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**Maladies of the Modern Soul:  
Kristeva, Lawrence, and the Post-Metaphysical Subject**

**Brian Lee**

**Submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**

**University of Wales Swansea**

**2005**



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## SUMMARY

This thesis situates some letters, novels and essays by D. H. Lawrence within a frame of Julia Kristeva's later-period ideas (from Powers of Horror onwards) about the modern subject experiencing an oedipal crisis of identity, coextensive with loss of faith in cultural metaphysical discourse. In it, I identify a number of key Kristevan themes and perspectives: symbolist aesthetics, adolescent psychology, sacred logic, amorous discourse, and, in the last chapter, a nexus of foreignness, fascism and homosexuality. In doing so, I often take a somewhat oblique approach to Kristeva's "abject" discourse, which then feeds into my readings of Lawrence. For example, I conflate Kristeva's semiological account of the adolescent psyche with Anna Freud's seminal study of the biological adolescent, and view Lawrence accordingly. This interlacing of oedipal and pre-oedipal theory offers an innovative aetiology in regard to Kristeva, while it reflects my emphasis throughout the thesis on the artist's borderline crisis, rather than, as is more typical in Kristevan criticism, affirming the poetic imaginary. Similarly, I conflate Kristeva's account of the psychological equivalence of fascism and modern art with Klaus Theweleit's censoring analysis of fascist texts. This generates an ethical and historical register for Lawrence's para-fascist expressions, within my exploration of the semiotics of the abject text.

Kristeva never mentions Lawrence, while this thesis is unique as a full-length juxtaposition of a major and much-analysed modernist and a crucial postmodern-analytic theorist. My hope is that its operation within the fields of literary studies and linguistic psychoanalysis will stimulate wider academic interest in negotiating the two writers. My Conclusion, which elaborates Kristeva's own discourse as a product of unconscious phantasy, gestures ahead to a proposed comparative study. I end the thesis by speculating about its implication with my own, possibly abject, phantasy, while insisting on the validity of the production.



# DECLARATION AND STATEMENTS

## Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ..... (candidate)

## Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Thanks to Steve Vine for guidance, encouragement and patience.

## ABBREVIATIONS

More extensive details are to be found in the bibliography

### KRISTEVA

(All texts are translations)

AN	"The Adolescent Novel" (1990)
BS	<u>Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia</u> (1989)
DL	<u>Desire in Language</u> (1980)
FB	"Foreign Body': A Conversation with Julia Kristeva and Scott L. Malcolmson" (1993a)
JKI	<u>Julia Kristeva: Interviews</u> (1996a)
KR	<u>The Kristeva Reader</u> (1986)
NM	<u>New Maladies of the Soul</u> (1995)
OMI	"On Melancholic Imagination" (1988)
P	"Postmodernism" (1992a)
PH	<u>Powers of Horror</u> (1982)
PST	<u>Proust and the Sense of Time</u> (1993b)
RPL	<u>Revolution in Poetic Language</u> (1984)
SO	<u>Strangers to Ourselves</u> (1991)
TL	<u>Tales of Love</u> (1987)
TS	<u>Time and Sense</u> (1996b)

### FREUD

(All texts are translations)

PFL, 14	<u>The Penguin Freud Library: Vol. 14: Art and Literature</u> (1990 )
SE (vol. no.)	<u>The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud</u> (1953-74).

### LAWRENCE

<u>Apocalypse</u>	<u>Apocalypse and the Writing on Revelation</u> (1983)
<u>Letters</u> (vol. no.)	<u>The Letters of D. H. Lawrence</u> (1979-93)
<u>Phoenix</u>	<u>Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence</u> (1961)
<u>Phoenix II</u>	<u>Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D. H. Lawrence</u> (1968)
<u>Reflections</u>	<u>Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine, and Other Essays</u> (1988)
<u>Studies</u>	<u>Studies in Classic American Literature</u> (1971)
<u>Symbolic</u>	<u>The Symbolic Meaning</u> (1962)
F&P	<u>Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious</u> (1961)

## INTRODUCTION: THE POST-METAPHYSICAL SUBJECT

1993 saw the publication of the French edition of Julia Kristeva's New Maladies of the Soul (1995). The book features a set of essays reflecting on and illuminating her 1980s and early-1990s work, which, within a matrix of ideas about subjectivity, sexuality, history, religion, language and art, constructs a pathology of the post-metaphysical late-capitalist psyche. Kristeva's subject of modernity is a schizoid being oriented in two, futile and dangerous, directions. S/he is split between, on the one hand, conformity to homogenising consumerist models of satisfaction, and, on the other, a will to fragment established social structures and identify with extreme fundamentalist or totalitarianist movements. These obverse orientations, between cultural identifications lacking in creativity, and identifications which destabilise cultural identity, manifest a radical psychic "malady", in characterising which Kristeva conflates an inability to sublimate in language the somatic body, an inability to invest the world with significant imaginary form, and an inability to represent personal experience. Following the decline of belief in authoritative guides for the imagination across a range of Western philosophical and scientific discourses, but crucially for Kristeva, of faith in Christianity, an essential psychic nexus between symbolic and somatic poles has become much weaker. As communal master-narratives fade, so does the possibility of identifications that might cohere society while providing the individual with a unique and positive value for self-identity. John Lechte glosses Kristeva to observe

...a partial death of the symbolic ... manifest in the cutting of links with others ... Here, modern society would be witness to a wasting away of the imaginary that is equivalent to the death of subjectivity. The real, and the act as such -- the destructive aspect of the death drive -- then emerge in the void ... and society becomes increasingly marked ... by terrorism, crime, suicide, and violence of all kinds. (1990a, 38)

The subject deprived of a metaphysical, and, most importantly, a theological, ordering of individual aspiration (your personal journey from the body to God, your saved soul) is increasingly unable to elaborate desire. Dissociation of conscious representation from the somatic body, whose archaic (primal) space generates unconscious phantasy and affect, means that the body -- and this is to say, the imaginary field -- is insufficiently sublimated in language, and emerges in affective stress disorders chiefly characterised by melancholic nihilism and projected hatred.

Psychoanalysis and art, for Kristeva, form as positive responses to the sick soul of modernity. Freudian theory's unique and authentic understanding of the psychological effects of modern life, she argues, is grounded in Freud's identification of the essence of the psyche as a dialectic between body and language. This relation, whereby instinctual impulses and unconscious processes are sublimated in cultural codes, is the precondition of a healthy society, though a sick psyche may be regenerated in the clinical process of transference, through which the analyst comes symbolically to be represented in the analysand's somatic field of infantile/unconscious phantasy. Kristeva terminologically links the Freudian psyche to the Judeo-Christian "soul" (fr. Gk. "psyche") through the "transubstantiating" nature of the analytic relation between living body and abstract symbol. The discursive evolution of this link, however, is subsumed in the understanding that Freud seminally exposes an ontological truth -- the truth -- of the subject, which has been obliquely (mis)represented and substantially repressed, not just in religious discourse, but also in the dualist (spiritual/worldly, essence/substance, mind/body, etc.) preoccupations of philosophy and science over thousands of years. Thus Kristeva's promotion of Freud's knowledge merges into her own project, which, while ratifying his equivalence of strong metaphysical sublimation with psychic contentment (lack of the former having induced the crisis), at another level affirms subversive modern art as a revelatory deconstructive force opposed to chronically inauthentic metaphysical discourse.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of Kristeva's analysis of society's discontents is the modern artist-writer, whose creative violation of metaphysical codes and linguistic rules expresses alienation and frustration with a Symbolic order that is both repressive and redundant. The artist cathartically exposes the dialectical essence of the psyche in ways not regulated and disguised by codes of transubstantiation -- though this means that his identifications are infused by heterogeneous (unconscious) negativity, and are consequently provisional and insecure in ways redolent of psychosis. The Kristevan artist, in this case, both symptomatises the crisis in identity, and, through his instinctual-imaginative engagement with symbolic modes of representation, alleviates the crisis.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Freud, of course, is often hostile to religious modes of sublimation, and I return to this in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup>"His": I will, throughout this thesis, tend to use masculine pronouns for convenience when speaking of a

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the work of D. H. Lawrence in terms of Kristeva's location of the artist as the paradigmatic subject in crisis. An introduction to two such intensely synthetic writers might take any one of myriad forms. Both Kristeva and Lawrence are famously influenced by a variety of genres, styles, themes and theories, which each writer modulates with enormous energy in a substantial body of texts; both Kristeva and Lawrence have been attractive to academic writers, and the two critical fields are also substantial. It is, however, I think, most important at this stage to be clear about the theoretical ideas I will be deploying in an approach which situates one writer as the analyst and the other as the analysand: broadly speaking, which has the postmodern theorist "read" the modernist artist. And so, in what follows in the Introduction, I will mainly be concerned to elaborate some key elements and influences within Kristeva's highly synthetic theory.

## **I. APPROACHING THE SUBJECT**

This thesis, overall, is a critical application of a postmodern psycho-aesthetic discourse to a modernist artist's work. This means that in subsequent chapters I will not, on the whole, be comparing Lawrence and Kristeva: as, for example, Anne Fernihough does in D. H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology, where the two writers are seen as equivalent advocates of ambivalent process, organicist non-meaning and a millennialist "fractured" subjectivity (cf. 1993, 56). We might, indeed, align Kristeva and Lawrence as post-Romantic, and even post-theological, writers fascinated by dialectical tropes, apocalyptic discourse and sublime imagery (I will return to these themes). I nevertheless suppose that it seems to my reader "natural" to subsume Lawrence's work within Kristevan theory; as natural as it would be to compare and contrast their writings within, say, a post-Romantic dialectical paradigm.<sup>3</sup> To analyse Kristeva's work using terminology derived from Lawrence's metaphysical essays, on the other hand, must appear bizarre. Thinking of Lawrence's dialecticism in terms of the subject-in-process (as we will) seems a legitimate critical act,

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generic subject. This practice echoes a similar tendency in Kristeva's writing, while reflecting the fact that her theory is being elaborated here in relation to a male writer's work.

<sup>3</sup>Colin Clarke, in River of Dissolution, situates Lawrence in the Romantic tradition by virtue of his pervasive tropes on "dying into being" (1969, p. 3). Patricia Waugh sees Kristeva as a typical postmodernist fascinated by Christian-Romantic-Modernist modulations of self-dissolution and epiphanic recovery (cf. Waugh 1992, p. 10).

but to argue that Kristeva's subject-in-process is a "carbonised" formation would surely be unpersuasive. It is significant, in this regard, that Fernihough mainly uses "semiotic" terminology -- multivocality, etc. -- when making assertions about the two writers' theoretical equivalence.

We might assume that an acquaintance with recent critical practice is what naturalises the use of poststructural discourse to understand modernist texts; but is such a reading justifiable? Will my application of one postmodern theory to Lawrence's texts tend to restrict, rather than to proliferate, meanings? Why, given this doubt, did I not initially reject a metadiscursive position, and instead choose to relate the two avant-garde writers within some much more "open" form of the history of ideas? Before addressing these questions, I want to invoke as devil's advocate one commentator's profoundly negative views on postmodern theoretical positions.

John Harwood's Eliot to Derrida: The Poverty of Theory (1995) is a vitriolic attack on critical practice which reifies postmodernism and modernism as distinct and interactive paradigms:

Over the last three decades, so much explanatory and evaluative power has been invested in 'modernism' and 'postmodernism' that, according to many academic critics and theorists, twentieth-century literature amounts to a two-party system in which all serious writing must belong to one or the other category. (Harwood 1995, 13)

Harwood sees a generic postmodern theorist observing modernists, "groping their way through the territory he is now mapping [as] the fog of mystification and logocentrism is finally dispelled..." (ibid., 32, 39). The modernists' opposition to bourgeois discourse is registered by Harwood's notional theorist as a developmental stage, one situated prior to the postmodern epoch of heavily theorised attacks upon Western metaphysical discourse. Derrida, in Of Grammatology, argues that one of his precursors is Ezra Pound, whose "irreducibly graphic poetics was, with that of Mallarmé, the first break in the entrenched Western tradition" (1974, 92). Modernists are, indeed, a kind of avant-garde, an advance party launching the first salvos at metaphysical grand narratives; on the other hand, for Derrida, prior to deconstruction every text is more or less in thrall to logocentric discourse.



In more general, if fanciful, terms, poststructural theorists tend to see the modernist artist as a bright, willing, albeit troubled child, whose political intuitions, intentions and failures can be understood through the mature authority of cultural theory. One often reads that a modernist writer "shows" while he cannot "say" that something is "wrong": Joseph Conrad's novel, Heart of Darkness, is generally perceived as an unwitting, or unconscious, critique of Western imperialism; similarly, Lawrence's attraction to "the primitive", notably in The Plumed Serpent, "depends on a not-quite-realised critique of western individualism" (Torgovnick 1990, 171). Lawrence "fumbles for a formula that might dismantle the racial and sexual polarities of the colonial situation" (Neilson 1997, 322). What Lawrence does not have the theoretical "tools" to say is understood here by post-colonial critics. Modernists half-understand things: they gesture at modes of hegemonic oppression which they cannot properly identify; and this is so not only because they are theoretically ill-equipped, but because they cling to the possibility of the transcendental signified. Lawrence's primitivist utopianism clouds his understanding of primitivism as a function of colonialist appropriation.

For John Harwood, however, poststructural readings of modernist texts, rather than producing fresh insights into enigmatic and confused rhetoric, are determined by a "set of ... ideological assumptions that decide the results of the critical enquiry in advance" (Harwood 1995, 27). The overall result is that the vast spectrum of art produced from, say, 1870 to 1930 -- fifty "isms" were invented between 1886 and 1924 (Nicholls 1995, 76) -- has increasingly been homogenised and reified. Modernism is an agent which (albeit in a fumbled, unrealised way) "does" this and that (hybridises colonial signifiers, transforms sex into discourse, dissolves logocentric hierarchies, represents the unrepresentable, etc.), to illustrate endlessly recycled theoretical assumptions. Poststructural theory, meanwhile, increasingly and aggressively attributes explanatory power to itself, as "[e]ach aspiring master-critic or theorist ... tries to discredit lines of argument and investigation which threaten his authority" (Harwood, *ibid.*). Personality cults develop, as Lacanians and Derrideans (for example) repeatedly apply principles and methodology, and so express their implicit "faith in deified authorities whose Word is inscrutable even to their disciples" (*ibid.*, 195). Each successful "disclosure" in the object text enacts a circular affirmation of the power of theory to unravel the unwitting "problematics" of textuality, while modernism becomes no more than the whetstone upon which to sharpen a variety of

theoretical axes. For Harwood, there is a totalitarian purist impulse in postmodern theory that is clearly expressed in the refusal of Derrida and Paul de Man to acknowledge any other way to understand -- any other way to read -- language except through deconstructive practice (v. ibid., 191).

Harwood's book is an uncompromising argument against complicity with a poststructuralist academic hegemony. And it is, of course, the wholesale displacement by theory (or Theory) of post-Leavisite complicity with Lawrence's prophetic "Truths" that makes the idea of using Lawrentian doctrine to understand Kristeva seem absurd. We are products of the culture we inhabit, of the (academic) discourses we encounter. Nevertheless, and in response to Harwood, I do not suppose that I am a member of the personality cult of Kristeva. I do not "believe" in the power of one psychoanalytic variant discourse to definitively explain Lawrence. My initial aim, in fact, was to produce a comparative study of the two writers based on a number of parallels: for example, their intense idiolectual synthesis of other writers' terminology, their preoccupations with Christianity and maternity, and their production of dualist tropes aimed to make dialectic an ontological first principle. The Conclusion in this thesis, which focuses upon Kristeva herself aspects of her theory used in the previous sections, is largely a critique; but it is also intended as a gesture in the direction of possible future work that might elaborate Kristeva and Lawrence as (if you will) postmodernist and modernist analogues par excellence. By first seeing how Kristeva might understand one sick modernist "child" we gain a singular experience of theoretical (and analytic) practice, which then can serve as a kind of groundwork before the field of engagement is "opened up" to relativisation within the history of ideas. We are, moreover, given the opportunity to judge for ourselves whether a Kristevan critical application must be circular and self-affirming, a sterile exercise in (the analyst's) explanatory power whose conclusions (about her patient) we can predict; or whether, by contrast, a Kristevan Lawrence generates unexpected and persuasive insights.

Kristeva is generally understood to focus largely on modernist texts, where "modernism" is loosely used to embrace a period from the mid-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century, a period in which she identifies the most powerful responses to loss of metaphysical security. She therefore analyses a wide range of writers, from

Fyodor Dostoevsky, Gérard de Nerval and Charles Baudelaire, to the 1950s work of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Samuel Beckett and Marguerite Duras. Later in this Introduction, and after looking at aspects of her theory, we will be able to locate Kristeva's approach to post-metaphysical art within the "adult/child" model, specifically through her own distinction between the analyst's professional status and the "lay" self-analysis of the writer. I begin the following dedicated account by concentrating on how Kristeva positions herself in relation to postmodernism, and specifically how she sees her thought as a mode of deconstruction theory.

## II. KRISTEVA

### 1. Constructing Without Labels.

On the whole, "modernism" and "postmodernism" are not terms that Kristeva actually uses. Indeed, feminist writers and women academics have rarely intervened in the postmodernism/modernism debate. This has led to the suggestion that postmodernism is just another ideological "invention" by men (and to accusations that such a comment is itself aimed at excluding women from the debate) (v. Brooker 1992, 197). When asked in a 1991 interview what she thinks of the "literary movement", postmodernism, Kristeva is scathing:

That is another mediatic notion, putting labels and announcing movements. It is inevitable in a way, you put three or four individuals in a group and you come up with a schema that simplifies the world ... It is ... a label that conceals a variety of experiences that remain irreducible to the term. (JKI, 225)

Postmodernist academic debate (three or four in a group) embodies a "collectivising" urge to form (masculine) meta-discourse that ostensibly opposes, but actually mirrors, late-capitalist mediation, homogenisation (simplification) and suppression of individuality.<sup>4</sup>

At the level of methodology (and not "movement"), for Kristeva, deconstruction of metaphysics and ideology is the crucial postmodern project, though she explicitly rejects the Derridean paradigm as having been "very harmful ... One does not deconstruct before

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<sup>4</sup>"It is not surprising", says Patricia Waugh, "that Postmodernism has been seen by its critics as neo-conservative ... One can see how the erosion of the notion of oppositional critique from a transcendent viewpoint can be used to confirm the freemarket pluralistic "anything goes" of capitalism in its most rapacious modes, or suggest a return to consensus ... which is equally resistant to the idea of political critique or disinterested humanitarian progress" (Waugh 1992, p. 9).

having constructed" (JKI, 56). Destabilising transcendentalist language should, she argues, achieve an effect of "enrichment, not ... confusion" (JKI, 57). Deconstructive practice rightly reverses hierarchical binaries and dissolves logocentric meanings; but the post-metaphysical subject is not "reconstructed", since the social, imaginary, material and affective presence of subjectivity is not registered in abstract writing committed only to showing processes of difference and deferral.

In "A New Type of Intellectual: the Dissident", Kristeva speaks of modern philosophers who "retain[] only the notion of analysis as dissolution, and write[] in a style similar to that of an outmoded avant-garde such as symbolism" (KR, 300). Toril Moi recognises the main focus for Kristeva's hostility here: "If Derrida in the late-1970s writes like Mallarmé in 1890, his work is less subversive than some would have it" (Moi, KR, 17). Mallarmé, like Derrida, works from the premise that "the supreme language is missing ... the miraculous stamp of Truth Herself Incarnate" (Mallarmé 1956, 38); both writers reject subjectivity and are hostile to speech as a cultural form; both recognise the arbitrariness of language, while they restrict meaning to the signifier. The hermetic syntactical opacity in symbolist practice thus has an equivalence in Derrida's wilful obscurity and nihilist approach to meanings. Symbolist texts, however, for Kristeva, are otherwise distinct from the postmodern through their tendency to articulate "that contemporary radical quality of borderline writing which in other civilisations and times had analogies in the mystical tradition" (P, 201). Mallarmé's poetry gestures at an essential authentic experience that his awareness of arbitrary language denies, and, in so doing, generates a new kind of subjective expression (which I will discuss in some detail as we proceed).

Kristeva, in Revolution in Poetic Language, then, is as concerned as Derrida is to displace the philosopher-subject's self-mastery and phenomenology of presence constructed in rigorous taxonomic elaborations. Her "revolution" hinges on the deconstructive principle that oppositions between the signifier and the referential object (signified) cannot be sustained. For Derrida, however, when binary self-presence collapses, there is only the trace of an absence, an empty space. Kristeva, by contrast, embodies this space through the radical binarism in Freudian theory, whose dynamic is the continuous action in language of primary processes. Poetic language, for Kristeva,

represents a (the poet's) body traversed by the drives, and so manifests the infantile-psychoanalytic imaginary in excessive affect, unregulated phantasy and transgressive synthesis, while borderline and dialectical tropes signal the writer's archaic location between the unrecognizable body and symbolic self-expression. Creative writing, for Kristeva, is thus a "writing-as-experience-of-limits" (P, 201), and the experience is that of the subject-in-process.

The most recent points will be developed in the following discussion, when I will look (very selectively) at some of Kristeva's key influences. In the first of two sections, I discuss the impact of Roland Barthes (whose criticism of referentiality precedes Derrida) and Mikhail Bakhtin on the "earlier" Kristeva's model of the revolutionary artist opposed to traditional modes of cultural representation, before observing the significance of Hegelian negativity and the Kantian sublime within the "later" Kristevan paradigm describing a sick artist in crisis.

## **2. Confronting the Doxa**

### **Barthes**

Roland Barthes was a crucial source for, and later was Kristeva's colleague at, the avant-garde journal, Tel Quel. The Tel Quel intellectual group in the late-1960s embarked on a radical project which, as John Lechte says, aimed to "break[] the nexus between words and things which various forms of empiricism seemed determined to maintain at all costs through the workings of representation" (1990b, 18). For Barthes himself, bourgeois culture and western art forms, particularly the classical-realist narrative, present an illusion of verisimilitude through the division of signifier(word) and signified(reality), whose referential relationship disguises the opacity of language, and so preconditions transcendentalist discourse. The illusion of transparent meaning, argues Barthes, is inevitable given that we are constituted in language, and language universally reifies the signified: but one's response is crucial, and bourgeois modes of communication are complicit with the illusion.

Barthes calls the "doxa" (Gk. "opinion") the sum-total of pre-formed discourses structuring capitalist social reality in accordance with "the rules of econo-technical evolution" (DL, 96), and he advocates a literary practice of "jouissance", which exceeds

the "pleasure" of understanding the world objectively within realist narratives, in order to subvert these narratives' confirmation of the doxa's bourgeois-capitalist stereotypes. Barthes' notion of *jouissance* is an essential catalyst in Kristeva's modulation of psychoanalytic *jouissance*, from a proto-oedipal masculine principle to a maternal principle underlying a new kind of subjectivity expressed in subversive literature.<sup>5</sup> Kristeva speaks of,

...the importance of a change of venue that involves thinking about the subject on the basis of literary practice rather than on the basis of neurosis or psychosis. The project outlined by Roland Barthes, while in fact sanctioned by psychoanalysis, nonetheless opens out on a different "subject," which, as we know, psychoanalysis stumbled against while examining the meanderings between "I" and "other." (DL, 97)

In short, Barthes shows Kristeva how to align literary production with a feminine libido and a borderline subject who "joys", not in phallic power, but in syntactical disruption, who writes "between" neurosis (doxaic repression) and pre-oedipal psychosis. This model of interaction between the repressive and the repressed depends on the function of the "ideologeme", to which I will return shortly.

Barthes' theory celebrates the nouveau roman, the new experimental novel which emerged in France in the 1950s, and which, he claims, deconditions the reader accustomed to versions of reality produced in the realist novel. Such deconditioning, which "introduces wandering or fuzziness into language..." (DL, 136), for the Marxist-influenced Tel Quel group in the 1960s and early 1970s, is equivalent to disrupting state-political orthodoxies. And here, in a conceptual frame of confrontation rather than pathology, the linguistic play of postmodern writing feeds into Kristeva's own theory. The novels of Philippe Sollers, another Tel Quel colleague (and Kristeva's husband), combine avant-

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<sup>5</sup>"Jouissance" is a French term denoting excessive or extreme pleasure. Apart from its presence in academic discourse, it is archaic and unused in English. In Totem and Taboo (Standard Ed., XIII) Freud associates *jouissance* with the power and profit of the pre-totemic father, and with the cannibal sons' totemic re-enactments of paternal identification. The oedipal castrated subject, on the other hand, must refuse *jouissance*, which then is channelled through the masculine libido's narcissistic desire for completion. Lacan makes *jouissance* the property of woman, but also the function of the subject's desire for unconditional fulfilment beyond phallic fantasy. *Jouissance* is therefore absent, as is woman herself, within the Symbolic order. French feminist psychoanalysis revises *jouissance*, variously, as a counter-paternal, hysterical and unrepresentable formation (Irigaray), as the distinct property of woman's writing whose plenitudinous oceanic metaphors originate in the mother's voice (Cixous), and as the moment of joy when art produced by either sex goes beyond the meanings of the Symbolic order (Kristeva). See Elizabeth Wright (ed.) (1992), pp. 185-8.

garde theory with literary practice, and are generally thought to have provided her with practical ways in which syntactic order may be breached by "poetic" (fuzzy) language (v. Lechte 1990b, 22, 78).<sup>6</sup> Much later, Kristeva acknowledges the seminal status of Barthes' Writing Degree Zero (1970) when talking about her own first novel, The Samurai (1992b [1990]), with its "discontinuous composition, fragmentation, polyphony, breaks, blank spaces, and the heterogeneity that unites them all" (JKI, 245, 246).<sup>7</sup> Barthes' early influence on Kristeva, however, is matched by, and merges into, another theory identifying the novel's counter-authoritarian potential.

### **Ideologeme, Intertextuality, Bakhtin**

In order to comprehend the influence on Kristeva of the Russian Formalist, Mikhail Bakhtin, we should first examine her notion of the "ideologeme", the specific mode of a text's organisation of meanings -- its "response" -- to social and historical ideological forces.<sup>8</sup> Kristeva characterises the ideologeme within her study of medieval French narratives, whose "doxaic" stereotypical forms -- epic, myth and folktale -- are disrupted when homogeneous symbols are challenged by moments when their typology fails in a revelation of alterity and contradiction: the weak sovereign, bad priest, and so on. Kristeva is working here with a distinction between symbol and sign, whereby the symbol is understood as a function of institutionalised meaning in contiguity with the signifier/signified division (KR, 71), while the sign, whose (linguistic) existence the illusory symbol conceals, is manifest when "reified universals become objects" (DL, 40), when seminally Aristotelian categories such as "heroism", "courage", "nobility", "virtue" (DL, 38), etc., are "penetrated" by apparent "vices" (not heroic, etc.). The result is a revelation of individual difference, the "singularity of each thing" (KR, 68), and of the infinite complexity of signification:

...the sign signifies an infinitisation of discourse. Once the latter is more or less free from its dependence on the "universal" (the concept, the idea in itself), it becomes a potential mutation ... a constant transformation ... The ideologeme of the sign can therefore suggest what is not, but will be, or rather can be ... as a

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<sup>6</sup>In "The Novel as Polylogue", in Desire in Language (1980), pp. 159-209, Kristeva gives a substantial reading of Philippe Sollers' novel, H.

<sup>7</sup>Kristeva reverentially -- "how could I match his talents as a writer?" -- reviews Roland Barthes's theory, in "How Does One Speak to Literature?", in Desire in Language (1980), pp. 92-123.

<sup>8</sup>The ideologeme is elaborated in "From Symbol to Sign" (Kristeva 1986, pp. 62-73), and "The Bounded Text" (Kristeva 1980, pp. 36-63).

transformation produced by the possible combinations within its structure. (KR, 71-2).

The Kristevan artist, accordingly, is engaged in a revolutionary signifying practice aiming to produce moments when the sign's ideologeme transgresses the ideologeme of the symbol with contradiction as a function of alterity and combinative potential. These deviations challenge the symbol's "quantitative limitation" (DL, 39) with ambivalence and lack of closure within an "intertextual" signifying practice. The meaning of "intertextuality" (a term coined by Kristeva) in this case, is not, as is often thought, to be "understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources'" (RPL, 60). Properly understood, intertextual transition between sign systems is an abstract discursive register of particular material transgressions of discourse by the sign's ideologeme.

Kristeva's intertextual model of linguistic production is crucially informed by Mikhail Bakhtin's elaboration of "carnival" as a field of liberating subversive speech which overturns hierarchies and merges the sacred with the profane. Carnavalesque textuality, originally Menippean satire, generates ambivalence through an "insertion of history (society) into text and of this text into history" (KR, 39). As sign systems merge, their abstract symbolism and historical narrative purity are compromised by signification from another space/discourse. The carnivalesque textual scene dethrones the authoritative voices (doxa) of history qua narratives of social identity, not by rational argument and logical negation, but by confronting the law with alterity, at least one other voice, present and unresolved within a dialogical text. The medieval carnival scene is characterised by Bakhtin through its transgression of scholastic discourse, which pre-conditions the emergence of the literary novel, a genre subversive of theology.<sup>9</sup> Kristeva accordingly observes that

...all of the most important polyphonic novels are inheritors of the Menippean, carnivalesque structure: those of Rabelais, Cervantes, Swift, Sade, Balzac, Lautréamont, Dostoevsky, Joyce and Kafka. Its history is the history of the struggle against Christianity and its representation; this means an exploration of language (of sexuality and death), a consecration of ambivalence and "vice". (KR, 50)

The rise of the novel has seen Christianity's "monological" Law increasingly transgressed by variant, and thereby "wrong" modes of representation, thus generating dialogical

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<sup>9</sup>See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, (1987 [1929]). Kristeva presents and develops Bakhtin's central ideas in "Word, Dialogue and Novel", reprinted in *Desire in Language* (1980), pp. 64-91, and in *The Kristeva Reader* (1986), pp. 34-61.



polyphony within a universalising discourse. Again it is worth being clear that Kristeva subsumes direct contradiction or negation of the Law by the real "vice" of alterity, another voice appearing within a homogeneous authoritarian field. How, then, do these transformative moments appear in literary practice?

Dostoevsky is fascinated by the idea of forgiveness, argues Kristeva, because he is fascinated by Christianity. But then forgiveness, in Crime and Punishment, "appears not as an idealizing movement repressing sexual passion, but as its working through" (BS, 199). The murderer, Raskolnikov, seeks and finds forgiveness from a spiritually pure prostitute: Christian iconography is confused in unresolvable signification: prostitutes should always be forgiven, and not become forgivers in scenes thus "consecrating" ambivalence and vice. James Joyce's umbrella term, "contransmagnificandjewbangtentiality", for Kristeva, condenses "trinity" and "transubstantiation", and signals Joyce's "obsession .. with the Eucharist theme" (NM, 174). Symbolic meanings are "perverted" by Joyce in a shattering of narrative (historical) sense through dialogical, nonsensical signification. Aside from the novel, in an essay on Samuel Beckett (DL, 148-58) Kristeva observes the playwright's obsessive fascination with the Nativity, the Passion and the Resurrection: in Waiting for Godot, for instance, the tree on a hill clearly suggests the crucifixion, while the characters around it "wait", are saved, are damned and wait again in an eternal unresolved cycle.<sup>10</sup> Aaron's rod, in the New Testament, symbolises divine birth. In Lawrence's eponymous novel, it is displaced as a flute, which then can be seen to represent a kind of masturbatory, and even homosexual, alienation, while the narrative refuses to resolve its central theme of renewal or rebirth (v. infra, Ch. 5). In these examples, the certainty of symbols embedded in a grand narrative of universal human "progress" gives way to a highly idiosyncratic use of the divine signifier, which is opened up to "profanity" in conflation and contradiction.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ruth Parkin-Gounelas schematically develops Kristeva's approach to the work of Beckett in her essay, "Abjection and the Melancholic Imaginary" (2001).

<sup>11</sup>Paul Poplawski argues that Lawrence "dialogises, subverts, and transposes Christianity at almost every level of his art..." (1993, p. 74). Lawrence's essentially ambivalent preoccupation with Christian discourse has long been a focus for critical study. Kingsley Widmer, in The Art of Perversity, argues that Lawrence "negates and transcends the social", through an aesthetics of daemonic perversity, "rooted in ancient heretical traditions of anti-Christianity" (Widmer 1962, p. 131, 168). Graham Hough characterises Lawrence's quarrel with Christianity through his will to combine the forbidden flesh with transcendent spirituality (1956, pp. 252-3), though Catholicism, for Hough, finds favour with the artist as a continued source of mystery due to its elements of "pagan consciousness" (ibid., p. 253). Harry T. Moore, too, asserts that Lawrence has "hope" for Catholicism, religiously and personally, though not as a discourse for effecting change (1974, p. 346). Writing specifically on Sons and Lovers, Evelyn Hinz (1972, pp. 35 ff.) similarly identifies Lawrence's nostalgia for

I have looked at some early formative influences on Kristeva's theory, and, in so doing, isolated for the sake of clarity the idea of "revolution" against grand narratives, law and order. My account, however, ultimately aims to show that the paradigm of revolution is overlaid by Kristeva's interest in responses to the effective failure of the doxa: the "death of God" -- and death is an experience, not of language, but of a subject. And so I next turn to the specific constitution of the subject-in-process, eventually to show how, in Kristeva's theory, transgressive signs merge into experiences of alienation and excess. I will look at ways in which she synthesises philosophy and psychoanalysis to construct as an ontological principle the process of the writing/speaking subject, while, in parallel, she develops a model of the literary subject as its paradigmatic modern expression. Both her ontology and her ideas about avant-garde practice hinge on G. W. F. Hegel's principle of negativity.

### **3. The Subject-in-Process: Negativity and Rejection**

#### **Negativity**

Modern artists are generally understood as being in "negation" of society: they are seen as politicised and directly opposed to entrenched social structures. In Revolution in Poetic Language, by contrast, Kristeva states that, "our notion of negativity should not be confused with negation in judgement..." (RPL, 117). This assertion parallels Hegel's construction of negativity over-against Immanuel Kant's ideas, set out in the Critique of Pure Reason (1793 [1781]), about logical negations -- paradoxes -- incurred when trying to move dialectically in judgement, from the realm of empirical understanding to the realm of pure reason. For Kant, the term "dialectic" refers to Man's propensity to fall into logical self-contradiction. Hegel, by contrast, uses "dialectic" to refer to a propensity to transcend contradiction.

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Catholic iconography. Peter Balbert, however, observes that while Lawrence echoes Catholic rhetoric through his "high church" incorporation of its opulent language with symbolist modes of transcendence, "Lawrence's ethics, with all their categories of judgement, are vigorously puritanical: no transcendent sex without the death of bad sex, and no creative man until there is transcendent sex." (1989, p. 20). See also Tom Paulin's (1989) essay, "'Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers': The Puritan Imagination", for an account of Lawrence's "perverse" Puritanism, a combination of revolutionary zeal, chiliastic fervour and isolationism, which Paulin distils from the eponymous poem. I am most indebted in this thesis, however, to Virginia Hyde's The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology (1992), which extensively maps Christian iconography and archetypes in Lawrence's poetry, essays and novels.

In Phenomenology of Spirit (1952 [1807]), Hegel argues that subjects exist alienated in a world process of struggles to control objects and enslave others, which, in his rationalist system, is coextensive with humanity's struggle to overcome conceptual negation and attain full knowledge of the world. The Hegelian subject experiences a continuous deferral of self-sufficient consciousness, though the intellectual pursuit of dialectic (philosophy) can overcome alienation by transforming the antithetical relation into an "active" Notion (sic) of consciousness. The struggle between the concept and its negation thus is resolved in "diremption" (Aufhebung), a "sublation" at a higher plane of understanding, while successive applications of dialectic must eventually lay bare all of reality. Substance -- the ancient philosophical term for the reality out of which are formed the accidents, properties, attributes and modes predicated by a fixed judging subject -- is radically redefined by Hegel: "[t]he Substance is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity ... [A] self-restoring sameness, or this reflection of otherness ... is the True" (1952, 10). Quite simply, Hegel is the inventor of the reflexive subject in process, formed, not in permanent oppositionality between inside (self) and outside (object), but in a circular movement through "becoming other" (ibid., 11). The real is rational, "the actuality is self-movement" (ibid., 13), and the subject is a dialectic between same and other. Notional active consciousness of this occurs in diremption, as a unary concept of alterity comprehends Absolute Mind/Spirit, itself the secure space of rational presence to which excess and alterity "return". We might think of the Aufhebung as that "Eureka!" moment when a "pure" understanding is reached, prior to the appearance of the new concept's necessary antithesis, and a resumption of struggle.

Kristeva discards Hegel's transcendentalist element -- or at least his metaphysics, since we will later see how she synthesises Kant's sublime with the Aufhebung -- while Hegel's model is otherwise the prototype for the subject-in-process, whose substance is negativity and whose essence/identity is a "journey" of self-estrangement through material otherness. Most precisely, and ostensibly, Kristeva renominates negativity as "rejection" (RPL, 119), and maps it onto the Freudian pre-linguistic body in primary process.

### **Rejection**

To understand Kristeva's "rejection", one must, as she says, "leave the verbal function and move toward what produces it ... the drives..." (RPL, 122). Like Hegel's negativity,

rejection is a substantial principle, a "mobile law" (RPL, 109), which correlates the subject's imaginary reflexivity with his drives to self-identity through repression of pre-oedipal space. Sadistic anal pleasure is "the last to be repressed and hence the most important" (RPL, 150), and pleasure in the rejection of bodily waste, displaced to maternal negativity, is obverse to an attraction to linguistic production that constitutes the subject's identity. Rejection thus founds, and perpetuates, the subject's imaginary transference to the other of culture and language: "anal rejection or anality ... precedes the establishment of the symbolic and is both its precondition and its repressed element" (RPL, 149). Successfully negotiating the Oedipus complex is a matter of sublimating the drives in/as the Symbolic order's exclusions of the body's alterity through codified laws of identity -- while the energised process of rejection is manifested in the precocious artist's language dominated by primary processes:

Language as symbolic function constitutes itself at the cost of instinctual drive and continuous relations to the mother. On the contrary, the unsettled and questionable subject of poetic language (for whom the word is never uniquely sign) maintains itself ... [by] reactivating this repressed instinctual, maternal element. (DL, 136)

There is a cycle of self-questioning and self-reassertion going on all the time, but only a special kind of writer experiences and reveals its presence: for Hegel, this is the (Hegelian) logician-philosopher, for Kristeva, the poet (understood by the analyst).

As a matter of general ontology, in Kristeva's theory, just as the material operation of language (the sign) underlies the illusory symbol, so the cycle of word and drive underlies the illusory transcendental subject whose monological language codifies the other, most aggressively in religious discourse where sacred logic carefully abominates the feminine and the body (I discuss "the sacred" in detail in Chapter 3). In terms of artistic practice, and again coextensive with the irruption of sign into symbol, the poet reactivates primary processes to disrupt (his own) static "thetic" positionality, and thus shows language mimicking the somatic destruction and renewal of drive charges, while revealing the subject-in-process dissolving and reforming in a jouissance of "unhomed", uncodified signifiers.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>The thetic disposition, for Kristeva, is a component in the mirror stage which preconditions thetical/antithetical judgements made in a symbolic position. Kristeva's notion of the thetic is coextensive with forms of discourse centring on a unified, transcendental subject. Such discourse goes back to Plato's rationalist Republic, which forbids desire, laughter, poetry, and anything else threatening to destabilise the philosopher-subject's dialectical progressions to Truth. Allon White summarises this vector within Kristeva's

Kristeva, then, sees the artist harnessing somatic forces to wage war on the Symbolic: "the term 'drive' denotes waves of attack against stases, which are themselves constituted by the repetition of these charges ... We shall call this process of charges and stases a negativity" (KR, 95). Waves of drive energy irrupt into language and constitute creative writing at points where symbols are transgressed by signs: "[a]t the borderline between a signifier where the subject is lost and a history that imposes its laws ... literature appears..." (DL, 96). The literary artist, however, both deconstructs and reconstructs the subject, as he "weaves into language ... a secret motor, powerful and unknown, repressed and innovative; literature distils its birth and its struggles" (DL, 97). The writer is s/he who makes manifest the "engine" (or "soul") of subjectivity (in-process), through the semiotic disposition which transforms the chora's pulsions of negativity at the border of language with the maternal/body.<sup>13</sup>

"It is in this sense", says John Lechte, "that the subject is ... a reverberation which is connotative of both union with, and separation from, the mother" (1990a, 27). Kristeva asserts that, "[n]o language can sing unless it confronts the phallic mother. Know the mother, first take her place, thoroughly investigate her jouissance, and, without releasing her, go beyond her" (DL, 191). The poet committed to dissolving syntactic structures and semantic boundaries in language dominated by oral and anal drive energy, "sings" the "pleasure of fusion and rejection" (DL, 191). On the other hand, "poetic language would be for its questionable subject-in-process the equivalent of incest" (DL, 136). Desire for the mother, and the mother's desire, Elizabeth Grosz glosses, "is what the symbolic must ...

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thinking, in Chapter 3, in Carnival, Hysteria, and Writing (1993). Kristeva develops the thetic by negotiating the term's significance in the work of Edmund Husserl: see "From One Identity to an Other" (Kristeva 1980, pp. 124-47), and Revolution in Poetic Language, (1984, pp. 32-7).

<sup>13</sup>The "semiotic", as a "mark, trace, index, precursory sign..." (Kristeva 1984, p. 25), refers to the "organisation, or disposition, within the body of instinctual drives ... as they affect language and its practice" (Roudiez, in Kristeva 1980, p. 18). The semiotic, "exists ... always, for the Symbolic would have no materials out of which to be constructed, were it not for the bodily drives rhythmically expressed in the semiotic register -- there is a prospect for heterogeneity and disruption within every subject, male or female, and this prospect can always be glimpsed somewhere, whether in art, in language, in madness or in dreams" (Frosh 1994, p. 133). The "chora" underlies the semiotic disposition as a "receptacle" of inchoate energies, and the ultimate source of negativity: "an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases" (Kristeva 1984, ibid.). Kristeva derives the term "chora", with its shapeless, positionless, universal and maternal significance, from Plato's cosmology in the Timaeus, "where it stands for the mediating instance in which the copies of the eternal model receive their shape" (Rose 1990, pp. 153-4; see also Kristeva 1980, p. 133).

cover over and contain. The symbolic requires that a border separate or protect the subject from this abyss which beckons..." (1990, 89). Since "poetic language breaks the incest taboo, and, as such, verges on psychosis" (Butler 1992, 169), the cycle of rejection that reveals the phallic mother may be as terrifying as it is sublimely polysemic. And then the committed revolutionary artist mutates into the symptomatised post-metaphysical artist.

#### 4. Abjection

In Kristeva's earlier work, including Revolution in Poetic language, avant-garde writing is, as we saw, presented so as to elaborate as a positive activity transgression of the Symbolic's epistemological assumptions. A non-reducible provisional subject appears, within a signifying practice which is a "specific mode of practical knowledge" (DL, 96), while being inaccessible to scientific referential logic and capitalist modes of communication. During the late-1970s, however, there occurs in Kristeva's work a crucial paradigm shift, no doubt largely conditioned by her experience of clinical psychoanalysis, which results in a much greater focus upon psychopathology in modern art.<sup>14</sup> The emphasis here is not on destabilising the rational subject of discourse, and rather on the creative writer's exposure to the maternal field of the death drives, as art manifests the psychic torment of modern humanity.

And so emerge texts such as Powers of Horror (1982 [1980]), Black Sun (1989 [1987]), and Strangers to Ourselves (1991 [1988]), in which Kristeva elaborates the horror of maternal proximity (Powers), mourning and melancholia (Black Sun), and estrangement and alienation (Strangers). In Powers of Horror, uncompleted "abjection" of the primal mother overlays the pleasures of oral and anal jouissance and reconfigures the subversive cycle of "rejection". Tropical waves of attack are displaced by a dangerous journey into the archaic:

In a world in which the Other has collapsed, the aesthetic task--a descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct--amounts to retracing the fragile limits of the speaking being, closest to its dawn, to the bottomless "primacy" constituted by primal repression. Through that experience ... "subject" and "object" push each

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<sup>14</sup>Alice Jardine states that, "[t]he importance of one particular event in Kristeva's personal trajectory during the 1970s cannot be overestimated. She decided to become a psychoanalyst ... [and then] assumed fully her place as a cultural critic, someone attuned to the epistemological and psychic logics underwriting today's more overtly moral or political dilemmas" (1986, p. 111).

other away, confront each other, collapse and start again--inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject. Great modern literature unfolds over this terrain... (PH, 18)

An abyss leads to a terrain, in a typical instance of Kristevan psycho-topographical play. On this alien terrain (and echoing Kristeva's language) the death drives whip like vicious winds, their cathexes not channelled and ordered in systematic object-relations. Abjection, like rejection, is a principle of negativity, but the revelation of abjection is both fearsome and desolate rather than confrontational, suggesting a subterranean landscape of quasi-psychotic features.

### **Phenomena**

In the 1980s, Kristeva tends to concentrate, as I will in this thesis, on affect and phantasy: on tropes, images and themes, rather than deploying her schematic, psycho-semiological formula of phonematic sign particles, syntactic sound patterns, and so on, which is the crucial methodological approach in Revolution in Poetic Language (1974). Kristeva's later work is existentially and phenomenologically oriented through a psycho-topographical discourse evoking a wasteland populated by "foreigners", "strangers", "exiles" and "dejects", by unhomed, lawless and death-driven writing subjects.<sup>15</sup> Suicide and murder are fascinating, corpses, ghosts and doubles proliferate, while skin (the body's border), teeth (oral sadism), blood (broken skin), and waste matter indicate "the frailty of the subject's signifying system" (PH, 35). Such fantasy -- or primal phantasy -- images in literature are, for Kristeva, phobic transformations objectifying a threat of evacuated social identity, and manifesting the writer's precocious borderline position. In Powers of Horror, she sets out a "phenomenology" of abjection, and I will draw on this in Chapter 1, when looking at Lawrence's earliest novels.

### **The Woman-Effect**

Above all, in modern literature, for Kristeva, there is ambivalent transformation of the feminine, representing a "pushing away", a "confronting", and a "collapsing against" the phallic power of the mother. Outbursts of misogyny oscillate with ephemeral "totalisations" when the oceanic mother's voice is heard "singing" in language. Kristeva thus effectively situates in the pre-oedipal imaginary the "woman-effect" so visible in male

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<sup>15</sup>Maud Ellmann (1990) applies Kristevan theory to T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land, which she sees as a paradigmatic abject text.

modernists' writing, where paranoid constructions contrast with gestures toward plenitudinous fusion: "Sade ... his mother's lover ... Artaud, identifying with his 'daughters'; Joyce and his daughter at the end of *Finnegan's Wake*; Céline who takes as pseudonym his grandmother's first name; and innumerable identifications with women..." (DL, 136).<sup>16</sup> In Lawrence's ubiquitous deployment of the woman-effect, female characters and feminine "principles" become an exalted source of spiritual power (in the absence of a sacred father), catalysing affirmative "dissolutions" of the self. But "she" is just as often an object of loathing to be kept at bay in an overt fear of fusion (the death of the subject). This dialectic we can observe particularly well as a linear function in *The Trespasser's* tale of isolated lovers (v. *infra*, Ch. 1). Specific motifs in Lawrence's work, moreover, structurally negotiate between idealisation of, and separation from, woman: for example, the axle(woman)-wheel(man) metaphor, in "Study of Thomas Hardy" (v. *infra*, Ch. 3), and the "star balance" trope in *Women in Love* (v. *infra*, Ch. 4).

### **Ambivalence and Excess**

Abject phobic phenomena and an overarching woman-effect, for Kristeva, are phantasy products whose characteristic ambivalent excess is redolent of psychotic regression. In her essay "The True-Real" (KR, 216-37), Kristeva argues that modernist texts, in refusing/failing to distinguish between signifier and signified, effectively reify the signifier, which reverberates with mystic significance. The importance of French symbolism in Kristeva's theory depends on her psychoanalytic framing of the familiar view that Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarmé, and others, respond to the death of God by arguing for the sacred status of art, and investing faith in the power of words to meaningfully represent estranged identity. Symbolist epiphanies, for Kristeva, evoke the "magical" experience of borderline psychosis, a disturbing and exhilarating accession to the drives, the unnameable Real, represented in metaphorical saturation. These poets, and many modernists after them, turn the crisis in language into a poetics of estrangement which creates a space for renewal of the speaking subject. Their work consequently hovers between ecstatic

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<sup>16</sup>In *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (1985), Alice Jardine argues that as a response to the death of God, Man and History, modernity generates a new imaginary space of the feminine, configured in art through "gynesis". The "woman-effect" (or "woman-in-effect") may be fearsome and monstrous; but woman also functions as a mystified source of power providing hope and solace within an imaginary devoid of metaphysical security. Jardine is predominantly concerned to identify the woman-effect in postmodern French theory, and this position influences my analytic critique of Kristeva in the Conclusion.



illuminations of "connection" between the primal imaginary and reality, and a "decadent" syndrome of abject-melancholic atheism, a dialectic whose importance in Kristeva's aesthetics cannot be overstated: it is coextensive with the revelation of the subject-in-process constantly cycling between death (drives) and linguistic rebirth.

Symbolist modernism, for Kristeva, is a field of "hallucinations" of chronic boundary collapse, and representations of uncompleted abjection and provisional transcendence. In Lawrence's 1911 novel, The White Peacock (which I look at in Chapter 1), the valley of Nethermere is a maternal metaphor suggesting fragmentation, confinement and a threat of engulfment. The valley floor is a permeable skin, a "space" of the body over and through which animals dart, screaming and biting, and committing bloody murder. The central characters aspire to relocate in a more secure and stable environment. On the other hand, the valley is a nurturing originary space for these same characters whose psychic gestation is agreeably inhibited, while the retrospective narrative converts nostalgia into epiphany in moments of reverential natural description, visions of a "holy communion of pure wild things" (Lawrence 1955, 128). Iconic biblical terms thus "return" as incoherent relics recycled in a "consecration of vice" (unresolved metaphorical ambivalence -- snowdrops are like manna, etc.), though the profound nostalgic jouissance of such imagery also suggests an anxious meditation on loss and mourning. There is, in the artist's linguistic elaboration of the maternal, a desire for separation and a refusal to separate, which constitutes the subject-in-process alienated both within language and from language, in mourning both for the father (the metaphysical "home") and the mother (the first "home"). If the generic modernist is a sick child, then the Kristevan deject is a psychic "orphan" (SO, 21).

Literature, then, for Kristeva, is not a cure for the social maladies of the soul. It cannot replace the father principle, and, in fact (to echo again Kristeva's often dramatic language), it worships and trembles before the abyssal plenitude of the phallic mother. Writing rather is compensatory, offering catharsis in estrangement, estrangement as catharsis. The artist's revelation of the drives in/as provisional and open meanings is

always the obverse of his shock at self-dissolution. Like the psychotic borderline patient,<sup>17</sup> he speaks in a sublimely inflected language:

Kristeva argues that that function as social beings [which] we most take for granted -- speech -- bears a radical alterity which returns in literature to mock our certitude and give body to our dreams. Language is the Unknown that lies just beyond our line of vision. It is the new sublime, overpowering and mastering us... (Smith 1996, 85)

Kristeva, indeed, frequently makes use of the term, "sublime", particularly in Powers of Horror. She is, on the other hand, far more explicit about her appropriation of Hegelian negativity than she is about the influence of the Kantian sublime. I want next, therefore, to bring out the significance of the latter trope in abjection theory, and also, through her nexus of the sublime with negativity, to specify Kristeva's distinctively synthetic and deconstructive approach to metaphysical discourse.

### Sublime Negativity

The abject, as Kristeva stresses in Powers of Horror, is in a dialectic with the sublime:

If the abject is already a wellspring of sign for a non-object ... [s]ublimation ... is nothing else than the possibility of naming the pre-nominal, the pre-objectal, which are, in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal. ... I become abject. Through sublimation I keep it under control. The abject is edged with the sublime. It is not the same moment of the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being. (PH, 11)

Kant's aesthetic sublime is triggered by a moment when the subject is unable to "grasp" a perceptual object, in a failure of the imagination confronted by a phenomenon of great magnitude: a mountain range, for example. An awesome and terrifying perception initially voids the self of significance, but this perception is "edged" with an intuition of the noumenal, or supersensible, realm of being where reason is "purified" of contradiction, and the supersensible self is freed from empirical negation.<sup>18</sup> The sublime, as Patricia Waugh

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<sup>17</sup>For a set of accounts of borderline conditions from a clinical perspective, see Michael Stone (ed.), Essential Papers on Borderline Disorders (1986).

<sup>18</sup>Paul Crowther argues that Kant, at times, "creates needless problems for himself" (1993, p. 135) by insisting that the term "sublime" should be reserved only for experiences of the noumenal realm. The term, says Crowther, can and should be applied to the perception of vast phenomena evoking supersensibility, since the uncomprehending perception is inextricable from the intuition of infinity. Indeed, like the abject and the sublime, they can be seen as mutually "edged", in a paradox of merging and oscillation. Paul de Man, in a deconstructive argument, asserts that, "the sublime is shot through with dialectical complication. It is, in some respects, infinitely attractive but, at the same time, thoroughly repellent: it gives a peculiar kind of pleasure ... yet it is also consistently painful ... it know of no limits or borders, yet it has to appear as a totality..." (1992,

says, is an experience both of "glimpsed plenitude and liberation and of a recognition of ... loss and deprivation" (1992, 27). The Kristevan abject is, in Kant's words in the Critique of Judgement, also an "outrage on the imagination" (1952, 245), a loss of (metaphysical) comprehension, a terrifying diminution of the cultural subject, and, in Kristeva's words, "a violent, dark revolt[] of being" (PH, 1). The sublime aspect of abjection, however, appears when the identificatory darkness, the great magnitude of non-meaning, is sublimated in speech/writing. Cultural abjection exposes the metaphysical subject to the non-objectal infinity of the drives, but the (dialectical) subject-in-process is reconstituted in the unlimited potential of the sign: "[t]he time of abjection is double: a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth" (PH, 9).

When Kristeva speaks of the abject/sublime, then, Kantian notions of dualist infinity, radical priority, and the affective field of awe, fear and rapture are being synthesised with/in the Hegelian Aufhebung's disclosure of negativity. The transitionality of Kant's sublime, which mediates between empirical judgement and conceptual categories, merges into Hegel's heterogeneous and mobile interpenetration of self and world (other). In the Hegelian sublation,

...the passive Subject itself perishes; it enters into ... the differentiated content and its movement, instead of remaining inertly over against it ... Conversely, the dispersion of the content is thereby bound together under the self. [S]ince the Predicate is really the Substance, the Subject has passed over into the Predicate, and ... in this way what seems to be the Predicate has become the whole and the independent mass... (Hegel 1952, 37)

Kristeva -- who is sometimes called, with more or less levity, the "Bulgarian Hegelian" -- similarly involves the stable ("passive") symbolic subject in a reflexive dispersion, a mass of infinite differentiation, a "trans-nominal knot" of negativity, while she crucially incorporates the aesthetic sublime's discourse of excessive affect and experiential overload. The result is language in which the concept (theory) is infused with poetic jouissance.

...this polylogical "I" speaks of a before ... before language, before being ... shock, spurt, death; a collision ... heterogeneity of the "representamen," the "other," "language," "I," "speech," ... (DL, 188).

We should, moreover, recall at this point that the Kristevan artist's negative-sublime vision of "intolerable significance" (PH, 11), is paradigmatically a symbolist production, and his sublime/object ambivalence an hallucinatory confusion of affect between ecstasy and horror, a borderline subject's representation of the unrepresentable (position) before language: the "representamen" is the semiotic product.

The synthesis, set out above, of Western epistemological theories subsumed within the "deep-logical" organisation of psychoanalysis, is typical of Kristeva's *modus operandi*. Understanding modern subjectivity in terms of the psychoanalytic relations between conscious and unconscious experience, she argues, produces "another rationality ... that poses many questions to Western epistemology" (JKI, 20). Kristeva's incorporation of Kant and Hegel, in fact, is also a more or less explicit analysis of Kant and Hegel, which undercuts their symbols of presence by disclosing the sign's materiality. At the very moment when Kristeva is bolstering her theory with the philosophers' ideas, a constructive-deconstruction (of Western onto-epistemology) is taking place. The transcendental subject is intertextually destabilised by ambivalence as a "voice" of sameness and difference emerges from another sign system, and the transcendental ego is placed in question by the (Kristevan) discourse which its predicates inform. Leon Roudiez cites Kristeva: "I never intended to follow a correct Marxist line, and I hope I am not correctly following any other line whatsoever" (DL, 1). Kristeva's theoretical influences, Roudiez glosses, are not "applied", but rather -- and inevitably -- "enter into a dialectical relationship" (*ibid.*). The "incorrect" psycho-linguistic subsumption of the sublime with the Aufhebung is, I think, a good example of this.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Kristeva's modifications of Hegel exist within a massive field of the philosopher's influence. M. C. Dillon (1990) shows how Hegel's reflexive subject known to-itself in desire for the other is negotiated in the work of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Lacan. An understanding of Hegel's influence on Lacan, Dillon argues, should have as a premise that, "[o]n the question of desire, Hegel and Freud are the two major modern sources ... [though] Hegel's identification of desire with self-consciousness sets him at odds with Freud because it seems to preclude anything like unconscious desire" (Dillon 1990, p. 36). Lacan, in adapting Freudian narcissism, retains the Hegelian paradigm of desire as a function of self-negation and self-recognition in the other; but Lacanian desire is an unconscious effect of the phallic signifier. As he is by Kristeva, Hegel is "questioned" even as he informs, since the Lacanian illusory phallus denies alterity's "return" to ideal Mind, and makes narcissism (the I-ideal) both necessary and impossible. Kristeva's principle of rejection, as we saw, re-envisions Hegel's negativity as the eternal return of primary processes, but the principle then counters Lacan's blindness to what, for Kristeva, is the authentic source of desire, the permanent bodily "otherness" capable of representation in the semiotic disposition. Kristeva's response to Lacan's ideas, however, is complex, being both derivative and critical. This theoretical relationship is discussed by Elizabeth Grosz, in Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction (1991, pp. 150-67). See also Toril Moi (1995), pp. 97 ff., for an account of Lacan's theory serving to explicate French feminist theory, including that of Kristeva. In Chapter 4

We can and will, as I have suggested, symptomatise Kristeva's fascination with dialectic using her own theory -- and, indeed, her theory of textual production in modernity must surely be capable of inversion, particularly as it emphasises the analyst/reader's counter-transferential relationship with the artistic subject/text:

Analysts try to implement their vision of symptoms and anxieties by relying on their imaginative abilities to identify with their patients, their rhetorical gift of naming what is unnameable, and their theoretician's distance. (JKI, 73)

I will say something about the "distance" between the analyst and analysand in the next, and last, section of theoretical elaboration. Given that I focus in this thesis on Lawrence's prose -- his letters, doctrine, and predominantly his longer fiction -- I think it is appropriate to return here to the topic of novelistic production and discuss why, despite her famous advocacy of (revolution in) "poetic language", Kristeva herself so often chooses to analyse the modern novel rather than "pure" poetry.

## 5. Analysing Literature

### Novel and Poem

Bakhtin's model of the novel, as we saw, crucially informs Kristeva's ideas about transgressive intertextuality, as his notions of polyphony and dialogism are reconceived through the semiotic disposition of the dialectical subject's incestuous return to "zero, the moment of crisis, of emptiness, and then the reconstitution of a new, plural identity" (JKI, 190). This identity, argues Kristeva, is

...capable of manifesting itself as the plurality of characters the author uses; but in more recent writing, in the twentieth-century novel, it may appear as fragments of character, or fragments of ideology, or fragments of representation. (JKI, 190)

But then is not modern poetry also a site of semantic and syntactic fragmentation? Kristeva often puts her ideas more straightforwardly in interviews than she does elsewhere, and next we can see her clearly explaining why the novel, in relation to poetry, is privileged by virtue of narrative:

...one can maintain a distinction between poetic and novelistic experience. For me, this distinction is interesting because it indicates different levels of psychic unity and, in a certain way, some of the writer's possible defences with regard to the

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of this thesis, I compare and contrast Lacanian and Kristevan ideas on the psychology of love.

crises that writing assumes. In the narrative experience the subject has access to more options for working things out with respect to moments of crisis, hallucination, loss, and risk of psychosis. The poetic experience is more openly regressive, if you will: it confronts more directly ... the maternal, the feminine ... and, at the same time, risk and loss of the self. (JKI, 191)

Whereas poetry offers a "temptation to go down as far as possible toward the semiotic ... to the very edge of nonmeaning" (*ibid.*), narrative form, although evidently presenting plenty of opportunities for fragmentation and polyphony, nevertheless "moves us away from the poetic sense of fusion dominated by primary processes": the novelist "distances himself; he places himself in time" (JKI, 193). Kristeva identifies the poet Gérard de Nerval's occasional use of "I", verb and predicate: a narrative "moment" of thetic differentiation and judgement transiently "rescuing" the writer from the threat of fusion.<sup>20</sup>

Here we can think again of Symbolist poetry: "the whole thrust of Mallarmé's poetics is against the recognition later expressed by Bakhtin, that 'The word in speech is half someone else's'" (Nicholls 1995, 38). Mallarmé's language is intended to be self-mirroring, utterly personal, even as authorial intention vanishes in the evocation of a "state of soul" (Mallarmé 1956, 21) within his words. The poet's use of Hegelian metaphysical terms such as the "Notion" and the "Absolute", suggest how close such a poetics -- indeed, all poetry -- is, for Kristeva, to fetishisation of the word in hallucinatory visions transforming primary narcissism. Conversely, we might look ahead to Women in Love (*v. infra*, Ch. 4), a highly indeterminate narrative full of uncertain boundaries between words and characters, and regressive expressions of horror, melancholy and love. Yet Lawrence's novel reconstitutes thetic positionality linearly ("in time") through the central character's idiolectual doctrine of reflexive "flux", which, as a metaphysical elaboration, is in constant play with what the doctrine advocates, moments of sublime, primary narcissistic dissolution: "intolerable accession ... deepest life-force ... ineffable darkness ... ineffable riches" (Lawrence 1995, 314), and so on. The narrative form thus gives Lawrence a sense of psychic unity. He has "options" to "work things out", to justify self-dissolution while, obversely, "rescuing" the discursive and reflexive self from its headlong "dive" into the maternal abyss. The novelist creates characters which represent aspects of himself, puts them in some social framework, "semioticises" the novel's language to produce a

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<sup>20</sup>Kristeva gives a detailed reading of Nerval's 1853 poem, "El Desdichado" ("The Disinherited"), in Black Sun (1989), pp. 139-172.

polyvalent field, and identifies with the characters' attempts to comprehend issues of identification and relationality. For Kristeva, the novel "which incorporates the poetic experience in an intertextual manner, is a tremendous opportunity for the sublimation of our crises and malaises" (JKI, 194).

