

UDC 820.09 Lawrence  
Original scientific paper  
Accepted for publication on 28 December 1982

## "Women in Love" and Expressionism (II)

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Lawrence's greatest novel, which is the result of an autonomous development and logically proceeds from his earlier experiments in fiction, shows a remarkable degree of congruence with the aesthetics of Expressionism. Its basic poetics freely mixes the mimetic principle, richly diversified through the two centuries of novelistic tradition, and the non-mimetic and anti-mimetic devices of Modernist art, which relies predominantly upon the sovereign power of the creative imagination and freely encroaches upon the domain of imaginative stylization (abstraction), the creative distortion of the real, in order to express the inner truth.

**Nur ich, mit Wächter zwischen Blut und Pranke,  
ein hirnerfressnes Aas, mit Flüchen  
im Nichts zergellend, bespien mit Worten,  
veräfft vom Licht.**

Gottfried Benn, *Ikarus*

True to the basic premise of Expressionist art, Lawrence's visionary art in *Women in Love* strives to capture the essential truths about the characters and their relationships in the context of the spiritual and moral prophile of their historical epoch. All the time his prophetic vision strives to get at the inner meaning of things, at the fundamental truths that underlie and often contradict appearances.<sup>1</sup> This is transmitted onto the structural rhythm of the novel, whose key points are the scenes with unconscious motivation that convey the essential truths about the characters and their relationships. These highly stylized scenes are to be found at all crucial points in the dramatic articulation of the action of the novel and they determine its structural pattern. In one scene after another,

the pressure of violent, overpowering feelings and impulses makes the characters act in a fantastic, strange, incomprehensible way. Yet some kind of profound truth gets expressed through such scenes; for a brief moment they disclose depths which would otherwise have remained out of sight<sup>2</sup> These scenes stress over and over again in the novelistic structure, whose basic law they determine, the existence of deeper levels of being, beyond the reach of intellect and will. By basing its dramatic unfolding on these scenes, the novel stresses the existence of these vital regions of the psyche which may be repressed, thrust out of sight, or resolutely denied, but which make themselves felt in one way or another, flashing their oblique, indirect signals to the psyche and warning the characters about the impending crises like signs of fate. These scenes show similarity with the symbolic language of dreams. The distinction between the manifest and latent codes of meaning which Erich Fromm makes in relation to dreams may be applied to them too.<sup>3</sup> Similar to a dream logic, a dream language, wherein the dislocations of the psyche, traumas, obsessions and repressed emotions surge up, disguised in their motley garb, these scenes flash their oblique, indirect signals to the psyche and represent the warnings of fate, if only the characters knew how to read them.<sup>4</sup>

This structural pattern is a result of the autonomous development of Lawrence's genius and is a logical outcome of his previous development as a novelist. Yet, it shows a remarkable similarity to some of the basic structural characteristics of Expressionist literature as defined by Walter Sokel:

The Expressionist dream play could be defined as a dramatization of the stream of consciousness or rather the stream of subconscious. Expressionism is the dramatic alternative to the stream of consciousness technique, and both developed at the same time. Both seek to interiorize and vivify the traditional narrative method of presenting inner states in literature. The narrative method, as developed by the great nineteenth-century novelists, probes far beneath the surface behaviour of characters and aims to comprehend their "soul". But it can do so only from outside, with the author in the role of psychologizing commentator and observer. It tends to intellectualize and may easily fail to convey the "inner feel" of the character's mind to the reader. To avoid its indirectness, Flaubert and the nineteenth-century Symbolists had introduced their functional symbolism from which, as we have seen, Expressionism developed.

The stream of consciousness technique was another way of meeting the same problem. Both the stream of consciousness and Expressionism seek to get away from the analytical comments of the author to a greater forcefulness, directness and immediacy. **Both seek to present innermost thoughts and feelings from "inside out" instead of describing them from the outside alone.** The interior monologue seeks to attain this goal by exactly reproducing on paper the flow of associations and

its immediate verbalizations in the character's head; Expressionism seeks to attain it by visualizing hidden emotions in symbolic scenes and embodiments. Whereas Expressionism descends from the "musical" or "leitmotiv" symbolism of Flaubert, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, and the Symbolist poets, the interior monologue was born in the consistent Naturalism of the brothers Goncourt and developed by Dujardin. It is Naturalism consequently applied to the inner life; Joyce, who perfected and transcended this method, was a fervent admirer of the Naturalist aspects of Ibsen.

Well-adapted to narrative fiction, the stream of consciousness technique was less suited for drama. Expressionism, on the other hand, employing the visualization of the dream rather than the verbal pattern of the waking mind, was eminently theatrical and suitable for dramatic experiment. The drama was to become its proper medium, where it found its strongest following and made its most lasting impact. It was no coincidence that the interior monologue celebrated its greatest triumph in a literature with a strong novelistic tradition, while Expressionism reached its greatest vogue in a culture notoriously weak in the novel but characterized by a strong flair for the theatrical...

In choosing the nocturnal dream rather than the verbal flow of consciousness as their model structure, the Expressionists, like the Surrealists, opted for the dramatic against the narrative technique, for the visual against the verbal. Even when Expressionism becomes narrative art of the first rank, as in the tales of Franz Kafka, it draws its main strength from the vividness of individual scenes following one another in a dreamlike succession. Kafka's novels resemble sequences of stage settings or the reels of fantastic films. The effectiveness of a masterpiece like *Metamorphosis* resides to a great extent in its initial and key image — the mysterious transformation of a man into a giant bug. Some of the best lyric poetry of Expressionism is, like the poetry of Surrealism, imagist in character. The sharply outlined dreamlike image or image-scene forms its basis...

The strong emphasis on the visual in Surrealism and Expressionism is, of course, closely connected with the layers of mind with which, in contrast to the original stream of consciousness technique, they seek to deal. The stream of consciousness technique, in its original Naturalistic form, is, like the traditional dramatic method of presentation, unable to show emotional tendencies and layers of the mind of which the characters are not aware. Although it reveals thoughts carefully concealed from public view, it cannot reveal thoughts or emotions concealed even from a character's own consciousness. Since it is a stream of consciousness, it cannot show the subconscious, the seething volcano of things completely repressed and hidden. Because of its Naturalism and Naturalistic assumptions, interior monologue must ignore whatever is too shameful and horrible to be allowed across the threshold of consciousness. It digs beneath surface behaviour but stops at a layer only once removed from it. Surrealism and Expressionism seek to push on to still deeper and more concealed recesses of the mind. They leave the area of consciousness and penetrate to the dream.

This difference in the depth of mental layers treated necessitates a profound difference of technique. Symbolic disguise takes the place of the direct verbalization of thoughts, which constitutes the stream of consciousness method. Pictorial language, the language of symbolic images, which characterize dreams, takes the place of the flow of words and sentence fragments, which characterize interior monologue. Instead

of a narrative sequence of verbal thought fragments, we encounter a dramatic sequence of sharply visualized scenes. Thoughts become events. The most brutal desires are acted out in dreamlike scenes. The most monstrous fears become envisioned reality... The interior monologue still seeks to preserve the distinction between the external environment and the inner self. Expressionism drops it. With the disappearance of this distinction, the Naturalistic stream of consciousness becomes Expressionism...

Stream of consciousness can show ambivalence only as a sequence of impulses, not as an utter tangle. It has to separate conflicting emotions by time; but their destructive power lies in their interpenetration and complete simultaneity. But the metaphoric visualization, the "image essentielle" of existence, a parallel to Mallarmé's "parole essentielle", can accomplish such a task. By the judicious application and description of such a "strategic metaphor", or metaphoric event, the Expressionist is able to pack a very great emotional complexity and extensive meaning into a very small space with the resulting heightening of concentration and pungency. Kandinsky claims that this type of literature is "epochal". i. e. most appropriate for our time, an age of ambiguous and multifaceted personalities for whom the art principles of former times no longer suffice. The highly complicated modern sensibility wants to experience in art not the physical actualities of human life, but the mystery of the human soul.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the categories Sokel uses, such as "dramatic visualization" of "hidden emotions in symbolic scenes and embodiments", the representation of "the seething volcano of things completely repressed and hidden" through the "pictorial language" and the "symbolic disguise", the choosing of "the nocturnal dream... as a model structure", the insistence on "the buried emotional complexes acted out in hallucinatory scenes", etc. may, with full justification, be applied to Lawrence's greatest novel. The high degree of congruence of formal traits between Lawrence's novel and the literature of Expressionism as interpreted by Sokel relates Lawrence's novelistic achievement closely to the mainstream of one of the most radical movements within European Modernism.

The scenes with unconscious motivation, which determine the structural rhythm of the novel, provide a subterranean chain of psychological and thematic linkages, assuring the unity of the dramatic action beneath the narrative discontinuity which Lawrence carried to such daring extremes in this novel. These profound psychological compulsions under which the major characters act at all crucial points in the dramatic unfolding of the action bear powerful witness to the fundamental psychological identity of individual characters and, beyond that, to the thematic unity of the novel. We soon learn to discern in the daring discontinuous sequences of *Women in Love* logical progressions of psychological states which are rooted in the profoundly inalienable core of the

character's personality. In the progression of the Birkin-Ursula relationship, this subterranean logic causes a profound change to come over the relationship, while the Gudrun-Gerald relationship is characterized by a repetitory movement rooted in the involuntary movements of their psyche. This repetitory movement is richly diversified by different sets of novelistic circumstances, by a counterpoint of things, objects, landscapes and dramatic situations; yet, it is there all the time.

These crucial scenes are worked out in different techniques, yet imaginative stylization, or imaginative abstraction, is a characteristic common to them all. Lawrence's creative imagination is nowhere more fertile than in these scenes. True to Expressionist aesthetics, they exhibit a varying mixture of mimetic and non-mimetic elements. Some rely basically on a full interpenetration of the literal and the symbolic, the real and the imaginative, never leaving the social realm but charging it with the maximum imaginative meaning (Rabbit). The others take place exclusively on the level of imaginative stylization, or imaginative abstraction (Moony). Some borrow features from dream and somnambulism (Gerald's walk to Gudrun's house in the Death and Love chapter, or his death in the Snowed Up chapter), some develop a weird form of a strange personal ritual performed by a character under great psychic stress (Birkin's ritual of "purification" in "Breadalby", Gudrun's dance in the "Water-Party", or her strange communing with the landscape of snow and ice in the "Continental").

These scenes are richly diversified as regards the stylistic means which they deploy. This brilliant display of daring imaginative stylization is in the function of expressing the innermost. Thus they exemplify to perfection the fundamental postulate of Expressionist art: to exteriorize by means of imaginative stylization (abstraction) the hidden soul states (*Seelenstände*), the invisible spiritual realities.<sup>6</sup>

### **Imaginative stylization**

The scene in which Hermione hits Birkin with the lapis lazuli ball, impelled by the unconscious motivation to murder him, is the first of these scenes that suddenly wrench themselves free from the causally related chain of events.<sup>7</sup> The character's acts are dislocated from the social realm and belong to some other level of reality than the everyday, normal one. As if in a temporary fit of insanity, the characters act out their profoundest impulses. They move in a kind of unconscious darkness, with conscious control completely slipping.

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. Only this blotted out her mind, pressed out her very breathing, his silent, stooping back, the back of his head.

A terrible voluptuous thrill ran down her arms — she was going to know her voluptuous consummation. Her arms quivered and were strong, immeasurably strong. What delight in strength, what delirium of pleasure! She was going to have her consummation of voluptuous ecstasy at last. It was coming! In utmost terror and agony, she knew it was upon her now, in extremity of bliss. Her hand closed on blue, beautiful ball of lapis lazuli that stood on her desk for a paper-weight. She rolled it round in her hand as she rose silently. Her hearts was a pure flame in her breast, she was purely unconscious in ecstasy. She moved towards him and stood behind him for a moment in ecstasy. He, closed within the spell, remained motionless and unconscious.

Then swiftly, in a flame that drenched down her body like fluid lighting 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. But her fingers were in the way and deadened the blow. Nevertheless, down went his head on the table on which his book lay, the stone slid aside and over his ear, it was one convulsion of pure bliss for her, lit up by the crushed pain of her fingers. But it was not somehow complete. She lifted her arm high to aim once more, straight down on the head that lay dazed on the table. She must smash it, it must be smashed before her ecstasy was consummated, fulfilled for ever. A thousand lives, a thousand deaths mattered nothing now, only the fulfilment of this perfect ecstasy.<sup>8</sup> (117—117)

The scene renders visible the paradox which the author's inner vision has already detected of madness under rationality, of an unconscious chaos in the seemingly rational character in whom the repressed and unacknowledged unconsciousness strikes back with terrific violence in a situation of great psychic stress. Hermione, a blandly civilized being, is suddenly seen in a new light. Upon an intense provocation from the outside — she is being cast off by Birkin — the rift in her being gets suddenly disclosed and the "*maelstrom of her unconscious*" of which the author had already spoken, moves into full view.<sup>9</sup> Her inner being is revealed by this scene which fulfils the basic striving of all Expressionist art — to reveal the innermost. The scene is imaginatively stylized in that it presents the act of attempted murder — a culmination of Hermione's wish to grasp, to dominate and to possess — through the basic image of a perversely distorted counterpart to the sexual act. It abstracts this basic tendency and projects it through a condensed image of a perverted counterpart to the sexual act, whereby the vampire motive which has been consistently used in the imaginative stylization of Hermione's character reaches its culmination.<sup>10</sup> By a startling narrative strategy

the vampire voluptuousness and vampire cannibalism, which has determined Hermione's behaviour all along, has been translated from psychic into extreme physical terms. Her attempt at murder is consistently rendered through the erotic imagery which stresses the perverse core of the act; the "voluptuous thrill" which she feels along her arms the second before she lifts the heavy lapis lazuli ball culminates in the orgasmic spasm when the ball hits Birkin's head.<sup>11</sup>

### Stylized ritual

The next link in this chain of unconsciously motivated acts which reveal the *Gestalt* of characters and their relationships and, beyond them, some aspects of the modern sensibility and the modern mind, is the scene portraying Birkin's reaction. Birkin, who is a non-conformist intellectual modelled on Lawrence, rejects not only Hermione but the whole cultural ambiance which she represents. In its largest implications, his break with Hermione means a break with his culture. His revulsion, hatred and disgust are expressed in a powerful imaginatively stylized scene that takes the form of a strange ritual which he spontaneously develops in a situation of existential extremity.<sup>12</sup> In the course of this ritual, he discards all tokens of civilization and "marries" himself to Nature, the natural world outside humanity. The theme of the healing powers of Nature as opposed to civilization and its evils, running powerfully in European literature from the eighteenth century onwards, undergoes a curious modernistic transposition in Birkin's purification ritual. Through the physical touch with nature, Birkin washes himself, as it were, of the sins of his civilization. He discards the repressions and inhibitions of his civilization, trying to regain the Paradise lost through civilization, through the overdevelopment of consciousness. With this scene begins his search for the lost Eden, for a way of life which will heal the split in his own being between the conscious and the unconscious. This search will take him through the land of destruction and death towards the "new heaven and earth" he discovers with Ursula.

Birkin, **barely conscious**, and yet perfectly direct in his motion, went out of the house and straight across the park, to the open country, to the hills. The brilliant day had become overcast, spots of rain were falling. He wandered on to a wild valley-side, where were thickets of hazel, many flowers, tufts of heather, and little clumps of young fir-trees, budding with soft paws. It was rather wet everywhere, there was a stream running down at the bottom of

the valley, which was gloomy, or seemed gloomy. **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 hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers. He wanted to touch them all, to saturate himself with the touch of them all. 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, sool, subtle touch all over him, he seemed to saturate himself with their contact.

But they were too soft. He went through the long grass to a clump of young fir-trees, that were no higher than a man. The soft sharp boughs beat upon him, as he moved in keen pangs against them, threw little cold showers of drops on his belly, and beat his loins with their clusters of soft sharp needles. There was a thistle which pricked him vividly, but not too much, because all his movements were discriminate and soft. To lie down and roll in the sticky, cool young hyacinths, to lie on one's belly, and cover one's back with handfuls of fine wet grass, soft as a breath, soft and more delicate and more beautiful than the touch of any woman; and then to sting one's thighs against the living dark bristles of the fir-boughs; and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one's shoulders, stinging, and then to clasp the silvery birch-trunk against one's breast, its smoothness, its hardness, its vital knots and ridges — this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying. Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood. 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!

As he dried himself a little with his handkerchief, he thought about Hermione and the blow. He could feel a pain on the side of his head. But after all, what did it matter? What did Hermione matter, what did people matter altogether? There was this perfect cool loneliness, so lovely and fresh and unexplored. Really, what a mistake he had made, thinking he wanted people, thinking he wanted a woman. He did not want a woman — not in the least. The leaves and the primroses and the trees, they were really lovely and cool and desirable, they really came into the blood and were added on to him. He was enriched now immeasurably, and so glad.

It was quite right of Hermione to want to kill him. What had he to do with her? 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.

It was necessary to go back into the world. That was true. But that did not matter, so one knew where one belonged. He knew now where he belonged. **This was his place, his marriage place. The world was extraneous.**

**He climbed out of the valley, wondering if he were mad.** But if so, he preferred his own madness, to the regular sanity. He rejoiced in his own madness, he was free. He did not want old sanity of the world, which was become so repulsive. He rejoiced in the new-found world of his madness. It was so fresh and delicate and so satisfying.

