we? We shall know each other now'"(364). Maurice is "filled with hot, poignant love, the passion of friendship," but Bertie is "mute and terror-struck," overcome by the intensity of Maurice's ritualistic demands, and his own inability to meet him on the level which he desires. Bertie despises himself for his reticence, and is afraid that the defences he has constructed around his weakness, and now penetrated by Maurice's superior feelings, will permanently desert him, and cast him adrift, with no compensating resources, in the world of social activity. To surrender to the "passion of friendship" would involve a radical realignment of his social relationships, and though the "conflicting elements" within him require such a friendship, their reconciliation would leave him ill-equipped for the life he has constructed for himself. Thus, Maurice's insistence that they will be "all right now," for as long as they live, and so far as they are concerned, meets only with a detached affirmation from Bertie, who is trying to escape from a situation which is intolerable to him.

Maurice believes, however, that they have established a "new delicate fulfilment of mortal friendship," and this "revelation" is "exquisite"for him. He believes that a valid communion has been realized between them, and that Bertie has partaken of the quality of experience unique to the world of nonverbal intimacy. The major irony of the story is that this has not been consummated, for when the men return to the house and Maurice announces that they have become "friends," Isabel
notices that "Bertie was haggard, with sunken eyes...his eyes were as if glazed with misery." The communion has failed, and the attempt at establishing a relationship outside of marriage, and involving Bertie in an experience beyond his social realm of intellect, has not been successful, though ironically Maurice believes it has succeeded. The true blind man is Bertie, for he has not seen to the core of the truth which resides in the strength and moral purpose of Maurice's "different" experiential existence. Lawrence seems to suggest that the mysterious self adumbrated in Maurice would have raised Bertie out of the enclosed self-limiting emotional fortress he had constructed around himself, and reconciled the conflicting elements of his personality. Bertie is 'blind' to his own psychological and emotional limitations, and desires to escape from the recognition which Maurice threatens to impose upon him.

Lawrence's statement that the end of the story is "queer and ironical"(CI 566), clearly reveals his recognition that the "dark passions" in the conventional social world are predisposed to failure, though there does exist an affirmation in the dissolution created by them. Maurice, the literal "blind man" of the title, is unaware that he has destroyed the possibility of friendship with Bertie, though this failure is, in the final analysis, due to Bertie's unwillingness to venture beyond his secure detached environment—his "blindness" to the positive value inherent in Maurice's mystic organic fusion with an existence beyond that of unfelt experience.

The ritual in the dark shares a basic thematic and symbolic similarity with the previous attempts at male consummation and communion which I have discussed. "The Blind Man," however, emphasizes the difficulty of accepting the mysterious union implied, though dealt with in terms of similar symbols, in Women in Love. Maurice, like Birkin, is "a strange colossus," and in some sense also belongs to the underground of which Gerald and Loerke partake. In Maurice the diverse elements are

8 An analogy between "The Blind Man" and Women in Love can be posited on the basis of Birkin and Maurice on the one hand, and Gerald and Bertie on the other. Bertie's inability to respond on the level that Maurice demands is analogous to Gerald's failure to fulfil the blutbruderschaft demand that Birkin makes of him.
seen as partially positive and beneficial in quality, belonging as they do to the contradictory, yet necessary, elements in any male relationship. Maurice's identification with the horses in the barn, and later, when he attempts the ritual consummation, with the "half-wild grey cat," argues for the necessity of developing the positive value of physical and personal awareness.

The significance of the ritual consummation for Maurice is the "revelation" of "poignant love," and "the passion of friendship:" the establishment of a homoerotic relationship which is the "fulfilment of mortal friendship." That the world is unable to understand and commit itself to this type of affirmation, is a loss which Bertie and his "insane reserve" will be forced to bear.

The ironic inversion at the end of the story indicates Lawrence's developing awareness of the limitations inherent in his concept of male comradeship as "saviour" or "reconciler" of flawed personalities, but the investigation is far from complete. The conflict evident in homosexual and heterosexual rivalry gives increased scope for an investigation of the possible permutations of emotional drama. The traditional masculine companionship leads to the so-called "common-life eroticism" of the situation in "Monkey Nuts."

"Monkey Nuts," first published in 1922 but almost certainly written by 1920, also utilizes the inversion of an erotic triangle as the basis for its investigation. Unlike the previous stories we have examined, "Monkey Nuts" develops an ostensibly overt sexual rivalry in order to reveal the conflict inherent in male comradeship when confronted by an external, though natural threat.

9 Widmer, p.136. Delavenay, p.544, takes the extremely simplistic position that the story is "sans ambition philosophique, sans recherche autre que celle de la peinture exacte des gens et des choses." My discussion reveals that it is not as simple as Delavenay suggests.

10 Roberts, 097: "'Monkey Nuts' was returned to Lawrence from the agent Pinker in the summer of 1921 and forwarded to Mountsier the American agent with other manuscripts in December." Sagar, p.99, suggests that the story was written in the Winter of 1918-19, but gives no evidence for that dating. Also CL 680.
The relationship between Joe, a young soldier of twenty-three, and Albert, "a shrewd-looking fellow of about forty," is basically a paternalistic one, though "Joe never thought of Albert as a master"(366). Both men are billeted together not far from the railway station where they worked, and Albert is described as being "a real good pal" to Joe. There is, however, something sinister about Albert, for in addition to being "shrewd-looking," his face "looked a little withered, old," and he delights in coarse and ambiguous verbal mischief the aggressive aspect of which suggests his sexual ambivalence. Joe, whose "tender-looking form, young and fresh" characterizes him as an innocent, is shy and modest in the face of Albert's dubious worldly experience, and the obvious advances of Miss Stokes, the "landgirl" who drives "her splendid horses" with a daily load of hay to the goods-yard.

Miss Stokes, as her name implies, precipitates a near crisis of passion between the two men, and eventually initiates Joe in the mystery of sexual experience. It is Albert, however, who "did all the talking" at the first encounter between the three of them, though Miss Stokes fixes her "magnetic attention" on the younger man. Joe, "a very shy bird," falters and turns away from her, though he "would talk with Albert, and laugh at his jokes"(368). The initial rivalry which develops is between the girl and Albert for possession of the innocent Joe. Miss Stokes depends upon her "silent forces" to affect Joe, and win him away from the influence of the older man. To accomplish this she sends him a telegram requesting that he meet her at the station; Joe, feeling guilty at the implied desertion of his "pal" and protector, does not want to take Albert into his confidence. Joe's reticence and confusion "piqued" Albert, for he fears losing his domination over the younger man.

Joe chooses to ignore Miss Stokes's invitation, and instead accepts that of Albert, for both men "smarten up" and go into town where "Albert knew a fair number of the boys round about"(368). Joe's reaction may be considered as typical of any youth who is suddenly confronted by a sensual female. However, his reactions

11 Complete Short Stories, Phoenix ed. Vol. II.
are complicated by the special relationship he has with Albert, for at the same time Albert is both protector and seducer. Albert, being older and more experienced than Joe, is a genial but authoritarian father-figure, and Joe's allegiance is tempered by the usual confusion of feelings accompanying any rejection or threat of loss. The special relationship which has developed between the two men in their almost idyllic existence will not readily succumb to the outside interference presented by Miss Stokes, though at the same time their relationship is being eroded from within by Joe's developing awareness of his individuality and attractiveness for the girl.

Joe's decision not to meet Miss Stokes is partially due to his own inexperience and resultant reticence, as well as his unwillingness to reject and offend Albert. However, he cannot help but feel some slight superiority in having been chosen instead of the older, more experienced man, and when they return from their evening with "the boys," Joe shows the telegram to Albert: "He looked full at Albert, the two men looked straight into each other's eyes. There was a lurking grin in each of them"(369). Albert jibes at Joe in his usual mischievous way, and chides him for his "appointment" with the girl. Joe defends himself by denying any desire for the assignation, and when Albert presses him for the reason of his refusal, Joe "suddenly looked round rather haughtily," and says simply that he didn't want to go(369). The exchange is terminated by Albert ordering Joe into the bed they share, thereby reasserting his dominant role in their relationship, but at the same time having revealed through his previous banter that a conflict is developing for possession of the youth.

The following week sees a transformation of the triangular relationship into a pattern in which "Joe remained silent, averted, neutral, a little on his dignity. Miss Stokes was off-hand and masterful. Albert was full of mischief"(370). The rivalry is thus established between the girl and Albert for the mastery of Joe who, divided in his feelings and unwilling to offend Albert, retreats further into himself. Joe, however, does have his moments, for desiring to emulate Albert's easy repartee, he blurts out the occasional comment "jeerily, in a sudden fit of
uncouth rudeness that made both the others stare"(370). Joe is slightly ashamed at his behaviour, and when Albert reveals to the girl that he knew the contents of the telegram, "Joe had flushed dark, and cursed Albert in his heart"(371). His discomfiture is a measure of his awareness of the conflicting nature of his attraction, for at the same time that he does not want to offend Albert, he also does not want to alienate the girl.

Joe becomes a pawn to be manipulated by Albert and the girl. The conflict for domination and possession is aided by Joe's resistance to the sexual initiation threatened by Miss Stokes, and his reluctance to leave the "amicable" bed he shares with Albert. The first victory goes to Miss Stokes. At the circus that Saturday night Joe is "electrified" to notice her sitting not far away from him, and though he pretends not to see her, "it was a blow to him, and it made him angry"(371). He decides not to mention her presence to Albert, for "least said, soonest mended," and he does not want to jeopardize his relationship with him. Nevertheless, the girl's face in the crowd haunts him, and he knew "fatally" that she had seen him.

Joe is reluctant to leave the companionship and safety of his male companions, and as they leave the circus tent "Joe and Albert laughed and chaffed with the boys"(371). Joe, of course, feels threatened by the imminent arrival of the girl, and frequently looks around "to see if he were safe." The girl is a danger to the established relationship he has with Albert, and a threat to his own self-effacing personality. But Joe cannot escape from the "fatally" inevitable encounter, and significantly his sexual initiation is precipitated by the "dark figure" of the girl whom they encounter on the road.

As Albert leaves them, Miss Stokes "put her arm delicately round [Joe's] waist" and drew him down the road"(373). The setting is perfect for the almost ritual initiation which follows: a spring evening full of the fertile scent of "wild cherry" and the "first bluebells," with a nightingale singing under a full moon. The girl draws Joe closer to her, and the "soft pressure" made "all his bones rotten"(373). The experience for Joe is an ambiguous one; his seduction, though ritualistic in setting and
description, is considered as a corruption of his almost ideal and preferred relationship with Albert.

The embrace which made all Joe's "bones rotten," is a prelude to the corruption which begins to disturb his relations with Albert. Albert awaits Joe's return in a "fitful" state, reading the papers but seeing nothing. His evident agitation, reminiscent of a wife awaiting her husband's return, but also of a parent anxiously expecting a wayward child, is indicative of the change which has taken place between them. When Joe finally arrives, Albert looks at him "keenly" as if to see if there is any visible manifestation of the conflict. Joe is "sullen" and "his brow was black," and since there was "nothing more to be got out of him," both men go to bed.

The intrusion of Miss Stokes into what had been a basically uncomplicated relationship, causes a serious change in the men: "almost every evening Joe went off alone, returning late. He was sullen, taciturn and had a hang dog look"(374). The men do not "get on so well any more with one another," and in spite of Albert's "fun and nonsense" he is irritable and angry with Joe's "stand-offish sulkiness and complete lack of confidence"(374).

The almost palpable conflict between them is due to the conflicting loyalties and emotions aroused by the intrusion of the woman. Joe, against his will, is drawn to her, and his reluctance manifests itself in a partial rejection of all that Albert had previously been to him. In addition, the relationship between the two men has suffered a reversal, for Joe becomes angry and intolerant of Albert's sarcastic "fun and nonsense," though he himself is occasionally "full of odd whimsical fun, out-shining Albert"(374).

The antagonism between the men, and the reversal of their previous roles, is an indication that Joe is attempting to decide his own position in relation to the new force which has entered their lives. For Joe has changed; his previous innocence and youthful tender looks have deteriorated, so that "he seemed thinner, and his limber figure looked more slouching...his tanned face, a little thinner and darkened, took a handsome, slightly sinister look"(374). Joe's innocence has been corrupted
by the nocturnal seductive female, and her dominant influence is slowly destroying him. He becomes aggressive, and has "some of the look of a dog which is going to bite"(374).

The change wrought in Joe also causes a reversal in Albert's characteristic behaviour, and as he watches the boy undress one night, "for once he spoke in a natural voice, neither chaffing nor commanding"(375). Albert has learned a new respect for the now experienced youth, but his benevolent, concerned attitude, is a tactic in attempting to reaffirm their previous relationship, for Albert has noticed the slow disintegration in Joe. Albert's attempt at 'rescuing' Joe is characterized by a much more homoerotic attitude than has previously been noticeable, and he becomes more physical in his attentions: "...he went over, sat down by Joe, put his hand on his shoulder affectionately ....'What is it, boy? What's gone wrong? You can trust me, can't you?'"(375). The conflict for the reestablishment of their male comradeship has been engaged: "Joe turned and looked...at the face so near his....gradually the stupid, hunted, glowering look died out of Joe's eyes....'I don't want her,' he said, with a fierce resentment"(375).

Albert has given Joe the reassurance that he craves, the knowledge that Albert cares for and desires him. He is now able to state with "ferocity and resentment" that he doesn't want the girl. All Joe desires is a return to the safety of their previous relationship, in which their roles are clearly defined and each knows what to expect of the other. Albert "laid his arm affectionately across the shoulders of the younger man. Joe seemed to yield a little towards him"(376). The father/protector has re-asserted his role with a more explicit implication of the underlying homoerotic impulse. The advantage in the rivalry for possession of Joe has passed to Albert, and he takes Joe's place at the next assignation with the girl.

When Albert goes to meet Miss Stokes in place of Joe, the setting is once again significant, for instead of the warm evening full of the fertile sounds of Spring, the evening is "cold," the sky "grey," and the air "chill and depressing." The struggle between Albert and the girl is thus all but decided, for the advantage is no longer with her. This time Joe "is not
conducting the service" and Albert tells her that the boy had asked if he would "officiate" instead(277). The decisive blow has been struck, and Miss Stokes "walking like an automaton" disappears through the farm gate.

The conflict has almost been resolved, and that night the men slept together in "amity," but with "some anxiety" about the next morning's confrontation with the girl. The setting is again indicative of the girl's defeat, for "it was a cold morning, a grey sky shifting in a cold wind, and threatening rain"(377). Miss Stokes is prepared for one last battle for domination, and reins in her horses with a "war-whoop." She calls to Joe with a "half-inviting, half-commanding gesture" and he is all ready "to jump off the truck to obey her" when Albert restrains him with a hand on his shoulder(378). The battle of wills rages between Albert and the girl, with Miss Stokes calling to Joe, and commanding Albert to take his hand off him. Joe stands "half averted, with his tail between his legs," content to allow them to decide his fate, but quickly giving Albert pride of place in his affection: "Joe turned and looked at her, and a slow jeering smile gathered on his face"(378). Then, "in a tone mocking her call" he throws back at her the jibe "monkey nuts!" which she had previously directed at Albert, thus irrevocably asserting his preference: "Joe and his corporal looked at one another and smiled slowly," for they had effectively resisted the assault mounted by the woman. The two men are then reassured in their relationship when they find that Miss Stokes no longer comes with the hay, in fact "as far as they were concerned, she had vanished into oblivion"(378).

The end of the story suggests that masculine comradeship has overcome the threat posed by the intrusion of an unwelcome female, and that the erotic struggle between Albert and the girl has been resolved in the corporal's favour. The situation in the story should not be reduced to the simplistic statement of heterosexuality succumbing to homosexuality, for it does not appear to be Lawrence's intention to present that exclusive view. The drama between the three individuals is an amalgam of several basic emotional forces, complicated by Lawrence's own special view of male relationships.
Albert and Joe are representative of a traditional and common type of masculine friendship which flourishes in the situation Lawrence describes. The intrusion of the girl is thus a threat to the self-sufficient and established camaraderie between the men. The situation is complicated by Albert’s position as paternalistic father/comrade, as well as his own sexual attraction towards the girl. Thus he is divided between his attempt to maintain the established relationship with Joe, and at the same time, to consider himself a rival for the girl’s attentions. Albert’s feelings of rejection in having been passed over in favour of the younger, less experienced man, forces a shift in the rivalry, and he now finds himself in direct conflict with the girl to recapture and maintain possession of the youth.

In addition to this straightforward delineation of the conflicts involved, is an erotic attraction between the men which is dependent upon the dominant/inferior configuration of their relationship. Joe’s feelings for Albert are similar to that of a son for his father, but the fact that they are not blood relations introduces another dimension to their attraction. The covert homoerotic appeal between them may not be explicitly described, but is nevertheless present in their more intimate moments together. Eventually, their masculine pride and shared affection close ranks against the female intruder who has upset their lives, and for various motives reject her completely, thus reestablishing their relationship on its previous exclusive footing.

The masculine comradeship and homoerotic attraction does not, however, save the men from the awareness forcefully introduced by the girl. Miss Stokes has awakened Joe to the existence of sexual and emotional conflict which cannot be resolved by a fatherly pat on the shoulders; nor can they in the future be delegated to a protector. Albert, as well, has been made aware of the limitations of his personality. His "fun and nonsense" is a defence he has constructed to shield himself from any definite committed involvement, on anything but a superficial level, with other individuals. He is thus dismayed and "uncomfortable" when he notices the tears running down the girl’s
face after he has offered to "conduct the service" instead of Joe, but quickly recovers his bruised ego by dismissing her as not worth bothering with.

Albert and Joe fall back upon their old relationship as the easiest way of recovering from the reverses they have suffered: Joe unwilling to leave the protection of an older man for the maturity required to encounter the world of experience, and Albert, for solace and the assertion of his authority. Lawrence has discovered that the exclusiveness of masculine comradeship is not proof against the demands of social involvement. At the same time, however, the homoerotic relationship between the men is the source of a bond which can contend with, and overcome, the assaults of external forces inimical to them.

The contradictory, yet paradoxically complementary, failings and success of male relationships, especially those at the end of "The Blind Man" and in the situation of "Monkey Nuts," reveal that Lawrence has become more aware of the complications inherent in his theories of male homoerotic relationships. At the same time, he has revealed that there is a positive value in advocating their establishment as reconcilers of the dual nature of Lawrentian reality. More specifically, Lawrence has discovered that masculine relationships, especially those that are predicated on intense emotional conflict, are revelations of a "blood-consciousness" or "communion" which holds the potentiality of reconciliation.
CHAPTER VI

Aaron's Rod: The Basis of the "New Adjustment"

With the publication of Aaron's Rod in 1922, Lawrence began to consolidate the conclusions he had derived from the exploration of male relationships in his earlier works. However, the consolidation is, by its very nature, a continuation of the investigation, for Lawrence is now concerned with the way in which relationships between men can create and realize a new and positive social experience—a "new adjustment."¹

The novel itself was written over a span of more than four and a half years,² and the spasmodic composition is reflected in its lack of form and coherence, compared with such works as The Rainbow and Women in Love. In spite of its organizational and imaginative faults, Aaron's Rod is important as marking a transitional phase between the promise at the end of Women in Love, and the more theoretical writing which intrudes during its gestation. Since Aaron's Rod was begun by December 1917, and a first draft completed by September 1919,³ then taken up again in July 1920 and finished in May 1921, it spans the years during which Lawrence wrote important theoretical statements in 'Education of the People,' 'Democracy,' Studies in Classic American Literature, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, and Fantasia of the Unconscious.⁴ The novel, then, may safely be

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³ CB I, p.505.

considered as an attempt to depict imaginatively and experientially the concepts theoretically presented in the discursive writings of the period. It is equally important to recognize as well, that the theoretical discussions are products of the personal and imaginative experiences which were dealt with in the novels and short stories we have previously considered.

The single most important attitude to emerge from the discursive writings of the period, is Lawrence's changing concept of the purpose and applicability of male relationships as derived from his previous investigations. We have seen that the end of Women in Love holds the promise of Birkin's finding another world to replace that which is disintegrating around him, a world based upon fruitful marriage and the concept of "two kinds of love." The "new society" which Lawrence posits can develop only after a true polarity of consciousness has been achieved with the woman, then, out of this relationship, in which man is "made new after the act of coition," the male desires to "make the world new" as well. The forging of a proud singleness of being causes "a new passionate polarity to spring up between men who are bent on the same activity," and these men who are always "the pioneers of life" venture "onward into the unknown, alone with their own temerarious, dauntless souls."

This same idea is repeated in a slightly different, yet more explicit form in the series of papers entitled "Education of the People." Lawrence suggests that man, as the adventurer, leaves the "immediate personal life" in the care of the woman, while he "scouts ahead" and looks after "the further, abstracted and mechanical life." Man, the "outrider," the "leader," leaves the women and children behind with the wagons, and scouts ahead, always "hovering at the tip of life and on the verge of death" (Phoenix 664-665). The discoveries to be made, and the world to be created, thus can only be realized through the conjunction of men, and Lawrence demands that there be "between men...a new spontaneous relationship, a new fidelity" which can only be consummated when men "go beyond their women" and are "projected into a region of greater abstraction, more inhuman activity" (Phoenix p.665). The "leap ahead" to bring into being a new
social perception, is part of what Lawrence calls the "rainbow-change," a phrase which describes man's potentiality to evolve a creative civilization out of chaos.

The impetus for this view, and especially for the need to renew a creative civilization, derives partially from the vision of society presented in Women in Love, and partially from Lawrence's own demoralizing experiences during the War. The deprivation and persecution Lawrence suffered during the war years created an almost suicidal misanthropy which is quite evident in the letters of this period. For some time Lawrence's distress found succour in the idea of the utopian society Rananim, a dream which did much to help him maintain a modicum of sanity in what he felt was otherwise an insane disintegrating world. His alienation led him to the position where he could report that "...fiction does not, at bottom, interest me any more. I am weary of humanity and human things," and he turned instead to "thoughts, that transcend humanity" (CL 514). The semi-philosophical works which resulted were in some ways a rejection of humanity, but in other ways contained a desperate hope that humanity would be able to recover, and that there "will be a new heaven and new earth."^8

Part of Lawrence's developing optimism, especially after the armistice, finds expression in "Education of the People," "Democracy," and Fantasia, but the operative theory behind many of the pronouncements is the concept of "manly love" which derived ultimately as we have seen, from Lawrence's application of Carpenter's works to his own personal and intellectual situation. Another influence, and one which, for a time, was to take precedence, especially within the reflected doom of the war and post-war years, was that of Whitman and the seductive attraction of America. America was to be the site of the utopian Rananim,

5 'Foreword' to Fantasia, p.8.
6 See for example the "Nightmare" chapter of Kangaroo.
7 Amongst others, especially letter of 4 Sept. 1916 to S.S. Koteliansky, 'Rananim,' 89.
8 Phoenix, "Whistling of Birds" p.4.
and when the actual departure became impossible, Lawrence undertook a spiritual pilgrimage which culminated in the series of essays finally published as Studies in Classic American Literature.

The essays were originally conceived as early as January 1917 (AH 394), and begun in August of that year under the title "The Transcendental Element in American Literature" (AH 414). This original title places the whole impulse behind the idea for the series firmly within the sensibility which led Lawrence to renounce humanity and suggest that "one is happy [only] in the thoughts...that transcend humanity" (CL 514), italics mine.

Lawrence was searching for an intellectual base upon which to construct his escape from a world which had become insane; the emotional basis was already in existence and needed little justification or elaboration. The desire to "make the world new" was conceived as being possible only within the realm of direct masculine action, and what better example existed than the exclusively male activity of creating the "new world" of America from the primitive wilderness of both nature and the soul?