### **Professional and Lay Analysis**

Kristeva therefore urges psychoanalysts to study modern literature, which is,

...venturing into the darkest regions where fear, anguish and defiance of verbal clarity originate. Never before in the history of humanity has this exploration of the limits of meaning taken place in such an unprotected manner, and by this I mean without ... [metaphysical] justification. (P, 203)

Novels, particularly, through their "prosodic economy, interaction of characters and implicit symbolism, constitute a very faithful semiological representation of the subject's battle with symbolic collapse" (my emphasis, BS, 24). Looking again at the modernist novel, we see that however decentred these texts may be, there is a directly communicated anguish, not present in, say, a Thomas Pynchon novel; there is a profoundly ambivalent debate with Christianity, and a struggle to subjectify in discourse the hallucinated "purity" of oversaturated metaphoricity where self-fulfilment is a hairsbreadth from meaninglessness: "condensation on the brink of aphasia" (TL, 278). Symbolist practice subsumed within a culturally intertextual narrative may even generate a new religious discourse, as Lawrence does in The Plumed Serpent (v. infra, Ch. 5). Although Kristeva sees as delusory attempts to instate and revere the symbol abstracted from an extant cultural frame, modernists, she believes, at least are recognising the cultural crisis as a crisis of the subject's identity, and trying to work things out. Postmodernists, on the other hand, are unwilling to, as it were, deal with it: they access semiotic heterogeneity but "flee from" (P, 201) affect, in a cynical production of always-already deconstructed language that does not acknowledge desire. (Post-)Symbolist texts, seem, for Kristeva, to have a kind of naive integrity, a commitment both to representing and recuperating a psyche whose boundaries have collapsed.

The modernist, in fact, is the analysand par excellence. S/he is withdrawn and isolated, and s/he "talks" in a wild proliferation of borderline symptoms; yet this child-orphan really wants to be "cured", to work through the symptoms and reintegrate the self. While advocating incoherence in the novel, Lawrence says, "[m]e, man alive, I am a

curious assembly of incongruous parts ... In all this change, I maintain a certain integrity. But woe betide me if I try to put my finger on it" (Phoenix, 536-7). There is here an ambivalent attempt to represent nameless fragmentation while asserting the ego's coherence, which is typical of Lawrence; a moment of "defence and consolidation of the self in relation to its experience in crisis" (my emphasis, KI, 194). Lawrence, writing on Sons and Lovers, famously says: "One sheds one's sicknesses in books" (Letters ii, 90); and modernist writing, indeed, for Kristeva, functions as "a kind of continuous lay analysis ... [that] lack[s] the ideational means, the knowledge, the why and how of the psychoanalytic enterprise" (JKI, 194-5). The literary work is,

...not an elaboration in the sense of 'becoming aware' of the inter- and intra-psychic causes of moral suffering; that is where it diverges from the psychoanalytic course, which aims at dissolving this symptom. (BS, 24)

The modernist artist, "closer to catharsis than elaboration" (ibid.), is not to be confused with the postmodernist theorist/analyst, the one supposed to know.

Here we have reached the last stage in a discussion intended to put in place the groundwork of my complicity with Kristeva's meta-discursive status in relation to Lawrence. I want next to say something about the critical field in which this thesis operates, and about my status as writer-analyst, before providing a summary of subsequent sections.

### **III. POSITIONS**

#### **1. Criticism**

Kristeva studies James Joyce in her later work, and she often refers to Virginia Woolf. Not once, however, to my knowledge, does Kristeva even mention Lawrence. This fact, given the importance of modernist writing in her work, formed an initial impetus for this full-length application, while the absence of any such application in Lawrentian criticism, no doubt an aporia related to Kristeva's silence, reinforced the present writer's sense of critical opportunity. Critical material juxtaposing Lawrence and Kristeva does exist in a very few dedicated essays, and connections are occasionally made in books on Lawrence. I have already mentioned Anne Fernihough's correlation of the two writers through their aesthetics of "fractured" subjectivity. Paul Poplawski, discussing Lawrence's "pollyanalytic" theories, similarly sees him,



...mov[ing] towards a conception of the unconscious that bears a strong resemblance ... to Kristeva's version of pre-Oedipal consciousness, the "Semiotic" ... For it is primarily in the flowing rhythms, fantasy play, and slippage of his supremely exploratory language that Lawrence seeks to give liminal expression to the plenitude of the unnameable "real" and to the polymorphous sexuality of the preverbal "imaginary." (1993, 21, 172 n.)

What critical juxtapositions of Lawrence and Kristeva exist, in fact, tend similarly to align the two writers on the basis of a shared psycho-textual, aestheticised vision of "semiotic" structures, and do not use Kristeva's ideas to identify an existential pathology in Lawrence's work. This tendency is consonant with an understanding of the "earlier" Kristevan theory of poetic language. On the other hand I acknowledge, where it is appropriate in this thesis, critical texts which apply abjection theory to Lawrence: for example, in Chapter 5, I discuss Scott Brewster's essay, "Jumping Continents: Abjection, Kangaroo, and the Celtic Uncanny" (1999).<sup>21</sup>

In short, I would crucially justify this thesis on the grounds that a major modernist and a paradigmatic poststructuralist are being seminally negotiated at length, while, as I have suggested, one might see this applicatory work opening up a space for a comprehensive comparative account of the two writers. But then what space is occupied by the "I" who writes here to apply Kristevan theory?

## 2. The Analytic Subject

A crucial element in the psychoanalytic process is the analyst's counter-transference, her/his unconscious responses to the analysand's transference phantasy. Originally thought of by Freud as a problem, the analyst's phantasmatic engagement with the analytic

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<sup>21</sup>In considering Kristevan criticism, it is worth noting the presence of Bakhtinian approaches to Lawrence, given that Kristeva's concepts of intertextuality and the subject-in-process are, as she says, "deduce[d] from his work" (1996a, p. 189). David Lodge's seminal essay, "Lawrence, Dostoevsky, Bakhtin" (1990), applies the Formalist's typological categories -- direct speech, represented speech, doubly-voiced speech, and so on -- to Women in Love. Avrom Fleishman recognises the seminal importance of Lodge's essay, but objects to it on two related counts: first, a structuralist analysis of the plural forms of the text, which Fleishman sees in most Bakhtinian applications to Lawrence's work, plays down the significance of the dialogical text as a critique of monological language by a subversive speaking subject: the openness of the Lawrentian text is a politicised response to realist language. Secondly, Bakhtin's theory is used to rehabilitate and normalise Lawrence's often "unpleasant" ideas within an "ecumenical brand of critical pluralism" which reflects the critics' views (Fleishman 1990, p. 109). Lawrence's status as a "grand master of the oral, dialectical, parodic, and polyglot manner" (1985, p. 169), argues Fleishman, should not exclude an understanding of him as a "dinosaur of modernist excess" (1990, p. 110), whose Dionysian "voices" often are the vehicle for totalitarian power fantasies.

material has increasingly been seen as a kind of emotional evidence indicating a correct interpretation (cf. Rycroft 1995, 29). Accordingly, a strong vision of counter-transferential authenticity informs Kristevan theory, which emphasises the empathetic role of the clinical analyst and, by extension, the analytically oriented literary theorist and critic.<sup>22</sup> The interpreter of literary texts, for Kristeva -- and including Kristeva -- responds at a precocious, as well as an elaborative, level to the analysed writer's complexes and resistances, his nostalgia, fear, loathing and ecstasy, as an epochal function of shared metaphysical loss, destabilised subjectivity and textual regeneration. Thus her psycho-aesthetic discourse is famously laced with "poetic" language and personalised accounts of pleasure and suffering. The clinical analysis, in this case, is not to be thought of as a unique relationship, and is rather an arena in which is exposed and examined unconscious negativity present within all intertextual process, all reading and writing.

Since this thesis predominantly is complicit with Kristevan theory, it must be assumed to contain, purely as an intertextual production, its writer's phantasmatic and affective engagement with Lawrence -- and, perhaps, also with Kristeva. Since I am, moreover, involved in a practice of textual psychoanalysis, should I then "expose", or at least speculate upon, the nature of my own emotional responses as I proceed? Eynel Wardi includes this level of self-awareness in Once Below a Time (2000), a predominantly Kristevan study of some poems by Dylan Thomas. Wardi sees her analytic methodology coinciding with modern intersubjective theory:

...I believe that the subject I have written about in my reading of Dylan Thomas is both Thomas and myself in a particular subjective encounter. The principal subject matter of this book is, therefore, a dialogue between two subjectivities, which have evolved in the process of its articulation. (Wardi 2000, 5-6)

Wardi thus elaborates Thomas's fascination with rebirth and renewal during an "exhaustive chewing over of a small number of texts which engaged me in an intense identificatory--and indeed subjectifying--com-union with ... their deepest subjective meaning" (ibid., 6, 27). Wardi extensively deploys a post-Freudian vocabulary of psychosis, but her concern is with creative processes of reading/writing, and their specific intertextual formations:

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<sup>22</sup>See Tales of Love (1987), pp. 13-17, and "Counter-transference: A Revived Hysteria", in New Maladies of the Soul, (1996), pp. 64-86.

..[T]he poetics I propose is informed by generalising theories, [but] it is not meant to be comprehensive, even though my theoretical discourse may make it seem that way ... [t]he subjectivist poetics elaborated in this book is a poetics that emerges from a reading and writing process--a particular event... (*ibid.*, 33)

The foregrounded markers of Wardi's idiolectual composite subject stylistically echo Kristeva's self-interrogating displays of intersubjectivity:

...shall I "pardon" him again, as he "presume[s]"? No, I must first re-submerge him (or myself?) in his mock-porridge of fishy excuses for "haranguing" me with all his "nuisance," for by his perverse logic, there is no redemption without abjection, no birth without a murder, no affirmation without radical negation. So I should say the hell with him, or rather: to hell with him, for how can I do otherwise, but by subjectifying myself, once again ... Let me repeat, then, one more time, alas! [*sic*], the motions of that same old ambivalence . . . (*ibid.*, 172-3)

Kristeva's language of literary "counter-transference" informs Wardi's subject of jouissance. Meanwhile, Wardi's emphasis, following Kristeva, on the uniqueness of transactions in the poetic imaginary results in an assumption that her own "psychoanalytic fantasy of origins" (*ibid.*, 6) is being projected. This assumption can be associated with Kristevan passages in which psychoanalysis itself is an "impossible" metadiscourse, "I admit, an artifice..." (NM, 44), whose (postmodern-aesthetic) authenticity inheres in its registration of voids in meaning and imaginary re-creations of the subject. It is curious, then, that Wardi seems to overlook the implication of her "evolving" subjectivity, not just with Thomas, but with Kristeva too. The fact that Wardi does not even suppose that she could subjectify her dialogue with the Kristevan text might suggest repression of phantasmatic and affective tensions, which, in turn, opens a space for writing about this unacknowledged arc of negativity in Once Below a Time.

My intention here, however, is primarily to suggest that Wardi is complicit with Kristevan theory, that she applies this theory to Thomas in recognisable thematic and stylistic ways, and then to distinguish this position from my own perspective. In elaborating Kristevan theory and applying it to Lawrence, I make no claim to represent my phantasmatic engagement with either writer. My analytic meta-position, of course, must express "counter-transferential" desire. I simply choose not to register this desire (or what I can perceive of it) explicitly, to "actualise" my unconscious processes in relation to the textual other. This elision can be justified by setting Wardi's affirming poetics, which she hopes "will contribute to a renewed valorisation of Thomas's work" (2000, 32), against my pathologising approach to Lawrence. Whereas Wardi is concerned to show how a

particular transaction with poetic language generates a particular dialogical subject -- though her Kristevan affiliation, perhaps, makes her text more generalising than she admits -- I, by contrast, set out to give a generalist and, indeed, clinical account of the artist qua epochal subject in crisis, and make any aesthetic perspective that emerges a function of this disclosure. Neither Wardi's affirming particularity, nor my own universalist pathology, is an approach running counter to the Kristevan "spirit". I work, if you will, at a level in the analysis where material is being elaborated and co-ordinated, and I thus assume a significant "distance" from the artist/analysand which supports, rather than "unsettles", the framing discourse of my Kristevan surrogacy. Both my elaboration of Kristeva's theory and my readings of Lawrence are oriented towards Kristeva's more predicative, even metaphysical, passages constituting the subject-in-process as a "mode of practical knowledge" about humanity's psychic discontents, rather than towards moments when she speaks as a self-consciously aestheticised subject of textual jouissance. Having said all this, in the Conclusion, and after analysing the Kristevan symptom, I will (and I speak now in prolepsis) offer a brief account of ways in which unconscious impulses directed at both writers overdetermined my choice of theoretical positions. Here, finally, and as indicated above, we turn to a summary of this thesis.

#### **IV. THEMATISING**

Each of the five chapters below utilises a "theme" or themes derived from Kristeva's ideas about aesthetic expression in a post-metaphysical crisis, and each thematic elaboration generates a close reading of one or more of Lawrence's texts. These texts are most frequently a novel or novels, while his doctrinal essays are crucial in two chapters, and citations from the letters feature throughout. Sometimes a theme is elaborated in line with its presentation in a single Kristevan text: for example, in Chapter 3, my discussion of sacred logic in Lawrence's "Study of Thomas Hardy" pervasively draws on Powers of Horror. In other places there is a synthetic construction, as when two or more "strong" Kristevan theoretical elements are correlated in a way that is not immediately evident in Kristeva's work. In Chapter 1, for instance, I link abjection with ideas about melancholia set out in Black Sun (1989), and accordingly analyse French symbolism (and, later, Lawrence's symbolist novel, The Trespasser), thus shedding new light (or darkness) on writing which Kristeva principally explores, and largely affirms, in Revolution in Poetic Language. As well as occasionally combining Kristeva's theoretical provinces, or internal

paradigms, I sometimes find it fruitful to link one of these with another, related, approach: for example, in Chapter 5, when exploring Lawrence's totalitarian impulses, I incorporate Klaus Theweleit's well-known psychoanalytic study of fascist writing. On the whole, the chapters in this thesis are intended to build up a personal, sometimes atypical, yet coherent, picture of Kristeva's psychoanalytic project, while presenting Lawrence's famous creative energy and innovative strategies in terms of a paradoxical struggle, both to represent and transcend psychic regression, in writing which is both traumatised and cathartic.

### Summary

In Chapter 1, I elaborate Kristeva's phantasmatic "phenomenology" of abjection centring on borderline metaphors, somatic images, and the artist's preoccupation with paternal weakness and maternal domination. After applying this perspective to some of Lawrence's early letters, I merge the abject hermeneutics of the "pheno-text" with Kristeva's phenomenology of mourning and melancholia, which centres on ambivalent reification of lost meaning in a non-object, the maternal "Thing". I move on to situate Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock, in this combined pathological field, and so identify a thoroughly precocious, borderline-melancholic production. In the latter half of the chapter, I approach Lawrence's symbolist novel, The Trespasser, by looking at the literary-historical division of late nineteenth-century French poetry into "Symbolism" and "Decadence", and configuring the latter to conform with Kristeva's theory of melancholic sublimation. At the same time, I give an account of Kristeva's nexus of subjectivity and Symbolism in a context of the avant-garde's substitution of allegorical figuration by metaphorical patterns in which a transcendent subject-in-process is refied. My reading of The Trespasser, then, explores essential Kristevan ideas about post-metaphysical abjection and melancholia, while characterising in some detail textual processes operating within a semiotic signifying practice.

The theme in Chapter 2 is derived from Kristeva's essay, "The Adolescent Novel", though in developing her essential nexus of subjectivity and intertextuality in a context of the adolescent psychic organisation, I primarily focus here on Lawrence's doctrine. I thereto elaborate his rejection of the super-ego's authority, and consequent appropriation of metaphysical discourse in ambivalent screening and filtering processes, registering both

Symbolic and semiotic aspects of language. In accordance with my emphasis on pathology in this thesis, I conflate Kristeva's psycho-semiological construction of the adolescent writer with Anna Freud's account of neurotic symptoms observable in the biological adolescent. Through this theoretical nexus, I am, on the one hand, able to construct a clinical picture of a socially disordered borderline personality, one characterised by whimsical passion, casual betrayal, narcissistic manipulation and conflictual acting out. On the other hand, Anna Freud's model of adolescence hinges on dissociated "as-if" identifications with intellectual discourse, and it is through this trope that I refract Kristeva's novel-based account of the adolescent economy in order to focus on Lawrence's highly synthetic metaphysics, or "pollyanalytics". My essential purpose, in this chapter, is to observe a psychotic motility in Lawrence's expropriation and rearticulation of theoretical terms within self-consciously "intellectual" idiolects, whose predications he avows with a "fickle" transient intensity. These theoretical, broadly ontological, productions articulate at the level of discourse Lawrence's precocious permutation of signifiers, in textuality always in-process of re/defining the self and reality.

In Chapter 2, I am chiefly concerned to show Lawrence's pollyanalytics as a psychotically unstable field of condensation and displacement. Chapter 3, by contrast, while continuing to focus on Lawrence's doctrine, is reorientated in relation to his ambivalence between Symbolic and semiotic aspects of language. My emphasis here is not on suspension of the paternal function, and heterogeneity in Lawrence's Symbolic mimicry, but rather on his deep-logical alignment with the Symbolic's regulation of the abject. Having, in the previous section, looked at shifting tropes within and across several instances of Lawrence's doctrine, I concentrate here on one -- his first -- substantial essay, "Study of Thomas Hardy", which I characterise as the post-theological artist's "as-if" Bible, and compare with the biblical Book of Leviticus. I thereto apply Kristeva's hermeneutic disclosure of the Book's repressive "sacred logic", and so identify what has not been seen before in Lawrence's essay, and, I believe, anywhere else in his work: a staged movement from, as Kristeva has it, "skin to food, sex, and moral codes": a phantasy journey from materiality to abstract symbolic order. Like Leviticus, the "Study" gradually codifies a transcendental judging subject -- on the other hand, unlike in Leviticus, this movement is counterpoised against an aesthetic-subversive argument for collapsed subjectivity and excessive meaning. I therefore combine my elaboration of sacred logic with a register of

Kristeva's Bakhtinian influence in ideas about polylogical textuality, and thus identify "voices" in Lawrence's "bi-logical" text, those of a codifying "scribe", and a rhetorical "poet" promoting polysemic liberation. These voices, in accordance with the thetic/semiotic rotation of the subject-in-process, I see as inextricable in the "Study"'s production of meanings. A key aim of this chapter, then, is to identify Lawrence's symbolist rhetoric as an ideological production by showing the syntagmatic evidence of its structural dependence upon the sacred logic of the differential (abject) sign. Nevertheless, in registering the text's inconsistent location of pure/impure terms, and in identifying as chimerical the final "Symbolic" stage in its codifying movement, I do not obscure my broader perspective in this thesis, which situates the "Study" as one abject idiolect within Lawrence's ongoing negotiations of tropological variation and subjectifying ontology.

In Chapter 4, the overarching theme is the borderline condition of being in love. Having, in earlier sections, elaborated and applied Kristevan principles set out in Revolution in Poetic Language, Powers of Horror, Black Sun and New Maladies of the Soul, I now take as my main theoretical text, Tales of Love, focusing particularly on a chapter in which Kristeva negotiates with Freud, Klein, Lacan and Winnicott to produce a primordial identification which she calls the Imaginary Father. The "object" of this identification is an archaic transition from the primal dyad to the ego ideal, and it is, for Kristeva, "addressed" in the sublimity of saturated metaphoricity, coextensive with an illusion of boundary breakdown between signifier and signified, itself coextensive with the "madness" of love. I thus continue to elaborate and apply ways in which Kristeva centralises the symbolist metaphor within her ontology of the aestheticised subject: (following the contexts of patterning and illusion responding to melancholic inhibition [Chapter 1], of intertextual provisional superimposition within Lawrence's doctrine [Chapter 2], and of oedipal orientation narrating the metaphor's provisionality [Chapter 3]). Here, I discuss Kristeva's privileging of the metaphor through her rejection of Lacanian desire as the paradigm of human relationality, and through the positive influence upon her of Winnicott's ideas about transitional object-relations, creative illusion and maternal compliance. I emerge from this account having established a dichotomy between Kristeva and Lacan over the status of gender love as a function of relational phantasy. I accordingly identify in Women in Love a "moral compass" registered through two narrative vectors that echo (or modernistically prefigure) Kristeva's theoretical hostility to Lacan. On the one

hand, a "love story" functions to affirm an amorous discourse centred on a subjectifying trope that addresses, or reactivates, primal phantasies of transition. This vector features a male character associated with cultural alienation, empathetic feminine connection, and psychic renewal. Meanwhile a parallel love story, or amorous discourse, is constituted to represent lack and deferral. This "phallic" vector features a character associated with cultural repression, misogynistic violence, and psychic disintegration. Lawrence's novel, then, I will see constituted across onto-relational paradigms of metaphorical plenitude and metonymic desire. I counterpoint this Kristevan negotiation of a well-known dichotomy in the text, however, when continuing to recognise that codified oppositions in Lawrence are semantically adrift in polysemy merging and reconstituting terms of identity.

In Chapter 5, I negotiate three themes: fascism, homosexuality, and Kristeva's construction, in Strangers to Ourselves, of the "foreigner" double-registered in geographical relocation and subjective "exile" from both metaphysical and maternal "homes". The Lawrence texts I primarily focus on are Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent, whose narratives of exile encompass a production of homosocial, authoritarian discourse. One of my aims is to discount common perceptions of Lawrence as being "not fascist" because of this or that reason (too individualist, too complex, too inconsistent, says he doesn't like fascism, and so on), and rather to situate fascism in a pre-oedipal frame and read the "leadership" novels in this light. To this purpose, I augment my account of Kristeva's ideas about fascism and art with Klaus Theweleit's classic two-volume analysis of the fascist psyche, Male Fantasies (1987, 1989). Theweleit argues that historical fascism is conditioned by national/paternal alienation as an elaboration of regressive infantile narcissism, whose crucial mechanism harnesses the subversive status of homosexual desire. Similarly, Kristeva's alignment of fascism and post-metaphysical art through an epochal loss of heimlich identity involves mutual opposition to the paternal function, and convergence in the phantasy field of Freud's pre-totemic horde, linked, as in Theweleit's approach, to the subversive potential of homosexual discourse. When I come to Lawrence's novels, the combination of Theweleit and Kristeva generates a new and distinct approach. I treat the three narratives, to some extent, as a single project wherein counter-cultural representations of homeland exile and "flirtations" with homosexual imagery merge into filiative-horde power structures. Horde phantasy in Lawrence's novels, as in fascist discourse, centres on a leader who is not the absent "father", and rather the



ideal ego replicated as a "homosexualised" partner/brother, who reconstitutes the foreigner in identification with potentially murderous "sons". In tracing the development of Lawrence's masculinist "totalitarian" vision, I will, however, as always, acknowledge plural and polysemic elements in his narratives: notably a strong vein of characterological ambivalence towards the (fascist) metadiscourse under construction, and also ways in which his realist (geographical) staging of self-dislocation enables Lawrence to explore the uncanniness of the English language when it is intertextually "abroad".

The Conclusion, "The Analyst's Symptom", has two sections. In the first section, I situate Kristeva herself as an "abject subject", and, after negotiating the paradox raised by such a proceeding, elaborate her discourse as an unconscious expression of the modern crisis of identity. The resulting analysis recapitulates themes and perspectives set out in the five chapters in this thesis. My theoretical reversion has two aims: first, to follow the implications of Kristeva's theory of epochal precocity to its logical outcome in her own psychopathology; secondly, to gesture at a projected comparative study of Lawrence and Kristeva. In the second section in the Conclusion, I complete my acknowledgement of universal abjection by analysing myself. Specifically, I see my implicit -- and sometimes explicit -- tendency in this thesis to censure Lawrence, bound up with my emphasis on his pathology, as hostile projection counterpoised against a filial phantasy of Kristevan omniscience. While again recapitulating thematic structures used in the thesis, I trace its writing subject's (my) working through of infantile paranoia and idealisation to a provisional reality.

**ABJECT PHOBIA AND MELANCHOLY SYMBOLISM:  
EARLY LETTERS, THE WHITE PEACOCK, THE TRESPASSER**

Kristeva describes the first chapter in Powers of Horror, as a "preliminary survey of abjection, phenomenological on the whole" (PH, 31). This "phenomenology" refers to what the generic artist "sees" in his mind's eye: how he objectifies pathological affect -- fear, depression, ecstasy, hatred, etc. -- consonant with primal modes of fantasy, or "phantasy", in which parental imagos represent loss of the paternal principle and fixation on the phallic mother. Kristeva observes Dostoevsky's "world of fathers, who are either repudiated, bogus, or dead, where matriarchs lusting for power hold sway" (PH, 20); Proust is fascinated by love and forbidden (incestuous) sexuality, while Joyce discovers "the feminine body, the maternal body, in its most un-signifiable, un-symbolizable aspect" (*ibid.*). Such manifestations, for Kristeva, combine with somatised borderline metaphors -- teeth, bowels, skin, waste matter -- to sublimate the writer's Symbolic identity crisis. The first chapter in this thesis, in fact, has a comparable function to Kristeva's first section in Powers, inasmuch as I identify phobic transformations which are elaborated in later sections. I will not, however, be confined here to the topical matter in Kristeva's "Approaching Abjection" chapter. My abject "phenomenology" intersects with an account of Kristeva's model of melancholia, eventually to characterise as pathological processes of subjective integration within Symbolist poetics. Following a wide-ranging and theoretically abstract Introduction, this chapter aims to establish elements of Kristevan psycho-semiotics which will, as the thesis proceeds, be further mapped out and modulated in relation to Lawrence's work. The present chapter features close readings of some of Lawrence's early letters, and of his first published novels, The White Peacock, and The Trespasser.

## **I. EARLY LETTERS**

### **Death of God**

This thesis is dedicated to understanding in deep-psychological terms Lawrence's experience of metaphysical loss, and particularly his loss of religious faith. It is appropriate, therefore, to begin with two 1907 letters in which the 22-year-old artist announces to a Congregationalist minister his personal response to God's death. Lawrence

says that he has been reading Darwin and Spencer, alongside a number of unsatisfactory theological treatises, which "cannot sustain a rationalist attitude in a nebulous atmosphere of religious yearning" (*Letters* i, 37). He requests closure: "[i]t is essential that we should understand the precise position of the Church of today" (*ibid.*). In the second letter, two months later, appeal has become assertion: "I have now only to state my position with regard to Christianity" (*ibid.*, 40). He resents its demands for subjection to universal laws which promise perfection to all but leave the mass of humanity in poverty and degradation: "[i]t cannot be ... that a pitiful, omnipotent Christ died nineteen hundred years ago to save these people from this and yet they are here" (*ibid.*). God specifically has betrayed areas of Nottingham and London:

Women, with child -- so many are in that condition in the slums -- bruised, drunk, with breasts half bare ... Oh, how is it possible that a God who speaks to all hearts can let Belgravia go laughing to a vicious luxury, and Whitechapel cursing to a filthy debauchery -- such suffering, such dreadful suffering ... why not touch these people at once, and save this enormity, this horror? ... Men -- some -- seem to be born and ruthlessly destroyed; the bacteria are created and nurtured on Man, to his horrible suffering ... Such design there may be for the race -- but for the individual, the often wretched individual? (*ibid.*, 40-1)

Lawrence goes on in his letter to reject categorically the divinity of Jesus and the "God-idea" (*ibid.*, 41). We, however, can observe the above citation's "drive basis" inasmuch as an impulse to reject is overdetermined by pathological rejection (abjection), a precocious borderline condition.

### **Horror**

An hysterical intensity is generated in Lawrence's description of slum people. The Godless misery of Nottingham and Whitechapel is inflated to the social corpus of "Man", who lacks a teleological "design", and is infected by "bacteria", while Man's suffering is narcissistically compressed into the abject wretchedness of the "individual". Misogyny, meanwhile, characterises the slum women, who are presented in terms of excessive mothering ("with child -- so many"), and associated with filthy "untouchable" (by God) bodies, bruised skin and debauched behaviour. At the heart of the city is decay and ruination, as Lawrence's ostensible empathy for the poor veils a horror of unclean and improper somatism and maternal generative powers. Meanwhile, he establishes a misanthropic distance from an entirely decadent and grotesque humanity, either "laughing" or "cursing".

### Lonely Joking

The abject writer, Kristeva observes, is himself "not without laughter--since laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection" (PH, 8). Semiotised writing produces a carnival of polyphony, a "gushing forth of the unconscious ... [of] repressed, suppressed pleasure..." (PH, 206): the Symbolic is "overwhelmed" by allusion, ambivalence, analogy, and non-exclusive oppositions -- all of which characterise the joke. Kristeva's revolutionary artist is a kind of irreverent jester whose mocking jouissance "laughs" at God and systemic meanings. Abject laughter, by contrast, is "neither jovial, nor trustful ... It is bare, anguished, and as fascinated as it is frightened. A laughing apocalypse is an apocalypse without god" (PH, 206). Rather than a jubilant affirmation of the mother-tongue (consonant with Kristeva's early writings), such outbursts are savage, bitter, ironical, the (textual sur)face contorted by a snarl of abhorrence or a moue of self-pity. Here is Lawrence reflecting on his post-Progressive species:

...the great procession is marching ... [but] the creatures in the menagerie are comical ... certain of the wonder of this eternal progression ... the animals snap and rattle by the way ... I laugh when I see their grimaces ... But the folks who see the funny side of things suffer horribly at times from loneliness. It is a sad thing to be the only spectator at a farce. (*Letters* i, 57)

The humour is a self-consciously isolated response to collapsed social teleology. It is, in Kristeva's terms, the "fragile obverse of a radical nihilism" (PH, 206), as the writer takes "a double stance between disgust and laughter" (*ibid.*). Is this, Kristeva asks rhetorically, perhaps seeming to look over Lawrence's shoulder, "the horror of a sickening human condition, or is it an extravagant farce...?" (*ibid.*).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>To identify a laughing Lawrence is to register, beyond the psycho-semiological materiality of unconscious forces, a stylistic vein of comic irony which subverts the "prophet's" intensity: the undercutting of Rupert Birkin's pomposity in *Women in Love* is a good example (see Chapter 4, below). Lawrence's self-mockery prompts Con Coroneos and Trudi Tate (2001) to negotiate a Bakhtinian model of the "merry, subversive and carnivalesque" (p. 113) with the pathological association of laughter and violent loss made by the French surrealist, George Bataille. I look, in Chapter 3, at Kristeva's incorporation of Bataille's identification of creative writing as Dionysian in its commitment to shock and excess. Coroneos *et al.*, furthermore, refer to Kant's definition of laughter in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*: "an affection arising from a strained expectation being suddenly transformed into nothing"; it is a sudden descent, a fall into the void" (Kant; Coroneos *et al.* 2001, p. 114). The critics thus bring Lawrence's humour into the field of the sublime, to observe a dialectical "structure at work which binds together contrasting possibilities, rather like the pleasure and unpleasure of vertigo" (*ibid.*, p. 115) -- or, we might, say, of ecstatic freedom and depressed dislocation in the shock of abjection.

## Beasts

Indeed, with the collapse of the humanist paradigm, the writer's humanity itself is in question: the early letter's "menagerie" is one of the first "animalisms" in a Lawrentian textuality pervaded by characters who are bird-like and cat-like, and so on, and of anthropomorphic animals: the famous Mino scene in Women in Love, for example, when two cats mimic the behaviour of a pair of lovers (Lawrence 1995a, 148 ff.). "The abject confronts us ... with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of the animal" (PH, 12), says Kristeva, deriving from anthropological studies of societies whose social codes emerge largely through the identification of animals inhabiting a "forbidden" world of murder and perverse sexuality. In a borderline psyche, "on the edges of primal repression" (PH, 11), phantasies of bestial encroachment generate a specific field of phobic metaphors signalling society's failure to sublimate sex and death, as they represent the writer's abject identificatory chaos and masochistic exposure to the devouring mother. We will see such phantasy particularly well represented in The White Peacock.<sup>24</sup>

## A Jester's Skin

Lawrence's horror and humour are bound up with masochism in a 1907 letter:

But where is my motley! ... Think of a naked fool -- with patches even on his skin!  
... patches of blushing soreness -- a naked fool -- Oh lord! Give me my motley,  
my motley -- and burn this letter, this portrait of my patched, naked folly. (Letters i,  
51)

Skin: damaged, defiled, a blushing soreness of the body, restating the rawness and soreness of a traumatised ego whose speech is immolated ("this letter"), and all convergent on a central divine appeal. Skin, for Kristeva, functions as the corporeal prototype of the clean and proper body of taxonomic abominations which "line" the Symbolic order. "Abjection" archaically refers to the process by which a child leaves behind the mother, and enmeshes his/her bodily experiences within codes maintaining a symbolic "skin" which protects the divine Word from an abominated (female) body. In uncompleted abjection (which, in adult reactivation, Kristeva calls "abjection") there is a fearful fascination with borderline permeability, with the body's alarming tendency to "leak", expressed in paranoid fantasies

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<sup>24</sup>Lawrence, as I have observed, makes clear that Darwinian theory has been crucial in his decision to reject Christianity. See Roger Ebbatson's discussion of the significance in the artist's spiritual crisis of the literature of evolution, particularly Haeckel's cellular Darwinism, which, for Ebbatson, serves to "extend" Lawrence's "concept of Nature" (1980, pp. 32 ff.).

of penetration, deflation and defilement. Lawrence's early letters often suggest fear of personal contamination, of his "soul" with "dirt", and of borderline degradation: "I am already rusting..." (*ibid.*, 53, 54). These moments intersect with masochistic lacerations, as self-abusive speech scarifies the textual body of a leaking/speaking subject. The early letters already show, as Lawrence acknowledges, an intense "impulse to write" (*ibid.*, 50), though their "incoherent display" (*ibid.*, 41) of logorrhoea can be a source of borderline anxiety, a haemorrhaging of signifiers which appals him. It is specifically this failure of self-control which prompts Lawrence repeatedly to beseech motley for a worthless jester: a "gassy fool" (*ibid.*, 72). And the jester's performance is aimed to impress a lady.

### **Cult of the Lady**

The letter block-cited above is addressed to a woman friend, Blanche Jennings. Indeed, women receive most of Lawrence's early letters, which "chatter" (*Letters* i, 48) away, often in lengthy self-reflexive passages. The same letter to Jennings nears its end:

Have I bored you all this time -- Lord, what a fool I am? I am always opening my heart to some girl or woman, and they wax sympathetic, but they are fools with no alloy of wisdom. I have my grain of sense somewhere -- it prevents my falling in love... (*ibid.*, 51)

Having "bored" Blanche for several pages in which coy self-deprecation -- "boyish impatience ... vain and poor ... lamentable figure..." (*ibid.*, 47, 50) -- mixes with showy displays of sophistication -- "suffering ... from acute Carlyliophobia ... Professors and the rest of great men I found were quite small men" (*ibid.*, 49) -- Lawrence then humbly apologises, and immediately calls Blanche a fool. She is the ideal reader supposed to heal the narcissistic wound by knowing about (his knowledge of) literature and philosophy, yet these letters are pervaded by gratuitous misogyny. Such oscillations between misogyny and idealisation in sado-masochistic phantasy, would, for Kristeva, clearly signal (symptomatised) the writer's precocious positionality.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva observes a dialectic of "courtliness-sadism" (PH, 162) associated with all of Céline's fictional women. This dynamic is first elaborated in her 1969 essay, "The Bounded Text", where she identifies in medieval French court poetry a "cult of the Lady" (DL, 49) through which Woman is "theologised" as a "pseudo-centre, a mystifying centre, a blind spot...", an object of desire reconceived through the angelic Virgin as a "deified mistress" (DL, 50). In Antoine de la Sale's late-medieval poem/early

novel, Le Petit Jehan de Saintré (1456), Kristeva sees the sign system, or ideologeme, of courtly discourse in transition to (transgressed by) bourgeois codification which distrusts and subordinates women, and marks them as objects of exchange. The universal idealised Symbol of Woman in de la Sale's text is transgressed and destabilised, becoming ambivalently both valorised and denigrated. Woman is appealed to as the Other, while being misogynistically represented as "disloyal, ungrateful, and infamous" (DL, 51). The Lady is also a tramp. To be concise, Kristeva correlates an epoch of mutually "compromised" discourses with the abject writer's subversive intertextuality, which is coextensive with a reactivation of primal ambivalence in relation to the mother.

This framework, then, conditions Kristeva's identification of an extensive idealisation/loathing dialecticism within Céline's novels.

Giving life--snatching life away: the Célinian mother is Janus-faced, she marrie[s] beauty and death. She is a condition of writing ... she is also the black power who points to the ephemeral nature of sublimation and the unrelenting end of life, the death of man. (PH, 161)

In the absence of the paternal function, the writer "narrates stories to the Lady" (PH, 161): he "courts" the phallic mother's authoritative Otherness, supplicates for her approval, while also registering the mother's dominant presence as an ontogenic indicator "pointing to" man's ephemeral condition within the weakened Symbolic. At another level of the symptom, meanwhile, the abject writer is in a state of mourning, for meanings and for his mother.

When writing again to Blanche Jennings in 1908, Lawrence frets about an early draft of The White Peacock (while managing to insult the intelligence of her and several other women who read his work and give him generous feedback):

I have nearly read Laetitia. It bores me mightily in parts. You can none of you find one essence of its failure: it is that I have dragged in conversations to explain matters that two lines of ordinary prose would have accomplished far better; I must cut out many pages ... [T]here are some strong scenes, e.g. -- the churchyard scene with Annable ... and also the death of the father... (Letters i, 92)

Two months earlier Lawrence had declared to Blanche: "I lost my rather deep religious faith; I lost my idealism and my wistfulness, and I wrote Laetitia in that year" (Letters i,

72).<sup>25</sup> A desolate churchyard scene and a father's death, are, indeed, conflated at the thematic core of Lawrence's final draft of the novel, which is pervaded by a sense of grief. Accordingly, as we approach the section in this chapter which focuses on The White Peacock, I want to look at how Kristeva characterises the epoch's identity crisis through a discourse of melancholia. And this, I think, is best set out as an account of her synthesis and revision of Freudian and Kleinian perspectives.

## II. MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

### 1. Freud: Primary Masochism

Freud, in "Mourning and Melancholia" (SE, XIV [1917]), produces an analogy through a set of shared features:

...a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment. (SE XIV, 244)

The last item on this list, however, is not a shared feature of mourning and melancholia, and is, in fact, the one distinguishing characteristic: "[t]he disturbance of self-regard is absent in mourning" (*ibid.*). Crucially, for Freud, mourning is entirely a conscious process, whereas the melancholic's lost object is unconscious: he does not know why he "mourns". An actual mourner "hyper-cathects" memories of the lost object in psychotic denial, after which reality-testing prompts a recognition that the object no longer exists, and consequent detachment: "the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (*ibid.*, 245). In the melancholy psyche, however, a kind of unresolvable grief is generated as the process of detachment (from what?) is jammed, and libido which, in mourning, eventually cathects new objects in reality, cathects the ego itself in fantasies of impending punishment and suicide: "[t]he complex of melancholia behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathectic energies ... from all directions, and emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished" (*ibid.*, 253). The unknown "lost" object is a source of oppression, and something -- the self -- which must be "killed". The melancholy ego is subordinate to the oppressor, while conversely treating itself as the object, and imagining itself sentenced to death.

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<sup>25</sup>The White Peacock was begun in 1906, periodically revised by Lawrence until December 1910, and published in January 1911.



Freud goes on to speculate about manic episodes which counterpoint melancholy masochism in a bipolarity between, on the one hand, states of "joy, exultation or triumph" over "hidden" loss (SE XIV, 254), and depressive periods when the (unknown) oppressor condemns the sufferer to inactivity and self-reproach, etc. This opposition joins the oppositional tropes -- love and hate, attraction and repulsion, sadism and masochism, and others -- upon which psychoanalytic theory hinges, though Freud admits that he is unable satisfactorily to explain manic episodes in melancholia, and why "triumph" is not present in mourning.

## **2. Klein: Depressive Mobilisation**

For Melanie Klein, in "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States", triumph is present in mourning, as well as in melancholia, "closely bound up with contempt and omnipotence, as an element of the manic position" (1999 [1938], 259). Klein firms up Freud's opposition between inhibition and mania during her characterisation of the "depressive position", while also restating his ideas about oppression and primary masochism.

Klein's depressive position has the same archaic function as the Oedipus complex, enabling the generic infant to differentiate itself from the mother. During the depressive transition, a child learns to feel guilty about earlier paranoid-schizoid phantasies of revenge on an absent nutritive body (bad breast), while it pines for a lost oceanic good breast: it feels both guilty and grief-stricken, albeit as necessary elements in its separation from the "m/other" and integration as a morally aware (of good and bad) subject. The Kleinian infantile economy of paranoia and depression is perpetuated throughout adult life, while it characterises the subject's pathology as a matter of degree: in Klein's melancholic/mourner, the conflict between paranoid aggressivity and depressive masochism is strongly intensified, while manic idealisation, set in relation to delusional "triumphs" over a "bad" object, defends against feelings of persecution and loss. Klein's mourner works through complex projections of persecution paranoia, self-loathing, sado-omnipotence and idealisation, eventually to reassert repression and integrate the ego consonant with symbolic introjection of the phantasmatic "good" breast.<sup>26</sup> Inasmuch as

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<sup>26</sup>Melanie Klein's ideas about early projection and introjection, and paranoid-schizoid ambivalence between idealisation and persecution, are presented most clearly in her 1946 paper, "Notes on Some Schizoid

the depressive position is perpetual, however, so is grief for the lost mother, and melancholic affect continuously surfaces to disrupt the generic subject's symbolic integration, while the condition of melancholia (as in Freud's model) signals abnormal rumination on the unconscious lost (maternal) object. For Klein, subjectivity is sustained through ongoing investments of phantasy with symbolisation, thus sublimating paranoid and depressive phantasy. The pathological implication, which Kristeva develops, is that melancholic experience will be widespread during a culturally registered failure of Symbolic codes.

### 3. Kristeva: Writing as Mania

Kristeva's theory of melancholia, largely set out in Black Sun (1989), radically derives from Melanie Klein's model. Kristeva incorporates Klein's concept of a generic, four-axis dialectical subject, oscillating between paranoia and depression, and also between pre-linguistic phantasy (paranoid and depressive) and symbolic sublimation. Identifying pathological melancholia, for Kristeva, is again a matter of degree: a precocious subject, whose paradigm is the creative writer, is preoccupied by unresolvable loss, and evinces a pronounced tendency to manic-depressive affect. Kristeva, however, differs from both Freud and Klein in the nature of the perceived lost object. While she clinically engages with depression prompted by individual circumstances, Kristeva's wider concern is its relation to post-metaphysical experience. Accordingly, the "lost object" of epochal melancholia is not any single object, conscious or unconscious, and rather an imaginary function of weak/absent mechanisms of moral identification (the death of God), congruent with an intensification of maternal phantasy:

The depressed narcissist mourns, not an Object but the Thing. Let me posit the "Thing" as the real that does not lend itself to signification, the centre of attraction and repulsion ... [T]he depressed person has the impression of having been deprived of an unnameable, supreme good, of something unrepresentable. (BS, 13)

Kristeva effectively reconceives the "abject" borderline subject within a discourse of melancholia, whereby the subject's expressed preoccupation with "Thingness" signals an imaginary conflation of the primal mother with linguistic anomia, an identification of -- and with -- the experience of loss. Formulated as a sequence, we see that weakness in regulated meanings initially "means" loss of the (cultural) self; loss of the self leads to an

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Mechanisms" (Klein, 1970).

identification with lost meaning; the self-without-meaning experiences abjection and reactivates the unnameable (pre-oedipal) Thing: an unidentified non-object, maternal and totalised, through which language signals its failure to objectify/refer to objects. In creative writing, on the other hand, the Thing's combinative field of masochism, loathing, nostalgia, idealisation and omnipotence reinvigorates language in a "discourse" of affect.

For Kristeva's modern artist, representing "depressive affect, makes up for symbolic invalidation and interruption..." (BS, 19). He is engaged in an "eroticisation [sic] of suffering" (BS, 19), as he "nostalgically fall[s] back on the real object (the Thing) of ... loss", in an "impossible mourning" (BS, 43-4). The melancholic psyche "recedes ... toward the position of the archaic 'Thing'--the elusive pre-object of a mourning that is endemic with all speaking beings and a suicidal attraction for the depressive person" (my emphasis, BS, 152). Of course the creative writer is not (necessarily) suicidal in a biographical sense. As always with Kristeva, we are talking about aspects of a core dialectic of eternal return, of "dying" away from social language to rebirth the speaking self:

The depressive denial that destroys the meaning of the symbolic also destroys the act's meaning [moral order] and leads the subject to commit suicide ... as a reuniting with archaic non-integration, as lethal as it is jubilatory, "oceanic." (BS, 19)

Inscribing melancholic affect enables the artist sublimely to "triumph" over the cultural death of (mourned) meaning (a "bad" object, a Thing), and thus to project and integrate a symbolic self -- albeit caught up in representations of precocious maternal experience. The writer's triumphs of speech and losses of identity, meanwhile, are represented in a manic/depressive dialectic: the action of producing language is a manic defence against linguistic inhibition, while the artist writes with a manic intensity to produce meanings characterised by manic-depressive swings that disclose his "reuniting with archaic non-integration", while representing (precociously) his fundamental instability between language and primary processes.

The mania and depression foregrounded in post-metaphysical writing appear to be represented in two broad orientations within Symbolist poetry, which I will examine in the penultimate section in this chapter, prior to considering Lawrence's novel, The Trespasser. I want next to give a reading of The White Peacock that deploys ideas I have already set

out about complex melancholia and abject phobia, and so identifies a narrative committed to representing a lost mourned Thing and a perilous borderline space.<sup>27</sup>

### **III. THE WHITE PEACOCK**

#### **Land of the Lost**

Graham Hough observes the formal debt owed by Lawrence's first novel to George Eliot's regionalism, central focus on two couples' developing relationships, and tripartite narrative structure (cf. Hough 1956, 24). The characters in The White Peacock live in the rural valley of Nethermere, where Parts I and II are set, while in Part III they move out to the wider world, after which the closely observed time scheme dissolves in long-term projections of alienated experience. At the beginning of Part III, the embedded narrator, Cyril Beardsall, says:

Lettie had landed and was travelling to a strange destination in a foreign land. It was time for us all to go, to leave the valley of Nethermere whose waters and whose woods were distilled in the essence of our veins. We were the children of the valley of Nethermere, a small nation with language and blood of our own, and to cast ourselves each one into separate exile was painful to us. (234)

The novel's structure immediately suggests (in a Kristevan frame) a bifurcation between a representation of maternal space, and a subsequent emergence into cultural "exile" where subjects are permanently wounded by an originary separation. It is from this position of loss and inhibition that the narrator speaks of his valley home, and the writer names, as Kristeva puts it,

...an unnameable domain which one might ... evoke from a constitutional exile. This "something" would be previous to the detectable "object": the secret and unreachable horizon of our loves and desires, it assumes, for the imagination, the consistency of an archaic mother, which, however, no precise image manages to encompass. (BS, 145)

Lawrence's novel is fixated in an "impossible mourning" whereby the regressive psychotopographical projection of Nethermere has the "consistency of an archaic mother" -- its modes of representation are consistent with pre-oedipal phantasy. If Kristeva's "abject" constitutes the maternal pre-object through projections of borderline negativity in paranoia and repudiation, then Kristeva's "Thing", also a constitutive aspect of the pre-object,

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<sup>27</sup>All quotations in this chapter from The White Peacock (1955 [1911]) appear in the following section of the main text, and are referenced in parentheses by page number only.

configures the two poles of primal separation indeterminately, being a space both of pleasurable idealisation, and of dejection governed by the death drives. Accordingly, in Lawrence's projection of Nethermere, nostalgia and grief are complicated by separation anxiety and paranoid aggressivity, as the writer confronts "something", a border and a Thing, which will not stabilise as a morally definable (good/bad) object.

### **Bereavement**

The Nethermere valley's nostalgic function is double-registered, both as the exiled characters' childhood home, and through indications of a lost vitality within this projection. The narrator recalls the Nethermere of his childhood as already "gathered in the musing of old age" (1). The fish in its lake are "descendants" from the "young days" (1). Cyril speaks of the "tumult of life which had once filled the valley", while now the lake is "intensely still ... brooding over its past" (1). Even chairs "mourn[] darkly for companionship", in a "desolate kitchen" (3). "There's always a sense of death in this home" (27), says Lettie, Cyril's sister. Everyone, however, is prone to bouts of unfocused longing and apprehension, as nostalgia merges into images of emptiness and death.

At times Nethermere, the pouch-like "hollow which held us all" (66), does seem capable of nurturing a carefree existence. The central characters, Cyril, Lettie, Leslie Tempest, George Saxton and his sister Emily, all ostensibly young adults, typically set off on a day out with packed lunches prepared by their mothers, like the Famous Five or William's Outlaws. Unburdened by adult responsibilities, they wander aimlessly across the valley, occasionally popping into a peasant's home for free food. But these cyclical journeys are ultimately unsatisfying. Nostalgic idealisation is undercut by an anxious awareness of inhibited development, an interminable waiting for some kind of emergence into being: "[y]ou never grow up..." (27), says Lettie. Years later, towards the end of the novel, George says to Cyril: "I'm only a kid after all..." (285). "We all are", Cyril replies. Time is suspended for the "symbolic" exiles preoccupied by their youthful past, while the maturative inhibition of their youth is signalled by the narrative's crucial structuring topos, an "eternal return" of Nature's seasonal cycles. The valley's flora, moreover, provide opportunities to brood about Thingness:

...snowdrops are sad and mysterious. We have lost their meaning. They do not belong to us, who ravish them. The girls bent among them, touching them with their fingers, and symbolising the yearning which I felt ...

"More than tears," said Lettie ... "they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we have lost. They make me feel afraid" ...

"What should you have to fear?" asked Leslie.

"If I knew I shouldn't fear," she answered ...

"Do you think, Cyril, we can lose things off the earth ... things that matter -- wisdom?" (128-9)

There is, here, a kind of funeral service for meaning, a eulogy for unnameable loss, gesturing at a disintegration of faith in the paternal field of (received) wisdom.

And it is a crucial moment when Cyril's and Lettie's estranged father, Frank, is unwittingly encountered by the precocious friends in a wood, rather like a Williamesque sleeping tramp. Frank is all twitches and groans and "sickness and dissipation" (21). "You don't seem to have nice dreams" (21), says a shocked George. Frank is disposed of in Chapter 4: "I can hardly last a day or two--my kidneys are nearly gone ... I have had the worst of it ... Goodbye--forever..." (31-2). Frank's wife confesses that her cruelty has sent him into decline (31-2). Kidney, or liver, failure will become, for Lawrence, a key sign of masculine exposure to a dangerous femininity (and I look at this trope in more detail in Chapter 5). As the familial analogue of a "principle", Frank conforms to the abject's loss of trust in the father: he is "liar" full of "mean dishonesties and deceits ... the illusion of him had broken into a thousand vulgar fragments" (32). It is, nonetheless, psychologically consistent that when he sees Frank's dead body, Cyril himself disintegrates in abject estrangement: "a sense of terror, and a sense of horror, and a sense of awful littleness and loneliness among a great empty space. I felt beyond myself as if I were a mere fleck drifting unconsciously through the dark" (36-7).

### **Fear of Being Bitten**

Nethermere is full of suffering, death and mourning. A hedgehog caught in a gin trap cries pitifully (43). Birds look down and grieve: "crying, lamenting ... all the time crying and crying in despair" (155). The traps are intended for unnamed predators, "fierce little murderers" (43). Murder, for Kristeva, is renounced along with incest, in the name of the symbolic God-father, which means that a fascination with murder is a key symptom of failure to sublimate the death drives, and thereby codify and regulate separation

hostility.<sup>28</sup> George Saxton tortures and kills bees on the second page of the novel, and, in Chapter 5, "The Scent of Blood", he enjoys a rabbit hunt, to Lettie's horror: "he almost pulled its head off in his excitement to kill it" (51). All across the valley, animals are murdering and being murdered, eating and being eaten, in an unregulated, amoral, Darwinian Nature: "Suddenly through the gloom of the twilight-haunted woods came the scream of a rabbit caught by a weasel" (21). In Nethermere, indeed, mankind strays on the territories of the animal.

The White Peacock is red in tooth and claw: "isn't it cruel? -- Isn't it awful? ... everything! If we move the blood rises in our heel-prints" (12), says Lettie, as engulfment phantasy merges into a representation of the abject mother's body. The valley floor on which the humans stray (but cannot move) is often a porous membrane, a sickening skin from which come bloody emissions/leaks and a threat of falling into the "bowels" of the earth. Small shrieking animals chase each other across this borderline between below and above (inside and outside), an eldritch eternal return of teeth and noise, the latter, in Kristevan terms, overpowering semantics with acoustics, and obliterating sense and identity. Nethermere often looks and sounds more like Transylvania than Nottinghamshire, as sheep fall victim to "wolvish" (63) dogs, and people transform into vampiric predators and victims. Infants hate the (bad) breast: a woman says of her child, "[y]ou wouldn't credit how he bites. 'E's nobbut two teeth, but they like six needles" (71). Lettie stands before George: "[t]heir lips smiled curiously. She put back her throat as if she were drinking. They felt the blood beating madly in their necks" (29). She is "full of insurgent tenderness" (30), while burying a fingernail in George's thumb: "'What a gash! ... Does it hurt you?', she asked very gently" (30). Here is the Janus-faced female, the life-giver and life-snatcher, nurturing while breaking skin to produce again the sign of her feared generative power, a sanguine discharge.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>See Revolution in Poetic Language (1984), pp. 72-85, and Powers of Horror (1982), pp. 72, 150 ff. I say more, in Chapter 3, about the significance of murder in the construction of sacred discourse, when looking at Kristeva's synthesis of Freud's pre-totemic, phylogenetic myth; and in Chapter 5, I make connections between the murderous primal horde and Lawrence's totalitarian impulses.

<sup>29</sup>For Kristeva, oral phantasies of devouring are bound up with the material production of language: "[t]hrough the mouth that I fill with words instead of my mother whom I miss ... I elaborate ... want, and the aggressivity that accompanies it, by saying. It turns out that ... oral activity, which produces the linguistic signifier coincides with the theme of devouring. (PH, 41). Her borderline writer represents the lost object and transiently "completes" mourning through sublimation, while his "speech" is pervaded by spontaneous reactivations of the devouring mother. Kristeva thus makes equivalent a manic "devouring" of materialised language in response to voided meaning -- and -- phobic oral metaphors within language.

### The Abject-Gothic

Mary Russo makes explicit the highly suggestible correspondence between Kristevan abjection and Gothic grotesquerie: "[Gothic writing is] blood, tears, vomit, excrement: all the detritus of the body that is separated out and placed with terror and revulsion ... on the side of the feminine -- down there in the cave of abjection" (Russo 1995, 1). Judith Wilt, in Ghosts of the Gothic, sees Lawrence offering "a full-scale vision of the sublime, the first in English letters since Shelley..." (1980, 247), and a product of imaginative transgressions between the self and the not-self: "[t]he consequences of crossing the boundary are pure Gothic, the orthodox sublime -- that is, lurid and melodramatic..." (*ibid.*, 246). Kristeva describes the abject as "sublime alienation" (PH, 9) in a "land of oblivion" (8), where life becomes inextricable from death in a terrifying displacement of speech by somatic heterogeneity (which then is represented in speech). In fact a correspondence between the Gothic and the abject is necessary and self-evident, since, for Kristeva, any fantasy of identity threatened or overwhelmed by irrational sublime "powers" is reactivating infantile abjection (phantasy). The Gothic, then, would denote a space in which phobic metaphoricality produced by abject writers accumulates as a convenient field of motifs into which later writers tap to sublimate archaic anxieties.<sup>30</sup>

Lawrence's first novel is full of unmistakable Gothic-sublime atmospherics: "Mist rose, and wreathed round Nethermere, like ghosts meeting and embracing sadly" (66). Leslie Tempest deplures "this hell of a country", as Cyril listens fearfully to "the cry of some night birds over Nethermere, and the peevish, wailing, yarling cry of some beast in the wood" (77). Edgar Allan Poe is invoked, as crows soar, "like souls hunting for a body to inhabit, and despairing. Only the first ghoul was left on the withered, silver-grey skeleton of the holly. 'He won't even say Nevermore,' I remarked" (82). Ghouls and ghosts inhabit the valley, seeking to infect living bodies with death. Cyril scampers like a hunted animal, awed and terrified within a Hammer horror scene:

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<sup>30</sup>Linda Ruth Williams sees Lawrence's 1925 short story, "Glad Ghosts", as "begging for a reading that combines Freud's Uncanny and Kristeva's Abject" (1999, p. 236). Williams conflates Gothic and vampiric terminology with abjection theory in relation to several of Lawrence's texts, including The Rainbow and Women in Love: "[g]hosts are everywhere in Lawrence; his few ghost stories are not peculiar, playful or uncharacteristic aberrations, but are part of a continual discourse with and about the presence of death in life" (*ibid.*, p. 241). Also see below, n. 31.



In the wood the wind rumbled and roared hoarsely overhead, but not a breath stirred among the saddened bracken ... Armies of cloud marched in rank across the sky, heavily laden ... The wind was cold and disheartening. The ground sobbed at every step. The brook was full, swirling along, hurrying, talking to itself, in absorbed, intent tones. The clouds darkened; I felt the rain. Careless of the mud, I ran, and burst into the farm kitchen. (87)

Nethermere's sickening blood- and tear-soaked images of death and decay form a miasma which undergoes heterogeneous re-animation in a suggested cacophony of nonsensical voices -- yet the narrative stages a "rescue" of the dislocated character from all this "poetic" sublime, phobic metaphoricity, and re-"homes" him.<sup>31</sup>

### The Ghostly "I"

Kristeva speaks of "I", who "behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders: fainting away" (PH, 4). The White Peacock's narrator, Cyril, echoing the response to his father's death, frequently experiences psychotic levels of dissociation as he contemplates Nethermere's kaleidoscopic natural processes:

I myself seemed to have lost my substance, to have become detached from concrete things and the firm trodden pavement of everyday life. Onward, always onward, not knowing where, nor why, the wind, the clouds, the rain and the birds and the leaves, everything whirling along--why? (83)

For Tony Pinkney, Cyril

...must be seen as not simply one character among others but as a figure or metaphor within the novel for its ambitions towards totality, towards a transcendental position that could comprehend ... all the social fragments it depicts. (1990, 20)

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<sup>31</sup>Freud's essay, "The Uncanny" (SE, XVII), gives an etymological explanation of how the German adjective heimlich (familiar, homely) came to take on the meanings of unheimlich (unfamiliar, uncanny, strange). Freud goes on to locate the experience of the Uncanny in the perception of an object as both familiar and strange. For Kristeva, the borderline state of abjection is "[e]ssentially different from 'uncanniness,' more violent too, ... [it] is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory" (PH, 5). This assertion modulates an essential distinction between Kristevan and classical theory, in that she focuses not so much on neurotic identifications and defences, as on failure of secondary repression and quasi-psychotic (pre-oedipal) dissociation so "strange" that spatio-temporality fades away as the self and the object lose identity. Nevertheless, Freud's Uncanny has a positive role within the psychoanalytic project set out in Strangers to Ourselves (1991). The linguistic subject, Kristeva argues, is always radically estranged from her/himself (from cultural identity), having a perpetual alterity in unconscious or maternal space. A proper understanding of this, she believes, leads to the awareness that paranoia about "different" people, especially national foreigners, is a product of the unary subject's repression of his inner "foreignness". In disseminating this awareness (in Strangers), Kristeva raises the possibility of people dissolving cultural barriers and relating through a shared ontology of psychic dualism, whereby Uncanny syntheses are "the ultimate condition of our being with others" (Kristeva 1991, p. 192).

Pinkney argues that Lawrence's first novel "straddles the two Eliots, George and T. S." (*ibid.*, 12), in its negotiation of classical-realist and modernist modes through the English-Roman dichotomy of the Saxtons and the Tempests. The narrative "stubbornly" persists within the English classicist tradition of omniscient narration, while the narrator's voice gradually merges into "modernist amorphousness" (*ibid.*, 27). Cyril's "transcendental" descriptions of occasions when he was not present, and his catalysis of others' love affairs, breaks down, argues Pinkney, in an increasing crisis of identity.

An object Cyril is, indeed, in identity crisis, and we might elaborate semiologically his position as the intertextual nodal point for an ideologemetic transgression of classicist omniscience by modernist "discourse". Pinkney's model of gradual decline, however, elides Cyril's early responses to the valley's fearful sublimity, while episodes of his disembodiment, which also appear early on, counter any "totalising" function through the difficulty he seems to have in connecting with object-reality, as dissociation merges into a kind of etherealisation. Cyril is often physically unable to touch things: as when he thinks of catching an exhausted rabbit: "this was impossible to me ... I couldn't" (49). He is a constant gaze, the "beholder" of an abjectly chaotic and grief-inhibited world, both natural and social. Eerily present, strangely unnoticed during others' lengthy, intimate conversations, Cyril does not so much catalyse relationships, as move fluidly among the multiple voices like a ghost unaware of his condition, observing inhibited relationships and telling "a story of mismatch, personal defeat, bafflement and even disintegration" (Black 1986, 45).

The White Peacock is pervaded by representations of disintegration, engulfment, alienation and death. The valley phenomenologically transforms the partial drives of orality and sado-masochism in Natural metaphoricity, while, at the level of character, this transformation centres on Woman. Lettie is an early version of the dangerous seductive woman who will densely populate Lawrence's later work (notably the Pussum and Gudrun, in Women in Love). Lettie says to George, "you make me feel as if I'd like to make you suffer" (27). And she does. If Cyril's ghostliness represents psych(ot)ic disembodiment, an unresolved diffusion of the "I" into the "not-I", then George represents an exposure of the wordless suffering body.