As for the certain grief he felt at the same time, in his soul, that was only the remains of an old ethic, that bade a human being adhere



to humanity. But he was weary of the old ethic, of the human being, and of humanity. He loved now the soft, delicate vegetation, that was so cool and perfect. He would overlook the old grief, he would put away the old ethic, he would be free in his new state. (119—120)

The daring imaginative stylization of the scene renders the innermost meaning of Birkin's action under the form of a weird personal ritual which seems insane and incomprehensible at first glance but which has a deeper significance in conveying Birkin's state of mind at this point in the development of the novel.<sup>13</sup> The Wordsworthian theme of the union with Nature as a relief from the frustrations of urban life takes on an almost unbearable intensity in Lawrence. Wordsworthian melancholy surges as a violent passion in Lawrence who, as usual, excels in portraying the extremity of feeling. The extremity of passion reflects the agonizing existential position of his heroes and heroines. Wallowing naked among the green shrubbery, Birkin undergoes a ritual of purification and celebrates with frightful intensity in what seems to be a temporary fit of insanity his secession from human society. Wordsworth's gentle melancholy surges with unbearable intensity in Lawrence. This reflects not only a difference in artistic temperaments but a historical change in the cultural climate. By Lawrence's time, the European man had been deprived of so much spiritual support that his existential extremity conditioned the violence and the intensity of his feelings of loss, pain or agony when he found himself stripped of all belief, deprived of all traditions. Birkin's weird ritual of absolving himself from his culture, of denying his links with society has manifold implications which become obvious with the development of the novel. The obverse side of this ritual of cleansing himself from the sins of civilization is a violent upsurge of destructive feelings, which spills over into a hatred of mankind. The obverse side of Birkin's feelings in the purification ritual in Bredalby will come uppermost in Moony, when he frantically stones the image of the moon in the pond, enacting a personal Apocalypse.

The weird ritual he goes through is his answer to the "Egyptian tomb" in which the rest of Hermione's party are entombed. It is a powerful imaginative stylization of his wish to escape the frustrations and maladjustments of his culture while the rest of them remain firmly encased within their particular cultural, social and spiritual conventions which make it impossible for them to break out of the settled patterns.<sup>14</sup> Birkin searches for a reunion with Nature because his own civilization, in his estimate, represents a dangerous and

ultimately insane deviation from nature.<sup>15</sup> Birkin's wish is to break out of the tightening knot, to come out on the other side into self-fulfilment and freedom, to surpass the deadly state by merging the unconscious and the conscious (the opposite of which is the "*shrivelling within one's own skin*", to use his own phrase). While Hermione denies the unconscious mind, Birkin tries to incorporate powerful instinctual surges into the act of living. His search is essentially an experiment in living, an effort to find modes of being which will enable him to liberate himself from the restrictions and frustrations of his culture.<sup>16</sup>

The stylized ritual undergone by Birkin in this scene represents, in fact, a complex ideograph<sup>17</sup> of his turbulent psychic state. Although within reach of Hermione's mansion, of the social world, the thicket where Birkin lies down naked among the living vegetation is transformed into a mystic "marriage-bed" with Nature — a shocking variation on the Wordsworthian theme of Nature as a soothing healer of the anxieties of the city life and the tensions of the modern psyche. Yet, this imaginatively stylized scene is far less shocking than it might seem at first glance when one considers the general development of the arts in the early twentieth century. Contemporary with Lawrence's narrative experiment in *Women in Love* were Djagilleff's great innovations in the art of the dance, Stravinsky's music, Expressionist poetry and drama, and the Cubist and Futurist movements in the visual arts; they were all moving away from the principle of mimesis, searching for daringly new non-mimetic stylistic means for expressing the complex rhythms of the modern psyche. In *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, the central works of his narrative experiment, Lawrence was in full accord with the *Zeitgeist* of the age and, consequently, these two great novels of his belong to the mainstream of European Modernism.

### Imaginative abstraction

With the ritual of purification in the spring thicket, Birkin breaks away not only from Hermione but from his culture. In his revulsion from his culture he gets as near death, violence and destructiveness as any other character in the novel. The sombre counterpart of the vegetation ritual in the Breadalby chapter is the chapter called "Moony", with the famous scene of Birkin's stoning with frightening violence the image of the moon in the pond. The "Moony" chapter

links obliquely with the vegetation ritual. Many things have happened in the meantime in this enormously rich novel yet, in spite of the discontinuity of narration, the scenes with the unconscious motivation, which belong to the basic dramatic pattern of the novel, witness to the deep continuity of the psychic life of the characters. They illustrate the psychological law of fundamental identity of personality, of sameness under difference.

Birkin's act is apparently unrelated to any context. It appears to be entirely purposeless and fully incomprehensible from a commonsensical point of view and from a realist perspective. It represents in the purest form what the German Expressionists understood by the term of *Aufbruch*, the break-through of the inner man that suddenly wrenches himself free from the laws of contingencies and causalities.

He stood still, looking at the water, and throwing upon it the husks of the flowers.

"Cybelle — curse her! The accursed Syria Dea! Does one begrudge it her! What else is there —?"

Ursula wanted to laugh loudly and hysterically, hearing his isolated voice speaking out. It was so ridiculous.

He stood staring at the water. Then he stooped and picked up a stone, which he threw sharply at the pond. Ursula was aware of the bright moon leaping and swaying, all distorted, in her eyes. It seemed to shoot out arms of fire like a cuttle-fish, like a luminous polyp, palpitating strongly before her.

And his shadow on the border of the pond was watching for a few moments, then he stooped and groped on the ground. Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water, and was flying asunder in flakes of white and dangerous fire. Rapidly, like white birds, the fires all broken rose across the pond, fleeing in clamorous confusion, battling with the flock of dark waves that were forcing their way in. The furthest waves of light, fleeing out, seemed to be clamouring against the shore for escape, the waves of darkness came in heavily, running under towards the centre. But at the centre, the heart of all, was still a vivid, incandescent quivering of a white moon not quite destroyed, a white body of fire writhing and striving and not even now broken open, not yet violated. It seemed to be drawing itself together, with strange, violent pangs, in blind effort. It was getting stronger, it was reasserting itself, the inviolable moon. And the rays were hastening in in thin lines of light, to return to the strengthened moon, that shook upon the water in triumphant reassumption.

Birkin stood and watched, motionless, till the pond was almost calm, the moon was almost serene. Then, satisfied of so much, he looked for more stones. She felt his invisible tenacity. And in a moment again, the broken lights scattered in explosion over her face, dazzling her; and then, almost immediately, came the second shot. The moon leapt up white and burst through the air. Darts of bright light shot asunder, darkness swept over the centre. There was no moon, only a battlefield of broken lights and shadows, running close

together. Shadows, dark and heavy, struck again and again across the place where the heart of the moon had been, obliterating it altogether. The white fragments pulsed up and down, and could not find where to go, apart and brilliant on the water like the petals of a rose that a wind has blown far and wide.

Yet again, they were flickering their way to the centre, finding the path blindly, enviously. And again, all was still, as Birkin and Ursula watched. The waters were loud on the shore. He saw the moon regathering itself insidiously, saw the heart of the rose intertwining vigorously and blindly, calling back the scattered fragments, winning home the fragments, in a pulse and in effort of return.

And he was not satisfied. Like a madness, he must go on. He got large stones, and threw them, one after the other, at the white-burning centre of the moon, till there was nothing, but a rocking of hollow noise, and a pond surged up, no moon any more, only a few broken flakes tangled and glittering broadcast in the darkness, without aim or meaning, a darkened confusion, like a black and white kaleidoscope tossed at random. The hollow night was rocking and crashing with noise, and from the sluice came sharp, regular flashes of sound. Flakes of light appeared here and there, glittering tormented among the shadows, far off, in strange places; among the dripping shadow of the willow on the island. Birkin stood and listened and was satisfied.

Ursula was dazed, her mind was all gone. She felt she had fallen to the ground and was spilled out, like water on the earth. Motionless and spent she remained in the gloom. Though even now she was aware, unseeing, that in the darkness was a little tumult of ebbing flakes of light, a cluster dancing secretly in a round, twining and coming steadily together. They were gathering a heart again, they were coming once more into being. Gradually the fragments caught together, reunited, heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in panic, but working their way home again persistently, making semblance of fleeing away when they had advanced, but always flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam fell in with the whole, until a ragged rose, a distorted, frayed moon was shaking upon the waters again, reasserted, renewed, trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfigurement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at peace. (278—280)

The burden of the destructive potential is evident in all characters in *Women in Love* as a result of the disproportions in themselves and the disharmonies in their culture. (Witness Hermione in the lapis lazuli eposide, Gerald taming the mare at the railway crossing, Gudrun and the bullocks, Gudrun and Gerald in the "Rabbit" chapter, Loerke and Gudrun who jointly destroy Gerald at the end of the novel, etc.). Yet the scene in "Moony" with Birkin stoning the moon is the most unnatural, the most frightening of them all. This is proved by the style which is charged with incredible violence. The style points at the innermost meaning of Birkin's action.<sup>18</sup> Birkin's mad act of stoning the moon's image in the water expresses the tumult in his psyche which usually gets subli-

mated on the verbal level. In a number of chapters ("In the Train", "Island", etc.), Birkin gives vent to a destructive desire for blasting the globe, to a morbid wish for the end of the world, imagining with perverse delight the cosmic cataclisms that would clean the world of the human race altogether so that only the grass would remain and an occasional hare. The violence inherent in his speeches is fully unleashed in "Moony" and translated into a powerful act of symbolical abstraction. Birkin's inner charge of destructiveness is a result of his pent-up frustrations, general discontent, Hamlet-like maladjustments to the bad times. His despair and nihilism explode here in a seemingly insane act which expresses some profound truth about him at this moment of his psychological evolution. The seemingly incomprehensible act obliquely expresses the death wish in Birkin (which, with a different degree of intensity, exists in them all). In him, too, Eros has turned into Thanatos.

It is a moment of apparent madness. In its utter unconsciousness it is improperly understood by the character himself in spite of his high-powered intellectuality. It discloses the emotional depths of which the character is not fully aware. In "Moony", Birkin enacts his private Apocalypse. It starts with his hatred of "the white goddess", Cybelle, the Syria Dea, that is to say, his hatred of the exclusive predominance of the "white" consciousness, mental control, hypertrophically developed at the expense of the dark levels of being. (The moon is in his private iconography equated with the superstructure of consciousness, and both are equated with the woman.) But owing to the dense linguistic texture of the imaginatively stylized scene, which functions as a powerful symbol, new meanings develop in the "temporal unfolding of the symbol". Birkin's perversely intense wish for the end of the world stems not only from his personal frustrations but from his deep revulsion against his culture. His mad act in "Moony" obliquely expresses his frustrations with their concomitant excesses. His disgust with modern life spills over into a hatred of humanity, a wish for the cataclismic end of the world and for the destruction of individuated forms until all is dissolved into primal chaos. This psychological tumult is translated into concrete terms through the seemingly insane act of stoning the moon. The moon "bursts" through the air, reminding one of the stars and the moon falling from the heavens in the Christian Apocalypse.<sup>49</sup> The perversity of Birkin's action is stressed by the inherent violence of the style; the moon is given anthropomorphic qualities, which renders Birkin's act

doubly unnatural. Images of tearing apart, violation and destruction abound in the description. If the moon has, at the beginning of the scene, been equated with the light of consciousness ("the accursed Syria Dea"), the darkness which soon sweeps over the image of the moon in the pond owing to Birkin's mad act is not the fecund darkness of the usual Lawrentian contexts; it is the darkness of annihilation, of primal chaos. Birkin stones the moon until it is completely broken into fragments. What remains is the hollow noise, the meaningless bursts of sound, the meaningless flashes of light; all individuated forms have been dissolved into the primal chaos, the primal night, the primal "boom" heard by E.M.Forster's Mrs. Moore in the Marabar Caves. It is only then that Birkin is perversely satisfied. ("*Birkin stood and listened and was satisfied.*") A violent, destructive impulse acted out with frightening intensity has superseded the original impulse of revulsion against "the white goddess", "the accursed Syria Dea". Birkin's action is aimed at breaking the body of life until the stasis of death is triumphant. Thus, his act is ultimately motivated by a death wish in himself, which he shares with his culture.<sup>20</sup>

The destructiveness of Birkin's action is underlined by a subsidiary image cluster which often appears in Lawrence's *oeuvre*, always with the same meaning. This image cluster significantly links the moon with the rose. Birkin is striking at the "*heart of the moon*", which is later on equated with the "*heart of the rose*"; when the body of the moon has been broken, the text refers to the "*petals of the rose*" that have been scattered far and wide; when the fragments are getting together once again, the text refers explicitly to the "*intertwining heart of the rose*". By insistently using this closely-knit train of imagery, a significant shift of meaning has been effected which stresses the radical destructiveness of Birkin's action. By being likened to a rose ("*the heart of the rose*"), the moon lost the connotations carried by the "white goddess", "the accursed Syria Dea", and changed into a rose. All this was possible by the kinetic unfolding of the multilevelled linguistic meanings of the extremely dense description of Birkin's action. In Lawrence's *oeuvre*, the image of a rose is often equated with the living body of life, with the fundamental pulse of creation.<sup>21</sup> By being likened to a rose, the moon lost the connotations of the "accursed Syria Dea", and received the connotations of the warmth, joy and beauty of creation. Ursula, who will ultimately lead Birkin out of the land of death and into the land of paradise, has already

been explicitly likened to a rose.<sup>22</sup> When linked with the feminine principle in Birkin's consciousness, the moon reveals a double image, a baffling coexistence of both the destructive and creative principles, embodied in the novel by Hermione and Ursula respectively.<sup>23</sup>

This significant image cluster, associated both with the moon and with Ursula, is linked later on in the text with the "*inviolable moon*", "*reasserting itself calmly on the waters.*" It implies some affirmative impulse in life which goes on and reasserts itself in the teeth of human hatred, disgust and nihilism, some indestructible positive impulse both outside man, in outer Nature, and inside him, as the later development of Birkin's and Ursula's relationship will convincingly demonstrate. The "*inviolable moon*" reasserting itself on the waters is associated with the fundamental creative impulse in Nature and links not only with Birkin's monologue in the chapter "In the Train", but with his final soliloquy in the last pages of the novel as well.<sup>24</sup> The moon is "*inviolable*" and it reasserts itself; the fragments get together, composing a whole, until the heart of the rose re-gathers itself and, trembling from its recent convulsion, floats triumphantly on the water again.

Birkin's mad act may be likened to Gerald's cruel treatment of his pure-bred Arab mare in the "Coaldust" chapter. Both imply violence done on the living body of life.<sup>25</sup> This bears witness to the law of secret subterranean affinities that are to be found everywhere in *Women in Love* within the singularly by rich orchestration of its theme, which may be defined in Jungian terms as modern man in search of the soul. Interchangeability of the psychic complexes in characters is one of the most significant aspects of the intricate unity of Lawrence's complex treatment of this theme.<sup>26</sup> While Gerald won in the battle with the mare and was ultimately lost, Birkin lost in his weird battle with the moon and was ultimately saved. The heart of the rose intertwining itself once again ("*They were gathering a heart again, they were coming once more into being*") is opposed to the destructive chaos, to fragments floating aimlessly about. In spite of the frightening nihilistic implications of the scene, some sort of hope emerges at the end. The end of the scene stresses the indestructibility of nature, including human being in so far as humanity is part of nature.

Yet Birkin surpasses this phase, sloughs off the old skin, leaves behind the violence and hatred and disgust, and finds a "new heaven and earth", a new mode of personal being, a

new integration of the psyche through his relationship to Ursula. In Birkin's case, love is an answer to existential nihilism. Birkin's sexual metaphysics implies a transcendence of reality, an escape from its limitations and boredom, restrictions and inadequacies into a new realm of being which Lawrence-Birkin calls by visionary terms of "the new heaven and earth". Here speech peters out; Birkin, who is an inexhaustible talker, falters when he broaches this realm; in dramatizations such as the "Excuse", a dramatic rendering of what purports to be the mystical experience of sex is inadequate, grotesque, or downright ludicrous.<sup>27</sup> Yet the text, like the poetry of the sequence *Look! We Have Come Through*, hints repeatedly and insistently that through sex the protagonists of both the novel and the poems have found a mystical new realm of being, a "palpable body of reality", an "immemorial body of darkness", which human speech seems to be ultimately incapable of rendering. On more tangible earthly level, sexual love for Birkin and Ursula means the fulfilment of the self, the breaking out of the egocentric imprisonment within one's own consciousness through a relationship with the Other, a connection with life and reality. Yet Lawrence's sexual metaphysics does not allow for the dissolution of the self. *Women in Love* does not proclaim a dissolution of personality in Dionysiac ecstasy but a rebirth of the self beyond Dionysiac ecstasy. Through the Birkin-Ursula relationship, *Women in Love* pleads for the dissolution of consciousness but not for the dissolution of personality in Dionysiac ecstasy. A rebirth of personality is brought about by Dionysiac energies which temporarily annihilate intellect and consciousness. This is why Birkin says that he prefers a dry soul. He makes it a point that he distrusts a Dionysiac ecstasy. In this context it is instructive to compare what Richard Sheppard says about the ambiguous relation to chthonic powers that the German Expressionists had, many of whom could not decide whether Dionysus, one of the deities that they claimed allegiance to, was meant to represent anarchic, amoral energies, or the self-regulating energies.<sup>28</sup> *Women in Love* embodies this ambiguity to perfection. The two attitudes are worked into the conception of the two major male characters, Gerald and Birkin. For Gerald, sex is an upsurge of anarchic, chaotic energies; for Birkin, who has a kind of sacral attitude to it, sex is a self-regulating energy.