The prime illustration of this view for Lawrence was the life and work of Walt Whitman; though Lawrence's view of his achievement was later to change somewhat, the early published versions of the American Essays present Whitman as both prophet and saviour. Lawrence had always had a great admiration for Whitman and, as a poet himself, had found a basis for his aesthetic of form in his reading of the American's work. In his youth Lawrence read Whitman with Jessie Chambers and Louie Burrows (CL 25), and even later, when he began to denounce some of Whitman's conceptions, he is still able to say: "Whitman, the great poet, has meant so much to me. Whitman, the one man breaking a way ahead. Whitman, the one pioneer."  

Whitman's, of course, the great exponent of "male comrade-ship," and Lawrence's true attitude at the time is revealed in

10 SCAL, p.162.
his letter to Godwin Baynes: "...you are a great admirer of Whitman, R. said. So am I. But I find in his "Calamus and Comrades" one of the clues to a real solution—the new adjustment. I believe in what he calls "manly love," the real implicit reliance of one man on another: as sacred a unison as marriage; only it must be deeper, more ultimate than emotion and personality, cool separateness and yet ultimate reliance."11 For Lawrence, Whitman was the harbinger of "the great new era of mankind" and the new adjustment can only be brought to fruition on "the sheer friendship, the love between comrades, the manly love alone can create a new era of life."12 With Whitman as guide, and his own experiences, and explorations of male relationships in the novels and short stories, Lawrence has reached the stage where he believes that male comradeship, the love of comrades, will be able to change the world and "establish the new perfect circuit of our being."13

This is the basis for the metaphor at the end of "Education of the People," where Lawrence insists that men should "scout ahead. Let them go always ahead of the women, in endless trek across life. Central, with the wagons, travels the women, with the children and the whole responsibility of immediate, personal living. And on ahead, scouting, fighting, gathering provisions... the men, the leaders, the outriders."14 The metaphor is based on the peculiarly American 'wild west' wagon train, the era of the pioneers opening up a new land for settlement. This aspect of American life is symbolized not only by the male leaders of the pioneer train, but by the exclusively homoerotic masculine partnership, popularized in endless western films, which made the American west 'safe' for the women and children.15

11 CB I, p.501.
12 The Symbolic Meaning, p.262-3.
13 SM, p.262.
14 Phoenix, p.664-5.
15 In this context see Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, New York, 1960; Revised 1966.
Masculine comradeship thus begins to emerge supreme; in Lawrence's 1920 revision of the 1918 Whitman essay, the woman of the wagon train metaphor in "Education of the People" is reduced, really to a submissive function. She is no longer an individual being with a living soul. She must fold her arms and bend her head and submit to her functioning capacity. Function of sex, function of birth. Women have been completely superseded, and picking up his own clue in the Baynes letter, Lawrence elaborates on his discoveries in Whitman's 'Calamus': "Acting from the last and profoundest centres, man acts womanless. It is no longer a question of race continuance. It is a question of sheer, ultimate being, the perfection of life, nearest to death. Acting from these centres, man is an extreme being, the unthinkable warrior, creator, mover, and maker." Lawrence decides that Whitman had known that "the polarity is between man and man," something which Lawrence had suspected, and towards the final recognition of which he had been directing his own thought and work.

Ultimately, the final version of Studies in Classic American Literature concentrates exclusively on males, and Lawrence realizes, especially in the Fenimore Cooper chapters, that the "new human relationship" is only possible between men, a "human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex. Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love....This is the new nucleus of a new society, the clue to a new world-epoch." In the figures of Natty Bumpo and Chingachgook, Lawrence sees the symbol of "a new race being": "And they stand side by side, stark, abstract, beyond emotion, yet eternally together. All the other loves seem frivolous. This is the new great thing, the clue, the inception of a new humanity." For Lawrence, the New Race would come from the

16 Symbolic Meaning, p.260.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p.261.
19 SCAL, p.51
20 Ibid., p.56.
non-consummated marriage of males, a strange communion and unknowable embrace out of which would rise the "wing-covered seraph of a new race being." Lawrence recognizes, and indeed recreates, a "genuinely mythic description of the West" which, in revealing its inherent "peculiar brand of sentimentality," betrays "a kind of higher Masculine Sentimentality utterly remote from all fables whose Happy Ending is Marriage." The "Happy Ending" which Lawrence envisages can only be written by "the manly love which alone can create a new era of life," a masculine love which surpasses marriage in that it has "no ulterior motive whatever, like procreation."22

There can be no doubt that Lawrence has now moved to a position where he believes that he can clearly see a purpose and vindication for homoerotic male relationships. In fact, he seems to have progressed beyond a simple "blood-brotherhood," promising individual communion, to a universal brotherhood suggestive of salvation and service: "...let men have a new attitude to one another. Let them have a new reverence for their heroes, a new regard for their comrades: deep, deep as life and death."23 This attitude or 'vision' is echoed with greater intensity and with an unmistakably lively commitment in Fantasia of the Unconscious: "The next relation has got to be a relation of men towards men in a spirit of unfathomable trust and responsibility, service and leadership, obedience and pure authority. Men have got to choose their leaders, and obey them to the death. And it must be a system of culminating aristocracy, society tapering like a pyramid to the supreme leader."24

Lawrence has come to this belief from his own investigation of the nature of male relations, through his disenchantment with "humanity," and via his immersion in Whitman and the homoerotic myth. There is, however, a problem, that of the inherent freedom

22 Symbolic Meaning, p.262-63.
23 Phoenix, "Education of the People" p.665.
24 Fantasia, p.179.
and 'democracy' of the great American experience, which sharply contrasts with the "superman" image in Whitman's 'Calamus'; this contradiction is especially noticeable in Lawrence's statements in the second part of the letter, where he expresses his admiration for the "manly love" conception in 'Calamus,' but the first part of the letter appears to contradict directly the sentiments expressed in the above quotations from "Education" and Fantasia, which themselves are ultimately derived from Lawrence's reading of Whitman. Lawrence writes to Baynes that "one has to learn that love is a secondary thing in life. The first is to be a free, proud, single being by oneself: to be oneself free, to let the other be free: to force nothing and not to be forced oneself into anything. Liberty, one's own proud liberty, is worth everything else on earth: something proud within oneself."

The apparently irreconcilable contradiction of these views may be considered as being a major stumbling block to any understanding of Lawrence's attitude toward male relationships, but Lawrence himself did perceive the contradiction. He believed at this point in his life that "manly love" would be able to change the world; that much is obvious from his admiration of Whitman and his analysis of Classic American Literature. However, Lawrence's recognition that if the love of comrades leads to the identification of the individual with the mass, in other words, with democracy and a resulting "merging," then this would be "only a half truth...the other half is Jehovah, and Egypt, and Sennacherib: the other form of Allness, terrible and grand, even as in the Psalms." 25 The contradiction between the authoritarian superman warrior figure, and that of the average or democratic man, is one which Lawrence at this period does not feel the need to reconcile. In fact, he decides for leadership and authority, and for the time being, against the average man—as "Education of the People" and "Democracy" reveal.

On the basis of the changing attitude we have examined in the theoretical and discursive writings, Aaron's Rod must be considered as a prelude to the fictional inception of these ideas.

25 Symbolic Meaning, p.258.
The important letter to Godwin Baynes, already referred to above, may be taken as the doctrine upon which the novel is predicated. Aaron Sisson must learn, in the words of the letter, that "love is a secondary thing in life. The first is to be a free, proud, single being by oneself." He must develop his "own proud liberty," and must "force nothing, and not be forced [himself] into anything." This freedom, Lawrence suggests, will lead, through "manly love" to "a real solution—the new adjustment." The concept of manly love is, for Lawrence, a "real implicit reliance of one man on another: as sacred a unison as marriage: only it is deeper, more ultimate than emotion and personality." This special type of male relationship combines both freedom and ultimate reliance; Aaron's Rod is an attempt to reach this plateau of existence.

Aaron Sisson's attempt at achieving the condition Lawrence describes in the Baynes letter, is an advance, in the words of "Education of the People," "into the new regions of unexplored futurity," and the establishment of "deathless friendship between man and man."²⁶ Aaron begins his exploration by recognizing the discordance within himself:

...he was not happy—nor comfortable. There was a hard, opposing core in him, that neither the whisky nor the woman could dissolve or soothe...He recognized it as a secret malady he suffered from: this strained, unacknowledged opposition to his surroundings, a hard core of irrational, exhausting withholding of himself...A woman and whisky, these were usually a remedy— and music. But lately these had begun to fail him. No, there was something in him that would not give in— neither to the whisky, nor to the woman, nor even the music. Even in the midst of his best music, it sat deep established in him, this obstinate black dog, and growled and was never cajoled. He knew of its presence—and was a little uneasy. For, of course, he wanted to let himself go; to feel rosy and loving and all that. But at the very thought, the black dog showed its teeth.²⁷

The divided self evident in the above analysis of Aaron's present condition, is one reason for his desertion of his wife, a course

²⁶ Phoenix, p.665.

²⁷ Aaron's Rod (Penguin Books edition, reprinted 1968) p.31. Subsequent references will be placed in parentheses immediately following the quotation in the text.
of action for which Lawrence gives little explanation when it occurs. What little justification Lawrence does reveal, is centred about Aaron's desire to keep himself apart from his wife and family's "curious, irritating possession"(15), a state of affairs which, on his wife's evidence, has contributed to a destructive relationship: "We were all right at first. I know I was fond of him. But he'd kill anything. He kept himself back, always kept himself back, couldn't give himself---"(56).

It is evident that Aaron has failed to achieve the polarity adumbrated in *Women in Love*, but the reasons and motives behind this failure are only revealed much later in the novel, when Aaron can clearly analyze his personal position in relation to his wife. What emerges from his introspection is that both of them felt themselves to be "first and single," especially Lottie who, "under all her whimsicalness and fretfulness had a conviction as firm as steel: that she, as woman, was the centre of creation, the man was just an adjunct. She, as woman, and particularly as mother, was the first great source of life and being, and also of culture. The man was but the instrument and the finisher. She was the source and the substance....She did but inevitably represent what the whole world around her asserted: the life-centrality of woman. Woman, the life-bearing, the life-source"(192). However, Lawrence has decided that there cannot be two "centres of creation," two individuals constantly conflicting for the position of "first and single." He has progressed beyond the notion of "polarity" towards the conviction that there can be, and must be, only one dominant partner in any relationship: an idea which had been expressed in much more subdued terms throughout the canon, but which at this point becomes vocal and dominant. We have already examined the evolution of this theme and its expression in the discursive writings of the period, and now we can see how these ideas are represented in *Aaron's Rod*.

Aaron's analysis of his relationship with his wife inevitably comes to the recognition which Lawrence posited in the 1920 revision of the Whitman essay: "the woman is reduced really, to a submissive function. She is now no longer an individual being with a living soul. She must fold her arms and bend her head and
submit to her functioning capacity. Function of sex, function of birth." Lottie must remain "with the wagons" as Aaron scouts ahead for a new fidelity between men. Lottie, however, would not acquiesce in such an arrangement, and in accordance with Lawrence's belief in the potentiality of an "advance into the regions of futurity," she must submit to Aaron before he can take his place in the ranks of male discoverers.

Aaron must leave his wife if he is to fulfill the promise Lawrence suggests is inherent in masculine endeavour. To maintain his individual and race integrity, as well as to accommodate himself to the unfolding "deathless friendship between man and man," Aaron is forced to venture out of his destructive marriage situation and into the unknown; he must do so without the hindrance of a wilful and possessive wife who steadfastly maintains that she is "first and single." In order for Aaron to "keep the mastery of his own soul and conscience and action"(155), he must reject the demands of Lottie and "hold himself forever beyond her jurisdiction. Henceforth, life single, not life double....Let there be clean and pure division first, perfected singleness. That is the only way to final, living unison: through sheer, finished singleness"(155-6).

Thus Aaron leaves his wife, and rejects, what in retrospect is James Argyle's analysis of his marital conflict: "...the balance lies, in that, that when one goes up, the other goes down. One acts, the other takes. It is the only way in love. And the women are nowadays the active party. Oh yes, not a shadow of doubt about it. They take the initiative, and the man plays up. That's how it is"(287), to which Aaron replies that his marriage "was the same. Mine was the same, if ever it was"(288). Love, then, especially the love relationship Aaron had with Lottie, becomes "a secondary thing," and he embarks upon the creation of "a free, proud, single being by oneself" which Lawrence so vehemently expressed in the Baynes letter. In leaving Lottie, and in recognizing the marital discord,

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29 Phoenix, p.665.
Aaron has reached a commitment which he whole-heartedly embraces in his credo, "Henceforth, life single, not life double."

Having embarked upon his life of "pure singleness" and, hopefully, being in a position to establish his "own proud liberty," Aaron must find his way to "final living unison"(156). It should be perfectly clear at this point in our discussion that the unison Aaron is approaching is one which can only be achieved with another man. And if the pattern Lawrence establishes in the Baynes letter, as well as in the discursive writings of the period, holds true, then we can only expect to find in the novel an approach towards "deathless friendship between man and man."\(^{30}\)

Aaron's quest for "singleness" and liberty" seems irrevocably to direct him towards Rawdon Lilly and the establishment of a relationship with him which is remarkable, in that Lilly is absent for most of the novel. Nevertheless, the invisible influence of Lilly upon Aaron is a viable force throughout, beginning with the "look of recognition"(77) which passes between them at the Bloomsbury gathering where Aaron is considerably out of place. Lilly can quite correctly be considered as Aaron's "alter-ego" as several commentators have pointed out,\(^{31}\) and, indeed, in one aspect at least, there is a more or less continuing dialogue between them which is suspiciously like a personal analysis. Lilly, who "had a certain belief in himself as a saviour"(91), supplies Aaron with articulated views about love and marriage, power and possession—views which, for the most part, Aaron is attempting to articulate for himself, and which he "feels" to be applicable and correct in his situation. At the same time, however, these views are questioned not only by Aaron, but by the other characters in the novel, though ultimately it is only the two men who are completely committed to, and affected by, the dialogue of alternatives.

Aaron perceives that Lilly has, to a considerable degree,

\(^{30}\) Phoenix, p.665.

\(^{31}\) Leavis, p.38, suggests the "alter-ego" analogy: Graham Hough, p. 98, "a dialogue of Lawrence with himself": Murry, Reminiscences, p. 235, "Aaron is the instinct to which Lilly supplies the consciousness. Also Tedlock, DHL: Artist and Rebel, p.152.
achieved his "own proud liberty" and has learned "to be a free, proud, single being" by himself. In fact, Lilly tells him as much when he takes Aaron in during his illness: "Everybody ought to stand by themselves, in the first place—men and women as well. They can come together, in the second place, if they like. But nothing is any good unless each one stands alone, intrinsically"(112). The main narrative line of the novel, is, as I have already established, Aaron's attempt to fulfil his credo, and the one emphasized in the Baynes letter. In Lilly, Aaron has found not only a guide, but perhaps a "saviour" who can show him the path and direction of achieving complete possession of himself and the realization of his soul's impulse.

The relationship between the two men is not completely one-sided; at the beginning, Aaron refuses to follow Lilly blindly. Aaron often retorts to Lilly's proselytizing from the vantage point of his own unsatisfactory experience, and criticizes Lilly's "self-possession" ideals on the basis of his own real past condition. Though Aaron agrees with the concept of keeping oneself to oneself, he cannot yet commit himself completely to Lilly's pronouncements: "You talk as if you were doing something special. You aren't. You're no more than a man who drops into a pub for a drink, to liven himself up a bit. Only you give it a lot of names, and make out as if you were looking for the philosopher's stone, or something like that....You talk, and you make a man believe you've got something he hasn't got. But where is it, when it comes to?"(127). Lilly agrees with this criticism up to a point, for he has a measure of self-awareness, but at the same time he reiterates the necessity of an expanded self-possession: "I think a man may come into possession of his own soul at last—as the Buddhists teach—but without ceasing to love, or even to hate. One loves, one hates—but somewhere beyond it all, one understands, and possesses one's soul in patience and in peace—"(128). Aaron must "learn to possess [his] soul in patience and in peace" as well, and to this end Lilly does serve as a guide, for throughout the novel Lilly's words echo and re-echo in Aaron's mind, and his subsequent behaviour shows that
they have a lasting and meaningful influence upon him.  

In addition to debating the values of proud singleness and liberty, and advocating their necessity, Lilly also initiates Aaron into the promise of "manly love" and the "implicit reliance of one man on another." The mode of Aaron's initiation is one with which we are already familiar, following, as it does, the established behaviour which characterized male conflict and relations in the previous works discussed. The earlier examples of male homoerotic behaviour were, with the exception of a few, secondary to the major theme and structure of the various works. This is not to suggest that they were not fully integrated into the larger concerns of the respective novels or stories, but rather that they embellished or supported the experience Lawrence was attempting to convey. In Aaron's Rod, however, the male homoerotic relationship is the major theme, for it acts in conjunction with the credo of "singleness" and "liberty" to fulfil the promise Lawrence had developed for it. The whole impetus behind the novel is to show the evolution and potentiality of "deathless friendship between man and man," acting as it does, in consort with singleness, and leading, as Lawrence believed it must, to "the new adjustment."

In Lawrence's previous exploration of male relations their purpose and meaning remained either in embryo state, or were reflections of personal confusion, or were half-realized stages to the present meaning and purpose which he evolved for them. At this point, however, Lawrence, for the first time, has developed a more or less coherent, and for himself, valid, theory of the directive potentiality of homoerotic male relations. In Aaron's Rod Lawrence is at pains to show not only this potentiality, but to submit it to careful scrutiny; this accounts for the dialogue intérieur nature of Lilly and Aaron's conversations. Ultimately, the novel stands as a prelude to the full commitment to the new configuration of male comradeship.

For example, Aaron's change in attitude towards the Marchesa, when he refuses to indulge the "reflex of his own passion" is directly attributed to "the influence of Lilly."
The homoerotic relationship between Aaron and Lilly develops, as many of the earlier ones did, from an initial "recognition," through a configuration of "dependence," until a final "adjustment" or "sacred union" is achieved. In Aaron's Rod, though, the recognition and dependence occur very early in the novel, and the remainder of the narrative serves to show only the potentiality of "adjustment" and union, although, in an important sense, Aaron has formed a spiritual and intellectual union with Lilly, as evidenced by Lilly's almost all-pervasive influence. At the same time, we must recognize that this influence is part of the dependence stage, which, in Lawrence's new development of male relations, has its proper alignment with the leadership and power themes.

The "recognition" which exists between the two men functions in much the same way as the male friendships in the earlier works. Aaron and Lilly are "brothers," though not related like Maurice and Geoffrey in "Love Among the Haystacks"; they nonetheless partake of the same kind of interpersonal experience: "The two men had an uncanny understanding of one another—like brothers. They came from the same district, from the same class. Each might have been born into the other's circumstances. Like brothers, there was a profound hostility between them. But hostility is not antipathy"(129). It would appear, then, that Lawrence is making it as easy as possible for a subsequent relationship. 33 In addition, their congruency firmly supports the suggestion that they are diverse facets of the same personality, and thus after completing the internal questioning dialogue, will be prepared to complete the "sacred union" of manly love.

The initiation of Aaron follows the pattern of direct physical contact and conflict which characterized the other male relations we have discussed. The emergence of a definite and articulated

33 In this context it is interesting to note that all the characters Lawrence treats as potential "blood-brothers," and for whom he is attempting to ascribe a homoerotic love ethic, come from similar backgrounds of class and education. This might stand as a critical and condemning fact for what he was attempting to achieve, but given Lawrence's personal preferences, is understandable, though perhaps not excusable.
purpose is reflected with a subtle, yet significant difference. The conflict is primarily intellectual and temperamental, while the physical contact is a loving and tender embrace, rather than the overt physical hostility noticeable in "The Prussian Officer," Sons and Lovers, and "The Old Adam" amongst others. Furthermore, the erotic contact does not come as the end result of repressed hostility which, after the actual conflict, is resolved in a relationship of affectionate tolerance. The physical contact between Aaron and Lilly begins from the assumption of "recognition" and affection, and is presented as rousing a "manly love" impulse in both. In addition, instead of lapsing into the emotional shock signified by stupor and coma, as in the case of the orderly in "The Prussian Officer" and Paul in Sons and Lovers, Aaron must be roused from "a sort of semi-stupor of fear, frustrated anger, misery and self repulsion: a sort of interlocked depression"(117).

Lilly, who is "properly troubled" about Aaron's illness, does "not quite know what to do," for it is obvious that if he takes no action, Aaron, as the doctor suggests, "might go off quite suddenly—dead before you can turn round—." It is more than significant that part of Aaron's depression and illness is due to the fact that "his bowels won't work," for as Lawrence suggests in Fantasia of the Unconscious: "the tide of life in us, instead of flowing upwards and outwards towards mental consciousness and activity, it turns back to flow downwards. Downwards towards the digestive processes...." This "flow" must be unhindered if Aaron is to have the "proper sleep"(118) which would allow his soul to retreat "back into the sea of its own darkness, the mind, stage by stage, enjoys the mental consciousness that belongs to this retreat back into the sensual deeps; and then it goes extinguished. There is sleep." This "proper sleep" is the sleep of regeneration, and preparation for "elemental contact"; Lilly is the only one who can reawaken Aaron, for "his soul seemed stuck, as if it would not move"(118). If by ministering to Aaron,

Lilly can remove the obstruction in Aaron's system, then the autonomous circuit can continue unopposed, and he will awaken "afresh out of the dark sea of the blood," a recreated self which "is the unit for the next society."  

The circuit which governs man's physical organism is linked, according to Lawrence's theory in Fantasia, to the sun and the moon: when the sun sets, and darkness falls, "the tide of life turns in us," and the moon "is the tide-turner. The moon is the great cosmic pole which calls us back, back out of our day-self, back through the moonlit darkness of the sensual planes, to sleep."  

The "mental consciousness that belongs to this retreat" has been lost to Aaron, and only when it is reawakened, will he be able to become a unit of the next society which, by means of the circuit of night polarization, will direct him "towards life, and towards leader,...the dynamic of the next civilization."  

With the theory outlined in Fantasia before us, it is significant to observe that when Lilly is "properly troubled" about Aaron's condition, it was "early afternoon, and the sun was shining into the room"(117). The doctor's dire warning that Aaron "might go off quite suddenly," comes in the morning, after Lilly had found the sick man "in a sort of heap on the bed," in a "semi-stupor of fear, frustrated anger, misery and self repulsion: a sort of interlocked depression." It is clear that the "circuit" necessary for regeneration has been interrupted, and though Lilly attempts to interest Aaron in the dynamic life, represented by the flowers "in the spring sunshine"(117), "his soul seemed stuck." Lilly prefers not to have a repeat of the previous night when Aaron "would slip down on his back, and go semi-conscious. And then he would awake, as if drowning, struggling to move, mentally shouting aloud, yet making no sound for

36 Ibid., p.180. Lawrence himself suffered a similar "obstruction," for in a letter to Catherine Carswell, April 1918 (AH 43%), he states: "I feel as if I had a child of black fury curled up inside my bowels. I'm sure I can feel exactly what it is to be pregnant, because of the weary bowel burden of a kind of contained murder which I can't bring forth."

37 Fantasia, p.181.

38 Ibid., p.180.
some moments..."(116). Obviously, then, Lilly must attempt to do something to reinstate the circuit of renewal which would allow Aaron to participate fully in life's potential: "Suddenly Lilly rose and went to the dressing table. 'I'm going to rub you with oil,' he said, 'I'm going to rub you as mothers do their babies whose bowels don't work.'"

Quickly he uncovered the blond lower body of his patient, and began to rub the abdomen with oil, using a slow, rhythmic, circulating motion, a sort of massage. For a long time he rubbed finely and steadily, then went over the whole of the lower body, mindless, as if in a sort of incantation. He rubbed every speck of the man's lower body—the abdomen, the buttocks, the thighs, and knees, down to the feet, rubbed it all warm and glowing with camphorated oil, every bit of it, chafing the toes swiftly, till he was almost exhausted. Then Aaron was covered up again, and Lilly sat down in fatigue to look at his patient.