## Words and Death

At first George is in rude physical health, joying in the blood-letting of animals; but his unconsummated fascination for Lettie leads to alcoholism and the destruction of his liver. Crucial to George's physical degradation is a loss of linguistic capability. Lettie teases, denies and cuts, but she is, above all, unintelligible, as her flaunting of literary and philosophical knowledge reduces him to mortified, guilt-bearing silences. George might, from a Kleinian perspective, be seen to move from the jouissance of oral sadism to an idealising depressive position, where failure to speak is coextensive with primal masochism, an inversion of the death drives in suicidal impulses. His drunken "slovenly articulation" (143) restates his relationship to Lettie, and degrades into chronic stupor. He seems engulfed by silence: "[y]ou feel awful", he says, in a rare moment of lucidity, "like a vacuum, with a pressure on you, a sort of pressure of darkness, and you yourself--just nothing, a vacuum" (284). George eventually becomes hopelessly confused: "am I talking rot? What am I saying? What are you making me talk for? What are you listening for?" (285). His "lamentably decayed" (320) body is consonant with an inability to communicate, to bond with others. His ego weighed down and hollowed by an incomprehensible maternal super-ego, an oppressive Thingness (a pressure of darkness), George ends the novel "apart and obscure among us, like a condemned man" (322).

Silence, in abjection, is unsanctified by a codified abstract signified which would make it a "spiritual" space of "reflection", "contemplation", "meditation" and so forth. The deject-writer fears silence. Lacking a permanent codified self, he cannot be wordless and live; he lives when he writes, in-process, in a manic jouissance. Makiko Minow-Pinkney notes the Kristevan "equation ... forged between symptoms and semiosis -- the pain of the body being also the pleasure of the text" (1990, 159). The writer writes to escape the pain of pre-linguistic abjection, and discovers pleasurable jouissance in his productive relations to the text, albeit by representing the pain of meaninglessness to implicate his voice(s) in language. He sublimates "death" in scenes of abject and melancholy affect, in schizoid and depressive characterisation and phobic representations of silence. In a crisis of identification, asserts Kristeva, there are "two unyielding protagonists ... death and words" (PH, 160). Lawrence's narrative and characterology, centring on George's decline into anomia, stages the conflict to counter the crisis.

In The White Peacock, then, speech pours from the narrator, Cyril, but he does not engage in the physical world, while George Saxton is reduced to a suffering body unable to speak. Through this double-articulation the novel represents failure of the word and the living body to connect in sublimation -- while an underlying experience of this failure generates the (post-metaphysical) writer's thetic-defensive functions: the instatement of "I" (narrator), the manifold characterological identifications, and the teleology of narrative form. In the last part of my reading, I want to focus on a character, Annable, who takes up relatively little space in the novel, but around whom the central themes and images cluster intensely.

### **Epicentre of Expulsion**

Céline's novels, observes Kristeva, centre on portrayals of persecuted men who "fear decay and death at the touch of the feminine" (PH, 159). The body is "touched" by her teeth, and punctured: "what goes out of the body, out of its pores and openings, points to the infinitude of the body proper and gives rise to abjection" (PH, 108). In the abject psyche, meanwhile, faecal matter

...signifies, as it were, what never ceases to separate from a body in a state of permanent loss in order to become autonomous, distinct ... [A]nal dejections constitute the first material separation that is controllable by the human being" (PH, 108)

The White Peacock's anxiety about perviousness and loss is supplemented by an obverse necessity to separate from what is filthy, rotten and disgusting. Lawrence's novel does not, on the whole (unlike, say, Beckett's plays<sup>32</sup>), scatologically represent anal impulses to separate. The narrative's misogyny rather is suggestive of the level of infantile phantasy at which faecal expulsion is subsumed by maternal rejection formative of the clean and proper self. In Kristeva's model of abjection, furthermore, pre-objectal hostility involves the r/ejection of "everything ... all objects ... [The infant] drives them out, dominated by drive as he is, and constitutes his own territory" (PH, 6). Accordingly, a subject's cultural abjection is strongly signalled by, but far exceeds the specificity of, faecal and feminine tropes. The "shittiness" of the somatic feminine body is represented in the gendered

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<sup>32</sup>"The anal, as every Beckett reader knows, is an obsessive point of return in his writing ... Shit, as his characters like to pun, is 'serious matter' ... In many ways this was a preoccupation he shared with Joyce, whose Ulysses has been described as an odyssey, throughout the day, through the digestive tract" (Ruth Parkin-Gounelas 2001, p. 73).

Symbolic as filthy, disgusting, sexual-devouring woman, while the mother qua totalised pre-objectal space is also transformed in the (object-relating) Symbolic. If Lettie is the "first fatal woman in Lawrence's fiction" (Black 1986, 43), then Annable, the gamekeeper in The White Peacock, is the first instance of a Lawrentian type including, among others, Birkin in Women in Love, and Aaron in Aaron's Rod: the rogue male characterised by universal loathing.<sup>33</sup>

The Saxtons are being engulfed, "bitten off the estate by rabbits" (145). But, for Annable, there is only

..."one sort of vermin--and that's the talkin' sort." So he set himself to thwart and harass the rabbit-slayers ... He was a man of one idea: that all civilisation was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture. I won his respect one afternoon when he found me trespassing in the woods because I was watching some maggots at work in a dead rabbit ... When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind ... He treated me as an affectionate father treats a delicate son. (145-6).

If Nethermere is a space of "murderous apocalypse" (PH, 151), representing the "horror of hell without God ... [where] no means of salvation, no optimism, not even a humanistic one, looms on the horizon" (PH, 147), then the epicentre of the psychic storm (located at the narrative's median point) is Annable's "evacuation" of/from culture. He is a kind of abject anti-hero who ostensibly achieves self-identity and controls his "territory" by repudiating humanity. The gamekeeper paradoxically becomes a surrogate "father" to the bereft Cyril, his strong body and assertive manner evoking a locus of security, and seeming to counter the narrative's lack of a guiding ideal. Annable, however, is also the marker for a devastating loss and fragility.

I spoke in the Introduction of Christian discourse which "returns" incoherently in descriptions of Nethermere's flora: a holy communion of flowers, manna-like snowdrops, and so on. The White Peacock accordingly features religious ceremonies without benefit of clergy -- as when Lettie establishes an ad hoc wayside pulpit, from which she sermonises to George: "[I]ook at that elm ... It'll be dead next year ... It's casting its bread upon the winds ... trees know how to die, you see--we don't" (208-9). She then provides a

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<sup>33</sup>For Graham Hough, Annable typifies an "embittered masculine protest" which will dominate Lawrence's work, to the extent that the gamekeeper is the "first bearer of the Laurentian philosophy" (Hough 1956, p. 30).

"funeral" for a dead wood-pigeon. Lettie here is a "seething confusion" (209), tormenting a "speechless" George (210). She is, in Kristeva's terms, the "black power", who "points" to the "death of man" (PH, 161). Annable's former lover, Lady Crystabel, takes this behaviour to its logical conclusion when she "points" to his death in an obituary in a women's newspaper (150). This analeptic event and other persistent memories are crucial in the central Annable episode (epicentre), which gives a dynamic clarity to the novel's negotiations of Woman, Christianity and death.

Annable's identification of the rotten fungus of culture intersects with his hostility to Crystabel through a "rotten" church (148), "mouldering ... black and melancholy" (146), outside which the gamekeeper (formerly a parson) preaches alienation to Cyril. The church is inhabited by a shrieking, shitting peacock: "[t]hat's the very soul of a lady", says Annable: "I should like to wring its neck ... the miserable brute has dirtied that angel. A woman to the end, I tell you, all vanity and screech and defilement" (147-8). Ferocious misogyny "inhabits" his loss of faith, faecally overdetermined in misanthropic projections which expel what is foul, and separate/birth him in a delusion of authenticity achieved through incessant loathing. Yet the narrative, in Kristeva's words, is "always umbilicated to the Lady--fascinating and abject object of the telling" (PH, 146). Annable's powerful body and proud autonomy veil denial and nostalgic idealisation, an inability to "kill" memories of the dead (Lady) Crystabel, while the angel's defilement (by the "soul of a lady") inflates to a phantasy of unending faecal engulfment: "[t]he church ... I suppose they'll stand all over the country like this soon--with peacocks trailing the graveyards" (148). Soon after revealing to Cyril his hatred for the "talkin' sort" of vermin, Annable is killed in a quarry landslip, and, at his widow's insistence, buried in the decadent churchyard, under the shrieking peacock.

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In a letter of 14 June 1910, Lawrence presents the general editor at Heinemann with a couple of possible titles for his first novel. They are, he says,

...designed to give a truly rural odour and at the same time a touching picture of the futility of agitated humanity ... "The Cry of the Peacock" (a discordant row of selfishness triumphant -- please refer to the keeper-graveyard-Lady ... [scene])  
-- "The White Peacock" (to wit [...])... (Letters i, 163)

To wit, what? In the Introduction to the Cambridge University Press edition of the novel, Andrew Robertson explains: "Annoyingly the letter is torn immediately following the reference to the title 'The White Peacock', so one cannot say what meaning Lawrence attached to it in 1910" (1983, xxix). Robertson notes another, earlier, epistolary association made by Lawrence between selfishness and peacocks, and leaves it at that (*ibid.*, xxx). If, however, we think of Lawrence's peacock as a poetic symbol whose saturated metaphoricity is highly suggestive, polyvalent and ultimately incoherent, then we might also think of Jean Lorrain's 1887 Symbolist poem, "Les paons blancs", in which (in translation) "great white peacocks ... look like a gathering of souls, souls of imploring women encircling a haunted habitation ... the old enchanted park..." (Lorrain, cited Scott 2000, 69-70). Clive Scott elaborates:

Symbolist art is certainly well populated by peacocks, as the attributes of Hera, as many-eyed, Argus-like guardians of deserted demesnes, as the spirits of departed nobility, with tails ... like the starry firmament ... [M]asculinism is ... overborne by the feminine presences that the peacocks ... mediate or corporealize. (*ibid.*, 70)

Lawrence, then, appears to have derived from late-nineteenth century Symbolisme his androgynous peacock and deserted building resonating with ineffable loss and melancholy; though he sharpens up an association with religion (his building is a church), while the peacock is heavily invested with misogynistic impulses. As we move towards what is surely Lawrence's most obvious post-Symbolist prose work, The Trespasser, I want to give an account of aspects of the French movement which prefigure modernist writing. My approach, as I have indicated, will overlay Kristeva's construction of Symbolism as the "revolutionary" prototype of avant-garde signifying practice, with her later vision of the abject/melancholic artist. This, of course, is not to obscure her identification of Symbolist poetry as a psychotic, drive-ridden textuality, and rather to say that I engineer a kind of revisitation of the 1980s Kristeva to her 1970s' objects of study in order to emphasise their melancholic pathology.

#### **IV. THE SYMBOLISTE PROTOTYPE**

##### **1. Revolution: Symbol y. Allegory**

As a revolutionary aesthetic, argues Peter Nicholls, French symbolism confronts a "political sphere which seems to rigidify into a ritual 'allegory' of social process ... a stark backdrop to any countervailing fantasy of transcendence" (Nicholls 1995, 24-5). These

poets withdraw from religious, scientific and political processes, and privilege individual transcendence within literary language committed to representing mood, intuition and mystery. In a semiological frame, Laurence Porter observes that "Modernists often adopt a Symbolist diction characterised by ambiguity, polysemy, auto-referentiality, and the coexistence of presence and absence" (Porter 1990, 261). Lawrence's characteristic use of ambiguity and polysemy, and his commitment to irrationalism and "feeling" within an organicist framework, strongly echo Symboliste aesthetics, most clearly in his advocacy of the allusive symbol in opposition to religious allegory.

Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away, because their value is dynamic, emotional, belonging to the sense-consciousness of the body and soul, and not simply mental. An allegorical image has a meaning. Mr Facing-both-ways has a meaning. But I defy you to lay your finger on the full meaning of Janus, who is a symbol ... [Symbols] don't "mean something". They stand for units of human feeling, human experience ... And the power of the symbol is to arouse the deep emotional self... (Apocalypse, 48-9)

And we find the poststructural psycho-aestheticist, Kristeva, also holding this essential avant-garde position against allegorical discourse:

Allegory ... the personification of the semantic and subjective tension specific to metaphor, became its grave ... Allegory sets and moralises, it parcels out, soothes, and pontificates ... [it] preserves an allusion to a world of abstract values (Danger, Virtue, etc.) but loses the ambiguity specific to play and joy; it conceptualises and clarifies... (TL, 288)

Kristeva is talking specifically here about the style of abstract representation which began in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and reached its high point as personification in Baroque art. The avant-garde's opposition to allegory, meanwhile, expands into a general rejection of rationalist, hierarchical forms of moral representation which subordinate the body, the organic, and notions of unrepresentable or indeterminate space/s.

I want, at this point, to suspend the discussion of allegory, having thus far identified a focus for avant-garde opposition that is prototypical in Symbolism, echoed in modernism, and a crucial element in Kristeva's postmodernist project. In Kristeva's analytic thought, however, and as we have seen, what is opposed in culture is the sublime of an essential ontic tension disclosed by the modern artist. I will accordingly show how she relates allegory to Symbolism, during my reading of The Trespasser. I want next to



consider an essential dichotomy within the Symbolist movement, which suggests a radical melancholic experience underlying the revolutionary signifying practice.

## 2. Symbolisme and Décadence

Symbolism (Symbolisme), the mid- to late-nineteenth century aesthetic movement, is closely associated with Decadence (Décadence). Like any term for an aesthetic movement -- like modernism and postmodernism -- Decadence has its parametric problems. To exactly whom and what does it refer? Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud, were, at various times, thought of either as Symbolist or Decadent (2000, 2). Under either label, the avant-garde was committed to liberating language from decadent cultural discourses, which were seen as oppressive, exhausted and no longer trustworthy. "Symbolism", though, often denoted the positive practice of oblique and allusive expression, while "Decadence" (inverted by Baudelaire and Gautier) opposed cultural decadence as a regenerative intellectualist movement. Conversely, Symbolists often attacked Decadents from a perception that Symbolism was the theoretical arc, while Decadent writing expressed only "mood", and, moreover, one of apathy and negativity (cf. McGuinness 2000, 3 ff.). The Symbolist/Decadent opposition, in fact, can be situated to identify a vein of melancholic "decadence" generated by Symbolist ambiguity.

Mallarmé declares that culture, and particularly language, is "experiencing an exquisite and fundamental crisis" (Mallarmé 1980, 2). Exquisite is the epiphany that, within the interstices of language and through the "mystery of the symbol", gradually suggests meanings, and so "elicit[s] a state of soul by means of a series of decodings" (Mallarmé 1956, 21). Mallarmé claims the poet's right to occupy a fundamental space left by the death of the Catholic narrative (cf. Dayan 2000, 21), and simultaneously to reject the literary "hieratic canon" (Mallarmé 1980, 3) of rhyme, form and metre. There are sacred duties: "[a]rt was a religion and the poet was the priest ... with the power of self-creation ... the source of his own transcendence" (Chiari 1970, 46-7). The Symbolist poet is a prophet of individualism, enacting a kind of "will to literature" (Trotter 1999, 74): he merges joyously with his medium, to become a "soul [that] exists only when its melody is played..." (Mallarmé *ibid.*, 5). Temporality, teleology, objectivity and the self, are lost in language gesturing at the Mallarmean "Absolute", or what Rimbaud often called the "universal soul" in the substance of language.

On the other hand, this is a crisis of representation; the poet's rejection of moral order means (and recalling a citation used in the Introduction) that "no one can utter words which would bear the miraculous stamp of Truth..." (Mallarmé 1956, 38). Imagination and self-dedication are inherently futile: moments of notional transcendence in "poetic" language cannot be detached from the idea that meaningful linguistic production has failed. It is therefore "in the space between hope and failure that ... [Mallarmé's] work is situated" (Nicholls 1995, 37); while "[i]n Decadent temporality, it is the giddy ... near uncapturable state of betweenness that fascinates and compels" (McGuinness 2000, 5).

As the fin de siècle approaches, it becomes easier to distinguish a disoriented, pessimistic Decadent vector within the Symbolist movement. There is, we might say, a pathological, borderline and melancholic, response to the withdrawal from meaning, as some late-nineteenth century writers express the "return" of personality, of speech, of a troubled subjectivity:

...[t]he Decadent, or Decadent persona of the Symbolist, ... [asks] questions of morality and behaviour which never assail the Symbolist ... Decadence is ... permeated by a sense of loss, present or imminent ... combine[d] with a sense of surfeit, so that verse has that ... "wearied look from having explored all available dreams". (Scott 2000, 64-5)

The poet's right to occupy a space left by the death of God is, perhaps, as meaningless as his right to enter into the heavenly kingdom. The seer-poet's gaze is inhibited by anxious rumination: he may be deluded, his self-dissolving epiphanies foregrounding emptiness. Ambivalence generates phobia: perhaps the mysterious paradise revealed in language will turn out to be at best vacuous, and worse, a devilish, hellish place (cf. Chadwick 1971, 13).  
When you strive for the ineffable, who can say?

Plagued by doubts, the avant-garde revolution gets bogged down in social isolation and a self-imposed inability to think coherently about ideal modes and spaces. For Kristeva, "melancholy is affirmed in religious doubt. Nothing sadder than a dead God..." (OMI, 13). Mallarmé begins to represent the artist's experience as a perspective on death, in poems such as Toast Funèbre (1873) and Tombeau d'Edgar Poe (1876), while obscurity merges into disorientation and melancholy in the work of Paul Verlaine, Jean Lorrain and Remy de Gourmond. The musical quality of suggestiveness, which, for the early

Mallarmé, provides an aspirational focus for the poet, in Verlaine's work evokes a haunting sadness and anxiety, while Lorrain's and de Gourmand's images of ruined buildings suggest decay within that paradigm of modernity and progress, the city, and so echo Baudelaire's narcissistic entrapment by a culture wherein demands for the new result in an eternal return of the same.<sup>34</sup> Kristeva's pre-oedipal aesthetics taps into this Decadent field of alienation and inhibition (as well as its linguistic revolution) when she speaks of "the avant-garde, Mallarmé, Lautréamont, and after them the surrealists--the entrance of psychosis into the life of the city, which modern art represents" (JKI, 13).

As we move on now to Lawrence's second novel, The Trespasser (1983 [1912]), I want to carry forward the affective essence of the literary-historical dichotomy set out above, as an articulation split across transcendence and despair, which I will then characterise in terms of Kristeva's post-Kleinian model of complex melancholia. Lawrence's profoundly symbolist -- and thereby "decadent" -- novel proceeds as a series of oscillations between idealisation and derealisation, while the narrative is specifically related to French Decadent art through its recurrent attempts to conflate sexual jouissance with "suicidal" self-consummation in allusive metaphoricity (cf. Scott 2000, 63). The Trespasser is a concentrated negotiation of grief and nihilism, problematised transcendence, and unresolved feminine fixation. In contrast to The White Peacock, there is no detached, embedded narrator, while the later novel similarly discards the sprawling provincial-realist template and microcosm of interactive characters. It is as though George and Lettie have been lifted from Peacock, and isolated within a prose poem saturating their doomed affair (his doom) with obscurity and melancholic affect. For John Worthen, The Trespasser is,

...something of a living fossil, a chance survivor of an earlier epoch ... [It] marked the end of the road for Lawrence as a "personal or lyrical writer": "Paul Morel", though autobiographical, would be mostly far less personal, and would hardly be lyrical at all. (1979, 22, 25)

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<sup>34</sup>Walter Benjamin identifies Baudelaire as the seminal artist in a "modern" epoch, through his evocations of metropolitan boredom, alienation and terror. Baudelaire's claustrophobic representations of frozen time and melancholic inactivity function, for Benjamin, as metaphors for the freezing of history in a capitalist marketplace delimited by bourgeois values, where the production and consumption of "new" goods is illusory. See Nicholls (1995), p. 7, and McGuinness (2000), p. 29-30. In All That is Solid Melts into Air, Marshall Berman evaluates Marx's characterisation of bourgeois alienation and inhibition as a contradiction between "insatiable desires ... permanent revolution ... perpetual creation and renewal" -- and -- "nihilism, destruction ... the heart of darkness, the horror" (Berman 1983, p. 102).

There is, in fact, both an end and a beginning. Lawrence's lyrical Symbolist influence will not be anywhere nearly as ostentatious in subsequent novels; yet The Trespasser's psychic "umbilication" to a fascinating and abject "Lady" is a kind of core-dynamic groundwork, an aesthetic primary manifesto for his career-long negotiations of woman with transcendence and death.<sup>35</sup>

## V. THE TRESPASSER

The Trespasser begins in mourning. One of the two main protagonists, Siegmund Macnair, is already dead. Helena Verden and her friend, Louisa, play Mozart. On one level, the "music" of suggestive symbols will, in the three movements of the novel, produce a constant flow of linguistic jouissance, while, at another level, we see an imagistic use of music to establish a Verlainean mood of haunted melancholia. The room in which the women play is like a crypt, with "dead green walls", the carpet "like a square of grass in black loam" (4). The space of grieving transforms into an "indifferent ... church" (7), generating echoes of the White Peacock's Gothic ruin. As always in Lawrence, Christian "relics" frequently return in The Trespasser, their meanings mystified in categorical transgression and melancholic affect: two candles burn dimly on Louisa's piano, as if upon an "altar" (7). Helena's violin, moreover, recalls the instrument of her former teacher and lover, Siegmund, which once "drank his being and turned it into music" (12). Siegmund's violin no longer speaks; it is, like him, "folded in silk in the dark, waiting" (12). Prolepsis then enables the narrative to stage a resurrection, a triumph over silence and death.

Siegmund comes alive, six months earlier, determined to throw off bourgeois domesticity. He hates his wife, formerly a "lady" (20), who now signifies "repetition of ... degradation" (20). Like Annable's Lady Crystabel, Beatrice has vampirically "bled" her man "of his courage and self-respect" (20). She stares at Siegmund balefully in "suspicion ... and contempt" (19). On the other hand, there is Siegmund's mistress, an abstract idealised figure, "eternally self-sufficient, solitary..." (19). Beatrice and Helena at this point oppose each other as loathed and idealised females. Siegmund's wife persecutes him, filling him with guilt and making him feel like a ghost, while his lover signifies

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<sup>35</sup>All quotations in this chapter from The Trespasser (1983 [1912]) appear in the following section of the main text, and are referenced in parentheses by page number only.

renewal and life. Helena is a means to free the "suppressed ... soul", in "a sort of new birth", through "a translation of himself" (14). When Siegmund travels to the Isle of Wight for a few days with Helena, in fact, the narrative is moving toward a textual space of psycho-topographical "translation" where the woman-effect will be negotiated within a mesh of allusive figuration. I want to interpret this matrix of excess in ways that register both a pervasive polyphony and a schema establishing a pattern of meanings, while I also want to identify Lawrence's subjectifying organisation of specific figural patterns in a complex of melancholic ambivalence. To do this, we first need to deviate from the reading for a while in order further to elaborate allegory as a mode of figuration relative to symbolist practice.

### **The Allegorical Imaginary**

"Might the Imaginary be allegorical?" (BS, 100), Kristeva speculates rhetorically. She is not, however, suggesting that an essential psychological function should be aligned with a cultural mechanism ostensibly opposed by the avant-garde. The actual implications of Kristeva's nexus are elaborated along vertical, or subjectifying, and also horizontal, or contextual, lines of elaboration. A vertical axis is clearly identifiable in allegorical representations forming the dominant mode of figuration in the Middle Ages. There is, here, a series of tensions between a literal, worldly image -- for example, a woman holding a child -- and a supernatural presence and universal moral value/s which the image represents: the holy Virgin, and Nurture and Purity. Such a tension between low and high, worldly embodiment and abstract idealism, for Kristeva, both transforms and veils the essence of subjectification in transition from abjection to the I-ideal of culture. Religious allegory, she argues, is

...constituently very close to depression and at the same time show[s] a necessary shift from depression to possible meaning. Like a tense link between Thing and Meaning, the unnameable and the proliferation of signs, the silent affect and the ideality that designates and goes beyond it... (BS, 100)

Allegorical binary productions, such as "Satan and God, Fall and Resurrection" (BS, 101), elaborate the subject's eternal process of emergence in/to language. Through a "breathtaking orchestration in the imaginary economy (BS, 101), the preverbal world of Thingness is displaced to a material world of pain, death and depression, and "killed" by the Word, through which the subject is identified with a universal ideal (Virgin, Christ, Saint, etc.), and thereby "totalised", as "two extreme thematics" (Satan/God, etc.) construct

"sublime meaning for and on behalf of the underlying, implicit nonbeing..." (BS, 101, 99). Allegory thus "weaves a hypersign around and with the depressive void ... and regains for myself a higher meaning because I am able to remake nothingness ... within an unchanging harmony" (BS, 99). Allegory lexicalises and moralises the subject's radical tension between the wordless (Godless) body and its sublimation, "between ... depression/depreciation and ... signifying exaltation" (BS, 102). The concept of harmonised representations, meanwhile, moves us from this vertical or subjectifying model, to a horizontal or intertextual approach to allegory, and thence to symbolist practice.

The sign, as conceived by modern semiological theory, is inextricable from a system of language which determines a sign's relations to other signs, while the transferential mode in which meanings move across signs is called figuration. Figurative interpretation, then, raises a parallel concept to the sign's relations to discourse which locates the figure within a systematic set of figures. Interpreting religious allegory subversively means seeing its figural relations in detachment from the pre-figural Text (Bible) which confines interpretation within a hierarchical structure of higher and lower planes. Abolishing a text's metaphysical level of interpretation reveals the textuality of meaning, as a field of interaction among signs. A psycho-semiological paradigm, furthermore, displaces "divine" and "worldly" by consciousness and the unconscious, which are interpreted as fields of coherent and incoherent signifying relations. Characterising the textual conscious, in this case, means observing metaphorical coherence formed through a specific pattern of signs and their relations. Kristeva speaks of

...the poetic art that transposes the affect into an elliptic, lacunary prosody, formed by condensation and allusion. Repetitive, often monotone, this prosody imposes upon affective fluidity a grid as exacting in its deciphering (often presupposed is a detailed knowledge of mythology and esotericism) as it is supple and indefinite by its very allusiveness ... One understands thereby that the triumph over melancholy consists as much in the constitution of a symbolic family [not a Symbolic order] ... as in the construction of a symbolic object... (OMI, 17).

In Chapter 2, I look at some esoteric, mythological, and other discourses that Lawrence's metaphysical doctrine draws upon. I want here to identify in The Trespasser a "grid" or "family" of meanings, on the one hand, "supple" and "indefinite", provisional and deictic, not regulated by a pre-figural text -- on the other hand, a pattern of signs cohered through repetitive figural superimposition. I want, in other words, to negotiate the (unconscious)

"openness" of Lawrence's polyvalent text, while observing a (conscious) structural pattern, and sub-patterning, of figuration. The interpretant thus becomes a kind of semiotised alternative to allegorical harmony, a "discourse" of allusive signs. Michael Black sees in The Trespasser, an "underlay of repeated or developed themes [which] gives an orchestral or many-stranded meaning to the clear thread of the action" (Black 1986, 80). Lawrence's recurrent, rhythmical, associations between colours, birds and bees, flowers and the sea, the sun and the moon, the mouth and blood, and more, Black argues, are "orchestrated" into a "motivic structure" (*ibid.*). My concern, however, is not just with how blood, for example, is echoed in other (orchestral) registers by floral sap, and the sea, and so on, within a developing composition. From a Kristevan perspective, Lawrence's novel is a network of metaphorical relations, a symbolic grid whose semiotic "discourse" is split between conscious (cohering) and unconscious (polyphonic) planes, and this split is reified in a subjectifying dialectic between meaning and loss. In other words, I am concerned with how horizontal shifts intersect with a vertical dialectic, in The Trespasser, to produce the split subject-in-process: the one "essential truth of the psychism in process of constitution and decomposition" (OMI, 19).

We have to carry forward, then, a field axis of horizontal correspondences between signs, and a cyclical axis registering vertical movements between lower and higher planes, consonant with subjective de/formation, and depressive and manic mood swings. When Kristeva speculates that the imaginary might be allegorical, she is thinking about the eternal cycle between materiality and linguistic idealism which "positions" the subject-in-process. Allegory fixes and codifies the subject's essence in split being, and his desire to transcend the physical; this, obversely, means that allegorisis, "the genesis of allegory" (BS, 102), is referable as the essential dynamic in creative, paradigmatically symbolist writing, where a web of allusion is invested by allegoric narcissism in cycles between melancholic inhibition and "hallucinations" (in a post-metaphysical text) of transcendence. As a product of the artist's melancholy jouissance, these hallucinations signal epiphanic "triumph", an omnipotent perception of identification within a "harmonised" pattern of meaning, whose semiotic signifiante (not metaphysical "significance") is both subversive of, and essential to, religious allegorical transcendence. In turning now to elaborate these ideas within The Trespasser, I want to look first at how one signifier in the novel's grid destabilises and reconstructs identification on both vertical and horizontal planes.

### **The Liberated Sign**

From a Kristevan perspective, Makiko Minow-Pinkney identifies Virginia Woolf's liberation of novelistic language through representations of "sounds, intonation, colour, shape. Sensory intensities have their origin in utilitarian objects, but then detach and foreground themselves, becoming objects ... in their own right..." (1990, 161). Michael Black suggests that Woolf's novel, The Waves, published in 1931, may have had as its "model" (1986, 81) The Trespasser. In this case, one word we see repeatedly foregrounded in Lawrence's novel to "inspire" free associations, is "blue". As Siegmund journeys to Portsmouth, and thence to the Isle of Wight, he imagines the sea, "so like Helena, blue, beautiful, strong in its reserve" (21). A glimpse of the actual sea induces oceanic rapture: Siegmund is "mated with joy ... as if he were a part of it all ... amid the large, magnificent sea noon like a piece of colour" (22). But warm blueness is soon displaced to Helena's cold, shivering arms (23). He is "fused in an aura of love", yet "[Helena's] blue eyes were rather awful to him" (24). "Blue" is first a sign of strength, then this association is displaced in a movement from sublime pleasure, via bodily pain and pathetic weakness, to abject terror. And Helena herself -- or "Helena" -- is, in parallel, a location of safety, of ecstasy, of impotence, and a devouring female threatening disintegration. In the horizontal field a signifier shifts across contexts, while various modes of subjective affect inflect the signifier to articulate a "wave" in the text's constant vertical "process". Consonant with the formation and dissolution of its meanings, "blue" is subjectively invested to sublimely transcend abjection -- and become lost again. And integral to this archaic representational process, of course, is the woman-effect.

### **Fusion and Appropriation**

Lawrence's representation of heterosexual desire in The Trespasser, as throughout his work, is ambivalent between images of ecstasy and engulfment which can be seen to transform oral phantasy. Siegmund is fascinated by Helena's mouth. It is a portal through which they can "melt and fuse together ... [in] the long, supreme kiss in which man and woman have one being" (32). Yet her "passion exhausts itself at the mouth" (32). Helena's mouth double-registers abjection in primary and secondary narcissism: it is inhibitory, inviting and denying Siegmund's demands for a translation, a "birth"; and it is predatory, dangerous, an abyss threatening his subjectivity, his life. She lies upon him, listening to



his heart. The "vividness" (32) of Siegmund's blood merges into his dreams of fusion with Helena, which are "the flowers of his blood" (33). The flowers are associated with a life-giving summer sun, but also with bees, which recur again and again in the novel, moving from flower to flower, transferring sap. In the obscure logic of superimposition, Siegmund's passionate will to fusion is drained (exhausted) by Helena's mouth in a prolific dispersal/leakage of his blood. Such images of fusion and dispersal dispose the writer's precociously uncertain positionality, while the allusive nexus is a nuclear group of signifiers in the text's extended family, its "affective fluidity" (OMI, 17) crystallised in/to a "passage" of gendered (Symbolic) self-identification.

Helena eventually gives in to Siegmund's demands for fusion: "she met his passion with love ... she felt it destroyed her. Her soul seemed blasted" (91). A notable facet of Lawrence's pervasive fascination with heterosexual relations is his commitment to expressing women's ideas and feelings, which often suggests that he is identifying with his female characters. In a Kristevan frame, however, this does not represent any kind of feminist or egalitarian, or, indeed, any conscious, impulse on Lawrence's part. As he says in a 1914 letter,

I don't care so much what the woman feels--in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care about what the woman is--what she is--inhumanly, physiologically, materially ... representing some greater, inhuman will. (Letters ii, 183)

For Kristeva, poetic language is not about some premeditated "message", but rather is "deeply indicative of the instinctual drives' activity relative to the first structurations (constitution of the body as self) and identifications (with the mother)" (DL, 137). While artistic constructions of women defy generalisation, Kristeva argues, they tend to form in an economy of projection relative to the (male) writer's identification with a male protagonist. In The Trespasser, the narrative's disclosure of Helena's mental processes is a projection of Siegmund's experience, and it is subordinate to the essential purpose of representing, and working through, the writer's identity crisis.

Lawrence, then, appropriates as an enunciating position his female character, so as to override her function as an abject object. Otherwise cathected in loathing and idealisation, she can be a subject articulating a cycle of melancholy and jubilation. Meanwhile, the writer's cross-gendered appropriation causes characterological boundaries

to break down and merge, as part of the novel's general displacement of affect across signifiers. Helena's inner experience, as well as Siegmund's, is dispersed and orchestrated within the phantasy island's metaphorical grid, where loss and restitution of meaning are enacted in synaesthetic imagery and shifts between distressed and ecstatic self-estrangement. I want to look at this dynamic as it operates in a particularly condensed section in the novel.

### **Allegoric Waves**

On the morning after her "soul-blasting" submission to Siegmund's desire, Helena relaxes:

...small waves ran up the beach ... continuing perfectly in their flicker the rhythm of the night's passion. Nothing, she felt, had ever been so delightful as this cool water running over her. She lay and looked out on the shining sea. All, it seemed, was made of sunshine more or less soiled. (61)

The sudden negative perception is triggered by her memory of the night's physical passion. Through psychic dissociation the intense sensory experience of Helena's soiled body is dispersed in a sublime group of signifiers:

The coarseness was fused out of the world, so that sunlight showed in the veins of the morning cliffs and the rocks. Yea, everything ran with sunshine, as we are full of blood, and plants are tissue from green-gold, glistening sap. Substance and solidity were shadows that the morning cast round itself to make itself tangible: as she herself was a shadow cast by that fragment of sunshine... (61-2)

This movement staging a merging of somatism and Nature in an ideal space of synaesthesia (authorised by the reliquary "Yea"), however, is halted by a memory of bats, whose flickering wings "threaded with blood" (62) intercept, *via* the waves, the soiling rhythm of sex. This negative image then is inverted in a jubilant vision of transparent wings attached to the cliffs, and then to "the wings of all the world ... The world itself was flying ... she fancied it a vast heavy bee humming on its iridescent atmosphere across a vast air of sunshine. She lay and rode the fine journey" (62). Dispersing, deflating, vampiric bees here coalesce into one massive nurturing body, while Helena's body is finally cleansed, even as it vanishes: "white and playing like a bird, shining like a vivid, restless speck of sunlight ... the owner[] of the morning..." (62). The writer, though, is the creative "owner" of this dazzling passage, as waves of allegorisis generate a delusion of exalted self-presence.

A writer, observes Kristeva, may be "seized" by "phonic and rhythmic coherence", when, caught up in his own production of hyper-meanings in a heterogeneous "discourse", he senses "a boundary relative to the free associations inspired by each word..." (OMI, 17). When Helena thinks she owns the morning, a moment of ego mastery (a boundary) is achieved by Lawrence (the borderline writing subject): at one level, through a successful manipulation of the unstable family of signifiers, and, at another level, because the passage is ("allegorically") perfecting the "bad" soiled body in transcendent hypersignification. In a text with no cohering universalist pre-Text, and no binary codes, the instant of control occurs when the text's polylogical

..."I" speaks/sings the indecisive moment of its own coming. [It] gathers together into a single, formulated sequence rhythm and meaning, erased presence, and a reconstructed or mimed presence where it scans-and-signifies the truth of its own production... (DL, 188).

The psychic "truth" foregrounded in the symbolist text is a dialectic of such "constitutions" with "decomposition": the subject-in-process. Transcendental representations appear when the writing subject scans a phase in its production and signifies the "Truth" of self-presence in identification with the reified signifier filled with Meaning. There is an egoist alignment with the (vertical) emergence of the sublime from intolerable in/significance, relative to a particularly dense sequence of polyvalent metaphors. A secular epiphany occurs, a triumph of the ideal in the abstract hypersignifier, and the triumph of the writer over the play of the drives across a suffering body (which the synaesthetic word is also representing). It is a sublation in primary narcissism, a moment of manic omnipotence: it is an hallucination of completion in a quest to represent (find in language) the maternal "promised land", in a Godless text (and on a psycho-topographical island) made strange by condensation and allusion.

"'Where was Siegmund?', she wondered" (62). He is elsewhere on the Isle, echoing Helena's transcendent mood: "he had more wilful life than the sea, so he mastered it laughingly with his arms, feeling delight in his triumph over the waves" (62-3). He, too, has found the promised land: "[t]he sand was warm to his breast and his belly and his arms. It was like a great body he cleaved to. Almost, he fancied, he felt it heaving under him in its breathing" (63). As with Helena and the world-bee, this is an infantile image of security; but Siegmund is a male character, and there is an immediate displacement: "'Surely' he said to himself, 'it is like Helena'", and an incestuous transformation: "he laid

his hands ... on the warm body of the shore, let them wander, discovering, gathering all the warmth and softness..." (63). As in *Nethermere*, however, mother's phantasy border is pervious, a phobic product of anxiety about sinking irretrievably into the (maternal) Thing: Siegmund's hand "burrowed under the surface, wrist deep ... under all, was this deep mass of cold, that the softness and warmth merely floated upon" (63-4).

### **Reduplication**

Connections between porous borders and self-dissolution are made explicit to Siegmund by a "sort of *Doppelgänger*" (98), Hampson, a fellow-violinist:

"I call a day like this, 'the blue room.' It's the least draughty apartment in all the confoundedly draughty House of Life."

Siegmund looked at him very intently. This Hampson seemed to express something in his own soul.

"I mean," the man explained, "that after all, the great mass of life that washes unidentified, and that we call death, creeps through the blue envelope of the day, and through our white tissue, and we can't stop it once we've begun to leak." (92)

The narrative's imagery of soiling, leaking and immersion, and one of its particularly febrile signifiers, "blue", are sublated as master-terms in a rudimentary philosophy or metaphysics. This "position" is then made relative to women:

"She can't live without us, but she destroys us ... they destroy the natural man in us --that is, us altogether ... Fools--the fools, these women ... Look at me, I am whittled down to the quick."

All at once he stopped. The bitter despair in his tone was the voice of a heavy feeling of which Siegmund had been vaguely aware for some weeks. Siegmund felt a sense of doom. (94-5)

The encounter between Siegmund and Hampson is the first instance in Lawrence's novels of scenes in which a confused and unhappy protagonist is fascinated by a wiser, idealised version of himself, who seems able to convert impressionistic experience into coherent discourse, but whose affirmations the narrative undercuts.<sup>36</sup> Kristeva situates the literary double in a primitive field of narcissism, where the gaze sees the self everywhere (while the writer is always "seeing" himself in his characters). Such characters may at first gesture at the Symbolic -- "Is this the Other, my clean and properly ordered brother?"

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<sup>36</sup>Lawrence's tendency to place in his novels idealised and undercut male doubles reaches a zenith in his "leadership" period, which I look at in Chapter 5.

A double may hold [back], for a while, the instability of the same, giving it a temporary identity, but it mainly explores the same in depth, opening up an unsuspected, unfathomable substance ... that which threatens and could engulf ... [R]eduplication precedes the specular identification specific to the "mirror stage." It refers to the outposts of our stable identities, blurred by a drive that nothing could defer, deny, or signify. (BS, 246)

Hampson denies symbolic reflexivity, and instead reduplicates Siegmund's negative feelings. Like the deadly female, he points to the death drives which are the "power" behind the narrative's melancholy jouissance. The two characters, again in Kristeva's terms, are "replicas in the script of suffering ... the theme of destruction" (BS, 251).

### Labels

The Trespasser, aside from being a field of deictic dispersals and reformulations, is also a narrative, a "script" developing its "theme" as an overarching movement of uncompleted abjection: a birth from death, which is a rebirth into death. Siegmund's early thoughts are about a "breaking of bonds, a severing of blood ties, a new sort of birth ... Slowly, the body of the past, the womb which had nourished him in one fashion for so many years, was casting him forth..." (14). These ideas give way to moribund images: "[I]ife, and hope were ash in her mouth" (111); there is "death taking place in his soul" (113). As the island excursion draws to a close, Siegmund's increasing shame and guilt over abandoning his family merge into his growing perception of Helena as the source of an oppressive (phallic mother's) "law" of unnameability. Functioning as a kind of alternative formulation to Lettie Beardsall's baffling eloquence and George Saxton's silencing, Siegmund's self-destructive feelings and the figural disseminations of his depressive affect are consonant with an explicit failure of language centring on Helena.

In an early moment of euphoric anticipation, Siegmund says to Helena: "You have torn the labels off things, and they all are so different ... Now, nights and days go racing over us like cloud-shadows and sunshine over the sea..." (76). But much later, as his gloom deepens, "[s]he can't translate herself into language" (135). "There was something in her he could never understand" (149). The Trespasser is the representational product of a borderline psyche whose orientation towards pre-symbolic space conditions an inability to establish coherent relations between self and world, signifier and signified. Helena, as a maternal imago, is equivalent to the world without a referential system of labels (signifieds), and indicative of the ego without boundaries: "'[w]hat is myself?' he asked.

'Nothing very definite' she said..." (99). Their affair is characterised by the flow through Siegmund's (and Helena's) mind of uncoordinated and indistinct ideas/symbols which are like schizophrenic, paranoid and omnipotent, "messages".<sup>37</sup> Persecution phantasies cathect the impoverished ego: "She had a destructive force: anyone she embraced, she injured ... she was a harmful force, dragging Fate to petty, mean conclusions ... [Siegmund] was an awful blank before her" (111-2). Desire for Helena (and Helena's projected desire) produces sublime "wholenesses" in identifications with a maternal skin of unlimited magnitude (the world-bee, etc.); but it also entails phantasmatic engulfment and dispersion of the rational self: "[a]ll his thoughts, like bees were flown out to sea, and lost" (111-2, 141).

It is, as we have seen, axiomatic for Kristeva that melancholic irrationalism is identical with Symbolic breakdown, while the death of God is a paradigmatic metaphor, and specific as the primary trigger of crisis. "Optimistic" French Symbolists, as we also saw, make the artist a replacement for God. For Mallarmé, the poet is a divinely creative figure, while Baudelaire suggests analogies between the artist and Christ through their angelic nature and divine mission (cf. Chadwick 1971, 13). But then how might the angst-ridden Decadent symbolist modulate the identification? More specifically, how -- and why -- does one post-symbolist novelist, through an abject self-destructive character, identify with Christ and his mission?

### **Passion Play**

In the graveyard of a Roman Catholic church, Siegmund's "heart felt heavy, sad ... Yet he derived comfort from the knowledge that Life was treating him in the same manner as it had treated the Master ... [in] the Christ-tragedy" (88). Is Siegmund's face "a panorama of passing God?" (111), wonders Helena. He certainly has a heightened sense of his own passing through the world:

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<sup>37</sup>Kristeva's frequent associations of abjection with schizophrenia inform her aesthetic model of borderline psychosis, and accordingly modify her adaptation of Kleinian manic-depression. For Kristeva, abjection is an acutely pathological form of *Spaltung*, the splitting of the ego in tension between conscious and unconscious ideation, which is elaborated in relation to a generic subject by Freud and Lacan. Kristeva synthesises Eugen Bleuler's refinement of *Spaltung* to describe a syndrome of unsystematic, dissociative and fragmentary, delusional ideation, which Bleuler neologistically called "schizophrenia". See Laplanche *et al.* (1973), pp. 427-9, and pp. 408-9. In Chapter 2, below, I specify in greater detail Kristeva's discourse of psychosis used to characterise the modern artist's production.

He, in loneliness, must search the night for faith.

"My fate may be finely wrought out ... Even damnation may be finely imagined for me in the night. I have come so far. Now I must get clarity and courage to follow out the theme..."

...But he needed to know what was the proper sequence of his acts. (115)

Siegmund's journey is an abject per/version of the Passion, one for which there is no guidance in a pre-existing holy Book. There are no readable and coherent miraculous signs, no seminal acts for the would-be apostle, and there is no allegorical progress to resurrection and the celestial light: "[s]taring at the darkness, he seemed to feel his course, though he could not see it" (115). Kristeva speaks of the abject-melancholic writer (Dostoevsky) whose sense of loss is veiled by a character who is,

...persuaded that God doesn't exist but who, in adhering to the divine position ... [performs] that exemplary act of denial and freedom which, for him, is suicide. God doesn't exist -- I am God -- I do not exist -- I commit suicide: such would be the paradoxical logic of this negation of a divinity or paternity nonetheless maintained in order that I possess myself of it. (OMI, 20).

After much anguish Siegmund hangs himself at home. As with Christ, his mission is to suffer and die, albeit in a narrative in negation of the divine/paternal principle (where "negation" signifies both repudiation and loss, abjection and mourning).

During Siegmund's final hours, the "Christ" trope is elaborated relative to a paternal deity characterised by existential paradox: "Siegmund thanked God that life was pitiless ... otherwise, how could he go with any faith to his death ... He was shirking the responsibility of himself, turning it over to an imaginary God" (211). Kristeva identifies the post-theological suicide -- the clinical depressive, and the modern artist of the death drives -- staging death as a transfiguration of Thingness which (at last) ends persecution and recovers the ideal self with-out symbolisation: "suicide is ... a reuniting with sorrow and, beyond it, with that impossible love, never attained, always elsewhere; such are the promises of the void, of death..." (OMI, 15). Death, particularly self-destruction, is recurrently desirable in Lawrence's narratives, coextensive with an allegoric "promise" of sublime nonmeaning. In the contextual (or intertextual) frame of its ironic relation to religious discourse, meanwhile, we see The Trespasser's perverse Passion narrative arriving at a final "station" (of the absent Cross).

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Siegmund dies; but in this thesis we observe his creator's ongoing "sublimation solutions ... of crisis" (OMI, 16). In this first chapter, I have tried to avoid being programmatic in producing a catalogue of abject and melancholic symptoms, while negotiating ideas about how subjectivity and textuality coincide; these ideas will be elaborated and augmented as we proceed. One of these symptoms, of course, is the ambivalent return of Christian language, as both a combatant cathected in misogynistic transformation, and an ideal space conflating metaphysical nostalgia with mother-love. In Chapter 3, I focus closely on the Bible when identifying in one of Lawrence's essays a dynamic for which a template exists in Leviticus. A great many metaphysical ideas, however, feed into Lawrence's art and doctrine, and it is possible to read his work in terms of one or more of these theories.

I have suggested that Hampson, the double in The Trespasser, offers Siegmund a glimpse of metaphysical regulation. For Daniel Schneider, this scene is specifiable through Lawrence's preoccupation with Schopenhauer's philosophy:

...the Life Force, or the Will to Live, is impersonal, implacable, and cruel; and the female, as the instrument of this force, does not hesitate to use the male for the realization of life's ends ... The synthesizing principle of the novel is this: whatever is included is for the sake of exhibiting with maximum clarity and pathos the remorselessness of the great impersonal process that urges male and female into destructive union ... Lawrence's vision is almost purely Schopenhauerian.  
(Schneider 1984, 120, 131-2)

A problem with this perspective is that Schneider's systematisation of The Trespasser's symbols -- for example, Helena/woman is the "great elemental sea" (ibid., 132) -- elides the shifting nature of Lawrence's language, his refusal/inability to fix a "label". While it is reasonable to suppose that Lawrence synthesises Schopenhauer's language, his novel's allusiveness makes impossible an explanation in terms of the author's intention to represent "with maximum clarity" a single pre-existing philosophy.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Daniel Schneider (1984, p. 30), when considering Lawrence's Schopenhauerian influence, acknowledges the seminal work of Allan R. Zoll (1978). See also, Michael Bell's (1992) explication of Lawrence's understanding of the philosopher, and Robert Montgomery's The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art (1994). Since we have been thinking of Lawrence as a symbolist writer, see Peter Nicholls (1995) on the extensive influence of Schopenhauer on French Decadent symbolism (pp. 47-9). In Proust and the Sense of Time (1993b, p. 78), Kristeva herself reflects upon Schopenhauer's "French disciples", from the Symbolistes to Proust, who restate the philosopher's opposition to rationalist discourse, and his privileging of artistic intuition as that which assimilates the contradictory and incoherent Will. The "natural affectivity" of the Will, observes Kristeva, pre-figures Freud's understanding of the unconscious, though Freud's repressive model is not consonant with the aesthetic vector of influence which sees the Will most strongly assimilated in music and "musical" language, "the perfect language of being" (ibid., p. 87). The four



Paul Poplawski, by contrast, in concentrating on the "synthesis of beliefs that Lawrence evolved slowly throughout his life" (1993, 161), uses a diachronic interpretative model whereby Lawrence's ideas are incorporated and accumulate as a personal metaphysical system. This approach is also flawed, however, since it cannot properly register signifying indeterminacy; it cannot comprehend that Lawrence's principles, and, indeed, his theories, however urgently argued, are typically labile and transient, and are so as a function of identification instability as the obverse register of synthesis. It is worth restating here our emphasis on psychopathology, which entails that the artist's work is being seen as primarily indicative of borderline affective disorder. Accordingly, rather than affirming Lawrence's wide reading, and identifying his cumulative engagement with the history of ideas, we would see idealisation turning into indifference or hostility, and so characterise an incoherent series of shifting predicative allegiances to extant metaphysical discourse. Kristeva's psycho-intertextual theory perhaps can best comprehend the sheer number of Lawrence's ideational sources: why his mind (and not, perhaps, yours or mine) is so "open" to textual influences.

In the next chapter, I give an account of Lawrence in terms of Kristeva's analogy of the abject writer with a bright adolescent. Here we will come closest to establishing a "personality" for the artist, as someone with a ceaseless drive to acquire knowledge, as one who seems to believe in everything -- and everybody -- at some time or another, but who thereby comprehends the permanent value of nothing and no-one.

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transcribed lectures that constitute Proust and the Sense of Time (1993) are expanded and augmented, in Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature (1996b [1994]). The section in the former text cited here, "Proust as Philosopher" (pp. 75-98), appears revised and enlarged in Time and Sense, as "Proust the Philosopher" (pp. 251-275).

**AN ADOLESCENT PSYCHE:  
INTELLECTUALISM AND "AS-IF" TYPOLOGY  
IN THE ARTIST'S METAPHYSICS**

In "The Adolescent Novel" (1990), Julia Kristeva argues that the generic Western novel has been,

...largely tributary, in its characters and the logic of its actions, to the "adolescent" economy of writing, ... the work of a perpetual subject-adolescent ... [T]he novelist presents himself as an adolescent ... recognises himself in the adolescent, and is an adolescent... (AN, 11-12)<sup>39</sup>

Sylvie Gambaudo glosses Kristeva's view of the "adolescent" novelist as having,

...a psychological structure open to repressed elements because the control and blocking functions of the superego are momentarily suspended ... [Adolescents'] mythic predilection for writing, for contesting society's values and for rebelling against authority figures symbolize the desire to open up the limiting and even corrupting structures of symbolic language... (Gambaudo 2000, 111)

For Kristeva, the artist's crisis of metaphysical, or Symbolic, cultural identity corresponds to a typical adolescent's psychic destabilisation hinging on an active negation of parental values which distil wider social constraints. It is in this context that she declares: "I do not see ... what would prompt writing if not an 'open structure'" (AN, 11). Roland Barthes, cited on the back cover of Powers of Horror, comments favourably on Kristeva's rigorous approach to synthesis, observing that her work "takes up all the space it deals with, fills it precisely...".<sup>40</sup> We might, then, see Kristeva synthesising the "adolescent" field in psychoanalysis in order to generate a variant terminological "space" (discourse) with/in which to characterise her revolutionary/abject artist, whose writing is at once immature and creative, rebellious and traumatised.

The artist's "recognition" of himself in the adolescent, for Kristeva, is most apparent in the frequent "projection" of pubescent characters in novels, and, accordingly, in "The Adolescent Novel", she discusses at length the crucial status of the Bildungsroman

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<sup>39</sup>"The Adolescent Novel", appears as Chapter 9 in New Maladies of the Soul (1995), pp. 135-53, and in Fletcher et al. (eds) (1990), pp. 8-23. In this chapter I refer to each text, respectively, as AN and NM (my abbreviation for New Maladies).

<sup>40</sup>Barthes' translated citation is taken from "L'étrangère", Quinzaine Littéraire, May 1-15 (1970), p. 20.

in the Western novel's historical development. Kristeva's discussion moves, chronologically and highly selectively, from fifteenth-century France to Dostoevsky (AN, 12-23; NM, 139-153), and, in addition to adolescent characterisation, examines representations of androgyny, conflict between parental imagos, the idealised "Lady" and misogyny, multiple identities, integrated and disintegrated identities, and the profane use of Christian icons.

My first impulse, after deciding that the adolescent psyche would be a chapter theme in this thesis, was to gloss Kristeva's account and then give a reading of Lawrence's most obvious Bildungsroman text, Sons and Lovers. The reading would, I thought, focus on Paul Morel's anaclitic relations to his mother, while his self-conscious effeminacy, idealisation/loathing of his girlfriend, Miriam, and intense responses to parental conflict, also presented useful symptomatic topoi. I subsequently decided, however, that applying "The Adolescent Novel" to Sons and Lovers would not greatly elaborate what had already been said about abjection in Chapter 1, and that the analysis might anyway seem too "obvious", or programmatic, something that I am trying to avoid while negotiating a very well-known analytic theory with an already well-theorised/analysed artist.<sup>41</sup> And so, in line with my stated aim to produce an applicatory text that also gives a personal, and sometimes atypical, vision of Kristeva's theory, I want to take a different tack.

"The Adolescent Novel", as we might have supposed from the title, and as we saw above, is largely about novels; yet Kristeva's analogy is overarchingly between the biological adolescent and that of the artist-writer understood in terms of his epochal, post-metaphysical situation. This essential situatedness of the adolescent economy, linked to the epoch's symptom paradigms of abjection and melancholia, suggests that the economy may be present, to whatever degree, in non-fictional work. This is to say, precisely, that if the artist is experiencing a chronic and sustained crisis of identification, and this

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<sup>41</sup> "Well-analysed artist": psychoanalytic interpretations of Sons and Lovers are prolific, and begin as early as 1915, with Alfred Kuttner's (1969) oedipal, author-centred exploration of mother-fixation and envy/hatred of the paternal rival. In 1955, Mark Spilka (1957) uses Lawrence's rejection of Freud's destructive Unconscious (and of Freudian reviews of Lawrence's books) to support an argument for the presence of "two psychologies" at work in the novel: the one Freudian, the other anti-Freudian, the latter aligning love of the mother with Lawrence's creative unconscious. In Daniel Weiss's full-length study, D. H. Lawrence: Oedipus in Nottingham (1962), oedipal resonances persist, although latterly they are understood as discourse: "Sons and Lovers offers a classic case history of ... an Oedipus complex. Not that the novel sets out to prove [it]... Rather Freud's theory helps uncover a pattern of meaning..." (Finney 1990, p. 25).

experience prompts his writing, then it is reasonable to suppose that the "adolescent's" crisis will be further registered when he writes in prose genres other than the novel, and, indeed, in discursive form. I am thinking here particularly about Lawrence's doctrinal essays and books, in which appears a kaleidoscopic range of related theories on anything and everything, from sex and art to school education and racial superiority, from cosmology to electrical-magnetic centres in the human body, and so on. In deciding to use the adolescent theme to elaborate some of these texts, moreover, I was crucially drawn to a matter of psychoanalytic provenance centring on the defence mechanism of "intellectualisation", which is formally linked to adolescence by Anna Freud in her 1936 (A. Freud, 1954) seminal account of the adolescent psyche. What makes this mechanism especially interesting to me here (in an "atypical" nexus) is that Kristeva's ideas about adolescence do not at any point directly negotiate with those of Anna Freud.

In this chapter, then, I view Lawrence's doctrinal output in the light of Kristeva's theory of the adolescent writer, which I conflate with aspects of Anna Freud's definitive work. My negotiation of Freudian intellectualisation and Kristevan aesthetics results in a theoretically oblique, but terminologically consistent, perspective, which locates as a key point of articulation between these classical-defensive and poststructural-aesthetic analyses of adolescence, the shared feature of Helene Deutsch's "as-if" psychic typology. We begin, though, with a general account of Anna Freud's views on adolescence.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The subsequent discussion of Anna Freud's and Kristeva's views on adolescence is self-contained, and this is a reflection of my concern with adolescent intellectualisation, for which Anna Freud's is the paradigmatic account within psychoanalytic literature (see Laplanche *et al.* 1973, p. 224). A sketch of the general field of psychoanalytic views on adolescence, however, may be useful. This field is substantially created with the pioneering work of American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall. Hall (1904) instates the paradigm of adolescence as a time of turmoil and conflict, of Goethean *Sturm und Drang* (see Balk 1995, p. 11). This universalist framework later would be placed in question by some psychologists on grounds of socio-cultural specificity (see Gleitman 1986, pp. 564-5), but Sigmund Freud endorsed Hall's viewpoint (the Oedipus complex is renewed in puberty; see, for example, *Three Essays on Sexuality* [1986], pp. 354-7), and Kristeva's later connections between adolescent thought, cultural destabilisation and art incorporate the classical model of pubescent "crisis". Hall takes the post-Darwinian position that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, and sees adolescence as an "epoch" in which the individual evolves from savagery to early civilisation. Similarly, for Sigmund Freud, adolescence is the final stage in a phased, psycho-sexual "evolution", its storms and stresses being caused by inner tension generated through sudden, massive increases in libidinality. Anna Freud, in 1936, develops this basic set of positions to derive specific mechanisms of adolescent defence. These I set out in the main text below. A later text (Anna Freud, 1958) asserts the necessity of turmoil in adolescence, viewing the apparent conventionality and calm compliance of some young people as a pathologically repressive formation. This leaves two, central and related, problems unresolved: how can normal, well adjusted behaviour be exceptionally pathologised, and, similarly, how can we know when an adolescent is showing authentic signs of normalisation? Peter Blos (1941, 1962) observes ubiquitous adolescent upheaval, but, unlike Anna Freud, does not view these irruptions of libido as pathological, but as synecdochic within the

## I. ANNA FREUD

Anna Freud, in The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence (1954 [1936]), is, as we might expect, concerned with defence mechanisms rather than with creativity (a point to which I will return). Her descriptions of the psyche repeatedly use battlefield imagery ("combatants", "forces") to emphasise the struggle of the ego to contain the id's instinctual excesses. This struggle, for Freud, is modulated during distinct phases within an individual's life. When she thinks about adolescence (Chs. 11 and 12), two key modes of defence are identified: Asceticism and Intellectualisation. These are set out separately, though their functions are interwoven. It is important to bear in mind from the start that Freud is talking about a generic teenager, and never about an adult subject or, indeed, a mature artist.

### 1. The Ascetic Adolescent

Anna Freud sees in adolescent behaviour a prudishness which may achieve levels of expression "less akin to the symptoms of pronounced neurotic disease than to the asceticism of religious fanatics" (A. Freud 1954, 167). Sexual ideation is repressed to a degree found at no other time in the individual's life cycle, as the adolescent feverishly fights against the "quantity rather than quality of ... [the] instincts" (*ibid.*, 168). Levels of desire akin to infantile polymorphous perversity are experienced, producing intensely speculative sexual phantasies. What makes the adolescent different from the infant is that a super-ego has formed, and excessive desire generates excessive anxiety and repression. The adolescent's fear of sex extends to fear of all desire, and he says "No" to entertainment

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universal experience of development as conflict resolution. Unravelling Anna Freud's dogmatic stereotyping, Blos identifies five phases of adolescence, from "preadolescence" to "stable psychic structure", a dialectical approach allowing for all variations in bi-polar response to the superego (parents and culture) (See Blos 1962, Chapter 3, "The Phases of Adolescence", pp. 52-158). Erik Erikson (1968) makes adolescence number five in his list of eight life-spanning, developmental crises, each characterised by a specific ambivalent tensionality. In the case of adolescence, it is Identity  $\nu$  Confusion, the resolution coming as a choice between Fidelity and Repudiation. In Erikson's neo-Freudian model, if the crisis is capably resolved then fidelity to one's occupation or social role will be a strong field of sublimation, one of eight "psychosocial strengths", while anti-social, repudiatory impulses will be displaced to cathect inappropriate social behaviour. For more elaborate overviews of psychoanalytic theories on adolescence, from which I have partly derived, see Blum (1953), pp. 136-57 (emphasising the work of Anna Freud), Muus (1962) (see pp. 47-58, on adolescence as a feature in Erikson's stages), Rogers (1969), pp. 159-65 (critiquing both traditional and Erikson's stage theories, and repudiating the "special" developmental status of adolescence [p. 163]), Gleitman (1986), pp. 563-7 (preferring social specificity over-against a universal conflict model), and Balk (1995), pp. 9-28 (also a useful account of behaviourist and cultural-anthropological theories whose empirico-observational basis is antagonistic to psychoanalysis).

of any kind. Here, says Anna Freud, is the aetiology of an observable type, the solipsistic youth avoiding the society of his peers and living "in true puritanical fashion" (*ibid.*, 169).<sup>43</sup>

In the struggle against an overwhelming id (physiologically speaking, a massive rise in hormonal activity), argues Freud, the super-ego often is reinforced to the point of the ego's near-collapse. The neurotic functions of displacement and sublimation are abandoned, and the adolescent is "suddenly indulging in everything which he had previously held to be prohibited[,] and disregarding any sort of external restrictions" (A. Freud 1954, 170). This behaviour is an element in a distinctly adolescent dialectic: an "abrupt juxtaposition or succession of instinctual renunciation and instinctual excess ... [in] alternation" (*ibid.*, 171), as sexual phantasies are staged, and "fun" generally is had, followed by guilt-ridden, high-minded repudiation and withdrawal.