The scene in which Birkin frantically stones the moon in the pond presents one of the most powerful examples in Lawrence's art of what Walter Sokel in his book on *Expres-*



sionism calls "the tendency to abstraction in Expressionist art". A fundamental existential situation for a character, a complex of ambiguous and contradictory emotions, or an essential inner drive in a character is abstracted from the world of contingencies and causalities and presented through a powerful dream-like image, a dream-like situation, which functions as a powerful autonomous strategic metaphor, an "image essentielle".

Stream of consciousness can show ambivalence only as a sequence of impulses, not as an utter tangle. It has to separate conflicting emotions by time; but their destructive power lies in their interpenetration and complete simultaneity. But the metaphoric visualization, the "image essentielle" of existence, a parallel to Mallarme's "parole essentielle", can accomplish such a task. By the judicious application and description of such a "strategic metaphor" or metaphoric event, the Expressionist is able to pack a very great emotional complexity and extensive meaning into a very small space with the resulting heightening of concentration and pungency. Kandinsky claims that this type of literature is "epochal", i. e. most appropriate for our time, an age of ambiguous and multifaceted personalities for whom the art principles of former times no longer suffice. The highly complicated modern sensibility wants to experience in art not the physical actualities of human life, but the mystery of the human soul.<sup>29</sup>

The scene which functions as a "strategic metaphor" in Sokel's sense projects with great force the innermost core of an existential situation of a character through a basically non-mimetic device. This device concretizes the complex invisible spiritual reality. This is the light in which Sokel interprets the crucial metaphor of metamorphosis which condenses the fundamental meaning of the hero's existential situation in Kafka's story, the complex dream-like images in the poetry of Georg Trakl which, in a disguised form, present the existential biography of the poet, and Wedekind's, Sternheim's and Kaiser's plays, which concentrate on the presentation of the essential profile of the social phenomena of their time by freely encroaching upon the domain of the imaginative, the fantastic and the grotesque.

Sokel, in fact, distinguishes two stylistic tendencies within Expressionism. Both strive towards the same goal: to express the innermost. The first is characterized by a free mixture of mimetic and non-mimetic techniques. (Many other theoreticians and art historians speak of this tendency as characteristic of Expressionism.)<sup>30</sup> The second raises the stylistic phenomena onto a higher level of imaginative abstraction, absolving them from the world of contingencies and causation, from temporal and spacial laws. They are not empirically verifiable and

project their basic meaning through a non-mimetic medium, which functions autonomously as a powerful poetic image, an "image essentielle".<sup>31</sup> Lawrence's significance in this context is all the greater in that he devised a variety of non-mimetic techniques in the medium of the novel, which, as Philip Rahv says, has always been "the most empirical of all literary genres; existence in its original and inalienable datum; its ontology, if we may employ such a term in relation to it, is 'naïve', commonsensical, positing no split between appearance and reality."<sup>32</sup> Lawrence effected a highly original mutation of the genre of the novel in *Women in Love* by incorporating in it a variety of non-mimetic techniques of imaginative stylization, by means of which he could project complex psychological states of his characters with supreme success and objectify the innermost. Yet he never left the traditional domain of the novel, the empirically verifiable social realm, never forfeited the principle of verisimilitude and probability and, for the most part, stayed immersed in the world of contingencies.<sup>33</sup> *Women in Love* is a rare triumph of Modernist art which incorporates tradition and yet transcends it finally by its powerful inner creative drive (*der Kunstwollen*).

### **Objectification of the innermost through a highly metaphorical description**

Birkin's and Ursula's journey to the Continent in the "Continental" is, in Lawrence's description, both an actual journey and a state of being. This is one more stylistic device used by Lawrence in the rich diversification of his narrative techniques, by means of which he projects the innermost being of his characters and embodies it in a livingly concrete form. Thus he preserves the complexity of psychological nuances and gives it the appearance of a palpable, tangible reality, although dealing all the time with impalpable, intangible spiritual realities. In the description of this journey, Lawrence objectifies in the medium of prose visionary experiences on the edge of the inexpressible which have for centuries been the exclusive prerogative of poetry. The ecstatic feeling of the lovers, their glimpse of the visionary new land toward which they are going, of the state of being which they hope to achieve in their relationship, belongs to a class of human experience which has for centuries been most successfully objectified in poetry, but which has not often been attempted in prose.

She did not really come to until she was on the ship crossing from Dover to Ostend. Dimly she had come down to London with Birkin. London had been a vagueness, so had the train journey to Dover. It was all like a sleep.

And now, at last, as she stood in the stern of the ship, in a pitch-dark, rather blowy night, feeling the motion of the sea, and watching the small, rather desolate little lights that twinkled on the shores of England, as on the shores of nowhere, watched them sinking smaller and smaller on the profound and living darkness, she felt her soul stirring to awake from its anaesthetic sleep.

"Let us go forward, shall we?" said Birkin. He wanted to be at the tip of their projection. So they left off looking at the faint sparks that glimmered out of nowhere, in the far distance, called England, and turned their faces to the unfathomed night in front.

They went right across to the bows of the softly plunging vessel. In the complete obscurity, Birkin found a comparatively sheltered nook, where a great rope was coiled up. It was quite near the very point of the ship, near the black, unpierced space ahead. Here they sat down, folded together, folded round with the same rug, creeping in nearer and ever nearer to one another, till it seemed they had crept right into each other, and become one substance. It was very cold, and the darkness was palpable.

One of the ship's crew came along the deck, dark as the darkness, not really visible. They then made out the faintest pallor of his face. He felt their presence and stopped, unsure — then bent forward. When his face was near them, he saw the faint pallor of their faces. Then he withdrew like a phantom. And they watched him without making any sound.

They seemed to fall away into the profound darkness. There was no sky, no earth, only one unbroken darkness, into which, with a soft sleeping motion, they seemed to fall like one closed seed of life falling through dark, fathomless space.

They had forgotten where they were, forgotten all that was and all that had been, conscious only in their hearts, and there conscious only of this pure trajectory through the surpassing darkness. The ship's prow cleaved on, with a faint noise of cleavage, into the complete night, without knowing, without seeing, only surging on.

In Ursula the sense of the unrealized world ahead triumphed over everything. In the midst of this profound darkness, there seemed to glow on her heart the effulgence of a paradise unknown and unrealized. Her heart was full of the most wonderful light, golden like honey of darkness, sweet like the warmth of day, light which was not shed on the world, only on the unknown paradise towards which she was going, a sweetness of habitation, a delight of living quite unknown but hers infallibly. In her transport she lifted her face suddenly to him, and he touched it with his lips. So cold, so fresh, so sea-clear her face was, it was like kissing a flower that grows near the surf.

But he did not know the ecstasy of bliss in fore-knowledge that she knew. To him, the wonder of this transit was overwhelming. He was falling through a gulf of infinite darkness, like a meteorite plunging across the chasm between the worlds.<sup>34</sup> The world was torn in two, and he was plunging like an unlit star through the ineffable rift. What was beyond was not yet for him. He was overcome by the trajectory.

In a trance he lay, enfolding Ursula round about. His face was against her fine, fragile hair, he breathed its fragrance with the sea

and the profound night. And his soul was at peace; yielded, as he fell into the unknown. This was the first time that an utter and absolute peace had entered his heart, now, in this final transit out of life.

When there came some stir on deck, they roused. They stood up. How stiff and cramped they were in the night-time! And yet the paradisaical glow on her heart, and the unutterable peace of darkness in his, this was the all-in-all.

They stood up and looked ahead. Low lights were seen down the darkness. This was the world again. It was not the bliss of her heart, nor the peace of his. It was the superficial unreal world of fact. Yet not quite the old world. For the peace and the bliss in their hearts was enduring. (436-438)

Through the legitimate extension of meaning the description of a real journey is at the same time a powerful description of a state of being. Essentially, it is a journey of the rebirth of the soul. Mystical, visionary light is shed on the inner experience. The lovers' happy foreboding of self-fulfilment in freedom is portrayed as a journey towards the visionary land. For Ursula, the intimation of paradise is presented under the image of the "*golden light shed on her heart*"; for Birkin, the ship plowing through the darkness is identified with a transit from one world to another (he is "*falling through a rift between two worlds*"; the voyage is for him "*a final transit out of life*"). Through its linguistic density, the text suggests a transcendental dimension of the lovers' experience.<sup>35</sup> Love is for them a mystical land to be explored, a metaphysical absolute. In contrast to their feelings about England and its culture which they leave behind (England is referred to as "*nowhere*"; the lovers feel that they have just awakened from anaesthesia, from an "*imprisonment in nothingness*"), love is for them "*light never seen on land or sky*". For Ursula, it is a paradisaical land, pictured insistently under the traditional religious imagery of intense light "*which is shed on her heart*" and does not belong to the material world of facts and contingencies. It is not a *locus*, it is a state of being. The rebirth of the soul through love is suggested by the imagery of intense light, a shimmering, glimmering vision of paradisaical bliss seen with an inner eye. It reminds one of Beato Angelico's celestial meadows, of Dante, and of the religious poetry of the baroque period.<sup>36</sup> The imagery links with Birkin's earlier meditation on Ursula's beauty, which for him is unrelated either to form or colour but is primarily associated with the "*strange, golden light*" he glimpses through her. The light effulgence imagery suggests the paradisaical bliss, the intensity of joy, the perfection of existence he glimpses through his relationship to her. Birkin's foremost feeling at this moment is summed up in the image of

the mystic trajectory of the soul travelling between two worlds, the old life of cramping consciousness and the new life of reintegrated being. The images of resurrection and paradise abound in the passage as a whole. The paradisaic state of bliss which belongs to the inner invisible reality of what the soul experiences is contrasted not only to the "paperly nothingness" and the "anaesthetic sleep" of the lovers' previous existence in England but to the entire external reality which surrounds them at the present moment, "the superficial unreal world of fact". The lovers posit the supremacy of the inner world, refusing to recognize the outer world. The inner world is completely unrelated to the outer, a kind of "supreme fiction". Birkin's and Ursula's hatred of the existing world, which they identify with their own culture, their hatred of the industrial civilization and the bourgeois patterns of behaviour, is so strong as to prompt them to deny it altogether, asserting the absolute reality of the inner world of the self. The self does not appear to be tragically isolated in the context of the Lawrentian vitalist philosophy. Sexual experience forms a link with the sacred core of life, the fundamental biological rhythm pulsing through the cosmos.<sup>37</sup> As to the social reality, wandering around becomes an essential strategy of freedom; just as for Joyce's Stephen Daedalus, exile is a necessity if one is to preserve oneself from getting enmeshed, from mental and moral conformism to the petty bourgeois way of life which spells death to the spirit. Birkin's "nowhere" ("One wants to wander away from the world's somewheres into our own nowhere.") is defined as a "perfected relation between you (Ursula) and me (Birkin) and a few others — the perfect relation — so that we are free together." "Nowhere", which is equated with an inner freedom, is not really a locality, as Birkin explicitly states, but a state of being. In social terms it comes down to running away from all existing social patterns. A precondition of inner freedom for the Lawrentian hero is to be constantly on the run. In fact, Birkin and Ursula are much more radical in their rejection of their own culture than Joyce's Stephen Daedalus. At the end of the novel, they achieve a complete break with everything (the Expressionist term of *Aufbruch* is nowhere more apposite than here). Their break with their own past, with their personal antecedents, with their country, family and European culture is very thorough. They are rejecting not only England; they are in fact running from their own civilization as a whole. While Stephen Daedalus only leaves Ireland for "Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and wood-begirt and citadelled and of

entrenched and marshalled races", Birkin and Ursula, in fact, effect a radical break with the world, proclaiming the self absolute. In this context it is legitimate to make a comparison with another famous First World War novel, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. In that novel the main hero also effects a kind of moral and mental jump, a private secession from the violence, horror and unreality of the war. Ultimately, it is from a sense of unreality that Frederick Henry flees, from a nightmarish chaos of meaningless facts, from a vision of the dissolution of everything into unreality. Love is a road to personal salvation, a road to freedom in both cases. It is the only experience in a meaningless world that confers meaning upon life. It creates a small personal world of sense within a world of unreason and madness and stems the flood of unreality rising from within. Love is posited in both novels as an existential absolute, but in Hemingway's novel it does not have the sanctifying aura that Lawrence's mystic vitalism confers upon it (the sexual act being a direct link with the "heart of the universe", "the heart of reality"). For the Lawrencean lovers, love is a precondition of the growth of the self into completeness and wholeness. The lovers, fleeing from the pestilential society of their day, are movingly portrayed. But the novel stops there and does not develop the situation further. It ends open-ended in a mixture of triumph and uncertainty. In rejecting all contact with the external world, unbearable pressures might be put on the relationship and the glimmerings of these doubts may be felt in the forms of unanswered questions in the open ending of the novel. Love is posited as a substitute for the world. All external reality becomes a "shadow play of unreal life", which is understandable in view of the intensity of feeling felt at the moment by the lovers; but the natural question poses itself: how can the private universe be sustained once the intensity of the moment has passed away? Will not the total isolation from any surroundings, a complete break with their culture, tell in one form or another on the relationship? Can one really achieve full humanity in total renunciation of all social ties? Can one drop out of one's own culture so easily and completely? Can love indeed effect a transit out of the known life and its patterns into the visionary inner world? It was not in the scope of Lawrence's greatest novel to answer these questions, but it is of its essential greatness that he lets the weight of these unanswered questions fall on the final dialogue between the lovers in which the ghosts of all these unformed questions dimly raise themselves on the far horizon.<sup>38</sup>

## Dream and somnambulism

The primary postulate of Expressionist art to which *Women in Love* triumphantly belongs is that data from the external reality be cast into the melting-pot of the imagination and reworked there. Thus imagination puts a stamp on data perceived in external reality, creatively stylizing the outlines of the real and distorting the features of the literal and the concrete under the pressure of the inner vision.<sup>39</sup>

Moral and spiritual dissolution is a constant theme of the novel. It involves all the characters, while their relationships are seen as slowing down, counteracting or intensifying the process of dissolution and disintegration in their very being. Dissolution goes on as a constant process in Hermione as a result of a split between the conscious and the unconscious mind; in Gerald, as a result of the disproportions in his inner being; in Gudrun, imprisoned in the vicious circle of her own consciousness; in Minette, the London courtesan, about whom it is said that "disintegration floats like a film on her eyes"; in Loerke, who is likened to a "rat that swims in the sewers", etc. Birkin and Ursula are not exempted from it, yet through their relationship they grow out of it.

The dissolution theme is closely linked with death, and it is the presence of death that dominates a good part of the action of the novel. *Women in Love* is saturated with death, whose faces are many and various. First of all, there are the actual deaths which regularly punctuate the novel; Diana Crich's violent death by water in the midst of a festivity; Thomas Crich's prolonged and painful dying; Gerald's suicide at the end of the novel. But, over and above the actual deaths, the death processes go on in the souls of all the major characters, and this is, of course, of far greater significance. Ultimately, it is the death process at the heart of his own civilization that Lawrence is exploring, a disease at the heart of Western civilization such as it appeared to his visionary eye during the First World War, which finished the cultural and spiritual heritage of old Europe.<sup>40</sup> Hermione, who denies the unconscious mind and lives entirely at the rational level, is pictured as being constantly on the brink of dissolution, madness and death. She is actually, as has already been seen, presented as a vampire from the region of the dead who haunts the living and sucks their blood; Gerald, who seems to have his own death angel walking invisibly by his side all the time, suffers from a sense of an inner void and wrestles with a secret death impulse all throughout the novel until he

finally succumbs to it; Gudrun, doomed to rot away in the prison of the self, lashes out in destruction both outwardly (towards Gerald) and inwardly (her own self); even Birkin and Ursula, who ultimately save themselves, are not exempted from the general process of dissolution, which Lawrence sees as pertaining to their times and civilization. Birkin, described early in the novel as "wavering", "pale", "indistinct", and "unearthly", has to struggle through the landscape of death. After an attempt at assassination by Hermione which he escapes by the skin of his teeth, he goes through a violent process of revulsion not only against Hermione and his former way of life but against his whole culture. This process reaches its culmination in "Moony", which shows Birkin dangerously drifting away from humanity altogether, with only a hair-splitting distance dividing him from a mental and spiritual disbalance that would engulf him in hatred and disgust of mankind, like a modern Timon of Athens. When he comes to propose to Ursula, perversely trying to overpower her by his will, he is pictured "as an image of some deathly religion". ("He sat there, pale and unearthly, as an image of some deathly religion.") This significant description looks both forward and backward in the novel. It looks backward towards Hermione as if he himself were, at this particular moment in his life, suffering the processes of dissolution in his inner being to which Hermione is condemned, and forward to Gudrun's enigmatic worship of death at the end of the novel, symbolically represented by the landscape of snow and ice. Ursula is also from time to time submerged by death feelings, although she is the least susceptible to death and disintegration processes in the soul and the nearest to the positive values in the novel by her unfailing instinct for life, growth, joy and spontaneity (Lawrence refers to her "unconscious positivity"). Yet even she passes through phases of revulsion against everything when she shuts herself in a world of her own, denying the outer world and thus denying herself the possibility of self-fulfilment, which, as the Lawrentian dialectic argues, comes only through successful relationships with the world outside the self, including the world of nature as well as the world of humanity.