He saw a change. The spark had come back into the sick eyes, and the faint trace of a smile, faintly luminous, into the face. Aaron was regaining himself. But Lilly said nothing. He watched his patient fall into a proper sleep(118).

The homoerotic brotherhood communion is once more enacted, surrounded by the trappings of mystical religious ritual; in this case, the ritual paraphernalia is not only obvious in its presence, but intimately connected with the esoteric Fantasia theory. In terms of the ritual, Aaron may be considered as a sacrificial victim being anointed with the holy oil, while Lilly, the priest surrogate, officiates "mindless, as if in a sort of incantation." In this sense, Aaron is being directed "towards life, and towards leader," for during the ritual, Aaron is completely dominated by Lilly rubbing him "as mothers do their babies." The domination which Lilly claims within their relationship, is here expressed in much the same way as Severn's treatment of Thomas in "The Old Adam," when he undresses his vanquished landlord, as he had earlier undressed the child. In addition, Lilly's mastery is reinforced by his ability to imitate the force of the moon, "the tide-turner," by "using a slow,

39 Fantasia, p.181.
rhythmic, circulating motion, a sort of massage"(ll8). Lilly's ability as high priest of an emerging "creative civilization" is evidently successful when he sees that "the spark had come back into the sick eyes, and the faint trace of a smile, faintly luminous, into the face."

The ritual should also be considered as a pledge "of deathless friendship between man and man," because it is enacted within the established homoerotic communion ceremony which Lawrence presented many times before. Lilly's intimate and tender caress, concentrated as it is on "the blond lower body" of Aaron, and including "every speck of the man's lower body," is a recognition of the suppressed contact which was desired but could not be expressed in any of the earlier incidents, though Birkin and Gerald's wrestling match did come close to a similar experience. In Women in Love, however, Lawrence's purpose was not to show the establishment of an exclusively male union which was to occupy the complete novel. In Aaron's Rod, the emphasis is slightly different, though ultimately it has its foundation in the earlier narrative. Lawrence is here concerned to show the establishment of "manly love," and "the real implicit reliance of one man on another" as a prelude to the new adjustment; this is a solution which was to be enacted solely within the concept of a male dominated and dominating society. Lawrence was also committing himself to the evolution of a society based upon male leadership, and utilizing the ideas of "superman" derived from Carpenter and Whitman. Thus, Lilly's friendship and domination are enacted in terms of a homoerotic communion which rouses not only a "spark" in Aaron's eyes, but a sensuous "smile, faintly luminous" on his face. Lilly's attentions are successful, for he notices that "Aaron was regaining himself," proof that the elemental circuit had been reestablished.

The communion and comradeship thus initiated, their relationship falls once more into the familiar pattern established in earlier incidents, for Lilly and Aaron enact a pseudo-marriage which, on the surface, corresponds to a conventional heterosexual relationship. As Aaron slowly recovers from his physical and spiritual illness, Lilly becomes the model housewife: "he put on
the kettle, and quietly set cups and plates on a tray. The room was clean and cozy and pleasant. He did the cleaning himself, and was a very efficient and unobtrusive a housewife as any woman. While the kettle boiled, he sat darning the socks which he had taken off Aaron's feet when the flautist arrived, and which he had washed" (120-1).

We can be quite certain that a type of brotherhood has been created between the men, for Lawrence quite explicitly states that "the two men had an almost uncanny understanding of one another—like brothers" (129). Whether this is indeed the "blood-brotherhood" posited in Women in Love, may be open to speculation, for at this point in the narrative there does not appear to be a total "implicit reliance of one man on another." Neither does their relationship suggest a union "as sacred...as marriage," though ostensibly Aaron and Lilly do behave as a married couple: Lilly washes and darns, and is said to be adept at "skilful housewifery" (129). It is possible that describing a domestic scene was the only way for Lawrence to convey a realistic manifestation of "sacred unison," and to offer it as a substitute for relationships "beyond women." At the same time, however, Lawrence demands that this new configuration of male comradeship should be "deeper, more ultimate than emotion and personality, cool separateness yet ultimate reliance." Lilly may perhaps have achieved the "separateness," or at least he likes to believe that he has, but Aaron has yet to do so, for emotion and personality are constantly evoked in his relations with Lilly: "Lilly's skilful housewifery always irritated Aaron: it was so self-sufficient. But most irritating of all was the little man's unconscious assumption of priority. Poor Lilly was actually unaware that he assumed this quiet predominance over others. He mashed the potatoes, he heated the plates, he warmed the red wine, he whisked the eggs into milk pudding, and served his visitor like a housemaid. But none of this detracted from the silent assurance with which he bore himself, and with which he seemed to domineer over his acquaintance" (129-30).

The thinly disguised scorn with which Aaron looks upon Lilly's unconscious self-assurance is tempered slightly by a grudging admiration. Aaron, however, feels inferior to Lilly and his accomplishments, for he has yet to achieve himself the self-possession which Lilly has acquired. It is apparent that Lilly has moved beyond women and has learned to possess his soul "in patience and peace"(128). He also desires the same thing for his wife: "And if Tanny possesses her own soul in patience and in peace as well—and if in this we understand each other at last—then there we are, together and apart at the same time, and free of each other, and eternally inseparable"(128). This is the type of "cool separateness yet ultimate reliance" which Lawrence is attempting to show being created in the "male marriage" of Aaron and Lilly, but with the qualification that, in the new configuration of manly love, there must emerge a leader or dominant partner. Clearly, Lilly believes himself to have this quality, for he unconsciously assumes "predominance over others," and while Aaron may be irritated by this display, it is only because he has yet to be reconciled to his own role in life and in relation to Lilly. Yet Aaron is fully aware that something has been initiated and completed between them, for "he knew perfectly well that Lilly had made a certain call upon his, Aaron's soul"(147). Though Aaron is not yet in a position to obey the call, and in spite of telling himself that he "did not intend to obey," Lilly has in fact had a great influence upon him, and once Aaron reconciles his own nature, he will return, perhaps triumphantly, to him.

Aaron does, as we have seen, establish a credo for himself; his commitment to "life single," fulfilling as it does the first demand of Lawrence's theory, involves the rejection of the "fixed female soul," and the "strange woman's will." Once Aaron has broken loose from Lottie, women like her, and all that they represent, he will have achieved a completion that is also a beginning: "the arrival at a state of simple, pure self-possession"(201). It is interesting that Lawrence suggests that both men and women are capable of this achievement (witness Lilly's wife Tanny), but he does not show that as happening.
Aaron has established a credo for himself the main impulse of which is the creation of perfect self-possession. But self-possession is closely aligned with predominance over others, and, in Aaron's case, he must exorcise the destructive relationship with Lottie, and establish, or re-establish, the ability to come to terms with, and dominate, a woman. By exploiting the power of his flute, which "Lilly had called Aaron's Rod," he quickly reveals "his own power" to the Marchesa. Through the magic of his phallic Pan music, he achieves victory: "his manhood, or rather his maleness, rose powerfully in him, in a sort of mastery. He felt his own power, he felt suddenly his own virile title to strength and reward" (300-1). Aaron, finally, has discovered through his self-possession, the ability to master the "fixed female soul" with its "strange woman's will." He feels the surge within him of "his own super-power," and moves about "in the splendour of his own male lightning, invested in the thunder of the male passion-power. He had got it back, the male godliness, the male godhead" (301).

Aaron emerges dominant, not only in his own eyes, but in the sex act with the Marchesa as well. But his success with the Marchesa and his new found power quickly palls on him, for he is not only happy to "go to bed alone, in his own cold bed, alone" (308), but finds that "it simply blasted his own central life. It simply blighted him" (317), to be with the woman. The reason for Aaron's unseemly quick disillusion is not hard to discover, for he feels that the Marchesa is using him as Lottie did previously, desiring only "to curl on his naked breast, to make herself small, small, to feel his arms round her, and his slow, still, breathing: lifting her....This seemed almost to make her beside herself with gratification" (317). Aaron decides that she used him "as a mere magic implement, used him with the most amazing priestess-craft" (318). The immediate comparison here is with Lilly's "incantation" when he anoints Aaron's body with the oil; while the Marchesa ignored "the individual man which he was" with "an indifference that was startling to him," Lilly did nothing of the sort. What Lilly was attempting to do, was to draw Aaron out of himself and re-establish the elemental
circuit which would allow the emergence of a self-sufficient being. The Marchesa, on the other hand, was attempting to destroy him: "she would drink the one drop of his innermost heart's blood, and he would be carrion": thus Aaron must reject her ("his soul stood apart, and could have nothing to do with it" [318]), and escape.

Aaron's escape from the Marchesa is a turning point in his commitment to Lilly and "the new adjustment," for, as he leaves the villa, "he had some difficulty in unfastening the various locks and bars and catches of the massive door downstairs, and began, in irritation and anger, to feel he was a prisoner, that he was locked in"[319]. The "locks and bars and catches" which Aaron has to unfasten, symbolize the many obstacles he has to overcome both in society and within himself, before he can finally be free for Lilly. When "the ponderous door" comes loose "suddenly," Aaron is issued forth into the morning, a living example of Lawrence's favourite metaphor of the seed and the kernel. Aaron's Rod has blossomed(301), and as a result of his experience with the Marchesa, he has made his final choice, or rather, like the seed, it has been made for him: "his soul, in its isolation...chose it so with the soul's inevitability" (319). As "the door shut heavily behind him, with a shudder," Aaron is released into the morning, into the "mental consciousness and activity"41 which the day, and "the next society" demands. His rod has served its purpose, and significantly it is destroyed not only by the bomb which shatters the cafe, but its symbolic phallic function is exorcised in the dream he has after its destruction.42

In the dream, Aaron, in the guise of "two people," an invisible self, and a "flesh-and-blood....palpable self," is in a boat gliding outward on a large lake. As the boat moves, the palpable, flesh-and-blood Aaron does not hear the rower's warnings,

41 Fantasia, p.180.

42 H.M. Daleski, in The Forked Flame pp.201-2, has I think adequately discussed the symbolism of the dream, but neglects the meaning of the moon and its relation, as I suggest, to the theory in Fantasia.
and his "naked elbow" strikes three stakes standing up in the water to "mark the course." The stakes, symbolic of the phallic rod, are also related to the three women who had been in Aaron's life: Lottie, Josephine, and the Marchesa; as each is knocked down, the "invisible Aaron breathed with relief." Once the relationship with the women, and the blossoming rod has been discarded, the boat is free to sail on "into the deep, unfathomable water"—presumably indicative of a relationship with Lilly, and the manly love adjustment of the next society. That this is indeed the case, is revealed by the fact that Aaron arrives at a city in the centre of the lake dominated by Astarte, the moon goddess. As we have seen, Lilly is identified with the moon, being the moon surrogate who revives Aaron from his illness and establishes the elemental circuit which prepares him for a life in "the deep unfathomable water" of the new adjustment. Aaron's journey is towards Lilly, and the establishment of a relationship with her, a relationship which, within the criteria of the Baynes letter, "must be deeper, more ultimate than emotion and personality"; this is precisely what Aaron has left behind in his relationship with the women, and destroyed flute. The next day, after the dream, Aaron realizes that "the only thing he felt was a thread of destiny attaching him to Lilly....So he made up his mind, if he could, to make some plan that would bring his life together with that of his evanescent friend"(335).

The idol of Astarte which appears in Aaron's dream, holds in her lap several sizes of eggs; this forms the direct link with the potential which Lilly holds out to Aaron. In the conversation between the two men in the last chapter of the novel, Lilly advises Aaron that he must not deny his "own soul's self," and Aaron retorts somewhat sarcastically: "So I'd better sit tight on my soul, till it hatches, had I?"(344). To which Lilly replies: "Oh yes. If your soul's urge urges you to love, then love. But always know that what you are doing is the fulfilling of your soul's impulse." Love, Lilly suggests, is not the goal, but a means, "a life-means" of fulfilling the soul's "active desire and suggestion." Love, then, is secondary, and according to Lilly (Lawrence), man has exhausted the "love-urge" for the moment, and must commit himself to the "power motive," for only
within the power motive will man find life and potentiality. However, the love urge and the power urge appear to operate within the human consciousness in the same way: "there must be one who urges, and one who is impelled," and Lawrence suggests that "the woman must submit, but deeply, deeply submit" (346).

Here, then, emerges the basis upon which the "new adjustment" will be formulated, a basis which, as we have seen, was conceived within the context of male comradeship and leadership as expounded in the Whitman and "Education" essays. The submission is not here given a definite political application, but is linked to the individual soul "in its dark motion of power and pride" (346). As Lilly suggests, Aaron is his own "Tree of Life...Somewhere within the wholeness of the tree lies the very self, the quick" (344), and as we have seen, Aaron's tree, his 'Rod', has blossomed and sent forth its buds, for Aaron "understood, he knew. He understood, oh, so much more deeply than if he had listened with his head" (345). But Aaron also recognizes that man cannot live alone, and demands an application for his newly discovered awareness, which Lilly meets with the concept of the power urge. Power, unlike love, he suggests, is not only concerned with happiness, for happiness is only "one of many states, and it is horrible to think of fixing us down to one state." The urge for power does not limit man's potential to a single state, but "urges from within, darkly, for the displacement of the old leaves, the inception of the new" (346). When love is displaced, or becomes secondary, as the criterion demands, there will be "profound, profound obedience in place of this love-crying, obedience to the incalculable power urge. And men must submit to the greater soul in man, for their guidance: and women must submit to the positive power-soul in man, for their being" (347).

This is the formula for the creation of a "unit for the next society," and though Lilly is extremely imprecise, it is clear that Aaron will be such a potential unit. He has been

43 Fantasia, p.180.
vitalized by Lilly, "the tide-turner" and moon priest, and has surrendered completely to "the heroic soul in a greater man"(347). Lilly suggests to him that; "You, Aaron, you too have the need to submit. You, too, have the need livingly to yield to a more heroic soul, to give yourself. You know you have. And you know it isn't love. It is life-submission. And you know it"(347). Indeed, Aaron does know it, for he sees Lilly above him, "dark and remote seeming," his face "like a Byzantine eikon." Lilly is the leader to whom Aaron must submit, for he contains the mysterious power of male godhead, and exercises his influence over Aaron in the guise of Astarte and moon priest. The impetus is towards the fulfilment of a homoerotic relationship of "implicit reliance" or submission, though the novel does end on an ambiguous note. In reply to Aaron's question about whom he is to submit to, Lilly answers: "Your soul will tell you."

Part of the ambiguity derives from the fact that Aaron has already submitted to Lilly, as the various incidents I have discussed demonstrate. On the other hand, Aaron's submission is unconvincing, and while he agrees with Lilly on love and passion, he cannot give himself fully to the concept of the power urge; not believing for example, that women can yield in the way Lilly demands. The inconclusiveness of the ending is directed primarily at the power theme to which Aaron does not acquiesce, and this reservation at the end must be seen, to some extent, as Lawrence's own. Nevertheless, as the novel itself reveals, Lawrence has shown a progression within the criteria he establishes in the Baynes letter and in the discursive writings, towards the new adjustment. Lilly has formed a male comradeship and established himself as leader; he has directed Aaron beyond the female relationships which had "blighted him" and prevented a full communion. The nature of their communion, or manly love relationship, is purposely left open at the end of the novel, for *Aaron's Rod* is only the prelude for Lawrence's exploration of a purely male-dominated world. *Aaron's Rod* is a necessary step in the direction of the exploration of male comradeship and the leadership themes, and in spite of the novel's often humourlessly portentous and pompous narrative, it succeeds in establishing the basis upon which the exploration is to continue.
CHAPTER VII

Kangaroo:  The New Human Relationship

Aaron Sisson's reluctance, at the end of Aaron's Rod, to acquiesce completely to the ideas of power and leadership, should not be considered as a failure of Lilly's powers of persuasion. By leaving the ending of the novel purposely vague and inconclusive, Lawrence allows himself the option of pursuing his theme in either a positive or negative direction. In Kangaroo, he chooses to examine both these possibilities, but still retains the idea of the necessity of male relations against which to view any development of leadership. Lawrence's investigation of the overt political exploitation of power and leadership, is conceived in terms of intimate personal and physical relations between men, because his ultimate interest is with individual male activity in a male-dominated society. We have seen that one of the criteria for the "new adjustment" is an implicit reliance of "one man on another" within a communion of "manly love" and, as Aaron's Rod has revealed, this can only evolve from a deep personal and individual male relationship.

The necessity for a basis of individual and personal relationships in any attempt at creating a new social organization, demands that the individual involved first resolve his own problems of selfhood. Aaron Sisson accomplished this to a large degree through his own efforts coupled with those of Rawdon Lilly, and as the novel suggests, his success would have been incomplete had it not been for the special relationship he had contracted with another man. In Kangaroo, Richard Lovat Somers must also contend with his own unique problems of self; in fact, he is searching for some meaning in the new life he has chosen in Australia, for as Lawrence himself discovered: "It is a weird place....there seems to be no inside life of any sort: just a long lapse and drift. A rather fascinating indifference, a physical indifference to what we call soul or spirit."\(^1\)

\(^1\) CL. 711. Letter to Catherine Carswell, 22 June 1922.
The Australia 'without a consciousness' is the perfect landscape in which to explore the themes of power and leadership; Lawrence's statements about these forces, in the discursive writings, posit the emergence of a "living dynamic relation"—a consciousness which will establish the "next society." Since Lawrence's theories demand "that every individual creature shall come to its own particular and individual fullness of being," it is not surprising that Somers must discover his own selfhood in a relationship with Jack Callcott at first, and then with Kangaroo later. The "dynamic relation" which Lawrence now considers to be paramount, is a "relationship of men towards men in a spirit of unfathomable trust and responsibility, service and leadership, obedience and pure authority. Men have got to choose their leaders, and obey them to the death. And it must be a system of culminating aristocracy, society tapering like a pyramid to the supreme leader." This formula is examined in Kangaroo, with Somers as the experiencing and critical protagonist, first as leader within his relationship with Jack, and then as follower in his flirtation with the authority of Kangaroo. In both cases, however, the experiment is conducted on two levels: the first being a purely personal and individual attempt to come to terms with himself, and the second, an attempt to place the individual within the larger context of authoritarian organization.

Both levels of Richard Somers' investigation and involvement are enacted within the framework of male-oriented activity and relationships. Somers consciously wills himself away from, and beyond, the influence of women, as represented by his wife Harriet: "I intend to move with men and get men to move with me before I die....I've got to struggle with men and the world of men for a time yet....I have the roots of my life with you. But I want if possible to send out a new shoot in the life of mankind—the effort

2 Ibid.
3 Fantasia, p.179.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
man makes forever, to grow into new forms." The conflict between Somers and Harriet centres upon Lawrence's idea, as expressed at the end of the "Education of the People" essay, that man is the explorer-warrior, scouting ahead of the women who remain behind. The view that women must be shut out of the impersonal world of male activity is not one to which Harriet is willing to acquiesce, though she does, in time, grant the proposition of impersonal activity. Like Aaron, Somers must also rationalize his relationship with women, but he does not have to endure the same degree of purgation which Aaron suffered.

The picaresque quality of Aaron's experiences emphasizes the explorer-wanderer function of the emerging male hero, and the three women in his life represent, as we have seen, the obstacles to be overcome before he can commit himself with Lilly. Aaron's "adventures" led Lawrence a merry chase, for he reports: "I am finishing Aaron. And you won't like it at all. Instead of bringing him nearer to heaven, in leaps and bounds, he's misbehaving and putting ten fingers to his nose at everything." The difficulty Lawrence experienced in bringing Aaron to heel is due, to a large extent, to his own reluctance to face the consequences of his theories, though he had opted for male supremacy and the power theme in lieu of a commitment to democracy and the masses. However, by the end of the novel, Aaron is approaching "heaven," or at least Lawrence is prepared to hope that he will choose the path leading to the establishment of a social heaven. Kangaroo takes us further along that path, for here, Aaron's "adventures" become, through the agency of Somers, much more cerebral: "Man is a thought-adventurer. Man is more, he is a life adventurer. Which means he is a thought-adventurer, an emotion adventurer, and a discoverer of himself and of the outer universe. A discoverer"(307-8). Yet this "thought-adventure" is still experienced within the terms of reference scattered throughout the theoretical.

6 Kangaroo (Penguin edition, reprinted 1968) pp.77-78. Subsequent references will appear in parentheses immediately following the quotation in the text.

7 CL 653. Letter to Dorothy Brewster, May 1921.
writing, and more specifically, within the context established by the necessity of male relationships. Before anything concrete can be discovered about the validity of Lawrence's intuition, and before any definite social action can accrue to it, the major characters involved in the process of the "thought adventure" must be seen to establish the one major Lawrentian demand—that they act from the impulse generated by male comradeship, for only from this basis can anything valid and positive occur. Thus, any examination and discussion of the Leadership and Power themes must occur on the level of personal relationships, for human interaction is the only basis upon which to construct the new consciousness of adjustment.

The first relationship Somers forms in the "world of men," is with his neighbour Jack Callcott, a man in whose eyes Somers notices "a touch of mystery, of aboriginal darkness"(38). The description is apt, for it embodies the "extraordinary hoary, weird attraction" which Lawrence and Somers feel for Australia. At this stage in the narrative, Callcott is Australia, and the "weird" attraction which Lawrence, in the letter to Catherine Carswell, attributed to the seeming age of the country—"it seems so old, as if it had missed all this Semite-Egyptian-Indo European vast era of history, and was coal age, the age of great ferns and mosses"—is reflected in the "aboriginal darkness" within Callcott. The mysterious darkness is representative of an age "before souls, spirits, minds were grown at all," and its lack of "consciousness" is the perfect environment within which men may attempt to create a new one. The face of Australia is "weird" and "vulnerable," but its body is "live, energetic," just like its representative Jack Callcott(66). A measure of attraction is thus established between the men on the basis of instinct and emotion, and Somers is drawn to Callcott not only by intellectual curiosity, but by a deeply felt need for a personal and physical relationship.

The physical undertone to the relationship between the men is mutually recognized, yet at the same time is reinforced by a mystical or esoteric attraction which we have seen to be manifested

8 CL 711.
in the other male relationships Lawrence presents. In the case of Somers and Callcott, the ostensible physical compatibility is informed by a spiritualist instinct; Jack tells Somers that "some of us chaps...can tell a man by the smell of him, so to speak. If we can't see the colour of his aura, we can jolly well size up the quality of it. And that's what we go by. Call it instinct or what you like"(62). The favourite Lawrentian device of indicating recognition and commitment by describing a meeting of eyes during which the characters involved "know" each other instinctively, is given in Kangaroo the explicit mystical and esoteric meaning which is its basis throughout Lawrence's work. The difference is that in the present novel, Lawrence is utilizing his understanding of the mystic basis for male comradeship which he derived via Whitman, and through his reading of Eastern and domestic mystics. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to recognize that Lawrence is giving male relationships an extra-physical and experiential impetus which, though closely linked to physical and emotional attraction, exists both separate from, and as a part of, that attraction. This additional quality inherent in male relationships can best be called a type of reinforced instinct, for it is, along with the homoerotic drive, a basis from which men may act in consort to develop a positive achievement.

Callcott recognizes that it was instinct and fate which brought Somers to Australia, and hence into his life: "I knew it the minute I set eyes on you...I said to myself, 'that chap is coming into my life!'"(63-4). It is because of this recognition that Jack knows he can "trust" Somers, and in return, the "common honour, as between man and man"(65), convinces Somers that to have "reservations and qualifications" about the offer of intimate friendship is pointless. Callcott's earnestness prompts Somers to pledge his trust in return, and at this, "a light leaped into Jack's eyes,"(65) similar, it should be pointed out, to the "spark" which enters Aaron's eyes after Lilly's mystic incantation. What follows in Kangaroo is a physical homoerotic expression of the "man to man" relationship upon which the future is to be decided: "Jack came to him and flung an arm round his shoulders
and pressed him close, trembling slightly, and saying nothing. Then he let go, and caught Somers by the hand. 'This is fate,' he said, 'and we'll follow it up.' He seemed to cling to the other man's hand. And on his face was a strange light of purpose and of passion, a look at once exalted and dangerous"(65).