Perhaps many adolescents do vacillate between excessive instinctual expression and guilty self-incarceration, as Anna Freud argues; and perhaps (while recalling Kleinian associations set out in Chapter 1) we can instate this provenance with regard to Kristeva's depressively "guilty" artist having manic "fun" in metaphorical *jouissance*. We might, by refracting Anna Freud through Kristeva, oppose the artist's depressive paranoia to his precocious "decriminalisation" of maternal incest, in a language liberated by the poetic imaginary from moral imperatives through free association and symbolist excess. This construction, however, promises little that would be new in this thesis, and, indeed, Freud's ascetic defensive mode offers nothing much that was new in 1936, since a heightened struggle between the repressive ego and sexual impulses is the *sine qua non* in psychoanalytic pathology. More original and striking is her extension of ascetic repression in a context of intellectual moral debate, which then becomes the second mode of adolescent defence.

## 2. The Intellectual Adolescent

Pubertal destabilisation, argues Anna Freud, in many cases generates a sudden "advance in intellectual development" (1954, 173). Here Freud invokes a type perhaps familiar to

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<sup>43</sup>"His": I continue my use of predominantly masculine pronouns to refer to a generic subject, here following Anna Freud, as well as Kristeva, and because I am always, implicitly or otherwise, talking about Lawrence.

anyone who has spent some time in sixth-form common rooms or on a university campus: the earnest student, tirelessly debating on universal matters of "conscience", he who,

...will argue the case for free love or marriage ... a free-lance existence or the adoption of a profession, roving or settling down, or discuss philosophical problems such as religion or free thought, or different political theories, such as revolution versus submission to authority... (*ibid.*, 174)

The objectivity of the latency period, the interest in narratives of adventure and discovery, the fascination with descriptive details of bikes, cars, animals, far-flung countries, etc., gives way to abstract thought with an amazingly "wide and unfettered sweep" (*ibid.*, 175). It apparently indicates an immediate accession to depths of worldly wisdom well beyond the young person's years. How is this possible? Freud's answer is that it is not. The ascetic adolescent has been established as essentially withdrawn and isolated (except during bouts of mindless excess), and the second mode of defence follows suit: "We revise our opinion when we ... discover that this fine intellectual performance makes little or no difference to ... actual behaviour" (*ibid.*, 175). A youth may empathise enthusiastically with the "problems" of the world while displaying "an outrageous lack of consideration towards those nearest to him" (*ibid.*). His "lofty view of love and of the obligations of a lover" (*ibid.*) masks high levels of personal infidelity and callousness. His interest in the structure of society, often greatly exceeding that in later life, does nothing to integrate him socially. It is rather a "thinking over of the instinctual conflict" (*ibid.*, 177):

The abstract intellectual discussions and speculations in which young people delight are not genuine attempts at solving the tasks set by reality. Their mental activity is rather an indication of a tense alertness for the instinctual processes and the translation into abstract thought of that which they perceive. The philosophy of life which they construct ... is really their response to the perception of the new instinctual demands of their own id... (*ibid.*)

It all boils down, Freud is saying, to a sequence of "day dreams" (*ibid.*, 176) which "translate" the struggle, and which are not in the least intended for further translation into action.

The adolescent philo-sopher's (*lit.* "lover of wisdom's") impressive journey through the history of ideas is therefore to be distinguished from "grown up" arguments and debates. We can elaborate this contrast by thinking of the logico-dialectical tradition in Western philosophy, and particularly of English liberal philosophy in the tradition of J. S.

Mill, which promotes constant debate by opposing viewpoints.<sup>44</sup> A liberal thinker in the twentieth-century would, at a level of theoretical practice, welcome fascist and communist dogma as the means to contest, and eventually to reinforce, the "truth" of liberalism: but at no point would he identify with fascism or communism. The authority of the "super-ego" discourse, the Liberal moral metaphysic, would not be destabilised so as to permit such identificatory (as distinct from logical) play. The intellectualist adolescent, on the other hand, according to Anna Freud, believes in each idea he takes up. His is an endless quest, not to test the received "truths" of logic and reality, but to find cognitive positions through which to translate inner conflict. He is committed to each position, even though he is febrilely moving from one op/position to the next. The super-ego is suspended, there is no permanent metaphysic, and rhetorical object(ive)s constantly change:

[Adolescents'] philosophy of life, their religion and politics alter, as they exchange one model for another, and, however often they change, they are always just as firmly and passionately convinced of the rightness of their views which they have so eagerly adopted. In this respect they resemble a type of patient, described by Helene Deutsch, in a clinical work on the psychology of adults, as being on the borderline between neurosis and psychosis. She calls them persons of the "as if" type, because in every new object-relation they live as if they really were living their own life and expressing their own feelings, opinions and views. (A. Freud 1954, 184)

Anna Freud's reference to Deutsch's identification of the "as if" (or, in Kristeva's text, "as-if") subject will be crucial when we shortly turn to Kristeva's perspective on the adolescent psyche. At this point, we should clarify a crucial distinction.

Anna Freud is not concerned with art. Her intellectual adolescent deals with cultural issues in "unfruitful" ways. The youth is not "solid" and "reliable", as he will be in later life's healthy, "active" engagements with the world (Freud 1954, 180). Culturally unregulated phantasy is inimical to Freud, and there can never be a beneficially (creatively) transgressed ego. Freud's adolescents identify with what we might think of as pre-fabricated images and discourse: the world's objects and their meanings cannot be "customised". A youth may, for a time, adore a specific girl, idolise a student friend, and (we may say) worship a rock god, while each idealisation entails a feverish repudiation of the "wrong" sort of girl, the betraying friend, the uselessness of other rock gods. He will

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<sup>44</sup>See John Stuart Mill's On Liberty (1985 [1859]), especially Chapter 2, "Of Thought and Discussion", pp. 75-118, on truth as a function of the dialectical relations between received and contested opinion.



typically reject suddenly these "hyper-catheted" (*ibid.*, 183) objects, and idealise the "wrong" girl, etc. Similarly, when it comes to intellectual discourse, the adolescent may, at various times, and always in oppositional mode, be a disciple of Platonic elitism or Marxist uniformity, of Liberal egalitarianism or Nietzschean *Übermenschlichkeit* -- and so on. What becomes clear, however, is that Freud's adolescents do not, in any positive sense, recombine signifiers to create personal speaking positions in idiolectal discourse. For the oedipal-defensive theorist, to isolate oneself and play, through conflation and displacement, with the extant rules of identification is definitive perversion.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Anna Freud's entire theoretical output, observes Elizabeth Wright, is "dedicated to unquestioned ideals of maturity", having none of the mother-centred "feeling for the wayward and aberrant" (1998, p. 138) to be found in Melanie Klein's object-relations work, and, we might add, in Kristeva's psycho-aesthetics. Freud's blindness to creativity, consonant with her oedipal perspective registering as positive only stabilising psychic activity, clearly resembles her father's attitude to art and artists. For Sigmund Freud, aesthetic experience is a mystery. In *The Moses of Michaelangelo* (1914), he confesses that he is "no connoisseur in art ... I am unable rightly to appreciate many of the methods used and the effects obtained..." (Freud 1990, p. 253). Contemplating art objects might have a "powerful effect", but since Freud cannot "explain to [him]self what their effect is due to" (*ibid.*), he derives no pleasure. In a typical leap from self-reflexive musing to comprehensive assertion, he goes on: "This has brought me to recognise the apparently paradoxical fact that ... some of the grandest and most overwhelming creations of art are still unresolved riddles to our understanding" (*ibid.*). Freud may be baffled, but, as a rationalist, he wants to refuse suggestions that artistic production itself requires a destabilisation of cognitive processes: he is thinking of the Romantic tradition when he says: "We admire [works of art], we feel overawed by them, but we are unable to say what they represent to us. I am not sufficiently well-read to know whether ... some writer on aesthetics has discovered that this state of intellectual bewilderment is a necessary condition when a work of art is to achieve its greatest effects. It would only be with the greatest reluctance that I could bring myself to believe in any such a necessity" (*ibid.*, pp. 253-4). Much later, in *Dostoevsky and Parricide* (1927), Freud makes clear his sense of defeat: "...before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms" (*ibid.*, p. 441). He does, nevertheless, occasionally analyse specific artists' work, albeit in psycho-biographical terms. In a 1910 monograph, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*, for example, the frequent critical observation that, in Leonardo's "Madonna and Child with St. Anne", Anne looks barely older than her daughter, Mary, is explained by Freud as a reflection of the artist's childhood lived with "two mothers" (*ibid.*, p. 206), his natal mother and step-mother. (In *New Maladies of the Soul* [1995, pp. 154-8], Kristeva sees the same painting by Leonardo as a semiotised "profane" conflation of the Immaculate Conception and the Incarnation, which symbolises the birth of humanity within an excess of flesh, and in the absence of Man and his God). The nearest Freud gets to presenting a general theory of the artist's psyche, is in the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1917), where the generic artist is identified as a frustrated failure: "an introvert ... He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honour, power, wealth, fame and the love of women; but he lacks the means ... [so] like any other unsatisfied man, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy, whence the path might lead to neurosis" (*Standard Ed.* XVI, p. 376). In *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* (1908), the artist's excessive imagination is made even more clear: "The creative writer ... creates a world of phantasy ... which he invests with large amounts of emotion -- while separating it sharply from reality" (Freud 1990, p. 132). The dreamy artist is unscientific, regressive: like a "child at play" (*ibid.*). Freud is dogmatic: "We may lay it down that a happy person never phantasises, only an unsatisfied one" (*ibid.*, p. 134). Kristeva, of course, would agree with Freud that artists are essentially unhappy. Both analysts associate artistic production with a troubled psyche, with a turning away from culture and reality, and the expression of primary narcissistic phantasy. Whereas Freud's oedipal imperative enforces his negative perspective on the imaginative excesses of the artist, however, Kristeva sees art as the most valuable product of the human imaginary, especially in an epoch deprived of a metaphysical imaginary frame: modern art symptomatises suffering, but it also relieves

## II. KRISTEVA

### 1. Intellectualisation

The defensive strategy of intellectualisation set out by Anna Freud in relation to adolescents has come to have a general application to adult patients undergoing clinical psychoanalysis. Kristeva herself uses the term in her case study of a woman who, following a spiritual crisis, develops an "infatuation with theoretical writing" (NM, 92). Kristeva reports that "Martine", a highly educated practising teacher, studied obsessively,

...assimilated various theories and pitted them against each other in order to display a phallic, anal strength ... These intellectual actings-out ... displayed no cognitive or theoretical inventiveness. They were watered down versions of the Masters, mere compilations. (NM, 93)

"Can we really speak of inhibition when faced with so much intellectual curiosity?" (NM, 92), Kristeva asks, rhetorically. Yes, she replies, because Martine's intellectual activity is not creative: it is an abstract "screen of cognitive discourse" (NM, 93), whose purpose is to symbolise conflict, while repressing free association. Such patients inevitably use their "positions" to challenge the intellectual authority of the analyst, often borrowing from psychoanalysis itself. It is perhaps a measure of Martine's illness that she informs her analyst of her ideas about Gérard de Nerval's melancholia and Louis-Ferdinand Céline's abjection: "I could easily recognise my own articles" (NM, 97), says Kristeva. Martine disavows her theoretical identifications, understands them simultaneously at two, mutually inconsistent, levels: she believes Kristeva's ideas are really her own, but at another level she knows Kristeva will discover and explain her dissociated narcissism, and create an "intellectual" conflict situation. This imbrication of narcissistic delusion and pragmatic acting-out of inner conflict is, for Kristeva, inhibitory, sterile and unproductive; how, then, can we see intellectualisation as a component in artistic, or semioticised, discourse?

We should be clear about our identification, so far, of two kinds of "intellectual" discourse implied by the psychoanalytic pathology of intellectualisation. We might think of them as types.<sup>46</sup> Type A would be the "normal", "healthy", culturally ordering/ordered

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suffering, and there can never be too much therapeutic symbolisation of unconscious phantasy and affect.

<sup>46</sup>The simple typological schema that follows is mine. It functions to clarify the pathology of intellectualisation, and is not to be directly associated with three types of intellectual activity set out by Kristeva in "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident" (Kristeva 1986, p. 295), although I draw on this text.

discourse of the philosopher, scientist or theologian, who makes cohesive use of the imagination to integrate and assimilate the self within the Symbolic, or paternal, function. (Of course, for Kristeva, this Type, as a paradigm, has a redundant status in the post-metaphysical epoch.) Type B intellectualist discourse, by contrast, forms as a repressive cognitive screen, which is articulate and fervent, which shows a consistent fascination with metaphysical law, but, crucially, the ego is not assimilated within any one discourse so as to generate an affirmative and stable identification of the self and its social and ontological reality. As Anna Freud says, the intellectualist behaves "as-if" each of his shifting rhetorical positions is not just an externalisation of inner conflict, but the paradigm of truth. As we now go on effectively to construct a "Type C" creative intellectualist, Deutsch's "as-if" type, as I indicated above, forms the crucial nexus between Freud and Kristeva.<sup>47</sup>

Kristeva cites from Helene Deutsch:

Psychoanalysis discloses that in the "as-if" individual it is no longer an act of repression but a real loss of object cathexis. The apparently normal relationship to

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Kristeva's concern in her essay is to prioritise subversive aspects of psychoanalysis and experimental writing over-against the work of a third type of dissident, whose direct opposition to bourgeois political structures fails because s/he remains caught up in the master-slave dynamics of symbolic Law.

<sup>47</sup>Helene Deutsch's monograph, "The Psychological Type: 'as-if'" (1934) appears as "Some Forms of Emotional Disturbance and Their Relation to Schizophrenia" in Deutsch (1965). See Janet Sayers (1991), pp. 54-5, and p. 273 n. The psychoanalytic aetiology of the "as-if" type, and, by extension, of intellectualisation, begins with Sigmund Freud's concept of Verleugnung, or disavowal. Disavowal is elaborated by Freud in 1923 and 1924 (Standard Ed. XIX, pp. 143-4, 184-5), although he briefly describes in Studies on Hysteria, a "blindness of the seeing eye", whereby "one knows and does not know a thing at the same time" (Standard Ed. II, p. 117 n.). Disavowal, like all analytic pathology, refers to radical ambivalence; but it particularly signals the moment when an unexpected event does not, as it should do, disturb a "fixed plan" (*ibid.*). It is a "perception producing no psychical affect" (*ibid.*), and this is because "thoughts are not matched by ... feelings" (Balk 1995, p. 13): the subject registers the world only cognitively, superficially. The conceptual dynamic of disavowal corresponds to W. R. Bion's "reversible perspectives" (1984 [1963], p. 58), or reciprocal analogues, as two vases invert to represent facial profiles. Images of social reality are both there and not there, seen and not seen, observed and (secretly) disregarded. The second formative element in Deutsch's "as-if" theory is Hans Vaihinger's The Philosophy of "As If" (1925 [1911]). Vaihinger argues that, although religious beliefs are no longer capable of validation, we should retain them as "practical fictions" which cohere communities. Freud himself refers to Vaihinger's practical fictions strategy in The Future of an Illusion (Standard Ed. XXI, pp. 28-9, 29 n.), where the "scientific" Freud is hostile to any idea that religious discourse might have "incomparable importance for the maintenance of human society" (*ibid.*, p. 28). Disavowal, for the analyst, is firmly a pathology, and there is no "practical" use for infantile delusions about God. By contrast, Alfred Adler's view that the ego as capable of attaining non-libidinal coherence through a recognition of the ubiquity of phantasy, results in explicit affiliation: "I readily follow the ingenious views of Vaihinger, who maintains that historically ideas grow from fictions" (Adler, cited in Hillman 1983, p. 111). Helen Deutsch's "as-if" personality type, however, conflates ideas of pathology and practical fiction, giving a double-aspect sense that feeds directly into Kristeva's account of the adolescent artist.

the world ... is the expression of identification with the environment, a mimicry which results in an ostensibly good adaptation to the world of reality despite the absence of object cathexis ... In "as-if" patients, the objects are kept external and all conflicts are acted out in relation to them ... the "as-if" ego subordinates itself through identification to the wishes and commands of an authority which has never been introjected. (NM, 195-6)

This "as-if" subject's "environment", for Kristeva, is a post-metaphysical textuality devoid of a strong paternal identity, in which no symbolic structure is rigidly maintained, consonant with the subject's failure to introject and permanently categorise the pre-oedipal "authority" of the maternal dyad. The oedipal crisis of identification implicit in "as-if" typology, however, then is situated by Kristeva within the adolescent economy's psychic openness, in a move which (in typical Kristevan style) results in an affirmative, specifically aesthetic, transformation of the symptom. It is worth quoting her at length:

Just as there are "as-if" personalities, there are open structure personalities. The latter incorporate the "as-if" personality as well as other characteristics that can appear in perverse structures, even if they do not necessarily harbour any actual perversions ... Helene Deutsch, who treated many adolescents, knew that the Sturm and Drang of adolescence is less a matter of age than of a structure that I have called an "open structure." Although this term has been used to describe a living organism whose sole purpose is to renew itself by opening itself up to its environment or another structure, there are also some speaking beings who possess this property within the boundaries of their psychic realm. Through a massive freeing-up of the superego--which occurs for most of us during adolescence--such subjects are exposed to a rotation of representations between the various psychic registers (for instance, drives--primary inscriptions--secondary inscriptions). This experience gives ... a greater capacity to engage in frequent and creative transferences onto other people, objects, or symbolic systems ... [in a] transferential opening up and restructuring of psychic dynamics ... What is more, certain subjects attain the symbolic elaboration and the creative transmission of this particularity--I am referring to artists. (NM, 136, 199-200)

In order to understand the intellectualist-artist's transferential restructuring of the ego within symbolic systems, and, indeed, his production of such systems, we first need to see how the "as-if" psychic economy is transmitted within the nuclear dynamic of "poetic" language. And this returns us to the sublime metaphor.

### **The "As-if" Metaphor and the Real**

The "as-if" type, we recall Anna Freud saying, is not "really living [his] own life" (1954, 184); and when we think about art in terms of the "as-if" psyche, we are thinking about how reality is constructed in relation to the Real, Lacan's idealised and impossible space

which Kristeva maps over as the maternal origin of object-relations.<sup>48</sup> In her essay, "The True-Real [*Le vréel*]" (KR, 216-37), Kristeva identifies a "concretisation" of the signifier typical of modernist (post-symbolist) writing, and consonant with the speech of psychotic patients who, and again in Lacanian terms, "foreclose the Father". The psychotic's rejection of the fundamental signifier, the phallus, means escape from castration; the signifier, however, "returns" to speech, not from the repressed unconscious, but within the Real, in an imaginary projection of psychic space prior to entering the Symbolic order. The typical form of psychotic projection is hallucination, which conflates the signifier and the signified, treats the signifier "as-if" it were the whole of reality, and imagines an unmediated continuity between the self and the represented world, that finds expression in repeated "becomings" of a wish-fulfilling, omnipotent self.<sup>49</sup>

In Chapter 1, when characterising Symbolist aesthetics as a manic-depressive complex, I looked at the writing subject's "triumphant" emergence in patterns of affect-invested metaphors, which omnipotently transform his relations to the melancholic Thing (correlative to the empty signifier). In a vertical process of subjective de/formation, intersecting with a horizontal plane of figural superimposition, non-meaning "becomes" a totalised experience of self-presence. In the tropological field of the adolescent "as-if" psyche, then, the Kristevan poet's wish-fulfilment is generated by foreclosure of the Father, as symbolic "Truth" is restituted in the space of the Real, consonant with a language of allusion and superimposition through which the adolescent signals his refusal/loss of the (suspended) super-ego's authority. The writer with-out normative discourse "rotates" between Symbolic (thetic, assertive, ordering) and semiotic (plural, destabilising, indeterminate) registers of language, whose unmediated negotiation conditions gestalt hallucinations in which the Symbolic is identified with pre-oedipal space (coextensive with the Real). It appears in this psychic economy "as-if" the phallus and an authentic True Self were located within the substructure of language, as concretised signs "authenticate" an unmediated potential for Truth, rather than a belief system predicated on historical objectification.<sup>50</sup> When not actually synthesising a moment of totalised "Being",

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<sup>48</sup>The "real that eludes us" is discussed by Lacan in "The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis" (Lacan 1994, pp. 53 ff.).

<sup>49</sup>Freud associates failure of primary repression with wish-fulfilment in hallucinatory plenitude, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *Standard Ed.* IV-V, p. 122.

<sup>50</sup>"True Self": Kristeva asserts that Helene Deutsch's "as-if" type "brilliantly prefigure[s] Winnicott's notion of

the writer is building to the next sublation ("becoming"). He passionately believes in each tropological formation of the rotational (split, dialectical) psyche, whose potential in-process is reified in/as sublation. There is produced a series of rebirths, epiphanic revelations about the self and its reality, whose "as-if" credibility is a function of the affect-saturated metaphor's conveyance of primordial space.

Having resituated the hermetic symbolist in a frame of "as-if" typology, we can now further situate this model of signifying practice in relation to the creative writer's "intellectual" production.

### **The Creative Intellectualist and the True-Real**

In symbolist writing, as we have seen, the true-reality of subjectified metaphoricity in quasi-psychotic "Being" transcends a dialectic of "becoming", which, in turn, transforms the abjectly split subject's psychic rotation. This dynamic is obvious in The Trespasser, and, to some extent, present in all of Lawrence's novels. In Lawrence's doctrine, subjectifying moments of phallic transcendence in semioticised language (the Symbolic in the Real) become "as-if" metaphysical guarantees of moral and ontological discourse that structurally "mimics" Symbolic order. Lawrence's predicative pieces tend to build upon ostentatious master/slave oppositions -- for example Voluntary and Sympathetic principles, in "Education of the People" -- which, like patriarchal discourse, privilege the masculine over the feminine. These dialectics we can understand as both rotational processes foregrounding the cyclical instability of a subject-in-process, while they also function as hierarchical tropes characterising Lawrence's metaphysical, ontological and epistemological, constructions. A transcendental "Thirdness" generated by such oppositions would be the Holy Spirit, a new "reality" into which the opposed principles of Love and Law merge in "Study of Thomas Hardy". As an imaginary synthesis of the Symbolic and the Real, the Holy Spirit homogenises the (delusory) subject, but in a

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the 'false self', (NM, p. 196). See, "Ego Distortions in Terms of True and False Self", in D. W. Winnicott (1972 [1960]), pp. 141-52. The quest for a notional True Self is, Winnicott observes, often observable in dissociated patients who see themselves as living false, inauthentic lives. He presents his case study of a middle-aged woman, who "had the feeling all her life that she had not yet started to exist, and that she had always been looking for a means of getting to her True Self" (*ibid.*, p. 142). For Winnicott, moreover, an artist with "exceptional talent" typically manifests the adolescent's "ruthless" disdain for society, while being "able to reach a kind of socialisation" (*ibid.*, p. 26) within his analogous ("as-if") "world" of imaginary identifications.

heterogeneous, potential space, and an inchoate, foundational moment, as a super-structural mimicry of codifying discourse merges into a (pre-oedipal) vision of Truth still to be/come. The Holy Spirit is a totalising potential that guarantees the authenticity of Lawrence's semiotised metaphysics "as-if" its codes/laws were homogeneous, stable, free from psycho-linguistic processes. As a matter of fact, Lawrence's doctrinal arguments are "horizontally" constituted in an ever-shifting metaphoricity that is both idiolectual and highly intertextual.

The generic Kristevan writer re-creates his Symbolic "origins" coextensive with an unfolding of discursive reality recycling signifiers in a post-metaphysical maze of discourse. Lawrence's master/slave (masculine/feminine) tropes and their syntheses are always being reconfigured, as "fantasy [is] filtered through the available imaginary codes" (my emphasis, AN, 11). Like the adolescent-intellectualist, Lawrence generates a conflictual "screen", and identifies with certain positions. Whereas an inhibited patient's intellectualist screen is merely a sequence of identifications with the views of "the Masters", however, the artist does and does not "recognise" the authority of discourse, and is involved in a kind of intellectualisation-in-process which disavows available "orders", philosophical, scientific, historical, mystical, etc. Lawrence's doctrine is every bit as assertive, judgemental and passionately advocated as the moral-metaphysical positions taken up by adolescent intellectualists, and his views change with a comparable febrility. But he does not just change identificatory positions: he creates these identifications, and, in so doing, disavows his own metaphysical discourse. As a borderline or "open" subject, pathologically registered in both the neurotic and the psychotic symptom, Lawrence's defensive screen is always provisional, its terminology constantly renewed through a phantasy-filtering process whose only permanent characteristic is the dynamic of conflict (splitting) and "birth". The artist thus re/creates himself, in-process, coextensive with the creation ex-nihilo, from the "emptiness" of meaning in his psycho-textual environment, of the terms of reality. He becomes a God of the Word.

### **The Post-Theological Adolescent**

In Chapter 1, I discussed the (post-)Symbolist artist's identification with Christ/God: in The Trespasser, this identification is essentially melancholic, in a perverse Passion narrative ending with the suicide of Siegmund Macnair because God is dead. The Bible's narrative

of resurrection is filtered through and (as a metaphysical relic) idiolectually renewed in the novel, though joyful epiphanies, "miraculous" sublime condensations, give way to a depressive account of death without resurrection. In Lawrence's doctrine, implicit identifications of the writer with God, the creator of the world and life are "supported" by an identification with Christ reflecting the typology of the adolescent's "fanatical" and "zealous" devotion to a (transient) moral principle or cause. Lawrence identifies, not so much with Christ's ultimate fate, as with His status as a preacher of the Word. When Lawrence's positions are held, when predicative binaries are elaborated and affect-saturated gestalt (totalising) moments are "lived", they are elaborated and lived with a messianic zeal. In sum, the subjectivist dynamic of wish-fulfilment in post-Christian artistic writing involves a narcissistic resituation of the Creator's omnipotence, and of the messiah's mission to disseminate the Truth of the self and reality as a function of the poetic act which renews faith in language.

The most recent section in my account of Lawrence's "as-if" psyche, as I have said, was conceived without substantial detailed references to Lawrence himself, since I wished to make as clear as possible the theoretical nexus of ideas. I now turn to a section applying these ideas to Lawrence's doctrinal output. I want first to concentrate on the epistolary Lawrence, when thinking about his utopian fantasy, *Rananim*, and the messianic adolescent "personality" it suggests. Here my account leans as much in the direction of Anna Freud as Kristeva, though subsequently I emphasise semiological aspects of Lawrence's intellectual "positions" when looking at the "Foreword" to *Sons and Lovers*, *The Symbolic Meaning, Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*.

### III. LAWRENCE

#### 1. *Rananim*

*Rananim*, Lawrence's vision of a community of superior people, is elaborated, mostly in the letters, from the autumn of 1914 to the summer of 1915, a time of particular turbulence in his writing, though it resurfaces from time to time thereafter. Lawrence's characterisation of *Rananim* is highly synthetic. After visiting the British Museum in September 1914, he declares: "I know, from the Egyptian and Assyrian sculpture--what we



are after..." (Letters ii, 218). In January 1915, he writes (showing a typical fascination for fine detail):

What about Rananim? Oh, but, we are going. We are going to found an Order of the Knights of Rananim. The motto is 'Fier' [proud, superior] -- or the Latin equivalent [superbus]. The badge is So: ... [sketch] ... an eagle, or phoenix argent, rising from a flaming nest of scarlet, on a black background. And our flag, the blazing, ten-pointed star, scarlet on a black background ... [sketch] ... (ibid., 252-3)

Soon Lawrence announces that "it is time to wave the oriflame and rally against humanity and Ho, Ho! St John and the New Jerusalem" (ibid., 254).<sup>51</sup> The community's symbolic attributes are unclear; Lawrence keeps "filtering" terms, moving the hierophanic goalposts, and playing, as a daydreaming schoolboy might, with abstract and iconic badges and flags.

At first the plan is to "sail away from this world ... [to] where there shall be no money but a sort of communism ... a colony built up on ... the assumption of goodness in the members" (Letters ii, 259).<sup>52</sup> As early as February, however, Rananim is coming home: "the island shall be in England ... [a] new community in the midst of this old one" (ibid., 277). Rananim is a social project, in that the herd should learn from its presence among them; but it is really for Lawrence's apostates, who have a "most sacred duty" of exclusive congress:

...the gathering together of a number of people who ... shall be free to live by the best they know. The ideal, the religion, must now be lived ... We will bring church and house and shop together ... For all our life is based on the assumption that God is not--or except on rare occasions. (ibid., 272)

The location of the new ideal continues to shift. In December 1915, Lawrence tells Bertrand Russell: "[w]e are waiting to go to Florida, for the others ... They are all very young people. We can go and start a new life in a new spirit--a spirit of coming together, not going apart" (ibid., 490). By February 1916, Zennor in Cornwall is,

...the Promised Land ... I feel like a Columbus who can see a shadowy America before him ... We will all be happy yet, doing a new, constructive work, sailing into

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<sup>51</sup>Lawrence apparently derived the word, "Rananim", from the Hebrew musical version of Psalm 33, where it implies "righteousness" (Letters ii, editors' note, p. 252). Lawrence's awareness of a thirteenth-century bestiary held in the Ashmolean in Oxford, seems to have produced the phoenix and star images (ibid., p. 253 n.). The "oriflame" derives from an ancient French royal banner; the New Jerusalem refers to John's vision in Revelation 21: 1-2 (ibid., 254 n.).

<sup>52</sup>For an account of the influences upon Rananim of New England utopianism, particularly that of John Humphrey Noyes' "Bible Communism", see Emile Delavenay (1972), pp. 262-7.

a new epoch ... I feel my philosophy is real, again a sort of bursting into new seas.  
(*ibid.*, 556)

By the end of 1916, America is the proposed location of Rananim (*Letters* iii, 25). Soon after this, Lawrence speaks of a "Garden of Eden of blameless but fulfilled souls, in ... the [Pacific] Marquesas Islands, Nukuheva" (*ibid.*, 65). Two weeks later, the "living dream" (*ibid.*, 69) is again in America, and, in May 1917, "our chiefest hope for the future is Russia ... Send me a Berlitz grammar book, I will begin to learn the language--religiously" (*ibid.*, 121). From then until 1921, Rananim will be in America yet again, Paraguay, Columbia, Russia again, Italy, Palestine, Zululand, the South Seas and Spain.<sup>53</sup>

Anna Freud, we recall, typologised the adolescent partly through an intense engagement with ways of resolving humanity's "problems", countervailed by an outrageous lack of consideration for people closest to him. Lawrence repeatedly attempts to get friends and acquaintances to come with him to wherever Rananim happens to be at the time, making ludicrous demands that people give up often comfortable lives, and submerge their will to whatever principles Rananim currently embodies. Meanwhile, the adolescent's fervent allegiance can turn at any moment to repudiation. Some biographical texts on Lawrence (e.g., Delavenay 1972, Delany 1979) suggest a man who develops instant but very fragile enthusiasms for people he encounters, coextensive with the "new" ideas that these people bring to his awareness. The relationship with Bertrand Russell appears as a particularly good example of how people mean ideas to Lawrence, ideas which are synthesised with the dual purpose of "filling" the morally empty signifier, while registering an abject oppositionality. Russell encouraged the quixotic artist-thinker to explore Greek philosophy, about which Lawrence became highly enthusiastic: "These early Greeks have clarified my soul. I must drop all about God" (*Letters* ii, 364). Unfortunately, in return, "You must drop all your democracy ... It must be a case of Wisdom or Truth ... there must be a Ruler: a Kaiser..." (*ibid.*). I discuss Lawrence's fascist tendencies in Chapter 5; the point to note here is that his demand of Russell is prompted by a reading of John Burnet's anthology, *Early Greek Philosophy*, which was given to him by Russell (v. Delany 1979, 118). It is crucial that Lawrence's enthusiasm is not for ancient Greece as the source of democracy, and rather for the anti-democratic views of Heraclitus, which are immediately used against his theoretical benefactor.

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<sup>53</sup>My account of Lawrence's proposed locations for Rananim is indebted to Peter Fjågesund (1991), pp. 62-5.

In February 1915, in his first letter to Russell, Lawrence had enthusiastically aligned himself with the philosopher's political positions, to the point of offering a brief socialist programme of nationalisation and equal rights (*Letters* ii, 282-3). By July, Lawrence is a misanthropist, an autocrat and an elitist. For Anna Freud, adolescents' idealising identifications vanish in disgust at what this friend is "really" like, or what this writer "actually" means. Early in 1915, Lawrence regarded Russell as a kind of blood-brother; in September he writes to his former friend:

I'm going to quarrel with you again. You simply don't speak the truth, you simply are not sincere. The article you send me is a plausible lie, and I hate it ... [You] have become savage and anti-social ... Your will is false and cruel ... full of devilish repressions ... perverted, mental blood-lust ... Let us become strangers again. (*ibid.*, 392)

Lawrence's moral bullying, distilled in violent outbursts, eventually drives away most of his intellectual cohort.<sup>54</sup> Anna Freud observes the adolescent's ascetic tendency towards self-isolation, a depressive turning away from what is idealised and loved (*v.* 1954, 183). Lawrence, in this respect, courts the repudiations which isolate him. People are idealised and then repudiated, in parallel to his appropriation of concepts, which are soon idiolectually abstracted and used to dramatise primordial phantasies of be(com)ing. Lawrence is only momentarily a Heraclitean convert, when using the elitist positions of Heraclitus to challenge Russell; though his attraction to elitist discourse will continue to suggest impulses to omnipotence, while his preoccupation with re/birth is articulated in dialectical forms of renewal. Heraclitus, admired by Hegel as the progenitor of onto-dialectical theory, is soon absorbed into Lawrence's (up until then) predominantly Judeo-Christian screen/filter of opposition and synthesis, most directly into the matrix of influences upon the apocalyptic "Flux of Corruption", in his 1915 essay, "The Crown".<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Lawrence's outbursts against democratic altruism and vituperative personal attacks had a surprising impact upon Russell, who was suddenly made the object of an aggressive vehemence that, directed elsewhere, had been Lawrence's most attractive feature: "For twenty-four hours I thought that I was not fit to live and contemplated committing suicide" (Russell 1956, p. 107).

<sup>55</sup>Emile Delavenay argues that, in Lawrence's "Flux of Corruption" dialectic, "the sense of becoming, of change, of the decomposition of all that is temporal, the term *flux* itself, are all reminiscent of Heraclitus ... What strikes us most forcibly about 'The Crown' ... is the quality of the synthesis, the complete fusion of the various influences into a highly individual work. Blake and Heraclitus, Chamberlain, and Nietzsche, Mrs Jenner, Dostoevsky ... make way for Lawrence, poet of spontaneous creation, contemplator of the great creative and destructive processes of life..." (Delavenay 1972, pp. 335-6).

In the most recent section I have tried to elaborate, largely in accordance with Anna Freud's oedipal psycho-biographical theory, Lawrence's adolescent typology, or "personality". I want next, and as I have indicated, to develop further the semiological aspects of the above account, which means highlighting a textual subject constituted by semiotic (pre-oedipal) psychic processes during integrative acts of symbolisation. Specifically, this means looking closely at the dynamics of Lawrence's screening and filtering of discourse, and thinking about how he codifies reality, the world and the self, in a series of profoundly androgynous, "as-if" foundational moment/s -- how, by a sustained exercise of the intertextual imagination, Lawrence's "rotational" psyche provisionally instates the Symbolic's function of codifying reality with/in the Real, or pre-oedipal maternal space.

## **2. Foreword to Sons and Lovers**

In his first substantial doctrinal exposition (written in January 1913), the Foreword to Sons and Lovers, Lawrence works with (filters through) two messianic discourses: the apocalyptic esotericism of the 12th-century Italian mystic, Joachim of Fiore, and St. John the Divine's Book of Revelation.<sup>56</sup> Joachim's Trinitarianist epochs of Father, Son and final permanent reign of the Holy Spirit, are modified by Lawrence to centre on the generative power of Woman, while John's revelation is subverted and idiolectually renewed:

John, the beloved disciple, says, "The Word was made Flesh." But why should he turn things round? The women simply go on bearing talkative sons, as an answer. "The Flesh was made Word." (Lawrence 1994a, 467)

Lawrence's text mimics the prophetic style, the "voice", of St. John, while staging the post-theological writer's disavowal of Christian discourse: first, through a profane conflation of John with the schismatic Joachim, and, secondly, by a reversal of the Bible's Word/flesh predicative hierarchy, and its sublation in an idiolectual Holy Ghost. The scriptural metaphors thus are reinvested with "as-if" scriptural authority: a local speaking subject appears within the duration and space of the text, sustained by the reliquary "power" of these disavowed religious signifiers, conflated with the foundational authority of the

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<sup>56</sup>The Foreword to Sons and Lovers appears in the Appendix, in the Penguin (Cambridge) edition of the novel (Lawrence 1994a, pp. 467-73). Joachim is rarely mentioned directly by Lawrence, but the influence of the mystic's ideas about apocalyptic synthesis in the Holy Ghost is often evident, and sometimes features heavily: as in the Foreword, and also, for example, in "Study of Thomas Hardy" (discussed in detail in Chapter 3, below). See Marjorie Reeves and Warwick Gould, Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth Century (1987), which includes a chapter on Lawrence and Joachim.

mother/woman. Passages of metaphysical legislation build to moments of manic omnipotence:

So there is the Father--which should be called Mother--then the Son, who is the Utterer, and then the Word ... And the Flowers of the World are Words ... and the Queen ... lies at the centre of the hive, and stands ... for God the Father, the Almighty, the Unknowable, the Creator. In her all things are born, both words and bees ... And the bee, who is a Son, comes home to his Queen as to the Father ... So the man comes home to woman and to God, so God the Father receives his Son again ... Thus the eternal working ... It is a moment of joy, of saying "I am I." ... the glad cry "'This is I--I am I!" And this glad cry, when we know, is the Holy Ghost the Comforter ... and again and again comes the exclamation of joy ... and astonishment at new self-revelation, revelation of that which is Woman to a man. (*ibid.*, 470-2)

The Foreword achieves a spontaneous subjective integrity by rediscovering full meaning in the phallically transformed plenitude of the symbiotic mother, consonant with the "as-if" construction of a metaphysically regulated world. In the glad cry of emergence into Being, "I am I", fusion with the maternal to which the (death-driven) nostalgic writer tends becomes the true-real guarantee of narcissism, a delusional procured Other within a provisional and heterogeneous ontology.

In a sense, the Kristevan creative writer is speaking against himself, trying both to subvert language and to reform its exposed indeterminacy. We see this ostensible paradox clearly in the Foreword, in the cycle of identifications by which God becomes Woman/Mother, who enables Man, "the Utterer", to speak/write, to be a dissociated but self-sufficient "I", whose creative reinvestment of the Symbolic Word -- and of a metaphysical world -- identifies him with/as God. The cycle appears as a series of identity propositions ensuring that any attempt to distinguish, overall, between "Woman", "Mother", "Father", "Son", and "Man", etc., cannot be sustained. At various points in the Foreword, the Father is flesh, and so is Man and his Word, and so on. The Foreword spontaneously "adds to the mix", proliferates intertextual tropes -- the "infinite Rose" suddenly appears -- but metaphorical proliferation tends to an homogeneity made explicit in the copula: "the infinite of the 'Rose', the Flesh, the Father--which were more properly, the Mother" (Lawrence 1994a, 470). Lawrence forecloses the Laws of symbolic identification and accesses the negativity of primary processes; but he denies negativity through an Imaginary space of autonomous integrity, in a "world" built by, and around, its subject-in-process, the always-becoming "I".

Lawrence's "as-if" Symbolic/true-self production hinges on a constant intertextual re-legislation of reality, and compulsive affirmations of reality's integral narcissism. The Foreword's apocalyptic discourse has a transient operative function; it represents one stage in Lawrence's career-long development of discourses of rebirth which constitute primal phantasy in a semblance of order, a concatenated narrative. The Foreword is, to use Kristeva's term, a "phantasmatic operative composition" (NM, 10). And, just as Lawrence composes discourse by foreclosure, appropriation and mastery of other textual authorities, his own metaphysic is itself foreclosed, its super-ego function suspended, as he moves on to another composition of signs, another "system", which screens, filters through, and constructively deconstructs available signs, to disavow and provisionally re-situate reality within the true-real, and stage his "genesis".

### **3. The Symbolic Meaning**

The essays posthumously collected in The Symbolic Meaning (1962), were written in 1917 and 1918, and are early versions of pieces which were published in Lawrence's lifetime, as Studies in Classical American Literature (1971 [1924]). The Symbolic Meaning appears as a good example of just how "open" to intertextual reconstruction Lawrence's mind could be. At this point in his career, he is synthesising a wide range of magical, occultist and mythical theories. He augments his awareness of schismatic theology with the occult theosophy of J. M. Pryse, for instance, while also drawing on Madame Blavatsky's 1888 text, The Secret Doctrine, itself a jumble of paradigms subtitled, "The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy".<sup>57</sup>

In the first essay in The Symbolic Meaning, "The Spirit of Place" (Symbolic, 15-31), Lawrence introduces ideas, among others, about Atlantis, alchemical elements and psychometric spirituality, historical national stereotypes, occult spiritual migration, and electro-geographical poles of vital magnetism. The resultant terminological matrix produces a "history" of the world in which human actions are largely overdetermined by surges and falls, relative strengths and weaknesses, in national psycho-magnetic circuits. At the centre of the world is Rananimian America, which, throughout history, has been the

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<sup>57</sup>Emile Delavenay (1972, pp. 458 ff.) gives a detailed account of esoteric sources used by Lawrence at this stage in his career.

"unknown continent" (*ibid.*, 22) casting its spell of infinite vital magnetism on all races and nations. Its eventual colonisation is seen by Lawrence as the attraction, collection, absorption and renewal of energies, spirits, "plasmic psyches", and so on, in/to the choric space of a potential mysterious advent, one "which we cannot foretell, a new creation on the face of the earth, a world beyond us" (*ibid.*, 29). America is an uncanny Utopia:

There is an unthinkable gulf between us and America, and across the space we see, not our own folk signalling to us, but strangers, incomprehensible beings, simulcra perhaps of ourselves, but other, creatures of an other-world. (*ibid.*, 17)

Seen across a liminal "gulf", America is a borderline space establishing a dialectic of fusion and self-alienation. The latter, phobic, vector of the "empty" signifier is being "filled", even as "America" is being composed, in an intertextual proliferation of meanings whose density, as in the Foreword, generates a subjective experience of plenitude. The subjective dynamic is crystallised in a totalising conflation of word and body:

Art-speech, art-utterance, is and always will be, the greatest universal language of mankind, greater than any esoteric symbolism. Art-speech is ... a language of pure symbols ... which are pulsations on the blood and seizures upon on the nerves, and at the same time pure percepts of the mind and pure terms of spiritual aspiration. (*ibid.*, 19)

Lawrence's history of the world serves to support the "scientific" principle that the spirit of American soil is the fount of America's superior literature, which, universalised in the frame of a religious poetics, is made the source of the writer's linguistic vitalism. Lawrence thus re-enacts the phantasy of the split subject's (impossible) accession to full linguistic being. He "heals" the split between "inside" and "outside", becomes explicitly the Creator of the textual world, and so births -- again -- the Man/Artist/God (the Utterer). The visionary space of Be(co)ming, like the history -- like the text itself -- was his all along.

The adolescent intellectual's "as-if" construction of reality and its true-real self/Other, in "The Spirit of Place", is linked, as abject writing always is, to a repudiation of cultural forms. The prudish adolescent aligns with the ascetic preacher when Lawrence modifies his theory of inevitable psycho-magnetic attraction, and condemns the "negative impulse" of emigration expressed by,

Spaniards, Puritans, Jews, Celts ... [who] went in the lust for deliberate control of the living issues: lust for sensual gratification ... on the part of the Spaniards and



perhaps the Celts; lust for spiritual gratification ... on the part of Jews and Puritans. (Symbolic, 29)

Lawrence's dissociated condition, expressed through his constant struggles to integrate language and the drives, generates paranoia responding to an incestuous mother's devouring "lust", which he aggressively projects to the other of culture. His central preoccupation, however, is to produce post-Christian forms of genesis, and, however metaphorically abstract and intertextual he is being, the biblical template (or signifying relic) is a likely feature.

The most abstract of the essays in The Symbolic Meaning is Chapter 9, "The Two Principles" (175-89). Here the artist-God reconfigures his mind/body gestalt vision:

The religious systems of the pagan world did what Christianity has never tried to do: they gave the true correspondence between the material cosmos and the human soul. The ancient cosmic theories were exact, and apparently perfect. In them science and religion were in accord. (Symbolic, 176)

The national and geographical ideas of the first chapter are left far behind, as Lawrence pronounces with serene authority in an "as-if" Genesis. The universe is birthed: "in the beginning was the creative reality ... still void and dark ... the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". The biblical language is both harnessed and undercut, as Lawrence makes creative reality the prime mover, prior to the appearance of God. The primal division of the waters by the firmament (Genesis 1: 6-8) is augmented with ideas about "cosmic dark fire ... not spoken of", and the Rosicurian Cross evoking an infinitely regressive, nostalgic space, "which has so thrilled the soul of man from ages far back before Christianity..." (Symbolic, 178). The Cross is the symbol of a "fourfold division" of Earth, Air, Fire and Water on the Second Day of Creation:

Central within the fourfold division is the creative reality itself, like the body of a four-winged bird. ... Then the universal motion begins, the cosmos begins to revolve, the eternal flight is launched. Changing the metaphors ... we may say that sun and space are now born. (ibid., 177).

How could God initially move on the face of the waters, if Water does not appear until the end of the Second Day? Because Lawrence's metaphors are always changing, the composition always being composed.

Lawrence's fourfold original space is soon augmented by the Egyptian ankh and the symbol of Aphrodite, which have "multiple reference, deep and far reaching, embracing ...



the mysteries of function and production. How foolish it is to give these great signs a merely phallic indication!" (Symbolic, 184). From this nostalgic, affect-saturated inter-text emerges a "changed" cosmological essence, this time bringing into play the woman-effect.

The coming-together of the sexes may be the soft, delicate union of pure creation, or it may be the tremendous conjunction of opposition, a vivid struggle, as fire struggles with water in the sun. From either of these consummations birth takes place. (ibid., 185)

In Lawrence's "Genesis", the "great signs" are great inasmuch as he invests them with an affective response equivalent to their "power" of allusion detached from traditional phallic meanings ("how foolish"). These hypersignifiers of non-meaning, awash with reverential affect, merge into the abject writer's pervasive phantasy of ending oedipal conflict and finding peace in the guiltless union of maternal incest. The phantasy, as so often in Lawrence, filters through the hetero-sex act, simultaneously registering the adolescent's asceticism, while re/staging a psychic birth. A proto-structural moral order appears in Lawrence's cosmos, based on the right and wrong kinds of birth. Good birth is in the Imaginary space of homogeneous Naming (here a conflation of esoterica, the Rosy Cross, ankh, Tau, etc.), while bad birth is a projection of the unresolvable negativity in Lawrence's own psycho-textual processes: the "struggle into separation, isolation, psychic disintegration ... a continual process of sundering and reduction..." (ibid., 185-6). Lawrence's "moral order" is registered in primal ambivalence, a fixated splitting, in the basic Kleinian terms, into "good", ideal and nurturing, and "bad", incriminatory and persecuting, maternal objects. The symbolic ordering role thus is undercut by an indicative failure to control the abject object, to repress (by Naming) phantasies of birth-into-death consonant with the first, frightening moments of separation from the symbiotic mother. Lawrence again registers the impossibility of recovering the Symbolic function through an introjection (Naming) of maternal space, while having always-already linguistically foreclosed the possibility of screening and fixing in sublimation a "phallic mother". (For Kristeva, the paradigmatic patriarchal icon is the Virgin Mary, and in the next chapter I situate the Marian aspect of Christian discourse when I discuss the relation of sacred logic to abjection.)

We have seen that the intellectualist patient often uses psychoanalysis itself as a screening master-discourse, which may, as with Kristeva's analysand, Martine, be used to challenge the analyst. It therefore seems apt -- if it is not paradoxical, in this applicatory

thesis, to give psychoanalysis a hypodiegetic status -- that Lawrence the self-therapeutic adolescent, screening and filtering phantasies of foundational regeneration, should both "quarrel with Freud", and appropriate Freud's model of subjective genesis from an always-already primal scene.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4. Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious**

In Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, which Lawrence describes as, "six little essays on [sic] Freudian Unconscious" (Letters iii, 466), the starting point is taken from the American psychologist, Trignant Burrow, who saw Freud's theory as being itself repressive in function.<sup>59</sup> Lawrence argues that Freud's "incest motive" (F&P, 197) is a fabrication, and that sexual desire for the mother is just an idea, a "logical deduction of the human reason" (F&P, 206), essentially the product of Freud's filthy mind. Lawrence then reverses the Freudian relations between incest and phantasy. Instead of the primal mother being the ultimate object of repression, forbidden desire for which overdetermines men's relations with women, Freud's incest motive is indicative of an a posteriori displacement of man's "tortured and increasing passion" for a wife who will not allow "passional communion" (F&P, 206). This displacement, Lawrence argues, marks the inadequacy of rationalism: man has never wanted sex with mother, and psychoanalysis is repressing, not only its own structurally inherent idea that he does, but also the true nature of the unconscious, and of the strongest and purest emotional bond man will ever know.<sup>60</sup>

Lawrence's essential "intellectual" argument, his adolescent challenge to (or suspension of) Freud's authority, is concatenated through a dialectic between evocations of maternal symbiosis and abject aggressivity. Passages in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious are written with an hysterical intensity. Lawrence famously speaks of Freud's dark cave, which contains,

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<sup>58</sup>See Frederick Hoffman's essay, "Lawrence's Quarrel with Freud" (1965); other concise accounts of Lawrence's typically hostile but synthetic approach to psychoanalysis include, Salgado (1982), pp. 85-93, Finney (1990), pp. 22-32, Fernihough (1993), pp. 61-82, and Becket (2001).

<sup>59</sup>Lawrence's later (1927) review of Trignant Burrow's book, The Social Basis of Consciousness, is reprinted in Phoenix (Lawrence 1961, pp. 377-82).

<sup>60</sup>Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1984 [1972]), align Lawrence's aggressive stance against Freud with their own "schizoanalytic" project, holding up the artist's work as a model of subversive textual practice. I develop this nexus in Chapter 5, in relation to Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalytic construction of fascism.

...[n]othing but a huge slimy serpent of sex, and heaps of excrement, and a myriad repulsive little horrors spawned between sex and excrement ... that sack of horrors which psychoanalysis would have us believe is [sic] source of motivity. The Freudian unconscious is the cellar in which the mind keeps its own bastard spawn. The true unconscious is the well-head, the fountain of real motivity. (F&P, 200, 204)

The sack of horrors is crucially an unidentified "between" space of inhibition, a persecutory absence, and thus cognate with Lawrence's "bad birth" projections which stretch back, via The Symbolic Meaning, to the apocalyptic Flux of Corruption in "The Crown". While Lawrence conflictually "debates" with Freud at the level of discourse, abject phantasy is being filtered through Freud's tropes, which thus serve as the groundwork for another Lawrentian construction of Be(com)ing that situates the self under Law in a foundational space:

The great laws of the universe are no more than the fixed habits of the living unconscious ... From this centre the whole individual arises, and upon this centre the whole universe, by implication, impinges. (F&P, 212, 216)

The "true", or "pristine", unconscious centre of being, "is beyond all law of cause and effect in its totality, yet in its processes of self-realization it follows the laws of cause and effect" (F&P, 212). It is functionally both heterogeneous and regulatory, though the former aspect is opposed by Lawrence to a misread element in Freud's theory: "[u]seless to talk about the unconscious as if it were a homogeneous force like electricity" (F&P, 209). Freud does not, of course, regard the unconscious as homogeneous and completely knowable, but Lawrence (to his own satisfaction) lays bare the metaphoricity of Freud's Symbolic -- his oedipal -- authority, and then goes on to re-imagine Freud's primal scene, and to enact his own coming into Being.

Lawrence displaces Freud's incestuous mother with his personal vision of symbiotic plenitude:

The great magnetic or dynamic centre of first-consciousness acts powerfully at the solar plexus ... It is like a lovely, suave, fluid, creative electricity that flows in a circuit between the great nerve-centres in mother and child ... It passes in a circuit between the two poles of the passional unconscious ... It establishes in each that first primal consciousness... (F&P, 218)

Lawrence is still using "psycho-magnetic" ideas here, in a discourse of body-mapping across the solar plexus and lumbar centres (I will return to this). More crucial is an oscillation between maternal sublimity and abject paranoia:

The scream of revolt from connection, the revolt from union. There is a violent anti-maternal motion, anti-everything. There is a refractory, bad-tempered negation of everything, a hurricane of temper ... The child is screaming itself rid of the old womb, kicking itself in a blind paroxysm into freedom, into separate, negative independence. Then the mother gets angry too. It affects her. (F&P, 220)

Mother and child, Lawrence suggests, basically scream at each other in the act of separation until a sublation occurs: "And then the storm subsides. The pure act of sundering is effected. Each being is clarified further into its own single, individual self, further perfected, separated" (F&P, 220). This moment of individual perfection is, however, then restated as a "self-positive" (F&P, 224) pristine being, in another passage of symbiotic language. Crucially, there is no evident progression beyond this cycle across the pristine unconscious and a pristine consciousness, intersected by the dialectic between symbiosis and separation. Lawrence is precociously ambivalent about whether separation or fusion births subjectivity. His metaphysical biology lesson thus stages a retroactive projection of Symbolic emergence onto the ambiguous maternal object. The oscillations, in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, between symbiosis and abject paranoia signal an inhibited psyche condensing oedipal punitive authority within pre-oedipal imaginary space, through the repetition and immediacy of "crime" (incest) and "punishment" (abjection).

We turn now to the second, and by far the longest, of Lawrence's two reconstructions of psychoanalysis, the "continuation" (F&P, 5) text that is Fantasia of the Unconscious.

### **5. Fantasia of the Unconscious**

Lawrence's intentions are made explicit in Fantasia's Foreword:

I am not a proper archæologist nor an anthropologist nor an ethnologist. I am no "scholar" of any sort. But I am very grateful to scholars for their sound work. I have found hints, suggestions for what I say here in all kinds of scholarly books, from the Yoga and Plato and St John the Evangel and the early Greek philosophers like Heracleitos down to Frazer and his "Golden Bough", and even Freud and Frobenius. Even then I only remember hints--and I proceed by intuition. This leaves you quite free to dismiss the whole wordy mass of revolting nonsense, without a qualm. (F&P, 5-6)

The final sentence suggests a provocative masochistic dissociation entirely in keeping with disavowal of the Symbolic order, the commitment to (or, obversely, crisis of) knowing and

not-knowing articulated by Lawrence's refusal (or inability) to work with more than "hints" of meaning, which will be filtered in free association, or elaborated through "intuition", in "[t]his pseudo-philosophy of mine -- 'pollyanalytics,' as one of my respected critics might say..." (F&P, 9).<sup>61</sup>

For the abject writer of pseudo-philosophy, moreover, knowing and not knowing seems to mean not knowing anything very well at all. The writer's restless journey through discourses, driven by his production imperative to fill with idiolect a depressive void in meaning, is consonant with an unwillingness, or incapacity, to dwell on fine detail. Lawrence does not just abstract ideas from context and mix them up; he does not properly understand many of these ideas in context in the first place. We have seen that Lawrence misreads Freud's Unconscious when saying that it is homogeneous, like electricity. But then he does not tell us why electricity is homogeneous. It is entirely consistent with suspension and disavowal of authoritative discourse and manic-omnipotent investment in his work, that Lawrence does not "dwell" on the precise physics of protons and electrons, amperes and volts, before making a confident assertion about the nature of electricity. Anne Fernihough observes Lawrence's "breathtaking inconsistency" (2001, 7), in arguments which "...seek[] to persuade at the moment of writing" (*ibid.*); while, for Paul Eggert, "[Lawrence] must have known in some part of himself that there were brackets around his truth claims, but he could not write as if there were" (2001, 171). This is because the truth claims are a filter for unconscious borderline phantasy, and primarily serve the writer's need to stage an essential drama. Lawrence has a low awareness of the original contexts of abstracted signifiers, which matter to him no more than lack of internal coherence in his always provisional ("this means such-and-such, for the moment" [TL, 276]) "as-if" philosophy.

Fantasia of the Unconscious, then, as Lawrence suggests, is not a carefully considered revision of Freudian psychoanalysis, and I want to conclude this chapter with a few more examples of just how carefree -- or careless -- of context he can be when using, as he says, "hints" and "suggestions" from various sources to inspire his spontaneous "as-if" truth claims.

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<sup>61</sup>David Ellis states that the term, "pollyanalytics", was coined in relation to Lawrence by John Weaver, in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 28 May, 1921. See Ellis (1988), p. 182, n.

"We are all very pleased with Mr Einstein for knocking that external axis out of the universe. The universe isn't a spinning wheel. It is a cloud of bees flying and veering round. Thank goodness for that, for we were getting drunk on the spinning wheel" (F&P, 19). If Lawrence is alluding here to the modern paradigm shift in physics, then we should note that Newton's classical mechanical laws (Lawrence often rails against "mechanical" existence) of attraction and motion have nothing to say about a universal external axis. Is Lawrence talking about Earth's planetary axis? If so, how is this external? It hardly matters -- to him. The whole point is to construct an affect-charged passage of confinement, suffering, release and birth:

So that now the universe has escaped from the pin which was pushed through it, like an impaled fly vainly buzzing ... we can hope also to escape ... For me there is only one law: I am I. And that isn't a law, it's just a remark. (F&P, 19)

Lawrence ostensibly appropriates Einstein's theory; he agrees with Einstein; but he does not even begin to engage in detail with the theory. The metaphoricity of impaled flies and swarming bees collapses Lawrence's argument into semiotic ambiguity, while infusing the logic with abject affect, in turn generating another provisional assertion of the absolutely separate self ("I am I", we recall, is elsewhere used in association with the religious discourses of St. John and Joachim, and this "glad cry" announcing Lawrence's emergence into Being subsequently recurs again and again in his doctrine). Lawrence sees no reason to record and understand, to "unpack", what Einstein actually rejected: "the principle of relativity states that the laws of mechanics are not affected by a uniform rectilinear motion of the system of coordinates to which they are referred".<sup>62</sup> The artist instead uses the "suggestion" of freedom in the principle of relativity in order, again, to name the archaic law (that is not a law) of undifferentiated narcissistic sovereignty, while looking ahead (always looking ahead) to the Symbolic dawn of a new "theory of human relativity" (F&P, 19).

In the last chapter of Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, "Human Relations and the Unconscious", Lawrence maps out the human body "magnetically", in accordance with the fourfold template set out in the Symbolic Meaning. This body-mapping discourse is

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<sup>62</sup>See the Wordsworth Dictionary of Science and Technology (1988, p. 709).

elaborated in Fantasia from Chapter 3 onwards. The solar plexus, Lawrence says, incorporates objects into the self, while the cardiac plexus merges the self with the object; conversely, the lumbar and thoracic ganglia are associated with separation, self-realisation and independence. The distinction between plexus and ganglion is restated by Lawrence in the binarism of sympathetic, feminine or mother-centred, and voluntary, or masculinist, impulses. I deal in some detail with this configuration in Chapter 5. Of particular interest here is Judith Ruderman's observation:

Lawrence probably knew full well that standard medical discussions of neuroanatomy at the time included the lumbar and thoracic ganglia in the sympathetic (known today as the autonomic) nervous system rather than in the voluntary system ... But in matters scientific and otherwise, Lawrence was never one to be hamstrung by the "facts"--facts were to be played with and imaginatively extended so that the truth might be arrived at. (Ruderman 1984, 26)

Lawrence's blatant misreading is all the more startling because of the importance that this neuroanatomical language assumes in his later discursive work. It is, however, relatively unsurprising that Fantasia's understanding of Freud turns out to be markedly different from that in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious. Lawrence apologises: "It wasn't fair to jeer at the psychoanalytic unconscious" (F&P, 11). Nor was it right to refute the essential sexuality of the human psyche: the elision of the oedipal watershed in the earlier book is displaced by a staging of primary and secondary consciousness, the sexual division being crucial in the secondary stage. Lawrence effectively constructs his version of the Oedipus complex, consonant with a linear movement away from a repressive mother to ideas about masculine leadership. I will, again, deal with the essentially pre-oedipal formation of Lawrence's leadership vector in Chapter 5, and I will be most concerned with linearity in the next chapter. In Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence's argument for an "oedipal" division is destabilised, as always, by pre-oedipal blurrings of text and context, signifier and signified, phantasy and reality, thesis and affect. I want, finally, to shift Lawrence's "carelessness" into a more explicitly psychotic register of inter-diegetic movements and primal phantasy inhibiting the law- and subject-making functions in Fantasia.

"And there it is, a hard physiological fact" (F&P, 26). In the beginning, the father nucleus fuses with the mother nucleus, says Lawrence, getting his "hint" here from molecular biology, though terminological slippage leads to a mother-germ and a father-germ, and later a mother-spark and a father-spark, a mother-love and a father-love, and so

on. The scientific objectivity of Lawrence's hard fact is anyway immediately subverted by a spontaneous genesis: "and the wonder emanates, the new self, the new soul, the new individual cell" (F&P, 26). The omnipotently triumphant "I am I" is reified once again, here through the primordial mother-spark, in a "blissful centrality", "pride and lustiness", "glee", "rapacity", "sheer joy", "marvellous playfulness", and so on (F&P, 31). Lawrence cannot just describe; he drenches his argument in affect consonant with a compulsive repetition of hyper-conflationary narcissism.

As in Lawrence's novels, fearful (non-)objects of primary repression, representations of abject Thingness, often appear in Fantasia. At the beginning of Chapter 4, entrapment and uncanny dread are evoked in a digressive account of the authorial writer's location, near the Rhine plain, at the edge of the Black Forest:

I think there are too many trees. They seem to crowd round and stare at me, and I feel as if they nudged one another when I'm not looking. I can feel them standing there ... And they won't let me get on about the baby this morning ... I seem to feel them moving and thinking and prowling, and they overwhelm me. (F&P, 37)

Aside from the paranoia, this extradiegetic shift from Lawrence's elaboration of the primal scene ("the baby") is typical of his failure to sustain topological borders and linear parameters in his argument, coextensive with a failure to keep "hard" science apart from unconscious phantasy and pre-reflexive, synaesthetic hallucination ("I can feel them"). Fantasia often suggests schizophrenic levels of disturbance of its own logical processes, as ideas and images of symbiotic fusion with inanimate objects "pop in" to Lawrence's head/text -- here functioning to convert the paranoiac trees into a site of becoming: "[a] huge, plunging, tremendous soul. I would like to be a tree for a while. The great lust of roots. Root-lust. And no mind at all" (F&P, 39).