The vision of *Women in Love* is alarming, disturbing and frightening, because it is the vision of a world permeated by profound moral despair. Early in the century, it articulated the world of metaphysical despair which was to be much later explored by Jean Paul Sartre and the whole body of European existentialism. We have become fully familiar with this sombre psychological landscape, but one must bear in



mind the date of writing of *Women in Love* (1916—1917) to become aware of Lawrence's profound originality. "The landscape of modern nightmare" has one of its greatest prototypes in Lawrence's *Women in Love*.<sup>41</sup>

The major bearers of the theme of the disintegration of the soul resulting in an irresistible death drive are the two damned lovers, Gerald and Gudrun. Lawrence's portrait-painting in these two cases is a powerful example of the clairvoyant rendering of the characters' psyche, revealing the deepest truths which are entirely different from the surface.<sup>42</sup> Lawrence's visionary art captures the fundamental truth and constantly finds new means of projecting it. In visionary distortion of outer, external surfaces of reality under the pressure of the creative imagination, the features of the hidden truth bulge forth. Visionary insight is the premise of this aesthetics. This basic creative intention nowhere shows to greater advantage than in the portraits of Gerald and Gudrun. The enormously efficient and energetic modern industrialist, a powerful agent of industrial progress, is revealed as a disintegrating human being, secretly yearning for death, while a highly emancipated modern woman who is challenging everything in search of self-realization is revealed as a castrated human being, whose feelings are frozen, who is severed from the vital rhythms of life and forever imprisoned within the tortured circle of her own endlessly spinning consciousness, an outsider to life, a forerunner of Sartre's and Camus's heroes.

Gerald's obsession with will and power, the "perfect in-human machine", is, in Lawrence's apocalyptic reading of the situation, seen as one of the manifestations of the self-destructive impulse which characterizes the doomed world. Gerald is seen in the light of the Biblical parallel as Cain, the killer, the destroyer, the violator of the sacred life ties. The promulgator of the new industrial order is equated in Lawrence's iconography with the apocalyptic horseman of death, wrenching at the frame of life to break it apart.

True to the logic of his clairvoyant reading of Gerald's character, Lawrence shows by various novelistic means how Gerald destroys his own being in the course of the execution of his plan of the total instrumentalization and dehumanization of everything human. I shall single out two scenes which powerfully project his self-identity crisis and his death drive. Both scenes belong to the chain of scenes with the unconscious motivation which structurally articulates the novel; both are imaginatively stylized in that they borrow features from dream,

hypnosis, and somnambulism.<sup>43</sup> Each projects through a powerful dream-like situation the existential extremity of the protagonist, and thus functions, in Walter Sokel's sense, as a "strategic metaphor" within the structural rhythm of the novel.

The first of these scenes occurs in the "Death and Love" chapter. Suffering acutely from direct confrontation with death during his father's prolonged agony, Gerald goes to Gudrun on the night of his father's burial to find alleviation of pain and oblivion in sexual love. The scene of his blind, unconscious walking from his father's grave to his future mistress's bedroom in the nearby mining village focusses his overpowering fear of death, his helplessness, his unconscious search for some outward emotional and moral support, or, if this is not forthcoming, for some powerful anodyne. This is what love comes to mean for Gerald, a quick way out to oblivion and sleep, a simulacrum of death by which real death might be avoided or at least postponed for some time. He moves and acts under some profound compulsion of the psyche without being fully aware of what he is doing. Gerald stumbles unconsciously towards the mining village and Gudrun's house, intuitively finds his way there in a kind of self-induced hypnosis, somnambulistically climbs the staircase of a completely unknown house in search of her room, blindly gropes along the corridor, trying various bedroom doors and listening to the strange sleepers' breathing, until he finds her bedroom door, goes in, and takes her in a kind of hypnotic trance. Like Birkin "marrying" himself to vegetation, or stoning the moon, like Gudrun, somnambulistically dancing towards the horns of the dangerous Scotch bullocks, Gerald enacts some profound compulsion of the psyche in this powerful dream-like scene. Going to Gudrun with the clay from his father's grave sticking to his boots and the scents of flowers from his father's grave on his clothes, he reveals himself quite unexpectedly as a potential victim, a pitifully lost and inwardly ravaged being. In such somnambulistic scenes, Lawrence develops a completely new novelistic idiom in which the inmost being of the protagonists comes to the surface. The repressed and unacknowledged regions of the psyche and spheres of being show themselves for the moment, flashing forth some hidden, yet vitally important truth in an obscure, cryptic language. The personality of the protagonist acts under some profound compulsion without being fully aware of the ultimate meaning of his action. The scenes with the irrational motivation make some profoundly authentic statements about the characters involved in them. Deep instinctual depths show themselves for

the moment, violently contradicting the conscious superstructure of personality. As regards their formal patterning, these scenes, which portray the states of mind in existential extremity, on the verge of psychological aberration, and which defy all known patterns of social behaviour, borrow from the language of hypnosis, hallucination, trance and somnambulism. They suddenly wrench themselves free from all experientially known patterns of behaviour. They possess some kind of mad validity of their own, an irrational flavour of truth that bypasses reason, featuring in their very unpredictability and startling idiosyncrasy some profound truth about the character involved. Birkin's somnambulist gestures when he stones the moon; Gudrun's hypnotic dance towards the horns of the Scotch bullocks; Hermione's trance in which her consciousness goes to sleep and the unconscious "maelstrom" rages fully in the lapis lazuli episode; Gerald's hypnotic walking towards Gudrun's bedroom in an unknown house in the mining village — all these "blind" acts belong to the metapsychology of the irrational and are rendered in an aesthetic code that presupposes the symbolic, imaginative stylization of the innermost. These somnambulist states of mind represent, in fact, volcanic eruptions of the irrational, which disclose the hidden depths as if in some tectonic disturbance of the psychic terrain. These scenes represent strange ideographs of the irrational and are not easy to decipher. They represent hallucinatory enactments of the subconscious desires and emotional complexes where the logic of everyday behaviour and deterministic systems of motivation is not pertinent any more. Their incomprehensible, seemingly insane motivations have another logic. The elements of reality are raised upon another plane, masked, disguised out of immediate recognition and composed into new wholes. Thus, they represent cryptic ideographs of the turbulent states of mind of the characters involved.

These scenes strive at the ultimate truth. They strive to render visible the ultimate self.<sup>44</sup> In the profound ambiguities of the Lawrentian psychology, Gerald seeks release in sex, and, beyond sex, in death, reminding us of Strindberg's Miss Julia when, in a blood-curdling monologue towards the end of the play, through her mismatched lover dressed in black she sees Death, her real lover that it coming to take her. Gerald's walking from the cemetery to Gudrun's room may be interpreted on its deepest level as the subtly disguised expression of an unconscious death drive guiding his steps towards the very person who will ultimately destroy him. His blind walking recalls the earlier scene when he stands

in front of the mirror gripped by a sudden terror because of the sudden overwhelming sense of absolute non-existence. In the mirror scene, the sudden terrifying truth stares at him, wrenching him from the familiar world of social appearances and personal pretensions. He feels like a ghost without a substance. His unconscious walking around the countryside repeats the message of the mirror scene : his existential uncertainty, his loss of identity, his overwhelming sense of existing only as a hypothetical point in an existential void. In the mirror scene he left like a bubble washed round by darkness, which might burst at any moment; here he finds himself engulfed by an immense darkness, on the verge of surrendering to it, dissolving in it, ceasing to exist as a personal entity.<sup>45</sup> In the graveyard scene, Gerald has to take a direction, has to decide where to go from his father's grave where the dead flowers pour out a sickening smell, but he finds himself in a situation which recalls a nightmarish dream : he must take a direction and he does not know where he is and even less who he is. On the ordinary novelistic level, the whole scene is rendered credible by Gerald's overwhelming shock at his father's death. He is still in a shell-shocked condition, not fully responsible for his movements and actions. Thus Lawrence fully reconciles his very special system of motivation, which signals an irrational *Aufbruch*, with the experientially known framework of psychological patterns. This situation powerfully embodies Gerald's basic feeling of being suspended over an abyss of nothingness, Through its similarity with dream and somnambulism, it captures attention and compellingly establishes its authenticity by dramatizing Gerald's inmost being. Deep inside, Gerald has become an amorphous mass, which causes him acute suffering because of his complete loss of identity. Gerald's former fear of being a bubble washed round by darkness which might burst has metamorphosed into a much more terrifying sense of having become an amorphous mass without a sense of identity and a sense of purpose. The terror of the situation projects the reverse side of Gerald's ideal of functionalism to which he has subordinated both his own being and the life of others who depended on him. The iron-willed Bismarck of industry, the agent of "progress", has turned into a gelatinous mass, soft pulp, has gone rotten inside. Gerald Crich is a powerfully realized prototype of many modernist and post-modernist heroes. One is reminded, for example, of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, who also fears that he has become an amorphous mass, or

of John Barth's Ambrose, the hero of *Lost in the Funhouse*, who suffers from an agonizing sense of the loss of identity through an endless proliferation of his own image in distorted variants in the hall of mirrors. Primarily, one is reminded of Samuel Beckett's heroes, who have reached the end of the line and exist in a kind of vacuum, certain of nothing, neither of their surroundings nor of themselves, voices composing themselves in the void. One could go on enumerating endless projections in contemporary literature of man alienated from his own being, lost in the labyrinth of his own consciousness, suffering from an existential vertigo. Gerald Crich is a powerful prototype of them all.

The other scene which is rendered in the idiom of a dream-like projection of existential extremity is the scene of Gerald's death in the snow in the Bavarian Alps. Like the scene on the open road<sup>46</sup> in the "Death and Love" chapter, Gerald's death scene is pervaded by dream-like somnambulism. It brings to a culmination Gerald's death wish, which has been secretly gnawing at his inmost being for a long time. The somnambulism of Gerald's steps which unconsciously guide him to a deep ravine among the Alpine cliffs where he will slip down and go to a final sleep repeat the somnambulist steps from the "Death and Love" chapter which took him unconsciously from his father's grave to his mistress's room. The same basic sharp contrast is repeated with overwhelming intensity. The exponent of the sovereign power of the personal will, the ruthless believer in the absolute functionalism of human life, finds his death as a stumbling, somnambulist figure, all sense of direction and purpose gone. Gerald drifts forward as a dreadful, sightless, somnambulist figure in a kind of dream or a hypnotic trance, impelled by a powerful unconscious motivation. With his hands lifted, waiting for the death blow to descend, he seems to be at the mercy of powers beyond his control, yet, according to the deeper logic of the novel, this moment is a hallucinatory fulfilment of his deepest death wish. Like Christ, with whom he identifies himself (one of the small Christ figures at the end of the long pole Lawrence was fascinated with in the Bavarian Alps), he denied the vital powers in himself and let himself be murdered, acquiescing in the murder, somehow. The sightless, drifting figure is suffering in an extremity of pain, and this extremity of feeling characterizes all such imaginatively stylized scenes with the unconscious motivation, which belong to the main structural rhythm of the novel.

## The symbolic landscape

In *Women in Love* Lawrence also uses the symbolic landscape to project the innermost self of characters. The magnificent last two chapters of the novel achieve a complex interpenetration of the human drama and the multilevelled dimensions of the symbolic landscape. The landscape in these final chapters expresses tendencies in the characters' psyche without being anthropomorphized. It reflects the soul or, to be more precise, it powerfully correlates with the soul, yet it does not forfeit the physical. The symbolic landscape of the "Continental" and the "Snowed Up" chapters is a culmination of an inherent pressure in Lawrence's narrative art towards the indirect presentation of powerful inner drives in his characters, whereby he effects a transposition of complex psychical movements onto the segments of physical, external reality. Thus they gain enormously in sensuous concreteness and become fully objectified. Lawrence's techniques of using the landscape to objectify the innermost soul states show a remarkable degree of congruence with Expressionist aesthetics.

Walter Sokel, for instance, writes with regard to Expressionist drama:

The physical stage, the protagonist's environment, ceases to be a fixed frame of a scene or act and becomes a projection of his inner self. For the idea of the set stage implies the concept of a fixed external nature in which the actions that art imitates take place. Strindberg and the Expressionists conceived of the world to be expressed in art not as a given space of nature but as a field of magnetic and gravitational forces radiating from the soul. The scenery of the Expressionist stage changes with the psychic forces whirling about in it, just as in the universe of relativity space is modified by the matter it contains; the Expressionist character is not a fixed individual personality, but the crystallization of psychic forces, modifying the scene surrounding him. Landscapes reflect the emotional situation of the characters. The mountains through which Strindberg's Unknown Man and his Lady in *To Damascus* travel on their way to her parents take on a savage and frightening look reflecting the hero's apprehensions of the impending visit. Scenes, therefore, change rapidly. What the characters remember is not merely talked about but is immediately presented as a scene flashing before our eyes. Expressionism, like the dream, replaces intellectual analysis by direct visual presentation... "We are such stuff as dreams are made of" is not very far from the assumptions of the dream play, and the heath scene in the third act of *King Lear*, in which nature becomes a dynamic projection of a raving mind, is very close to Expressionism.<sup>47</sup>

Sokel's thesis that one of the fundamental premises of Expressionist art is the fact that "*in the Surrealist-Expressionist universe no barriers exist between world and self*" is fully

borne out by what the leading Expressionist artists wrote about their own work.

In his highly influential essay *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* Kandinsky wrote that the aim of the new art is "presenting nature not as an external phenomenon but predominantly the element of the inner impression, which has recently been called Expressionism".<sup>48</sup>

Franz Marc wrote in connection with the second exhibition of the *Neue Künstlervereinigung* in 1910:

All the pictures include a plus-factor, which robs the public of its pleasure but which is in every case the principal merit of the work: **the completely spiritualized, de-materialized inwardness of perception** which our fathers, the artists of the nineteenth century, never even tried to achieve in their "pictures". This bold undertaking, to take the *matière*, which the Impressionists sank their teeth into, and spiritualize it, is a necessary reaction, which began with Gauguin in Pont-Aven and has already fostered innumerable experiments.... The way the Munich public condemns the exhibition is almost amusing. They behave as if the paintings were a few isolate aberrations of sick minds, whereas in fact they are the sober, austere beginnings on soil that is being turned for the first time. Don't they know that the same innovatory, creative spirit, resolute and confident, is active in every corner of Europe today?<sup>49</sup>

Franz Marc defined the basic striving of the new art as an attempt to throw a bridge from nature and "naturalness" "across to the realm of the spirit", which constitutes the specific "necromancy of humanity".

Paul Klee wrote in those early days when he searched for the new way in his art:

The change of course was very abrupt; in the summer of 1908 I devoted myself entirely to natural phenomena and based the black-and-white landscapes behind glass of 1907-1908 on these studies. Hardly have I reached this stage, when nature is boring me again. **Perspectives make me yawn. Am I to distort them now?** (I have already tried distortion in a mechanical way). **What other way is there for me to bridge the gap between inner and outer as freely as possible?**<sup>50</sup>

It is not difficult to place Lawrence's various techniques for the objectification of the innermost soul states of his characters, especially his technique of the symbolic landscape which reflects the soul, in the context of these definitions of Expressionist art.

The prime example of his superb usage of the symbolic landscape in *Women in Love* are the final two chapters. The snow valley to which Gerald takes Gudrun to subdue her

finally, to freeze her impulses and motions, to establish a complete dominance over her, to destroy her soul, is the final stage of the drama of their relationship. The "cradle of snow", a valley in the Bavarian Alps, surrounded by the high peaks, is consistently referred to as *Ultima Thulae*. For these two characters it proves to be the final impasse, the end of their life journey, though it is worked out in different terms for each of them.

The frozen landscape of the final chapters bears a secret resemblance to the "Coal-Dust" chapter in that there are thematic and symbolic links between the two. The coal-dust landscape has been presented as a modern Inferno where all forms of life are subtly deformed and perverted, an Inferno which is demoniacally disguised so that it is not easy to recognize it for what it is. It lures one to lose one's soul beyond retrieval as Gudrun comes to experience it. The snow landscape, which is for Gudrun "exhilarating to madness", seems to be intentionally presented by the writer as a kind of counterpart to the Inferno of the "Coal-Dust" chapter, as a kind of Paradise for the damned. The snow landscape, with all its radiance, brilliance and transfiguring beauty, is ultimately a death-dominated landscape. Its geometric beauty denies the irregularities, idiosyncrasies and imperfections of organic life and asserts the supremacy of anorganic, dead, inert matter. This landscape negates by its very nature the warm body of life. It arrests time, growth and change. The virginal beauty of its snow-covered expanses, where the motion of life has been entirely stifled, is the domain of death. These inert, cold, levelling, life-denying expanses are significantly refracted through the consciousness of Gudrun; this is the landscape in which she reaches the final goal of her soul's journey, which is finally identified as death. The landscape exerts on Gudrun the same kind of perverse fascination as the industrial Inferno at the beginning of the novel did. For her, it possesses a demonic illusion of beauty. As in the "Coal-Dust" chapter, the distorted perspective stands for a distorted way of looking at things. In this case, too, the perspective is Gudrun's.