The intensity of feeling in Jack's passion for his new "mate" is a palpable physical expression of the homage and hope he has for him, but at the same time Lawrence is wary of the uses of such passion, for he describes Callcott's purpose as potentially dangerous. The danger at this stage of the narrative is that the confusion of emotional and political feelings will have a detrimental effect upon Somers insofar as it is an instinctual conviction, coming from the "dark aboriginal forces" from within Callcott. It is clear that Lawrence is seriously questioning the uses to which such forces may be put, for though he considers them as an integral part of male social action, he fears the consequences of a commitment which denies the individual consciousness. Since Somers is, in an important sense, in the process of developing his own consciousness, the commitment with Callcott is at best ambiguous; though Lawrence is concerned to investigate and develop a situation where male relationships in a male dominated world are seen to establish a new adjustment and "save" society, he is apprehensive about the possibility of it being able to do so at the expense of the individual. Thus, even at the beginning of Kangaroo, Lawrence has important reservations about power and leadership, but as H.M. Daleski suggests, Lawrence, "with logical persistence, drives himself through Kangaroo, to a clearly repugnant position in The Plumed Serpent."9

The danger which Lawrence perceives in Jack Callcott's intensity, does not prevent him from continuing his investigation, for he still feels that his flirtation with the themes of Kangaroo might have a positive result. The basis for this positive potentiality still remains the value inherent in a homoerotic male relationship, for the salvation of Australia is conceived of in terms of "a set of chaps with some guts in them, who'll

obey orders when they find a man who'll give the orders"(102). This, of course, is an extension in direct action, of Lilly's contention that "all men...want a leader...in their souls to submit to some greater soul than theirs." Callcott recognizes in Somers a man "who seems sure of himself and what he means"; in effect, he believes Somers to have the self-possession which Lilly was attempting inculcate in Aaron. In spite of the fact that Somers has yet to be absolutely sure of "what he means" and what he wants, he is ready to pretend that he does, and once again it is in the context of a homoerotic communion that Callcott reveals the presence of a fifth column in Australia. The secret information is imparted at night on the shore of the sea, with "the stars shining overhead," as if to give to what is in effect an initiation ceremony, a mysterious almost universal importance. The fact that it is enacted at night, in darkness, with only the stars for witnesses, suggests a link with the forces of primeval mystery and the "elemental circuit" of the Fantasia theory. In addition, the exchange is "man to man," or as Callcott emphasizes: "This is absolutely between ourselves, now, isn't it?"(103). The setting and the two solitary men, alone like lovers on the sea shore, combine to elevate the situation into the familiar mystic homoerotic initiation ceremony:

"Give my your hand then," said Jack. Somers gave him his hand, and Jack clasped it fast, drawing the smaller man to him and putting his arm around his shoulders and holding him near to him. It was a tense moment for Richard Lovat. He looked at the dark sea, and thought of his own everlasting gods, and felt the other man's body next to his. "Well now," he said in Somers' ear, in a soothed tone. "There's quite a number of us in Sydney—and in other towns as well—we're mostly diggers back from the war—we've joined up in a kind of club—and we're sworn in—and we're sworn to obey the leaders, no matter what the command, when the time is ready—and we're sworn to keep silent till then. We don't let out much, nothing of any consequence, to the general run of the members." Richard listened with his soul. Jack's eager, conspirator voice seemed very close to his ear, and it had a kind of caress, a sort of embrace. Richard was absolutely motionless(103-4).
The significant aspect of the situation is the sheer physical nature of the communion between the men, or at least what appears to be a communion, for Somers is listening with his soul. Like Aaron Sisson, Somers is being seduced not only by the "strange speech—music which sank into him" (AR 345), but by the "caress" and "embrace" of Callcott's voice. Somers' initiation into the secrecy of the diggers movement is largely sexual in nature, for, as Lawrence suggests in Fantasia: "at the last hour of sex I am no more than a powerful wave of mounting blood, which seeks to surge and join with the answering sea in the other individual." It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the men share the secret of the future on the shores of the sea, and that Somers feels "the other man's body next to his...holding him near to him."

Lawrence, however, appears to have reservations about the value of the communion, if indeed it is a communion at all, and these reservations are necessarily extended to the value of the organization Callcott outlines. Somers is "tense," and stands "absolutely motionless,"—much the same response evidenced between Maurice and Bertie Reid in "The Blind Man." In that short story, it will be remembered, the physical contact between the men was an indication of an ironic inversion and failure of masculine comradeship, for Bertie's "tenseness" and swoon-like motionless imprisonment was suggestive of his revulsion and inability to come to terms with himself. The similar response of Somers in Kangaroo, suggests the unreality of the political organization, and the commitment with which Callcott is attempting to seduce Somers. Lawrence emphasizes this when he has Richard think of entering in with these men in a dangerous, desperate cause. It seemed unreal. Yet there he was, with Jack's arm round him. Jack would want him to be his 'mate.' Could he? His cobber. Could he ever be mate to any man?"(104).

The answer, prepared for by Lawrence's reservations in his description of the relations between Callcott and Somers, is an emphatic "No". Yet even in Somers' rejection of being "mates" in the way Callcott desires, is the inconclusiveness which

characterized the ending of Aaron's Rod, for Somers is tempted "to pledge himself to a friendship, or comradeship, that nothing should alter. He wanted to do it. Yet something withheld him as if an invisible hand were upon him, preventing him"(118). Somers does desire "a living fellowship," or some type of living relationship with another man, but emphatically rejects "any more affection... not affection, not love, not comradeship. Not mates and equality and mingling. Not blood-brotherhood. None of that"(119-120). This, it will be immediately noticed, is a new development in Lawrence's attitude toward male relationships, for Somers is recoiling from the very type of relationship which Lawrence had been advocating from almost the beginning of his career.

I would like to suggest that Lawrence is having Somers reject "intimate comradeship" not so much because it is a questionable relationship with a man, but because Lawrence, in his own search for a method whereby male relations could be rationalized and made acceptable to his own personal situation and way of thinking, had linked his commitment to an abhorrent political and social position. Thus, he has come to the point where he must either reject the whole and support the part, or support the whole and reject the part, clearly an impossibility, though Lawrence seems to have a predilection for advocating irreconcilable positions. Somers, therefore, rejects blood-brotherhood, affection, and manly-love, for the simple reason that to support it would mean an involvement with a political organization whose members are potentially irrational Kangaroo-like animals(118). It is this which, in the final analysis, Lawrence rejects, for comradeship and affection had led him to the superman-warrior theory which at one time he thought would be the salvation of mankind. But the total submission to a leader necessarily involves the complete erasure of individual personality and self-hood, a position for which Lawrence has little sympathy. It appears, then, that Lawrence has, in the first quarter of the novel, rejected the very idea of male comradeship acting in consort with political and social action. This is not to suggest that he rejects outright the idea of "a comrade, a mate," for Somers "half wanted
to commit himself to this whole affection with a friend," and recognizes that "the affection would be deep and genuine enough" (119). The other half of the problem of commitment with a "mate" is, as I have suggested above, the shrinking from the political involvement which, in the structure of the novel, is a necessary adjunct to the question of comradeship.

Kangaroo reveals that Lawrence has come to the position where he is once more divided between two contradictory impulses. Both are intimately connected with "the relationship between men" and to some extent may each be seen as a justification and rationalization of the other. Rejecting one, however, must necessarily bring about the rejection of the other, or at least its transformation into something different. Lawrence shows Somers to be rejecting the idea of "blood-brotherhood" and comradeship, but still committed to the idea of "some other living relationship"(120). This other living involvement which Somers feels he desires, is a "mystic relationship between men, which democracy and equality try to deny and obliterate. Not any arbitrary caste or birth aristocracy. But the mystic recognition of difference and innate priority, the joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority"(120). Clearly, these criteria are not fulfilled in Kangaroo, for "blood-brotherhood" and the idea of "mates" is the basis for the organization, both political and individual, which informs the novel. Since Somers rejects all thought of "a beloved ideal of friendship," love, and "mingling...intimacy," he must necessarily reject the political and social ideas of Kangaroo which combine concepts of authority and absolute love. What remains is an emerging commitment to "mystic" authority and the creation of a personal myth to contain it. That, however, is not the business of Kangaroo, and the remainder of the novel serves to reinforce the initial rejection expressed by Somers, and hint at the next development.

That Somers will ultimately turn away from the organization represented by Calcott, Struthers, and Kangaroo, is evident almost from the beginning of his involvement. The men are all creatures, and not visibly human at all: "Jack himself wasn't unlike a kangaroo, thought Somers: a long-faced, smooth-faced, strangely watchful kangaroo with powerful hindquarters"(118).
There is something of the demonic in the descriptions of the diggers, and Ben Cooley obviously "was a kangaroo. His face was long and lean and pendulous, with eyes set close together behind his pince-nez; and his body was stout but firm....Somers noticed that when he sat down, his thighs in his dark grey, striped trousers were very thick, making his shoulders seem almost slender; but though his stomach was stout, it was firm"(120-1). As Somers becomes more and more involved in debating their relative beliefs with Kangaroo, the leader visibly changes into a non-human demonic creature: "Kangaroo's face had gone like an angry wax mask, with mortification. An angry wax mask of mortification, haughty with a stiff, wooden haughtiness"(233). The death and putrefaction which metaphorically hovers over Kangaroo's political ideals, come to realistic fruition through a series of physical changes: "He had become again hideous, with a long yellowish face and black eyes close together, and a cold,... dangerous hulk to his shoulders. For a moment Somers was afraid of him, as of some great ugly idol that might strike. He felt the intense hatred of the man coming at him in cold waves. He stood up in a kind of horror, in front of the great, close-eyed horrible thing that was now Kangaroo. Yes, a thing, not a whole man. A great Thing, a horror"(234). Finally, with a bullet in his "marsupial pouch," Kangaroo lies festering in a hospital bed: "Somers found Kangaroo in bed, very yellow, and thin, almost lantern-jewed, with haunted, frightened eyes. The room had many flowers, and was perfumed with eau-de-cologne, but through the perfume came an unpleasant, discernable stench"(354).

What Somers essentially recoils from in Kangaroo's political dogma, is the concept of love and absolute power acting in unison as the foundation of creative activity(148). This is the very idea which Lawrence rejected in the Baynes letter when he states that "love is secondary," and which Lilly rejected at the end of Aaron's Rod as "the hateful will-to-love." Kangaroo thwarted is, as we have seen, "a great, close-eyed horrible thing," but he still exercises a strange attraction for Somers, which, once again, is manifested in homoerotic terms: "Richard, curled narrow in his chair like a snake, glanced up at the big man projecting
over him. A sort of magnetic effusion seemed to come out of Kangaroo's body, and Richard's hand was almost drawn in spite of himself to touch the other man's body. He had to refrain from laying his hand on the near, generous stomach of the Kangaroo, because automatically his hand would have lifted and sought that rest"(152). This time, however, Somers rejects the advance, and the implied intimate relationship, for already his own creative impulse lies elsewhere, and he is only playing devil's advocate to Kangaroo's politics: "Kangaroo searched Lovat's eyes; but they seemed to be of cloudy blue like hell-smoke, impenetrable and devilish"(152).

The physical revulsion that coexists with the almost mystical attraction which Somers feels for Kangaroo, extends to his lieutenants as well. Willie Struthers awakens in Somers a Whitmanesque "Love of Comrades" which the Australians choose to call "mate love" and "mate-trust." Somers perfectly recognizes "the latent power that is in man today, to love his near mate with a passionate, absolutely trusting love," and realizes that Struthers wanted this mate-love "called into consciousness and highest honour.... It was to be the new tie between men, in the new democracy. It was to be the new passionate bond in the new society. The trusting love of a man for his mate"(219). Somers cannot acquiesce, "for he had learned the great danger of the new passion, which as yet lay only half realized and half recognized, half effective"(220). The objection is a major one, and involves the fact that a commitment to "the love-will" eventually "kills the thing it loves," and that individuality is "a wayward, wilful, dangerous, untrustworthy quantity to every other individual" and eventually "is bound to react at some time" against every other individual, or "lose its own integrity"(220). The bifurcation of latent desire and rational consciousness manifests itself once again, and Somers is forced to reject Struthers' advances while recognizing his own attraction to them. This is evident when he tells Kangaroo that Willie is "...a force, he's something," but that he doesn't "like him physically--something thin and hairy and spiderish. I didn't want to touch him"(228).

Somers' rejection of the values and ideology of the diggers
movement is constantly revealed by the repulsive animal, reptile, and insect analogies which Lawrence applies to them. Ben Cooley is, of course, a kangaroo, and so is Jack Callcott, but Kangaroo is a horrible yellow putrefying animal, and Struthers is a thin hairy spider. Somers himself, when he appears to acquiesce to Kangaroo, sits "curled narrow in his chair like a snake". Finally, Somers realizes that Kangaroo is not "really aware" of him as an individual, for if he were, "he wouldn't be hugging me as if I were a scorpion. And I am a scorpion. So why doesn't he know it? Damn his love. He wants to force me". The rape analogy is particularly apt, as is the metaphor of Kangaroo fostering a scorpion in his nest, for ultimately Somers must sting him, and by questioning the validity and efficacy of his ideology, injects the poison which results in Kangaroo's festering death. The irony is that Kangaroo stings himself by "pressing the slight body of the lesser man against his own breast and body", symbolic of the fact that Kangaroo ignores Lovat's advice and persists in "some fixed idea of himself". The idea, as Somers points out, "is perishable...even the idea of God or Love or Humanity or Liberty—even the greatest idea has its day and perishes."

Lawrence is not, however, being totally pessimistic; he is only being realistic, for he recognizes, and has Somers do the same, that "we must have ideas," and that when "a man follows the true inspiration of a new, living idea, he then is a willing man whom the Fates lead onwards". It is only when a man follows an idea that is "really dead," and still persists in following it, that he is "the unwilling man who the Fates destroy." Lawrence, it appears, has been following a dead idea, and it is his recognition of that fact which prompts the repulsive animal and insect imagery throughout the novel, a throwback to the "beetle" imagery of *Women in Love*. The violence and death which emerges from the digger movement, and which turns into the literal and metaphoric corruption of Kangaroo and his organization, is evidence of Lawrence's implicit rejection of a concept which seems to have led nowhere. Kangaroo's particular brand of manly love and authority leads only to the annihilation of death:
"You've killed me. You've killed me, Lovat!" whispered Kangaroo. "Say good-bye to me. Say you love me now you've done it, and I won't hate you for it." The voice was weak and tense....There ensued a long silence. The corpse—for such it seemed—lay immobile and obstinate. Yet it did not relax into death. And Richard could not go, for it held him. He sat with his wrist clasped by the clammy thin fingers, and he could not go. Then again the dark, mysterious, animal eyes turned up to his face. "Say you love me, Lovat."...."Say you love me." The pleading, penetrating whisper seemed to sound inside Somers' brain. He opened his mouth to say it. The sound "I--" came out. Then he turned his face aside and remained open-mouthed, blank.

Somers' refusal to appease the conscience of the dying Kangaroo, is a measure of his own integrity, and the position to which Lawrence has come, for Somers has opposed Kangaroo on the basis of a new commitment he has evolved for himself. It is almost pointless to emphasize that this is Lawrence's commitment as well, for the Whitmanesque comradeship/Superman/Leader appears to have been transcended and transmuted into a new communion:

"...one cannot have a life of entire loneliness, like a monkey on a stick, up and down one's own obstacle. There's got to be meeting: even communion....The ritual of supreme responsibility, and offering. Sacrifice to the dark God, and to the men in whom the dark God is manifest. Sacrifice to the strong, not to the weak. In awe, not in dribbling love. The communion in power, the assumption into glory. La gloire" (312).

Lawrence's "Dark God" has been the subject of much critical debate, and informed guesses as to its meaning range from opinions that Lawrence himself did not understand what it was, to the fact that "he is intrinsically and necessarily, vague and undefined." Other critics suggest that the Dark God is the opposite of the "God of Love" and should be considered as "a symbol for some pantheistic conception which gives the individual a profound sense of identification with 'great creating nature'

and at the same time a sense of being commanded by a powerful authority within himself." J.I.M. Stewart believes that the dark god "is not revealed to Somers or to Lawrence," and Anthony Beal thinks that ultimately Lawrence "does little to define the dark gods." All of these approaches are to some extent correct, with the possible exception of Graham Hough's dismissal as to Lawrence's own understanding of what he was about. The important consideration is that Lawrence himself purposely left the definite meaning of the dark god vague, for he is "forever dark, forever unrealizable: forever and forever" (294). This god is "unutterable...because it can never have a name," and is simply "the great living darkness which we represent by the glyph, God" (294). The dark god also has somewhat of a "pantheistic conception," for "every living human soul is a well-head to this darkness of the living unutterable," and every man who contends with his own soul, contends with the dark god, for "this unutterable is like a germ, a foetus with which he must travail, bringing it at last into utterance, into action, into being" (294).

The "glyph" for the unutterable and unthinkable creative activity, is "many gods to many men: all things to all men," and though Lawrence suggests that "it is a frightening thought," he maintains that it is "very liberating" (295). Keith Sagar believes that it is also a dangerous thought, for "if any man can give the name of God to his passions and strange motives, we shall have some bloody gods, including Lawrence's," and uses as his evidence Lawrence's statement that "to be pure in heart, man must listen to the dark gods as well as to the white gods, to the call to a blood-sacrifice as well as to the eucharist" (296). Be that as it may, Lawrence is primarily concerned that the total man be available to the influence of the dark god, for "life

16 The Art of DHL, p.137.
makes no absolute statement" (295), and all aspects of human motivation must be accommodated. To be free, man must commit himself to the "perpetual call and answer" of his soul, and that includes both "white" and "dark" gods. The dark god must, I think, eventually be considered as a creative impulse, either positive or negative, but nevertheless still creative. The "great god" enters man from below, and as such is identified with the "phallic self," for it "enters us from the lower self, the dark self" (150), and is "the god you can never see or visualize, who stands dark on the threshold of the phallic me" (151).

In this sense the dark god is linked with the moon as "tide-turner" of man's consciousness, for like the moon, the dark god influences the "lower self" where the mind "retreats back into the sea of its own darkness" and there enjoys a renewal of mental consciousness and a preparation for dynamic involvement with the next civilization. By answering the call of the dark god, man takes "a new resolution" into his soul, and "breaks off from the old way." This, then, is the impetus and background for Somers' rejection of Kangaroo's vision, for the digger movement does not allow the lower self precedence over the spirit: "I know your love, Kangaroo. Working everything from the spirit, from the head. You work the lower self as an instrument of the spirit. Now is the time for the spirit to leave us again; it is time for the Son of Man to depart, and leave us dark, in front of the unspoken God....There is a great God on the threshold of my lower self, whom I fear while he is my glory" (151). It is this "glory" which Lawrence nominates as a "communion in power" (312), a ritual of "supreme responsibility and offering," which is to be elaborated in The Plumed Serpent. Somers must create his own myth of creative action before he can find the "something else" to which he can commit himself, and the development of the "Dark God" in Kangaroo is a beginning.

For the digger movement, and especially for Kangaroo, the dark god is a scarab god, poisoning and destroying a dogma which

17 Fantasia, p. 181.
18 Ibid., p. 181.
Somers rejects completely. The unification of love and power is anathema to Lawrence, for as we have seen, "love is secondary" and man must be "a free, proud, single being by oneself." Somers has come to this belief by following the lead of his personal "dark god," but he has also had to suffer a similar progression to that Aaron did in *Aaron's Rod*. The basic pattern is the same, for Aaron had to contend with three women before discovering his new direction, and Somers contends with three men in order to reach a similar potentiality. Jack, Struthers (Jaz), and Kangaroo were the obstacles in *Kangaroo*, just as Lottie, Josephine, and the Marchesa, were in *Aaron's Rod*. The major difference is that Somers is acting in a world of men, and the conflict is for the most part contained within the male relationships Lawrence saw as necessary for the new adjustment. The failure is not yet a failure of the male dominated society, nor, in spite of important reservations, is it completely a failure of the concept of comradeship and manly love. The reservations are necessarily individual ones, for it is Richard Lovat Somers who as protagonist, must come to terms with the dynamics of social and individual action.

In spite of the failure of the vision in *Kangaroo*, the possibility exists that the "new adjustment" will in fact occur, though in terms of the "dark god" and the creation of a personal mythology. Somers sees a rainbow, "a good symbol" of "a pledge of unbroken faith, between the universe and the innermost"(173), and the dark god is a creature of the innermost. The rainbow, however, is not complete, for "it was a piece of rainbow, but not sharp." The indistinct rainbow is itself an indication of the continuing indecision and inconclusiveness of Lawrence's commitment, as expressed in *Kangaroo*, and it is only in *The Plumed Serpent*, where the concepts and ideals I have been discussing are submitted to their most rigorous test, that Lawrence arrives at what must finally, in terms of male homoerotic relationships, be seen as "the new adjustment."
CHAPTER VIII

The Plumed Serpent
Communion in Power: Towards an End

The emergence of the "dark god" in Kangaroo, and its demand for a "communion in power," prepares the way for the creation of a mythology of masculine supremacy in The Plumed Serpent. Richard Lovat Somers' desire for a "living fellowship" or living relationship with another man is conceived of as existing beyond affection, love, and comradeship, for he rejects not only "mates and equality and mingling" but "blood-brotherhood" as well (119-20). The process begun in Aaron's Rod with Lilly's rejection of the "will-to-love," and continued in Kangaroo by Somers' refusal to partake of "mate love" and "mate-trust," leads to the establishment of "mystic" authority and the myth to contain it in The Plumed Serpent. Manly love, and the concept of blood-brotherhood, has given way to the total submission to power and authority. The living fellowship mooted by Somers as an alternative is enacted totally devoid of the redemptive power inherent in the earlier male relationships as posited, for example, in Women in Love.

A measure of the novel's weakness, or more specifically, of the inconsistency of the development of Lawrence's thought when viewed against the background of the rejection in Kangaroo, is the utilization in The Plumed Serpent of the very things from which Somers recoiled in the earlier novel. The Diggers movement with its emphasis on male privilege, superiority, the lust for violence, and totalitarian control, is described in terms of repellent insect and reptilian imagery which makes Somers' rejection that much easier. In The Plumed Serpent, the Quetzalcoatl movement embodies the very attitudes rejected in Kangaroo; Lawrence attempts to make them acceptable by giving an otherwise intolerable political system a religious sanction. Thus, the problem presented in Kangaroo by the rejection of the abhorrent system of the Diggers is neatly side-stepped in The Plumed Serpent by the introduction of a supernatural mythic structure which, while presumably making the system more amenable to the native
population, nevertheless still embraces the very qualities which were basic to the earlier novel.

The inconsistency is further side-stepped by the continuation of the commitment which Somers (and, of course, Lawrence) has evolved for himself in an attempt to counter the demands of Kangaroo. This commitment is the early stage of the religion which was to emerge full-blown in the Quetzalcoatl myth, and has as its basis "the ritual of supreme responsibility and offering. Sacrifice to the dark god." The dark god, as an "ithyphallic" creative force, demands a "communion in power, the assumption into glory," and it is the powerful, as leaders of the movement, who embody all the qualities found earlier in Kangaroo. Now, however, with the trappings of mythic religion to give credibility to their demands, sacrifice and offerings are exacted by men representing the dark powers, who become gods in their own right. The communion in power is ultimately a celebration of male exclusiveness and superiority as embodied in a religion of power, and Lilly's dictum in Aaron's Rod that "men must submit to the greater soul in a man, for their guidance" is the basis of the male relationship, and, indeed, all the personal relations in the novel.