Lawrence, at times, seems to experience demented levels of regressive dissociation:

If you don't believe me, then don't. I'll even give you a little song to sing.

"If it be not true to me

What care I how true it be . . ."

That's the kind of man I really like, chirping his insouciance. And I chirp back:

"Though it be not true to thee

It's gay and gospel truth to me. . . ." (F&P, 16-17)

Fantasia tries hard to persuade the reader of the "facts"; but the psychotic text destabilises its own Symbolic authority, and destroys the thetic communication by a transcendental ego



of the science of the signified (of nuclei, etc.) to a receptive ideal other/addressee (v. DL, 130). The often self-ironising writer/subject does not care whether "they" or "you" or we believe him, because the "I" that speaks, then, has no position to defend: desire has cathected an hallucination of the autonomous True Self, which is symbolically "justified" as a narcissistic transformation of the writer's sense of dissociation, and which forms locally through synaesthetic identification with the signifier. In the "Cosmological" chapter in Fantasia, Lawrence is in abject hyper-drive:

I do not believe in one-fifth of what science can tell me ... I do not believe for one second that the moon is a dead world ... I do not believe that the stars came flying off from the sun like drops of water when you spin your wet hanky ... Now I don't accept any ideal plausibilities at all. I look at the moon and the stars, and I know I don't believe anything that I am told about them. Except that I like their names, Aldebaran, Cassiopeia, and so on. (F&P, 148)

The "truth or plausibility of the psychotic text" (KR, 217), Kristeva asserts, is its revelation of the sublation of affect in language: Lawrence synaesthetically likes these materialised, concretised, self-sufficient signifiers, and is not interested in knowing about their referent objects (signifieds).

However confident (omnipotent) he may seem at times, Lawrence's doctrine is crucially symptomatic of abject dissociation hinging on an unresolvable struggle to regenerate autonomously (within) the paternal function. Indeed, the writer often is clearly sick and tired of his endless intertextual task of internalising laws in order to recreate the world in a narcissistic grid of meanings, only to "lose" these meanings within the semiotic process of his own de-systematised language. Unable to comprehend the paradox in his writing and feeling "betrayed" by language, Lawrence typically expresses his dismay through a comprehensive abjection of discourse, and a reaffirmation of one of his quasi-religious Words crystallising a wholeness of time/space:

I have tried and even brought myself to believe in a clue to the outer universe. And in the process I have swallowed such a lot of jargon that I would rather listen now to a negro witch-doctor than to Science. There is nothing in the world that is true ... At length, for my part, I know that life, and life only, is the clue to the universe. And that the living individual is the clue to life. And that it always was so, and always will be so. (F&P, 148)

Yet even in this moment of intense hostility, it is the naming of archaic undifferentiated "life" in relation to the jargon that alleviates hopeless melancholic dissociation, and

affirms the writing subject in language. Lawrence will never stop "swallowing" words which save him from the void, which enable him to speak, albeit intertextually, provisionally, psychotically, of an integrated subjective space in a signifiable reality over-against abjection:

A deviser of territories, languages, works, the deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines--for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject--constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a stray. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger [of psychosis] ... but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. And the more he strays, the more he is saved. (PH, 8)

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In Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence develops many themes, which I have dealt, or will deal, with elsewhere, including sexual relations, education, and cosmology. My main concern in this chapter has been with general ways in which his "non-fictional" work is produced through the "adolescent" mechanisms of foreclosure and disavowal, cognisant of both intellectualist defence and intertextual innovation. I have tried to elaborate Lawrence's existential acts of writing, whose truth-function suspends the authority of ontological narratives, and rehabilitates their language within an "as-if" codifying topology that mimics the Symbolic order, while evoking the "true-reality" of pre-linguistic dissociation and identificatory instability. In the course of elaborating this instability, however, I identified a developmental shift of idealisation from the mother to the father, across Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia, and within Fantasia itself. Is it possible, in this case, that, aside from Lawrence's provisional and deictic symbolist "births", and subsuming the heterogeneous production of his metaphysical discourse, Lawrence is producing extended linear representations of oedipal transition? This question propels the next chapter, in which we look at how "sacred" taxonomy is elaborated and articulated, respectively, by Kristeva and Lawrence.

**READING THE "BIBLE":  
SACRED LOGIC IN "STUDY OF THOMAS HARDY"**

In this chapter we look at the first of Lawrence's substantial doctrinal works, "Study of Thomas Hardy", which is, if you will, the first "Bible", or "Book", within his canon of metaphysical doctrine. The essay coheres ideas that, up until its production in 1914, sporadically appear in the letters and fiction; but for the first time Lawrence's religious poetics explicitly is argued in a sustained polemic. I have, from time to time, identified Lawrence's reliquary appropriation of the Catholic phantasmagoria of iconic signifiers and tropes; this chapter explores at another level the Lawrence-biblical nexus when disclosing a psycho-textual mechanism in the "Study", one which has not, I believe, been identified until now: a representational progression from the body to the symbolic logos which corresponds to an oedipal staging movement identified by Kristeva in the Book of Leviticus. In Chapter 2, I argued that ostensible coherent and stable meanings in Lawrence's "pollyanalytical" discourse dissolve in provisional moments of subjectification identified with synchronic "grids" of allusive signifiers. I want here, by contrast, to characterise Lawrence's psychic borderline position with an emphasis, not on paternal foreclosure, figural patterns and spontaneous transcendentalism, and rather on a core dynamic in his idiolectual mimicry of Symbolic codification, a transcendental narrative articulating repression and displacement of the abject. Lawrence, of course, is an avant-garde artist ostensibly opposed to fixed religious taxonomy, and I will therefore need closely to negotiate the narcissistic orientation in his subversive aesthetics with my account of his essay's deep-logical similarity to Leviticus, which, for Kristeva, is the Bible's paradigmatic self-codifying text.

In a first section, below, then, and prefaced by a look at Freud's views on religion, I set out Kristeva's theoretical analysis of sacred discourse. A second section contains my elaboration, in general terms, of how this theory may be applied to the aestheticist rhetoric in "Study of Thomas Hardy", so prefiguring a third section in which I give a dedicated reading of Lawrence's essay.

## **I. PSYCHOANALYSING THE SACRED**

### **1. Freud: Obsession**

In 1907, Sigmund Freud published a paper entitled "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" (SE, IX), in which he traced a resemblance between obsessive acts in neurosis and "[religious] observances by means of which the faithful give expression to their piety" (SE IX, 117). Freud sets out an homology between neurosis and religion by braiding together ideas about guilt, isolation, renunciation of instincts, displacement and obsessive repetition. Even at this early stage in his writings on religion, he can identify it as a "universal obsessional neurosis" (SE IX, 127). Freud's argument is given a phylogenic background in Totem and Taboo (SE XIII), where he develops an analogy between "primitive" man and obsessional pathology. The totem worship observable in contemporary tribal societies, Freud argues, in each case derives from a pre-historic murder by the tribesmen of their patriarchal leader in order to gain sexual access to the tribe's women. This frightful secret is subsequently repressed, and the father-leader's power is sublimated in the magical authority of a totem animal. The totem is given the status of a fearsome God, which culturally evolves into modern religions that depend on obsessively repeated sublimations of guilt in placatory rituals. The oedipal problematic, argues Freud, is as clear to see in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, as is the obverse, god-like status of the father in the troubled speech of the analysand:

The psychoanalysis of individual human beings ... teaches us with quite special insistence that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh ... and that at bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father. (SE XIII, 147)

In Moses and Monotheism (SE, XXIII), Freud's parricide-guilt theory of religion is further supported by the observation that Moses, the prophet of a singular and restrictive God, is murdered by his own people. This act exacerbates the "tribe's" repressed primal-father guilt, so much so that the Jewish people increasingly wish for a sin-redeeming Messiah, who appears in the form of Jesus/Christ.

The essential elements of Freud's model of religious faith, then, are that the tribal father is murdered, that sacred Law is based on phantasies of guilt in relation to the father's displacement, and that "primal" women have no long-term influence on religious formation. While acknowledging that Freud's views on religion have been subjected to

intense criticism, what I want to carry forward is the status of these ideas as a radical backdrop to Kristeva's theory of sacred logic.<sup>63</sup>

## 2. Kristeva: The Lining of Prohibition

Julia Kristeva, reading Totem and Taboo in Powers of Horror (1982, 56 ff.), argues that Freud's elaboration of oedipal guilt as the basis of religious belief elides two implicit elements: the exchange of women from father to sons, and the chaos preceding the murderous advent of language/culture. Freud imbricates phylogeny and ontogeny, and sees tribal/infantile murder of the father leading to the individual's psychic castration, expressed in the maternal incest taboo and guilty relations to a patriarchal God, the ultimate source of culture's laws. For Kristeva, however, "murder" also names a point in primary repression

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<sup>63</sup>It may be useful to look at some key points taken from critiques of Freud's views on religion, though the range of this field is far greater than can be indicated within a footnote. In God and the Unconscious (1952), Victor White sees in ethnological studies what Freud comprehensively ignores, the presence of Mother and Daughter deities pre-dating Father-gods (p. 42). Also, when closely looking at Freud's textuality, White sees a widespread idiomatic distortion of meanings: for example, Freud's idea that neurotic religious "illusion" is a false conception of reality, makes it indistinguishable in the broadest context of psychoanalysis from any other belief about reality, all such beliefs being characterised by narcissistic delusion (p. 43). In Chapter 2 of Freud and Religious Belief (1975 [1956]), "Religion and Obsessional Neurosis", H. L. Philp concentrates on Freud's article, "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" (cited above in the main text), in order to question the analogy between individual psychopathology and religious ritual. For example, the Christian Eucharist service, far from encouraging the solitary behaviour ascribed by Freud to obsessional acts, seems definitively communal. In his adversarial primer, Freud (1989), Anthony Storr identifies the discredited Lamarckian assumptions informing Freud's belief that the psycho-cultural characteristics of the murderous primal event are immediately acquired by the tribe (p. 86). Storr, moreover, sceptically regards Freud's famous denial, in Civilisation and its Discontents, that he has had an "oceanic" religious experience (Standard Ed., XXI, 64), observing the frequent "return" of religion in Freud's writing, which suggests that the self-styled rationalist and atheist has his own obsessive preoccupation. In Moses and Monotheism, Freud himself declares that Moses has "tormented [him] like an unlaid ghost" (Standard Ed., XXIII, p. 103). As I noted above in the main text, Freud has Moses murdered by his people; this assumption, argues Storr, is based on what was even then discredited scholasticism (1989, p. 88). Freud goes on to deduce that Moses was an Egyptian. This, according to Peter Gay, in A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and the Making of Psychoanalysis (1987), is an unconscious strategy whereby Moses is stripped of his Jewishness then murdered, so that Freud can be the first, true (godless) leader of his people, and it is also an identification with Moses, after the analyst was rejected by his intra-disciplinary "people" (most painfully by Jung) and by critics hostile to psychoanalysis (cf. Gay 1987, p. 150). Not everyone, however, has been hostile. Ernest Jones produced several essays (collected 1951, vol. ii, pp. 190-373, passim) elaborating Freud's model of religious belief. Jones, while often referring to mythic progenitors of modern faith, elides Freud's phylogenic (pre-)historicism, and emphasises the psycho-phenomenology of infantile phantasy. Believers occasionally have tried to accommodate the two discourses. R. S. Lee's Freud and Christianity (1967 [1948]) is a well-known instance. Lee effectively reverses the analytic approach to religion: Christianity becomes the universal explanatory discourse, while psychoanalysis is an important field articulating humanity's radical religious impulse. What results is a sophisticated attempt at reconciliation, making use of the mutuality of terms and structures -- the paradigm of love, the life instinct vs. the death drive (of Jesus), and trinitarianism (of ego, id and super-ego). Lee's fundamental claim is that psychoanalysis's unattainable ideal self is a theoretical displacement of the sinless ideal, Christ. Other studies attempting to harmonise the fields of religion and psychoanalysis include Heije Faber's Psychology of Religion (1976), and W. W. Meissner's Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience (1984).

before the castrating Law of the Father, and the "victim" is the somatic primal mother -- who is killed but never dies. The murderous event, "the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (PH, 10), consonant with oral and anal paranoid phantasy, is the preserved foundation of the Symbolic order. And ritual religious sacrifice, for Kristeva, is a crucial re-enactment in the socius of the maternal murder in primary repression.

### **Sacrifice**

No matter what type of creature is killed, argues Kristeva, sacred sacrifice recapitulates the archaic moment at which culture/language separates from somatism. It is a moment of violent rupture, and an act of symbolic containment. She draws here upon Georges Bataille's view that religious sacrifice both represents the transgressive violence of murder, and functions as a sign of society's interdiction against murder. Bataille situates the "productive expenditure" of the bourgeois economy in relation to the "unproductive expenditure" of the sacred's Dionysian world of trance, dance and ritual sacrifice, which signals that excess and instability are at the core of societal identity (v. Lechte 1990b, 74-5). Kristeva synthesises Bataille's ideas, as she modifies Freud's phylogenic groundwork in Totem and Taboo, when mapping out how the "unproductive" economy of the maternal body is excluded from the productive expenditure of symbolic order, while never ceasing to transgress it. Kristeva makes clear the double-aspect of sacred identity,

...a two-sided formulation ... One aspect founded by murder and the social bond made up of murder's guilt-ridden atonement, with all the projective mechanisms and obsessive rituals that accompany it; and another aspect, like a lining, more secret still and invisible ... oriented towards those uncertain spaces of unstable identity, towards the fragility -- both threatening and fusional -- of the archaic dyad ... The similarities that Freud delineates between religion and obsessional neurosis would then involve the defensive side of the sacred. (PH, 57-8)

Sacred identity, then, has both a defensive and an abject function, since the borders of identity cannot be codified to exclude the abject-object without representing its somatic excess, which is sublated in sacrifice, and also accumulated within taxonomies of abomination separating the pure from the impure.

### **Abomination and Social Identity**

In her essay, "Reading the Bible" (NM, 115-26), Kristeva is careful both to acknowledge the influence of, and to distinguish her own hermeneutics from, the work of cultural-

anthropological and socio-linguistic theorists. Seminal, in this respect, is Mary Douglas's (1969) explanation of how societies tend to form around food taboos (cf. NM, 116), while the later, semiological, approaches of J. Stoler (1973) and Evan Zeusse (1974) argue, respectively, that Leviticus uses abomination to mark out a narrative between life/death and God/man, and that pagan sacrificial religions are replaced in the Book by rules, prohibitions and moral codes (cf. NM, 116-7). These ideas are strongly reflected in Kristeva's elaboration of sacred discourse; though she identifies in the source texts,

...an important omission: no attention is paid to the linguistic subject of the biblical utterance ... Who is speaking in the Bible? For whom? The question ... seems to suggest a subject who is not at all neutral and indifferent like the subject described by modern theories of interpretation, but who maintains a specific relationship of crisis, trial, or process with his God. (NM, 117)

The subject-in-process, in other words, can be "discovered" in the religious text, coextensive with a discovery of the "side" of sacred identity which confronts the abject body to produce a series of phantasmatic transitions, from a perceived threat of defilement, to the interdiction of abomination. The Judeo-Christian religion situates the subject through prohibition, guilt and atonement (sacred side no. 1); but it also reveals "the way in which societies code themselves in order to accompany as far as possible the speaking subject on [his] journey" (PH, 58). It is this encoding journey (sacred side no. 2), this narrative of borderline negotiation, this ongoing transitional process, with which Kristeva, and we, are predominantly concerned.

All texts considered "sacred", Kristeva asserts, "refer to borderline states of subjectivity" (NM, 117). Kristeva's approach to the Bible is based on this crucial identification. The text as a whole, and Leviticus most clearly, far from being a site of fixed and stable prohibitions, is full of febrile borderline activity, as clean and proper sacred identity is distinguished over-against impurities. This activity, moreover, is staged:

...it could be said that a biblical text (the Book of Leviticus), which delineates the precise limits of abjection (from skin to food, sex, and moral codes), has developed a true archaeology of the advent of the subject. Indeed this Book recounts the Subject's delicate and painful detachment--moment by moment, layer by layer, step by step--as well as his journey from narcissistic fusion to an autonomy that is never really "his own", never "clean", never complete, and never securely guaranteed in the Other. (My emphasis, NM, 119)

A logic of separation in Leviticus repeatedly identifies and abominates polluting objects and behaviour, and these moments are elaborated in a narrative representing the subject's "archaeological" oedipal journey from the body to codified Law. The prohibitory defensive side of the sacred pre-predicates God's codification of the subject's exclusive identity; but step by step, layer by layer, the subject-in-process steps away from, and symbolically layers over, the phobic body. The Law of the Father-God in Leviticus is fixed and eternal, always pre-existing the narrative, and it is a teleological absolute embedded in the discourse -- yet at the level of the narrative's unfolding, the sacred subject is repeatedly exposed to ambiguity and chaos, violence and trauma, in an advent journey from maternal somatism to the pure homogeneous abstraction of the Name of God.

From skin to food, sex, and moral codes, then: a phantasmatic recapitulation of the subject's progression from primal somatism to symbolic integration. We next set out to trace Kristeva's hermeneutical map of the journey.<sup>64</sup>

### Leviticus

In its final chapters (17-27) Leviticus is explicitly and solely interested in producing a Law of Holiness, with its General Statutes, Rules for Priests and Sacred Calendar, and so on. In stark contrast, the first sections in the Book (1-10) deal with the visceral matter of animal sacrifice. These inscribed acts, Kristeva argues (v. PH, 94-5), while distancing the biblical discourse from pagan religions, indicate a strong interest in methodology, particularly in the function and status of skin and bowels. The sacrificial basis of the Levitical taxonomy begins a narrative fixated on the seminal abject-object: "the object excluded ... whatever form it may take in biblical narrative, is ultimately the mother" (NM, 118).<sup>65</sup> It is in this context that Kristeva identifies Leviticus's early fascination with skin cut and flayed to reveal blood and organs, as a series of transformations sublating paranoid phantasy of the mother's deadly "insides", her putrefying bowels. Tearing mother's skin and being

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<sup>64</sup>Kristeva's reading of Leviticus in *Powers of Horror* (1982) appears in Chapter 4, "Semiotics of Biblical Abomination", pp. 90-112.

<sup>65</sup>The relationship between taboo and sacrifice, for Kristeva, is one in which "[t]he taboo implied by the pure/impure distinction, organises differences, shaping and opening an articulation that we must ... call metonymic ... As to sacrifice, it constitutes the alliance with the One when the metonymic order that stems from it is perturbed ... Sacrifice is thus a metaphor ... [which] merely extends the logic of taboo..." (Kristeva 1982, pp. 94-5). Sacrifice transitionally condenses the somatic and the sacred, and thus restates the "murderous" function of metonymic taboo injunctions which displace the phobic body with the Word.



devoured/defiled by her womb, moreover, is consonant in the psyche with a tearing of the primal -- or bodily -- ego's synaesthetic boundary (of skin), a phantasmatic superimposition retroactively projected by a subject concerned with identity boundaries.<sup>66</sup> Such disturbing imagery in Leviticus is part of a process subordinating the abject in affirmative acts of signification which incorporate phobic phantasy in/to discourse:

...birth is a violent act of expulsion through which the nascent body tears itself away from the matter of maternal insides ... The subject then gives birth to himself by fantasising his own bowels as the precious fetus [sic]... (PH, 101)

The birth of the Symbolic self in Leviticus hinges on strict rituals which transform somatic horror into "offerings": Peace offering, Sin offering, Trespass offering, etc. The body is no longer a paranoid point for fixation, its heterogeneous materiality no longer visible "through" the ego's weak boundary. It has been cleansed, and is offered up. The filthy destructive bowels of sacrificial animals are made "precious", transformed by fire and "re/born", like so many immaculate foetuses of the self (which in phantasy they are), within the defensive, guilty, atoning register of the sacred. In order to maintain its discursive presumption of symbolic purity, however, Leviticus's narrative must keep on cleansing/abjecting phobic somatic objects. And this it does.

Having repeatedly transformed the abject excess within Man formed in the image of God, Leviticus's next "step" is to establish the integral surface of the physical body. Chapters 11 to 15 are concerned with "Things Clean and Unclean". In Chapter 13 we are taught, in dense detail, how to distinguish immaculate skin from the effects of leprosy, with its "impairment of the cover that guarantees corporeal integrity" (PH, 101). In Chapter 14, having visualised a clean and proper human being, animal sacrifice is further regulated to purify his skin according to the "law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Leviticus 14: 2). The advent of the forming subject's social identity is thus gradually

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<sup>66</sup>In "The Ego and the Id" (*Standard Ed.*, XIX), Freud states that, "The Ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface" (p. 26). Freud's model of the relationship between the organisations of the body and the ego informs Kristeva's abject subject, whose failure to occupy a coherent sacred-discursive space is coextensive with failure to identify the distinct space and surface of the physical body: "[t]he body's inside, in this case, shows up in order to compensate for the collapse of the border between inside and outside. It is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of one's 'own and clean self' but, scraped or transparent, invisible or taut, gave way before the dejection of its contents ... a true 'abject' where man ... [through displacement] crosses over the horror of maternal bowels..." (Kristeva 1982, p. 53).

marked out, as the body comes more and more to be cleansed, refined and subsumed, by Law and order.

Food emerges as a preoccupation at about this point in the Book, in a catalogue of dietary abominations:

Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud but divideth not the hoof, he is unclean unto you. And the coney [rabbit], because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you ... And the hare ... And the swine ... These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: ...  
(Leviticus 11: 3-9)

And so on. The unclean animals are, not always, but crucially, those which do not fall into clear categories, which do not appear as they "should". As Kristeva says, "[f]ood becomes abject ... if it is a border between two distinct entities or territories" (PH, 75). Camels, like the edible cattle, are ruminants: but the camel's undivided hoof seems to mark an uncanny cross-species disturbance of natural order. Animals with physical features seemingly at odds with their natural environment are also excluded: "all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers..." (11: 10). Birds that do not fly -- "fowls that creep, going upon all four" (11: 20) -- may not be eaten. Kristeva's overarching point is that societal food abominations project the most archaic form of abjection, oral disgust, a spitting out of the milk (or other food) of maternal nurture, merged into anal phantasies of separation, where maternal ambivalence (an indeterminate animal) is r/ejected, as the self spits out itself into homogeneous Symbolic identity (v. PH, 3, 75).

From skin to food, then, so far. But "[I]et me take a further step", says Kristeva:

The terms, impurity and defilement, that Leviticus heretofore had tied to food that did not conform to the taxonomy of sacred Law, are now attributed to the mother and to women in general. (PH, 100)

The Book's logic of separation enters a field corresponding to the oedipal phase of sexual distinction, which begins the sublation of Woman's desired/desiring body within patriarchal Law. The archaic threat of the feminine/body is now explicitly represented by the physical signs of her sexual difference, while this difference merges into the regulation of unclean motherhood, thus signalling a double-register of the incest prohibition, against both sexual desire and anaclitic fixation. Distinctive sexual bodily functions are associated

with regeneration and dealt with by social exclusion. There is a great concern in Leviticus with the purification of post-natal woman, a process lasting up to two months (12: 6), while pre-natal woman is "put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even" (15: 19-20). The clean and proper (male) body must not be exposed to bodies which "leak", while the generative power and confining status of the womb is made unclean, in discourse always "secretly" copulating with the object in order to identify the self.

When Leviticus is explicitly concerned with sex, in Chapter 18, it talks about every variation except the one implicit within marriage: there must be no homosexual intercourse ("same and same"), no adultery, no extended familial incest, no zoophilia, and so forth. Feared female sexuality, displaced to the mother's generative power, vanishes here in a cloud of sexual abominations, whose barely stated purpose is to legislate for the proper partner/object in marriage. Woman herself seems to disappear, becoming an authorised function of patriarchal Law, a cypher within the mono-libidinal Symbolic.

Skin to food, sexual identity -- and moral codes: Leviticus's sacred logic is now ready to make "one of [its] extreme points" (PH, 104), effectively to take its final step in the phantasy journey to pure, homogeneous self-identity. In Chapter 19, which sets out General Statutes of the Law, the long sequence of visceral, leprous and leaking bodies of one kind and another, which modulate into separation from woman herself (and her sublation in marriage), gives way to an instatement of Oneness. The Book's "separating agency asserts its own pure abstract value" (PH, 104), the guarantee of a procured Otherness, the social I-ideal in relation to the absolute Father: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19: 2). Impure somatism, with its modes of waste and excess, no longer exist. Leviticus speaks in the Name of the identity generator, the Logos defiled only by false symbols, particularly those of pagan religions. The text's logic of separation continues, but in the realm of justice, honesty and truth, in identifications of proper words (cf. PH, 104).

Before moving on ourselves, to Lawrence, I want briefly to look at Kristeva's hermeneutic examination of Christian discourse, in which she identifies two further, distinct elements in the sacred.<sup>67</sup>

### **The Christian's Journey**

The essential sacred-subject mechanism in the Old Testament, the journey from the body to God elaborated most clearly in Leviticus, is, Kristeva argues, re-articulated in Jesus's explicit movement from his mother to the atoning and purifying Cross. There is, however, a crucial difference.

[S]eparating oneself from the mother, rejecting her, and "abjecting" her; as well as using this negation to resume contact with her, to define oneself according to her, and to "rebuild" her, constitutes an essential movement in the [Christian] text's struggles... (NM, 118)

As Juliet MacCannell observes, "Where Jewish rites have exclusion of the maternal as their basis, the Christian brings the mother in to the centre, albeit in a form that has undergone repression" (MacCannell 1986b, 339). Leviticus makes woman's unclean generative body disappear in Laws of marriage, ob-literated by inscriptions of sexual exclusion. In Christianity, by contrast, the female body surface is "rebuilt", cleaned up, Symbolically mapped, to achieve a divine visibility in a host of allegorical representations, paradigmatically, perhaps, in Raphael's serene Madonnas. Mariology, for Kristeva, signals a "revenge of paganism", whose sacrificial bodies Judaism overlaid, while, in terms of depth-psychology, it is a "reconciliation with the maternal principle" (PH, 116), an attempt to resume contact with the mother in primary narcissism, and define oneself accordingly in the Symbolic. This specular (and spectacular) purification of the mother's generative function (virgin birth) has become an indispensable phantasy element in the Christian's identification with Jesus's journey to the Father.

A further difference between the Old and New Testaments' articulation of sacred logic, Kristeva argues, is that the abominated object in the Gospels is no longer exterior: "[i]t is permanent and comes from within" (PH, 113). While there is a reconfiguration of Leviticus's dietary fixation in the crucial Christian association of sin with speech, the

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<sup>67</sup>Kristeva, in *Powers of Horror* (1982), engages with the New Testament mainly in Chapter 5, "...Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi", pp. 113-32.

Judaic inside/outside model of cleanliness and sin is inverted. The Christian confesses, not to defend against externalised objects, but to expel inner defilement. Sin is always-already inherent -- original -- in the subject. The Christian paradox is that purification of the subject depends on repeated identifications of the subject's essential impurity (cf. PH, 113-4). This point will resonate when I discuss what Kristeva calls the artist's "fortunate sin", in the next section.

As we now turn to Lawrence, I need first to establish the groundwork for my reading of the "Study", which is to say, to show how Kristeva's ideas about sacred logic and patriarchal Law can be applied to an avant-garde polemic strongly opposed to social legislation and moral authority. And since this involves what I believe is a new interpretative negotiation of Lawrence's religious and aesthetic impulses, I will sketch out, by way of both introduction and contrast, some critical approaches to "Study of Thomas Hardy".

## II. LAWRENCE

### 1. Complicit Readings

Lawrence's famous "old stable ego" letter, with its objection to any "certain moral scheme", appears on 5 June 1914 (Letters ii, 182-4), when an earlier draft of what will be called The Rainbow is under way, and three months before work on "Study of Thomas Hardy" begins.<sup>68</sup> Critics, it seems, generally have seen the "Study" as an elaboration of the letter, which, as Baruch Hochman has it, "fl[ies] in the face of the Western moral tradition" (1970, 16), through its explicit defiance of bourgeois discourse and the unified societal subject.<sup>69</sup> Such critics may disparage the quality and coherence of Lawrence's rhetoric, but they accept that the essay speaks at, and only at, the level of its subversive language. The "Study"'s refusal of "mechanical" social regulation and advocacy of an organic "passional" ego, it seems, is as free as it says it is of metaphysical Law.

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<sup>68</sup>See Keith Sagar, D. H. Lawrence: A Calendar of his Works (1979), pp. 51, 54-5.

<sup>69</sup>In parts of my Introduction, and in Chapter 1, when discussing Roland Barthes and Symbolism, I dealt more fully with the avant-garde artist's relations to modes of bourgeois culture.

If they focus on the essay, then, Lawrentian critics tend to spend much of the time glossing key concepts. As an example, take Chong-Wha Chung's "examination of [Lawrence's] philosophy of dualism in human relationships and in the individual":

In "The [sic] Study of Thomas Hardy" Lawrence explains his dualism: "Man and woman are ... the embodiment of Love and the Law...". According to him, "what we want is always the perfect union of the two," which is "the Law of the Holy Spirit, the Law of Consummate Marriage." Love is the embodiment of positive nature and mobility, and the Law passive nature and stability ... [etc.] (Chung 1989, 70)

Chung goes on, at length, "explaining" what Lawrence "means"; as though we did not have Lawrence to explain to us what is the case according to Lawrence. Chung concludes that the artist has "undertaken ... a tireless and courageous exploration in 'the darkest continent of the body', in search of the very essence of godhead and the core of life" (*ibid.*, 86). Emile Delavenay's lengthy reading of the "Study", in contrast with Chung, is contemptuous of Lawrence's "turgid, often obscure, critical and historical argumentation" (1972, 317); though we still get what amounts to a summary of the essay's rhetorical argument (studded with Delavenay's expressions of impatience). Philip Hobsbaum registers Lawrence's argument in terms of its radical elements, which include a "thunderous attack on various systems in society" (1981, 91), while, like Delavenay, he is scathing about Lawrence's confused and wayward discourse: with its "curiously contextless manner of writing ... [t]he 'Study', like several of its successors, lacks coherent shape. Indeed, the most cogent remark that can be made about it is that its title seems like a misnomer" (*ibid.*, 90). Whether seen in a positive or negative light, however, it is crucial that Lawrence's text is understood to speak with one "voice", that of the avant-garde artist.

Commentators presenting Lawrence's aesthetics in terms of his religious impulse end up telling us little more than what he "believes" and from where he "derives" his beliefs. A key "deriver" would be Virginia Hyde, in *The Risen Adam: The Revisionist Typology of D. H. Lawrence* (1992). Her Bible- and myth-revising Lawrence provides an invaluable, scholarly source text, but one which, again, is complicit with the artist's singular will to appropriate religious terminology within his creative project. She encounters the usual confusions and inconsistencies, while identifying one narrative movement, one consciousness, and one logic, throughout Lawrence's work. Paul Poplawski's (1993) "believer" account shows the many forms of Lawrence's "religious

impulse", and how we can register at various points the writer's "intensity" of belief. Poplawski, in fact, makes the "Study" an impulsive high point, "the first extended and systematic formulation of [Lawrence's] philosophical beliefs" (1993, 82). The essay has an impressive "theoretical framework based on a duality", a "conflict of opposites that leads to a supervening balance and wholeness" (*ibid.*, 82-3). The critic nevertheless recognises that the essay's terms,

...are often confusing and it is not always clear whether [Lawrence] intends to suggest that his dualities achieve a consummating oneness through fusion or through the very tension of antithesis--a transcendence of opposition, or a balance in opposition. (Poplawski, 1993, 83)

In treating semantic ambiguity as a problem obscuring Lawrence's presentation of his beliefs, Poplawski, like Delavenay, Hobsbaum and Hyde, is complicit, not necessarily with the artist's beliefs, but with his rhetorical implication that these beliefs can only be comprehended as an avant-garde discourse that "flies in the face" of traditional modes of codification.

Of course, for some critics, the incoherence of Lawrence's argument supports the argument, thus avoiding the above-mentioned critics' disavowal of the fact that Lawrence's "problematic" ambiguity and instability appear within an argument privileging ambiguous and unstable meanings. Anne Fernihough's D. H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology (1993) emerges at the crest of a wave of poststructural criticism exploring a semantically undecidable Lawrence. As George Donaldson puts it, Fernihough "convincingly addresses her own critical moment" (1999, 52), when admiring the prescient artist's relativist rejection of a "bounded, coherent self in mastery of an objective outer world" (Fernihough 1993, 11).<sup>70</sup> Ambivalence and confusion in Lawrence's work, for Fernihough, are intentional, performatively representing a subversive argument proposing the abandonment of socio-metaphysical regulations for a deconstructive organicist aesthetics. The critic thereto observes the "fracturing of the unified subject in favour of plurality and multivocality which so fascinates Lawrence in critical works like 'Study of Thomas

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<sup>70</sup>Addressing the same critical moment, Peter Widdowson edits his Lawrence critical reader (1992) with a bias towards the "postmodern" artist, allied to deconstruction's assault on traditional forms of knowledge/language. There is, in Widdowson's book, Gamini Salgado's seminal ([1976]) identification of the "radically indeterminate" Lawrence's "janiform" and "centrally paradoxical" language (Widdowson 1992, p. 143), a discussion by Daniel O'Hara of the artist's "repetitive self-cancellation" (*ibid.*, p. 157), and Daniel Schneider's Lawrence committed to presenting "alternatives to logocentrism" (*ibid.*, p. 160).

Hardy'..." (1993, 56). Lawrence the poet-novelist, for Fernihough, produces polysemic ambiguity, while the doctrinal Lawrence argues for the practice of such writing, while also engaged, at a secondary level, in the practice.

In negotiating the artist's disturbances of meaning with his arguments for semantic disturbance, then, Fernihough, whose own argument is influenced by Kristeva, locates in the same field Lawrence's anti-realist poetic language and his theory about such language. She thus aligns both the poet's polemic, and his poetic practice, in opposition to modes of sacred discourse. Elizabeth Grosz, when glossing Kristeva, observes the appropriate distinction:

Kristeva's interest in religious discourse is, in a sense, the inverse of her interest in poetic texts ... Where the poetic anticipates a language to come, the sacred attempts to stabilise ... [W]here the poetic engenders a semiotic breach of the symbolic, the religious represents a semiotic recoded in symbolic terms; where the poetic articulates the unnameable semiotic chora, the religious is its "revelation". The religious recodes what is becoming uncoded and destabilised in the poetic. (Grosz 1990, 99)

While I accept Fernihough's necessary assumption that polysemic language performatively represents a rhetoric of polysemy inscribed in the same text, it is, however, the crux in my approach to "Study of Thomas Hardy" that a polemic about deregulated language, and the production of deregulated language which it advocates, do not necessarily harmonise, in inverse relations to the sacred, as "the poetic". And this is because we are talking about two different types of writing, poetry and polemical prose, which, for Kristeva, means talking about two modes of signification, and two kinds of logic.

## **2. Bi-Logical Narrative**

Kristeva distinguishes the avant-garde poet, "the writer experimenting with the limits of identity", from the dissident prose writer polemically attacking bourgeois forms, the "rebel who attacks political power ... [and so] remains within the limits of the old master-slave couple" (KR, 295). To elaborate here a Kristevan distinction made in the Introduction, the dialogical text which departs from purely verbal articulations is always radically subversive, while a polemical text is typically monological in its enunciatory form. This means that an avant-garde polemic's direct (rather than transgressive) oppositionality to monological discourse would make it complicit with the excluding mechanisms and laws which it rejects. In a frame of the sacred, the field of "ultimate law" (KR, 296), the



polemic may be seen to "abominate" the defiling other of culture, and so to assume the artist's privileged "pure" self-presence. Such a text, argues Kristeva, while obviously to be registered in terms of the counter-Symbolic practice it proposes, would also function in a monological psycho-textual field coextensive with the hierarchical "violence" of the Western metaphysical tradition, which hinges on centralised and marginalised terms. Thus Kristeva refers to the rationalist historicism distilled in Hegel's master-slave dialectic of power and resentment, within whose identificatory limits the artist's revolutionary attitude would generate repressive, and, indeed, self-codifying, discourse.

### **Bifurcation**

I have drawn a distinction between the artistic text semiotised in poetic *jouissance*, and the aestheticist polemic. Focusing now on the latter identification, my aim, when reading the "Study", will be to characterise its rhetoric of polyvalence through a monological function which constructs sacred identity. The "Study", I will suppose, is sacred in the broad sense that it is a religious text, one which (like Leviticus) functions to produce a transcendently guaranteed, ideal subject. In Lawrence's essay, the subject produced is the artist in the tradition of late-Romantic (*via* Symbolist) mystical elitism, with its core discourses of organic essentialism, individual inspiration and sublime creativity. Secondly, the "Study"'s argument is sacred, in Kristeva's terms, in that an ideal subject is produced at two convergent levels. On the one hand, there is a rhetorical defensive supposition of pre-predicated ontological essence, through which the writing subject excludes culture and transcendently guarantees an always-already pure and proper identity for the self/artist. On the other hand, the "Study" stages a borderline evolution of the ideal self constituted through differentiation, displacement and sublimation, correlative to the logic of separation in Leviticus. Leviticus's sacred identity is double-registered between the illusory fixity of a Symbolic prohibitory Law, and an orientation towards spaces of uncertainty, murder and sacrifice, where the repressed is codified to form the lining of identity. And in the "Study", too, I will argue, the fixed prohibitory "master-slave" construction of the artist over-against the abject of culture (sacred side no. 1) is sustained by a "secret" journey to subjectification in the abstract Word, which progressively sublates pre-oedipal phantasy in abjection (sacred side no. 2). Consistent, moreover, with Lawrence's status as an abject subject whose impulses to self-reify

correlate to universal r/ejection, the "cultural abject" extends to include other artists, such as Thomas Hardy.

I am arguing, then, that, despite the obvious difference between, on the one hand, the socially bonding Leviticus, and, on the other, the will to social detachment and privileging of an anti-rationalist "body" in the "Study", the latter text stages an ontogenic self-codifying movement to ideal subjectivity. This dynamic is observable in the location of groups of dominant tropes, which corresponds to Leviticus's shifts from skin to food, sex, and the abstract linguistic subject. I am not, of course, suggesting that Lawrence's essay is fascinated by modes of ritual animal sacrifice, or that it prescribes the dietary intake of its ideal artist-reader; I am rather suggesting that the "Study"'s narrative articulates a journey to clean and proper Symbolic identity which involves projecting the abject other in a field of "feminine" heterogeneity, excess and ambivalence -- the identity being that of the artist advocating excess and ambivalence. The product of this paradox is two imbricated narrative vectors, and, effectively, two enunciating voices. A "poet", the polemicist, assumes an aesthetic Law pre-predicated in relation to the "Study"'s narrative, and so asserts the artist's freedom, as he writes, from the influence of other discourses. Meanwhile, a "scribe's" sacred-logical teleology gradually constructs identity through intertextual abjection/sublation, and eventually arrives at a scription of ultimate Law, the very Law of identity which the poet assumes is always-already exorbitant to the text.

### **Symbolic Orientation**

At this point it will be useful to situate the present chapter by recalling how, in Chapter 2, I registered a pathology of intellectualism and "as-if" typology in Lawrence's doctrine, when thinking about the "adolescent" writer's foreclosure of the paternal function, and his manic-omnipotent inscriptions of "becoming". The result, we saw, is a psychotic authentication of the materialised signifier "as-if" the Symbolic order were being (or could be) established in the somatic Real. I thereto placed an emphasis on Lawrence's generation of highly unstable metaphysical constructs, which centre on non-referential, hypersignifying (sublime) "voids" in meaning. For Kristeva, the healthy subject achieves a state of equilibrium between symbolic codification and semiotic infinitisation, while the abject subject oscillates between these psychic fields when trying to heal his acute (schizophrenic) Spaltung between inner and outer reality. I want, then, and in contrast to

Chapter 2, to emphasise here the abject Lawrence's Symbolic orientation. Instead of concentrating on psychotic fragmentation and/or semantic instability in Lawrence's hieratic metaphysics (though I will register this), I want to show how his borderline subjectivity, always approaching the abject, is consonant with an "inverse" affiliation to repressive and taxonomic mechanisms of abjection in social discourse. The avant-garde artist "usurps" the father's authority over the sacred Word, but then mimetically reproduces the (holy) father's mechanisms of identity. Lawrence is a blasphemer against sacred meanings, a textual sinner; but he exhibits a powerful will to reform.

### **Fortunate Sin-Within**

For Kristeva, the artist produces in a field correlative to felix culpa, "fortunate sin", a theological concept proposed by Duns Scotus in the early-fourteenth century. The Church rejected the philosopher's idea of sanctifying moments when illicit desire is confessed to God without ecclesiastical supervision, and instead embarked upon Inquisitorial modes of elicitation, condemnation and punishment of "sinful" speech (cf. PH, 131, Lechte 1990b, 165). The artist, for Kristeva, becomes the means by which culpa is made felix, through his refusal of realist-metaphysical "supervision", and his faith in the semioticised symbol, and, thereby, in the anti-rational "sin-within" of unconscious desire. It is a crucial distinction, in this respect, that while Lawrence's destabilised signification and sublime metaphors speak the spoken/written sin of eroticising the drives, "Study of Thomas Hardy" marks the first extensive attempt to justify unregulated, or "fortunate", speech.

Lawrence, the justifier of *jouissance*, in this case, may reject the Bible's iconography and style himself as a poet-rebel adopting "the mystic's familiarity with abjection [as] a fount of infinite *jouissance*" (PH, 127); he might, as the "Study"'s speaker often does, identify with, or privilege, what traditional religious discourse represses: *asymbolia*, ambiguity, heterogeneity, the body, woman, instinct, and so on. But no matter how fervently the text's "poet" argues for the sinful practice of disrupting language and identity -- indeed, because the narrative is an argument for a kind of transcendent and exclusive identity -- narcissistic codification occurs in a deep-logical movement from somatic excess to a lawfully predicative, omniscient self. Put another way, and returning to the famous 1914 letter cited at the beginning of this section, although the "Study"'s

ostensible "theme" is allotropic, carbonised experience, the narrative also generates a diamantine, self-present, subject.<sup>71</sup>

### III. "STUDY OF THOMAS HARDY": A READING

If we again recall what was said about Lawrence's intellectualist production in the previous chapter, then "Study of Thomas Hardy" is the first of his idiolectual "Bibles", or perhaps the first "Book" in his doctrinal canon. The first chapter in this "Book", then, would be an "as-if" Genesis. It is an apologue, a moral fable, set in the epoch of "ancient palaeolithic man" (399), where a soothsayer, "the old man at the door of the cave" (399), teaches a boy to value what is excessive to the self: "Conceit, conceit of self-preservation ... conceit!" (400). The essay's speaking subject hereafter often seems to swing between the wise and cynical old man, and an impulsive adolescent performing excessive speech acts.

[Old Man:] ...and the fatness and wisdom and wealth are just the fuel spent. It is a wasteful ordering of things, indeed, to be sure: but so it is, and what must be must be. ... [Boy:] But I will chase that flamy phoenix that gadded off into nothingness. Whoop and halloo and away we go into nothingness, in hot pursuit. (401)

Understood in the vector of the "poet's" rhetoric, this omnipotent Father-figure justifies the rebellious adolescent's lapses from consciousness in symbolist hypersignification. The old man's voice immediately makes clear the "authorised" status of excessive meanings. On the other hand, "I can tell you I do not know it all yet...", says the uncharacterised narrator, who promises that "[t]here is more to disclose." (404). The ignorance here is significant. The writing subject is innocent of what is to come, located, as he is, at the start of an unfolding sacro-logical journey. Sacred side no. 1 is expressed in the essay's "greater unwritten morality" (420), an always-already abstract Law of signifying Excess (as the exorbitant Word of God and Jewish identity eternally guarantee Leviticus's identity), while sacred side no. 2 is discernible in a subjectifying orientation towards spaces of uncertainty and excessive signification. The essay's argument is articulated within a proliferating metaphoricity, whose ambiguity is both associated with the pre-predicated Law of excessive production, and projected in association with the abject other in a process of homogenising sublation.

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<sup>71</sup>All quotations from "Study of Thomas Hardy" (Lawrence 1961b, pp. 398-516) in the following section are referenced in parentheses by page number only.

The essay's defensive artist, then, is always-already "complete" in his dissociation, adopting Lawrence's habitual self-conscious isolation from the abject of culture. The speaker asks "only that the law shall leave me alone as much as possible ... Let there be a parliament ... for the careful and gradual unmaking of laws" (405). He identifies a pervasive "sickness of the body politic" (405), and associates it with capitalist greed, the Great War, suffragettes, and Christ's self-pitying love, all features of a decadent inhibited society. In a letter written during the "Study"'s production (December 1914), Lawrence expresses his sense of betrayal by religion:

...there is no real truth ... All vital truth contains the memory of all that for which it is not true. [Religious] ecstasy achieves itself by virtue of exclusion; and in making any passionate exclusion one has already put one's right hand in the hand of the lie. (Letters ii, 247)

Yet Lawrence's essay, we will find, is highly exclusive. "We start the wrong way around", claims its rhetorical subject, "thinking, by learning what we are not, to know what we as individuals are" (434). The "Study", on the other hand, identifies what its subject of non-knowledge "is not" for most of its 120 pages, which means that the forming self emerges silhouetted against a comprehensive screen of false "not-I" textuality. An early point of fixation, indeed, suggests that something in the essay is starting the wrong way around.

### 1. Skin: Excess and Sacrifice

Leviticus, as we saw, identifies defilement of the sacred in leprosy: "skin tumour, impairment of the cover that guarantees corporeal integrity..." (PH, 101). Furthermore,

...whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous ... [N]o man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron ... shall come nigh unto the altar. (My emphasis, Leviticus 21: 18-23)

Superfluity, a visible excess at the border of the ideal body (of Man in God's image), is the problem. The "Study"'s dissociated and self-sufficient poet, by contrast, is identified with "waste" matter. This fortunately sinning advocate of jouissance exists within a melancholy masochistic economy: the avant-garde artist is jetsam in a rationalist society which refuses -- turns into refuse -- his excessive meanings. He therefore makes waste (himself) matter, by inverting the "wasted" status in identification-with the subject of poetic language. This identification is bound up with maternal nurture:

When your mother makes a pie, and has too much paste, then that is excess. So she carves a paste rose with her surplus, and sticks it on top of the pie. That is the flowering of the excess. And children ... eat the paste blossom-shaped lump with reverence. But soon they become sophisticated and know that the rose is ... only excess, surplus, a counterfeit, a lump, unedifying and unattractive, and they say, "No, thank you, mother; no rose". (400)

Ironically "sophisticated" adults do not understand that what they throw away -- the precocious "me" -- not only is of value, it is the only thing of value. The paste rose is a "blemish", a metaphorical outgrowth at the boundary of rational society, and it is the excessive self clinging in an intimate symbiotic "communion" to Mother's skin.

In the context of a symbolist aesthetics of withdrawal, the identification with waste matter generates an ego boundary for the creative deject, who becomes "the only authentic one" (PH, 134) in a sick and worthless world from which he has escaped. As Anne Fernihough observes, the first part of the "Study" is "saturated with monetary language, explicitly opposing art to the network of exchange: art is the "excess" or "waste" symbolised ... outside the sway of exchange value" (1993, 29-30). The essay's rhetorical poet is detached from social phenomena, effectively insisting that market value does "not come nigh unto" the space of excess. His altar/alter-ego scribe, meanwhile, generates identity by sublimating the abject, as iconic capitalist signifiers, including "reproduction" and "surplus", shift into a positive field of creative excess. This ambiguity, moreover, is dispelled at the level of the writer's subjectifying identification with these shifts of meaning. The result is a paradox of identity in which the culturally wasted self is offered up as a function of the self's emergence.

Two early motifs in the "Study" are the flaming poppy and phoenix, whose "fiery" transformations can be seen to correspond with the altar sacrifices in Leviticus's early visceral chapters. These acts in the biblical text, as we saw, stage a destruction of the pre-odipal body. The skin of the "bad mother" is broken, and her bowels ritually burned, to sublimate within sacred prohibition the heterogeneous body's threat to Symbolic order. In Lawrence's "Book", too, fire is quickly established as a key sign that waste matter is being re/born as something precious. Here, however, the sacred logic is abjectly "lining" a subject identifying with metaphorical excess. A complex trope is generated, in which the writing subject merges into the true-reality of his signifying space, which "burns" into a spiritual infinity of nothingness: "the flame and the ash are the be-all and the end-all"

(401). No paternal Other exists (the father is foreclosed), and therefore no mechanism mediates between self and Other through somatic objectification (animal blood and guts): the burner is also the burned, in an imaginary transformation of the body's heterogeneity conforming to the writer's perverse dissociation. The wasted self-identification generates sacred transformation, not (and shifting Testaments here) in tongues of fire, but in a new-sacred "fire of tongues, an exit from representation" (TL, 253). The subject both defiles -- and anoints -- himself in a metaphorical Pentecost: "[w]hat it is, I breathe it and snuff it up, it is about me and upon me and of me" (404). Two imbricated narrative vectors converge on the same fiery images, as the rhetoric indicates its detachment from the codifying old stable altar-ego, while the sacred imbuing of excess/waste (meaning) marks a phase in the narrative's sublation of the body, and movement to a Law (of excess). Either way, the biological subject at this point is phantasmatically covered in what is abominated at the skin/altar/borderline of metaphysical discourse. And he does not just breathe it and snuff it up: he tastes it too.

In arriving at the second stage in the path to subjectivity in "Study of Thomas Hardy", one corresponding to the food preoccupation in Leviticus, we do not, as I have suggested, find a list of things hooved, horned, finned, and winged, etc., polarised according to comestibility. What we do find, however, is a corresponding fascination with categorical ambivalence, leading into prolific oral images of liberating expulsion.

## **2. Food: Ambivalence, Incorporation, Spitting Out**

The significance in the "Study" of waste, as what is left over from the social pie, is sharpened up by looking at what Kristeva says about "food remainders in Brahmanism..." (PH, 76). Ambivalence, here, is crucial. On the one hand, leftovers cause extreme repulsion through their "incompleteness" (*ibid.*), which pollutes the Brahmanian monological/monotheistic universe. Food remainders, however, occasionally are eaten, to "make ... [the Brahman] qualified to undertake a journey or even accomplish his specific office, the priestly act" (*ibid.*). The abject of leftover food thus may achieve a pure status. Sacred discourse, Kristeva argues, "needs the ambivalence of remainder if it is not to become enclosed within One single-level symbolics..." (*ibid.*). The purification of abject material/ity keeps the system sane by preventing a totalisation of Law in psychotic phantasies of absolute autonomy. The Brahman's frequent "returns" to his defiled food

operate, for Kristeva, as a signal of the Symbolic's need to experience the return of the abject, and thus to recognise, albeit unconsciously, the reality of the other. Perverse acts of purification obliquely register the negativity which sacred discourse disguises, and which is articulated, at a semiological level, in instatements and "purifying" resolutions of intertextual ambivalence. And here we can turn to Lawrence's negotiation with the essay's eponymous textuality.

### Hardy

The "Study", as Lawrence tardily concedes, is "supposed to be a book about the people in Thomas Hardy's novels" (410). When, in his typical dilatory text, Lawrence thinks along these lines, what concerns him is that Hardy will not let his characters become happily free individuals. Man glimpses freedom, runs towards it, becomes alienated, and ultimately is returned to the prison of society. Hardy is rebuked for wallowing in futility and entrapment:

...the little, pathetic pattern of man's moral life and struggle, pathetic, almost ridiculous. The little fold of law and order, the little walled city within which man has to defend himself from the waste enormity of nature, becomes always too small... (419)

Lawrence is hostile to Hardy's vision of an unfathomed wilderness beyond the borders of conventional society, which presents the only alternative to mankind's petty and oppressive morality. Hardy's bleak Nature, nevertheless, is a negative sublime trope that attracts Lawrence as he (as ever) "filters" discourses (v. Chapter 2) in search of dialectical templates for his own narratives of becoming. By transforming Hardy's extra-societal wasteland into his own aesthetic vision of exorbitant "life", Lawrence affirms the infinite potential of the linguistic subject in relation to a depressive Thingness. Hardy's vast terrifying nothingness is an operator of loss and guilt, and the generator of an intertextual moment which (once again) represents the Passion of the self's ecstatic exit from representation.

Crucial at this point, moreover, is Lawrence's understanding that Hardy's vision is inherently ambivalent: "there is a hesitating betwixt life and public opinion, which diminishes the Wessex novels from the rank of pure tragedy" (440). Hardy's most profound failure is to resolve the proper location of humanity, and the "Study" opposes his irresolute narratives to proper -- "pure" -- tragic dramas, such as those by Sophocles,



Shakespeare and Tolstoy (419), where an uncomprehended divine morality is the source of "providence", "fate", and "destiny", while being active in judgement and punishment. Lawrence thus argues that Hardy himself is dislocated, his tragic vision not properly tragic. Leviticus's animal taxonomy serves to distinguish what is and is not transgressed by other species' characteristics, and what does and does not live in its natural, proper environment. The animals elaborate the body's exclusion from the (speaking) "mouth" of sacred discourse, while presenting a body (of signs) which is safe and nutritious to "incorporate". Accordingly, for Lawrence, Hardy's ambivalence means exclusion from the tradition of proper tragic writing. Hardy generates in the "Study" both a subjectifying reversal of his negative sublime, and an "abominating" separation from his indeterminate status within, and thence abject remainder-ness outside, the tragic tradition. In the latter respect, the essay's own "greater unwritten morality" is identified with/in the "real potent life" (420) of the tradition, and opposed to the death-dealing Hardy. This identification, however, is provisional, and the "Study"'s forming subject remains a paradox of integration and waste, synthesis and rejection, wilfully exorbitant even as it identifies its own boundaries.

### **Not-I**

"There is always excess, a brimming-over", says Lawrence: "[w]hen is a man a man? When he is alight with life. Call it excess? If it is missing, there is no man, only a creature, a clod, undistinguished" (421). In Chapter 4, in the "Study", "waste" and "excess" are represented in prolific images of brimming-over, of liberating liquids emerging from rivers, springs, fountains and geysers, and so forth. In the essay's rhetoric, these images celebrate the organic "life" to be found in lapses from consciousness which distinguish the "poet" from the cultural herd. At the same time, the liquid spurting from geo-topographical orifices can be seen to transform the infantile act of "spitting-out" mother's milk/food, coextensive with abjection into self-identity. Oral disgust, for Kristeva, is displaced in anal expulsions of the "shit" of maternal ambivalence, as the child spits itself out of her orbit and into the Symbolic, with its (false) promise that nurturing milk will be replaced (in the mouth) by a plenitude of signifiers. The "Study"'s brimming/spitting imagery leads to a signal of detachment:

I see a flower, because it is not me. I know a melody, because it is not me. I feel cold, because it is not me. I feel joy when I kiss, because it is not me, the kiss, but rather one of the bounds or limits where I end. (432)

The nascent self emerges at a boundary with pre-reflexive (non-)objects, in a simple vision of the differentiated not-yet other to the "I", the "not-I" of primary narcissism. The "Study"'s explicit concern with "appetite" and "food" in this chapter, moreover, ostensibly marks the poet's continued opposition to social "self-preservation", while intensifying a perception of the narrative's precocious oral fixation.

The speaker in "Study of Thomas Hardy" is in the process of being born, always striving to establish the limits of the subject, to replace ontological insecurity with renewed faith in the signifier. He prophetically speaks for humanity, as he yearns for,

...the Uttered Word [which] can come into us and give us the impetus to our second birth. Give us a religion, give us something to believe in, cries the unsatisfied soul embedded in the womb of our times. Speak the quickening word, it cries, that will deliver us into our own being. (434)

The passage in which this quotation appears effectively completes the first two phases of the essay's sacred journey. Womb imagery is frequent in Lawrence's writing obsessed by rebirth; but here it is nodally precise. As the first half of the "Study" unfolds, the "poet" rhetorically prohibits communal discourse, judicial law, capitalism, religion, etc., while elaborating a pre-predicated sublime law of the artist subjectified in his excessive Word. Actual textual processes (oral) superimposition and (anal) separation, meanwhile, move the narrative towards this law by condensation and displacement of (other) signifiers. The new-sacred subject is now ready to enter a stage equivalent to Leviticus's establishment of sexual identity, to create an "impetus" to the "uttered Word" equivalent in status and function to Christianity's Virgin.

### **3. Sex and Regeneration: The Madonna-Effect**

Kristeva, as we saw, identifies in Leviticus a development in which the female sexual body, coextensive with her generative power, is abominated through regulation. Maternal somatism, initially projected as animal viscera, skin blemishes, etc., is reconfigured as gendered woman, who is sealed up and obliterated within the patriarchal authority of marriage. For Kristeva, as we also saw, Christianity "rebuilds" the patriarchally repressed feminine into an acceptable Symbolic image of motherhood. In "Stabat Mater" (KR, 160-86, TL, 234-63), she recounts how Christian discourse intensely projects the mother's "gift" of man to the sacred-subjective space of the Father. The Virgin birth serves a phantasy of emergence into language of the ideal subject, symbolically conceived, having no taint of

his origins in sex and the female body. Like the medieval cult of the courtly Lady (which I discussed in Chapter 1), the Madonna, for Kristeva, is a key indicator of "the workings of masculine sublimation" (KR, 163).<sup>72</sup>

The importance of the Virgin in the Christian imaginary is such that it rivals for millennia that of Jesus/Christ in the visual arts.<sup>73</sup> In "Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini" (DL, 237-70), Kristeva identifies in Madonna paintings in general,

...a kind of possession of the mother, which provides motherhood, that unique border, with a language; although in so doing [the painter] deprives it of any right to a real existence ... accord[s] it a symbolic status. Unfailingly, the result ... is a fetishised image... (DL, 249)

Mary's body is mapped out and territorialised, de-eroticised and fetishised: the breast is the only visible maternal element, while her ears are ready to receive man's divine speech, and her smiles and tears signal the pain and pleasure -- the Passion -- of departure from a blissful primordial space.<sup>74</sup>

In a context of Lawrence's religious impulse, loss of the metaphysical discourse of the Virgin is, of course, the clearest background to his deployment of the "woman-effect" which is crucial in this thesis. We are concerned here, therefore, with what happens when for the first time the woman-effect is staged ontogenically, albeit bi-valently, within Lawrence's first extended doctrinal narrative.

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<sup>72</sup>Kristeva asserts that when "the Virgin Mother ... assumed the title of Our Lady, this will also be in analogy to the earthly power of the noble feudal lady of medieval courts ... Mary and the Lady shared one common trait: they were the focal point for men's desires and aspirations, embod[ying] an absolute authority the more attractive as it appeared removed from paternal sternness. This feminine power must have been experienced as denied power, more pleasant to seize because it was both archaic and secondary, a kind of substitute for effective power in the family and the city ... the underhand double of explicit phallic power" (Kristeva 1986, p. 170).

<sup>73</sup>Kristeva, in "Stabat Mater" (1986), observes that Christianity's obsession with the Madonna bears little relation to her original textual presence, which "amounts in fact to the imposition of pagan-rooted beliefs on, and often against, dogmas of the official Church. It is true that the Gospels already posit Mary's existence. But they suggest only very discreetly the immaculate conception of Christ's mother; they say nothing concerning Mary's own background and speak of her only seldom at the side of her son or during crucifixion" (p. 164). As a whole, "Stabat Mater" expressly is indebted to Marina Warner's historicism in Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary (1976).

<sup>74</sup>"Ears": Ernest Jones's 1914 essay, "The Madonna's Conception Through the Ear" (1951, vol. ii, pp. 266-357), argues that, as a repressive element in Catholic iconography, the Madonna's ear transforms infantile, sexual phantasy through its physical similarity to the mother's external sexual parts. Kristeva sees this transformation turning the vagina into an "innocent shell ... rooted in the universality of sound..." (Kristeva 1986, p. 173), which then functions as a patriarchal homogenising trope.

What happens first is that, having with his ideal Rananimian reader, "agreed, then, that we will do a little work -- two or three hours a day", Lawrence puts a question: "Then we will be free. Free for what?" (440). Free to have sex; or rather to think about it, and then to sublimate it: "the act, called the sexual act, is not for the depositing of the seed. It is for leaping off into the unknown, as from a cliff's edge, like Sappho into the sea" (441). The "Study"'s poet claims to have liberated sex from its "preservative" and "procreative" roles in society (441), and thus to have given "greater meaning" to "male and female duality and unity" (443). At the same time, the sexual act is demoted as a mere bodily function, "a matter of relief or sensation, equivalent to eating or drinking or passing of excrement" (445). The sex-act is displaced in images of man leaping into the female body's "fluid" energy, while her disturbing sanguine discharge becomes a mere glimpse of colour in a wash of "dissolution" metaphors:

Out of the living river, a fine silver stream detaches itself ... Then, in tiny, concentrated pools, a little hangs back, in reservoirs that shall later seal themselves up as quick but silent sources. But the whole, almost the whole, splashes splendidly over, is seen in red just as it drips into darkness and disappears. (My emphasis, 441)

Silenced and sealed up, darkened and disappeared, the female/sex is rehabilitated within one of the "Study"'s core motifs, the "Axle and Wheel of Eternity", where the male "seethes and whirls in incredible speed upon the pivot of the female" (442). Here, for the essay's poet, Man and Woman are fixed in an allegorical harmony, beyond desire.