Here they were shut up together in this cell of golden-coloured wood, with two blue-checked beds. They looked at each other and laughed, frightened by this naked nearness of isolation.

A man knocked and came in with the luggage. He was a sturdy fellow with flattish cheek-bones, rather pale, and with coarse fair moustache. Gudrun watched him put down the bags in silence, then tramp heavily out.



"It isn't too rough, is it?" Gerald asked.

The bedroom was not too warm, and she shivered slightly.

"It is wonderful", she equivocated. "Look at the colour of this panelling — it's wonderful, like being inside a nut."

He was standing watching her, feeling his short-cut moustache, leaning back slightly and watching her with his keen, undaunted eyes, dominated by the constant passion that was like a doom upon him.

She went and crouched down in front of the window, curious.

"Oh, but this —!" she cried out involuntarily, almost in pain.

In front was a valley shut in under the sky, the last huge slopes of snow and black rock, and at the end, **like the navel of the earth**, a white-folded wall, and two peaks glimmering in the late light. Straight in front ran the cradle of snow, between the great slopes that were fringed with a little roughness of pine-trees, like hair, round the base. **But the cradle of snow ran on to the eternal closing-in, where the walls of snow and rock rose impenetrable, and the mountain peaks above were in heaven immediate. This was the centre, the knot, the navel of the world, where the earth belonged to the skies, pure, unapproachable, impassable.**

It filled Gudrun with a strange rapture. She crouched in front of the window, clenching her face in her hands, in a sort of trance. **At last she had arrived, she had reached her place. Here at last she folded her venture and settled down like a crystal in the navel of snow and was gone.**

Gerald bent above her and was looking out over her shoulder. Already he felt he was alone. She was gone. She was completely gone, and there was icy vapour round his heart. He saw the blind valley, the great cul-de-sac of snow and mountain peaks under the heaven. And there was no way out. The terrible silence and cold and glamorous whiteness of the dusk wrapped him round, and she remained crouching before the window, as at a shrine, a shadow.

"Do you like it?" — he asked in a voice that sounded detached and foreign. At least she might acknowledge he was with her. But she only averted her soft, mute face a little from his gaze. And he knew that there were tears in her eyes, her own tears, tears of her strange religion, that put him to nought. (450—451)

How are we to understand Gudrun's rapture at the sight of the snow valley, the glimmering mountain peaks where the earth and the sky are united, persistently referred to as "*the navel of the earth*"? The snow valley, the *Ultima Thulae*, is the Lawrentian transposition of the old Greek notion of Omphalos as the final chapters define by both dramatic and poetic means the final phase of the journey of the soul. In this landscape, Gudrun becomes a devotee of death, a solitary priestess of a kind of death ritual. According to the subtle logic secretly at work in the whole novel, many emotional complexes are shared by all the four major characters. A striking example of that is the fact that Gudrun's death wish, latently present in her consciousness, is later transferred to Gerald. He acts out what she postpones in the physical act but

which, on the evidence of the novel, she comes to feel in her soul, "la mort dans l'âme".

In the strange scene quoted beforehand, which ventures, like so many others in *Women in Love*, on new novelistic ground, developing its own unique idiom, Gudrun accepts with grief her own love of death, love of destruction. "Strange religion", "transport", "and she remained crouching before the window as at a shrine, a shadow." — the crucial phrases of the text remind the reader of Lettie in *The White Peacock*, holding a silent communion with the snowdrops in the little dell, which shuts out her human lover. Only, in Lettie's case, nature was whispering to her some instinctive wisdom, some vital secret of which she felt that she had lost the cue, together with her civilization, while Gudrun feels kinship with the deadly dominion of inorganic inertia. Lawrence develops a non-mimetic, non-realistic stylistic idiom for the objectification of the internal states of mind of the character. A seemingly incomprehensible ritual spontaneously developed by the individual consciousness expresses some crucial truth of the inner life. In his visionary reading of the modern psyche, Lawrence reveals what lies behind the surface, in the hidden depths of the soul. In Gerald and Gudrun, the hero of the machine-age, a brilliant executive manager, and the extraordinarily gifted, emancipated, modern woman, he reveals the secret self-destructive drive. In Lawrence's apocalyptic vision, these two characters personify the love of death of their culture. In the life-denying landscape, the insane paradise, both reach the ultimate stage of the soul. Gudrun accepts her self-destruction in the ecstasy of subjection and grief, which she cannot explain. Gudrun is portrayed in this confrontation with the life-denying landscape as having reached the breaking-point in the soul, of which Birkin spoke in his meditation on the fates of individuals, cultures and races in "Moony", when the psyche in intense suffering breaks down and accepts its own doom and self-disintegration. What follows is the logical outcome of this dramatic event in the psyche; the breaking down of her soul, the giving in to resignation, coincides with her worshipping at the shrine of the mountain peaks. The peaks signify the closing in of the world, the ultimate stage of the soul, the giving in to death and nothingness. The confrontation with the landscape plays the same role in the inner logic of the development of this novel as a confrontation with a person. After Gudrun's strange emotion at the window of the mountain hut, her inexplicable wordless communion with the mountain peaks, her next lover,

Loerke, "a master in corruption", becomes inevitable. He is the inevitable next step, necessitating the casting off of Gerald, because he embodies the further stage in the progress of the soul towards utter self-destruction. By means of powerful symbolist indirection, Gudrun's self-communion projects the innermost processes of dissolution in her soul. In contrast to Birkin's and Ursula's voyage through "the living and profound darkness", "one unbroken darkness", which is the dark night of the senses, the voyage into the *terra nuova* of Lawrence's mystic vitalism, the *Omphalos* Gudrun reaches signifies death as the pivot of all existence.

The theme of the overdeveloped consciousness making man an outsider of Nature and disrupting the vital balance of being, the Hermione theme, is powerfully carried on in Gudrun. The mountain peaks appear to her as petals of a stone rose, transfigured by beauty in the evening sun. The transcendent beauty glowing in the sky symbolizes the ecstasy which she cannot feel, as if some vital centres in her being have gone dead; it is the simulacrum of the real ecstasy in the flesh. The mountain peaks are consistently likened to the pistils of a flower. Of course, the symbolic analogy has its ironical and darker side. The mountain rose, made of stone and ice, is inorganic and eternally frozen, in contrast to the living rose, which in the Lawrentian iconography, as has already been said, always symbolizes the warmth of earthy creation, the perfection of existence, whether that of flower, beast, or, in his incomparably more complex sphere of being, man. The stone rose opposes and negates what the living rose stands for. But in the complex life of a symbol, all kinds of subsidiary meanings may coexist simultaneously with the primary one, complementing or contradicting it, creating rich ambiguities. The pistils glowing in the sky in the evening light suggest the transcendental ecstasy in the physical act. We recall Birkin's peroration in The Classroom chapter: "It's the fact you want to emphasize, not the subjective impression to record. What's the fact — red, little spiky stigmas of the female flower, dangling yellow male catkin, yellow pollen flying from one to the other. Make a pictorial record of the fact, as a child does when drawing a face — two eyes, one nose, mouth with teeth — so —' And he drew a figure on the blackboard." This cross-reference suggests that the pistils of the mountain rose which glows in its transcendent beauty in the evening sky, the sight of which fills Gudrun with a strange, inexplicable rapture, are symbols of the transcendent ecstasy in the sexual act, which Gudrun will never attain.

Being unable to "feel", unable to live intensely on the level of instinct and spontaneous emotion, she is doomed to grief and remorse.

But in the heaven the peaks of snow were rosy, glistening like transcendent, radiant spikes of blossom in the heavenly upper world, so lovely and beyond. Gudrun saw all this loveliness, she knew how immortally beautiful they were, great pistils of rose-coloured, snow-fed fire in the blue twilight of the heaven. She could see it, she knew it but she was not of it. She was divorced, debarred, a soul shut out... With a look of remorse, she turned away, and was doing her hair. He (Gerald) had unstrapped the luggage and was waiting, watching her. She knew he was watching her. It made her a little hasty and feverish in her precipitation.

They went downstairs, both with a strange other-world look on their faces, and with a glow in their eyes. They saw Birkin and Ursula sitting at the long table in a corner, waiting for them.

"How good and simple they look together", Gudrun thought jealously. She envied them some spontaneity, a childish sufficiency to which she herself could never approach. They seemed such children to her. (452—453)

One recalls Coleridge's great *Ode to Dejection*:

All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
Have I been gazing on the western sky,  
And its peculiar tint of yellow green;  
And still I gaze — and with how blank an eye!  
And these thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,  
That give away their motion to the stars;  
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,  
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:  
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew  
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue,  
**I see them all, so excellently fair,**  
**I see, not feel, how beautiful they are.**

Lawrence must have been unconsciously remembering Coleridge in the context where a highly conscious character mourns the irrevocable loss of joy and spontaneity and deplors the sterility of the intellect, the dessication of feeling that comes of being imprisoned within the self and unable to break out. Coleridge knew well the frozen aridity of the soul, the inertia overcoming the vital self, as the terrifying climax of moral solitude projected in *The Ancient Mariner* shows with such uncanny power. Gudrun repeats the same pattern. Perception and apprehension function perfectly, but the spontaneous feeling has dried up and, consequently, the integral self is broken up. For Gudrun, the rose-coloured pistils of the mountain peaks in the upper air represent the chimera of self-fulfilment which will forever be denied to her, for she

is the modern soul damned to dwell forever in the prison of her own consciousness, the Sartrean *Huis Clos*. Of course, like the Coleridgean "I" in his *Ode to Dejection*, like his Ancient Mariner, Gudrun retains the clarity of perception and apprehension but she suffers from the crucial inability to feel, to absorb experiences on other levels than the rational one, through senses and feeling. The loss of spontaneity, the loss of authenticity, signifies some fissure in the inner being, some fatal deficiency of the modern man who has got out of touch with Nature and has consequently irreparably damaged himself. The mountain peaks transfigured in the evening light accord Gudrun a vision of unattainable happiness which, as she knows dimly, she will never possess. Hence her intense grief and "remorse" (it is significant that the Coleridgean word *remorse* has crept in at this point.). The chimera of self-fulfilment hovers before her inner eye for a moment, but it is a sham paradise, sham fulfilment. Through a fissure in her own being, she is excluded from the ecstatic unity with the greater Being outside her own self. The theme of the subjective consciousness as an outsider of the universe gets one of its first great modern impersonations in Gudrun, a much more profound study of the self imprisoned in consciousness than Hermion, who is a wonderful grotesque but never reaches the psychological depths of the portrait of Gudrun. While Gudrun discloses depth after depth in the changing perspectives which the novel offers about this exceedingly dynamical character, Hermione remains a magnificent grotesque imprisoned with the limits of the stylistic convention within which she is drawn.

Lawrence was intensely reading anthropologists at the time of writing *Women in Love*, as George Ford pointed out in his book on Lawrence, and he received a creative stimulus from their works.<sup>51</sup> The patterns of culture of the ancient civilizations which they resuscitated from total oblivion influenced Lawrence in writing *Women in Love*. George Ford wrote brilliantly about a number of parallels with ancient civilizations that Lawrence worked into the body of his novel. But the influence of Lawrence's anthropological reading on the process of writing *Women in Love* stretches further than Professor Ford suggests. The ancient mythic patterns are reflected not only in the complex elaboration of Lawrence's theme, which is that of a civilization in decay, but they found their way into its innermost structural design. In his great psychoanalytical novel, which follows the progress of the modern soul towards self-fulfilment and survival, with Eros triumphing over Thanatos (Birkin, Ursula), or towards death

and destruction, with Thanatos triumphing over Eros (Gudrun, Gerald), Lawrence unconsciously followed the ancient mythic pattern of the journey of the soul towards the ultimate truth about the cosmos and the human condition, described, among others, by the anthropologist Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Gudrun's confrontation with the symbolic landscape recalls the final goal of the journey of the soul which the ancient heroes of the world's great myths undertook in order to come into possession of some profound truths about the world and themselves. At the end of his journey, as Joseph Campbell writes in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the hero of such a myth reaches a place which is the centre of the world, often symbolized by the navel of the earth, from where the released waters of the new life start to flow when he triumphantly wrings from life its ultimate secret, with which he goes back to his race.<sup>52</sup> For Gudrun, in the darkly inverted modern version of the ancient mythic pattern, the final revelation is death. In her case, the life-giving waters from the navel of the world do not re-start their flow for the benefit of mankind. Imaginatively and spiritually, she enters the frozen world, "the infolded navel of the eternal snow", and wishes to unite forever with the frozen centre of the All.

Gudrun and Gerald had not come in. They had walked up the valley straight in front of the house, not like Ursula and Birkin, on to the little hill at the right. Gudrun was driven by a strange desire. She wanted to plunge on and on, till she came to the end of the valley of snow. Then she wanted to climb the wall of white finality, climb over, into the peaks that sprang up like sharp petals in the heart of the frozen, mysterious navel of the world. She felt that there, over the strange blind, terrible wall of rocky snow, there in the navel of the mystic world, among the final cluster of peaks, in the infolded navel of it all, was her consummation. If she could but come there, alone, and pass into the infolded navel of eternal snow and of uprising, immortal peaks of snow and rock, she would be oneness with all, she would be herself the eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All. (461)

The crucial word which Lawrence uses to define Gudrun's self-fulfilment in her contemplation of the mountain peaks and her identification with the inertia of the inorganic world is "consummation". It has unmistakable sexual overtones. As Hermione reaches her "consummation" in the sadistic spasm when she brings down the heavy lapis lazuli ball on her lover's head, so Gudrun, another perverted modern woman, reaches her consummation in yearning after death, in identifying herself with the ultimate reality of death. What Gudrun's identi-

fication with the frozen mountain peaks signifies in symbolic terms is a mystic "marriage" with Death, the final identification of Death as the true bridegroom. It is interesting to notice the morphological similarity of Gudrun's mysterious confrontation with the symbolic landscape and the earlier scenes from *The Rainbow*, such as, for instance, Ursula's strange conflict with Skrebensky among the stacks of corn, completely incomprehensible if we apply the logic, criteria and perspectives of the realist tradition. When we read about Ursula's "moon-consummation", with the moon substituting the human lover, the sexual imagery Lawrence uses points at the heroine's profound link with primary energies as well at the inadequacy of the human lover. The flaring up of primal energies in Ursula, which have a dual destructive-creative aspect, makes her one with Nature; she shares the dual nature of Nature's own destructive-creative energies, while the inadequate lover is excluded from the unity with Nature and destroyed by its fierce rhythms.<sup>53</sup> Depicting this conflict in the stackyard scene of *The Rainbow* in a radically new stylistic convention, Lawrence was preparing the ground for the style of *Women in Love*. The special techniques of *Women in Love* for rendering the innermost by its projection upon the external reality through basically non-mimetic means have their genesis in *The Rainbow*. The radically new narrative devices of the second and the third cycles of *The Rainbow* lead directly into *Women in Love*. In the morphology of Lawrence's style, Ursula baring her bosom to the moon, "burning with corrosive moon-fires", ultimately reaching her "moon-consummation", points directly towards Gudrun's "gratification" among the mountain peaks. Both kinds of scenes testify to the fact that Lawrence was, in the years 1915-1917, experimenting with forms of pure Expressionist art in fiction, which is certainly a more recalcitrant medium than the visual arts. Such scenes, without precedent in the art of the novel, are unique even within his own oeuvre. In *Women in Love*, his profound insights into the modern psyche are accompanied by a burst of technical inventiveness. In this novel he carried off incredibly daring techniques of imaginative stylization in the sphere of characterology, dramatic scene, narrative description and landscape-painting as an answer to the fundamental question all Expressionist art was facing with extraordinary sharpness: how to project the innermost states and fully flesh them forth so that they become palpable, tangible and fully "there" for the senses and the imagination of the readerviewer. With *Women in Love*, he pushed to the outermost edges his novelistic ven-

ture into the unconscious and into the basic patterns of his culture.<sup>54</sup>

Within the curious cross-linking of the themes and motifs of the novel — which manifests itself, among other things, as a constant interchangeability of the psychic characteristics of the four major characters — at the end of her soul's journey, Gudrun re-enacts Birkin's spiritual crisis from the beginning of the novel, focussed in his esoteric ritual of secession from the society of men (he strips himself naked and lies down among the vegetation, severing the link with humanity, shedding, as it were, his human nature, purging himself of civilization and its crimes). In this scene which, on the symbolical level, enacts Birkin's mystic "marriage" with the world of Nature, the thicket where he rubs himself against the pine needles and hazel boughs serves as a kind of marriage-bed for this queer personal ritual. Within the complex inner logic of this novel, Gudrun's confrontation with the mountain peaks represents a kind of inverse counterpart to Birkin's act in "Breadalby". Gudrun's succumbing to the death wish in her own being is pictured in daring symbolic stylization as a mystical "marriage" with Death, embodied in the frozen mountain landscape. Yet there are subtle differences. Both Birkin's and Gudrun's personal rituals are decisive acts of secession from human society. Yet Birkin's differs vitally from Gudrun's. It is the world of living Nature that he switches his allegiance to in the scene of lying down naked among the vegetation. By a symbolic ritual of stripping himself naked (he casts off his clothes, symbols of civilization, like Faulkner's hero in *The Bear*, who leaves behind his compass and his watch when he enters upon the ultimate stage of his journey towards the primal wilderness), he renounces the world of men, but he retains allegiance to living nature. With Birkin, the thread to life, to the living world, is never broken, in spite of his profound alienation from the society of man; Gudrun's identification with the frozen world of Death is total and irrevocable. The novel seems to suggest that hers is an irreversible process. Although the physical death is reserved for Gerald, the other party to the sexual conflict, for her, too, the "valley of snow", which blends the womb-death imagery, "the wall of white finality", "the heart of the frozen, mysterious navel of the world", is the final place where, spiritually, she undergoes death. In contrast to Gerald's physical death, hers is a spiritual death, death in the soul (Sartre's *La mort dans l'âme*). The symbolic landscape, in which the organic has turned into inorganic and flux and change have ceded place



to timelessness and immobility, visibly incorporates her final spiritual defeat, identifying it as the stasis of death.