The Plumed Serpent is a celebration of male superiority and exclusiveness towards which all the previous male relationships in Lawrence's work have ultimately tended. Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo marked a definite shift in the emphasis and responsibility to which, as we have seen, male relationships had evolved. The Plumed Serpent, as the last of the "power" novels, is also the novel in which the theme of male friendship meets its inglorious end. A necessary distinction has to be made, however, between what was previously presented as male comradeship and what is now presented as its not altogether logical culmination. The tentative male relationship which in Women in Love is founded on Blutbruderschaft, on love and eternal conjunction between men within the framework of definite friendship and affection, has foundered upon the system derived from the Whitmanesque Superman/Leader theories,\(^1\) for the new communion first hinted at in

\(^1\) See above, Chapter 4 part 3, also Chapter 6.
Aaron's Rod and then shown in Kangaroo, is based solely upon power and its compulsion of submission. Love has become power; Lawrence's intuitive and perceptive analyses of the uses of love, conditioned partly by his own experience, has led him to this conclusion. It was a necessary conclusion if he was to continue, and bring to fruition, the discoveries and experiences detailed in Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo.

Though The Plumed Serpent, as the last of the "power" novels, should be the crowning achievement of the "communion in power... La Gloire," nevertheless a note of discord creeps in, which is signaled by Lawrence's return to a woman as "the centre of sympathetic interest and the dramatized consciousness through which things are presented."² Kate Leslie, as the substitute Lawrence figure, does not exercise the critical consciousness which would appear to be necessary for a rational presentation of the novel's theories.³ Without a Richard Lovat Somers, the novel runs unfettered over the almost non-existent protestations of Kate, and there is nothing to question or condemn the excesses to which she is a witness. One is almost forced to assume that Lawrence did not want his creation to be examined in the way which Somers examines the excesses of Kangaroo, and Aaron the pronouncements of Lilly. In addition, by presenting the novel's point of view as that of a woman, and by having her become the "centre of sympathetic interest," Lawrence attempts to force the reader to acquiesce to his theories of supremacy and power much as Kate does with Cipriano. The Lawrentian triangular relationship is changed to one of linear ascending domination and control. Kate is apparently submissive to Cipriano, and Cipriano in turn is completely dominated by Ramon. There is no rivalry between the men for the affection of Kate, because her submission is a

² Leavis, p.67.

³ L.D. Clark, Dark Night of the Body (Texas, 1964), pp.13-14, suggests that "Lawrence chose women for his central surrogate in the American works" because they "are what we may call Lawrence's soul, speaking religiously as well as artistically," and because Lawrence was responding to the "Pagan and Christian tradition of regarding the seeking soul as female."
paradigm for the submission of all women to the power of the male leader. Thus, the Lawrentian triangle which, in the previous works we have examined, was the starting point for a new configuration of male comradeship, with the woman as catalyst, is here totally redundant, for the men involved have already established their relationship, and Kate has only to be slotted in to the appropriate position in the scale of domination. The male relationship is a static one, and Kate has no influence to change it into anything else.

Kate Leslie's role in the novel is solely to view the "male power" and "ancient phallic mystery," and to be dominated by it. However, hers is also the consciousness through which we observe the destructive society which Quetzalcoatl is supposed to redeem. The major significant aspect of her perception is the terms in which Lawrence chooses to describe it, and while the imagery utilized for this purpose has a definite thematic importance, its primary significance for this discussion is the definite parallel with the imagery of Somers' revulsion in Kangaroo. For Kate Leslie, the bull fight is a revelation of the decay and disintegration of Mexican civilization, and to reinforce this thematic aspect, Lawrence returns once again to the beetle imagery of Women in Love: "A real gutter-lout came to look at their counterslips, to see which seats they had booked. He jerked his head downwards, and slouched off. Now Kate knew she was in a trap—a big concrete beetle trap." This is the beginning of many similar imagistic condemnations which reflect Kate's and Lawrence's revulsion from the state of Mexican degeneracy. The men at the bull fight are "like lost mongrels" (16) and "beetle-like intruders" (18); the men of Mexico City are "scaley with dirt" and look at Kate "with a cold, mud-like antagonism as they stepped cattishly past. Poisonous, thin, stiff little men, cold and unliving like scorpions, and as dangerous" (83). Kate feels the "evil and the insolence" (84) which lurked in the "black, dimmed, swivel eyes swinging in pure

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evil" in the "cold and insect like" faces of the inhabitants. The people, and especially the women, whom "Kate, as a woman, feared...more than the men," are "somewhat reptilian under the long, flounced, soiled cotton skirt," and "lurking snake-like" within them is "the fear of not being able to find full creation" (84).

Kate recoils from this repulsive vision of degenerate Mexico, but it is somewhat ironic that her perception of the women's condition, and especially of their inability "to feel full creation," leads her to a situation in which, because of a similarly subservient role, she also is unable to transcend her own condition. The final sentence of the novel reaffirms her inability to achieve the desired creative potential, and her lament to Cipriano, "You won't let me go!" (462), is a distant echo of the fear she perceives coiled serpent-like in the Mexican women. The animal, reptile, and insect imagery reinforces Kate's rejection of the values of Mexican society from which she desires to escape, and thematically, the imagery is intended to reflect the disintegration of Mexican civilization and to insist upon the importance of the Quetzalcoatl movement as the only redemptive possibility. The fact that Kate views society in terms of repellent insect and reptilian imagery suggests a more than coincidental parallel with Somers' condemnation in Kangaroo. In that respect Kate inherits Somers' insight, and to some extent repeats his flirtation with what is both attractive and repulsive at the same time. As we have seen, it is evident from the beginning of Kangaroo, and primarily through the imagery utilized by Somers, that he will ultimately reject Kangaroo's political doctrine. Similarly, Kate's initial reaction to Mexico is expressed in the very same terms, and even includes a repetition of the scorpion image which, in The Plumed Serpent, reminds us of Ben Cooley and his lieutenants: "Poisonous, thin, stiff little men, cold and unliving like scorpions, and as dangerous" (83).

Like Somers, Kate is attracted to what repels her, but it is a measure of her failure as central consciousness of the novel that she is less than critical of the situation with which she chooses to involve herself; what little critical response she does manage is usually foiled. Both Somers and Kate passively
respond to the new developments in their lives, and their attitude is primarily dictated by the fact that both are being "courted" by forces which are either stronger or greater than they are. The sense of exclusiveness which this creates is a measure of their respective vanities, a character flaw which contributes to Somers' rejection of Ben Cooley's proposal, and to Kate's continuing hesitation and ambivalent desire to escape. Kate thus continues not only the imagistic perception of society which Somers initiated, but also partakes of strikingly similar, almost identical, personality and character traits which reinforce the unity between the two novels. More significantly, Kate, as female, contains attributes of Somers as male, but Somers' relationship with Jack Callcott and Ben Cooley was a feminine one similar to Kate's subservience to Cipriano and Ramon.

In addition, Kate is also the inheritor of significant aspects of Aaron's Rod, for Lawrence appears to have drawn on certain attributes of both Aaron and Lilly in his foundation of the type of role Kate was to fulfil. In effect, Kate embodies the logical reduction to which a central consciousness must come if it is to exist in the type of situation Lawrence describes in The Plumed Serpent. Lilly and Aaron both contribute aspects of themselves, as does Somers, and the composite character which results, while fulfilling the demands of the narrative and Lawrence's vision, is still less than the parts which contribute to its composition.

Kate is part of the fantasy world of Aaron's dream, for it is here that we find the beginning of the mythic landscape in which the action of The Plumed Serpent occurs. Aaron's dream is set "in a country with which he was not acquainted," and the first part, the chronicle of his tour of discovery, takes place in "a sort of underworld country." The dominant image which remains with Aaron as he wanders through the vast underground apartments and narrow corridors, is that of "a man's skin stuffed tight with prepared meat, as the skin of a Bologna sausage" which the men of the underground were preparing to eat. The man who is to be eaten is naked, and Aaron watches him "walk slowly and stiffly across the gangway and down the corridor." Significantly,}

5 *Aaron's Rod*, p.332.
Aaron sees him from behind: "It was a big and handsome man in the prime of life, quite naked and perhaps stupid." The vast apartments and narrow corridors, "like roads in a mine" are representative of part of the unknown within Aaron, and his fixation on the "naked man" who is handsome and in the prime of life, is indicative of Aaron's homoerotic attraction to Lilly; an attraction which, as in most of Lawrence's other male characters, is repressed. Aaron's dream, however, is an indication of his attempt to find his way clear of the maze which surrounds his repressions, and is part of his voyage of self-discovery. This is reinforced by the second part of the dream, when he finds himself in the boat, and having traversed the obstacles of his previous heterosexual relationships, represented by the stakes standing up in the water, is approaching "a lake-city, like Mexico."

The "foreign language" of the boat men, the strange underground city and the figure of the naked man, the allusion to Mexico, Aaron's voyage in the boat, and the idol of Astarte with the eggs in her lap, eventually find their meaning and parallel in The Plumed Serpent. The Mexico described in the novel is a strange, dream-like, underground country, a landscape as much representative of an emotional and psychological involvement, as of a real place and time. The world which Kate Leslie enters is unlike any place she has ever visited, and like the dream Aaron, she floats above and through it, never quite asserting her own critical individuality, but forced to play a role in dream myth over which she has little conscious control.

Kate enters the "narrow corridors" and "vast apartments" of the first part of Aaron's dream through her parallel experience at the Mexican bull fight, where her entrance to the bull-ring is through "a tunnel in the hollow of the concrete-and-iron amphitheatre"(12). The bull-ring itself corresponds to the "vast apartment" of Aaron's underground city, and is surrounded by the "lousy men" selling "greasy food," and little soldiers in drab washed-out uniforms. The inhabitants of the dream

Aaron's Rod, p.332.
fantasy are also drab and "greyish in their clothes and appearance," and take part in a ritual (the eating of the stuffed man) which corresponds to the sexual and sodomistic aspects of the bull fight. Aaron's view of the naked man, whom he sees "from behind" finds its parallel in the "effeminate-looking fellows in tight, ornate clothes," the "sinking posterior" of the beetle-like fat Mexican who sits on Villiers sharp boots, and in the sodomistic image of the bull working "his sharp flourishing horns" in the bowels of the old horse. All of these events repel Kate, but paradoxically she readily submits to a greater brutality later in the novel when she joins forces with the Quetzalcoatl movement. The dual nature of her response, the attraction and repulsion, is an extension and development of Aaron's experience in his underground dream city. The stuffed naked man, who is "perhaps stupid," is representative of Aaron's ambivalent desires, for he is attracted by the "big handsome man in the prime of life," yet repelled by the mindless and horrifying nature of his role in the nightmare. At the same time, however, Aaron's repressions are being released, for he is slowly coming to recognize the homoerotic impulse which leads him to Lilly.

The boat trip in the second part of Aaron's dream, which can be interpreted as his escape from the claustrophobic underground world, finds its extension and parallel in Kate's boat ride across Lake Sayula, first to Orilla, and then to the Quetzalcoatl stronghold of Sayula itself. The lake in both cases is indicative of a celebration of the masculine ethic, for, journeying across it, both Aaron and Kate prepare for a total commitment to a male-dominated society or relationship. Aaron's voyage is delineated by the rejection of the three women in his life, and the acceptance of a potential homoerotic adjustment with the sexually ambiguous Lilly, represented by the equally ambiguous idol of Astarte. Kate is conducted to her destiny with the male-supremacist Quetzalcoatl movement by a mythically evocative "crippled boatman" who carries her through the "blue dimness in the lower air." Kate's journey is dream-like in quality, and ritualistic in effect, but it heralds her involvement in a reality which is

7 Ibid., p.333.
meant to be symptomatic of a change in consciousness. The lake itself is overtly male, for Kate crosses "upon the flimsy, soft, sperm-like water" and, unlike Aaron who only floats above it, she is immersed and baptized into complete submission to the male ideal: "Kate took her bath in the filmy water that was hardly like water at all"(105-6). The "soft spermy water" is the spawning ground of the old gods, and Kate is made part of that emerging world of "gods that cannot die"(103) when she accepts the "Ollita of the gods," an old earthenware pot given as tribute to Quetzalcoatl. The mysteries which lie dormant beneath the waters of Sayula, and are slowly being resurrected and exploited by Don Ramon, are in a direct line of descent from Aaron's awareness of "the deep unfathomable water." In Aaron's case, the water was potentially symbolic of a relationship and commitment to Lilly, a relationship which, slightly mutated, finds its expression in Ramon and Cipriano, with Kate, bearing tribute given with "sensitive masculine sincerity"(103) from the gods themselves, as ineffectual participant.

Kate's escape from the underground horrors of Mexico City, symbolized by her experiences at the bull fight, is a repetition of Aaron's dream flight from the tin-miners' corridors and apartments. In both cases, however, the escape or pilgrimage is predominantly spiritual, and is intended as a prelude to a new adjustment of consciousness and involvement. Over both incidents broods the mythical figure of a god: in Aaron's Rod it is a curiously bisexual Astarte, and in The Plumed Serpent it is an articulation of Kangaroo's "Dark God," in the guise of Quetzalcoatl and his human representatives. The development of Lawrence's use of a mythic god as representative of an existence from which his characters are able to suggest new states of consciousness, is characterized by the same sexual confusion which we have noted in the earlier male relationships. Astarte is officially female, but in Lawrence's treatment she becomes bisexual through her identification with Lilly in Aaron's Rod. Lilly himself, ostensibly male, nevertheless functions as a woman in his relations with Aaron, and his ambiguous name itself suggests a confusion of gender which is
not accidental. Since Lilly is the direct line of descent from Lawrence's other androgynous heroes, it is not surprising that he behaves as an acolyte of Astarte. The appearance of the idol Astarte in Aaron's dream is thus an indication of his awareness of and attraction to those aspects of Lilly which have the most to offer for his new adjustment and potential submission. The androgynous nature of the relationship thus established is continued in Kangaroo, where Somers is courted and flattered by the Diggers movement leaders, until he insists upon his own commitment to the "dark gods." It is important to realize that the dark god of Somers' creation has become almost totally masculine in nature, and phallic in expression; as such it marks not a repudiation of the feminine aspect of male relationships, but an absorption of the dominant principle. Its final evolution into Quetzalcoatl supports this conclusion, because the Mexico of Kate's experience is an exclusively masculine one, where the feminine role is reduced to mindless submission, and any suspicion of femininity is condemned as perverse and indicative of the dissolution of society. The bull fight which Kate witnesses and is repelled by is the best example of this development, for the sodomistic undertones to the spectacle are meant to represent a basic weakness of the spirit which, in Lawrence's view, prevented any possibility of dynamic social and individual action.

The feminine aspects of Lilly, Aaron and Somers, are distilled in The Plumed Serpent into the character of Kate; she becomes the representative of those attitudes which attracted the central 'male' characters in the previous novels to each other, and since Lawrence has evolved an ethic based upon male supremacy and domination, Kate then becomes the object whose passivity is necessary to any depiction of the "communion in power." The problem of Lawrence's ambiguous presence in the novel in the guise of a woman is thus partially alleviated, because Kate Leslie must necessarily be feminine and submissive in order for the narrative to be seen to have a valid and direct applicability. However, H.M. Daleski's suggestion that Lawrence "was psychologically incapable of placing himself at the centre of a work in which he
makes his most unrestrained 'male' affirmation,\(^8\) must also be considered as one of the contributing factors to his choice of a female central consciousness. But the demands of Lawrence's new commitment to a male-dominated society, and to the uses of power, is more consistent with the choice than an attempt to exorcize the homoerotic impulse which was so much in evidence in the Prologue to *Women in Love*. However, it must also be recognized that this time Lawrence has moved beyond "Blood-brotherhood," as Somers made clear in *Kangaroo*, and while Lawrence may still have been "psychologically incapable" of being at the centre of a work celebrating "male" affirmation, indicating his unhappiness with the whole idea, nevertheless, as I have suggested above, a woman is necessary if Lawrence's views were to suggest and reveal a consistent development.

The development from Aaron's dream and the potential suggested by the image of Astarte with the eggs in its lap, finds its most consistent application in the relationship between Don Ramon and Cipriano. Their relationship is static, for Lawrence presents us with a "communion in power" which is already complete. The configuration of the interaction between the men is a known quality from the beginning, for Cipriano has submitted to the greater soul than his, the leader-cum-god, Ramon. The eggs in Astarte's lap, which Aaron relates to his own soul and to Lilly's attempt at domination, finds a direct parallel in Ramon's plans for the new Mexico: "Politics and all this social religion that Montes has got is like washing the outside of the egg, to make it look clean. But I, myself, I want to get inside the egg, right to the middle, to start it growing into a new bird....Mexico is like an old, old egg that the bird of Time laid long ago; and she has been sitting on it for centuries....Only the spark of fire has never gone into the middle of it, to start it"(203). By his desire to awaken the slumbering soul of old Mexico, Ramon reveals himself to be an acolyte of the dark phallic god posited in *Kangaroo* and resurrected from the masculine waters of Sayula. He not only desires to hatch the egg, but to fertilize it with "the spark of fire"

\(^8\) *The Forked Flame*, pp.237-8, n.1.
as well. The reassertion of virility implicit within Ramon's metaphor of fertilizing and then hatching the egg of Mexico's soul and consciousness, is the only means, Lawrence suggests, to bring about the salvation of his world. Domination and Power are the basis of Ramon's rule, and the submission he exacts within his relationship with Cipriano fulfills the criteria elaborated by Lilly and Somers.

The "communion in power" which is meant to be represented by the relationship between Ramon and Cipriano, is characterized by a "ritual of supreme responsibility, and offering" enacted in awe, not "dribbling love." The "sacrifice to the strong" which is its underlying demand is the summation of Lawrence's theory of social and individual salvation which has evolved through Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and the theoretical and discursive writings we have already discussed. The leader in The Plumed Serpent is obviously Don Ramon, and the power of Quetzalcoatl resides in his ability to exact submission and the sacrifice of individual will. Cipriano's reaction to him is a mixture of various motives and responses, for in his "guarded eyes" there is "an element of love, and of fear, and of trust, but also incomprehension, and the suspicion that goes with incomprehension" (203). Characteristically, contradictory elements combine to bind Cipriano to Ramon, and we must conclude that it is his psychological inability to act upon any of the contradictions which prevents any deep or intense questioning of Ramon's motives and methods. Cipriano, like Kate, is submissive, but Lawrence's ethic of male supremacy allows even Cipriano to have a dominant role within the structure of the novel's relationships, for Kate, in a "ritual of... offering," abnegates her individual selfhood and submits completely to him.

The feeling which Cipriano has for Ramon is not "dribbling love"; however, the "element of love" which co-exists with his fear is not clearly defined, but is sufficiently childlike in its dependence to call into question Lawrence's insistence that they have an ideal male relationship. Initially, Lawrence's

9 Kangaroo, p.312.
description of the physical and emotional intimacy between the men would appear to transcend the image of the static relationship which he presents, for Cipriano and Ramon behave in a manner similar to that which we have observed in the other male relationships discussed. A significant example of the type of description and behaviour which characterizes their relationship in the early part of the novel occurs in Chapter XII, when Cipriano, Ramon, Kate and Carlota meet for tea on the terrace of the hacienda. Before joining the others, Ramon experiences the same trance-like state of dissociation from reality which we have noted in conjunction with the earlier homoerotic relationships in Lawrence's work. Ramon is "in that state of extreme separateness which makes it very hard to come back to the world"(193); Lawrence suggests that he is communing with a cosmic reality far removed from the "noise" of "commonplace daily things." His soul and body are "naked to the cosmos," and in that state, "with naked torso" he goes to meet Cipriano, who greets him "with outstretched arms, his black eyes gleaming with an intensity almost like pain, upon the face of the other man"(193).

The two men "embraced breast to breast, and for a moment Cipriano laid his little blackish hands on the naked shoulders of the bigger man, and for a moment was perfectly still on his breast. Then very softly, he stood back and looked at him, saying not a word"(193-4). Ramon looks at Cipriano with "wide, seeing, yet unchanging eyes," unchanging because they are still in contact with the cosmic introspection which he experienced before being summoned back to the mundane reality of afternoon tea. He is also abstracted from the intimate contact offered by Cipriano, and almost negligently lays his hand on his friend's shoulder, at the same time favouring him "with a little smile." The aloofness and "far-off and intangible" quality of Ramon's presence, increases the power he is capable of exerting over his followers, and Cipriano is made to appear as a supplicating child, begging to be recognized by an acknowledged superior. The slightly erotic overtones to the men's embrace, is mitigated by the condescension in Ramon's manner, for Cipriano looks at him
with "wondering, childlike, searching eyes, as if he...were searching for himself, in Ramon's face"(194). Cipriano's dependence on Ramon, and his implicit desire for acceptance, is thus made quite obvious, and once again reveals the familiar pattern common to the male relationships which Lawrence presents.

The submission evident in Cipriano's response to "the bigger man," indicated by the way he "hung his head as if to hide his face" is, however, a stage removed from the type of submission in evidence in the other male relations and conflicts we have examined; previously, the "submissive" partner has always retained a modicum of individuality, or at least a trace of potential selfhood. Here, however, Lawrence intends the submission to be complete for, as Cipriano "stubbornly" insists: "I say: I am Ramon's man"(327), and this belief is reinforced by his earlier statement to Kate that she "may respect him more than any other man in the world"(90). Lawrence insists that, for Cipriano, Ramon "is more than life"(323), and attempts to emphasize the effect of the leader's power and domination by attributing extraordinary physical and metaphysical responses to Cipriano: "His eyes seemed to glare and go sightless, as he said it, the ferocity melting in a strange blind, confiding g|lare, that seemed sightless, either looking inward, or out at the whole vast void of the cosmos, where no vision is left"(323). Lawrence's assertions, and the unrestrained description such as the one just quoted, should force us to question the nature of the relationship he is insisting upon, for it is evident, at least from Cipriano's reaction, that Ramon's need for contact that is "intangible, remote, and without intimacy"(265) is not being fulfilled by the emotional, irrational submission he receives from him. Thus, Ramon's belief that "with Cipriano he was sure. Cipriano and he, even when they embraced each other with passion, when they met after an absence, embraced in the recognition of each other's eternal and abiding loneliness; the Morning Star"(265), is founded upon a false premise. This contradiction, between what Lawrence is insisting is the true nature of the men's relationship, and what it in fact really is (as revealed in Cipriano's reactions and Lawrence's own description of those reactions), suggests
serious reservations about the value and validity of Lawrence's assertions. In fact, the contradictions and inconsistencies, taken in conjunction with the excesses, not only of narrative description, but of doctrinal assertions as well, suggest Lawrence's own uncertainty and dissatisfaction with the fictive reality he was presenting.