The "Study"'s logic of feminine abjection is thoroughly imbricated with the rhetoric's projection of symbiotic bliss, in, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes puts it (albeit with no concern for psycho-textual politics), a "'theology' of marriage" (1968, 374). The female body is repressed, and her procreative sexuality projected in terms of generative power; and what she generates, what she "begets", is man's ability to signify his identity:

...the supremest effort ... shall be the pulsation outwards from stimulus [*sic*] received in the sex, in the sexual act, that the woman of his body shall be the begetter of his whole life, that she, in her female spirit, shall beget in him his idea, his motion, himself. (445)

The speaker imagines,

[Man and Woman] travelling to the same goal of infinity, but entering it from opposite ends of space ... he hails the woman coming from the place whither he is travelling, searches in her for signs, and makes his God from the suggestion he receives ... She is so close, that they touch, and then there is a joyful utterance of religious art... (My emphasis, 449)

Two Lawrentian "principles" which appear at around this time, man's "Will-to-Motion" and woman's "Will-to-Inertia" (447), ensure the harmonious "dance" is reconfigured in the female's essential "Immutability, Permanence, Eternality" (446), sustaining the "hub" upon which spins the mobile and productive man-wheel. Woman, here, is a possessed, fetishised Other with no autonomous existence, a disembodied, silent and immobile goddess. For Kristeva,

Every God, even including the God of the Word, relies on a mother Goddess. Christianity is perhaps ... the last of the religions to have displayed in broad daylight the bipolar structure of belief: on the one hand, the difficult experience of the Word -- a passion; on the other, the reassuring wrapping in the proverbial mirage of the mother -- a love. For that reason, it seems to me that there is only one way to go through the religion of the Word, or its counterpart, the cult of the mother; it is the "artists" way, those who make up for the vertigo of language weakness with the oversaturation of sign-systems. By this token, all art is a kind of counter-reformation, an accepted baroqueness. (KR, 176-7)

Lawrence's "way" is, indeed, to counter-reform established sign-systems by making positive his vertiginous experience of loss of meanings within a symbolist idiom. This is itself a sort of "cult of the mother", devoted to the oversaturation of signifiers whose baroque plenitude (of signs) transforms the heterogeneity of the drives. But he also mimics the other, sacred, kind, the counterpart of the Word, which codifies a mother whose desire for the Father's phallus is satisfied inasmuch as the son (man) becomes a subject of the patriarchal logos. In identifying with maternal drive excess, and introjecting the maternal imago, the "Study"'s poet and scribe are cultists of the mother oriented both semiotically and defensively towards the feminine, and so sharing signifiers in the double-aspect narrative of ideal narcissism.

As the "Study" moves closer to an inscription of Law, the imbricated rhetoric of freedom and logic of separation focus, as does Leviticus, on "rival" hieratic discourses. In a broad frame, as Judaism abominates other Gods, Christianity threw off the Old Testament's cold, rule-obsessed deity by emphasising God's love and Man's personal choice (cf. NM, 121; PH, 119). In Lawrence's essay heading towards a revelation of its transcendental Word, the dominant religions informing his culture, Christianity, and, by

extension, Judaism, become obvious targets for repudiation. The "Study"'s increasingly abundant masculine/feminine-orientation tropes are here deployed to transgress old sacred signifiers with indeterminacy. An ostentatious dialectic thus continues to crystallise a be/coming into identity through an "understanding" of gender relations, while ambivalence continues to be generated and resolved as a (transgressive) function of abjection. The result is a definitive passage of Lawrentian intertextual appropriation and subversion, which we can identify without losing sight of the essay's oedipal narrative.

### **Reading the Bible -- Abjectly**

Everything good and bad, Lawrence argues, derives from proper and improper balancing of female and male principles: "[a]nd so, looking at a race, we can say whether the Will-to-Inertia or the Will-to-Motion has gained the ascendancy..." (449). The problem with the Jewish race is that it is too feminine, its God a "female conception" (451). This is deduced from the passivity implied by the Jews' intense self-regulation, and the fact that Jewish unity so often is expressed in the Bible through metaphors of bodily integrity. At this point in the "Study", God and woman are identified with the flesh:

Woman knows that she is the fountain of all flesh, coming forth as flesh ... [she] is obsessed by the oneness of things ... That is the fundamental of female conception: that there is but one Being: this Being necessarily female. (451)

The Jewish "race", then, falls under the female principle. In this provisional context, the "Study" states that Jews conceive, "man as the One being" (451), since he is formed in the image of a male God. This makes God patriarchal in relation to his submissive people. The Jewish God, therefore, is dialectically identified as both male and female. When the "Study" goes on to consider Christianity in relation to Judaism, the latter's female God is carried forward and negatively situated, while Christianity is also supposed to have dispensed with fleshly concerns through the Messiah, who "repudiated Woman ... [and] lived the male life utterly apart from woman" (452). In a further repudiation of Jewish tribal homogeneity, the Christian God, identified with the male principle, is manifold in form, and each Christian reflects this: "man is separate from his brother" (452). At this point, then, the female principle is "repressed" in Lawrence's privileged Christianity. When, on the other hand, the argument leaves behind the female (otherwise male) Judaic God to deal solely with Christianity, a new polarity appears as the latter's God is feminised: Jew (female God)/Christian (male God), becomes God (female)/Son (male). The Son

takes over the Will to autonomous Motion. The relations of Old and New Testament cultures eventually become very simple: Jewishness was always female, while Christianity has been the "great assertion of the male" (452). They are re-nominated, respectively, "Law" and "Love", and framed sequentially: the epoch of Law is followed by that of Love, which is coming to an end. The modern artist is placed to synthesise Law and Love, and transcend the dialectic forever.

The "Study"'s engagement with the Bible is only part of an "as-if" metaphysical genealogy which idiolectually revises the history of ideas. In what Emile Delavenay calls an "[h]istorical psycho-theology" (1972, 309), the essay continues its intersecting dialectics of male and female, spirit and body, Law and Love, while extending the abjection of Thomas Hardy through a history of art from Ancient Greece to Futurism. The whole sequence crystallises as an imaginary teleology, which deictically gestures at sublation of the feminine/body and death, while establishing a metaphysical destiny for the subject's eventual advent.

### **Sacred Art**

Medieval art, the "Study"'s speaker asserts, is morbidly fascinated by the dead Christ's flesh (syn. "Law"), while, by contrast, Renaissance images concentrate on the spiritual Love of the holy infant. "There is nothing more dismal than a dead God" (BS, 8), says Kristeva, commenting on modernity's *Zeitgeist*. Lawrence is in accord:

During the medieval times, the God had been Christ on the Cross, the Body Crucified, the flesh destroyed, the Virgin Chastity combating Desire ... But now, with the Renaissance ... there was a great outburst of joy, and the theme was not Christ Crucified, but Christ born of Woman, the Infant Saviour and the Virgin; or of the Annunciation, the Spirit embracing the flesh in pure embrace. (454)

The flesh/spirit dichotomy which (provisionally) distinguished Christianity and Judaism in the earlier section, now splits Christianity to generate an historicist moment of Renaissance transcendence. Similarly, having previously elided Christianity's maternal function, the "Study" now shows Mary in all her glory. The Renaissance got it right about unconditional maternal love. Botticelli's Nativity of the Saviour is showered with positive absolutes:

This was the perfect union of male and female, in this the hands met and clasped, and never was such a manifestation of Joy ... the utterance of complete, perfect

religious art ... and it seems to be so in other religions: the most perfect moment centres around the mother and the male child... (455)

When looking at a Renaissance Madonna, asserts Kristeva, "[w]e are right at the heart of the Western imaginary" (NM, 157). We are gazing at the iconic form in its sacred cult of the mother. We, in that case, at this point, are looking at Lawrence looking right at the heart of the Western imaginary.

Lawrence's gaze, however, articulates the abject Western imaginary, and his ecstasy induced by Botticelli's Marian moment soon subsides.

This is Botticelli, always: different cycles of joy, different moments of embrace, different forms of dancing around, all contained in one picture, without solution. He has not solved it yet. (461)

The febrile gender dialectic continues: Raphael is male, too "geometric" and "spiritual", while Michaelangelo, by contrast,

...sought the female in himself, aggrandised it ... By turning towards the female goal, of utter stability and permanence in Time, he arrived at his consummation. But only by reacting on himself, only by withdrawing his own mobility. (462)

And so on, until the history is brought up to date with "three static centuries" in Italian art, characterised by a "preponderance of the female" (464), and leading to what Lawrence identifies as the sterile technological values of Futurist art. Futurism then paradoxically counters its racial provenance to assert the male principle, while the overarching decline of the "Latin" race into feminine essentialism is situated against the "Northern" race's epoch of Love (motion, maleness), in yet another splitting of affect, one more opportunity to show what the modern artist's synthetic production transcends, and one more event in the sacro-logical evolution of the artist. The gender-bending dialectic presumes the artist's always-already fixed and final position, while the signifying process works towards a harmonised resolution to the dialectical chaos (which previous holy scribes and artists have failed to achieve). In the latter vector, the scribe enunciates the same signifiers as the poet, but as a mass of conservative inscriptions of male independence over-against female inertia, which strengthen the forming ego by dense repetition. Emile Delavenay argues that the "Study"'s logic negotiating sublime self-dissolution with regulated constitution, while always producing inconsistency, "begins to crack" during the genealogy (1972, 312). The critic, however, unwittingly is looking at a carnivalesque text representing the radical



ambivalence of unconscious phantasy in a bi-valent narrative elaborating converse modes of identity. And the narrative is moving into its final stage of elaboration.

#### **4. Bi-valent Law**

The sacred vector in "Study of Thomas Hardy" now has a plethora of signification converging around the feminine. It has entered a stage coextensive with the "extreme points" of Leviticus's logic, whereby,

...impurity moves away from the material register and is formulated as profanation of the divine name. At this point in the trajectory, where the separating agency asserts its own pure abstract value ("holy of holies"), the impure will no longer be merely the admixture, the flow, the noncompliant ... which is the maternal living being. Defilement will now be that which impinges on symbolic oneness, that is, sham, substitutions, doubles, idols. (PH, 104)

This stage begins in Leviticus with the announcement of a "Law of Holiness" (17 ff.), whose "General Statutes" (19 ff.) are handed down to Moses by the absolute disembodied subject, "I the Lord your God" (19: 2), and later elaborated as "The Law", including the core commandments, in Deuteronomy 5. In the New Testament there is "The New Law" (Matthew 5: 21 ff.), which replaces the harsh God of Moses with a permanent option of cleansing the sinful subject through divine forgiveness. And the "Study", in turn, having properly ordered the linguistic sublation of somatism and the feminine, and dismissed sham and substitute writers (other scribes, other artists), presents its version of divine Law, which subsumes the rhetoric of decodification and the staged codifying agency.

The essay begins to feature passages of magisterial rhetoric:

It is the New Law; the old Law is revoked ... For each man there is the bride, for each woman the bridegroom, for all, the Mystic Marriage ... [E]ach man shall say, "I am myself, and Christ is Christ"; each woman shall be proud and satisfied, saying, "It is enough." So, by the New Law, man shall satisfy this his deepest desire. (467)

The new Law cements man's sacred position over-against a woman/mother whose generative power is harnessed, while her incestuous desire is neutralised. Meanwhile, a sub-clause refers to a transitional space:

It is the Unforgivable Sin to declare that these two are contradictions, one of the other, though contradictions they are. Between them is linked the Holy Spirit, as a reconciliation, and whoso shall speak hurtfully against the Holy Spirit shall find no forgiveness. (467-8)

This austere decree issues, we recall, from the advocate of a parliament to unmake moral, punitive laws. In a similar vein, Hardy's mistakenly tragic vision of man's submission to social morality has "blasphemed the Holy Spirit" (508). Hardy has offended against a categorical metaphysical regulation. Having lengthily criticised characters who submit to "the mere judgement of man upon them" (420), the "Study"'s writing subject eventually, itself, judges from on high:

...the marriage in the spirit is a lie, and the marriage in the body is a lie, each is a lie without the other. Since each excludes the other in these instances, they are both lies ... There must be a marriage of body in body, and of spirit in spirit, and Two-in-One. And the marriage in the body must not deny the marriage in the spirit, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and the marriage in the spirit shall not deny the marriage in the body, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. (475)

The speaker, no longer innocent, or ignorant, of his destined metaphysical dominion, emerges from the Spaltung journey of becoming, into guaranteed being, as the logic of separation concretises in the repressive purity of true and proper symbols.

The "Study"'s ultimate Law dramatises a re-entry of an abject subject into the Symbolic order as an ideal space characterised both as "freedom" between spirit and flesh, mind and body, Love and Law, and so on, and through the paternal function's exclusion and control of the feminine/body. The imbricated forms of absolute identity are distilled in the relative positions of two motifs. Lawrence's familiar epiphanic cry, "I am I", converges around moments when male and female principles are being distinguished, and man's associations with adventurism, knowledge and speech ("discovery", "light", "utterance") are pointed up. It is particularly associated with clusters of imagery dichotomising Christ/Love/Son/Spirit over-against Father/Law/Woman/Body:

...I will not take me a wife, nor beget seed, but I will know no woman ... For man shall not live by bread alone, nor by the common law of the Father. Beyond this common law, I am I ... I die in Christ and rise again. And when I am risen again, I live in the spirit. (511)

Despite the narrative's abomination of sham religions, Lawrence, as we might expect, continues intertextually "filtering" Christian discourse, whose terms are never fully abjected. Meanwhile, within the the essay's bi-polar structure, and at the end of the biological narrative, "I am I" completes the purifying process by affirming the spiritual and creative (male) self detached from somatism, as the abstracted transitionality of the Holy Spirit perfects the rhetoric's celebration of androgynous exits from representation.

In concentrating on the "Study"'s establishment of a virtual ego boundary through a propulsive vector of oedipal emergence, I have, to some extent, overshadowed ideas raised in previous sections about Lawrence's radical and pervasive indeterminacy. And this, after all, is a typically heterogeneous Lawrentian text, even in its final, most dogmatic stage. The "Study"'s Law itself -- and this tends, each time, to be the fundamental Law of being -- is polyvalent. It is linked to the female principle, but otherwise it is the Law of the Holy Spirit which reconciles male and female principles; it is the Law of the Christian Father-God, "who breathed life into a handful of dust" (511), and it is the Law of the usurping Son, coextensive with the artist. The rhetoric seems to account for its own metaphysical instability:

[E]very work of art adheres to some system of morality ... the degree to which the system of morality, or the metaphysic, of any work of art is submitted to criticism within the work of art makes the lasting value and satisfaction of that work... (476)

The artist's polysemy "criticises" his propositions. The proposed collapse of systematic identification is demonstrated in a radical semantic incoherence which obeys the argument's injunction to deconstruct the polemic, and thus prevents a closing establishment of terms of identity. A polyvalent field is concentrated in a shifting dialectic of becoming-terms, whose alter-aspect is a chain of deferred meaning, functioning within the writer's impossible quest to re/establish sacred subjectivity in his own terms while refusing metaphysical constraint. Lawrence's production of undecidable tropes leads up to -- and beyond -- any instatement of Laws of identity, and any specific discourse of the self.

For the revelation of the lawful subject in Lawrence's "as-if" holy text, as always, is provisional: deictic and deferred. Understood both as an artist of semioticised language, and as the doctrinal elaborator of an ontological aesthetics (sustaining oedipal reconstitutions of the subject), Lawrence's fascination with identity's foundation/borderline makes him an extravagantly intertextual subject-in-process, whose repressive impulse is not capable of symbolic resolution. But then the Bible itself, for Kristeva, never stops approaching the shifting borders of identity to regulate the birth of the Word from abject negativity. The holy Book's preoccupation with boundary negotiations makes it the codifying "inverse" of the poetic text (engaged in far more provisional constitutions of the self); but neither stabilises a clean and proper subject. As Kristeva asserts, "Deuteronomy

takes up again and varies Levitical abominations ... which in fact underlie the whole biblical text" (PH, 105). Leviticus, and we might think, "Study of Thomas Hardy" too, each exists within its doctrinal canon as a nodal point offering to the hermeneutical approach a specific emphasis, or accentuation, of a pervasive fascination with somatic separation and abstract idealism. This is why Kristeva (as we saw) talks of the biblical subject moving "from narcissistic fusion to an autonomy that is never really his 'own', never 'clean', never complete, and never securely guaranteed in the Other" (NM, 119). The Bible, apart from Leviticus, repeatedly abjects both the unclean body and other religions/gods, and obsessively affirms the self. The Old Testament carries on distancing itself from lepers and leaking woman, while the Christian subject carries on excavating and refusing his sinful desire. The religious subject, however, never finally expels the abject, which continues to fascinate in texts that must be read again and again to re-live the identificatory process underlying fixed and abstract Laws.

Towards the end of "Study of Thomas Hardy", an additional structural layer emerges coextensive with the instatement of Law, wherein the Holy Spirit/Ghost functions as a mysterious presence morally guaranteeing the "pure abstract value" (PH, 104) of the self-sufficient artist -- just as Moses's Law and Christ's preachings are guaranteed by the mystery of God. It is crucial, in this respect, that Catholic iconography, as Kristeva observes, "br[ings] to consciousness the essential dramas that are internal to the becoming of each and every subject. It thus endows itself with a tremendous cathartic power" (BS, 132). Lawrence's ambivalent relations to Christianity hinge on his rejection of its metaphysical "lie", but also on his envy of a powerful elaboration of primal omnipotence. The Old and New Testament God, the Law's most "Symbolic" signifier, for Kristeva, in fact, is the single most definite sign of the sacred's dependence on fixation in primary narcissism.

"This brings us to the central problem of the biblical God", says Kristeva, in her essay, "Reading the Bible": "He cannot be seen, named, or represented ... [and this] may give the analyst some insight into the infinitely complex question of the Bible's prohibition of representation" (NM, 121). The Symbol which guarantees representation, but which must not itself be represented, indicates, above all, that primary narcissistic fusion has not been replaced by the abstract signifier as the focal point of desire. The Name of God's

closure over-against the heterogeneous body is, literally, an illusion. God the Logos is actually the pre-oedipal ghost in the symbolic machine, "an archaic mirage of the paternal function" (NM, 121), and, again, an "archaic paternal figure arisen from the paradise of primary identification" (BS, 135). The Holy Father is the paternal function retroactively projected in what Kristeva calls the Imaginary Father, a moment in the repressed primal imaginary when symbiotic fusion is resituated to precondition the ego ideal. This paradisaical foundation of the psyche, is, of course, what is being sublimated in representations of the Madonna with child, and, by extension, in Lawrence's narcissistic harnessing of the woman-effect.

While it would have been possible to incorporate Kristeva's imaginary father within my thesis much earlier, this, I think, was not necessary, and I have chosen to keep its special significance in reserve until the chapter whose theme coincides with the context in which the figure is significantly elaborated by Kristeva herself. In *Tales of Love* (1987 [1983]), she gives a psycho-semiological historicist account of amorous discourse, which focuses on, "the diverse images of love in the West ... and the various dynamics affecting the amorous protagonists who emerge out of them" (TL, 16). Given that, at this point, we have been seeing for some time, and within several contexts, the crucial importance of the woman-effect in Lawrence's work, it is surely time to see his intense preoccupation with heterosexual relations representing, as Kristeva puts it, an "amatory genius" (TL, 347). What, then, is the nature of this genius, and this is to ask, what are the psycho-dynamics of love, for Kristeva, and, by application, in Lawrence? It is this problematic that I next consider.

**AMATORY DISCOURSE AND TRANSITIONAL OBJECTS  
IN WOMEN IN LOVE**

**I. MODERN LOVE**

In his essay, "Love", written in July 1916, during the same period as the first draft of Women in Love, Lawrence declares that: "[l]ove is not a goal; it is only a travelling ... Love always has been encompassed and surpassed by the fine lovers" (Phoenix, 152-3). Lovers surpass love? It is typical of Lawrence that his ethics of love should be both idiolectual and perverse. The central character in Women in Love repudiates society, and, within this context, sets out to redefine love as an essential encounter in which psychic boundaries dissolve; the novel, in fact, is a famous high point in the artist's career-long negotiations of heterosexual relatedness with liminal imagery. Stephen Kern, in The Culture of Love: Victorians to Moderns, makes clear that Lawrence's preoccupation with love is very much representative of the early- to mid-twentieth century, when "[t]he phenomenology, literature, and art of encounter are linked by a common focus on 'the between'" (1992, 51). This common focus among disparate writers, broadly understandable in terms of the modernists' perception of disintegrated metaphysical and social frames of identity, Kern argues, centres on a quest to devise new ways to authenticate human relationality as both immediate and transitional, and, paradigmatically, loving. Kern (v. ibid., 49-50) uses the example of Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, in which Clarissa Dalloway is a conduit for immediate, relational experience:

She knew nothing; no language, no history ... Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct ... what she loved was this, here, now, in front of her ... the ebb and flow of things ... she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home ... of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best ... but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (Woolf 1996 [1925], 11-12).

People drift in and out of Clarissa's consciousness in streams of transitional intimacy, notably in the form of amorous nostalgic reveries.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>In her essay, "Virginia Woolf 'Seen from a Foreign Land'", Makiko Minow-Pinkney places Woolf's work in a Kristevan frame, and sees the novelist articulating a "dialectic between dissemination and reconstruction" which represents the "true 'site' of the subject..." (1990, p. 164). See also Toril Moi's Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory (1995 [1985], pp. 1-18), for an account of Woolf's subversion of the metaphysics of presence. Moi makes significant use here of Kristevan ideas about revolutionary, semioticised writing (pp. 11 ff).

Not only modernist novelists, but contemporary philosophers also develop models of amorous communication based on liminal intimacy. As artists such as Lawrence and Woolf challenge stable identifications, specifically the formal gendered representations of love in the realist novel, so a phenomenology of encounter contests the post-Cartesian, egocentric philosophy of conscious mental experience.<sup>76</sup> A seminal instance of the new philosophy is Max Scheler's, The Nature of Sympathy (1970 [1913]), with its language of "flows" through which a loving couple experience something "undifferentiated as between mine and thine" (see ibid.). Martin Buber, in I and Thou (1966 [1923]), goes further than Scheler, to identify a necessarily unmediated connection produced in caring, intimate relations. "I-Thou" is a pre-linguistic, a priori identification in opposition to mastering positions produced in the field of what Buber calls the "I-it". Martin Heidegger, in Being and Time (1962 [1927]), continues the preoccupation with how an isolated subject might "get across" to the other and survive as the self. Love, for Heidegger, is what happens when two people share an enthralled co-understanding of "existence" (Existenz), a Thirdness field of cura ("care"). For Karl Jaspers (1970 [1932]), Existenz changes from an object of cognition to a boundary space defining the self in relation to the other through desire, longing, disappointment and loss. Authentic being emerges through a "loving struggle", wherein a potential experience of Existenz tackles another possible Existenz, questioning it, challenging it, struggling to communicate. Love, for Jaspers, is non-violent contention, and it forms the authentic core of a humanity that exists inasmuch as it communicates. Jaspers' conception of loving struggle nevertheless is typical of existentialist models of immediate relationality, in its registering of the modern subject's anxious sense of impossible agreement, and fear of the loved other's betrayal through false communication.

For Kristeva, as for Kern, Lawrence's preoccupation with redefining love would undoubtedly be a sign of its unsettled post-metaphysical times, though modern writers on love are also locatable within a long tradition of such writing. Kristeva talks, in a 1985 interview, about her historicist construction of amorous discourse in Tales of Love.

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<sup>76</sup>See Kern's The Culture of Love (1992), Chapter 3, "Encounter", pp. 41 ff.

One can certainly speak of a history of love, of mutations in the lover's discourse, and of changes in the role this discourse has played in the aesthetic imaginary and in philosophical or religious discourse. It is striking to note, for example, how important the lover's discourse was for the construction of Christianity. Everyone knows that the Christian religion is a religion of love and that churches are filled with people who go there to hear that God loves them; but we don't give it much thought because it has become commonplace. Perhaps we still need to stress that the entire history of the patristic is a story of highly nuanced variations on different modes of love and forms of love, ... the importance of the 'self' and the 'own,' and so forth" (KI, 68)

Christianity, then, is only one example, albeit perhaps the most obvious, of the appropriation of love by Western metaphysics. In Tales of Love, Kristeva says,

All the philosophies of thought, from Plato down to Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, that have aimed to give the experience of love a strong hold on reality have pruned out of it what is disorderly in order to reduce it to an initiatory voyage drawn toward the supreme Good or the absolute Spirit. (TL, 8)

After the collapse of the metaphysical tradition, Kristeva argues, new "mutations" of loving discourse appear which present the unstable and irrational essence of love, bound up with the writer's passionate impulses both to articulate a personal crisis of identification, and to re-establish the self in empathetic communication with others.<sup>77</sup>

Lawrence's fascination with amorous experience, in this case, signals a crucial modernist attempt to rehabilitate love as an authentic human encounter, in an age of distrust for ontological systems which sublate interpersonal affection when insisting on passionate identifications with spiritual or philosophic, cultural or universalist, ideals.

There is, of course, in the modern period, another writer devising new ways to understand human relatedness. "First among the moderns", says Kristeva, "Sigmund Freud, a post-Romanticist, thought of turning love into a cure. He went straight to the disorder that love reveals ... in the speaking being..." (TL, 8). Psychoanalysis, in fact, she believes, is uniquely potent as a modern relational discourse because it is "rooted" in love:

Psychoanalysis has given shape to a lover's discourse striving to be new; it is the only place laid out explicitly in the social contract that allows individuals to speak about their loves, to find a discourse appropriate to their amatory experiences, and

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<sup>77</sup>Kristeva does identify elements of love's irrationality in the "patristic", albeit in untypical instances of Christian writing: "[t]heology alone, and only within its mystical deviations, allows itself to be lured into the trap of a blessed loving madness, from the Song of Songs, to Bernard of Clairvaux and Abelard" (Kristeva 1987, p. 8)



to construct it through a relationship that is itself a loving relationship with their analyst. (KI, 69)

Psychoanalysis, then, is located with the moderns in Kristeva's history of variant amatory discourses -- but it is also the metadiscourse that allows us to understand, to "give shape" to, human relatedness, and specifically to the words of those, like Lawrence, whose understanding of love as a paradigm of relatedness is not shaped by the guided ascent of desire in metaphysical/sacred legislation. As always, for Kristeva, psychoanalysis both represents and transcends its epochal "striving" for new ways to ontologise the subject.<sup>78</sup>

While Kristeva's understanding of love is grounded in classic psychoanalytic ideas about libidinal overflow, narcissism and illusion, she also, however, rejects certain patriarchalist assumptions in classical theory. Her association of love with the transgressive and creative imaginary, moreover, is sometimes presented against earlier, more pessimistic, analytic ideas. In what follows, I first give a selective account of the psychoanalytic provenance of love in the work of Freud, Lacan, and Winnicott, before turning to Kristeva. I want, in this account, to show how gendered love is implicated with more general ideas about the subject's relational being, and also radically to distinguish

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<sup>78</sup>Kristeva, as one might expect, does not attribute to existentialist "moderns" a privileged elaborative response to the epoch's "pathological" angst comparable to that of psychoanalysis, and she instead symptomatises their discourse. In a 1980 interview, she asserts that "existentialism was, in my view, a regression with regard to the great philosophical and aesthetic formal movements, to take only my own fields" (Kristeva 1996a, p. 13). This modern branch of philosophy lacks the intellectual rigour of traditional philosophy, while the function of creative phantasy, which alone can regenerate the modern alienated subject is, she argues, ignored. Existentialism is not sensitive to aesthetics, and so it elides "the great revolution of the avant-garde, Mallarmé, Lautréamont, and after them the surrealists--the entrance of psychosis into the life of the city, which modern art represents..." (*ibid.*). Existentialist theory restricts the psyche to struggles with the other taking place in consciousness: "I think that Sartrean thought has no means to deal with the unconscious and, similarly, with everything that is material ... The unconscious as a logic, as a language, which is the essence of the Freudian discovery, is entirely foreign..." (*ibid.*, p. 14). Philosophy, generally, cannot explain incoherent modes of thought as anything but a diminution or absence of mind. The "voice" of heterogeneity/psychosis goes unrecognised since there is no analytic mechanism with which to assess counter-rational enunciations. Existentialists, specifically, in disregarding rigorous conceptual and semantic analysis, shut themselves off from post-Saussurian thought and the discovery of the psyche's status in differential signification which is at the heart of Lacanian and post-Lacanian psychoanalysis. Kristeva's critique of existentialism, on the whole, echoes that of Lacan: "Freud brought within the circle of science the boundary between the object and being that seemed to mark its outer limit ... [D]on't be content, I beg of you, to write this off as another dose of Heideggerianism ... the dustbin style in which currently, by the use of his ready-made mental jetsam, one excludes oneself from any real thought ... If I speak of being and the letter, if I distinguish the other and the Other, it is because Freud shows me that they are the terms to which must be referred the effects of resistance and transference..." (Lacan 1977, p. 175). Existentialist ideas about relationality, for Lacan, project narcissistic illusions of autonomy and self-reflexivity. There is no individual "human nature" to be constructed, since human being is the product of unconscious desire, and "I" is an illusion of the other's self-recognition. For a comprehensive account, see Ellie Ragland-Sullivan (1987), Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis.

between, on the one hand, the Freudian and Lacanian models of love, and, on the other, Winnicott's and Kristeva's mother-centred theories of imaginary integration. This distinction will form a template for my subsequent reading of Women in Love, in which I identify a moral dichotomy characterised by Lawrence's effective negotiations between Lacanian and Kristevan versions of love.

## II. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LOVE

### 1. Freud: Narcissism, Anaclysis and Eros

I want to look at two approaches to love in Freud's work, which form the basis for later analysts' thinking on the topic, and, indeed, largely constitute the basis of psychoanalysis. First, in "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (SE XIV [1914]), Freud negotiates narcissism with gendered love so as to make each a fundamental psychic mechanism. He first distinguishes between two types of love experienced in adult life. An "anaclitic" lover forms an attachment to someone perceived as nurturing, who thus displaces the primal mother, while another type of love is experienced by libidinally disturbed people, "such as perverts and homosexuals", who in their

...choice of love-objects ... have clearly taken as a model not their mother but their own selves. They are plainly seeking themselves as a love object, and are exhibiting a type of object-choice which must be termed "narcissistic". (SE XIV, 88)

In heterosexual love, Freud argues, men tend to be anaclitic lovers, while women tend to be narcissistic. Freud makes an essential characteristic of love the idealisation (overvaluation to the point of perfection) of an object. Lovers become positioned by ideal identifications within the oedipal frame: man displaces primary narcissism (with mother) to an idealised woman, while woman strives to be the object of his desire, her narcissism assimilating his phantasmatic assimilation of her as "the beloved". And so both, in fact, are narcissists; though only one (man) cathects an (anaclitic) object. I will return to these ideas shortly when discussing Lacan; and later we will see how Kristeva dismisses the anaclitic/narcissistic opposition to develop a primal space which transcends couple-love, Oedipus, and even narcissism itself. This brings us to Freud's second, generalist, understanding of love.

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle (SE XVIII [1920]), Freud presents the final configuration of his instinct theory, whereby the dualism of the sexual and the self-

preservation instincts, first clearly postulated in 1910,<sup>79</sup> is subsumed by the life instinct, what Freud calls Eros, the Greek term for love and the god of love. Freud opposes Eros to Thanatos, the death instinct, and thus identifies a psychical representation of what he sees as a universal ontological balance between attraction and repulsion. Where Thanatos signifies a tendency to repel reality and regress to archaic stasis, Eros represents the ego's tendency to organisation through "attraction" to alterity, whereby "union with the living substance of a different individual increases ... tensions, introducing what may be described as fresh 'vital differences'..." (SE XVIII, 55). The earlier model of a conservative ego struggling between unpredictable reality and polymorphous sexuality, is overlaid by the ego's dependence for its vitality upon desire for other-related experience. Eros, Freud's general principle of attraction, therefore is bound up with his first fundamental concept, the illusory ideal self formed in displacements of the primal mother to woman. Apart from in "On Narcissism", however, Freud does not specify how the dynamics of Erotic desire and gender-based narcissism affect human relations, and it is left to Jacques Lacan to provide a comprehensive nexus of Eros, Thanatos, heterosexual love and narcissistic illusion.

## 2. Lacan: Demand and Illusion.

### The Subject

In Lacanian discourse, couple-love is firmly the centre of a general theory of the subject. Following Freud, Lacan identifies love with narcissistic idealisation, and his writing can be fairly described as fascinated by the idea that gender forms the basis of symbolic economies:

I came to analysis because I suspected that the relations between men and women played a determining role in the symptoms of human beings. That progressively pushed me towards those who had not succeeded in them, since one can certainly say that psychosis is a kind of failure in what concerns the accomplishment of what is called love. (Lacan, in MacCannell 1986a, 42)<sup>80</sup>

For Lacan, all psychopathology, which reduces to melancholic cathexes of the death drives, is bound up with a deficiency of heterosexual self-identification, signalling failure

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<sup>79</sup>In "The Psycho-Analytic View of Psychogenic Disturbance of Vision" (1910), Freud posits an "undeniable opposition between the instincts which subserve sexuality, the attainment of sexual pleasure, and those other instincts, which have as their aim the self-preservation of the individual -- the ego instincts" (*Standard Ed.*, XI, p. 214).

<sup>80</sup>Juliet Flower MacCannell cites from *Scilicet*, 6/7 (1976), p. 16.

to transfer narcissism from the mother to a signified object (psychosis). This understanding radically informs Lacan's psycho-textual revision of oedipal subjectivity, which modulates Freud's anaclitic-narcissistic model emphasising masculine fantasy.

In "On Narcissism", Freud provides man with a sexual object, woman, while woman is compensated for castration only by a defensive reassertion of primary narcissism. Woman may experience object-love when she has a child (v. SE XIV, 89-90), but only man experiences it in the heterosexual relationship. In a typical, romantic, attachment, man idealises woman; she becomes for him an externalised I-ideal, exalted and aspired to as a role model. Men, argues Freud, become passionately attached, not to any particular woman, but to the experience of love through which man's attraction to the world is "guaranteed" by an external, ideal object, so making him an active (not melancholic) subject, and the only active subject, since object-cathexes activate a single, masculine libido.

Lacan, then, takes Freud's single libido to its logical terminus, by making man the only subject in language. Heterosexuality is an illusion in a hommo-sexual Symbolic order having only one positive term, masculinity, aligned with power and prestige and set over-against feminine negativity, which is an exclusion, a non-signifiable excess. In "God and Woman's Jouissance", Lacan asserts that,

"Woman" (la) is a signifier, the crucial property (propre) of which is that it is the only one that cannot signify anything, and this is simply because it grounds woman's status in the fact that she is not-whole. That means we can't talk about Woman (la femme). (Lacan 1975, 73)

Woman signifies nothing because she represents the mother's love, which must be sacrificed to sustain his patrimonial location. Desire for lost maternal plenitude, on the other hand, for Lacan, is the condition of the subject's vital relationality, of his gendered identity, and the forbidden referent (the mother) is substituted by a woman, whose subjectivity is annihilated to make her a sign of the self's autonomous completion. The signifier of desire for completion, meanwhile, is the Lacanian "phallus".

### **The Phallus**

The phallus, according to Lacan, is the penis removed from its anatomical role to symbolise potential self-sufficiency. In identifying with the phallus man transcends his

nostalgic need for nurture, he transcends desire for self-mirroring by/in the other, and he satisfies his demand for evidence of the presence and love of the Other. This multi-layered realisation of the autonomous subject, however, is purely imaginary. The Other, for Lacan, is the Symbolic absent father redolent of the archaic lost mother, and, similarly, the phallic space of Symbolic transcendence is not a "thing" which is there to be had. The subject is actually embroiled in constant struggles to master the other's desire in recognition of the self's phallic sufficiency and prestige. In a master/slave dialectic which constitutes subjective being, sexual difference is referred to Thanatos and the jouissance of the death drives, where desire for stasis inverts to aggressive impulses to "phallogratically" subordinate and control the other (sex). Men and women, Lacan argues, position themselves around the phallus and elaborate the roles of master and slave through the relation of anaclitic (to have the phallus) to narcissistic (to be the phallus) desire. Thus, "[t]he phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire" (1977, 287). The would-be centred positive/subject is inextricably joined with -- also translatable as "wedded to" -- the negative/feminine sign of his self-certainty in the cultural logos. The nuptial is an imaginary "phallic" effect in the signifier, and the subject's enunciated Symbolic advent ("I") correlates to a desiring phantasy of "consummating" self-identity with a significant other who means nothing. In this context, Lacan states that "[t]he phallus is the signifier of ... [an] Aufhebung ... which it inaugurates (initiates) by its disappearance" (*ibid.*, 288). In heterosexual love, woman "masquerade[s]" as man's specular other (Lacan 1977, 290), and what the (anaclitic) narcissist has is his own reflection as nothing, a misrecognised reflection of his own desire, a dis-appearance of love.<sup>81</sup>

The Lacanian subject, then, is universally characterised in terms of reflexive fantasy which is the core of Erotic attraction and vital relationality; at the same time, however, the analyst cynically regards the subject as deluded, even foolish -- Lacan, for one, comprehends the true nature of the subject's desire, which is a simultaneously necessary and impossible transcendence of the Symbolic, coextensive with the death-drive to primal stasis. Lacan's analytic meta-position conditions his own "transcendence", which

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<sup>81</sup>Lacan's use of the term "masquerade" evokes Joan Riviere's 1929 essay, "Womanliness as Masquerade" (1986). Riviere sees women's identity as an obscurity consonant with society's constructions of her roles. No essential femininity exists behind the societal norms of her behaviour and appearance. Her nature consists entirely in mimicry and reflexivity, which she performs in response to men's fears and desires.

enables him to observe man's psychic constitution through an illusory mastery of woman's desire, which makes her both the imaginary solution to, and the symbolic symptom of, his unconscious desire for the m/Other:

...[A]s the signifier of the phallus constitutes her as giving in love what she does not have [the gift of the Other] ... his own desire will make its signifier emerge in its persistent divergence towards "another woman" who may signify this phallus in various ways, either as a virgin or as a prostitute. (Lacan 1977, 290)

Lacan here restates Freud's virgin-whore dichotomy between amatory worship and sexual degradation, and also his mentor's idea that men are necessarily fickle since their fulfilment depends on imaginary relations to women, no one of whom can be a sign of the Other's love.<sup>82</sup>

I will return to Lacan when we arrive at Kristeva, and his version of love, as I have indicated, will be an element in my reading of Women in Love. My third and last discussion of analytic theory which influences Kristeva's ideas about the amorous encounter, involves a shift from the oedipal structuralism of Freud and Lacan to a developmental model of the subject, and a primal mapping which provides a crucial template for Kristeva.

### **3. Winnicott: The Transitional Object**

If someone believed, like Lacan, that love is an unavoidable illusion, but s/he wanted a more positive psychoanalytic explanation, then the theory of D. W. Winnicott would be a good place to look. Stephen Frosh neatly situates Winnicott in relation to Lacan's mirror stage:

Like many psychoanalysts, Lacan has an interest in mirrors ... [In] Winnicott's influential reading the mother "mirrors" the child's actual needs back to the child, so that he or she can experience these needs as tolerated and loved, and also can begin to symbolise them; the more accurate and accepting the mirror, the more space there is for the true self to grow. This is a very beautiful image ... Someone watches you and shows you they have understood what you are really like, and that they accept it; this mirroring enables you to feel appreciated and held and allows

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<sup>82</sup>Freud, in "A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men" (1910), observes that a "[man's] love objects may replace one another so frequently that a long series of them is formed" (Standard Ed., XI, p. 168). Freud sets out his ideas on romantic idealisation, including the infamous virgin-whore dichotomy, in "A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men" (1910, Standard Ed., XI), and "On the Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love" (1912, Standard Ed., XI) (papers I and II, in Contributions to the Psychology of Love).

you to take more risks in expressing your needs and making links with others. ...  
Lacan, however, is not so poetic... (Frosh 1991, 114)

We should be aware here that Frosh's poetic perception of a beautiful image is based on an ideal relation of a child to its attentive mother. As a matter of fact, things can go very wrong when Mother is either absent, or present but inadequate, as John Bowlby, in particular, has shown.<sup>83</sup> Winnicott himself, as we will see, takes into account bad early mothering; there is, nevertheless, perhaps, a strand of beautiful optimism discernible in his ideas about the relations of primal phantasy to adult self-fulfilment.

### The Origin of Illusion

Winnicott's work gives an excellent demonstration of the object-relational theoretical tendency to emphasise connection and symbiosis with the mother, as against the phallic field of castration foreclosing the mother's body. The emphasis in Winnicott is on plenitude, not lack. On Lacan's account, a meeting of demands for the Other's (originally the mother's) love is out of the question; there can only be transient misrecognition of the ideal "I" imagined through the other's desire. The self realised in self-deception, for Lacan, is unavoidable (while also being somehow contemptible). Winnicott takes on board the subject's illusory status as a function of unconscious desire, but constructs the illusion through an affirmative mapping out of the primal dyad. He introduces to the infant-child relation a space which is both intra-psychic and objective, and whose argued case therefore needs special pleading:

I am drawing attention to the paradox involved in the use by the infant of what I have called the transitional object. My contribution is to ask for a paradox to be accepted and tolerated and respected, and for it not to be resolved. (Winnicott 1971, xii)

For Winnicott, to talk of objects being "inside" or "outside" the psyche is inadequate (cf. ibid., 3, 11, 15). The paradox of the transitional object, in fact, is that is not an object at

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<sup>83</sup>John Bowlby is best known for his Attachment Theory, a comprehensive project combining mother-centred psychoanalytic theory with empirical evidence derived from animal studies and observations of the effects on children of maternal deprivation. His works include Forty-four Juvenile Thieves (1946), Child Care and the Growth of Love (1953), and Separation: Anxiety and Anger (1975). In Separation, the second volume in his Attachment and Loss trilogy, Bowlby argues that if the mother (as the typical early "attachment figure") has acknowledged the infant's needs for nurture and protection, while supporting its attempts at independent exploration, then the child will be likely to develop a healthy sense of self-worth and autonomous capability. If, on the other hand, the mother fails to provide sufficient comfort and safety while blocking her infant's exploratory impulses, the child is likely to develop pathologically. See Bowlby (1975), particularly Chapter 17, "Anger, Anxiety, and Attachment", pp. 284-96, and Chapter 21, "Secure Attachment and the Growth of Self-reliance", pp. 366-410.

all, either in the mind or in reality. And it is neither because it is both. The very first transitional object tends to be a piece of cloth or similar material, which is rolled by the infant into a breast-like object and suckled. This action is defensive against separation from the mother, but the child has also thereby formed an object of illusion (an "as-if" breast) which is used to play with images of me and not-me, and, as the ego develops, mine and not-mine. The transitional object is a bridge between the "magical" world of the internal object (concept) under the pleasure principle, and the world of objects under the reality principle (cf. *ibid.*, 11). It generates a positive proto-experience of separation and relationality, which is a precondition of subjectivity. The role of the mother in the infant's transitional behaviour, meanwhile, is not restricted to the breast's somatic nurture and illusory objectification.

### **Mothering Illusion**

The "good-enough mother" (Winnicott 1971, 11) is adequately "there" for the infant, meeting need with satisfaction, offering the breast when its plenitude is imagined (cf. *ibid.*, 9); but she also actively "weans" the infant by facilitating its transition from primary to secondary narcissism (cf. *ibid.*, 11). A good mother (who may at times be a transitional object herself [cf. *ibid.*, 5]) encourages her child's phantasies by allowing breast-cloths, teddies, etc., to remain unwashed and unrepaired. The mother's tolerant approval, in fact, is crucial to the generation of transitional phenomena. Recognition by the infant of her compliance in its illusion, through deference, supportive speech, object placement, and so forth, is an oft-repeated, mundane domestic event; yet the good-enough mother's empathetic rapport with childish fantasy is enabling the first vital steps towards Symbolic order.

For Lacan, the subject is repeatedly disillusioned when the mirror of idealised integrity is shattered, revealing the ego's Spaltung and impossible access to the M/Other's love. Winnicott's subject, by contrast, is archaically sustained by the primal mother's love of her child's play in an "intermediate area of experiencing" (Winnicott 1971, 3). The subject has a paradoxical understanding of the world as both self-created and an actual alterity, but s/he achieves ego-integrity through the legacy of "intermediate" thought, which houses the vital imaginary potential of identifying the self in relations with others. The original transitional objects, then, become decathected in time, but the original transitional



dynamic, nourished by unconscious recollections of the good-enough mother, sustains the subject as an imaginary form. Art and heterosexual love, for Winnicott, are particularly important transitional fields, being strongly redolent of the original (oral) "magical" fantasies in which relative boundaries are explored and blurred. Such intermediate ideation is "in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play" (Winnicott 1971, 15).

Winnicott's understanding of maternal empathetic guidance and identificatory play will strongly resonate in what follows, as we now move on to a discussion of Kristeva, which I preface with the briefest distillation of the psychoanalytic ideas set out above.

### **A Summary of Loves**

Freud puts in place the groundwork when identifying love as anaclitic, narcissistic, idealising, and generalisable as Eros; Lacan makes heterosexual love the sign of universal illusion and the sad state of humanity; for Winnicott, the subject forms in transitional processes dynamically reactivating the archaic mother's love. These paradigms we will see evolved within Julia Kristeva's variant negotiation of universal vital relationality and heterosexual amatory discourse.

#### **4. Kristeva: Love In-Process**

In an early section in Tales of Love, "Freud and Love: Treatment and its Discontents" (TL, 21-56), Kristeva elaborates the deep-logical foundation of her book. In glossing this essay we will be able both to correlate her ideas about love with those set out above, and to assemble a cluster of terms which can generate an appropriate reading of Women in Love.

### **Classical Negotiations**

We have seen that Kristeva ascribes to psychoanalysis a privileged understanding of love in the modern epoch. Freud, she argues, is the first theorist of any kind to see love as a cure; he discovered that staging the transference of primary to secondary narcissism produces a kind of rebirth from fixation into healthy relationships with others. Kristeva further argues, however, that oedipal Eros cannot be given a significant value in an epoch devoid of metaphysical social coherence, and this problematic hinges on the fact that everything in classical theory is about the "revival of narcissism, its abeyance, its

conciliation, its consolation" (TL, 22). In this context, Kristeva registers her opposition to Lacan's account of the inception of narcissism at the mirror stage, which entails that idealisation is located "solely within the field of the signifier and of desire" (TL, 38). If the illusion of the cultural Other "dies", there is no space (in the inaccessible real) where the original transference can be renewed: the subject loses the will to live, to seek through the other's desire signs of the Other's love. As a matter of developmental logic, Kristeva asks: "[d]oes the 'mirror stage' emerge out of nowhere? What are the conditions of its emergence?" (TL, 22). Similarly, the pre-oedipal space posited by Melanie Klein, for Kristeva, cannot find the subject attracted to alterity. The Kleinian subject is produced in archaic relations to the breast, which entails that narcissism "threatens to reduce to a fascination for what is nothing but the mother's phallus" (TL, 45). In response, Kristeva sets about re-constructing the foundations of narcissism, love and the subject's relational dynamic:

...the proposition I am offering here has the advantage of pointing to, even before the Oedipal triangle ..., the place of the Third Party; without the latter, the phrase Melanie Klein calls "schizo-paranoid" could not become a "depressive" phase ...  
The archaic inscription of the father seems to me a way of modifying the phantasy of a phallic mother playing at the phallus game all by herself, alone and complete, in the back room of Kleinism... (TL, 44)<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>As I suggested above, the theoretical section in this chapter is structured to prefigure an essentially binary reading of *Women in Love*, based on Lacanian and Kristevan versions of love. This necessarily relegates to a footnote Melanie Klein's contributions to this field, though they also have significant resonance in Kristeva's theory. For Klein, there is a problem in directly associating idealisation, as Freud does, with significant expressions of affection. Idealisation, she argues, initially cathects the plenitudinous mother, where it alternates with paranoid phantasies about the mother's absence/hostility. Primary idealisation pre-conditions ego integration through introjection of the "good self", correlative to Freud's I-ideal, and consequent healthy object-relationships. But idealisation, for Klein, becomes pathological when goodness has inadequately been identified with the self, causing envy and persecutory fantasies, and an aggressive splitting of the self from the object. Her solution to the eternal return of fixation points for splitting is to re-negotiate and overlay idealisation, such that creative reparation becomes the motivating agent of mature love. In "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (Klein 1975, pp. 344-69), Klein argues that paranoid responses to maternal ambivalence are countered in the depressive position by impulses to restoration. The child learns to stop reacting negatively to his ambivalent feelings by assimilating them, by recognising that the hostility is within him, and by feeling guilt over the damage done (in schizoid phantasy) to the mother, who now is a mourned, loved and lost, object. The child's need to "repair the damage" to Mother characterises the adult's perpetual need to integrate the self in the world, and this dynamic becomes the basis of sublimation and the exploratory impulse. The subject, while archaically motivated by guilt, is sustained by relatedness. S/he recognises the imperfect partialness of objects in reality, and looks for ways to restore "the good" by understanding social reality "holistically", relationally, tolerantly, wisely. This individual conforms to Freud's vision of Eros: s/he responds positively to -- loves to learn about, to identify (with) -- vital differences, in perpetual attempts to find harmony and understanding in an incoherent world. We thus, Klein asserts, "transfer our interest and our love from our mother to other people" (*ibid.*, p. 342). We are looking at one of the radical points of influence upon Kristeva's mother-based process theory -- particularly her notion of the stranger/foreigner -- when Klein, in "Love, Guilt and Reparation", says that "[in] the explorer's mind, a new

Kristeva, then, instates a necessary primal generative space by working from logical aporia in the theories of Freud, Klein and Lacan; having said this, Kristeva's Third Party is significantly characterised through her development of two mechanisms identified by Freud.

Einfühlung, or "empathy", argues Freud in "Identification" (1921), "plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people" (SE XVIII, 108). This oralised awareness of the other, quickly taken up and dropped by Freud, is redeployed by Kristeva as an "[a]matory identification ... (the assimilation of other people's feelings) [which] appears to be madness when seen in the light of Freud's caustic lucidity..." (TL, 24). Kristeva also expropriates an equally brief reference, in The Ego and the Id (1923), to a "Father in individual pre-history" (SE XIX, 31), identification with which is "immediate" and "direct" (TL, 26). This nexus of immediacy, paternity, and loving empathy/madness, then, informs the "proposition" that Kristeva "offers"; but the developmental necessity of her pre-oedipal "third realm" (TL, 22) most clearly corresponds to Winnicott's transitional phenomenology.

### **The Imaginary Father**

Any notion of the integrated self, for Lacan, is demoted to the imaginary and characterised through the illusion of the loving Other's recognition of "my" desire. Winnicott, by contrast, affirms the imaginary as the formative space in which the subject is produced and sustained through reactivation of the mother's loving recognition. For Winnicott, as we saw, the relational subject is constantly engaged in intermediate negotiations: lovers and artists, particularly, are prone to "lose" themselves, like young children, when playing with ideas blurring the boundaries between inside and outside, the self and the other. It is largely against this theoretical background that Kristeva correlates love with Freudian

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territory stands for a new mother, one that will replace the loss of the real mother. He is seeking the 'promised land' -- the 'land flowing with milk and honey' ... The desire to re-discover the mother of the early days ... is also of the greatest importance in creative art and in the way people enjoy and appreciate it. (Klein 1975, p. 334). The artist who "puts life into his object of art, whether or not it represents a person, is unconsciously restoring and recreating ... whom he has in phantasy destroyed" (*ibid.*, p. 335). Mary Jacobus (1995, pp. 145 ff.) makes clear the extent to which "Freud and Love: Treatment and its Discontents" negotiates with Klein's ideas. (Jacobus, however, does not discuss a Kristevan problematic with regard to the Kleinian subject characterised by fear, remorse and appeasement: "Melanie Klein's 'projective relationship' unwittingly serves as a cornerstone for society and the sacred", Kristeva asserts (1987, p. 23), since sacred -- at any rate, biblical -- laws of self-identity require the subject's pathologisation by paranoid guilt and masochistic idealisation.)

Einführung as the irrational essence of the transference relation (which Freudian rationalism elides), and elucidates love's archaic predisposition: "the hypnotic state known as loving madness rests upon a strange object ... that sets up love, the sign, and repetition at the heart of the psyche" (TL, 25).<sup>85</sup> The object is strange, uncanny, because it is the infant's positional identification "between" the mother and the father, and it is generated by the mother's abstracted attention. The focus of her attention may be work, a man (the father?), or some social instance; the infant cannot say. The crucial point is that an identification by the child of the mother's attraction to "another" space displaces the child as the phallus, in a triadic structure, or event, without which the primal dyad cannot be abandoned.

Mother, then, for Kristeva, turns away: and instead of an abject persecutory breast (her absence), there is a sublime father who loves but does not judge ("He" does not speak). The imaginary father is "the Phallus desired by the mother ... a coagulation of the mother and her desire ... the indication that the mother is not complete but that she wants . . . Who? What?" (TL, 41). The question of what mother loves, of what is the potential, infinite, loved space, leads the infant "out" into the Symbolic order and its false perceptions of the reflexive ego ideal. The archaic father-potential, however, is always-already the "zero degree of imagination" (TL, 24), and the desiring subject can transcend his cycle of misrecognition and disillusionment, by imagining the self in phantasmatic empathy, at the "borders of narcissism and idealisation" (TL, 6). Thus, for Kristeva, "[l]ove involves a sizeable Aufhebung of narcissism" (TL, 33.). A loving subject is sublimated in social signification, not through the aggressive phallic Aufhebung, but in "play" with signs of immediacy and transition, in imaginary conflation of narcissistic idealisation, attraction to others, and reified ternary space. This essential dynamic, Kristeva argues, is obscured, but evident, in metaphysical discourse. Christianity, as we saw, is one of the great metaphysical systems in which the language of love is crucial, and Christian agape provides for Kristeva a cardinal instance of "patristic" rationalisations of

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<sup>85</sup>Here Kristeva is acknowledging Freud's analogy, in "Being in Love and Hypnosis" (1921): "[t]he hypnotic relation is the unlimited devotion of someone in love, but with sexual satisfaction excluded" (Standard Ed., p. 115). Although Einführung empathy (which appears in "Identification") is not elaborated by Freud in this essay (or anywhere else), its connection with love as "mad" assimilation is an obvious implication: "it is even possible to describe an extreme case of being in love as a state in which the ego has introjected the object into itself" (ibid., p. 114).

love's irrational core in self-alter-idealism. Through agape (divine fellow-feeling), the differentiated "I" is constituted in unconscious relations to a Symbolic Father-God (Other) who loves "me" because I love the other as myself (v. TL, 139 ff., Lechte 172-4).

In sum, Kristeva makes love an idealisation that has no distinct object, and whose elucidatory origin is the pre-objectal identification of the imaginary father -- meanwhile, the imaginary father is the condition of rationalist object-relational discourse, whose vital dynamic is intermediate identificatory "madness". Echoing Winnicott's insistence on paradox, Kristeva asserts that "the problem is not to find an answer to the enigma" (TL, 24); one should instead accept as a deep-logical and archaic necessity the "preoedipal triad" (TL, 25) which undercuts the mirror stage as the authentic foundation of a subject whose imaginary (but authentic) being resides in transcendence of narcissistic desire through empathetic idealisation.

### Clinical Love

Kristeva introduces the imaginary father principle into analytic therapy, as Anna Smith says, "[i]n order to stabilise her patients, relieve them of abjection and offer them a ground on which to elaborate their love" (1996, 165).

Analysis love is what Freud called a Transference ... Transference love is a dynamic involving three people: the subject (the analysand), his imaginary or real object of love (the other ... ), and the Third Party, the stand-in for potential Ideal, possible Power. The analyst occupies that place of the Other; he is a subject who is supposed to know--and know how to love ... Transference love ... [is] the optimum form of interrelation ... because it avoids the chaotic hyperconnectedness of fusion love as well as the death-dealing stabilisation of love's absence. (TL, 13, 15)

In the clinic, the transference is carefully monitored and directed by an analyst who is a blank slate, an infinite potential space. Onto this "listening" space the subject at first projects hatred and emptiness, and then learns to trust the analyst's speech, and, in so doing, transfers primal ternary affect to someone who "stands in" for the omniscient symbolic Other. The analyst (for now) loves "me" only, and "I" love the analyst who loves my narcissism. Like a good-enough mother, she directs me to the Other scene, where lack in the other's mirrored ideal is eclipsed by attractional affect, and the traumatised desiring ego is recomposed as Ego Affectus (cf. TL, 155, 378). But what about the modern creative writer, unsupervised by the one-who-knows, and not being "pointed" to the cultural other? What does he make of the imaginary father? Kristeva's distinction, above, between

clinically induced love and "the chaotic hyperconnectedness of fusion love", leads us directly to the writer's symptomatic production.

### **Love and Metaphoricity**

For Kristeva, love, metaphor and the imaginary father come together at an interface,

...where what I incorporate is what I become, where having [anaclisis] amounts to being [narcissism] ... When the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other--precisely a nonobject, a pattern, a model--I bind myself to him in a primary fusion, communion, unification ... I become like him: One. A subject of enunciation.

Through psychic osmosis/identification. Through love. (TL, 25-6)

Thus the title of the second section in "Freud and Love": "Einführung: An Identification with a Metaphorical Object" (TL, 24). Metaphor, asserts Kristeva, is the "linguistic correlative" (TL, 275) of love, and both "rest on" the synaesthetic experience of the imaginary father, which then is the "ideal agency ... the ultimate addressee of ... [amatory-object] writing..." (TL, 320). Obversely, moving from the unnameable father to metaphoricity is the condition of love: a "state of transference ... toward the other ... [which] flares up from sensation to idealisation" (TL, 275). This brings us back to the importance to the artist of metaphor's sublime form, the symbol. The modern poetic subject, for Kristeva, is involved in a particular kind of transference which combines oral narcissism with non-finite meanings. The writer reappropriates dissociated affect by "addressing", through plenitudinous metaphoricity, the mystic infinity of the archaic virtual father, always cognisant of the loved and lost mother's desire. The poet's rapt attention is focused, not on a person, but on textuality, as primal love is reconstituted in oral acts of signification which assimilate and narcissistically introject the m/Other's desire. The poetic novelist, moreover, may elaborate the spontaneous "hyperconnective" form/s of narcissistic alterity as a discourse of heterosexual love centring on a metaphorical conceit. And this is what we will find in Women in Love.

For Kristeva, art and psychoanalysis are the significant modern fields of amatory language, in which the authentic ambiguity of transitional phantasy is no longer suppressed within homogenising referential discourse, which otherwise is fascinated by love.

If the state of love is such a disconcerting dynamic and at the same time the supreme guarantee of renewal, one understands the excitement it could produce when examined by metaphysical discourse, which clings to it from the time of its

beginnings in Plato. One also understands why love has become the privileged site of the passion of signs constituted by their condensation and literary polyvalence. (TL, 16)

In all this talk about the authentic qualities of the imaginary father and the modern poetic imaginary, the Kristeva reader does not, however, forget that the modern/ist poet's "privileged" nexus of amatory discourse and semiotic practice responds to alienation and traumatised narcissism. The socially abject writer cathects his own idiolectual representation of a ternary potential beyond the self, which means that the loved Other, the guarantee of his attraction to signs and alterity, is not socially embodied as the universal Good, the humanist God, the teleological Absolute, etc. The writer instead addresses the dis-Ordered infinity of a virtual Third Space, whose supreme attractional status is recurrently "revealed" as the unsustainable imaginary product of an isolated self. In this context, Kristeva accepts that "[i]t may seem paradoxical to be seeking the discourse of amatory relationships in borderline esthetics [sic]" (TL, 267). It may, she adds, "seem strange" to replace the "straightforward language of simple idealisation of the love object" with an analysis of "the painful or ecstatic states where the object slips away" (ibid.). But modern love is painful.

[W]hen the social consensus gives little or no support to such an idealising possibility, as may be observed at the present time ..., the derealisation that underlies amatory idealism shows up with its full power. (TL, 267)

Abject artists counter the epoch's derealisation of narcissism by forming (albeit idiolectually) a "cult of the irrepresentable ... a cult of the imaginary father--the one who loves us" (TL, 313). They write at the borders of narcissism and idealisation, "in a discourse of jouissance that is coextensive with the amatory condition" (TL, 339). Lacking metaphysical support, their projections of Otherness are fragile, and idealisation oscillates with derealisation as love slips into narcissistic "emptiness, seeming and impossibility..." (TL, 267). Discourse "addressed" to primary transition via metaphorical (symbolist) affirmation is also fascinated by moments when empathy collapses into dissociation, when amorous hyperconnective phantasy merges into a suicidal ego threatened by devouring fusion and, in Kristeva's words, "death-dealing stabilisation". Thus, "semiology interested in the degree zero of symbolisation is unfailingly led to pose itself questions concerning not only the amorous state but also its sombre corollary -- melancholy" (OMI, 13). As I turn now to Women in Love, I first elaborate this dialectic in the process of setting out a structural approach which informs the reading that concludes this chapter.

### III. WOMEN IN LOVE

#### 1. Structure: Conflict and Opposition

If Women in Love is about heterosexual love, it is also about heterosexual dysfunction. If it is about sublime fusion, it is also about fear and distance. If it represents a modernist borderline aesthetic defining new forms of relationality, then it is also represents a fascination with abject pathological states that centre on violent rupture and affective depression. A love affair and its motivating metaphor, the "star balance", distil a vision of renewal through empathetic idealisation, but the narrative is also about conflict and death, a "war" of the sexes. This war can usefully be understood in connection to the First World War, which has a crucial place in Lawrence's writing.

For Kristeva the "illogicality and silence" (BS, 222) of the modern philosophical crisis in signification results (proportional to an individual's exposure and comprehension) in a "brutalised consciousness" (*ibid.*) whose regressive, paranoid experiences become sublimated within a phenomenology of absolute conflict (v. PH, 140 ff.). War, then, can provide the grammar for a writer's "rhetoric of apocalypse" (BS, 223). Kristeva argues that "[w]ithout the [Second World] war it is hard to imagine a Célinian scription; the war appears to trigger it off, to be its very condition" (PH, 152). Such violent, nihilistic writing,

...no matter what its socio-historical conditions might be, [manifests] on the fragile border ... where identities ... do not exist or only barely so--double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject. (PH, 207)

There is, Kristeva argues, "no apocalyptic being" (PH, 154), inasmuch as the chiliast-war writer's images of total annihilation are

...the contrary of revelation of philosophical truth, ... [and] by definition, the sign of an impossible ob-ject, a boundary and a limit ... a drive overload of hatred and death ... the shattering or the impossibility not only of narrative but also of Urfantasiën under the pressure of drive unleashed by a doubtless very "primal" narcissistic wound. (PH, 154-5)

Louis-Ferdinand Céline's Urfantasië (primal phantasy), sublimated in fascist novels full of apocalyptic battle imagery, for Kristeva, is a product of the metanarrative fragmentation that (with Nietzsche at its [de-]centre) precedes twentieth-century warfare like a perverse a priori principle. The horrors of war are the ultimate empirical response to a terminal



disintegration of universal idealism, while the creative writer articulates these horrors as phobic displacements of abject phantasy correlating to his loss of categorical identity. (I deal with Céline, fascism and war in more detail in Chapter 5.)