Gudrun's wordless confrontation with the symbolic landscape in the chapters "Continental" and "Snowed Up" is the final modulation of the new stylistic convention Lawrence developed in *Women in Love*, which aims at expressing the inmost being of characters. Gudrun's inmost being is projected not through action but through her wordless confrontation with the symbolic landscape which is rendered by means of highly intense language whose extremely dense texture achieves multiple charges of meaning. Lawrence projects the innermost core of a character onto an external phenomenon of nature and thus the most complex nuances of the obscure states of mind and inarticulate feelings get a powerful visual objectification. By masterfully using a highly charged symbolic landscape, Lawrence is fully in line with Expressionist aesthetics which, both in the visual art and in literature, projects the rhythms of the psyche onto the external phenomena of nature in order to express the innermost. *Women in Love* offers examples of the *Vergeistigung* of landscape as powerful as the very best of Expressionist art.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

Lawrence's greatest novel, which is the result of an autonomous development and logically proceeds from his earlier experiment in fiction, shows a remarkably high degree of congruence with the aesthetics of Expressionism as it magnified itself both in the visual arts, where it originated, and in literature, where it bore most powerful fruit in poetry and drama. In its basic structural design, it conforms to the pattern of *Stationendrama*<sup>56</sup> favoured by many Expressionists, which follows the journey of the soul towards the ultimate catharsis of self-realization or self-destruction. Its thematic scope profoundly explores the predominant Expressionist concept of *Aufbruch*, a spiritual and moral break-through in its widest cultural context. In a radical squaring of accounts with themselves and with their culture, one pair of characters achieves a re-integration of being while the other pair ultimately faces destruction and death. The fundamental reversal of positions implies the triumph of Eros over Thanatos in one pair of characters, and that of Thanatos over Eros in the other pair. Underneath the *Stationendrama*, several mythic patterns may be discerned. Yet one of them is fundamental. *Women in*

*Love* provides the most complex treatment of Lawrence's version of the myth of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained (Paradise Lost through the wrongly oriented culture, which leads into the fragmentization of being, and Paradise Regained through the re-integration of being). The general Jungian category of modern man in search of the soul fits all the mythic patterns of the novel.

In his visionary exploration of both the individual soul and of the modern culture, Lawrence follows the basic premise of Expressionist aesthetics: the penetration to the essence of the phenomena observed and the rendering of their innermost being by disregarding convention and respecting only one law: the law of the creative imagination, which launches into radically new formal experiments.<sup>57</sup> In the exteriorization of the innermost states of mind — one of the basic preoccupations of Expressionist aesthetics — Lawrence invents in an outburst of creativity a wide range of unique stylistic idioms for which the common denominator is imaginative stylization. This is especially true of the key points of the structure, that is to say, of the scenes with the unconscious motivation that determine the basic rhythm of the novel. These dream-like enactments of the subconscious complexes show an astonishing degree of congruence with the poetics of Expressionist poetry and drama. The structural rhythm of the novel in its daring discontinuous sequences exemplifies to perfection the basic striving of Expressionist art towards the greatest imaginative concentration on the essential.<sup>58</sup> *Women in Love* exemplifies to perfection the "tendency to abstraction" in Expressionist art, as Sokel calls it, a tendency to project the essential meaning of a situation, a relationship, an emotional or spiritual problem through a dream-like image, or a dream-like situation, which functions autonomously as an "*image essentielle*". Yet, this great visionary novel that explores the subconsciousness of an individual and the subconsciousness of a culture never leaves the social realm and never forfeits the principle of mimesis. Its visionary, mythic patterns are subtly absorbed into the novelistic realm of complexities, confusions and uncertainties that reach only a trembling balance of the opposites and achieve only a temporary reconciliation of the contraries.<sup>59</sup> Its basic poetics freely mixes the mimetic principle, richly diversifies through the two centuries of novelistic tradition, and the non-mimetic and anti-mimetic devices of Modernist art that relies predominantly upon the sovereign power of the creative imagination and freely encroaches upon the domain of imaginative stylization (abstraction), the creative

distortion of the real in order to express the inner truth. Thus the poetics of Lawrence's greatest novel in all its aspects conforms fully to Expressionist art, as defined by the art historian Paul Hadermann:

Their (the Expressionists') common denominators are the creation of subjective space and, consequently, the sometimes mitigated rejection of old traditions, being, on the one hand, the reproduction of reality according to a perspective prism and an atmospheric vision and, on the other, the communication of emotions and ideas in accordance with a discursive, syntactic, or prosodic *a priori*.<sup>60</sup>

Both in its overpowering subjective vision of a civilization in decay and in its characteristic technical procedures, Lawrence's *Women in Love* is one of the greatest examples of the Expressionist variant of European Modernism.

### NOTES

1. Cf. Herwarth Walden: "Art is the gift of something new, not the reproduction of something already in existence. He who wants to enjoy a fine fruit must sacrifice its peel. Not even the most beautiful peel will disguise the staleness of the fruit inside. The painter paints **what he sees with his innermost senses... every impression of the external becomes an expression of the internal in his hands. He bears and is borne by his inner vision.**" Quoted in Wolf-Dieter Dube, *The Expressionists*, The World of Art Library, Thames and Hudson, London, 1972, p. 155.  
Cf. Franz Marc: "Do people seriously believe that we new artists do not take our form from nature, do not wrest it from nature, just like every artist that has ever lived... Nature glows in our paintings as it does in all art... Nature is everywhere, in us and outside us; **but there is something which is not quite nature but rather the mastery and interpretation of nature: art. In its essence, art has always been the boldest removal from nature, the necromancy of humanity.**"  
Quoted in Bernard Myers, *The German Expressionists, A Generation in Revolt*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1957, p. 132.
2. Not only are the major scenes which play a crucial role in the overall dramatic design of *Women in Love* structured in this way, but many smaller scenes within the novel have also been fashioned according to the principle of unconscious motivation. Gudrun's behaviour in the level-crossing episode, Diana Crich's behaviour at her wedding and Gudrun in the Pompadour are some of the examples which may be quoted.
3. Erich Fromm, *The Forgotten Language, an Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths*, Grove Press, New York, pp. 11—23.
4. Cf. the category of the "constitutive symbol" used by Eliseo Vivas in his discussions of *Women in Love* in the book *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1960; and the category of the "ritual scenes" used by Julian Moynihan in his discussion of *The Rainbow* in the book *The Deed of Life, The Novels and Tales of D. H. Lawrence*, Princeton University Press, 1963.
5. *The Writer in Extremis, Expressionism in Twentieth-Century German Literature*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1959, chapter "Music and Existence".
6. "... the basic Expressionist principle of vision and visualization of inner or mental states", Sokel, *op. cit.* p. 111.
7. The "Aufbruch" of the inner man, a category used in German Expressionism, is fully apposite here.
8. Page references are to D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1961.
9. A curious characteristics of the complex characterology of *Women in Love* is a psychological cross-patterning of the four major characters which is evident on various levels. A characteristic example of this is the fact that, only a few chapters prior to the Breadalby chapter, Birkin expressed a desire to crack Hermione's skull. He was furious with her for her compulsion to absorb everything in

knowledge, and expressed an opinion that only by cracking her skull would this obsession of hers be stopped. "Because you want to have everything in your own volition, your deliberate voluntary consciousness. Your want it all in that loathsome little skull of yours, **that ought to be cracked like a nut. For you'll be the same till it is cracked, like an insect in its skin.**" (46) By a curious transfer of impulses, in the Breadalby chapter it is Hermione who unconsciously deals a deadly blow to him and almost murders her former lover.

10. **"Deforming and simplifying shapes, altering and tensing colour relationships, creating a symbolic space, the painter (Van Gogh) annihilates reality in his search for the ultimate truth."** Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
11. Bernard Myers stresses the importance of the theme of the conflict of the sexes in Expressionist painting. The most prominent Expressionist painters dealing with it are Oscar Kokoschka and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, both of them following in the wake of the great forerunner of Expressionism, Edward Munch. Myers says with regard to Munch: "The painter's morbidity and insecurity are reflected in the symbolic **Vampire** (1894), done with the colour of Vuillard and in a mood far exceeding the despair of Kokoschka and others concerned with the man-and-woman problem. **Here man is literally swallowed up by the woman, her fierce-red hair enveloping him as she kisses him with a final, bloodsucking, symbolic gesture.**" He speaks further of the **"disturbing paintings on the same theme by Kokoschka, where the war of the sexes is expressed with disturbing power, while the painter digs down to the primeval urges and impulses."** *Op. cit.*, chapters on Munch and Kokoschka respectively.

This obsession of Kokoschka's is reflected strongly in his plays **The Murder Hope of Women, Sphynx and the Strawman, and Orpheus and Euridyce.**

12. Walter Sokel stresses the Expressionists' preoccupation with fundamental existential problems as one of the their predominant thematic characteristics. He speaks of the existential plot and the usage of characters as existential leitmotifs in Expressionist drama.
13. **"Never before has an art set out so consciously and violently to change the physical appearances of things, their colour, form, and space content, in favour of an augmented emotional transcription of the artist's reaction to the visible and the spiritual worlds."** Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
14. **"The concept of man's reversion to an untouched and arcadian environment — antique, exotic, or primitivistic — ... is reinforced by Gauguin, whose romantic search for a primitive society apparently inspired Nolde and Pechstein to make a pilgrimage to the South Seas, sent Mueller to primitive Central Europe, and interested a host of others in the cult of the 'unspoiled'. Gauguin's favourite theme of man and nature synthesized in rhythmic union become popular with Pechstein, Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Mueller, Marc, Campendonc, Nauen, and others. Although in many cases the Germans' versions would be more ecstatic as well as vaguer and more broken in form, some of them, such as Marc's, remained closely associated with the decorative linearism and symbolic movement of the Frenchman."** Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

15. "We have recognized that all the early twentieth-century artistic movements responded in their own ways to the dislocation of modern society and the nearness of the great war. The Fauve and Cubist painters of France reacted to their environment in a typically French (i.e. analytical) manner; the Germans expressed their protest in strident, deliberately dislocated, primitivistic terms, giving the emotions rather than the intellect free rein. As a protest against the refined obscenities of modern life as they saw it, there was an attempt to become uncivilized, to go back to the primitive and the archaic. As a protest against growing up into an evil world and into the totalitarian circumstances of adult life in Germany, they turned back to their own childhood and to the childhood period of humanity — the primitive. Against the so-called rational, they magnified the irrational." Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
16. Cf. Walter Sokel: "The longing to be fully and 'irresponsibly' alive marks that tendency in Expressionism which we shall call vitalism. The vitalist philosophies of the turn of the century, above all Henri Bergson's theory of the *élan vital*, postulated a dichotomy between the unconscious flow of life and the ossifying, categorizing intellect that is very similar to the conflict postulated in Expressionism. However, Bergson saw in a mental faculty — memory — a means of comprehending the irrational stream of life; his is a serene and gallicized version of Nietzsche's Dionysian principle. In Expressionism the Dionysian roots of vitalism remain much more evident. The Expressionist experiences the problem of vitalism more dynamically and with greater immediacy than did such French and Anglo-American authors as Proust, Valéry, T.E. Hulme, and T.S. Eliot, who were deeply influenced by Bergson. Expressionist vitalism is an extreme and violent reaction to and extreme form of cerebralism. Unlike Proust and T.S. Eliot, the Expressionists — in their early phase, at any rate — did not seek to recapture the timeless reality of flowing life through the mental act of memory and artistic recreation. Instead they reacted against all mental activity with a wild, anarchic yearning for "irresponsible lift" and "pure sensation"... Expressionist vitalism reacts against an excessive cerebralism, and its intensity is proportionate to the degree to which the intellect is felt as an inhibitive and disintegrative force in personality.... The most extreme example of the "thorn of the intellect" is found in the early work of Gottfried Benn, next to Kafka probably the greatest and most influential Expressionist....

I only, with the censor between blood and paw,  
 a brain-devoured corpse, trans-yelling  
 curses in the void, with words bespattered,  
 the fool of life.

Between his blood, which is part of nature, and his "paw", the tool of action, which should be motivated by the blood, lies the guard, the *Wächter* (the "censor"), thinking, reflecting, ambivalent, and hesitant self-awareness.... By universalizing his personal plight into the plight of mankind and postulating retrogression as an absolute ideal, the poet is not merely enabled to act in revolt, but to establish contact with a deeper layer of life, which corresponds closely to Bergson's vitalist Reality and to Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious". A spontaneous feeling wells up, breaking the crust of a cerebralized self, and

beckons like the mirage of the blue ocean in desert wastes. "Südllichkeit" ("Southernness") is the leitmotiv of these vision. It is associated with a tropical bliss of inactivity, and sensuous release; with the serenity of a flight of white marble steps beneath a hot sun, which promises a kind of religious salvation to the brain-monster Pameleen, the **Vermessungsdirigent**; with the colour and warmth of the Mediterranean, exemplified by the rhapsodic vision of Van Gogh's splashing ecstasies of colour on a canvas in a lush garden in Provence; or simply by the single word "Ithaca", which surges up from the subconscious, a magic word, rich with associations of sunlight, repose, lushness, and a primitive, ecstatic way of life:

O it flutters like a dove to my heart: laughing — laughing — laughing — Ithaca! — Ithaca! — O stay! Stay! Do not forsake me yet! O such striding, to have found home, amidst the falling blossoms, of all the worlds, sweet and drowsy." Walter Sokel, *op. cit.*, pp. 87—92.

17. "The dominance of the inner world and the desire to verbalize and pictorialize in nonnaturalistic symbols was the outstanding element in the work of these artists. Each of them, however, had his own solution for externalizing what lay beneath the surface of everyday appearances." Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
18. Cf. Višnja Sepčić, "Notes on the Structure of **Women in Love**", *Studia Romanica et Anglicae Zagrabiensia*, 21—22, 1966, pp. 289—304.
19. Cf. Frank Kermode "Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types", **D.H. Lawrence, The Rainbow and Women in Love**, Casebook Series, ed. by Collin Clarke, MacMillan, 1969, pp. 203—219. Lawrence's obsession with the Christian Apocalypse and his profound study of its sources as a preparation for his own book on the Apocalypse has been scholarly documented in Frank Kermode's article. In this Lawrence was of his time. Cf. what Bernard Myers says with regard to the Expressionist painter Ludwig Meidner: "Meidner's painting style emerged in a series of apocalyptic themes beginning in 1912. Exemplified by the **Apocalyptic Landscape**, 1912—1913, and the **Apocalypse**, 1912, these paintings show a distorted perspective, irregularly shaped and often swaying houses, a violently heaving ground line and an explosive sky. Tiny figures squirm in agony and terror before the imminent destruction of the world. The violent application of colour suggests Van Gogh, as does the actual palette, which is still relatively bland compared with the **Brücke** paintings, but adequate to convey the psychotic reaction of Meidner, his ecstatic pain. In the **Apocalyptic Landscape** the symbolism is more intense, a single tiny figure lying in the open under a blue-green, shattered sky; the **Apocalypse** is more typical, with its groups of harried, frightened people. Another variant shows a gigantic single figure against a wasteland, as in **I and the City**, 1915... What impresses us is the urgency and restlessness that surge through these often very exaggerated and overstrained works, their sense of doom... Meidner was not among the most significant painters of the period; but in his fearful and passionate sense of despair, his ecstatic yearning for another, beyond-earthly existence, he represented one of its more overtly Expressionist personalities." *Op. cit.*, chapter on Meidner, p. 71—72.

20. The nearest interpretation of Birkin's act in Moony to the one offered in this article is to be found in Richard Drain's article on **Women in Love**. "But most interesting of all is the way the writing of this passage creates a subtle fluctuation in our sympathies. We begin by seeing the moon as hard, sinister, repellent. It associates in our minds with the ball of lapis lazuli, Hermione's weapon against Birkin in an earlier chapter; it is equally pure and hard and closed in upon itself; and it functions equally well as an image of egoistic invulnerability, and autonomous mental consciousness. Its staring light we too wish to avoid, and when its reflection begins to form again on the water after Birkin's fusillade, we can accept that its fragments would be coming together "blindly, enviously", as Lawrence describes them; that the moon would be "regathering itself insidiously". But as Birkin obstinately renews his attack, "like a madness", refusing to admit defeat, it is he who is acting like Hermione, and Lawrence's language subtly changes ground; subconsciously we feel that the darkness has turned brutal and sadistic — "Shadows, dark and heavy, struck again and again" — and that the moon has become an oppressed victim, desperate to escape..."