An example of the unsatisfactory position into which Lawrence had thought and written himself is evident in the description of the ritual which physically and spiritually binds Cipriano to Ramon. Ostensibly it is closely related to all the other ritual ceremonies which we have seen enacted between men who are attempting, either consciously or unconsciously, to complete a communion of comradeship and friendship; but it differs from them in several important ways which, while fulfilling the criteria of Lawrence's "new adjustment" in male interaction, betray the alien and unsatisfactory reduction at which he has arrived. Unlike the hesitancy or unawareness which characterized homoerotic communion or attempted communion, like that of Birkin and Gerald, Maurice and Bertie in "The Blind Man," Severn and Thomas in "The Old Adam," or even Aaron's unconscious acceptance of Lilly's initiation, Cipriano does not in any way qualify his acceptance of Ramon. Ramon has "the power to compel"(21?), and Cipriano acquiesces, with no second thoughts whatsoever, to the call to share the mysteries of godhead with him. The initiation ceremony itself becomes an explicit ritual, unlike earlier incidents in which the trappings of mysterious arcane rites were only alluded to by oblique and symbolic references. In The Plumed Serpent a "sacred" relationship already exists, for the men enact a religious ceremony within the mythic structure of the reawakened "dark gods" of ancient Mexico. Yet in spite of Lawrence's presentation of a "sacred" relationship, and the assertion of Ramon's heroic power to elicit submission, the relations between the two men share a similar erotic and emotional atmosphere with the earlier male incidents which did not benefit from Lawrence's unqualified assertions.
The ritual enacted in *The Plumed Serpent* takes place against a background of nakedness and intimacy which, no matter how much Lawrence attempts to give it mythic reality, nevertheless remains firmly rooted in homoerotic sexuality. The heavy militaristic yet erotic atmosphere of the rituals in which Cipriano encourages his men to participate is strongly reminiscent of the situation in "The Prussian Officer," and in a sense that short story and the present situation represent two poles of a similar experience. Cipriano encourages and participates in "animistic dances," dances which are presented to "gain power; power over the living forces or potencies of the earth"(380). The effects on Cipriano are both spiritual and physical, and reinforce the potency of male phallic godhead: "And as the dance went on, Cipriano felt his strength increase and surge inside him. When all his limbs were glistening with sweat, and his spirit was at last satisfied, he was at once tired and surcharged with extraordinary power"(381). The sexual power which infuses Cipriano, represents the extreme celebration of male selfhood and vanity, for as a result of his newly acquired power and sexual glory, he is able to hold "all those black-eyed men in the splendour of his own, silent self. His own dark consciousness seemed to radiate through their flesh and their bones....he was the most precious part of themselves to them"(381). Cipriano is able to control and possess his men through the diffusion of his sexual attraction, and gathers "his own small, picked body of men" with whom he enacts his fantasies of paternalistic homoerotic domination: "and his men must be clean. On the march they would stop by some river, with the order for every man to strip and wash, and wash his clothing. Then the men, dark and ruddy, moved about naked, while the white clothing of strong white cotton dried on the earth"(382).

Cipriano's relationship to his men is extremely physical in nature, and it is his physical presence, coupled with an aura of sexual domination, which provides a link with the earlier male relationships we have discussed. An even greater degree of nakedness, intimacy and homoerotic physical contact distinguishes his relationship with Ramon: no matter how much Lawrence insists that theirs is a "sacred" relationship of two men who have each
consummated their individual selfhood, with one of them retaining his independence while submitting to the greater soul of the other, the actual fact of the description of their relations, and the ritual in particular, belies that notion. Their relationship is not the comradeship or affectionate friendship encountered in Lawrence's earlier novels, but is consistent with his development of a relationship in which one individual compels submission from the other. The ritual is immediately analogous to the control which Lilly asserts over Aaron in the oil rubbing scene in Aaron's Rod, but, while Lawrence would claim that Cipriano and Ramon's ceremony is devoted to the celebration of complete sacrifice to a greater soul, and indeed, describes it as such, it is nevertheless replete with emotional and homoerotic undertones, which once more place it within the familiar context of all the other similar ceremonies we have discussed.

Cipriano begins the ritual in a trance, for Lawrence states that he not only heard Ramon's voice from a distance, but that he "remained motionless in the warm dark, his consciousness reeling in strange concentric waves, towards a centre where it suddenly plunges into the bottomless deeps, like sleep" (383). In addition, the darkness itself is alive with a primitive life impulse which is reminiscent of the scene in which Maurice and Bertie were surrounded by the fecund darkness of the barn in the short story "The Blind Man." The suggestion in both cases is that the men involved are somehow in touch with the basic life forces and primitive desires which they have in common, and which should serve to unify them in an intimate relationship. Cipriano becomes a 'blind man' when Ramon binds his eyes "with a strip of black fur" and, like Maurice in the story, he is supposedly able to 'see' the basic life force in others and in the cosmos. In reality, however, he responds to the physical touch of Ramon, for the representative of Quetzalcoatl is seducing him with a homoerotic caress which Cipriano misinterprets as the power of the dark god made flesh. Ramon presses "one naked hand over Cipriano's naked breast, and one between his shoulders," with a "warm, soft pressure," and the result of this initial caress is the not altogether surprising reaction
that Cipriano "stood...erect and silent"(383). As Cipriano relaxes, and allows his consciousness to expand to meet his god, Ramon feels "the thud of the man's heart slowly slackening." He takes advantage of this submission to "bind Cipriano's arms at his sides, with a belt of fur round the breast"(384), and having rendered his servant completely unable to resist, he continues the seduction by putting "one hand over the navel, his other hand in the small of the other man's back, pressing with slow, warm, powerful pressure." Ramon then kneels and "pressed his arms close round Cipriano's waist, pressing his black head against his side." He then "bound him fast round the middle" in another symbolic representation of Cipriano's complete submission to the superiority of Ramon, and "pressing his head against the hip, folded the arms round Cipriano's loins, closing with his hands the secret places"(384).

It is evident that each erotic advance by Ramon brings with it another step towards the total immobilization of Cipriano, who retreats further and further into darkness until, standing "rigid and motionless" he becomes unconscious, overwhelmed by the intensity of feeling which he believes stems from the gods of the "living darkness." The details of Lawrence's narrative description of the scene suggest, however, a different cause, for it is impossible to ignore the intimate homoerotic nature of Ramon's actions. It is significant that at every stage of the ritual, when Ramon binds and touches Cipriano in a different place, Cipriano responds with the appropriate answer, but the penultimate homosexual embrace, with Ramon kneeling at his friend's loins and "closing with his hands the secret places," evokes nothing beyond a submissive "Yes." The mythic and mystical intention behind the ceremony is quite clear, but Lawrence is unable to show it actually succeeding as a mystical initiation. Ramon's laying on of hands is very like Lilly's attempt to reinstate the circuit of renewal in Aaron, for Cipriano, like Aaron before him, follows the receding "concentric waves" of his consciousness until "it plunges into the bottomless deeps, like sleep"(383). The ability to partake of the reinvigorating darkness or, in the words of the Fantasia theory,
to be reawakened to the circuit of night polarization, allows 
the individual to be directed "towards life, and towards leader." 
Cipriano, we are to believe, can and does participate in the 
circuit of renewal and thus, through his submission to the 
leader Ramon, is able to become part of the "dynamic of the 
next civilization." Aaron had originally to be instated in 
that circuit, but Cipriano is already part of the emerging 
"next civilization," so that Ramon's laying on of hands is 
more of a reinforcement than an initiation. However, we 
cannot escape from the all-pervasive, overtly homoerotic nature 
of the ceremony, for in spite of Lawrence's attempts to give it a 
different and more arcane meaning, he is apparently unable to 
transcend his unconscious fixation on male homoerotic relations.

Lawrence's attempt to develop a theory and doctrine which 
would overcome the explicit use of homosexual detail in his 
descriptions of male "communion" or "sacred relationships" led 
to the formulation based, as we have seen, on Whitman's and 
Carpenter's ideas of a mystic Superman ideal. But the develop­
ment of this theory, through its evolution from Aaron's Rod to The Plumed Serpent, founders when Lawrence attempts to justify what is essentially a homosexual embrace by insisting on the 
mythical nature of the experience. Lawrence's prose, as is 
everywhere evident, cannot carry the burden; he was unable to 
find a mode of expression which would transcend the explicit 
attitudes of his characters. 10 The theories of power and 
domination become analogous in their social and political sense 
to the configurations of human relationships, and more explicitly, 
to male homoerotic experiences. In addition to this confusion 
of motives, the actual narrative situations themselves fail to 
be convincing. Cipriano's total submission to Ramon lacks all

10 L.D. Clark, p.4, echoes many critics and commentators when he calls The Plumed Serpent "a flagrant piece of propaganda" and 
goes on to suggest that "the worst side of Lawrence was never more evident than it is in this novel: the careless language, 
the wearisome repetition, the prophetic aspiration, the confusion of practical and artistic ends. But two things save the book from the author: Lawrence's profound sympathy with the land he was writing about, and his uncanny skill at synthesizing form and setting and symbol"(p.13).
conviction when viewed against the dynamic relationships explored in the earlier novels and short stories. It must be admitted that Lawrence was following a false trail, at least from the point of view of his attempt to make homoerotic relationships acceptable not only to himself, but to his reading public as well.
CHAPTER IX

The Plumed Serpent and After

Lawrence's attempt to reveal the redemptive power of male relationships as a viable and dynamic force in human endeavour meets with little success in The Plumed Serpent, and this failure must ultimately be seen as a failure of the novel as a whole. The Plumed Serpent was to be the apotheosis of Lawrence's intuition and presentation of the potentiality inherent in male relations and leadership, to unify the blood and the spirit, and thus to establish the dynamic of the "next civilization." The new direction which Lawrence evolved for masculine leadership and relations was one which developed, in its final stages, from Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo; and it was intended, in The Plumed Serpent, to establish a mode of personal relations which was ultimately to lead the way to salvation. The salvation envisaged for mankind is presented in terms of a religious myth enacted within the unlimited possibilities of a political myth, while the personal salvation of his "heroine" is enacted within the "rites of passage" which have "certain ritual myths attached to them."\(^1\) Jascha Kessler states that the "rites of passage" myths are based on the formula of "separation-initiation-return," and that "Kate's story...comprises only the first two parts of the formula," because for her "there is only the going down to the depths, where she comes to rest, finally and forever, at the source of all power."\(^2\) The final stage of the mythic cycle does not occur in the novel, because "Kate does not return from the cosmic heart"; instead, "Lawrence did write out the last part of this mythic cycle, not as a pseudo-allegorical, or pseudo-realistic novel, but as a simple tale. In "The Escaped Cock" the hero wakes from 'death' in a cave, and walks abroad."\(^3\)


\(^2\) Ibid., p.243.

\(^3\) Ibid., p.259.
Kessler's formula is highly suggestive of the "rite of passage" which Lawrence's exploration of male relationships itself undergoes, for Kate Leslie is an amalgam, as we have seen, of the "male" protagonists of Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo. H.M. Daleski's contention that Lawrence's "lifelong effort to reconcile the female with the male resulted in a body of work which, in its organic development is unrivalled in English fiction of this century," nevertheless leads him to condemn The Plumed Serpent as "disastrous," for in it Lawrence was attempting to "assert a 'male' metaphysic in order 'to justify himself.'" Lawrence's own conviction that "the metaphysic must always subserve the artistic purpose beyond the artist's conscious aim," came to grief in the novel because the claims he wished to make for male relationships became more untenable the closer he came to completing the novel. David Cavitch considers that there was a "grace of irony in Lawrence that could anticipate his repudiation of the overblown fantasy he was writing even while his emotional self had to pursue it to the end," on the basis that before completing The Plumed Serpent, "Lawrence dashed off four travel essays about his daily life in Oaxaca that reveal him feeling sheepish as an author, perhaps already embarrassed by what he was driven to write in his Mexican novel." In Cavitch's view, the three other essays in Mornings in Mexico, with their "witty, tolerant report of Mexican life," suggests the conclusion that Lawrence came to realize that "all egotistical stances are self-evidently absurd when the ignorance, the frailty, the self-pity of an actual man are concretely shown."

There would appear to be a certain degree of truth in this analysis, for The Plumed Serpent does have something of the

4 The Forked Flame, p.252.
5 Phoenix, "Study of Thomas Hardy," p.479.
6 D.H. Lawrence and the New World (New York, 1969), p.188.
7 Ibid., p.187.
8 Ibid., p.188.
nature of a manifesto about it and, moreover, a manifesto with which Lawrence had become dissatisfied; the actual incident, and very often the prose itself, betray a haste of composition and a lack of interest evidenced in the forced and too consciously insistent nature of the narrative. Lawrence himself had earlier discussed the danger of this type of position; in the "Study of Thomas Hardy" he recognizes that "a sense of fault or failure is the usual cause of a man's making himself a metaphysic, to justify himself. Then, having made himself a metaphysic of self-justification, or a metaphysic of self-denial, the novelist proceeds to apply the world to this, instead of applying this to the world."\(^9\)

The failure of the vision in The Plumed Serpent to reveal the redemptive power of male relationships must be considered in connection with the "metaphysic of self-justification," for, as we have seen throughout this study, Lawrence was continually troubled by the need to place male comradeship within a proper personal and artistic perspective. His development of the exclusively male leadership and power theme was to serve this purpose, and was incidentally (though not unimportantly) to justify his own ambiguous sexual desire. The mythical and symbolic detail of The Plumed Serpent can be considered as Lawrence's attempt to bring into proper adjustment his psychological confusion, for which, after the suppressed admissions in the "Prologue" to Women in Love, he sought a new resolution through the denial of "love" in Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo.

Lawrence's attempt to construct a metaphysic of masculine leadership and power was a necessary adjunct to his desire to make male relationships socially and artistically justifiable. At the same time, however, we should not lose sight of the fact that Lawrence was for quite some time emotionally and psychologically committed to a reconciliation of the various possible configurations of human relations with the larger social and cultural concerns of his thought and expression. Thus, the evolution of his ideas of power and leadership, gaining

\(^9\) Phoenix, p.479.
impetus from his reading of Carpenter and Whitman, would seem an almost perfect solution to both aspects of the purpose. By renouncing Blutbruderschaft and "mateship" as he does in Kangaroo, and by denying "the will to love," and suggesting instead a submission to a greater soul as he does in Aaron's Rod, Lawrence would then be free of the more uneasy aspects of male emotional attachment which caused psychological and interpretative difficulties.

However, the "metaphysic of self-justification" brings with it new difficulties; by asserting it, Lawrence suggests that the artist "had to deny himself, his own being, in order to escape his own disgust of what he had done to himself, and to escape admission of his own failure."\(^{10}\) H.M. Daleski considers that Lawrence "compromised his integrity as an artist, lapsing, according to his own definition of the term, into 'immorality'."\(^{11}\) The definition he quotes is from "Morality and the Novel," in which Lawrence states that "morality is that delicate, for ever trembling and changing balance between me and my circumambient universe, which precedes and accompanies a true relatedness..." immorality occurs "when the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection...."\(^{12}\) Daleski goes on to assert that "nowhere does Lawrence put his thumb more heavily in the scale than in his presentation of Kate," and follows it with a convincing analysis of the ways in which Lawrence betrays Kate and his own "artistic conscience," advancing the narrative "with a determination and inconsistency" which leads him to take cover "in a position which he could not defend, either as thinker or artist."\(^{13}\)

In addition to compromising his integrity as an artist in relation to his depiction of Kate, Lawrence also compromised himself in terms of his "metaphysic of self-denial" in his

\(^{10}\) Phoenix, p.479.

\(^{11}\) The Forked Flame, p.252.

\(^{12}\) Phoenix, p.528.

\(^{13}\) Forked Flame, pp.252-256.
presentation of the homoerotic relationship between Ramon and Cipriano. The position to which Lawrence had brought his discussion and development of male relationships in *The Plumed Serpent* was formulated on the basis of the criteria established in the two preceding novels, which were in themselves developments, as we have seen, from the earlier attempts to inform male friendship with a greater-than-immediate redemptive social and personal power. However, as I have shown repeatedly, all incidents of male contact are informed with an emotional and sexual bias which makes it very difficult for Lawrence to claim any ontological redemptive result from them. In *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo* he began to work towards a position where the sexual element was to be denied, and "love" or the "will-to-love" (i.e. love as a motive force) was to play no part in the masculine structure and leadership of society. The result in *The Plumed Serpent* was to be a male leadership-relationship "intangible, remote, and without intimacy" (265); however, as my analysis of Cipriano's initiation as "the living Huitzilopochtli" reveals, the relationship between the two men is definitely not "intangible" and "remote." Far from being "without intimacy," its whole structure is dependent upon intimacy for its success. Lawrence's determination in insisting that the true nature of the relationship is devoid of the homoerotic impulse which characterized all the previous male incidents, is at variance with what he actually presented as occurring between the two men. The contradiction between determined insistence and actual accomplishment falls neatly into Lawrence's own analysis of "immorality" in the novel, for quite obviously he is dogmatically denying "himself, his own being," in an attempt "to escape admission of his own failure."

Lawrence was unable to depict male relationships without the emotional and psychological basis of homoerotic sexual attraction, and his insistence throughout the novel that Ramon and Cipriano's attachment was "without intimacy" serves only to compromise his artistic integrity. While his political and social theories led him to insist that male leadership relationships be "remote" and "intangible," his creative imagination
(as well as, to some degree, his psychological predilection) did not allow an aesthetic presentation of male relations in those terms. We have seen repeatedly that an intense emotional commitment, whether conscious or unconscious, was a necessary foundation to any depiction of male interaction. The attempt in The Plumed Serpent to deny this necessity results in a demonstration of Lawrence's obvious inability to do so. Thus, Lawrence is forced into an authorial stance where he must assert what he cannot depict, but in so doing realizes that he is consciously and falsely pulling "down the balance to his own predilection," and distorting the natural balance between himself and his "circumambient universe." This realization is, of course, an admission of failure, and leads the novelist to a revaluation of the "communion in Power" and the role of the hero.

The revaluation takes the form of rejection. In a letter to Witter Bynner, Lawrence admits that "the hero is obsolete, and the leader of men is a back number....The leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, ich dien sort of business."14 An interesting sidelight to Lawrence's arrival at this new position is his correspondence with Rolf Gardiner, a series of letters some of which were written during the period of composition of The Plumed Serpent, and some of which extend beyond the publication of the novel.15 Throughout the correspondence we are able to chart Lawrence's spontaneous responses to and pronouncements on leadership and heroes without the complications of the demands of artistic necessity and integrity. In addition, Lawrence's analysis of John Hargrave's "Kibbo Kift Kindred" movement is significant because of the many parallels with Lawrence's responses to homoerotic relationships and ideas of leadership and training. It was this latter concern

14 CL 1045 (13 March 1928).

15 Gardiner Correspondence July 1924 to December 1928 (CB III, p.82), CL and Huxley ed. 4 July 1924 to 23 December 1928. Plumed Serpent—first draft May and June 1923; begun again on 19 November 1924 and finished 5 February 1925 (CL 831); revised MayJune 1925. (Sagar, Art of D.H. Lawrence. Chronology, p.142).
which prompted Gardiner to begin to correspond with Lawrence, for he had joined the movement in 1923 and was to leave it in 1925. 16

Hargrave, the "White Fox, Headman K.K." was an "empirical pacifist" and, as Gardiner reports, his stand for "Woodcraft, Nature Lore and World Friendship against 'Patriotic Jingoism based on force'," led to the establishment in 1920 of "Kibbo Kift, The Woodland Kindred." The movement had an ambitious programme embracing the establishment of Land Reservations and Open Spaces; the recognition of social economics; the establishment of a world educational policy; the inculcation of pride of body, mental poise and vital spiritual perception; and the intention to work for world peace and brotherhood. Kibbo Kift itself meant "strength or any proof of strength," and its advocacy of strong leadership struck a resonant chord with Lawrence's preoccupation at the time. Gardiner himself noted a "nearness to the Lawrentian hero" 17 in Hargrave, and it was perhaps this quality which first attracted Lawrence as well. However, Lawrence remained fairly clearheaded about Hargrave's programme and characteristically brought his own interpretation to the movement.

Lawrence's letter to Rolf Gardiner of 4 July 1924 18 reveals his attitude to the Hargrave type of universal political and social union and brotherhood, and reveals the direction he was to follow in recommencing work on The Plumed Serpent four months later. Lawrence writes that he is "sick of the force of cosmic unity, or world union," considering all such plans as unrealistic; they "may exist in the abstract—but not elsewhere," and offers as an alternative his vision of individual uniqueness as a product of "the spirit of the place." Writing from his New Mexico ranch, Lawrence perceives a significance in the natural and animistic world which supports his ideas of union in singleness—a direct antithesis to the controlled and "willed"

16 CB III, p. 77 et passim.
17 CB III, p. 79.
18 CL 796-7.
system of the Kibbo Kift movement. Man's soul can only find expression and direction when it is free of all inhibiting factors, especially of the "monotheistic string." In the old gods of Mexico Lawrence thought he had found just that freedom. Hargrave's movement, with its adherence to willed "mechanical order," is anathema to Lawrence's commitment to a return "to the older vision of life" and his insistence upon a "yielding to the darker, older unknown...the natural mystery of power." Lawrence himself was, of course, about to immerse himself in the "dark gods" of The Plumed Serpent, and it is ironic that he applies not only the very thing he condemns in Hargrave—a mechanical, willed order—to the incidents and narrative of the novel, but also advises Gardiner to "accept what seems good to you, reject what seems repulsive"—the very advice he was to follow himself when The Plumed Serpent no longer answered to his needs.

A month later, on 9 August 1924, \textsuperscript{19} Lawrence is again criticising Hargrave's "snivelling self-pity" and his lack of honest and enthusiastic social condemnation: "What we need is to smash a few big holes in European suburbanity, let in a little real fresh air." What is needed, he suggests, is "the right words," for "words are action good enough." Lawrence demands a "smashing the face of what one knows is rotten"; The Plumed Serpent was to be Lawrence's own attempt to do just that. The next stage of the published correspondence occurs after the publication of the novel, at a time when Lawrence is having reservations about the position to which he had written himself. He could still, however, suggest that he thinks "it is my most important novel," and that it. "will stand a bit of wear." \textsuperscript{20} But his self-imposed mission was beginning to pall, for he realized that he had compromised himself in several important ways. Thus, writing to Gardiner on 17 July 1926, Lawrence passes on some hard-earned advice: "And don't be too earnest...nor overburdened by a mission; neither too self-willed. One must

\textsuperscript{19} CL 800.

\textsuperscript{20} CL, 860.
be simple and direct, and a bit free from oneself above all."\(^{21}\)
The advice comes from the depths of the American experience which
he had left behind him, for now a more subdued, quiescent
Lawrence is beginning to evolve; in the next letter to Gardiner,
inviting him to visit when the Lawrences return to London from
Baden-Baden, he is able to admit that he is "a bit scared...of
weird movements."

Though Lawrence is applying his apprehensions to Gardiner's
"Youth" movement, there is a suggestion that Quetzalcoatl is
behind it, for he goes on to suggest that he would like to "try
to dance a sword-dance with iron-stone miners," a suggestion
reminiscent not only of his earlier confession to Gardiner that
he danced with the Indians near his New Mexico ranch, \(^{22}\) but
also of the animistic and homoerotic dances in which Cipriano
participated. Morris Dancing was part of Hargrave's and
Gardiner's program\(^{23}\) and they were meant to foster the same
type of "communion" and "brotherhood" which Lawrence claimed
for similar dances in *The Plumed Serpent*. Implicit in Lawrence's
wistful desire to dance with the miners, and "to be connected
with something, with some few people, in some thing," is a
return to the Utopian idea of Rananim, but it is now, after years
of personal and artistic disillusionment, tempered by a
characteristic caution: "But, of course, I shall be wary
beyond words, of committing myself." Nevertheless, the idea
of some positive action with men, in the world of men, remains:
"I shall be very glad to abandon my rather meaningless isolation,
and join in with some few other men, if I can. If only, in the
dirty solution of this world, some new little crystal will begin
to form."

Lawrence's sympathy with an attempt "to get *anything real
going*"\(^{23}\) exclusive of "the social world *which* can offer little
or nothing any more," is a reiteration of his desire "for a new
sort of relationship between people," the single theme which

\(^{21}\) *CL*, 928.

\(^{22}\) *CL*, 796.