Women in Love, it is true, almost never mentions the War; the novel can, however, be seen to displace martial chaos and conflict.<sup>86</sup> Crucial, in this respect, is a dialectic between violent disintegration and integrative renewal through the "flux of corruption" and the "flux of creation", which first appear in Lawrence's essay, "The Crown".<sup>87</sup> The fluxes register apocalypticism ambivalently, as unredeemable social disintegration and as disintegration with a potential for renewal, while this bifurcation is rearticulated in opposed strands of heterosexual amatory encounter. One set of encounters, centring on the character Gerald Crich, represents violently repressive egotism embattled by a feminine threat. The second love story, which centres on the character Rupert Birkin, features the stellar motif, which sublimely hyperconnects, or condenses, the lovers. While it is the case that all of the novel's characters engage in antagonistic dialogue, and that they oscillate in mood between triumph and despair, the "battlefield" text is overarchingly structured around an unfolding of these good and bad kinds of love.

I want, in this case, to give a reading of Women in Love that primarily re-interprets a critically familiar narrative dichotomy. I have, of course, argued for some time that Lawrence's writing is radically indeterminate, and Women in Love is no exception. It is fair to say that a binary reading of Women in Love makes coherent a text pervaded by polysemy, a prominent feature of which is characterological overlap, which then conditions endless struggles by the characters to establish self-identity.<sup>88</sup> But it is also fair

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<sup>86</sup>In the Foreword to Women in Love (reprinted as Appendix I, in the edition used here, pp. 485-6), Lawrence says: "[this] is a novel which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war, though it does not concern the war itself. I should wish the time to remain unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters" (Lawrence 1995a, 485).

<sup>87</sup>Mark Kinkead-Weekes sees "The Crown" (Lawrence 1988, pp. 253-306) as transitional between the period of both "Study of Thomas Hardy" and The Rainbow, the latter completed in March 1915, and the period of Women in Love, which was substantially completed by November 1916. The first two chapters in "The Crown", argues Kinkead-Weekes (1968, p. 396), largely rewrite the "Study" in new terms, while Chapter III introduces the "flux" dialectic. See also Keith Sagar (1979), pp. 58, 74.

<sup>88</sup>"One of the teachings of Lawrence's career", asserts Michael Levenson, "is that propositions have no greater stability than emotions, and that concepts, no less than characters, palpitate with the rhythm of the plot" (1991, p. 156). Leaving aside the positionality of the supposed "teacher" here, we find in Levenson a poststructuralism-informed reading of Women in Love, largely in terms of "oppositions ... reversals ... inconsistency ... negating, denying..." (*ibid.*, p. 165). Graham Holderness, in his introductory text, Women in

to say that the narrative's main protagonists are sufficiently distinguished to offer grounds for identification by type. As Michael Levenson says, "without imputing a coherence that is foreign to Lawrence's habit of thought, we can reasonably attempt to reconstruct the fitful movement of Birkin's mind" (1991, 149). Furthermore, the novel's dichotomous structure, first critically elaborated by F. R. Leavis in 1955 (1976), seems to insist no matter how many instances of destabilised language are identified. In this spirit I will try to show Birkin's and Gerald's locations on the narrative's moral compass, while bearing in mind that their oppositional status is a paradigm of discrete struggles for identity characterised by widespread merging of character attributes.

With these reservations expressed, then, we can specify Women in Love's binary structure and didactic impulse through its juxtaposition of a privileged discourse of Einfühlung metaphorical "madness", with an account of self-empowering and moribund obsession. In effect, Lawrence constructs and negotiates empathetic-hyperconnective and phallic-reflexive discourses of love. I want, in this case, briefly to recapitulate Kristeva's and Lacan's models of love, whose main point of distinction is between a positive and negative view of the subject's imaginary relations to maternal phantasy.

Whereas Kristevan theory gives a positive sign to poetic illusion as a reactivation of the mother's love in metaphorical jouissance, Lacan's ideas about love hinge on aggressive obliterations of the feminine. Lacan sees the feminine masquerade (of the mother) as a veil over Spaltung, which is repressed in fickle, mastering, reflexive idealisations of woman. The subject is produced within these illusory relations to the symbolic Other: he is illuded, and the integral self is his illusion. For Kristeva, by contrast,

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Love, also observes widespread "contradiction, self-division, fracturing and contortion of meaning", and associates this polyvalent "chaos" with Lawrence's unsettling by the War, which makes the text a sign of a "culture in deep crisis" (1986, p. 128). While Holderness writes from a Marxist-historicist perspective, Gerald Doherty, in "White Mythologies: D. H. Lawrence and the Deconstructive Turn" (1987), is unconcerned with a cultural frame. Focusing on Women in Love, Doherty observes two essential Derridean gestures: one of overturning categories, and a subsequent movement towards undecidability. Doherty accepts that Lawrence's "betweenness", his third-termness, often smacks of transcendent thematisation; but the critic decides that "these discursive structures ... are traversed by rhetorical forces which at once ground and dissolve all such movement towards synthesis" (1987, p. 485). In "Dialectics of Knowing in Women in Love" (1991), Jack Stewart is much closer to a Kristevan perspective when combining Frederic Jameson's ideas about rhetorical mystification and "differential perception" (Jameson, in Stewart 1991, p. 59), with Bakhtinian theory, and subsequently identifying Lawrence's novel as both dialectical and dialogical, both a narrative of oppositions and syntheses, generating "constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (Bakhtin, cited ibid., p. 60).

the authenticity of the Other has an empathetic function in linguistic evocations of pre-oedipal narcissism and the mother's other-bound desire. Far from being a pathetic illusion, the imaginary father, in a nexus with narcissism, empathy and idealisation, conditions the social subject's integrity, while the dissociated modern poet affirms subjectivity through metaphors which, in representing idealised negativity infused by narcissistic phantasy, harness the excessive potential of the intertext. Juliet Flower MacCannell observes that,

...[f]or Lacan, metaphor is an impoverished mode dependent on a lack of reality, of meaning ... it always signifies more than it says. This surplus is fictitious, a cover-up for its essential negativity ... death through transcendence. (1986a, 98).

Kristeva is mock-dogmatic: "A word to the wise Lacanians should be enough! Metonymic object of desire. Metaphorical object of love" (TL, 30). Kristeva counters Lacan's vision of endless metonymic deferrals of the signified self, with a writing subject-in-process whose attraction to differentiated signs hinges on investments of imaginary contents and affect in the maternal "father's" infinite potential.

Using this model to understand Women in Love, one can, with particularly clarity, see Lawrence as a modernist precursor to Kristeva, in her terms, which I first discussed in the Introduction. This is to say that, like Kristeva, Lawrence's project to destabilise the systematic and foundational illusions of metaphysics runs parallel to a stream of thought which counters traumatic emptiness by affirmations of the self's relational essence outside language, and of the embodiment of this essence in poetic (symbolist) language. The crucial difference, again, is one between symptom and elaboration. Lawrence shows an awareness of certain psychological and cultural facts, but he lacks (from a Kristevan perspective) the ideational means, the language (including Kristeva's theory) with which to elaborate these facts. Lacan lays bare metaphysical authority to show a subject condemned to tortured self-alienation, an agent endlessly seeking completion in an illusion of the m/other's recognition. Kristeva aesthetically reconfigures this process in the poetic imaginary which embodies an authentic Ur-recognition of the subject's imaginary space of encounter. Lawrence, who is in no position to align with Kristeva against Lacan's bleak vision, nevertheless effectively does so, albeit through a characterological positioning and narrative unfolding whose function is cathartic rather than elaborative.

The amatory opposition in Women in Love, then, can be characterised in terms of a pre-oedipal "need" for feminine compliance with a metaphorical/empathetic vision, and a set of phallic "demands" for self-recognition and other-subordination. This dichotomy, located before and after the mirror stage, unfolds in the narrative, respectively, as an emergence from abjection, and as a movement to abjection whereby phallic mastery collapses into auterotic obsession. On the novel's moral compass, as I suggested, this counter-movement correlates to Kristeva contra Lacan. If, however, we think of Lawrence as an abject writer, and thereto symptomatise the textual unconscious, we see a characteristic bifurcated narrative which collapses time and space by representing transition from each side of the oedipal divide. Through Gerald's narrative, Lawrence projects onto culture the traumatic aggressivity of his post-metaphysical condition, and represents a collapse of "oedipal" Erotic desire into death-driven annihilation. This dynamic is inverted in Birkin's quest to emerge from nihilism, aggressivity and profound depression, in an authentic amatory relationship. Meanwhile, a dialectic of "reversible transition" between hyperconnection and melancholia spontaneously characterises both amatory vectors, consonant with the novel's conflictual representations of identity. Whether it is affirming empathy or deconstructing desire, this is always a nostalgic narrative transforming the mother's infinitised desire, while being thereby caught up in an incestuous auto-eroticism which derealises her plenitude in stasis and death. As Kristeva says (of Céline), when the modern artist writes, "what speaks is a strange rent between an ego and an other--between nothing and all. Two extremes that ... change places..." (PH, 141).<sup>89</sup>

## **2. Women in Love: A Reading**

In the first chapter, in Women in Love, sisters Gudrun and Ursula Brangwen travel along the main road of the mining town of Beldover, which will, throughout the novel, contribute paranoid imagery suggesting social miasma:

...part shops, part dwelling houses, utterly formless and sordid ... Gudrun shrank cruelly ... She was exposed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of torment ... this shapeless barren ugliness ... the insufferable torture ... these ugly, meaningless people, this defaced countryside ... She was filled with repulsion. (11)

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<sup>89</sup> Subsequent quotations in this chapter from Women in Love (1995a [1920]) are referenced in parentheses by page number only.

Beldover is, for Gudrun, a kind of post-apocalyptic galvanised graveyard: "[t]he people are all ghouls, and everything is ghastly. Everything is a ghoulish replica of the real world" (11). Here is an almost hysterical inscription of dissociation and free-floating paranoia, which suggests that we are, with Lawrence, once again looking at the topology of catastrophe that is abjection: "[i]t's like being mad, Ursula" (11).

### **Murder**

The sisters are heading for the village church to attend a wedding. Love that culminates in marriage is demonised on the novel's first page by Ursula as "likely to be the end of experience" (7). Rupert Birkin's girlfriend, Hermione Roddice, enters the church like a zombie, "drift[ing] forward as if barely conscious ... Her shoes and stockings were of brownish-grey ... macabre, something repulsive" (15). Hermione is a constant threat; she vampirically "crave[s] for ... Birkin" (16-17). Their moribund quarrelsome relationship sets the tone for a narrative full of dualist encounters among all the main characters. Women in Love is a dialogical war-zone: "through it all [the novel], the protagonists go on talking" (Fleishman 1990, 113), opposing and appropriating each other's ideas. During a heated debate with Gerald Crich, Birkin argues that anyone choosing to wear a national or ideological "hat" is a "murderer" (33). The dialectic of murderer and murderee becomes a conflictual topos in the novel: characters are frequently identified as one or the other, as they argue. Freud makes sado-masochistic phantasy an essential dynamic of the libido, in pre-oedipal development, in intrasubjective conflict between the (sadistic) super-ego and the ego, and in conflictual intersubjective relations (v. Laplanche *et al.*, 401-3). In Women in Love characters dominate, and are dominated by, the other, in what amount to sado-masochistic cycles. Encounters generate conflict, and ultimately feelings of emptiness and futility consonant with the "murdered" self-mastery of predicative knowledge. Verbal reflexivity is necessary for self-identification, but these identifications lack authenticity. People are necessary social partners, yet their narcissistic conversation is loathsome. "Humanity is a dead letter", Birkin announces to Gerald: "There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible" (59). Birkin's misanthropic regard for collective forms of identification and social intercourse is distilled in the relationship with Hermione, which crystallises his sense of an oppressive dead knowledge weighing upon a nascent potential for renewal.

## Hermione

Hermione is a "leaf upon a dying tree", who yet must "fight still for the old, withered truths, to die for the old, outworn belief, to be a sacred and inviolate priestess of desecrated mysteries" (293). Peter Fjågesund sees Rupert Birkin as "invariably the mouthpiece for ideas found in 'The Crown'" (1991, 32). The affair of Birkin and Hermione, in this context, represents "The Crown's" dialectic between the apocalyptic fluxes of creative renovation and sterile corruption. On the narrative's moral compass, Birkin is "right" to believe in vitality and unconsciousness, and so on, while Hermione's adherence to outmoded knowledge is "wrong". The couple's relationship, meanwhile, represents the seeming impossibility of any harmonious relations in a world of dead and violent words. At a third level of meaning, in the frame of depth psychology, what is wrong with Hermione and Birkin is the mimetic or reflexive nature of their desire.

Birkin has for some time been an advocate of "spontaneity", and a hater of "knowledge" and "consciousness", when Hermione presents her opinions on children's education:

...isn't it better that they should see as a whole, without all this pulling to pieces, all this knowledge ... better be animals, simple animals, crude, violent, anything, rather than this self-consciousness, this incapacity to be spontaneous. (40)

Far from identifying a soulmate, however, Birkin is enraged. She has appropriated his hat/identity, and wears it back-to-front to produce a "false set of concepts" (41). Hermione is a reflexive being; like the Lady of Shallot, she sees herself in the "mirrors" of her "own fixed will" (42). Birkin's rhetoric of liberation will eventually coalesce into an amatory discourse centring on a hyperconnective metaphor; but here his language is being hijacked and relocated beyond the mirror stage. Freud identifies the scopophilic drive with a will to master the object in knowledge, which harbours the potential for an exhibitionist reversal in the desire to be "mastered" (v. SE XIV, 109-40). Lacan elaborates scopophilic sado-masochism when orienting the gaze, with the phallus and desire, towards lack: the subject is constituted by phantasing the self perceived in the other's idealising gaze, while, obversely, the self disintegrates in the otherness of a castrating, de-centring perspective from outside the self (v. Lacan 1994, 182-3).<sup>90</sup> In Women in Love, Hermione's predatory

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<sup>90</sup>In the second part of Being and Nothingness (1956 [1943]), Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of the self's apprehension of others hinges on the gaze (regard), a term which Jacques Lacan appropriates and modifies

gaze is represented in her reflexive language which ruptures Birkin's autonomy by showing the self dislocated in the place of the other, and threatened by the desire of the other. Hermione is the phallic mother as a symbolic woman, a "Kulturtrager, a medium for the culture of ideas" (16). She represents the dead authority of the cultural Other in a deathly masquerade, where woman is not man's constitutive reflection but the symptom of his castrated emptiness. This "phallic" loving discourse, then, centres on moments of negatively inflected transcendence.

### Aufhebung

The relationship between Birkin and Hermione declines in mutual fear and loathing. Eventually she appears to him "like a corpse, that has no presence, no connection" (89), while he is regarded by her as an object of "horror" (104), an "evil obstruction" (105), and thence a murderess. After much vituperative language she assaults Birkin's head with a paper-weight. Immediately the struggle resolves itself in solipsistic fantasy. Hermione is serenely sacred, with a "right ... pure ... drugged, almost sinister religious expression..." (106), while Birkin, naked in woodland, is

...barely conscious, and yet perfectly direct in his motion ... moving in a sort of darkness ... He was happy in the wet hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers ... 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 ... This was his place, his marriage place. The world was extraneous. (106-8)

This, however, is a moment of pathological dislocation. The transcendent Aufhebung in the nature marriage sublates the conflictual (phallic) "wedding" of Birkin to Hermione's negativity as the "advent" of the autonomous self, and this illusion of narcissism without alterity is harshly deflated. Birkin is soon back in the "actual" world of desire and displacement, on a train, where "[e]very motion was insufferable pain, and he was sick" (108).

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(see Lacan 1994, p. 84). Lacan rejects Sartre's argument that the subject is ordered by the gaze of the other, which itself disappears into the self-conscious gaze at the world as a "radiated reticulation of organisms" (*ibid.*). Rather than a dynamic of transcendental scotomisation, the Lacanian gaze locates the self in the negativity of the other, as an illusory (phallic) condition of his unrealisable demand for recognition by the Other. One might say that, for Lacan, the "existential" tragedy of humanity is that lack of existence precedes, and always-already defers, the illusion of essence.

### De-Centring Love

In Chapter 3, I tried to show how Lawrence uses crucial figures and images bi-logically, in two imbricated narrative vectors. In Women in Love, the Birkin-Hermione Aufhebung is an element in the narrative's negative moral arc which depicts love as an egotistic battle for self-recognition. But this scene is also a stage in Birkin's emergence from auto-eroticised (death-driven) abjection in a quest for authentic Einfühlung fulfilment. "Wherein does life centre for you?" asks Gerald of his friend Birkin, who replies:

As far as I can make out, it doesn't centre at all. It is artificially held together by the social mechanism ... The old ideals are dead ... It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman--sort of ultimate marriage--and there isn't anything else. (58)

"And you mean if there isn't the woman, there's nothing?" says Gerald. "Pretty well that, seeing there's no God" (58), replies Birkin. "What", asks Kristeva rhetorically, "is there left to love in a world where fathers are derisory?" (TL, 363). Modern amorous narratives, she returns, "magnetise" woman in a kind of "idolatry ... a love of the feminine as the opposite extreme of religion" (TL, 363).<sup>91</sup> In Women in Love, accordingly, we once again observe a "sect" in the writer's "cult of the mother", as Birkin/Lawrence identifies with feminine negativity in an other-bound virtual space, by magnetising/projecting a woman/character and situating the self in a field of the m/Other's desire. Gerald (as we will see) is the main focus in the novel's representation of phallic love, whereby his masculinist strategies of self-empowerment descend into chaos. The abject Birkin, by contrast, is in a "pre-symbolic" space. Winnicott's good-enough mother directs her child's transition/s into relations with the other in language and culture. In Lawrence's perverse narrative, the universal archaic dynamic will be sublimated in/as a nurturing lover "looking away" from the socius in empathetic mutual estrangement. Ursula will be loved inasmuch as Birkin can induce her love for (him imagined in) figuration "addressing" the imaginary father event within an amatory idiolect. The ostensibly "counter-phallic" unfolding of this positionality, moreover, significantly registers the text's transgressiveness, as Birkin's need is transformed in demands for Ursula's compliance.

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<sup>91</sup>"Magnetisation", in Kristeva's terminology, refers to pre-oedipal identifications characterised by a preoccupation with separation and empathetic merging, and is thus more or less distinct from secondary process recognition of external objects. The term is used extensively by Klaus Theweleit in his study of the fascist psyche, which I look at in Chapter 5.



## Love Reinvented

After breaking up with Hermione, Birkin takes Ursula on a date and begins to groom her. Theirs will be an exclusive and special relationship; she can love and trust only him in a world of ignorant and dangerous others:

And they say that love is the greatest thing; they persist in saying this ... and just look at what they do! ... By their works ye shall know them, for dirty liars and cowards who daren't stand by their own actions, much less by their own words.  
(126-7)

The use of "saying" and "words" here is significant: Birkin's relationship with Ursula will hinge upon the meaning of "love". He wants to get rid of the term altogether. "It ought to be proscribed, tabooed from utterance, for many years, till we get a new, better idea" (130). Ursula, however, has conventional ideas about wooing and marriage. She refuses to abandon societal norms and be complicit in Birkin's new relationship. "'But still it is love,' she persisted" (130). Their bumpy courtship is characterised by his alluring projections of synthesis, in which there would, he declares, be an "isolated me ... beyond love" (145), a "pure abstraction" (146),

...a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there I would want to meet you--not in the emotional, loving plane--but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures ... [with] no standard for action there, because no understanding has been reaped from that plane. It is quite inhuman, ... no calling to book ... outside the pale ... and nothing known applies. (146)

He offers Ursula a "superfine stability ... a pure and stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding rapport ... a maintaining of the self in mystic balance" (150-1). "Sophistries!" she retorts: "[y]ou want a satellite...!" (150). Birkin, at this point, and as usual when faced with the "problem" of Ursula, is stymied. He is "battling with all his soul, with all his might" (146), to get his lover to join him "lost in play" with ideas of immediacy, fusion, separation and transition; but Ursula is resistant: "It is just purely selfish ... I know what your fine words work down to ... Mars and his satellite! You've said it--you've said it--you've dished yourself!" (147,150).

Is Birkin Mars the God of war, engaged in a master/slave struggle to make Ursula recognise his desire, to "murder" her identity in a masquerade; or is he offering her the opportunity to access her own other-bound imaginary potential in mutually assured

sublimity? Women in Love recurrently begs these questions, which are prompted by intersections between the phallic and the de-eroticised amatory counter-narratives. At this point in the novel, Birkin's appeals to Ursula are transgressed by an interpenetrative trope: his cat, the Mino, treats with outrageous chauvinism a female stray cat (149), so generating a properly "satirical" field of correlative harmony and rupturing dissonance. The pure balance is undercut, thus suggesting, or perhaps exposing, Birkin's egotistic commitment to self-empowerment.<sup>92</sup> And it is similarly consistent with the novel's indeterminacy, as one of many characterological overlaps, that Gudrun and Gerald, she cold and objective, he a parody of rational-humanism (of which more later), become the first couple to have an "authentic" relational experience in a mystic balance.

### **Balancing**

"There is a space between us", says Gerald in "Water-Party" (Chapter 14), as he and Gudrun occupy a boat on Willey Water lake. He senses himself "melting into oneness with the whole" (177), while she feels,

...magically aware of their being balanced in separation, in the boat. She swooned with acute comprehension and pleasure ... She could see his face, although it was a pure shadow. But it was a piece of twilight. And her breast was keen with passion for him, he was so beautiful in his male stillness ... a certain rich perfection of his presence, that touched her with an ecstasy. (177)

Gudrun "comprehends" -- she simultaneously catalyses, recognises and is attracted to -- Gerald's perfected narcissism, and he is thence abstracted to a "third space" of infinite potential, a "melting into oneness with the whole ... Let it drift ... So they drifted almost motionless, in silence. He wanted silence pure and whole" (178). Kristeva sees the Quietist doctrine of the seventeenth-century schismatic, Jeanne Guyon, gesturing at,

...potential idealisation ... [that] keeps affect confined within an unnameable mother ... because she is affectively devastating ... Silence eases the pain of such a maternal lack ... Silence as an artificial mother. Sustained by the ideal, "I" is then able to make the pain its own, neutralise, ease it. Without masochism and without

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<sup>92</sup>The Mars-satellite topos abstracted from its contextual unsettling, is, of course, a prime instance of what has elicited attacks on Lawrence's "chauvinism" by commentators including John Middleton Murry (threatened masculinity), Simone de Beauvoir (divine masculinity), Kate Millett (phallic consciousness), and so on, post-Millett. Peter Balbert gives a concise overview of this critical orientation, in D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination (1989), pp. 3-15. See also Graham Holderness's argument that Kate Millett seriously misreads the "Mino" scene in Women in Love (Holderness 1986, pp. 78-81).

paranoia, which would imply subjection to a stern law rather than love for and of a Third Party. (TL, 311)

Silence, the absence of speech, as we saw in The White Peacock, is an anxious idea for the lawless abject writer, whose subjectivity is a function of his textual production. But silence, for Kristeva, may otherwise be the indicator of a text addressing the pre-symbolic father, where anomia is "perfected" in the idealisation of meditative affect. The (male) subject experiences the wordless love of an "artificial mother" *via* the artifice of characterological woman, as the ideal-I is recaptured in the "certain rich perfection" of a moment of loving madness.

Narcissistic idealisation and narcissistic emptiness are two sides of the same coin, in Women in Love. Hyperconnective representations in symbolist passages "filled" with transitional affect are a hairsbreadth away from betrayal, masochism and paranoia. Gerald's sublime fantasy "encouraged" by the nurturing Gudrun, is also under threat by her: "[Gudrun] caressed him subtly and strangely, having him completely at her mercy" (177). She breaks his silence: "[s]hall I row to the landing-stage?" (178). Immediately there is bedlam, as everyone at the party begins shouting. A child screams "Di--Di--Di--Di--Oh Di--Oh Di--Oh Di!" (179). Gerald's sister Diana and her lover have fallen into the lake. After the water is drained the lovers below are revealed, their choking entanglement evoking a murderer and a murderess. "She killed him" (189), says Gerald. The sight leaves Birkin definitively abject: "sick and unmoved, in pure opposition to everything" (199). Instead of being drawn together by the accident, the remaining lovers experience acute anxiety and depression. Birkin isolates himself and broods misogynistically:

Woman is always so horrible and clutching ... Everything must be referred back to her, to woman, the Great Mother of everything ... He had a horror of the Magna Mater, she was detestable. (200)

The writer semiotically enchanted in reactivations of pre-oedipal harmony does so in the context of a manifestly oedipal crisis. This is indicated each time wish-fulfilling borderline jouissance is shattered by a "falling back" into abject representations of the loathed incestuous mother. Gerald's mystic serenity, moreover, as I have suggested, is not typical within the context of the binary narrative. His characterological development is largely understandable in structural opposition to Birkin's quest. I turn now to this development.

## Gerald

Gerald Crich, the son of a mine-owning industrialist, is, like Birkin, on a quest for a kind of absolute being. But Gerald's aspiration is a parody of teleological modernity, a sub-Hegelian narrative to mechanised Utopia. His first principle states that the "mechanical mind is purest and highest, the representative of God on Earth" (225). If we see "The Crown" as the meta-discourse informing Women in Love, then Gerald occupies the stream of the flux of corruption associated with an unredeemable, "rotten" humanity (while Birkin occupies the stream of renewal through disintegration). Gerald's promiscuous sexual conquests are composed over-against Birkin's and Ursula's confrontational, but relatively promising, relationship, while the seductions directly correlate to Gerald's exploitation of men's labour in the ceaseless "displacements" of mechanised production. While Birkin seeks love in a de-eroticised condensing, transitional state, Gerald is aligned with Hermione through his affirmation of social processes. Gerald's narcissistic idealism "addresses" the symbolic Other through a masculinist ordering of history, coextensive with phallic obliterations of the feminine. Gudrun Brangwen, however, is the undoing of him, as the erotic master becomes enslaved through fixation on her illusory nurturing presence. In order to polarise Gerald's decline, I will look first at an early scene, prior to his relationship with Gudrun.

## Pussy

Gerald and Birkin are up in London, socialising with artists. The Pussum, a sexy bohemian girl, attracts Gerald's attention. The subsequent encounter corresponds to the relationship of Hermione and Birkin in foreshadowing a more important liaison. In Tales of Love, Kristeva observes that Stendhal's narratives hinge on a lover split between two women.

These feminine "duets" are not merely two variants of the loved woman: the passionate and the cerebral one, the archaic and the modern [etc.] ... [B]eing "between-two-women" also suggests a safeguarding strategy. In order not to be swallowed up by one of them, the egotist grants himself at least two. An eternal stratagem of masculine sexuality obsessed with castration, maintaining two poles of crystallisation... (TL, 359)

Kristeva uses "crystallisation" here to mean fantasy generated in "writing ... [about] approached, taken or 'missed' women" (TL, 346). Lawrence, in this case, establishes the narrative "poles" of Ursula and Gudrun, while reproducing this dynamic through Birkin's

and Gerald's respective positioning between two women. Gerald will experience a series of traumatic "misses" in his relationship with Gudrun, but his early encounter with the Pussum shows a strong master approaching and taking:

...he was aware of her dark, hot-looking eyes upon him ... And on them there seemed to float a film of disintegration, a sort of misery and sullenness, like oil on water ... He felt an awful, enjoyable power over her, an instinctive cherishing very near to cruelty. For she was a victim ... The electricity was turgid and voluptuously rich, in his limbs. He would be able to destroy her utterly in the strength of the discharge. (64-5)

Like all the characters in Women in Love, Gerald has to deal with resistance and challenge. This is a battle of the gazes to master and enslave. The Pussum eats oysters, while her seductive eyes have the "look of a knowledge ... dark and indomitable" (68). Gerald works to repress this "inchoate" (68) force. He eventually compels the girl into submission: "in the hollow of his will ... [S]he seemed to become soft, to infuse herself into his bones, as if she were passing into him in a black, electric flow" (72). Later, he chats to Birkin:

She strikes me as being rather foul ... a week of her would have turned me over. There's a certain smell about the skin of those women, that in the end is sickening beyond words--even if you like it at first. (95)

Gerald's libido tends to cathect objects and objectify others in voyeuristic fantasy, while the feminine body, to which he ostensibly fights to gain access, is incestuously regarded as disgusting. As a phallic, "fickle" serial lover, Gerald, in Kristeva's words (writing on Stendhal),

...feeds on obstacles that are challenged by the eyes ... Indeed, deprived of satisfaction, the lover soaks up the loved one ... The visual absorption of the loved object ... amounts to its destruction, as it were, its total submission to the lover's gaze. (TL, 349-50).

The egotist's loathing of the sexual female body is a function of his oedipal positionality, which defends against anxieties about the feminine body through scopic displacements of the sexual act which enact a rape of identity by inserting the self in the space of the other.

As Gerald's gaze "absorbs" one woman after another, only to be repelled and disappointed by the subsequent somatic "fusion", he is sustained by his utopian vision of invention and labour. He idealises the organised masculine Mind in absolute distinction from the feminine body, and so avoids the question: "what does she want?" His refusal to

negotiate with feminine desire, however, means that he cannot, as Birkin does, affirm woman's empathetic desire in the imaginary field of transitional phenomena. Always-already situated after the mirror stage, Gerald's fickle affairs and visions of infinite production suggest infinite self-delusion, with no access to the authentic imaginary space in which the (illusory) subject is regenerated. This makes him acutely vulnerable to a "death of God" experience, the kind of oedipal crisis which was Birkin's starting point, and which, for Gerald, is triggered by an explicit failure of the Father principle.

### **Dead Father**

Thomas Crich dies, "slowly, terribly slowly" (321). For Gerald there is "no escape; he was bound up with his father" (321). His confidence evaporates. He loses "the mechanical certainty" that was "his triumph" (221). His imaginary position as the "God of the Machine..." (228) seems about to "collapse inwards upon the great dark void which circled at the centre of his soul" (322). Gerald's ego is a "hollow shell" (322). He is desperate for "reinforcements" (322). Images here of centripetalism and absent centres suggest the disintegration of the ego's organisation which will characterise his subsequent decline. The ego-reinforcement solution he identifies is Gudrun. As a creature of mastering will, she is a female analogue, and the essence of their relationship will be obsessional fascination.

### **Obsession**

Lawrence, in the Foreword to Women in Love, justifies his novel's "continual, slightly modified repetition" as being "natural to the author", and, moreover, typical of "every natural crisis in emotion..." (486). John Swift (1990) sets Women in Love's prolific repetition of words and phrases within the context of Freudian theory. Freud, Swift observes, has both an ontogenic understanding of repetition, in terms of the infant's fort-da game preconditioning the subject's mastery of loss, and a symptomatic understanding of repetition as a function of the death instinct. Repetition is a normative template for repression, and it is a traumatic symptom of loss and auto-erotic dissociation. Quantitative degrees distinguish health from pathology in psychoanalysis, and Women in Love is compulsive, for Swift, because of its substantial and pervasive repetition. In "The Obsessional Neurotic and His Mother" (NM, Chapter 3), Kristeva illustrates her tendency to reconfigure classical theory within a mother-centred frame (as she also does with

adolescence, for example), when she negotiates with Freud's "Rat Man" analysis.<sup>93</sup> Since pathological repetition is crucial in Gerald's relationship with Gudrun, it is worth assimilating a brief account of Kristeva's view of the relations between obsessional thinking and primary generative processes.

### **Dead Mother**

Kristeva states: "I would like to emphasise that the mother is buried within obsessional discourse" (NM, 60). The oedipal repressive function of obsessional neurosis, she argues, is overdetermined by melancholy anaclitic phantasy, whereby reactivations of the imaginary father's potential for love are inhibited by obsessive projections of a "dead" mother. This dead mother correlates to Winnicott's not-good-enough mother unwilling, or unable, to recognise the child's desire: "Look Mother...!" -- "Be quiet; I've got a headache [etc.].". The child's speech is momentarily "killed" by the "dead" response, and his attraction to transitional encounters submerged in melancholy. A chronic experience of such unresponsiveness may be permanently damaging, producing a subject who cannot stop trying to "motivate" the world (to motivate him). In this context an obsessional thinker, argues Kristeva, has two languages that express fixation on the mother, ones of affect and symbol. The former language reacts to inhibition by abreacting affect in "semiotic materials (aural, visual, tactile)" (NM, 63): the subject endlessly "checks" and "cleans", striving for perfection, as if in touching light switches, and so on, he is touching the dead mother, prompting her to love. In creative writing, for Kristeva, a syntactic register of inhibited repetition correlates to recurrent projections of this mother who will not, but must, respond. The writer is fascinated by an uncaring woman who is both a "deadly object" and a "stern mother" (NM, 53). There is a blind obsessive loyalty to Mother's dead authority in a space devoid of third parties, inverted to show her active authority in the auto-erotic field: "I recognise and facilitate your death".

In elaborating below the obsessive relationship of Gerald and Gudrun according to the dynamic structure set out above, I want to identify a further register of obsession in the text. Deriving from the idea that Lawrence projects to Gudrun the unresponsive mother, I will observe his secondary perception of her as a subject, a mother in depressed

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<sup>93</sup>See Freud, "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" (1909, Standard Ed., X).

withdrawal, which, for both Winnicott and Kristeva, is typically the empirical cause of maternal failure to stimulate her child's imagination.

### Obsessional Love

Gudrun is Gerald's Hermione: albeit an artist and a teacher, she devours man's identity in a rapacious lust for knowledge:

She wanted to touch him and touch him and touch him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained him into her knowledge. Ah, if she could have the precious knowledge of him, she would be filled ... For he was so unsure, so risky in the common world of day. (332)

Gudrun is vulturine; she anticipates the relationship with Gerald in terms of "all the afterdays when her hands, like birds, could feed upon the fields of his mystical plastic form" (332). Assimilation, differentiation, autonomy and stasis characterise her will to knowledge. She likes to isolate and identify, to fix and digest the other in a "sensual" knowledge corresponding to Gerald's exploitation of men and women, while she is otherwise erosive to his abstract Mind, and also to the element of motion in his vision of ceaseless production. In Chapter 1, she weighs up the wedding guests, categorising them dispassionately until "[s]he knew them, they were finished, sealed, stamped and finished with, for her" (14). Anyone whose amatory imagination motivationally "touches" this woman is going nowhere.

The relationship of Gerald and Gudrun tips into obsession with his "fixed idea" (339), an idée fixe: "he would get at her" (339). He goes straight from his father's grave to her house, and surreptitiously reaches her bedroom. After a struggle, Gudrun submits to a "penetration" of identity:

She let him hold her ... He found in her an infinite relief. Into her he poured all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again ... He felt his limbs growing fuller and flexible with life ... He was a man again, strong and rounded. And he was a child ... Mother and substance of all life she was ... like a healing lymph, like a soft soothing flow of life itself, perfect as if he were bathed in the womb again. (344)

But to Gudrun, there is "something monstrous about his juxtaposition against her" (346). Gerald's horror of the post-paternal void, often expressed in his sense of being buried alive, is relocated in a characterological shift. The clock ticks slowly for the post-coital, depressed Gudrun. There is "nothing to do but lie still and endure" (346). Each second is



"fatal" in a "night of eternity" (347). By the morning, "an ache like nausea was upon her: a nausea of him" (348). What is "burying" her is Gerald's obsession with her, his pathetic "loyalty" to the prospect of a love she cannot give. On the other hand, Gerald seems to have made yet another phallic conquest, one, moreover, in which incestuous disgust does not follow sensual obliteration. This failure of repression, however, suggests that he is burying himself in fusion with a dead m/other. His penetration of Gudrun is her penetration of him with a "life" overdetermined by his auto-erotic impulses: "[h]e was ready to be doomed" (353), observes the narrator. No longer self-abstracting and differentiating, and thus able to "recognise" (and repress) woman's somatic stink, Gerald anaclitically fixates on Gudrun's dangerous ability to bring about fusion-stasis, as Eros merges into Thanatos, and, as Leo Bersani puts it, love becomes "a seductive version of death" (1976, 180).

Ursula cautions Gerald:

"Gudrun isn't so very simple, is she? One doesn't know her in five minutes, does one? She's not like me in that."

She laughed at him with her strange, open, dazzled face. (371)

Ursula, despite her persistent defiance of Birkin, is far more open and transitive: "[s]o long as they were moving onwards, she was satisfied" (391). Gudrun is persuaded against her nature to travel, and the two amorous couples relocate to the Tyrol, where their struggle is played out to a murderous conclusion.

### Ice Queen

In a Tyrolean valley's "cradle of snow" is the "navel of the world ... pure, unapproachable, impassable ... It filled Gudrun with a strange rapture ... At last she had arrived, she had reached her place" (401). Gudrun feels that she is "herself the eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All" (410). This silence is not the "artificial" (textual) mother's warm and generous, selfless gift of the plenitudinous Other; it is rather an indicator of Gudrun's increasing coldness to Gerald, an intensification of her "frozen", loveless intransitivity. The more persistent his penetrations of her become, the more diffident and hostile she is, and the more desperate Gerald wants her to love him. This, as Kristeva has it, is a "postmortuary love" in which the writer projects a woman both "masterful and dead" (TL, 357), who presides over a dissection of the male ego.

Lawrence's secondary articulation of Gudrun, meanwhile, continues to register her suffering. She sees a world full of

...hideous, boring repetition ... Oh God, the wheels within wheels of people--it makes one's head tick like a clock, with a very madness of dead, mechanical monotony and meaninglessness. How I hate life, how I hate it. How I hate the Gerald, that they can offer one nothing else ... All life ... resolved itself into this: tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack ... Ha--ha--she laughed to herself ... ha--ha, how maddening it was, to be sure ... Oh how could she bear it, this endless unrelief, this eternal unrelief ... So many wheels to count and consider and calculate! Enough, enough--there was an end to man's capacity for complications, even. Or perhaps there was no end. (464-6)

Gudrun's lament evokes the infinite function of Gerald's perfect mechanical system; but it also suggests a morbidly depressed woman unable to affirm the existence of other people, and maddened into hysteria by her "child's" demands for attention. "Mother's" failure to re/generate a transitional space connecting "out" to the object-world, is thus inverted to Mother's penetration by a world full of "sons" who will not leave her alone. This register is then displaced to show again a paranoid son's vision of the not-good-enough mother, whose absent nurture threatens to devour:

Had she asked for a child, whom she must nurse through the nights, for her lover. She despised him, she despised him, she hardened her heart. An infant crying in the night, this Don Juan. Yes, but how she hated the infant crying in the night. She would murder it gladly. She would stifle it and bury it... (466)

### **Burial**

"I couldn't love you" (462), says Gudrun, finally, to Gerald. She has an affair with Loerke, who, like her, is a solipsistic artist seeing no further than the superficial form of things. Loerke's objective curiosity is the match of hers, and his stunted body corresponds to her attenuated desire: "[a]ll possibility--that was the charm to her, the lovely, iridescent, indefinite charm--pure illusion. All possibility--because death was inevitable and nothing was possible but death" (468). Gerald's loyalty to Gudrun's frozen amatory potential finally snaps, and, after half-strangling her, he completes the moral trajectory of the narrative by delivering himself into fusion-burial in the silent dead snow.

## Renewal

I want to return now to Birkin and Ursula and the novel's authentic amatory quest, and to conclude the reading by looking at the most resonant of the passages in Women in Love which "address" the imaginary father, and thus sublimate the "constituent violence" (TL, 274) of sexual difference within a non-eroticised plenitude. Here is Kristeva:

...when desire fully feeds amatory idealisation, its flow causes the speaking being to fly off the handle ... [T]he sign of the unspoken becomes the most intense equivalent of erotic flaring-up. Since the metaphor is the sign of unbeing, it reaches its peak and its completion in a deferment of meaning, at the very moment the narrative clarifies certain erotic stages of that unbeing. (TL, 369)

In Chapter 23, "Excuse", in Lawrence's novel, there is a notional climacteric in Birkin's attempts to make Ursula dis-regard cultural love and "clarify" his erotic unbeing, which is to say, to make her generate, recognise and idealise a mystic state transcending Erotic lack (unbeing) and erotic fusion. The narrative thus "defers" meaning in Einfühlung hypersignification staging a pre-oedipal "equivalent" of the narcissistic (master/slave) Aufhebung, whereby symbiosis, orgasm and other-bound (transferential) affect fuse in/to idealisation.

The transcendent collusion of Birkin and Ursula appears after the most violent of conversational struggles, involving a radical transposition of identity. Ursula, as Birkin in one of his semi-hysterical moods, rages against his former alter-ego: "what Hermione stands for ... I hate it, it is lies, it is false, it is death" (306). He then receives an abominating, Birkin-esque denunciation, the virulence of which surpasses anything even he has produced in a series of tirades against lives and loves.

...I tell you it's dirt, dirt, and nothing but dirt ... it's dirt you want, you crave for it ... Do you think I don't know the foulness of your sex life--and hers?--I do. And it's that foulness you want, you liar ... It stinks, your truth and your purity. It stinks of the offal you feed on, you scavenger dog, you eater of corpses ... you want yourself, and dirt, and death... (307)

This paranoid outburst of anal phenomena signals a profound incestuous loathing: "[f]usion, fusion, this horrible fusion of two beings, which every woman and most men insisted on ... was it not nauseous and horrible...?" (309). The narrative's oedipal crisis is at its most manifestly regressive in this murderous and obscene passage, which, however, is the precondition of a "love that shelters and infinitises ... the mother's sexual excesses" (TL, 369). The writer's somatic phantasy (albeit expressed through Ursula) is sublimated,

as the object dyad (represented by Birkin and Ursula) is superseded, in a glimpse of ternary potential, Birkin's "new heaven" (311), which magnetises and transforms feminine desire.

### **At Long Last Love?**

After Ursula's outburst, the couple are reconciled in "peace, just simply peace" (310), which then is "metamorphosed" into "presence, pure presence", that is -- and at last? -- the "very stuff of being" (312, 313). The lost generic God, as always, lingers within the idiolect: "[Ursula] recalled again the old magic of the book of Genesis ... She had found one of the Sons of God from the beginning..." (312, 313). But Ursula has "[n]ew eyes" (312); her acculturated gaze is shut down, and she accedes to mutual transition into the "strange element" (311). The encounter builds to a climax through a succession of images stressing the lovers' detachment and alienation:

The old, detestable world of tension had passed away at last ... [they] left behind them this memorable battle-field ... the world had become unreal. She herself was a strange, transcendent reality. (310, 311, 312)

As the supreme moment approaches, Ursula traces,

...with her sensitive finger-tips ... the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there. She had discovered something, something more than wonderful, more wonderful than life itself ... there, at the back of the thighs ... It was here she discovered him [sic] one of the ... strange, inhuman Sons of God... (313)

Ursula's "discovery" involves a redirection of her desire to a multilayered "poetic" field, in which the metaphor has a "retinue of idealisations and mysteries ... as the strained motion of condensation is taken up ... to nourish the field of ... meditation on the sublime, the essential magnet of love..." (TL, 307). This meditative transcendental field is augmented by Lawrence's familiar abstract deployment of the reliquary significance of biblical signifiers. Meanwhile, the phallus which transforms the masculine "presence" of the penis as the symbol of desire for self-certainty, is inverted through a repositioning of the somatic locus to "the back of the thighs, down the flanks, ... deeper, further ... than the phallic source" (313-4). Finally, the jouissance of the sexual orgasm is sublated:

She seemed to faint beneath, and he seemed to faint, stooping over her. It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being, the marvellous fulness [sic] of immediate gratification, overwhelming, outflooding from the Source ... at the back and base of the loins. (314)

Here, then, is an affect-charged "strange object" generating and fulfilling lovers in transitional jouissance, as the narrative perfects its "stellar balance" master-metaphor (of non-mastery) addressing a universal epiphanic space. On the other hand, the transition is arrived at through Birkin's insistent demands for compliance, while it is ultimately one writer's fantasy of feminine negativity merging into narcissistic omnipotence which projects his own "absolute" moment of psychic birth into alterity. This implication of the imaginary father's pre- and bi-sexuality (represented as mutual transcendence) with a "full" narcissistic potential, is perhaps most explicit when Birkin appears before an adoring Ursula as a "supremely potent" (318) Egyptian Pharaoh.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, on the novel's moral compass, the "Excuse" sublation is affirmed in the context of Lawrence's poetics, as a metaphorical conceit reaches (in Kristeva's terms) its "peak and its completion" as the embodiment of a universally accessible regenerative space, and the emblematic centre of a life-enhancing amatory discourse.

### Love and Drift

Speaking of the imaginary father, Kristeva is concise:

...the sublime is this neither-subject-nor-object entity that I have called "abjection." Erotic fantasy merges with philosophical meditation in order to reach the focus where the sublime and the abject, making up the pedestal of love, come together in the "flash." (TL, 368)

The "flash" of metaphorical jouissance is "the memory of an abjected mother", made "sublime because loved in the shadow of an imaginary, pre-Oedipal father" (TL, 327). The writer's cathexis of pre-Symbolic space, meanwhile, is also "making its presence felt in the flaws of the texture (language, discourse, or narrative) that represents" (TL, 368). Rupturing "flaws" in coherent meaning -- overlaps, repetitions and displacements -- are, as semiotic signification, complicit with inscriptions of intimate amatory fusion:

The contemporary narrative (from Joyce to Bataille) has a posttheological aim: to communicate the amorous flash. The one in which the "I" reaches the paranoid dimensions of the sublime divinity while remaining close to abject collapse ... To guide us through that experience the narrative becomes literal ... [d]isjointed, unstructured, mere free association, a drifting, a meshing of narrative events. (TL, 368)

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<sup>94</sup>The Pharaoh can also usefully be seen as a stage in Lawrence's doctrinal journey from Christian iconography to ethnological primitivism, and the quest for strange gods which reaches its apotheosis in The Plumed Serpent.

The text's transferential potential is "guided" within an indeterminate metaphorical and metonymic drift of meanings away from coherent (to free) association. This means that Einführung moments of plenitude have as their culture a text/ure of disjointed (fluid) language, in which the transitional object's meaning-full "freedom" is re/generated. While this dynamic is converse to the aesthetic privileging of metaphoricity over metonymy as a mode of subjectification, in writing practice these modes have interdependent functions: "[m]etaphor ... slip[s] into the metonymy of the impossible quest, but that amatory pursuit was itself sustained by the belief that the ideal--a metaphor --exists" (TL, 278). Thus the writer stages the "possibility for ... [a] dilapidated Self to call itself metaphorically 'vaporised'..." (TL, 328), and thus the novel is produced: in syntactic drift (both through condensation and displacement) conditioning "vaporisations" of identity, and as a linear narration of desire in a chain of signifiers locating a subject sustained by faith in the borderline "madness" of homogeneous alterity. The artist's indeterminate text is the vehicle of desire, as a field of deferred meanings which are indexical (rather than referential) to the fragmented materiality of pre-oedipal space. The artist's imaginary, meanwhile, produces the fantasy of transcending desire in homogeneous hyperconnection, and desire for this state of being is what integrates metonymic deferral in the quest narrative.

The star equilibrium in Women in Love, then, is a vivid transitional object "lifting" the writing subject (and the engaged reader) into an amorous super-state that attracts (as a fantasy of ending) desire, and which is both supported by drifting meanings (correlative to free association), and derealised in conflictual meanings (correlative to abject phantasy). The narrative, meanwhile, unfolds the archaic father's liberation of the self from dyadic conflict, in parallel with a "deconstruction" of violent repressive narcissism. Through Birkin's renewal and Gerald's death, Lawrence reactivates ambivalent primal affect around wish-fulfilling (pre-oedipal) and lacking (oedipal) discourses of love. Having always-already "murdered" (foreclosed) the paternal metaphor (the Name-of-the-Father), the writer situates a disintegration of egotism in the seminal context of inhibition, while inhibition is ended, in the other vector, through the true-reality of a woman whose wholly affirmative alterity, in compliance with narcissistic idealism, heals the split-subject in crisis.

Lawrence's text, moreover, operates in two re-integrative registers of estranging fantasy. While hyperconnective epiphanies re-establish relations between the signifier/self and the signified/other by collapsing their boundaries, the narrative differentiates the absolute self/other thus produced from negative images of cultural patriarchy which correlate to the artist's socio-cultural alienation. It is in this context that the positivity of Einführung collapses into the writer's obsessive devotion to primal phantasy and affect, which "direct" him "back" to the linguistic condition of his abjection, to a dis-ordered Symbolic in which he forms the dissociated self, and binds the self to the other, only inasmuch as he writes, and keeps on writing. And what he writes about is the emergence from abject conflict of an estranged, always transitional self, whose origin and sustenance is the authoritative, but indefinable, love of a long-lost mother.

The traumatic chapter, in Women in Love, in which Thomas Crich dies and Gerald's obsession with Gudrun begins, occurs immediately after the "Excuse" catharsis. Leo Bersani observes that,

...[t]here is nothing final about the peace of "Excuse." If the language of that chapter makes it clear that the episode is something crucial which the novel has been struggling to reach, it's also true that the novel's apparent goal is not its climax but merely a narrative unit somewhere in the middle of the work, and that the novel itself works beyond its most exalted achievement. (1976, 183)

Women in Love continues its oscillations between disintegration and renewal. The Tyrolean relocation transiently sustains the possibility of closure through "consummation ... in a new One, a new paradisaal unit regained from duality" (369). But the Tyrol is primarily Gudrun's and Gerald's battlefield, and his tomb. Birkin and Ursula never recapture their (his) finest hour, and the novel ends as it began, oppositionally, anxiously, with the couple still arguing to the last full stop (after which the precocious writer moves on, always abject, transitional, emergent, collapsed, alone . . .).

\* \* \* \* \*

As we move towards the next chapter, in which I see how Lawrence's integrative quest is taken up in the masculine idealisations of his leadership period, I want to say something here about the presence of homosexual desire in Women in Love. We have been concerned, up until now, almost exclusively with the deep-psychological implications of heterosexuality in Lawrence's work, with female characters' analogical relations to

maternal desire. But what, then, are we to make of Birkin's advocacy to Gerald of a mystical male bond, the Bludbrüderschaft? How can the notorious naked wrestling scene in "Gladiatorial" (Chapter 20) be analogically located within a psyche obsessed by the feminine? What, in this context, should we make of Birkin's "immediate gratification" at the "back of the thighs" and the "base of the loins", which is a key feature in the "Excuse" transition? Why, on the novel's very last page, is Birkin saying to Ursula that he had wanted "eternal union with a man too: another kind of love ... two kinds of love" (481). In a suppressed and replaced first chapter, "Prologue", this other kind of love is perhaps explicitly presented in an account of Birkin's fantasies:

In the street, it was the men who roused him by their flesh ... The soul of a woman and the physique of a man, these were the two things he watched for ... He loved his friend [Gerald], the beauty of whose manly flesh made him tremble with pleasure. He wanted to caress him ... [E]very now and again, would come over him the same passionate desire to have near him some man he saw, to exchange intimacy, to unburden himself of love to this new beloved ... a policeman ... a soldier ... pressed up close to him ... the erect body ... Or a young man in flannels on the sands at Margate, flaxen and ruddy ... He wanted to cast out these desires ... [He felt] despair, because this passion for a man had recurred in him ... dread of his own feelings and desires ... the bondage ... the torment ... (512-15)<sup>95</sup>

I quote at length in order to convey Lawrence's apparent commitment to an unequivocal depiction of repressed homosexual impulses.

In the next chapter I will examine homosexual representations in Lawrence's writing by negotiating them with his homosocial, and arguably fascist, tendencies, as they are crucially represented in three post-war novels. This nexus, moreover, will generate an understanding of the writer's loss of cultural metaphysics in terms of his "exile" in language, which is comprehended in geographical representations of cultural marginality and estranging relocation.

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<sup>95</sup>"Prologue" is in the version of Women in Love written between April and June 1916. It is absent from the next draft, completed in January 1917. It is reprinted as Appendix III, in the edition of the novel used here (Lawrence 1995a, pp. 499-516).



## SONS AND BROTHERS: THE LEADERSHIP NOVELS

In this final chapter I examine two familiar ideas about Lawrence's later work: that it displays homosexual desire, and that it is fascist, or proto-fascist. Homosexuality, in fact, we will see to be inextricable from a production of fascist writing, at least in a framework of mother-centred psychoanalysis. I will, then, as always in this thesis, be looking at "abject" manifestations of Lawrence's post-metaphysical crisis of identity in the light of one or more subordinate Kristevan themes: this time those of homosexuality and fascism. I will augment this approach by an extensive use of Klaus Theweleit's (1987, 1989) pre-oedipal analysis of German fascism, which particularly focuses on Freikorps militia groups formed after the First World War. The Freikorps articulated a widespread sense among Germans of betrayal by political authority, and consequent dislocation and estrangement in relation to national identity. These organisations of disaffected men flourished in the early 1920s, at the same time as what is called Lawrence's leadership period, and a comparable experience of cultural homelessness is evident in the artist's post-war writing, which features novels of foreign travel fascinated by unheimlich experience. Indeed, it is fair to say that Lawrence's national estrangement amounts to a third crucial theme developed within this chapter, one I will contextualise within the frame of Kristeva's thinking about the "foreigner". Put simply, then, I am concerned here to negotiate Lawrence's homosexual desire with his interest in male power groups, while understanding the product as an aspect of cultural alienation.

### I. FASCISM, HOMOSEXUALITY AND "FOREIGNNESS" IN LAWRENCE

#### 1. Recognising Fascism

In Sexual Politics, Kate Millett argues that, after Women in Love, Lawrence repudiates "his early work's concern with love and personal relationships, dedicating himself to the power urge that dominates his late fiction" (1977, 278). The subsequent novels, Aaron's Rod (1954 [1922]), Kangaroo (1980 [1923]), and The Plumed Serpent (1987 [1926]), for Millett, show Lawrence abandoning misogynist experiments with heterosexual love, and instead concentrating on images of men in dominant and submissive relations to each other.

The thematic shift identified by Millett is broadly observable in Lawrence's work, and an identical basic assumption underlies this chapter; her two-phase model, however, is problematic. She has to play down her own identification of a "submissive", and potentially passive-homoerotic, element in order to emphasise Lawrence's "power urge", while she also has to set aside Rupert Birkin's desire for Bludbrüderschaft in Women in Love (in the "heterosexual" phase). Millett's "men-only" understanding of the later novels, moreover, is problematised by her book's overarching thesis, that Lawrence is a sexual politician whose project aims to disparage and contain the "new woman". Finally, despite her emphasis on representations in the leadership novels of "power relations over masses of men and the glory of being proclaimed a great leader and hero, a dictator in fact--a patriarch in the patriarchy" (Millett 1977, 280), Millett elides possible associations to be made between these narratives and parallel, fascist dimensions in European culture. So what, in Lawrence's writing generally, might invite such associations?

### **His Struggle?**

Lawrence, as we saw in Chapter 2, is an elitist. His wartime utopian fantasy, Rananim, is about people who know better escaping foolish people who subscribe to societal norms. In the 1920s, however, the emphasis on fleeing bourgeois-capitalist conformity is partly displaced by authoritarianist impulses to control, and he increasingly assumes inherent, even innate, differences between the elite and their inferiors. In his preface to Dostoevsky's The Grand Inquisitor, Lawrence declares that "the mass who do not understand the difference between money and life, should always bow down to the elect, who do" (Phoenix, 286), while he asserts, in Apocalypse, that

...as a matter of fact, when you start to teach individual self-realisation to the great masses of people, who when all is said and done are only fragmentary beings, incapable of whole individuality, you end by making them all envious, grudging, spiteful creatures. Anyone who is kind to man ... wants to arrange a society of power in which men fall naturally into a collective wholeness ... Jesus knew all about it when he said: "To them that have shall be given" etc.--But he had forgotten to reckon with the mass of the mediocre ... The mass of men live and move, think and feel collectively, and have practically no individual emotions, feelings or thoughts at all. They are fragments of the collective or social consciousness. (Apocalypse, 145-6)

Lawrence's thinking about the "mass" is situated between paranoid visions of a dangerous fragmented horde, and his perception of a sheep-like herd which is a necessary backdrop to the revealed presence of the divine elite.

Lawrence's language of sheep-like mass collectivity can be seen to evoke the words of another famous elitist. David Welch, in The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda, observes that "Hitler made no attempt to hide his contempt for the masses..." (1995, 11). Welch cites from Mein Kampf:

The receptivity of the masses is very limited, their intelligence is small, but their power of forgetting is enormous. In consequence all effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand... (ibid.)

Those Germans who defied collective subordination, and chose instead to express dissident individuality, were identified as a drain on the organic "life" of the Reich, and invited the same barbaric treatment experienced by non-Aryans. Lawrence's imagery of mass suppression is often intolerant, and can be graphic:

The righteousness of the living dead is an abominable nullity. They, the sheep of the meadow, they eat and eat to swell out their living nullity. They are so many, their power is immense, and the negative power of their nullity bleeds us of life as if they were vampires. Thank God for the tigers and the butchers that will free us from the abominable tyranny of these greedy, negative sheep. ("The Reality of Peace", Phoenix, 684)

Sometimes mass destruction is all that will do; at other times there is the possibility of improving the masses, though this process seems inextricable from punitive violence. In "Education of the People", Lawrence virulently opposes democracy, and instead proposes an educational system which has as a crucial element brutal whippings and beatings of the back and base of the spine (v. Phoenix, 641). This area of the male body, already charged with "transitional" potential in Women in Love, becomes a highly privileged location of power during the leadership period, and I will return to it when we consider Lawrence's homosexuality.

Oswald Spengler, in Decline of the West (1926 [1918]), like Lawrence, equates the rise of "mass" democracy with the "rigidity" and decay of civilisation. Spengler's work elaborates with particular thoroughness the völkisch Destiny of mighty cultures and the

racial identity of superior individuals: Emile Delavenay frankly sees much of Lawrence's often intensely sociopathic, post-war thought,

...emanating from Nietzsche and his German disciples: the idea of abandonment to cosmic forces, the belief in the decline of civilisations, the apologia for the wild beast whose nature is to spring upon its willing prey--all this suggests that, drawing upon the same original, mystical, Teutonic creed [as Oswald Spengler], Lawrence's "philosophy" was evolving in close sympathy with the Germans of the day. (1972, 454)

Joyce Goggin, working from Foucault's identification of Nazi discourse as a confluence of theories of blood and sexuality, discusses Lawrence's favourable reception in 1930s' National Socialist Germany by many literary academics, who "discover an underlying sympathy for the contemporary German political climate in his writing..." (1997, 288). In Twilight in Italy, Lawrence differentiates between greater and lesser racial or national psychologies, and rhapsodises on the German soul:

There is a strange, clear beauty of form about the men of the Bavarian highlands, about both men and women. They are large and clear and handsome in form, with blue eyes very keen ... Their large, full-moulded limbs and erect bodies are distinct, separate, as if they were perfectly chiselled out of the stuff of life ... It is a race that moves on the poles of mystic sensual delight. Every gesture is a gesture from the blood... (Twilight, 93)

Bertrand Russell condemned in retrospect Lawrence's "mystical philosophy of 'blood'", with its "being" and "consciousness" underpinning ideas about superior individuals, races and nations: "[t]his seemed to me frankly rubbish, and I rejected it vehemently, though I did not then know that it led straight to Auschwitz" (Russell 1956, 107).

Anne Fernihough (1993) considers Lawrence's organicist doctrine of the "blood" in the context of the decline of the Leavisite critical idiom. This decline was brought about, she argues, not just by Kate Millett and subsequent feminist hostility to Lawrence, but by a discrediting of the Romanticist strain of criticism itself, particularly its organic idealism drawing analogies between art and natural growth. Fernihough links (1993, 5-6) this critical vector to the Nazi collaborationist allegations levelled in the 1980s against Paul de Man (whose arch-deconstruction veils his guilty destruction of prior organicist affiliations) and Martin Heidegger. Citing from sources claiming Heidegger's influence by Oswald Spengler, Fernihough goes on to recognise (*ibid.*, 20 ff.), as did Delavenay, Spengler's influence upon Lawrence through ideas about Destiny reified through great nations in

cycles of rise and decline, which, intersected by Nietzsche's elitism, propels the artist's own cyclical and authoritarian visions of human destiny. Fernihough discusses the importance of the Spenglerian paradigm in Women in Love, which is preoccupied by "rotten" civilisation and is full of organicist cyclical metaphoricity, while, and moreover, the narrative includes "a catalogue of ... anti-Jewish commonplaces" (1993, 27) in the descriptions of Loerke. The novel, Fernihough concludes, "cannot be exempted, at a thematic level, from a full-blooded völkisch organicism" (ibid.).

Despite this, Fernihough refuses to locate Lawrence's work on Russell's line straight to Auschwitz. For Fernihough, any argument psychologically linking Lawrence's interest in charismatic leadership to historical fascism is based on ignorance:

...[t]hose who have never read very much Lawrence are quick to condemn him as an extremist, isolating one phase of his work, one single text, or even one single letter ... So they present him as the priest of a cult of the phallus, or as the puritanical proselytiser of monogamous marriage, or perhaps as the proto-fascistic promoter of leadership. To read a substantial amount of his work soon puts paid to these parodic versions of him... (2001, 7)

I see Fernihough's argument here, however, as itself expressing a will to ignore what is unpleasant in Lawrence. Reading a substantial number of his texts should, indeed, dissuade one from the view that they are entirely concurrent with fascist discourse, not least because creative autonomy is so often a preoccupation. But to identify Lawrence's proto-fascistic "phase", and then to dismiss it as "isolated", and thereby insufficiently representative, is rendered ironic by Fernihough's vision (in the 1993 book) of a Kristevan deconstructive Lawrence. To assent to this particular model of plural and provisional writing is to assume an enunciating locus whose identity appears spontaneously within "a practice in which language and the subject are merely moments" (RPL, 14). Kristeva, I suggest, offers a framework in which no initial doubts need be felt about the validity of embarking on a study of Lawrence's fascist "moments", which, since they are produced by a deictic writing subject having no unifying structure, cannot be negated by other provisional moments when he advocates individual freedom, and, indeed, unstable language and subjectivity. Furthermore, and as we will see in detail later, fascism, through a conceptual alliance with homosexuality, may itself be subversive in relation to traditional forms of authority.