**D.H. Lawrence, A Critical Study of the Major Novels and Other Writings**, ed. by A.H. Gomme, The Harvester Press, Sussex, Barnes and Noble, New York, 1978, p. 88.

21. The rose is, in other Lawrentian contexts, described as a "running flame", "the very quick of nascent creation", that is made visible one instant and is gone the next, a supreme manifestation of the indestructible creative impulse in life which it incarnates for a brief moment. As in the essays, the rose persistently functions as such a symbol in the early sequence of poems **Look, We Have Come Through!**

#### Roses on the Breakfast Table

Just a few of the roses we gathered from the Isar  
Are fallen, and their mauve-red petals on the cloth  
Float like boats on the river, while other  
Roses are ready to fall, reluctant and loth.

She laughs at me across the table, saying  
I am beautiful. I look at the rumped young roses  
And suddenly realize, in them as in me,  
How lovely is the self this day discloses.

#### I Am Like a Rose

I am myself at last; now I achieve  
My very self, I, with the wonder mellow,  
Full of fine warmth, I issue forth in clear  
And single me, perfected from my fellow.

Here I am all myself. No rose-bush heaving  
Its limpid sap to culmination has brought  
Itself more sheer and naked out of the green  
In stark-clear roses, than I to myself am brought.



### Rose of All the World

**I am here myself;** as though this heave of effort  
At starting other life, fulfilled my own;  
**Rose-leaves that whirl in colour round a core**  
**Of seed-specks kindled lately and softly blown**

**By all the blood of the rose-bush into being —**  
Strange, that the urgent will in me, to set  
My mouth on hers in kisses, and so softly  
To bring together two strange sparks, beget

Another life from our lives, so should send  
**The innermost fire of my own dim soul out-spinning**  
**And whirling in blossom of flame and being upon me!**  
That my completion of manhood should be the beginning

Another life from mine! For so it looks.  
The seed is purpose, blossom accident.  
The seed is all in all, the blossom lent  
To crown the triumph of this new descent.

Is that it woman? Does it strike you so?  
The Great Bush blowing a tiny seed of fire  
Fans out your petals for excess of flame,  
Till all your being smokes with fine desire?

**Or are we kindled, you and me, to be**  
**One rose of wonderment upon the tree**  
**Of perfect life,** and is our possible seed  
But the residuum of the ecstasy?

How will you have it? — the rose is all in all,  
Or the ripe rose-fruits of the luscious fall?  
The sharp begetting, or the child begot?  
Our consummation matters, or does it not?

To me it seems the seed is just left over  
**From the red rose-flowers' fiery transience;**  
Just orts and slarts; berries that smoulder in the bush  
**Which burnt just now with marvellous immanence.**

Blossom, my darling, **be a rose**  
**Of roses,** unhidden and purposeless; a rose  
**For rosiness only without an ulterior motive;**  
**For me it is more than enough if the flower unclose.**

D. H. Lawrence, *The Complete Poems*, Vol. I, Heinemann, London, 1957, pp. 206—208.

"Life, the ever-present, knows no finality, no finished crystallization. The perfect rose is only a **running flame**, emerging and flowing off, and never in any sense at rest, static, finished. **Herein lies its transcendent loveliness.** The whole tide of all time suddenly heaves, and appears before us as an apparition, a revelation. We look at the **very white quick of nascent creation.** A water-lily heaves herself from the flood, looks around, gleams, and is gone. **We have**

seen the incarnation, the quick of the ever-swirling flood. We have seen the invisible. We have seen, we have touched, we have partaken of the very substance of creative change, creative mutation. If you tell me about the lotus, tell me of nothing changeless, or eternal. **Tell me of the mystery of the inexhaustible, forever-unfolding creative spark. Tell me of the incarnate disclosure of the flux, mutation in blossom, laughter and decay perfectly open in their transit, nude in their movement before us.**" The American Edition of *New Poems*, by D. H. Lawrence, Phoenix, *The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. and with an introduction by Edward D. McDonald, Heinemann, London 1936, p. 219.

22. "If it is the end, then we are of the end — **fleurs du mal**, if you like. If we are **fleurs du mal**, we are not roses of happiness, and there you are."  
"But I think I am," said Ursula. "I think I am a rose of happiness."  
"Ready-made?" he asked ironically.  
"No — real," she said, hurt." (193—194)
23. Both principles, in fact, are shown in the struggle for supremacy in all the feminine characters, with various degrees of intensity and a different issue.
24. Cf. Birkin's soliloquy in the chapter "In the Train": "Birkin looked at the land, at the evening, and was thinking: "Well, if mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind, but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. Let mankind pass away — time it did. The creative utterances will not cease, they will only be there. Humanity doesn't embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible." (65)

Cf. Birkin's final soliloquy:

"God cannot do without man." It was a saying of some great French religious teacher. But surely this is false. God can do without man. God could do without the ichtyosauri and the mastodon. These monsters failed creatively to develop, so God, the creative mystery, dispensed with them. In the same way the mystery could dispense with man, should he too fail creatively to change and develop. The eternal creative mystery could dispose of man, and replace him with a finer created being. Just as the horse has taken the place of the mastodon.

It was very consoling to Birkin to think this. If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game is never up. The mystery of creation is fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, for ever. Races came and went, species passed away, but ever new species arose, more lovely, or equally lovely, always surpassing wonder. The fountain-head was in-

- corruptible and unsearchable. It had no limits. It could bring forth miracles, create utterly new races and new species in its own hour, new forms of consciousness, new forms of body, units of being. To be man was as nothing compared to the possibilities of the creative mystery. To have one's pulse beating direct from the mystery, this was perfection, unutterable satisfaction. Human or inhuman mattered nothing. The perfect pulse throbbled with indescribable being, miraculous unborn species." (538—539)
25. Cf. Richard Drain, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
26. Sokel speaks of the characters in Expressionist drama as existential leitmotifs expressing aspects of a single personality. This bears a curious relation to the cross-patterning of characters in **Women in Love**, whose interchangeability of psychic complexes suggests that Lawrence is dealing, in fact, with four dissociated aspects of the modern psyche whose identity he is trying to define. The ultimate literary model is Dostoevsky, whose **Brothers Karamazov** dramatize the inner conflicts and contradictions of an immensely complex modern psyche through the secret interchangeability of characters which share whole complexes of psychological characteristics. Dostoevsky was one of the "patron saints of German Expressionism.
27. Cf. H. M. Daleski, "Women in Love: Firm Singleness and Melting Union", **D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow and Women in Love**, The Casebook Series, ed. by Collin Clarke, MacMillan, London, 1969, pp. 151—167.
28. Cf. Richard Sheppard:
- "However, the Expressionist concepts of liberation and respiritualized art are not as straightforward as they may appear. What exactly was meant by the authentic Self, the **Geist**, which was to be re-discovered and released? Was it Spirit, or Energy, the transrational or the irrational? This ambiguity was nothing new: nor was it peculiar to the Expressionism. Nietzsche, one of the principal forebears of Expressionism, had talked of Dionysus both as amoral, anarchic energy and as self-regulating energy. Similarly, and more recently, Herbert Marcuse has defined Eros as that which "knows no value, no good and evil, no morality", yet goes on to suggest that there is a "natural self-restraint" in Eros. Erwin Loewenson, one of the founders of **Der Neue Club**, regarded self-fulfilment as "heightening of vital intensity", whereas Kurt Hiller, his co-founder, described the power of regeneration as "idealistic", a concept which implies some sort of immanent order and restraint rather than formless ecstatic intensity. Though this ambiguity was never resolved, it is clearly crucial."
- "German Expressionism", **Modernism (1890—1930)**, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James MacFarlane, Pelican Guides to European Literatures, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 278—279.
29. Walter Sokel, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
30. Cf. Hadermann, "Expressionist Literature and Painting", **Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon**, ed. by Ulrich Weisstein, Didier, Paris, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1973, pp. 111—141.

31. Cf. Bernard Myers: "As to their outlook on the materiality of the physical phenomena, it should be observed that although most of the **Brücke** and many unaffiliated Expressionists considered their art dedicated to the purpose of looking beyond the mere appearance of things, it is the Blue Rider again that carries this attitude to its logical conclusion. Where the **Brücke** and others were definitely tied to subject matter, the Blue Riders, a bridge between the abstract art of France (through Delauney and others), and the inward-searching quality of German art, arrive at a varying dematerialized conception of the universe". *Op. cit.*, chapter on **Der Blaue Reiter**, p. 204.
32. "Fiction and the Criticism of Fiction", *The Kenyon Review*, Spring, 1956, pp. 276—299.
33. Cf. Lawrence's essay "Morality and the Novel":  
"The novel is the highest example of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered. Everything is true in its own time, place, and circumstance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circumstance. If you try to nail anything down in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail." *Phoenix*, p. 528.

Cf. also Frank Kermode:

"One of Lawrence's powers was a capacity for stunning verisimilitude, a thing precious in itself — one thinks of the passage in **The Rainbow** in which Will Brangwen picks up the factory girl at the music-hall. There are always untyped graces of this sort in Lawrence; they belong to history, and they are what all good novels ought to have. Lawrence never lost the power, but it must have seemed that its relevance to what he was doing progressively diminished.

**Women in Love** is the last novel in which he kept the balance. Its radical type is **Apocalypse**, used as an explanation of the great contemporary crisis; for "it was in 1915 the old world ended", and the great transition began. The great feat is to confront what Auerbach calls "the disintegration of the continuity of random events" — reflected in the technique of Lawrence's novel — with the unchangingness of the types, and to do it without sinking into a verisimilar discreetness on the one hand, or into a rigid flux-denying schema on the other. **Women in Love** studies crisis without unforgivably insulting reality. Its types do some of the work which historians also do with types." "Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types", *op. cit.*, p. 218.

34. Cf. Coleridge's Kubla Khan: "But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted / Down the green hills athwart a cedarn cover! / A savage place! as holy and enchanted / As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted / By woman wailing for her demon-lover!" — the mysterious path to the demonic underworld of the unconscious that feeds Kubla Khan's luscious gardens. In the chapter "Classroom", Birkin actually quotes from the same passage of Kubla Khan: "**Woman wailing for her demon-lover.**" p. 47.
35. The nearest pictorial equivalent to Lawrence's description of the mystical journey of the lovers towards the "new heaven and earth" is to be found in the famous painting by Oscar Kokoschka **Die Windbraut (The Tempest)**, of which Bernard Myers says:

"The most significant picture of the period is undoubtedly **The Tempest** (1914), which stands as a high water-mark in Kokoschka's symbolic creativeness. The painting, a sensation even in the 1947 Zurich exhibition of his work, is an allegorical representation of his great love affair. **The two lovers lie side by side in a kind of cockleshell whirling through space; the restless and tortured forms are Baroque in their intensity of feeling as in the unreal and symbolic space through which they are propelled. Movement into the infinite, to a nonearthly plane of being, together with the deliberate distortion of form and vividly heightened colour, again bring to mind the intense and dematerialized paintings of El Greco.**" Op. cit, chapter on Kokoschka, p. 62.

36. Cf. Juan de la Cruz's poem **En una noche oscura:**

En una noche oscura,  
 Con ansias en amores inflamada,  
 Oh dichosa ventura!  
 Salí sin ser notada,  
 Estando ya mi casa sosegada;  
     A oscuras y segura,  
 Por la secreta escala, disfrazada,  
 Oh dichosa ventura!  
 A oscuras, y en celada,  
 Estando ya mi casa sosegada.  
     En la noche dichosa,  
 En secreto, que nadie me veía,  
 Ni yo miraba cosa,  
 Sin otra luz y guía,  
 Sino la que en el corazón ardía,  
     Aquesta me guiaba  
 Más cierto que la luz del mediodía,  
 Adonde me esperaba  
 Quien yo bien me sabía  
 En parte donde nadie parecía.  
     Oh noche, que guiaste,  
 Oh noche amable más que el alborada,  
 Oh noche, que juntaste  
 Amado con Amada,  
 Amada en el Amado transformada!  
     En mi pecho florido,  
 Que entero para él sólo se guardaba,  
 Allí quedé dormido,  
 Y yo le regalaba,  
 Y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.  
     El aire del almena,  
 Cuando yo sus cabellos esparcía,  
 Con su mano serena  
 En mi cuello hería  
 Y todos mis sentidos suspendía.  
     Quedéme y olvidéme,  
 El rostro recliné sobre el Amado;  
 Cesó todo, y dejéme,  
 Dejando mi cuidado  
 Entre las azucenas olvidado.

In his interpretation of this poem of the Spanish mystic, Leo Spitzer speaks of an "existential adventure" of the soul that goes

forth in the middle of the night to meet her Beloved, guided only by the inner light streaming from itself. Juan de la Cruz's poem, which sensitively and passionately registers the mystery of the progress of the soul towards her Creator, which culminates in a final ecstatic union with the divine and the annihilation of the self, is called by Leo Spitzer "a Catholic Song of Songs". "This poem, written about 1577 by the Carmelite monk San Juan de la Cruz, is a perfect example of the manner in which the body can be made artistically tributary to the mystic experience. The Catholic saint treats no lesser a subject than the ecstatic union, not with a human being, but with the divine, in terms that constantly fuse soul and body." Leo Spitzer, "Three Poems on Ecstasy (John Donne, St. John of the Cross, Richard Wagner)", *Essays on English and American Literature*, Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 153.

37. Cf. the Anna Victrix passage from *The Rainbow*:

**"Inside the room was a great steadiness, a core of living eternity. Only far outside, at the rim, went on the noise and the destruction. Here at the centre the great wheel was motionless, centered upon itself. Here was a poised, unflawed silence, that was beyond time, because it remained the same, inexhaustible, unchanging, unexhausted.**

**As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movement, the unawakened sleep of all wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still in each other's arms: for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, whilst time roared far off, forever far off, towards the rim.**

**Then gradually they were passed away from the supreme centre down the circles of praise and joy and gladness, further and further out, towards the noise and the friction. But their hearts had burned and were tempered by the inner reality, they were unalterably glad."** D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, Harmondsworth, 1960, p. 145.

38. For the open ending of *Women in Love* see Alan Friedman, "Suspended Form: Lawrence's Theory of Fiction in *Women in Love*", *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Women in Love*, ed. by Stephen J. Miko, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1969, pp. 40. 50.
39. "The Expressionists deliberately avoid the objective form of things. They attempt to cut through temporary naturalistic appearances in pursuit of the inner truth, by means of intensified colour, and twisted forms that reduce the reality of objects to form and colour symbols, as in Marc, Klee, or Kirchner." Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
40. Cf. Richard Sheppard:
- "The originality of Expressionist poetry lies in the fact that it was the first German poetry to pass beyond the spirit of later Romanticism, the spirit of Rilke, George, and Hofmannsthal,

seeking to encounter directly the phenomena and crisis of modern industrial capitalism, and searching for a new consciousness within this total setting. It was a poetry marked less by community of style than community of attitude, a modern poetry of urban life, of warfare, of visionary and radical politics, depicting as Georg Trakl did in his *An die Verstummten (To the Silenced)* (1914) the city as a place of madness and disinheritance, but offering the promise that a new, suppressed energy might grow within it. It was also a poetry which encountered, described and interpreted the First World War, and the revolutionary movements and shocks which followed it. It was, in short, both for thematic and historical reasons a very contemporary poetry ...

There is an unmistakable sense in which the best Expressionists had known the ambiguity of their situation all along; had sensed that they were the last of a line fated to die of disillusion, and the first of a new generation questing amid chaos. This dual consciousness is essential to early Expressionism and it passed, after the death of Trakl and Stramm, to the Dadaists rather than the late Expressionists with their commitment to schematic and ready-made ideologies. Early Expressionism and Dada both knew the spirit of Trakl's *An die Verstummten* (1914), which saw in the mad, chaotic city the secret activity of a redemptive power:

**"Aber stille blutet in dunkler Höhle stummere Menschheit,  
Fügt aus harten Metallen das erlösende Haupt."**

(But silent in dark caverns a stiller humanity bleeds,  
Out of hard metals moulds the redeeming head.) ...

... And it was on this paradox that the best Expressionism turned. For where the preceding Impressionists had felt themselves the last guardians of a culture coming to an end, the Expressionists felt themselves on an intersection, at once looking backwards and forwards, mystical and revolutionary, desiring legitimate self-expression and falling prey to the daemonic will to power. Perhaps the word that best conveys their spirit is *Menschheitsdämmerung*, the title of the best-known anthology of Expressionist poetry, and a concept which can be rendered in English either as *Twilight of Humanity* or *Dawn of Humanity*. If Expressionist poetry was, all said and done, incapable of resolving the conflicts of twentieth-century existence, it was at least the first German poetry to take its strength from those conflicts, and explore the dangers and possibilities which engagement in them entailed." "German Expressionist Poetry", *op. cit.*, pp. 383—391.

41. Cf. John Middleton Murry:

"For Lawrence was alone in the depth of his prescience of the crisis of humanity which has developed since his death".

"D. H. Lawrence: Creative Iconoclast", *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, ed. by Harry T. Moore, Heinemann, London, 1961, p. 4.

Cf. Eliseo Vivas:

"In *Women in Love* religion, as ordinarily understood, does not enter: man's relation to God is not part of the substance of the novel; but Lawrence poses the problem of human destiny in view of the fact that his characters cannot believe in God, so that religion, by its failure, defines the central problem of the novel.