\(^{23}\) *CL* 940-41.
constantly informs his work. Lawrence's unrealized personal idea of a Utopian settlement surfaces again in his correspondence with Gardiner; he states that he would "one day" like to "take a place in the country, somewhere, where perhaps one or two other men might like to settle in the neighbourhood, and we might possibly slowly evolve a new rhythm of life: learn to make the creative pauses, and learn to dance and sing together, without stunting, and perhaps also publish some little fighting periodical, keeping fully alert and alive to the world, living a different life in the midst of it, not merely apart." The previous attempt, and resulting failure, at a similar experiment with John Middleton Murry could not have been far from his thoughts as he wrote this, and it is significant that Lawrence still conceives of any worthwhile social and individual action in terms of an exclusively male-dominant society, even though, after The Plumed Serpent, this type of experience is repudiated by virtue of its omission from the later work.

Lawrence also reiterates his perception of the need "to establish a fuller relationship between oneself and the universe, and between oneself and one's fellow man and fellow woman"; his desire to find some means to expand the "brothers-in-Christ" business...into a full...relationship, where there can be also physical and passional meeting, as there used to be in the old dances and rituals," is also conceived as possible only within the criteria he had established for male relationships. The "new relationship" and the "new rhythm of life" which Lawrence would like to see re-established are part of man's old rituals, rituals he attempted to revive and give significance in The Plumed Serpent, but essentially confined to interaction between men in a "physical and passional meeting." The possibility of becoming "the focus, or node, of a new sensibility," is reserved solely as a male activity, and the Arcadian ideal, or Utopian dream, once more finds its expression in a desire for "some quiet

24 CL, 940.

25 See above, Chapter 4, part 3.

26 CL, 941
house in the country—where one can begin—and from which the hiker, maybe, can branch out. Some place with a big barn and a bit of land....and...one must set out and learn a deep discipline—and learn dances from all the world....and wordless music like the Indians have."  

Lawrence's program centered around "some quiet house in the country," is strongly reminiscent of Edward Carpenter's "retreat" at Millthorpe in Derbyshire. Carpenter's motive was very similar to Lawrence's, for he "felt the need directly and instinctively" for "something primitive to restore [his] overworn constitution." Carpenter suggests that his decision to establish his rural retreat was born out of his own need, rather than "in pursuance of some great theory or scheme of social salvation," but he reluctantly admits that an idea of that kind might have been in operation. Closer to the truth might be the suggestion that for "a believer in the Love of Comrades" (as E.M. Forster termed him), a fairly secluded location would be ideal for the type of establishment he felt would best answer his "own need." As is evident from Forster's reminiscence, the "settlement" became a "shrine" which attracted many similarly inclined individuals, and Carpenter was able to practise his "high minded Homosexuality" free of the condemnation and intervention of an intolerant society.

Lawrence himself had, of course, suffered at the hands of bureaucratic and censorious society, and was certainly aware of Carpenter's experiment and his difficulties, real or imagined, with the public guardians of morality. The similarity between Carpenter's accomplishments and Lawrence's expression of a desire for a similar experiment is perhaps indicative of a common sensibility, at least in the area of male activity within the

27 CL, 951.
29 Ibid., p.111. See also Chapters IX and X, pp.147-189.
31 P.N. Furbank, Introduction to Maurice, p.v.
In this context it is worth noting that Lawrence wrote quite candidly to Dr. Trigant Burrow about the social and personal frustrations he felt, and in so doing he revealed his understanding of the personal impulse behind his quest for a Superman-Hero and the gradual revaluation of that theme. It is important to view Lawrence's correspondence with Gardiner and Burrow, as well as the tangential allusion to Edward Carpenter's experiment, as part of his continuing examination of the role of male relationships and the impulse to domination. Even though, after *The Plumed Serpent*, these themes do not loom large in the fiction, they are present, albeit sometimes disguised, in the correspondence of the period, and as such are an important indication of the degree to which Lawrence had subdued, or at least compromised, his earlier position.

Lawrence's awareness that "the hero illusion starts with the individualist illusion," which he reports to Dr. Burrow on 13 July 1927, is an important stage in his examination of the themes he had previously dealt with, for he goes on to affirm that "societal instinct is much deeper than sex instinct—and societal repression much more devastating." This statement is the Lawrentian rewording of Dr. Burrow's psychological theories, especially those parts of them with which Lawrence was most sympathetic. The initial meeting ground between the two men is their mutual distrust of the extremes to which Freudian psychoanalysis is taken, and once beyond that, Burrow's analysis that "the real trouble lies in the inward sense of 'separateness' which dominates every man," finds a welcome adherent in Lawrence. What is most significant for Lawrence at this time is his summary of Burrow's conclusion that "what man really wants...is a sense of togetherness with his fellow men, which shall balance the secret but overmastering sense of separateness and aloneness which now dominates him." This, together with Burrow's discussion of "normality"—in essence, for Lawrence, "the idolatry of self"—

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32 CL, 989.

strikes the most resounding chord in him, for as we have seen throughout this discussion, Lawrence was attempting to define himself in relation to others, and in relation to his own self image. For Lawrence, à propos of Burrow's study, "consciousness should be a flow from within outwards. The organic necessity of the human being should flow into spontaneous action and spontaneous awareness" and not, as society has conditioned, from "without inwards." On this basis, sexuality is simply self-interest; what Lawrence advocates, as he had already established throughout his work, is a "meeting," and this mutual meeting or "true flow" (what Burrows calls "societal consciousness") is for Lawrence "the human consciousness, in contrast to the social, or image consciousness."

The theory is similar to that which we have noted in Fantasia, and which Lawrence applied to Aaron and Lilly in Aaron's Rod and, to some degree, in The Plumed Serpent. What is significant about Lawrence's use of the theory is that it is applied to male relationships; he was still attempting to find a respectable basis for homoerotic relations. Incidental to this attempt, though not to be ignored, was his need to understand his own "self interest" in male comradeship; thus his sympathy with Gardiner, and fantasies of "Uranian" settlements in imitation of Carpenter, must be considered as part of this exploration. In Dr. Burrow's work Lawrence found support not only for his own theories, but also found an explanation for his individual frustrations and illusions. Burrow's pioneering development of group analysis dovetailed perfectly with Lawrence's own need and vision of "a state of honesty and a certain trust among a group of people...for it is only when we can get a man to fall back into his true relation to other men, and to women, that we can give him an opportunity to be himself." The coda which Lawrence found in Burrow's work was that "men must get into touch." He was extremely sympathetic to this development for it supported all that he had written and thought throughout his career.

The significance for this discussion of Lawrence's response to the theories of Dr. Burrow, and his correspondence with him, is that they reveal a continuing social and personal interest
in the role of male relationships. Indeed, in the letter of 13 July 1927, Lawrence writes: "I'll try and find your paper on the 'Genesis and Meaning of Homosexuality'—you should have said 'Genesis and Exodus.' But I've long wanted to know the meaning—and there you told it in 1917!" There is no evidence to suggest that Lawrence ever did "find" the article, and there is some confusion about whether it was actually in his possession somewhere and lost during his travels, or whether he was attempting to obtain the pamphlet from a library or a friend. Dr. Burrow reports that reprints of his articles first went to Lawrence about 1920, and since they were sent by one of the Doctor's students, there is some doubt about which were actually forwarded to him. Dr. Burrow also states that he is inclined to think "that the most recent of the published papers that went to him at the time was 'Psychoanalysis in Theory and in Life'" which was read at a conference, and "whatever other studies went to him at that time were doubtless those that most nearly preceded this address given in 1919." Among a group of papers published close to the date of the one quoted above, is "The Genesis and Meaning of Homosexuality and its Relation to the Problem of Introverted Mental States," but from Lawrence's statement in the 1927 letter, it is doubtful whether he had read, or indeed, ever received it. However, Lawrence's interest is evident, and his comments are singularly revealing.

Lawrence's suggestion that the title should have been "Genesis and Exodus" of Homosexuality is indicative of his concern with the problem, and his desire, evident throughout the work, to free homoerotic relations from the stigma of social condemnation. The Biblical allusion is, of course, a reference to a flight from suppression to freedom; it was primarily freedom of expression in all facets of human behaviour with which Lawrence was most concerned. His qualifying statement that he had "long wanted to know the meaning [of homosexuality]" is additional and conclusive evidence of his continuing concern.

34 CB III, p.147. Also p.678, n.203; and pp.680-685 (Burrow's letters to Lawrence).
with all the ramifications of male relationships, and his attempt to find some meaningful and acceptable basis upon which to predicate a "true relationship between men." As Lawrence reveals to Burrow on 3 August 1927, the only way to accomplish this is for men "to meet in some common belief"—if the belief is but physical and not merely mental,"\textsuperscript{35} and for a while, the possibilities extended by Hargrave and Gardiner seemed likely to provide the common ground upon which to enact his desires. Lawrence's constant reiteration in his letters to Gardiner of his desire to "revive the old round dances and singing among the men," and his belief in the value of doing so, must be considered as a reflection of his statements to Burrow, and of his need to put into practice what was a consistently attractive theory. But Burrow's psychological and social writings also articulated for Lawrence the failure and limitation of his own commitment to the leadership theme, and though leadership had been inextricably bound with male homoerotic relationships, Lawrence was able to discard the more obtrusive and excessive demands of his supremacy theories while still retaining a more subdued and "tender" appreciation of the possibilities inherent in male friendship.

Lawrence's appreciation of the fact that "the hero illusion starts with the individualist illusion" led him to his analysis and condemnation of Hargrave's Kibbo Kift Kindred, a judgement which Gardiner states "will probably remain the best ever pronounced on Hargrave's attempt."\textsuperscript{36} Gardiner had sent to Lawrence Hargrave's manifesto, \textit{The Confession of The Kibbo Kift}, subtitled "A Declaration and General Exposition of the Work of the Kindred,"\textsuperscript{37} and it was Lawrence's response to his reading of this work which prompted Gardiner's declaration. As Lawrence relates,\textsuperscript{38} he read the book "with a good deal of interest," but

\textsuperscript{35} CL 993.
\textsuperscript{36} CB III, p.79.
\textsuperscript{37} London, 1927.
\textsuperscript{38} CL 1034.
decides that "it won't work" because while "the ideas are sound" they are "not quite flesh and blood." The analysis of Hargrave which follows is highly significant, for Lawrence's comments can equally apply to his own attempts at evolving a totally male dominated society predicated upon an absolute leader:

The man alternates between idealism pure and simple, and a sort of mummary, and then a compromise with practicality. What he wants is all right. I agree with him on the whole, and respect him as a straightforward fighter. But he knows he's full of hate, underneath. He's overweening, and he's cold. But for all that, on the whole he's right, and I respect him for it. I respect his courage and aloneness. If it weren't for his ambition and his lack of warmth, I'd go and kibbo kift along with him....I wouldn't write a criticism in a paper against him. Rather praise him. Because his reaction is on the whole sound. Only it is too egoistic, like all modern things....

The judgement of Hargrave as an individual, and of his youth and leadership movement, contains echoes of Lawrence's own personal and artistic failures in the novel closest to his reading of Hargrave's book. The Plumed Serpent can be characterized in Lawrence's terms as alternating "between idealism pure and simple, and a sort of mummary," and like Hargrave, or at least like Lawrence's analysis of Hargrave, Lawrence himself, in the novel, realized that he was flogging a dead horse and "knows there's no hope, his way." Thus, the rejection of the leadership and power theme as it is expressed in the novel is vocalized via Lawrence's analysis of the Kibbo Kift, for in effect he was able to perceive a certain similarity in both. Lawrence shared ambition, courage, and loneliness with Hargrave, in so far as their respective analyses of society's dilemma was concerned, and their attempt to effect a reorientation of leadership and involvement. But both programmes involved an alienation, hence the "aloneness" which Lawrence so acutely realized, and for which he found a certain justification in Burrow's theories. The "note of failure" which Lawrence perceives in Hargrave is directly related to power and leadership, for Hargrave put into practice what Lawrence had at one time found very attractive, and which he himself was unable to realize. His judgement that
Hargrave "was not a leader for today" and that "the leader today needs tenderness as well as toughness" precedes the oft-quoted letter to Witter Bynner in which he reiterates the conclusions derived from his reading of Hargrave. In fact, Lawrence's rejection of "the whole business of leaders and followers" is repeated to Gardiner on 4 March 1928$^{39}$ when he unequivocally states that "even Leadership must die, and be born different, later on." Both Hargrave and Gardiner "are struggling to enforce an obsolete form of leadership," because their type of leadership (and incidentally the type Lawrence posited in The Plumed Serpent) was based upon "the reciprocity of power" rather than what he now considered a more viable form based upon reciprocity of tenderness: "When you get down to the basis of life, to the depth of the warm creative stir, there is no power." Tenderness is all, and "the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and men and women," and not the "leader-cum-follower relationship" which Lawrence concludes "is a bore."$^{40}$ The last letter to Gardiner severs once and for all the flirtation Lawrence vicariously experienced through Gardiner and Hargrave, and reveals the new direction of Lawrence's interest: "I think perhaps the nicest thing in the world is to be most of the time alone, then to see a few people with whom one feels a bit of natural sympathy. I'm afraid I'm really not made for groups and gatherings."$^{41}$

Lawrence had felt "a bit of natural sympathy" with Gardiner, and through him with Hargrave, but his final judgement that "this silly White Fox blarney about pure constructive activity is all poppycock..." is tempered by Lawrence's "what about him, by the way—the Kibbo Kift?" a question which betrays a certain continuing interest in the leader who lacked "tenderness." Lawrence's judgement about Hargrave's "rancour" and "failure" as well as the lack of "tenderness" to co-exist with the

$^{39}$ AH 704.

$^{40}$ CL 1045.

$^{41}$ AH 769.
"toughness," may have been a result of his careful reading of several sections of *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift* which specifically dealt with conditions and situations in which Lawrence had more than an academic interest. This aspect of Hargrave's manifesto was one which Lawrence himself was deeply involved with, and centred about the complications he had himself discovered in attempting to define and present a system of male leadership and friendship which would be both personally and socially acceptable. Male relationships were an integral part of Lawrence's programme, and in Hargrave's book he discovered a complete and total condemnation of both his own personal involvement and attraction to male comradeship, as well as the claims he made for them in constructive social activity.

In Part One of Hargrave's *Confession*, in a section entitled "The Fit and the Unfit," Lawrence would have read a description of himself which could only have served to alienate him from all that Hargrave was attempting, though it must be admitted that Lawrence was able, by a conscious effort, to be objective, and to repress whatever discomfort he may have felt. Hargrave writes that "men with high pitched voices are felt to be odd men out" and that "those who talk a good deal about the 'freedom of the individual' are suspected of an inner formlessness and unreliability in action."42 The juxtaposition of these two comments would have been hard to reconcile, for Lawrence, with his feminine "high pitched voice" did in fact advocate the very freedom Hargrave is condemning—though it should be recognized that during Lawrence's "leadership and power" phase, he himself would have supported the condemnation of "formlessness and unreliability." But Hargrave is on territory which is very close to Lawrence's own personal condition, for he goes on to state that "men who exhibit sentimental attachments towards their own sex are sensed immediately and dropped."43 If, however, Lawrence was making a conscious effort to repress his own attraction towards men, and if, as he suggested in

42 *Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, p.78. Hereafter cited as *Confession*.
43 *Confession*, p.79.
Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent, "intimacy," "bloodbrotherhood," "love," and "mateship" have no place in the new configuration of male leadership relations he was depicting in those novels, then Hargrave's statements interspersed amongst the ones quoted above would have found some support in Lawrence's way of thinking. The suggestion that "all Kinsfolk are capable of carrying out instructions issued by their leaders without the inferiority reaction common to the majority" and that "the Kin is one of the few movements to-day able to use the words 'discipline,' 'leadership,' and 'I must' instead of 'You should'," is exactly in keeping with what Lawrence was attempting to depict in his novels, and especially in The Plumed Serpent. However, as we have seen, Lawrence was unable to achieve the separation Hargrave demands between the homoerotic element and the leadership qualities of his adherents, though Lawrence would have supported Hargrave's comments on sex and sexuality: "no Kinsman or woman looks upon the sex impulse and the sex act as a low, degraded or sinful thing," though "sloppy lovemaking" or "exhibiting feeble sex reactions in public" is a "most deplorable exhibition of devitalisation in the social technique of the majority."45

The most damning aspect of Hargrave's book for all that Lawrence had attempted occurs in the second part entitled "The Spirit" in which Hargrave speaks directly to his disciples, in effect laying down the law of his conception of personal and social behaviour. He laments the state of society "when the round breast of the woman and the squared torso of the man lose their shapeliness, so that no one may be sure which is which," and summarizes his exposure to all the theories of homogenic and 'Uranian' relationships, directly alluding to Carpenter's theories (a reference Lawrence would certainly have recognized): "...the fusion of souls, the friendship-love, the Underlying Self, the All-self, the unit man and the mass man, soul-budding, the Intermediate sex...It is a turning of the spirit—left from Right to Left the wrong way of the sun, from life to Death,

44 Confession, p.78-79.
45 Ibid., p.79.
from white to Black from Male to Female." Many of these concepts and esoteric theories of homogenic justification had been utilized by Lawrence throughout his work. The "fusion of souls" and "friendship love" are the underlying basis for the male relations Lawrence constantly depicted. The "unit man" has a definite place in the Fantasia theory we have discussed in relation to Aaron's Rod, and the "man's man" is the basis of the leadership power revealed in Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent. The reference to Carpenter and his ideas about "Uranian" love in the context of the Intermediate Sex was utilized by Lawrence in conjunction with Whitman's ideas, as the basis for the evolution of his own conception of comradeship and homoerotic love. The difference, of course, is that Lawrence considered all these concepts as having a positive value for human relationships, and also, incidentally, as offering a viable justification for his confused feelings about his own sex. For Hargrave, however, "friendship love between male and male and female and female is suitable in the form of hero worship for the youth not fully fledged, but if the grown-up world moves backward towards a 'protozoic' love ideal where there is less distinction of sex, it moves a-widdershins to its decay and death."

Lawrence had utilized a "friendship love" situation between female and female in The Rainbow to suggest exactly the conclusion Hargrave offers; he did not feel the same way about male relationships until he showed Kate Leslie's reaction to the effeminate sodomistic spectacle of the bull fight at the beginning of The Plumed Serpent, where his intention was to suggest the "decay and death" rampant in Mexican society. Nevertheless, the sexuality he utilizes in that section is meant to be unredeemed sexuality, very unlike the redemptive capabilities he had claimed for the earlier male relationships, and which he attempts to show in operation between Ramon and Cipriano. For Lawrence, male "friendship love" was a move forwards, not backwards as Hargrave claimed; once again Edward Carpenter's theories of

46 Confession, pp.280-281.
homogenic love are the whipping post against which Hargrave vents his disapproval. The move backwards towards a "protozoic" love ideal "where there is less and less distinction of sex," is a direct reference to Carpenter's discussion of "the love affairs of the protozoa" in The Drama of Love and Death, in which he evokes a quasi-scientific system in explanation for the evolution of the physiology of love. Carpenter's purpose was to show that "homosexual tendencies are neither degenerate nor hereditary;" as we have seen earlier, Lawrence was sympathetic to an explanation which would resolve his own personal doubts. Hargrave, by a derogatory implication, attributes to Carpenter's "all-pervading and divine consciousness" the "power of undoing" and ranks him with "the frustrated souls on earth" who "find everything a pain, a longing, an agony, a problem, a suffering, a conflict, a betrayal, and an heart-breaking pang of unfulfilled hope."

This catalogue would have struck Lawrence as having some applicability to himself, for (as our discussion of his response to Dr. Burrow reveals) he was concluding some fairly candid self analysis. But Hargrave's main contention was that individuals who qualified as one of his "frustrated souls" bore "a grudge

47 The Drama of Life and Death: A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration (London, 1912).

48 Emile Delavenay discusses this aspect of Carpenter's work in his study Lawrence and Carpenter, pp.198-201.

49 Lawrence and Carpenter, p.201.

50 T.S. Eliot has criticised Lawrence's depiction of heterosexual relationships for "reascend[ing] the metamorphoses of evolution, passing backward beyond ape and fish to some hideous coition of protoplasm" ("The Contemporary Novel" in La Nouvelle Revue Francaise 1 May 1927; reprinted in D.H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage, ed. R.P. Draper, London, 1970, pp.275-277). Eliot's comment is perhaps more revealing of his own attitudes than those of Lawrence, for he prefaces the above remark by suggesting that "love-making" has only become tolerable because of centuries of "amenities, refinements and graces"—presumably "love-making" was at that time generally intolerable to Mr. Eliot.

51 Confessions, p.281.
against the gross terrestrial body—more specifically against the Lingam-Yoni and shrinking in their spiritual 'refinement' (always to be seen in auto- and homosexual types), seek to escape by the Intermediate Back Door." Thus Lawrence would have been faced with a condemnation which he perhaps recognized as potentially true, for he did fit Hargrave's description on several of its main points. Here, then, was an analysis of Lawrence's own attitude and condition, but an analysis which condemned any attempt to reconcile homoerotic attraction as "the grey fog" which completely prevented the achievement of "the vital polarity of the sexes"—a polarity which Hargrave affirmed "may not be destroyed." Lawrence was, of course, committed to "the polarity of the sexes" and in Hargrave, a man he partially admired in so far as their ideas of leadership and discipline once coincided, he discovered that his attitude towards male relations and his own personal feelings were classified with "the hand patters, the stalkers, the sleek kissers with sticky lips, the gentle hairless men with high-pitched voices who 'love each other'."

Lawrence was unable to separate homoerotic attraction from his presentation of male leadership and power, and though he advocated leadership relations which were "remote" and "intangible," he was unable to remove the "intimacy" from them. Hargrave, by a dedicated and mechanical process was able to condemn the very thing Lawrence could not escape, and which previously he had attempted to justify. In the Confession of the Kibbo Kift Lawrence finally read the end to his own leadership experiments, for on Hargrave's evidence, male homoerotic relations had no place in the world of the future. However, in spite of Lawrence's renunciation of power and leadership, he is still committed to male affection and tenderness, and far from subscribing to Hargrave's total exclusion, Lawrence's future does hold potential freedom for unrepressed male tenderness.

52 Confession, p.282.
Lawrence's vision of the future, which draws upon his ideas of leadership and male tenderness, coalesces in the unfinished "Autobiographical Fragment" written at or about the time when the correspondence with Gardiner, Burrow, and the evaluation of Hargrave's work were in progress. The "Fragment" begins with Lawrence's return to his birthplace and an analysis of social and personal conditions of his youth, but it quickly becomes a Utopian Dream Vision: he falls asleep and is revived one thousand years later in the same location though in a changed world. What is of interest is that the world into which he is reborn is definitely male-oriented and has an unobtrusive "tender" and benevolent male leadership structure. The world of "Nethrupp" is characterized by "a great stillness" and "a magic of close-interwoven life" which transmits itself to him. He awakens to the caress of "stark-naked," well-formed, peaceful men who, as they rub him gently into awareness, "give off life" and warmth. The life-giving caress is reminiscent of all the previous incidents throughout the fiction which we have discussed; here, however, the homoerotic element is almost absent (though the ceremony of initiating Lawrence into the future world does partake somewhat of the earlier fictional experiences). The men of Nethrupp are also reminiscent of the men to whom Birkin was attracted in the "Prologue" to Women in Love, their perfect bodies, blue eyes, and innocently erotic nakedness pervading Lawrence with the "warm rhythm of life," but they are totally devoid of attraction as sexually or emotionally desirable objects—indeed, they are like "plants in flower" though curiously without life.

53 Warren Robertd reports that the "Autobiographical Fragment" "was written in 1927 or 1928; the manuscript is on leaves from a notebook which was also the source of a few pages of the third version of Lady Chatterley's Lover" (Bibliography, p.162).