It is only when we put **Women in Love** in this perspective that we are able to see clearly the relation of Lawrence to the most profound and most challenging movement in contemporary philosophy in our Western world, atheistic existentialism. Nietzsche's exultant cry, "God is dead!" is one of Sartre's starting points. God's death forces the atheistic philosopher to face the problem of destiny in ultimate, radical, and desperate terms. And it was in these terms that Lawrence faced the same problem. The philosophy of love, the religion of the blood, the "leader-cum-follower" programme — all his ideas, solutions, insights, and messages, significant as they are by themselves, achieve full significance only when we see them as attempts to discover a way of life that would centre, "seeing there is no God". And it is only when we put Lawrence in this perspective that we are able to see fully what kind of novelist he was." **Op. cit.**, pp. 237—238.

42. Cf. what Oscar Kokoschka wrote about his own portraits to the Viennese art historian Hans Tietze:

"There was a time when I knew how to evoke the essence of a person, let us say his 'daemon', with such elemental simplicity, that the one principal line made one forget the chance elements that were omitted... I brought it off on some occasions, and the result was 'a person' in the way that the picture one forms of one's friends in one's memory is more vivid in its effect than the actual sight of them is, because it is concentrated, as if by a lens, and therefore capable of radiating..." Karl Kraus wrote about Kokoschka's paintings in **Die Fackel**:

**"... and I am proud of Kokoschka's testimony, because the truth of the genius that distorts is higher than the truth of anatomy, and because in the presence of art reality is only an optical illusion."** Quoted in Dube, **op. cit.**, pp. 187 and 184.

Dube says the following with regard to Kokoschka's portraits: "In portraits like these, Kokoschka laid the soul bare, and what was revealed was not beautiful. In the drawings illustrating **Mörder Hoffnung der Frauen**, he made the nerves of his characters visible as if they lay on the surface of the skin... In the same way, in his portraits, he projected his own anguish, his own torment, onto his sitters, which gave his conception of them a positively hallucinatory quality. Kokoschka called his projection of himself the fourth dimension, based on the creative nature of seeing, while the other three dimensions derived from mere eyesight." **op. cit.**, pp. 182—184.

43. Cf. Walter Sokel:

"Both Surrealism and Expressionism are deeply interested in the dream. The French Surrealists sought to recapture actual dream images and hallucinatory scenes as the spirit dictated them... Strindberg, more influential in German Expressionism on the whole than Rimbaud, had a somewhat different attitude to the dream than the Surrealists. In his preface to **The Dream Play** (1902) he writes:

"... the author has tried to imitate the disconnected but seemingly logical form of the dream. Anything may happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. On an insignificant background of reality, imagination designs and embroiders novel patterns: a medley of memories, experiences, free fancies, absurdities and improvisations." **Strindberg informs us that he**



intends to copy the form and pattern of dreams, not their actual subject matter. He is less interested in revelation than in the free composition of a universe of pure expressiveness. He wishes to reproduce a universe in which the empirical laws of causality and relationships are suspended and only a single purpose rules: the will to express an invisible situation. The Expressionist dramatist, like the dreamer, concentrates entirely on the purpose of expressing an inner world and refuses to let conformity to external reality divert him from this purpose." *Op. cit.*, pp. 37—38.

44. Cf. Walter Sokel:

"This abstract subjectivism of the Expressionists, which abstracts the empirical self from its basic problems of existence, anticipates the method of Existentialism as practised by Martin Heidegger in his **Being and Time** and by Sartre in his **Being and Nothingness**. In one of the most important programmatic essays of Expressionism, Paul Kornfeld sets up a dichotomy which seems like the nucleus of Heidegger's fundamental distinction between unauthentic and authentic existence. Kornfeld contrasts the "psychological man" to the "souled man". Psychological man is man seen from outside, as an object of portrayal and scientific analysis. "Souled man" is man seen from inside, in his ineffable uniqueness, or, to use Heidegger's term, man as **Existenz**. Martin Heidegger's **Being and Time** of 1929 is in many ways a tremendous elaboration of Kornfeld's Expressionist thesis. Applying the phenomenological method of his teacher, Edmund Husserl, Heidegger seeks to define man "from inside", man as "soul". This parallelism derives from the contemporaneity of the genesis of the two movements of Expressionism and Existentialism: Heidegger developed the germs of his Existentialist philosophy as early as 1911, the year in which Expressionism got under way, and Jaspers published his first work in 1917, at the height of the Expressionist movement. Still more important are the identical intellectual influences affecting both movements: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Martin Buber's **Ecstatic Confessions** of 1911, and **Daniel** of 1913, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Heidegger's teacher at the University of Freiburg, and, in the decade of the First World War, Kirkegaard's first impact upon Germany. Those who first appreciated him were the pioneers and founders of German Existentialism: Buber, Jaspers, and Heidegger, as well as the poet Rilke and the Expressionists Brod and Kafka.

For Heidegger, the essence of man is his existence... Thus, human existence is the experience of inexorable loneliness, a uniqueness for which the categories and methods of science, based as they are on the concepts of statistics, are completely irrelevant. But, and this is of crucial importance, though individual and unique, existence is by no means the same as individuality. Existence is not character; it is not at one with the quirks and idiosyncracies of personality; it is not originality; it is not that which sets a man off from other men. Rather it is that which he has in common with all men, but which each possesses as his own innermost truth. All men must die, yet each knows that he must die alone.

**This view of existence shows an amazing parallelism to the method by which the Expressionist arrives at his vision. Both Existentialism and Expressionism are concerned with describing the ineffable.**

They seek to do justice to what lies "beyond" or "beneath" conceptual understanding; both seek to define the "feel" of experience which is by definition incommunicable. The concept of existence, like the vision of the Expressionist, is the result of a peculiar process of abstraction; the incidental admixtures of external reality are abstracted from the essential self. This essential self, however, is neither a type (it is with some Expressionists, but by no means with the majority), nor an individual in his full empirical concreteness. It is an "inner feel", an awareness to which all categories and processes of logical thought are completely irrelevant.

The aim of Expressionism is to give voice to this indefinable "inner feel", this translogical essential situation, either by the dreamlike metaphoric visualization or — in a more old-fashioned way — by the parabolic demonstration, or by direct shriek, or by still other forms which we shall encounter . . . the various forms of distortion and abstraction in this rich and multifaceted movement." *Op. cit.*, pp. 52—54.

45. Cf. Lawrence's early poems:

#### Repulsed

The last silk-floating thought has gone from the dandelion stem,  
And the flesh of the stalk holds up for nothing a blank diadem.  
So night's flood-winds have lifted my last desire from me,  
And my hollow flesh stands up in the night like vanity.  
As I stand on this hill, with the whitening cave of the city in front  
And this Helen beside me, I am blank; being nothing, I bear the  
brunt

Of the nightly heavens overhead, like an immense, open eye,  
Like a cat's distended pupil, that sparkles with little stars  
As with thoughts that flash and crackle in far-off malignancy,  
So distant, they cannot touch me, whom now nothing mars.

In front of me, yes, up the darkness, goes the gush of the lights of  
two towns,  
As the breath which rushes upwards from the nostrils of an immense  
Beast crouched across the globe, ready, if need be, to pounce  
Across the space on the cat in heaven's hostile eminence.

All round me, above and below, the night's twin consciousness roars  
With sounds that endlessly swell and sink like the storm of thought  
in the brain  
Lifting and falling, long gasps through the sluices, like silence that  
pours  
Through invisible pulses, slowly, filling the night's dark vein.

The night is immense and awful, yet to me it is nothing at all.  
Or rather 'tis I am nothing, here in the fur of the heather  
Like an empty dandelion stalk, bereft of connection, small  
And nakedly nothing twixt world and heaven, two creatures hostile  
together.

I in the fur of the world, alone; but this Helen close by!  
How we hate one another to-night, hate, she and I

To numbness and nothingness; I dead, she refusing to die.  
The female whose venom can more than kill, can numb and then  
nullify.

#### Forsaken and Forlorn

The house is silent, it is late at night, I am alone.  
From the balcony  
I can hear the Isar moan  
Can see the white  
Rift of the river eerily, between the pines, under a sky of stone.

Some fireflies drift through the middle air  
Tiniily.

**I wonder where**

**Ends this darkness that annihilates me.**

D. H. Lawrence, **The Complete Poems**, Vol. I, pp. 78—80 and 209—  
—210.

Cf. also the ending of **Sons and Lovers**, where the existential fear is intensely felt by Paul Morel after the death of his mother, but his will to life triumphs over the death wish.

Both the lyrical "I" of the poems, and the hero of the autobiographical novel, feel the same overwhelming fear of being dissolved by the pressure of darkness, of being annihilated as individual entities.

46. One is ironically reminded of Walt Whitman's **Song of the Open Road**, which celebrates the boundless possibilities of the self. In **Studies in Classic American Literature** Lawrence, with his usual perspicacity, analyses the ambivalences and contradictions of Whitman's poetry, singling out for special praise this poem as showing the way to real freedom through the growth and expansion of the self which matures in contact with the wide world (the opposite is the imprisonment within the ego and its false concepts).
47. Sokel, **op. cit.**, pp. 38—39.
48. Dube, **op. cit.**, p. 20.
49. Dube, **op. cit.**, p. 125.
50. Myers, **op. cit.**, chapter on Klee.
51. George Ford, **Double Measure, A Study of the Novels and Stories of D. H. Lawrence**, The Norton Library, New York, 1965.
52. **The Hero with a Thousand Faces**, Bollingen Series, Princeton, 1973, pp. 40—41.
53. Cf. what the poet Theodor Däubler writes in connection with Franz Marc's paintings: "**Every animal is an embodiment of his cosmic rhythm**". Dube, **op. cit.**, p. 132.
54. Cf. Paul Hadermann on Kokoschka's paintings:  
"Between the archetypal incarnations of the subconscious pulsations which people Kokoschka's poems and dramas, on the one hand, and the individual treated 'with the scalpel' in his portraits of the

same period, on the other, the contrast is only superficial. **Being Freud's spiritual brother, Kokoschka crossed the subconscious threshold of a personality in the latter case, and of a culture in the former. From both he tore away the mask, and discovered his own obsessions underneath.**" "Expressionism in Literature and Painting", *op. cit.*, p. 125.

55. "No better reflections exist of the conflicts in Van Gogh's soul than the passionate and visionary landscapes of his last period." Bernard Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Dube writes that Emil Nolde was "transforming nature by infusing it with one's own mind and spirit", and so were Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Franz Marc, Max Pechstein, Otto Mueller, and others.

Dube characterizes Franz Marc's art as an effort to bring "the individual forms of animals and landscape closer to each other in a single flow of rhythm. Sometimes he did it with soft, fluid lines, as in the picture *Roe Deer II* of 1912... and at other times with forms reduced to angular cubes, as in *The Tiger*, also of 1912. But while the individual form is "Cubist", the picture as a whole is not. This interpenetration of subject and surroundings was what Marc meant when he wrote of the mystic-inward construction of a Cubist painting by Picasso, in *Der Blaue Reiter*. He also found something of the sort in the Futurists, in the reproduction of actual movement by the rhythmicization of the picture's elements. The pictures of 1913, such as *Deer in the Forest II*, *Mandrill* and *Animal Fates*, all depict the interpenetration of animal and landscape in the dissecting, overlapping and interlocking of forms that have become transparent. The mystic significance emerges in the completely unified rhythm of the picture plane." *Op. cit.*, pp. 132—135.

56. Cf. Ulrich Weisstein, "Expressionism: Style or *Weltanschauung*«, *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon*, ed. by U. Weisstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 15—29.

Cf. Walter Sokel on Expressionist drama:

"The characters of Expressionist dramas are embodied expression of inner states as well as significant forms of human existence. The hero of the first German Expressionist drama, Reinhard Sorge's *Beggar* has no name because he is identified with his "beggary", his spiritual search for the moorings of his existence; and the plot of the drama is the unrolling of all the spheres of existence in which the spiritual quest, his "beggary", takes place. It is an essential panorama, the totality of an existence displayed in encounters in which choice and decisions have to be made, and the hero changes his name — or rather his title — with the relationships in which he is involved. He is called the Son with his parents, the Poet in the company of the Patron of poetry, and the Youth when shown with the Girl. The plot could be summed up in the question: "What am I, and how am I to find myself?" *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

57. Cf. Franz Marc:

"I make the most outrageous demands on my imagination and leave aside everything else, theory and nature study, as other people understand them. This is the only way I can work, drawing on nothing but my own faculty of imagination, which I feed without

stunt — except in working hours." Dube, *op. cit.*, pp. 126—127.

Cf. Wassily Kandinsky:

"I have never been able to bring myself to use a form which came to me by some logical way, which has not arisen purely within my feelings. I was unable to invent forms, and the sight of such forms always disgusts me. All the forms I ever used came of their own accord, they presented themselves to me already shaped, and all I had to do was to copy them, or else they took shape while I worked, often surprising me. With the years I have only learned how to exercise a certain degree of control over this imaginative power of mine. I have trained myself not simply to let myself go, but to put reins on the power that works within me, and to guide it." Dube, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

58. Cf. Theodor Däubler: "A vision seeks to manifest itself with extreme succinctness in the realm of mannered simplicity: that is Expressionism in every style."

Kasimir Edschmid says that in Expressionist prose "the rhythmic construction of the sentences is different. They serve the same intention, the same spiritual urge which renders only the essential." The sentences "link peak with peak, are telescoped into each other, and have ceased to be connected by the buffers of logical transition or the external plaster of psychology."

Quoted in Ulrich Weisstein, "Expressionism: Style or Weltanschauung", *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Cf. Walter Sokel on the Sturm poets:

"The formal experiments of the Sturm poets transferred the extreme concentration of Wedekind's, Sternheim's, and Kaiser's dialogue style to poetry and developed the possibilities of linguistic concentration and abstraction to startling — and at times highly effective — extremes. By stripping language of its syntactical structure and reducing it to its essential elements — verb and noun — the Sturm Expressionists expressed the 'essence' of their age. They created a spare, telling, and breathless medium shed of the values of Gemüt, warmth, and atmosphere, liberated from all circumlocution, description, and diffuseness, and shorn of any element, such as conjunctions or inflected word endings, that fails to serve directly the purpose of expression.

Their language differs essentially from the rhetorical Expressionism of such poets as Klemm, Otten, Johst, Rubiner, Ehrenstein, and others... Their linguistic experiments and distortions are dictated by the wish to achieve a degree of poetic precision and expressiveness which the existing linguistic structure with its worn and standardized words cannot attain. While the rhetorical Expressionist in his nebulous emotionalism falls to a level of precision far below that of conventional speech, the Sturm poets seek to rise to a level of precision far above that of existing language. By different means, the Sturm poets pursue the same goals as Kafka, Trakl, and Barlach. The goal of these Expressionists is the disruption and dissolution of the habitual, indeed habit-created, and conventional texture of thought and feeling, and the expression of 'translogical' reality which art alone can communicate. They differ in their means. Kafka and Trakl seek to express 'translogical' reality by the 'pictorial idea', by means of visualization, metaphor, image, and gesture. Benn seeks to create it by the 'magic pronunciation'

of certain nouns able to evoke a wealth of buried racial memories. **The Sturm poets seek to express 'translogical' reality by means of linguistic compression ...**" *op. cit.*, pp. 111—112.

59. Cf. Lawrence's essay "The Novel":

"Now in a novel there is always a tom-cat, a black tom-cat that pounces on the white dove of the word, if the dove does not watch it; and there is a banana-skin to trip on; and you know that there is a water-closet on the premises. All these things help to keep the balance."

**Sex, Literature and Censorship**, ed. by Harry T. Moore, London, 1957, p. 67.

Cf. Lawrence's essay "Morality and the Novel":

**"Morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance" ...**  
**"And of all the art forms, the novel most of all demands the trembling and oscillation of the balance."** *Phoenix*, pp. 528—529.

60. Cf. Bernard Myers:

"As to their outlook on the materiality of the physical phenomena, it should be observed that although most of the **Brücke** and many unaffiliated Expressionists considered their art dedicated to the purpose of looking beyond the mere appearance of things, it is the Blue Rider again that carries this attitude to its logical conclusion. Where the **Brücke** and other were definitely tied to subject matter, the Blue Riders, a bridge between the abstract art of France (through Delauney and others), and the inward-searching quality of German art, arrive at a varyingly dematerialized conception of the universe." *Op. cit.*, chapter on **Der Blaue Reiter**, p. 204.

### EKSPRESIONIZAM U "ZALJUBLJENIM ŽENAMA"

Najznačajniji roman D. H. Lawrencea, **Zaljubljene žene**, rezultat autohtonog razvoja snažne umjetničke ličnosti, pokazuje veoma velik stupanj podudarnosti s temeljnim postulatima Ekspresionizma, jednoga od najradikalnijih pravaca evropske Moderne. Osnovna je stilaska značajka tog romana plodotvorno prožimanje mimetičkog principa, bogato razrađenog tijekom dvaju stoljeća romansijerske tradicije, i nemimetičkog i antimimetičkog stilske pristupa modernističke umjetnosti, koja se služi nizom tehnika imaginativne stilizacije (apstrakcije) te stvaralački zakrivljuje zbilju u funkciji izražavanja unutrašnje istine.