54 Phoenix, p.830 at passim.
There is "an instinctive cleanliness and decency everywhere, in every movement, in every act," and, in what is the direct antithesis to the first part of Aaron's dream in *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence is led "down to a big circular room" where "men reclined on the folded felts...eating an evening meal...They had taken off their clothes, and lay with the firelight flickering on their healthy, fruit-like bodies, the skin glistening faintly with oil." Clothing is "a burden or a slight humiliation. And they lay and talked softly, intermittently, with low laughter, and some played games...but mostly they were still." Life appears to be idyllic and perfectly in tune with nature; indeed, the men seem to have established the "fuller relationship between oneself and the universe, and between oneself and one's fellow man" which Lawrence advocated in his letter to Gardiner. There is also "a physical and passionless meeting, as there used to be in the old dances and rituals," for the inhabitants of Nethrupp "dance the sun down" and "wheel and dance" as birds and fishes, "controlled by some strange unanimous instinct."

The leader to whom Lawrence is finally conducted "had a quavering glimmer like light coming through water," and he advises Lawrence to take off his clothes, "be beautiful...like a white butterfly" and "let the light fall" on him. The tenderness and understanding of the leader is an extension of the instinct and communion in the strange world in which Lawrence finds himself, and the people have "the completeness of plants." Indeed, all the imagery in the dream section of the narrative is derived from the natural world, yet the society is lifeless—perhaps this is finally the reason for the unfinished state of the fragment. The world into which Lawrence awakens is curiously unsatisfactory when compared to that he left behind, and the "tenderness" and communion can be interpreted as mere apathy. As a vision of a utopian future the narrative fails, but the elements of which that future consists, and the orientation Lawrence finds in it, are significant in the context of his attitude towards male relations. Freedom and uninhibited behaviour are the norm. It is an indication of Lawrence's continuing interest in the possibilities of male interaction.
and male "tenderness" that the most visible characteristics of Nethrupp society are the almost continual state of male nudity, and the grace and warmth of the male specimens which Lawrence portrays.

The "Autobiographical Fragment" reveals that Lawrence had not lost interest in the concept of homogenic relations and their possibilities, but that he was still experiencing difficulties in finding a successful method to depict them. The Dream Vision ultimately fails, and is discarded unfinished, because in the process of fulfilling the dream the characters become dehumanized. Lawrence could visualize imaginatively what he thought a future Newthorpe would be like, but he could not humanize the individuals involved: they are all ciphers and have no immediate connection with experiential reality as Lawrence was aware of it.

Nevertheless, the impulse towards male comradeship and the continuing attraction of homoerotic relations persist, and in "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" Lawrence looks instead to his past to depict the importance of that particular aspect of human experience. The essay is important for our present purposes because Lawrence is articulating the experiences of his youth and his perception of the emotional and psychosexual impact on him of the mining community during his formative years. The significance of this retrospective view is enhanced because it occurs near the end of his life and, consequently, near the end of his continuing investigation of male relations. In addition, the essay has in common with the earlier "Autobiographical Fragment" an idealization of masculine comradeship, which is presented as morally and socially superior to the reality of the Lawrentian present.

Both essays are to varying degrees a "dream of life...come true," but their reality resides solely in the realms of


56 Phoenix, p.834.
imagination and fictional depiction. The instinctive behaviour of the inhabitants of the future Newthorpe is paralleled by that of the Eastwood miners from Lawrence's past who "lived... entirely by instinct"57 and did not become "mechanized men" through their experiences in the pit. The Eastwood miners share a comradeship and communion which is reminiscent of the homoerotic male relationships Lawrence has presented in the work previously discussed. The language of the description, and the physical awareness that the men feel for each other, further reinforce the parallel, and suggest a definite continuation of Lawrence's interest in the theme of male relations:

Under the butty system, the miners worked underground as a sort of intimate community, they knew each other practically naked, and with curious close intimacy, and the darkness and the underground remoteness of the pit "stall," and the continual presence of danger, made the physical, instinctive, and intuitional contact, almost as close as touch, very real and very powerful. This physical awareness and intimate togetherness was at its strongest down pit (135-6).

The shared masculine communal activity gives the men a "curious dark intimacy" and a "naked sort of contact"—in effect, the "magic of close interwoven life" which Lawrence attributed to the miners in the Newthorpe of 2927. The degree to which Lawrence is idealizing the nature of the miners' experience can be readily discovered by his attribution of the same perceptions and attitudes to his father who, Lawrence tells us, "loved the pit. He was hurt badly, more than once, but he would never stay away. He loved the contact, the intimacy, as men in the war loved the intense male comradeship of the dark days"(136). If we are to accept Lawrence's retrospective view of a collier's life, we must accept an idyllic existence where men work in close naked intimacy in the dark pit, then "continue their intimacy" in the pub, talking endlessly of "wonders and marvels" and varying that by just sitting on their heels, watching the flowers and "anything or nothing"(136-7). The reality of life is dismissed as "the nagging materialism of

57 Phoenix, p.135.
of the women," for it was to escape from the women that the men naturally drew closer together in "the intimacy of the mine," drawing strength and fulfilment from the "naked contact."

The miners' life which Lawrence describes is exclusively male, and it is presented as having a definite positive social and individual value, for not only are the men "deeply alive, instinctively," but they are "more than happy," they are "fulfilled." We must recognize in this exclusive masculine world an existence which was totally opposite to that which Lawrence himself experienced, for he never did work in the pit, and was usually in female company. In addition, his first job reinforced the feminine quality of his personal environment, which contrasted to the masculine endeavour represented by the miners. Thus, the "intense male comradeship" which Lawrence thinks he remembers as characterizing the adult male community of his childhood is to some degree a dream vision like that of Newthorpe in the future: Lawrence wanted to believe that his was the truthful representation, for the communal male activity was preferable to the reality of man-to-man confrontations with which he had little success. In addition, the feminine influence to which he was exposed prevented him from partaking of the kind of male experience he revealed in such a story as "Strike Pay." It would be fair to suggest that in "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" Lawrence was attempting to redress the balance by emphasizing the masculine comradeship which he had lacked during his formative years, and which he now saw, as a result of his contending with the reality of man-to-man relations throughout the fiction, in an idealized, mythicized way.

The contrast of past and present which occurs in both the "Autobiographical Fragment" and in "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" is intended primarily to reveal the respective conditions of male communal relations: the men of the present in "Nottingham" are "beaten down" and "disheartened," but the past and the future are idealized to the extent where the reality is totally lost in an evasion which quickly becomes potentially mythical. The underground existence of the miners

58 See Introduction above.
and their masculine camaraderie is reflected in another Lawrentian evocation of a lost, or past, existence—the civilization of the Etruscans. Lawrence admits that "whoever it is that has departed, they have left a pleasant feeling behind them, warm to the heart, and kindly to the bowels." The "stillness and soothingness in all the air" which he perceives in the "sunken places" of the Etruscans, is all part of the "fullness of life" which characterized the idealized miner of the past and of the future.

The Etruscans, like the miners, partake of "the natural flowering of life," and draw their greatest intimacy "out of the fissures of the earth." Lawrence himself, during his "spiritual excavation" of the Etruscan tombs at Vulci, is able to become, for a short time, the miner he never was, and to suggest an approach to the underground "intimacy" which he believed characterized not only the existence of the Etruscans, but of the Nottingham miners as well. Accompanied by two men who "had a strong, manly energy, more than the ordinary Italians" and by a "squat little fellow...with fat, soft, round curves," Lawrence crawls down the "gloomy holes" through the "excavated earth." As if it were a parody of the idealized underground communal activity which he had previously ascribed to the miners of his youth, Lawrence's own experience in the "gruesome holes" leaves much to be desired, and perhaps presents a truer picture of what conditions were really like: "Sometimes we had to wriggle into the tombs on our bellies, over the mounds of rubble, going down into holes like rats, while the bats flew blindly in our faces." In the reality of the rubble-strewn tombs, the "close intimacy" and the "naked contact" which Lawrence idealized in

60 Ibid., p.12.
61 Ibid., 49.
63 Etruscan Places, p.93.
the miners is transformed into a group of disparate characters, one of whom callously burns the sleeping bats with the candle he holds, and who "like a queer burrowing dumb animal...would creep into...holes in the queerest way, with his queer, soft, round hindquarters jutting behind."64

The visit to the tombs at Vulci is deemed a disappointment, in spite of the fact that Lawrence describes his exploration as "like being in a mine, narrow passages winding on and on, from nowhere to nowhere." Nevertheless, some hint of Lawrence's attitude to his companions is evident, for in addition to the "strong manly energy" which characterized the "higher type" and the "queer, soft, round hindquarters" of the "squat little fellow" who nonetheless "seemed healthy and alive," Lawrence's driver, Luigi, wants him to "have some abandoned house in the foothills" where, Lawrence reports, "he would look after my horses, and we would go hunting together—even out of season, for there was no one to catch you."65 Once again the attractive idea of two men living and working together in a close relationship becomes part of Lawrence's own personal desire—a desire which we have seen expressed not only as part of the early Rananim idea, but also in the letter to Rolf Gardiner, where a quiet house in the country is to be Lawrence's equivalent of Edward Carpenter's Millthorpe.

Lawrence relates that he is interested in Luigi's suggestion, but declines because of his fear of malaria in the district. It is interesting to note that during Luigi's proposition Lawrence's male travelling companion, Earl Brewster (who is designated simply as "B." throughout the narrative), "dozed lightly," and thus is excluded from the invitation. Luigi is "solitary and courageous and surely honest, solitary, and far more manly than the townsmen or the grubbing peasants,"66 but the idea of living in "some abandoned house in the foothills" and being looked after

64 Etruscan Places, p.94.
65 Ibid., p.97.
66 Ibid.
by the "manly" Luigi is only "a dream." In spite of being attracted by Luigi, and by his supposed ancestry with the ancient Etruscans who share, in Lawrence's view, the "natural flowering of life" with the idealized miners, the reality of the Vulci tour is "B. dozing lightly," and the rubble strewn passages of the tombs.

Yet it is against the background of the mythicized Etruscan existence that Lawrence relates to the men he meets during the tour, and who, because of their ancestry, become for the most part increasingly attractive. It is on the basis of the Etruscan myth that Lawrence is ready to entertain ideas of Uranian existence with the "manly" types of the Vulci district, and to reenact the comradeship and communal male activity which he thought was reflected in the wall painting in the tombs of Tarquinia. Representative of the homoerotic comradeship which Lawrence found attractive were the fragments of a painting depicting a man's dancing legs, which for Lawrence had more life than the "whole bodies of men to-day," and a picture of "reclining men," one of whom has "a naked flute-boy, lovely in naked outline, coming towards him." The comradeship and life impulse which Lawrence attributes to the Etruscans, and to which he was "instinctively attracted" in "instant sympathy," gain in value because of the idealized memory he had of the miners of his childhood.

The three narratives, "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," "Autobiographical Fragment," and Etruscan Places, share the distinction of being first person narratives, and consequently are to some extent disclosures of Lawrence's preoccupations at the time of composition. The characteristic idealization of male comradeship which occurs in the three works is indicative of Lawrence's continuing interest in that aspect of human relations; it is also an indication of the way in which the expression of this interest had changed. We are no longer presented with the explicit desire Birkin expresses in the "Prologue" to Women in Love, nor are we immersed in the excesses of male power and leadership as defined in The Plumed Serpent. Instead, Lawrence

67 Etruscan Places, p. 45.
is revealing an extremely calm, personal, but highly idealized view of what male comradeship was and possibly could be: his own role in exclusively male activity, as indicated in *Etruscan Places*, is honestly (if superficially) presented.

The idealization of past experiences allows Lawrence the opportunity of reacting to his own encounter with reality in the way in which it can best be assimilated into his conception of male comradeship and homoerotic relations. The reality of the coal miners is thus transformed into a valuable, almost mythic view of male activity; the unknown Etruscans are deified to such an extent that even their doubtful descendants become attractive, thereby becoming vicariously available for Lawrence's comradeship "dreams." This process of dream and myth-making is also utilized in *Last Poems* where, for example, in "Maximus" man does indeed become a god, and the transformation is achieved through the same working of personal illusion and idealization which characterized the three narratives discussed above.

The point of view in the poem is once again first person, but it is evident from the first stanza that some form of myth-making and illusion is at work: "God is older than the sun and moon/and the eye cannot behold him/nor voice describe him" (*CP*, p.692). The poet then proceeds to place himself directly within the fantasy and to imagine a meeting and conversation with "a naked man, a stranger..." who "...leaned on the gate/with his cloak over his arm, waiting to be asked in." The subsequent conversation is necessarily completely one-sided, with the man-made god contributing only his fantasy identity—Hermes. The poem ends with the recognition of the creative potential of imagination; however, implicit in the illusion is an admission of the falsifying aspect of idealization. The contrast between the reality of any given situation or observation, and the transformation made possible through idealization, is emphasized in the poem "Middle of the World"(*CP*, p.688).

The poems contained in *Last Poems* were written between September and December 1929 (*Sagar*, p.229). References are to *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. V. de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts (New York, 1964), hereafter referred to as *CP*. The pagination of this edition is the same as the Heinemann edition.
Once again a mythic landscape is created in which the poet's imagination is free to roam unfettered over the past, but the landscape and imaginative situation are derived from the reality of the poet's observable present. The "smoking ships/of the P. & O. and the Orient Line" becomes "the slim black ship of Dionysos" and other ships discharging "slim naked men from Cnossos." These men, who are given "glistening bodies" by the moon, speak "the music of lost languages" like the unknown Etruscans and the inhabitants of Newthorpe in 2927. As with the "...bearded men/with slim waists of warriors, and the long feet/of moon-lit dandiers" (CP, p. 689) of the poem "For the Heroes are Dipped in Scarlet," all the men Lawrence imagines are generalized and have little or no individual personality. One suspects that Lawrence is here unwilling to encounter the reality of direct man-to-man confrontation, and is content with an idealized memory or phantasy which poses no threat to him.

At this stage in Lawrence's concern with male comradeship there appears to be greater value in the illusion than in the reality. The miners of "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," the inhabitants of Newthorpe in 2927, the Etruscans, and the men of the Last Poems, all become gods, but only in illusion. They do not indulge in the excesses which characterized the living gods of Quetzalcoatl. Thus had Lawrence found the perfect way to deal with his impulse towards homoerotic relations. The idealization of male comradeship avoided the reality which he had explored in his life and work and, as the end neared, the "naked stranger" and the "slim naked men from Cnossos," miners in another guise, would cease to trouble him. Lawrence's apotheosis of male comradeship had provided a solution.
CONCLUSION

"The inner change in our attitude to one another grew gradually more pronounced. Lawrence said wistfully: 'If only you'd been a man, things might have been perfect'; then added immediately: 'but it wouldn't have been any good, because then you wouldn't have cared about me'."\(^1\)

"Some years ago Lawrence's old patron Mabel Dodge Luhan began to write me letters from Taos (she had found The Judgement of Paris Lawrentian). I wrote her back, asked about Lawrence whom I had read with delight at twenty and with disgust, may I say, at forty. She told me that Lawrence had admitted to once having had an affair with a farmer (Lady Chatterley c'est lui), but nothing lasting came of it—which of course is the whole point: although the male encounter is no more permanent than a flash-lightning, that does not rob it of meaning...."\(^2\)

The work of D.H. Lawrence's last years reveals that his interest in male relationships had not diminished; rather it had undergone a transformation in which all male activity was seen in a highly idealized way. David Cavitch's suggestion that, after the completion of The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence "no longer experienced feelings of sexual desire for either men or women, but that his libido was latent and narcissistic"\(^3\) begs too many questions and is dependent upon information not readily obtainable from "his subsequent writings." While Lawrence no longer dealt with what Cavitch calls "sexual desire for either men or women" with the same degree of intensity as he had in The Plumed Serpent and the earlier works, it is evident from my discussion in Chapter Nine: that though his interest may appear to have waned, Lawrence was far from having totally renounced his interest in and desire for the male relationship which Jessie Chambers at one time had found "rather unusual."\(^4\)

3 D.H. Lawrence and the New World, p.189.
Lawrence's attempts to understand the nature of his interest in male relationships, and to rationalize this interest by establishing a masculine love ethic in his fiction and discursive writings, were part of a continuing and life-long process, and not, as Frieda insisted to John Middleton Murry, "a short phase out of misery." Frieda's attempt to "delete all trace of the intellectual and emotional temptation of Lawrence's darker years" may have been, as Emile Delavenay suggests, "a mixture of legal and social precaution, and a general wish to safeguard his fragile reputation;" but Lawrence's commitment to an exploration of homoerotic male relationships was far from a "short phase" (although it may have been "out of misery"), it gradually assumed important thematic and aesthetic proportions in the canon.

Lawrence's investigation of homoerotic relationships does not occur in isolation from other major preoccupations, for an important aspect of his concern with male relations is their place in the context of a larger consideration of life: they are facets of an investigation of the total reality of human existence. Graham Hough has recognized that "Lawrence has an obscure realization that it is not possible to found a whole way of life on the relation between men and women, that a man must also play his part in the man's world." The preceding study has shown that Lawrence's "realization" was definitely not "obscure"; on the contrary, the readily discernible progression in his use of male homogenic relationships reveals a conscious attempt to place male relations in the perspective demanded by his growing maturity and his awareness of a reality which lies beyond that of conventional morality.

5 Frieda Lawrence: Memoirs and Correspondence, p.360. "There was a real bond between you and L. If he had lived longer and had been older, you would have been real friends, he wanted so desperately for you to understand him. I think the homosexuality in him was a short phase out of misery—I fought him and won—and that he wanted a deeper thing from you."

6 Lawrence and Carpenter, pp.243-4.

7 The Dark Sun, p.55.
Lawrence's general reputation rests upon the majority belief that he was only interested in presenting and investigating the male-female relationship in all its ramifications. This belief must be modified to a large extent in view of the preceding discussion, for while one cannot deny the fact that Lawrence has written well, and perhaps best, on the male-female experience, one must also recognize that he was interested in presenting male relationships, and investigating the complex and difficult subject of male comradeship. In spite of forceful, almost dogmatic statements—"I go to a woman to know myself, and to know her" (CL 318), and "...the great living experience for every man is his adventure into the woman" (CL 324)—which could support a complete commitment to heterosexual experience, strong overtones of homoerotic attraction are evident from the very beginning of Lawrence's career. The psychosexual impulse towards male homoerotic comradeship, present as early as The White Peacock, must be considered as coexisting with the heterosexual celebration (which is itself as much a result of Lawrence's marriage, as a complex psychological reaction manifested thematically in the fiction).

Lawrence's advocacy of a male complement to conventional heterosexual relationships is a product of his concern to establish a positive and valuable place for male relationships in all human interaction. Thus in Women in Love Birkin states his belief that "...a permanent relation between a man and a woman isn't the last word—it certainly isn't." Gerald of course is in agreement, and with that encouragement Birkin can elaborate his position: "...the relation between man and woman is made the supreme and exclusive relationship, that's where all the tightness and meanness and insufficiency comes in." What readers have been slow to recognize is that Lawrence attempted to remove, or at least temper, "the tightness and meanness and insufficiency" which he believed limited heterosexual relationships, by developing a parallel interest in the "additional perfect relationship between man and man"—though

8 Women in Love, p. 397.
with the safe and conventional qualification that this relation­
ship be "additional to marriage."\(^9\)

The cultural and social revaluation which Lawrence's advocacy
of male relationships demands is in perfect harmony with his
attempts to reveal the vacuouness of industrial man. Lawrence's
claim for the potentiality of male comradeship, and the redemp-
tive power which resides in it, is to some degree his political
solution to what he saw as the ever accelerating dehumanization
of society. Lawrence came to believe that relationships between
men can create a new and positive social experience—what he
calls a "new adjustment." The consolidation of this view in
the so called "power" novels necessarily draws upon his earlier
exploration of the pattern of shifting dominance which charac-
terized the male relationships before Aaron's Rod. The change
from what appeared to be a total commitment to man-woman
relationships in the early work to a commitment to the idea of
a "communion in power," results in the secondary role of women
in the later work because of this masculine emphasis. The
emergence of a masculine power ethic which excluded the tender-
ness and love between men in the earlier work, forces the
conclusion that Lawrence had attempted to come to terms with
his own feelings and psychosexual impulses towards male
homoerotic comradeship, and had failed. The "new adjustment"
to a "communion in power" is an attempt to negate the erotic
tenderness and transform it into an immediately visible and
dramatic social and political force—thus justifying not only
his realization that passionate expression and love are
possibilities between men, but also Lawrence's own confusion
about what his responses should be.

Nevertheless, the theme of male homoerotic relations, the
concern with male comradeship, and the potentiality Lawrence
claimed for them must be considered as an important, though
often neglected aspect of his work. The redemptive power which
he was at pains to claim for male relationships comes to rest,
and founders, on the masculine power ethic of The Plumed Serpent.

because of the irreconcilable contradictions between what Lawrence insisted he was doing in the novel, and what he in fact accomplished. As is everywhere evident in the novel, Lawrence himself had lost faith in the concept of unrestricted power. The recently published "Epilogue" to Movements in European History, originally written for the second edition of 1925, shows Lawrence's developing disillusionment with the type of power he expounds in The Plumed Serpent: "The forcing of one man's will over another man is bullying....It is a bad, degrading thing....Yet there must be power....Because if there is not power there will be force. What is the difference, among human beings, between power and force. A man invested with power has a profound responsibility. Force is irresponsible, unless controlled by the higher power."10 The power in The Plumed Serpent must ultimately be seen as irresponsible, and the "higher power," which is intended to control the excesses of Ramon, fails in its task.

The failure of the power theme does not necessarily imply the rejection of male relationships which had been incorporated into it; as my discussion of Lawrence's reaction to John Hargrave shows, he was still sufficiently interested to reject Hargrave's outright condemnation of any value inherent in male communion. Instead, during the latter part of his creative life, Lawrence turned to an idealization of past masculine experience, in part as a vindication of his own involvement with the subject, but also as a resolution to his sustained interest in homoerotic comradeship.

Male communion, comradeship, and homoerotic attraction are all part of the potentiality which Lawrence was intensely concerned to portray in human relations, and must now be considered as sharing in the Lawrentian struggle for fulfilment. The unique and valuable dimension which Lawrence's exploration of male relationships adds to the examination of human relations in his work contributes a significant level of meaning which should affect any future reading of the relevant fiction.

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D.H. Lawrence's interest in male relationships, and its manifestation throughout his work in the theme of male friendships, suggests an approach to his achievement as novelist and thinker which previously has not been adequately explored. Lawrence's attempt to understand and eventually to provide a rationale for his psychosexual feelings and impulses towards homoerotic comradeship began to assume thematic and aesthetic importance in *The White Peacock* and continued for the duration of his career.

An illuminating starting point for the discussion of male relationships is the story "The Prussian Officer," in which Lawrence establishes the techniques of imagistic and thematic expression which frequently recur in his subsequent treatment of male homoerotic relationships. The recognition that erotic tenderness can exist between men results in *Women in Love* in the advocacy of a male complement to conventional heterosexual relationships, although this awareness is complicated by Birkin's explicit homosexual responses in the unpublished "Prologue" to the novel.

After his initial adumbration of the theme in *Women in Love*, Lawrence's discovery of the potentiality inherent in male relations is explored in the "power" novels which follow—*Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *The Plumed Serpent*. Utilizing his own theories stated in such discursive writings as *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, "Democracy," "Education of the People," and his understanding of Whitman, Edward Carpenter, and esoteric tradition, Lawrence consolidated the various ways in which relationships between men could create a new and positive social experience—what he called a "new adjustment." The communion between men, which is expressed through a homoerotic embrace, is transformed into a "communion in power"; in the later novels Lawrence attempted to posit a masculine power ethic which would facilitate the establishment of a positive and valuable place for male relationships in all human endeavour.

However, Lawrence's later response to the ideas of Dr. Trigant Burrow, Rolf Gardiner, and John Hargrave in his
Confession of the Kibbo Kift, as well as his own experience of the realities of political power, led to a revaluation of the communion in power, and the notion of its dependence upon homoerotic relations.