Towards the end of this chapter, after certain ideas have been elaborated, I want to consider whether Lawrence's aesthetics can be regarded, over and above notions about heterogeneous enunciation, as a thoroughgoing totalitarianist discourse propelled by an essentialist dynamics of infection. I will then return once more to Fernihough, in order to question her exclusion of Lawrence from the field of post-Romantic organicist rhetoric by virtue of his "fractured organic" aesthetic of polyvalence. My conclusion in the matter of his fascist tendencies, at this point, follows from the "sufficiency" of his provisional expressions, and it is this: that, first, these expressions are very much there, and, secondly, that no amount of egalitarianist or liberationist rhetoric in Lawrence's work, whether about societies, individuals, language or art, makes these tendencies any less there. My primary task here, in line with all that has preceded in this thesis, is not to "bury" pathological tendencies beneath praise of Lawrence's dislocated language and multiple discourses, but rather to recognise pathology and provisionality as imbricated symptoms of his abject cultural dislocation. I move on now to a general discussion of Lawrence's textual homosexuality, in order eventually to conflate it with his fascist tendencies in/as a pre-oedipal economy.

## 2. Homosexuality

At the end of the last chapter I cited a homoerotic passage from the deleted Prologue (Chapter I) in Women in Love. Lawrence's first direct, and apparently favourable, mention of male homosexuality, however, appears in a 1913 letter:

I should like to know why nearly every man that approaches greatness tends to homosexuality, whether he admits it or not: so that he loves the body of a man better than the body of a woman -- as I believe the Greeks did, sculptors and all, by far [sic]. I believe a man projects his own image on another man, like on a mirror. (Letters ii,115)

What is important here, I think, is the way that homosexual desire is being negotiated with a gesture at masculine idealisation. John Worthen observes that "Lawrence had been considering love between members of the same sex from the very start of his career..." (1991, 44). References to "manly love" occasionally appear in the letters, as a profoundly pure and reliable relationship having its paradigm in the biblical couple, David and Jonathan (v. Poplawski 1993, 133). A merging of homoeroticism and exemplary forms of male bonding will be crucial when we engage with psychoanalytic theory about fascism, and specifically with ideas about latent homosexuality and submissive relations to

powerful, idealised males. First we should note another response to male homosexuality often present in Lawrence's writing: hostile repudiation. In 1915, he warns David Garnett about the Bloomsbury intellectual set:

It is so wrong, it is unbearable. It makes a form of inward corruption which truly makes me scarce able to live ... this horrible sense of frowstiness, so repulsive, as if it came from deep inward dirt -- a sort of sewer -- deep in men like K[eynes] and B[irrell] and D[uncan] G[rant] ... [A] door opened and K. was there, blinking from sleep, standing in his pyjamas. And as he stood there gradually came a knowledge passed into me ... carried along with the most dreadful sense of repulsiveness -- something like carrion -- a vulture gives me the same feeling. I begin to feel mad as I think of it -- insane. Never bring B. to see me any more. There is something nasty about him, like black-beetles. He is horrible and unclean. I feel as if I should go mad, if I think of your set ... Truly, I didn't know it was wrong, till I saw K. that morning in Cambridge. It was one of the crises in my life ... I could sit and howl in a corner like a child, I feel so bad about it all. (Letters ii, 320-1)

A "repressive" interpretation of this passage would note the intense loathing for an unmentionable object displaced in simile, while anxieties about self-disintegration tip into a suggestion of psychosis (howling), as Lawrence negatively projects impulses induced by the image ("that morning...") of a man emerging, possibly exposed, from a bedroom.

Lawrence's homoeroticism, by contrast, often emerges in anally fixated imagery which by-passes repression in positive metaphorical connotation. The "loins of darkness" motif in Women in Love can be seen elaborated in his psycho-magnetic neuroanatomical theory of "voluntary" impulses in masculinist opposition to the "sympathetic" mother-regarding front of the body. In "Education of the People", stimulation of the voluntary centres is the aim of the buttock whipping reserved for the ignorant, democratic masses: "Rouse the powerful volitional centres at the base of the spine ... Even with the stinging rods, rouse them" (Phoenix, 641). In Male Fantasies, Klaus Theweleit cites a former concentration camp inmate: "[o]n more than thirty occasions, I myself have witnessed SS camp commanders masturbating during floggings at the whipping post" (1989, 301). This startling juxtaposition of Lawrence with brutal Nazi abuse I will leave undeveloped for now, since its justification can occur only after we have looked in detail at a psychoanalytic correlation of homosexual fantasy and fascist discourse.

In Women in Love, apart from the dark loins, we see the anus obliquely eroticised in a preoccupation with waste, excrement and corruption. This field registers the

narrative's positive apocalyptic message of disintegrated society, a positive "flux" of renewal, which, in the context of Lawrence's anatomical mapping, suggests the anal rebirth of a socially abject individual who, as we saw in "Study of Thomas Hardy, is identified as "waste" matter (waste matters). Coextensively, Lawrence counters his typical association of homosexuals and beetles (see letter cited above) with an account of the Egyptian dung beetle, whose egg-containing ball of ordure rolls along in parallel with a life-generating Sun (Lawrence 1995a, 253). Elsewhere in the novel Birkin is fascinated by the immense buttocks of an African female statuette (ibid., 74, 78, 252). I will return to this imagery in the section on The Plumed Serpent, when situating Lawrence "primitivism" in relation to an established matrix of homosexuality and fascism.

Finally, here, Lawrence's ambivalent representations of homosexuality are further complicated by a broadening of his focus on the Cambridge set to include all of a "wicked and perverse" homosexual England (Letters ii, 319), which then is opposed to his utopian visions of foreign lands. In Women in Love and Aaron's Rod, Italy (and Australia and America in subsequent novels) is where voluntary impulses can be expressed, and where men may achieve a kind of pristine homosocial culture. Lawrence's positionality in a phantasy nexus of home and abroad, meanwhile, brings us to the third of this chapter's essential themes.

### 3. The Foreigner

Kristeva writes, in Strangers to Ourselves (1991), of the generic foreigner, an alienated, nostalgic, but otherwise potentially cosmopolitanised and liberated individual:

He has fled from that origin--family, blood, soil--and even though it keeps pestering, enriching, hindering, exciting him, or giving him pain, and often all of it at once, the foreigner is its courageous and melancholy betrayer. His origin certainly haunts him, for better and for worse, but it is indeed elsewhere that he has set his hopes, that his struggles take place, that his life holds together today. Elsewhere versus the origin, and even nowhere versus the roots. (SO, 29)

This passage is placed in an extended argument, or "fugue", interweaving images of national alienation with the estrangement of a precocious subject, whose relation to the abject maternal "origin" is consonant with imaginary constructions of relocation and



fulfilment "elsewhere".<sup>96</sup> It is rehearsing a basic principle to say that, for Kristeva, the subject can never be "at home" since his enunciations are always unsettled, displaced, deferred, in-process, questing between local points of (self-)identity. In *Strangers*, she elaborates unhomeliness as a trope of abjection, by reconfiguring the speaking subject's crisis of location through an historicist construction of perceived alterity. The Enlightenment, she argues, is the last epoch in which the foreigner, the exile and the immigrant, could be given a clear sign and re/assimilated according to metaphysical rules -- paradigmatically, Christian rules which teach love of the other. The modern subject, by contrast, is unable to clarify, and so to dispel, paranoia about otherness (religions, nations) through a discourse of universal identification (albeit imperfect anyway, in practice); and this means that he has no metaphysical "home" of his own. Un-homed in a language whose codification of reality has failed concurrent with loss of social identity, and simultaneously estranged from the primordial "mother-land" of his birth, "the stranger", as Norma Moruzzi succinctly glosses Kristeva's "fugue", "is always present within one's (national) borders and within one's (personal) self..." (Moruzzi, 1993, 135).

The compensation for post-metaphysical dislocation and paranoid dissociation, in Kristeva's psycho-poetics is, of course, linguistic jouissance. The poetic imaginary has the potential to heal the split psyche by accessing pre-oedipal phantasy, whose visions of Symbolic advent-ure sustain the precocious writing subject -- though the regressive state is always one of abject fixation. Nostalgia for the "origin" both "enriches" through its potential for transitive relocation in worlds of one's own creation, while it announces the "pain" of the writer's essential and radical dislocation. The "foreigner", then, modulates Kristeva's account of the generic borderline writer who suspends the super-ego's tyranny and is overwhelmed by primary processes, while always himself in (borderline) suspension between loss and provisional renewal of an imagined "home" identity. While the poet-artist is fascinated by uncanny moments when primal phantasy (inside) infuses symbolic referentiality (outside), the foreigner-novelist may be seen playing with explicit images of home and abroad, in narratives that stage crisis and exile, as, in Kristeva's words, he "flees"

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<sup>96</sup>Kristeva entitles this section in *Strangers to Ourselves*, "Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner". "Fugue" has another meaning beyond its musical sense, defined within psychiatry as a loss of awareness of identity associated with flight from one's usual environment ("home"), and consequent hysteria.

from "family, blood and soil", while "setting his hopes" on relocation in/to a series of geographical "elsewheres".

In Women in Love, characters are already escaping from England to the Tyrol; in Aaron's Rod, Florence is the destination, in Kangaroo it is Sydney, and in The Plumed Serpent, New Mexico. These lands of rebirth are formed against the homosexual wrongness of England, a space of recurrent pain for the writer. Huw Stevens describes the biographical Lawrence's experiences in England during the war: the banning of The Rainbow, consequent impoverishment and restriction, then expulsion from Cornwall, and, "[m]ost traumatically [in this period] the state 'pawed', scrutinised and mocked his naked body ... Lawrence portrays his treatment by military tribunals as a form of sexual assault" (Stevens 2001, 49). The artist's paranoia reaches an extended plateau in "The Nightmare" section in Kangaroo, where a series of army medical examinations is presented to emphasise the hateful English state's fascination with the central character's anus. "Elsewhere versus the origin": Lawrence's foreign countries are projected largely over-against the devouring homosexual predations of England. Yet this does not result in a thoroughgoing heterosexualisation of Italy, Sidney and New Mexico; the opposition is instead one between homophobia and homosocial fantasy. Huw Stevens overarchingly negotiates Lawrence's hatred of England with his eroticisation of foreign, dark-skinned men, which is veiled in a mystifying language of "southern" races characterised by a profound darkness (*ibid.*, 49 ff.). Stevens thus recognises the important nexus of foreignness, anality and darkness in Lawrence, and his account is acceptable as far as it goes; but it does not deal with the latent homosexuality which is crucial in the artist's constructions of nationally "orphaned" characters who are fascinated, not just by foreign men, but by foreign leaders of men. At this point we turn to Klaus Theweleit's account of fascist psychology, through which we will be able to conflate our three themes.

## **II. PRE-OEDIPAL FASCISM: A DOMINION OF ORPHANED SONS**

### **1. Fascist Foreigners**

Klaus Theweleit, in the second volume of Male Fantasies, cites from a novel by Rudolph Mann, which presents the troubled thoughts of a fictional ex-soldier soon after the end of the First World War:

The next day he found himself traveling [sic] the Görlitz line and musing on how he would never again make a good civilian. A stranger in his own country, he no longer belonged in the present. "That's it precisely; a stranger in my own country." (cited in Theweleit 1989, 394)

Mann is a former member of the Freikorps, which, as Benjamin and Rabinbach say in their Foreword to Male Fantasies (Volume 2), were "private armies of former imperial soldiers, anti-Communist youth, adventurers and sundry drifters organised in the volatile atmosphere of post-World War I Germany" (*ibid.*, ix-x). The Freikorps were put together in 1918 by Chancellor Ebert, who did not trust the largely working class regular army, specifically to quell communist revolutionary insurgence. In practice they were largely autonomous and self-motivated groups, each with a charismatic leader. They roamed at will, fighting Poles, Russians, Latvians and Estonians, and suppressing the German working class, until 1923, when the Freikorps were disbanded. The martial bonds between these men were underpinned by their sense of exclusion from a strong tradition of national identification with Prussian military success: the end of the War was a final, catastrophic blow to völkisch pride in German imperial power, whose decline had begun in the previous century (*v. ibid.*, 349 ff.). Many Freikorps men re-emerged, after 10 years of relative peace in Germany, to become the core of Hitler's SA (Sturm Abteilung) from 1933, and, in some cases, to be crucial administrators in the Third Reich.

This is a familiar history, yet Theweleit's work, argues Michael Rothberg,

...challenged German citizens' pre-1960 refusal to accept responsibility for their role in the recent Nazi past, and it grew out of a movement of students obsessed with their parents' guilt and with the psychology of fascism and authoritarianism. Male Fantasies also responded to ... a shortcoming in the dominant marxist models of fascism provided by the Frankfurt school: an inability to acknowledge the reality of fascist fantasy... (1994, 82)

Theweleit emerged from the 1960s' German New Left movement, which typically combined political and psychological modes of analysis in response to Germany's widespread evasion of its Nazi past. Theweleit's aim was not just to rediscover a suppressed history, but (and rejecting Frankfurtian rational-humanism) to focus on the individual psyche, to elaborate its unconscious structures, and thus to characterise, largely from some two hundred and fifty Freikorps novels and memoirs, the mind of the fascist male. Theweleit does not, as he says, "attempt to apply any one psychoanalytic system to these texts", but rather looks at "psychic processes..." (1987, 57). Using an eclectic mix of

theories, primarily those of Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler and Deleuze and Guattari, he constructs a picture of violent, irrational men who are essentially infantilised: "I can think of no single psychoanalytical term developed with reference to the psychotic child that could not equally be applied to a behavioural trait of the 'fascist' male" (1989, 220).

The soldiers thus occupy a psychic space familiar to us here, one of pre-oedipal fixation following suspension of the super-ego. Betrayed by a socio-cultural "father", these men are metaphysically dislocated, incapable of secure object-relations, and obsessed by "boundaries" and their disintegration. I will elaborate below some of Theweleit's key ideas: if we recall at this point, however, that a fascist artist (Céline) is crucial in Powers of Horror, and that both Kristeva and Theweleit are "pre-oedipal" theorists, it should be no surprise if much of this elaboration is redolent of abjection theory.<sup>97</sup> To be precise, my account of Theweleit, while thematically conflating homosexuality and fascism, and indirectly "illustrating" Kristeva's aforementioned ideas about the foreigner, also aims to give a backdrop against which her compatible ideas about the fascist psyche and homosexuality can subsequently be set out and readily assimilated. The fact, moreover, that Theweleit predominantly analyses novels without reference to an aesthetic framing discourse, will open a further space in which to situate a discussion of Kristeva's correlation of fascist and artistic writing.

As we now turn to gloss Theweleit's ideas about the deep-logical structures of the fascist male, I first consider how "mass" phantasy is bound up with misogyny.

## **2. Woman: The Mass and the Unnameable**

German fascist leaders, with Hitler as their model, tended to identify their own citizens as a foolish de-individualised mass susceptible to simplistic propaganda, while fascist propaganda itself spread paranoia about a mass to be suppressed or conquered. For Theweleit, the corporeal discourse of the Aryan's super-hard, impregnable male exterior emerges in opposition to constructions of a dangerous, polluting, potentially uncontrollable excess. Deriving from Deleuze's and Guattari's (1984, 340) ideas about molecular masses

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<sup>97</sup>Michael Rothberg, in his critique of Male Fantasies, observes that "Julia Kristeva's writings on the 'abject' produce this same anxiety over the boundaries of the body which she also finds in both 'borderline' psychotic patients and in fascist writing, such as that of Céline" (Rothberg 1994, p. 84).

(heterogeneous, multiple, fluid) and a molar mass (organised, fixed, rigid), Theweleit makes these two normally co-existing social formations antithetical in a fascist imaginary at war with communists, women and Jews, whose forces trope the fascist psyche's exposure to drive excess (cf. Theweleit 1989, 75). The soldiers in Freikorps novels are anti-Semitic and they predominantly fight communists, but these texts are full of misogynistic moments which, for Theweleit, signal a radical paranoid object. The men, he argues, are fixated at a "stage" where "the father is more or less nonexistent", their egos are besieged by libidinal superfluity, and they are "incapable of working over (verarbeiten) ... their fear of the 'devouring' mother" (ibid., 212-3).

One aspect of their essential misogyny is that Freikorps novels consistently refuse to name women characters. "She" may be idealised as a potential or actual wife, but she is often wholly uncharacterised, "nameless, dateless, outside history" (Theweleit 1987, 13). Admired from a distance, a woman's close presence elicits self-disciplinary injunctions against emotion, while the observed body of the beloved seems disturbing, disgusting, a faint threat of agitation veiled by the soldier's disinterest and boredom (ibid., 10). He repeatedly "escapes" from the woman in his life to defend against the rat-like molecularity of the Bolsheviks, at the forefront of which is the "Red" woman, always a whore whose sexual voraciousness is indistinguishable from a threat of "dissolution" in violent death. War, however, is an ambivalent experience: it is a savage revelation of the excessive threat of the feminine/interior, while the soldiers' eroticisation of death, including their own, provides the pleasurable jouissance that is so fearful/lacking in devouring/homely women: "[t]hese men look for ecstasy not in embraces, but in explosions, in the rumbling of bomber squadrons or in brains being shot to flames" (ibid., 41). The experience of war, in fact, depends on one's distance from women. There is an obvious dynamic of displacement: an overt erotic display by a wife or fiancée, repulsive or boring in itself, typically generates in the soldier's imagination horrific images of battle (v. ibid., 43). Only freed from the sexual powers of women can men live, joyously, ecstatically, violently. Their battlefield communion relieves the constant tension of maintaining the molar mass of a steel exterior, often during a shared destruction of the Red woman (cf. ibid., 171 ff.). In war, units of steel men eliminate the feminine and explosively come together. Given the soldiers' obsession with excluding/destroying women and forming male bonds, "[a]re we then dealing with 'homosexuality'?" asks Theweleit. "As a catchword it seems

appropriate, but does it really get us anywhere?" (*ibid.*, 54). We next move on to look at why, according to Theweleit, it does not, even though homosexuality, he argues, is crucial in the generation of fascist rhetoric. And I begin the section with his elaboration of the fascist ego.

### 3. Homosexuality

#### The Body-Ego and the Male Form

The first principle of Male Fantasies is that the psychic organisation of fascism is pre-oedipal. The fascist does not defend a mature ego, argues Theweleit, here following Margaret Mahler's (1970) studies of psychotic children; he rather maintains a precocious ego against unlimited desire and its heterodoxical, fluid production (cf. Theweleit 1989, 210). The fascist ego is essentially infantile, a "body-ego" whose phantasmatic armour is maintained, not by paternal object-relations, but through a "progressive displacement of libido ... from the inside of the body (in particular from the abdominal organs) to the periphery of the body" (Mahler, cited in Theweleit *ibid.*, 216). The peripheral displacement process of fascist body-ego maintenance, while hinging on phantasies of maternal sexuality and "devouring" bowels, is characterised by "penetrations" of other bodies' boundaries, to produce, again and again, an exposed "mass" of blood and guts. Pre-oedipal maintenance processes, in this case, do not conflict with self-dissolution: "the refusal to relinquish desire ... does not constitute fascism -- to the contrary, the source of fascism's violence comes from the coexistence of overflowing desire with structures of containment" (Rothberg 1994, 87). The death-driven soldier/writer comes thrillingly close to the horror of boundary dissolution, he represents it, he experiences it, he externalises it and triumphs, emerging with his peripheral form intact. This exteriority is intensely cathected:

The soldier carries a boundary with him, in the shape of the uniform, and the belt and crossbelt in particular. His body experiences the constant sensation of something "holding it together". His periphery, formed through external encroachments, appears to me so sharply divided from his "interior" that I am inclined to talk of his body as split into external muscle-physique and internal organ-physique. The muscle-physique is identical with what can be referred to as his "ego". (Theweleit 1989, 223)

The uni-form identity overlays and fetishes the soldiers' naked muscle-physique, which displaces, homogenises and de-eroticises the drives qua paranoid phantasies of internal/maternal organs, and which appears obsessively represented in fascist, particularly

Nazi, art. (In due course, I will observe Lawrence's obsession with uniforms and men's bodies, particularly in The Plumed Serpent.) Peripheral displacement of the "organ-physique", moreover, is elaborated in a production of "associations" (Freikorps, SA, SS, Hitler Youth, etc.), whose rigid regulations and self-discipline combat desire at every level. The soldier, argues Theweleit, "solidifies" the massed inside of the body, as organs become organisations. The totality of the war machine (body of men) becomes an artificial social ego committed to exposure of the organ-mass (as the consonant obverse of solidification and containment), in bloody violence implicating the death drive with omnipotent borderline phantasy.

We now move on, from the significance of the male body and male organisations in fascist ego maintenance, to Theweleit's account of how fascism and homosexuality are directly connected through the latter's function as transgressive discourse.

### **Homosexual Transgression**

We saw Theweleit citing from a concentration camp inmate testifying to an apparent eroticisation of anal assault. In fascist novels and memoirs also, there is a significant number of anally fascinated, sado-masochistic acts (such as whipping), while accounts of military school experiences repeatedly gesture at homosexual relations between cadets. At the same time, the Freikorps men, as one might expect, are ostensibly homophobic, and soldiers insult each other accordingly. The fascist texts' disavowal of homosexual desire (which is "seen" yet not seen), for Theweleit, is not simply a signal of weak repression. Anal sexuality, he argues, is significant in fascist discourse on two levels. First, inasmuch as the fetishised body-ego forms through infantile explosions of violence against uncontainable desire, homosexual desire is a focus for hatred, and the anus is persecuted (homosexuality was viciously suppressed in Germany under the National Socialists). At another, more profound, level, Theweleit reads fascist homosexual scriptions through Guy Hocquenghem's semiological location of the anus as a socially excluded space, the sign of a "forbidden territory" which is silenced by society, "exterritorialised", made a hidden object/signifier (v. Theweleit 1989, 309 ff.).

In fascist discourse, Theweleit argues, "[a]nal penetration comes to represent the opening of social prisons, admission into a hidden dungeon that guards the key to

recuperation of the revolutionary dimension of desire..." (Theweleit 1989, 313). A domination-submission relation characterising soldiers' interactions at every stage from cadet school onward, often "employ[s] the vehicle of fictitious transexuality, in which men become women, to represent the playful, apparently transgressive, but ultimately strictly regulated nature of flirtations with the homosexual" (*ibid.*, 327). What look like potentially homoerotic relationships in Freikorps texts are actually rites of passage through which "the fascist ... [is] initiated and accepted ... to gain access to the secrets that were the domain of the specific power elite" (*ibid.*, 339). Homosexuality becomes a "group desire", the transgressive potential of the abject anus being recovered by "restoring its functions as a desiring bond, and by collectively reinvesting it against a society which has reduced it to the state of a shameful little secret" (*ibid.*, 313). Homosexual (and any sexual) love is ruthlessly suppressed in Freikorps memoirs and novels, yet these narratives "flirt" with homosexuality, which represents a revolutionary dimension of desire, a key space of transgression against heterosexual and, overarchingly, paternal societal norms. And the flirtation occurs, ultimately, because in their hatred of the Versailles Treaty and their dreams of displacing the Weimar Republic through a revival of Prussian-militarist glory, the fascists themselves transgress against the paternal principle, while uniting to experience the shameful little secret of German men's castration. Buttock whipping, in this context, maintains the cadet ego's boundary by hardening his muscle-physique, while its sadistic implementation by the always "not-yet-fully-born" (*ibid.*, 318, *et passim*) soldier deterritorialises desire and "penetrates" the source of waste matter (he makes waste/himself matter) independent of both the paternal phallus and the generative power of women.

Theweleit goes on to argue that the "grouped-homosexual" identifications of the soldier rebels are subtended by a movement displacing the father with a transgressive leader. So what kind of leader is formed in a pre-oedipal psyche?

### **Leadership and Filiation**

Certainly the fascist leader, like his followers, has nothing to do with conventional political process. Theweleit asserts that "[a]most every [fascist] author proudly professes his ignorance of politics--the politics of parliaments, parties, newspapers, and tittle-tattle" (Theweleit 1989, 361). The fascist is a thoroughgoing pervert, an anally regressive deviant



from, and an orally omnipotent Übermensch "above", social institutions and democratic laws. Moreover, since the oedipal crisis requires that the father be displaced and the mother be killed, the fascist leader can only be a kind of superior brother, one, moreover, cathected in latent homosexuality. This relationship is not the cathexis identified by Freud in "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis", through which a phantasy of rebirth veils a homosexual impulse, the object of which is the father (cf. SE XVII, 100). The fascist has no cultural father: he refuses his shamed paternal lineage in recent German patriarchy -- but then he simultaneously longs for the guidance and security of an authority which is always-already rejected. In fact, "[p]atriarchy secures its dominance under fascism in the form of a filiarchy ... Nothing but sons as far as the eye can see--Hitler too is one of their number" (Theweleit (1987, 108). The leader figure for these orphaned brothers, argues Theweleit, is not a product of oedipal individuation and stable object-relations, but is rather a primordial "magnetic" identification. The charismatic leader, from the Freikorps officer to Hitler, emerges from the inchoate fatherless mass (within which "I" am abject, a stranger in my own country), and organises it into a masculine whole which simultaneously births him, sui generis, without woman's sexuality:

At the point at which the leader makes "Volk" of the mass, he implants his seed within it and prepares it to give birth to masculine organisations ... [he] takes up the submissive mass "below" and fuses it into his own totality. In the process, the mass below is devivified, then restored to life: it gives birth, but only to what is made to issue from it. (Theweleit 1989, 95-6)

A new steely, totalitarian body of organisations emerges from a Volk brotherhood formed through latent homosexuality magnetising the transgressive power of a superior man. Theweleit draws on structural anthropology for the tribal hieratic mechanism of "direct filiation", whereby,

...a single man sets himself up independently as son of God and his mother as nature. The filiative power that thereby accrues to him supersedes all other forms of social power; the ego it engenders is massive, its limits measured only by the limits of the world. Fascism produces a construction of rebirth that is similar ... but involuted: the new-born ego is not the son of God, but the son of himself and of history. (ibid., 241)

After the "birth" of the leader, the self-mass of interior (national) chaos is projected as the enemy other, which is characterised by primary narcissism knowing no external limits. The fascist's borderline phantasies of dissolution and containment extend across the entire world of others, in an infinite process of killing/penetration/exposure, each violent act a

provisional rebirth of the always not-yet-fully-born self, and a recapitulation of the leader's emergence from the miasma of the self/nation.

At this point, we end a section dedicated to Theweleit's theory. In order to maintain sharpness of focus in a long chapter, I want next broadly to gesture ahead to my eventual analysis of Lawrence's texts.

### **Intermission**

Let us quickly recall the overarching analogy I am setting up here: that Lawrence's estrangement from England is the product of the state's "betrayal", which shatters an intense self-identification and leaves him, in some sense, at war with England for the rest of his life. Despite superficially disparate relations to their respective countries, Lawrence and the German fascists align deep-logically as feminised foreigners traumatised by a radical, humiliating failure of national identity: a devastating narcissistic wound. When we come to the leadership novels, I will observe these narratives "submitting to" masculine icons, and "territorialising" foreign lands, as erotic homosexuality is displaced by magnetic power worship and filiative regeneration. We will find, among other motifs, hostility to capitalism, democracy, Bolshevism, women and Jews; we will observe beloved leaders emerging from a heterogeneous "mass", and seeking to organise a nation (Australia, Mexico) as an authoritarian brotherhood. We will see, especially in The Plumed Serpent, the eroticised male body, in and out of uniform, functioning as a magnetic "muscle-physique" opposed both to extant state organisations and to social chaos. The clearest analogies to fascism, in fact, are to be found in the last novel in Lawrence's leadership "trilogy"; but this means that we can, as it were, trace the "emergence" of the leader in Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo. This is for later; I want, as I have indicated, first to incorporate Kristeva's semiotic/aesthetic take on the homosexual and filiarchal characteristics of the pre-oedipal (object) psyche. And this will benefit, I think, from a brief account of explanations of homosexuality within prior psychoanalytic discourse: by seeing what conventions are being drawn on, we may better understand why relatively modern theorists such as Theweleit and Kristeva can confidently "locate" fascism with homosexuality.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>In the section that follows in the main text I am indebted to Kenneth Lewes' comprehensive account, The Psychoanalytic Theory of Male Homosexuality (1988).

### III. ANALYSING HOMOSEXUALITY

#### 1. Oedipal

Freud's theory contains four, more or less distinct, explanations of male homosexuality (v. Lewes 1988, 35 ff.). In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (SE VII [1905]), Freud discovers its source in the generic boy's refusal to relinquish his first love-object, the mother, which leads to identification with her and a quest for love-objects resembling himself. In the Little Hans and Leonardo da Vinci papers (SE X [1909], SE XI [1910]), an explanation not inconsistent with the first one states that the boy's horrified discovery and rejection of the castrated mother is followed by a life-long search for a compromise figure, a "woman with a penis". Thirdly, in the Wolf Man study (SE XVII [1918]), the boy's discovery of the mother's castration conditions identification with the father, while retaining the internalisation of a submissive role in relation to the phallic mother. Finally, in "Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality" (SE XVIII [1922]), Freud decides that an intense love for the mother results in intense jealousy of siblings, which is reactively formed into homosexual love. All of these versions, however, depend upon a pathological unresolved fixation on the mother. It is true that Freud usually applied the term "inversion" rather than "perversion" to homosexual desire since it was not, in his view, a "sickness", but rather an indication of the essential bi-sexuality of human nature. On the other hand, Freud's theory is heterosexually normative, always implying that homosexuality is developmentally regressive and perverted, characterised by excessive oral and anal affect.<sup>99</sup> The latter etiological positioning is retained and emphasised within object-relations theory.

#### 2. Pre-oedipal

Melanie Klein's mother-centred theory, with its emphasis on primitive anxiety and identifications of psychosis with pre-oedipal stages of development, established the groundwork on which later analysts would characterise homosexuality comprehensively in terms of early fixation. For Klein the homosexual is defending against infantile paranoia and the (pre-castration) maternal "bad penis" by idealising the "good penis", in phantasy

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<sup>99</sup>The contradictory articulation of homosexuality across "bi-sexual mode" and "perverted fixation" is unwittingly encapsulated in Freud's famous letter to the mother of a homosexual youth: "we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of the sexual development" (Freud 1961, p. 277).

consonant with psychotic delusion, in an oral construction of the phallus distinct from the super-ego. Following Klein in the 1930s and 1940s, many competing theoretical variations on this theme emerged (cf. Lewes 1988, Ch. 5, passim). I will not, in what follows, identify individual contributors to one of psychoanalysis's most baroque and inconsistent fields. Instead a composite picture, I think, can be drawn, based on the prevailing assumption among object-relations theorists that the homosexual male's ego is characterised by spontaneous infantile regression to degrees where neurosis merges into psychosis.

Post-Kleinian analysts "observed" that feelings of frustration caused intense hostility or self-mortification in homosexual men. Insufficiently regulated by the super-ego and aggressively fleeing the castrated (devouring) mother, while being propelled by omnipotent delusions, the homosexual displays megalomaniacal tendencies to identify with/in a maternal phallus, while remaining paranoid about the vagina dentata of the mother. When (Kleinian) guilt and remorse signal a new developmental stage relative to schizoid phantasy of a "bitten" mother, the fixated homosexual does not introject the "good breast", and eventually learn to love heterosexual objects under the social (heterosexual) phallus. He instead restitutes the lost breast and displaces the vagina by fetishising the buttocks and the anus.

Like a "normal" ego organisation, then, the homosexual psychic economy defends against guilt associated with sadism directed at the mother; but the homosexual phallus is linked to a pre-social body-ego, and the anus becomes the locus for a "magical" incorporation of power manifested in literal anal incorporation. A mature subject has always-already identified with the cultural father and rejected (introjected) the mother, but homosexual phantasy is aligned with schizophrenic patients' borderline phantasies of incorporating the father and possessing the mother. The homosexual love object accordingly is "positioned" as a transitional phenomenon, somewhere between masculine and feminine traits, part- and full-objects, oral and anal stages, sadism and masochism, self and non-self, and so on. D. W. Winnicott later would "normalise" transitional states of (religious, aesthetic) delusion within a conceptual framework of play, archaically facilitated by the good-enough-mother (v. supra, Ch. 4). In the work of post-Kleinian

object-relations theorists, however, transitivity is characterised negatively, and homosexuals are presented as paradigmatic cases of inhibition and perversion.

I want both to recapitulate and elaborate the recent paragraphs, while thinking back to Theweleit's account of fascism, and, anticipating the turn to Kristeva, thinking also of the general picture we have of the abject psyche.

The homosexual psyche is archaically constituted before the appearance of the super-ego. The homosexual takes revenge for his fixation on a phallic mother by a kind of moral masochism, an incorporation/penetration of/by the phallus, often overcompensated by a "he-man" image and sadistic fantasies of penetrating the buttocks. His desire for omnipotence oscillates between submission and aggression around a phallus projected prior to the reality principle, and transformed in the empowering anus. Homosexuals are in a constant (transitional) state of grievance against the mother, though their masculinist megalomania aims to reconstitute the sublimity/totality of her (breast), a phantasy infused by sado-masochism. The homosexual male believes in the possibility of a magical totality-incorporation of male power, a sui generis production of absolute identity consonant both with an obliteration of otherness and self-dissolution. Excessive cathexis of the ego is characteristic of homosexuals and schizophrenics, whose in-built narcissistic structure, bound up with masochism, can only desire and idealise the same, a superior self. Small wonder, given all this, that more than one of the theorists in the "pre-oedipal" period compare homosexuals to Nazis (v. Lewes 1988, 116).

Kenneth Lewes' history of psychoanalytic ideas about homosexuality, from which I have been drawing, is largely an attempt by an analyst to apologise for such extreme views, which he unreservedly presents as virulent, though technically counter-transferential, homophobia. (Reading Lewes' account, incidentally, is not a dissimilar experience to reading Theweleit on the fascists.) Lewes concedes that despite having its radical source in Freud's magnanimous views, and despite the subsequent appearance of liberal, and eventually "queer" modifications, analysed homosexuality never really frees itself from heterosexual-normative assumptions institutionalised in psychoanalytic discourse, and,

more specifically, from the devastating constructions of early object-relations theorists.<sup>100</sup> And we can see traces of such negativity located in the work of one of the most revolutionary and subversive of postmodern writers.

What immediately follows is split into two sections. In the first section I look at how Kristeva locates homosexuality in a pre-oedipal space where it is implicated with fascism, and then at how she situates Céline's fascist novels in a similar space, coextensive with artistic production.

#### IV. KRISTEVA

##### 1. Two Homosexual Economies

In Revolution in Poetic Language (1984 [1974]), some years before the appearance of "abjection", Kristeva's linking of the body's drives with (Hegelian) negativity is focused around the notion of rejection. As we saw in the Introduction, rejection is a "mobile law" of Symbolic identity prescribing the expulsion and repression of the pre-oedipal mother. The anal phase, as the final stage before the Oedipus conflict, generates impulses to separate consonant with paranoia directed at the mother. Phantasies of killing and separation eroticise the anus in wish-fulfilment, as "drives move through the sphincter[]" and arouse pleasure at the very moment substances belonging to the body are separated and rejected from the body" (RPL, 151). The pleasure of sadistic expulsion via anal sensation, then, is crucial in the formation of the subject: "[w]e would like to stress the importance of anal rejection or anality, which precedes the establishment of the symbolic and is both its precondition and its repressed element" (RPL, 149). Kristeva, moreover, asserts that,

Freud's silence ... on the subject of anality ... is not just the symptom of a certain blindness toward homosexuality, which, to his credit, he nevertheless sees at the basis of social institutions. His silence is also bound up with psychoanalysis'

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<sup>100</sup>"Queer modifications": In Arguing with the Phallus (2000), Jan Campbell examines the ongoing debate about psychoanalytic homophobia. In a discussion on queer theory, she looks at the contribution of the French writer, Guy Hocquenghem, who, as we have seen, is a key influence upon Theweleit's association of fascism and homosexuality. Campbell locates Hocquenghem in a line of analytic theorists stretching back to Wilhelm Reich, and taking in Deleuze and Guattari (who influence Theweleit and Hocquenghem), and Luce Irigaray. These theorists "champion the polymorphously perverse over the phallic term" (Campbell 2000, p. 137), but then fail to transcend the inherent status of "perversity" as the "return of the repressed", which ultimately reinforces oedipal conservative structures. Campbell is a critic of Kristeva in this regard, as well as of her "virulent homophobia" (ibid., p. 132), and I return to these themes in the Conclusion.

silence about the way the literary function subverts the symbolic function and puts the subject in process/on trial. (ibid.)

Freud, she is saying, correctly identifies the male "homosexual" (single) libido as the basis of culture; he gives (four) explanations of homosexual development; and he links the anal stage to sadism and the death drive (destructive jouissance). Despite all this, he is "silent" on the subversive significance of anal jouissance in the Symbolic, coextensive with literary production:

...before forming the new structure which will be the "literary work," the not yet symbolised drive and the "residues of first symbolisations" attack, through unburied anality and fully cognisant of homosexuality, all the stases of the signifying process... (RPL, 150)

This, of course, is a main arterial route in Kristeva's theory, one which situates semiotic production over-against metaphysical discourse, and which characterises the "unburied", or de-repressed, anal stage in terms of reactivated maternal abjection. It is, however, her explicit connection of anality with homosexual phantasy that interests us here.

We have two apparently contradictory, but actually compatible, positions taken by Kristeva in Revolution: she agrees with Freud that homosexuality is the "basis of social institutions", and thus of Symbolic order, and that the anal stage of rejection is its final precondition; and she also argues that anal jouissance "cognisant" of homosexual phantasy disrupts the paternal principle's (imaginary) stability. The first of these positions comprehends the Symbolic (following the Freudian single libido and Lacanian homosexualité) as "homo-sexual" in that cathexes between men and women are formed in an imaginary field of difference, and Symbolic identity is actually constructed through patriarchal reflexive identifications with the "same", as a "homological economy" (RPL, 175). Homo-sexuality, thus, in a broad frame of object-relations and self-identity, is "the truth behind heterosexual 'relations'" (RPL, 176).

Kristeva's second position on the "truth" of homosexuality, one to which Freud is "blind", is arrived at by shifting from the mirror under-lying "heterosexual" identifications, to the still further underlying basis of subjectivity in anal rejection, where differentiation and identity border construction begins. For Kristeva, the homosexual's fixation on anal pleasure itself becomes a sadistic borderline fixation point at which the repressive socius recognises and abjects anal jouissance, in a "paranoid moment which protects the unity of

the subject from being put in process/on trial" (*ibid.*). This negative cultural fixation protecting the heterosexual order, this identification of a "forbidden territory", obversely means that homosexuality -- which is, again, to say anal jouissance -- is a potentially subversive articulation. And this articulation, for Kristeva, coextends in the Imaginary with,

...the reconstitution of a homosexual phratry that will forever pursue, tirelessly and interminably, the murder of the One, the Father, in order to impose one logic, one ethics, one signified: one, but other, critical, combatant, revolutionary--the brothers in Freud's primal horde, for example... (RPL, 153)

The image of the phratry, or primal horde, shows Kristeva again deriving from classical theory, here Totem and Taboo, while re-mapping the primal scene. In Powers of Horror, as we saw in Chapter 3, she emphasises what Freud plays down in Totem, the seminal murder of the tribal women by the sons, the violence of maternal abjection which establishes the borders of discourse. This mapping is prefigured by passages in Revolution, where, having identified Freud's blindness to homosexual subversion, Kristeva emphasises the filiation aspect of murder, and elaborates its significance in modern writing opposed to the paternal function through phantasies of a "reunion with brothers' bodies" (RPL, 153). Klaus Theweleit's eclectically informed analysis of the fascist psyche is, of course, also fully cognisant of the Freudian primal horde seeking to murder the mother and displace the father with a "homosexual" brotherhood. Whereas Theweleit, however, reads German history through Freikorps texts' psychodynamics, and thus as a spatio-temporally limited crisis in the Symbolic function, Kristeva links modern creative writing to anal subversion and fascist discourse through her assumption of a comprehensive metaphysical crisis.

## 2. Artist and Fascist

Jean-Paul Sartre has argued that if artistic expression is impossible without liberty of expression, a literary fascist is an oxymoron.<sup>101</sup> A fascist, however, can be an artist, for

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<sup>101</sup>Sartre defines "literature" as a necessarily social form whose "freedom" should be implicated with left wing political positions. Such positions, however, are antipathetic to the modern narcissistic poet, who "rejects bourgeois values, is rejected by the aristocracy, and makes the mistake of not finding his 'justification' in the proletariat" (Sartre, Baudelaire 1950, p. 139, cited in Watts 1998, p. 73). Philip Watts, in Allegories of the Purge (1998), discusses the complex theoretical negotiations of "what is" literature, which occurred during the post-war movement in France to identify "collaborationist" writers. Watts looks at how Sartre's vehement denunciations of Céline's anti-Semitic polemics merge into a critique of the "poet's" apolitical investments in style, despite the fact that Sartre's own early work is heavily influenced stylistically by Céline. Conversely,



Kristeva, as Allon White explains, if he is "substantially anti-fascist in his formal comprehension" (1993, 87). This is to say that the artist responding to the crisis in meaning by subjectifying "triumphs" in signification whose polysemic excess is aggressively directed at symbolic order, is cognate, via anal sadism, with fascist phantasies of omnipotent totalitarianism achieved through destructive penetrations of bodies, ideologies, countries, and so on. Anality and homosexual transformation forming the dynamic nucleus of fascism is at the centre of artistic production, and it is so from the hermeneutical perspectives of both style and phantasy. In terms of writing style, the poet-subject's oral -- musical, rhythmical, fluid, etc. -- maternal representations are channelled through the (anal) conduit of "murderous" homosexual impulses in aggressive distortions of "homo-logic", as the writer semiotically assails linguistic identity organised under the Name of the Father. In terms of phantasy, the writer "reappropriate[s] the paternal function by playing the role of a son adopting a proper name" (KI, 230). An artist may be expected to concur with fascism in his rejection of traditional political authority (coextensive with the super-ego), and cathexis, via anal jouissance, of imaginary fatherless sons striving for power in a sadistic "revolution" registering (anal) masochism in identification with a homoeroticised leader. The fascist's unending destruction of the world, constituting a totality of the non-yet-born in a mapping-over of extant authority in sui generis myth, merges into the provisional production of the artist, who endlessly "attacks" meanings, and reconstitutes the self, by destroying established modes of identification and remapping the Symbolic.

Powers of Horror, Jacqueline Rose asserts, "could be seen as [Kristeva's] book about fascism" (1990, 143-4). And it is, of course, Kristeva's book about the return of the repressed in abject creative writing. In a 1976 interview anticipating the analysis of Céline in Powers, she echoes her contemporary, Theweleit, when seeing herself approaching fascist discourse from a theoretical "silence", and castigating Marxist-socialist rationalism which refused to contemplate the psychological implications of Nazism: "I'm not implying

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Céline's equally vehement denials that he wrote anti-Semitic material merge into accusations of literary plagiarism by Sartre, while Céline's campaign to detach himself from historical events comes to centre on a "modernist" account of his own novelistic style, which accordingly gets even more obtrusive and idiomatic in the 1950s: "[s]een in this light, Céline's post-war novels paradoxically illustrate the existentialist theory of literature in action. A commitment to style has become for Céline the most potent form of political commitment" (Watts 1998, p. 163) -- a commitment to revise the historical assessment of himself.

that we should exonerate Céline, but nor do I condone the self-righteous practice of those on the left that consists in believing that touching opprobrium will make their own hands dirty" (KI, 232). Céline, she emphasises, "is our contemporary" (KI, 233): he shows us the widespread isolation, irrationalism, aggressivity -- the psychosis -- characteristic of an age in which,

...symbolic legality is wiped out in favour of arbitrariness of an instinctual drive without meaning and communication; panicking at the loss of all reference, the subject goes through phantasies of omnipotence or identification with a totalitarian leader. (DL, 139)

The fascist's pre-oedipal fixation on power and death is endemic as a response to the post-metaphysical void, a potential threat to -- and a potential self-identification by -- every modern psyche, and, a fortiori, every modern writer. Céline the fascist and Céline the artist thus are compatible, and exemplary, within the deep-psychological model of a "[s]on permanently at war with father..." (DL, 138). His work is paradigmatic of the fact that "every writer experiences writing as a sort of ... eternal struggle with the symbolic function..." (KI, 230), a conflict projected in estrangement and provisional displacements of the paternal function. And it is in this context that we turn to Lawrence's leadership novels.

We have, specifically, a contextual matrix that I tried to assemble when reading Theweleit's psycho-historicism in combination with Kristeva's psycho-semiology: one subsumed by the themes of homosexuality, fascism and cultural estrangement, and elaborated through the key articulations of anal sado-masochism, misogynist paranoia, linguistic subversion, totalising identifications, and the radical phantasies of utopian alterity and an "empire of sons" under affiliative leadership. In the section of critical application which follows, I first elaborate this matrix within Aaron's Rod (1954 [1922]), whose narrative stages a flight from the devouring mother/nation, and the subsequent arrival of a foreigner in a strange land of reinvested homosexual identifications.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>All quotations from Aaron's Rod in the next section in the main text are referred in parentheses by page number only.

## LAWRENCE'S LEADERSHIP NOVELS

### 1. Aaron's Rod

#### Symbol

What is Aaron's rod? Most apparently it is a flute. It might initially be linked to the significance in The Trespasser of the male protagonist Siegmund's violin, which, like him, is dead and buried. The violin becomes the novel's central symbol in a "decadent" symbolist production (v. supra, Ch. 1). What, then, might Aaron's rod symbolise? At first sight, it seems a positive trope. As biblical typology it refers to the rod, or staff, of Moses's brother Aaron, which blossoms to signal its owner's rise to high priesthood (Numbers 17: 18). The rods of Moses and Aaron, in fact, are powerful, multi-purpose, supernatural tools (in Exodus and Numbers): they turn waterways to blood; they generate plagues of frogs, lice and locusts; they cause thunderstorms; they bring forth water from rocks; and Moses's rod parts the Red Sea and leads to the promised land. One might, then, register the rod's patriarchal power and aggressive paranoia (the plagues and other miracles are hostile acts against enemies). On the other hand, as a symbol of promise and new life, the brothers' rods (possibly the same one) re-emerge in the New Testament to herald the birth of Christ. Virginia Hyde observes the frequent typological use of this image by Lawrence, some time before and after the eponymous novel. The rod is "a special instance of Lawrence's symbolism of the tree of life, and he eventually equates it with Florence Cathedral, furthering the use of church sites in the major novels" (Hyde 1992, 119). Florence, in Aaron's Rod, moreover, also has a utopian function bound up with a transformation of erotic to latent homosexual desire.

Consider a brief exchange, typical of the section in the novel in which it appears, between Rawdon Lilly and Aaron Sisson, as Aaron plays the flute while recovering from illness:

"Aaron's rod is putting forth again," [Lilly] said, smiling.

"What?" said Aaron, looking up.

"I said Aaron's rod is putting forth again."

"What rod?"

"Your flute, for the moment." (102)

One can almost hear the affected lisp. Marguerite Beede Howe registers such moments of "flirtation" with homoeroticism as a narcissistic sublimation of the masculine self, which ultimately fails because the homosexual metaphor serves only to imitate woman: Lilly

cares for the sick Aaron like a mother for her new-born child (cf. Howe 1977, 91-2). Judith Ruderman, combining pre-oedipal theory with authorial biography, similarly sees Lilly tending Aaron like a mother, here as a function of the narrative's single-minded escape from the devouring mother (cf. 1984, Ch. 6). While both critics recognise the homosexuality of the imagery, they do not, however, recognise it as homosexual desire, and furthermore, not as a component in the narrative's "escape" from, and reinvestment of, erotic homosexuality, which runs parallel with a flight from (abjection of) the feminine. Ruderman's perspective, moreover, is flawed at a fundamental level. She sees Lawrence's central preoccupation with the Magna Mater in Aaron's Rod being displaced by one with the phallic father in The Plumed Serpent. The leadership trilogy, for Ruderman, is all about identifying with the father over-against the incestuous mother. But if, as she always assumes, Lawrence's narratives stage pre-oedipal fantasy, there cannot be an identification of (and identification with) a paternal phallus. The father's law is absent: archaically "not-yet", at best a pre-verbal intimation of the socius dependent on the mother's gaze: Kristeva's imaginary father, of course, elaborates this moment of unmediated intimacy (v. supra, Ch. 4).

Homosexual flirtation in Aaron's Rod, then, is an element in the text's "flirtation" with homosexuality, which, as the narrative proceeds, channels desire into a subversively deterritorialised identity field, centred on a leadership relation. Similarly, Lawrence's overarching "movement" in the three leadership novels is not to patriarchal power, but to homosexual phratry. And here we can ask again: what might Aaron's rod signify (symptomatised) in Lawrence's novel -- this time in terms of filiarchal staging and its associated fascist tendencies?

### **Ocnophilia**

We looked in the last chapter at D. W. Winnicott's ideas about psychic transition, and their influence on Kristeva's ideas about love's inception in the primal scene. It is interesting, then, to observe Klaus Theweleit deriving from Michael Balint's ideas about an "ocnophile object" (Theweleit 1989, 263), which is formed at around the same time as the infant's much-loved transitional object in separation from the mother. The ocnophile object, associated more with the anal than the oral stage, is clung to desperately when maternal "dual unity" gives way to the insecurity of abjection. If a child fails sufficiently to introject

and rehabilitate the breast in object-relations, then the subsequent adult is likely to retain some kind of ocnophile object: the outward and visible sign of a precociously insecure ego: a pre-oedipal penis rather than a socially cohering phallus. The first brother-leader to carry such an object, in fact, was Moses (*ibid.*, 264), argues Theweleit, who identifies as ocnophile phenomena the ubiquitous sticks and rods in the hands of German officers, not only in fascist novels, but also in biographical texts and photographic images; even Hitler was rarely seen in public without his riding whip.

Aaron Sisson's flute is crucial as his sole means of income after leaving home; but he often gets it out and plays (with) it during stressful periods, when he is alone. Then the familiar oceanic language appears, to signal that the "motherland" has been recovered: "The pure, mindless, exquisite motion and fluidity of the music delighted [Aaron] ... sheer bliss" (9). Kristeva observes of the foreigner, who has torn himself "away from family, language, and country to settle down elsewhere" (SO, 30), that he survives psychologically by "hold[ing] on to what he lacks, to absence, to some symbol or other" (SO, 5). If *Women in Love's* star balance addresses the regenerative field of the imaginary father, then Aaron's rod is its deep-logical counterpart in separation, a symbol of re/birth which crucially functions as an "anxiety penis" relieving borderline anxiety in inhibition. This accounts for the destruction of Aaron's flute near the end of the novel: nostalgia for maternal plenitude in masturbatory displacement is "held onto" during the narrative's radical psychic "surgery", transforming homosexual desire into a magnetic power relation. As Aaron travels from the English Midlands to London, then to Novara and Milan, eventually to rediscover Rawdon Lilly in Florence, an ocnophile symbol is repeatedly grasped, and only discarded when a filiative identification has been inscribed.

### **The Foreigner: A Passion for Indifference/A Longing for Affiliation**

Aaron in England has a "secret malady ... this strained unacknowledged opposition to his surroundings, a hard core of irrational, exhausting withholding of himself" (18). Kristeva, in *Strangers to Ourselves*, identifies a "secret wound, often unknown to himself, [which] drives the foreigner to wandering" (SO, 5). In the culturally estranged psyche, wounded narcissism (loss of a "home" identity) raises the spectre of the devouring mother and the vision of a flight in/to individuation: "the consummate name of such a freedom is solitude

... No one better than the foreigner knows the passion for solitude ... for indifference" (SO, 12). Having discovered isolation in alienation, however,

...[t]he paradox is that the foreigner wishes to be alone with partners, and yet none is willing to join him ... The only possible companions would be the members of an affiliation ... the foreigner longs for affiliation, the better to experience, through a refusal, its untouchability. "Experiencing hatred": that is the way the foreigner often expresses his life... (SO, 12-13)

Aaron's quest is paradoxical. Always dressed in black, and trailed by an "obstinate black dog" (18) (a colloquialism for sullen melancholy), he loathes social interaction. He is in opposition to everyone with a consistency that Rupert Birkin might only dream of. Anna Smith glosses Kristeva to observe that the abject foreigner's

...sense of space is so dislocated that he can no longer affirm either the security of a psychic interior or the comforts of a normatising, "transcendent" exterior (the father, the Law, God). There is no place that offers itself as home ... [T]he foreigner becomes an eccentric anti-humanist ... a rebel against all bonds and communities... (Smith 1996, 24)

Yet Aaron habitually seeks out the company of others: "he still wanted to give himself ... he wanted to let himself go; to feel rosy and loving and all that. But at the very thought, the black dog showed its teeth" (18). There is a permanent strand of paranoid aggressivity in Aaron's Rod, while the sociopathic foreigner-in-process is "hungry" (connoting oral phantasy) for an "elsewhere" on which he "sets his hopes" (SO, 29): a society where the autonomous True Self can somehow be socially integrated. This paradox is consonant with the quest to displace the father by an affiliative "home" in language which replicates the dislocated self in superior men.

The provisional "elsewhere" in Aaron's Rod (which will exist momentarily as Florence), then, is inextricable from homosexual aspiration. Aaron's perverse rejection of others is counterbalanced by his quest for perverse partners, perverts without the Law, other rogue males who refuse social identity. William Barr, in "Aaron's Rod as D. H. Lawrence's Picaresque Novel" (1992), compares Aaron's journey to Spanish, sixteenth-century tales of roguish pícaros, chancers who wander without a final destination, who mingle at every level of social class but are never assimilated. Both free and dislocated, pícaros -- and Aaron -- are, for Barr, definitively committed outsiders. Aaron's picaresque quality of cynical self-interest in a chaotic world, however, I would see overlaid by his quest for identity, which is propelled by an anxious sense of impotent disintegration.

Throughout the novel, Aaron encounters dissolute men, "a long roll-call of neurasthenic veterans", as Tony Pinkney observes, who appear as "an assortment of spiritual cripples and castrati" (1990, 117). These men evoke Theweleit's war veterans, prior to self-regeneration within the Freikorps. Whereas the German ex-soldiers are despondent following Prussian martial failure, Lawrence's novel identifies war with the total collapse of civilised behaviour. There is, nevertheless, an identical "syndrome": a collapse of faith in the grand narratives that socially cohere men. The male psyche is under intense threat in Aaron's Rod: men wander like ghosts, without purpose, as if male identity itself is shell-shocked. As the veteran Captain Herbertson says: "[n]othing vital is injured--and yet the life is broken in them. Nothing can be done--funny thing. Must be something in the brain" (111). Aaron is no rascally rogue: he is a kind of post-apocalyptic, shell-shocked male among many others, in search of a leader (Lilly) who will transform his sociopathic rejection in charismatic self-identification.

The impact on men of the War, meanwhile, seems inextricable from men's anxiety about the presence of women, and Aaron's quest for rebirth without female mediation is staged to escape both their domestic and sexualised type. Like any of the Freikorps soldiers, Aaron flees a terminally dull, "unspeakably familiar" (7), domesticity with a woman unnamed, known only as "wife" and "mother" throughout the first chapter. Both Theweleit (1987, passim) and Kristeva emphasise the loathing of the fascist writer for "prostitutes and nymphomaniacs ... a wild, obscene and threatening femininity" (PH, 167). In the early part of Aaron's journey the devouring mother looms large, as the "infernal good-will and love" (20) of Aaron's nurturing wife is displaced in a dangerous sexual challenge, the first in a series of such tests of Aaron's resolve.

### **Death by Hetero-Sex**

After spontaneously deserting his family, one of Aaron's early stops is the local pub, whose landlady has been his occasional, and seemingly voracious, sexual partner. She sits temptingly close: "the great fierce warmth of her presence enveloped him ... her fingers just touched his thigh" (17-18). But Aaron "float[s] like a corpse" (18) in the whisky intended by the landlady to facilitate sexual intercourse. His misery merges into absolute opposition. Each female attempt at seduction is a rite of passage that Aaron endures, like a

combination of Bunyanesque pilgrim and hero in classical mythology. The landlady suddenly transforms into,

...something hateful, something detestable and murderous ... maggoty with these secret lustful inclinations to destroy the man in a man ... Watching him ... [her] face became yellow with passion and rage. (20-1)

Having been denied sexual incorporation, the Magna Mater reveals herself in all her horror. But Aaron can walk away on "firm legs" (21), the whisky's power dispersed; and soon he is attracted, as he often is, by the promise of a "dark" (21) opening, a mysterious lane or road, an enigmatic matrix of images whose anal fixation will eventually be crystallised in dark male bodies and dark gods in The Plumed Serpent.

### **Sympathetic S.T.D.**

In London's Soho district, however, Aaron has slipped up: "I gave in, I gave in to her, else I should ha' been all right" (84). A free-spirited young woman, Josephine Ford, has seduced him. "It's my own fault ... If I'd kept myself back, my liver wouldn't have broken inside me, and I shouldn't have been sick" (84). An infection has appeared in the lumbar ganglionic "separatist" or "voluntary" centres, those "proud volitional centres of the lower body ... which maintain a human being integral and distinct..." (Phoenix, 639), and which are set against the "sympathetic" maternal connection, in Fantasia of the Unconscious and "Education of the People". Aaron's regenerative anal channel (via a healthy liver) is inhibited, as, at this point, is the transformation of maternal/internal processes in a discourse of male somatic integrity unfolding across the three leadership novels. In "Education of the People", Lawrence sees the primal mother and her child sympathetically engaged in "parasitism", coextensive with woman's love for man, which reduces to devouring sexual intercourse: "[b]reak the horrible circle of this lust" (ibid.). This rupture is the prime educational objective in anal punishment/stimulation of the democratic masses, which therefore starts early in life:

Seize babies away from their mothers ... Smack the whimpering child. Smack it sharp and fierce on its small buttocks ... till at last the powerful dynamic centres ... vibrate into life... (Phoenix, 639-40)

The positivity of the voluntary centres, whenever it appears in Lawrence's later work, centres on this image of violent separation, and the sympathetic/voluntary opposition emerges as the governing paradigm of heterosexual rejection and homosexual transformation in Aaron's Rod.



## Heterosexual Violence/Homosexual Healing

Jim Bricknell, a war veteran, is Josephine Ford's ex-boyfriend and a promiscuous ladies' man. Rawdon Lilly might have been reading "Education of the People" or Lawrence's pollyanalytical books, when he rudely castigates Jim:

...you should stiffen your backbone. It's your backbone that matters ... You shouldn't want to fling yourself all loose into a woman's lap. You should stand by yourself and learn to be by yourself ... slobbering yourself over a lot of little women ... makes a fool of you. Look at you, stumbling and staggering with no use in your legs. (75-6)

Bricknell's legs, weakened by sympathetic responses, are in contrast to the firmness of Aaron's legs after resisting the landlady's charms. Nevertheless, Jim has sufficient strength to wind the impertinent Lilly with a punch (77). Bricknell's commitment to heterosexual passion is restated in his commitment to Christian love, at which level aggressive mood-swings link the sympathetic orientation to the War and its legacy of frustrated ambivalence: "Christendom preaches love and wages war ... Jim is the image of the divided European psyche in which love alternates blindly with violence" (Vine 1999, xxii). Bricknell's punch, however, has the positive effect of triggering Lilly's separation from his obstinate, resistant wife, Tanny, which begins his transformation into a homosexual leader-brother.

Immediately after the punching incident we arrive at the Covent Garden encounter between Lilly and Aaron. Here, during Aaron's convalescence from his liver disorder, maternal nurture merges with homoeroticism and "lower centre" stimulation, as Lilly massages his patient:

"I'm going to rub you as mothers do their babies whose bowels don't work." ... Quickly he uncovered the blond lower body of his patient, and began to rub the abdomen with oil, using a slow, rhythmic, circulating motion ... He rubbed every speck of the man's lower body--the abdomen, the buttocks, the thighs and knees... (90-1)

As this section in the novel proceeds, Lilly is identified as a surrogate mother, housewife, and prostitute; the perspective is reversible:

"You talk to me like a woman, Aaron."  
"How do you talk to me, do you think?"  
"How do I?"

"Are the potatoes done?" (100)

Linda Ruth Williams sees such shifts in Lawrence's work (articulated at this point in the "gay banter" style), as elemental in his "sexual mobility, the sliding between identities and identifications, which is exposed at certain moments" (1993, 122). This mobility, as I have suggested, tends to be restricted in critical approaches to Aaron's Rod, which see Lilly and Aaron behaving like stereotypical women to represent men's castration and simultaneously to relocate with men female generative and nurturing functions. Such a construction fails to acknowledge obvious homosexual connotations, the flirtation between men which is the narrative's "flirtation" with the generative power of homosexuality.

Lilly teases Aaron with unacknowledged homosexual arousal, and he teases him with images of merged identity suggesting the potential of their "magnetic" relationship: "[s]ave for my job--which is to write lies--Aaron and I are two identical little men in one and the same little boat" (105). Just after this intimate moment, however, he tells Aaron he wants to get rid of him. Moments which "tease" sexual identity in a cycle of intimacy and betrayal, moreover, are subtended by Lilly's shifts between apparent authority and servility. He may be a skilful "housemaid" as he cooks meals, cleans the flat, and darns Aaron's socks, but he has an air of "silent assurance ... with which he seemed to domineer over his acquaintance" (100). Their time spent together, in fact, becomes a different kind of rite of passage, as Aaron tries to cope with Lilly's bewildering and frustrating twists and turns: "You're easily on, and easily off" (101). Tony Pinkney sees Aaron and Lilly as a "male pseudo-couple, bonded in its very truculence and friction ... that bleakest and most alienating of all modernist textual structures" (1990, 106, 121). Lawrence, for Pinkney, tries to "drag[] the pseudo-couple out of the airless, defeated universe of Beckettian modernism into the turmoil of contemporary extremism and crisis, out of ontology and back to history" (*ibid.*, 120). This attempt to accommodate an abstract synchronic trope within a realist diachronic narrative "wrecks" Aaron's Rod (and Kangaroo), which never develops a "viable politics" (*ibid.*, 120, 121). I, however, would see the ontological enigma of the pseudo-couple accommodated within the obscene strand of a narrative whose diachronic realism is subservient to an authentic psychosexual unfolding of rebirth. The "viable politics", in Aaron's Rod, then resides in Lawrence's fantasy of displacing (hetero)sexual chaos (to which post-/War "history" is displaced) through an identification with a charismatic leader.

A key moment of leader-synthesis occurs when Captain Herbertson visits the Soho flat, "to talk war to Lilly ... [a]s a man at night ... takes a taxi to find some woman, some prostitute..." (108). Herbertson batters at the door and "rattle[s] away" like a Bren gun, penetrating Lilly and Aaron with tales of fragmented living bodies, dead bodies that seem alive, and traumatised minds. The horrors of war, which, as we have seen, for Kristeva provide a "grammar" for the violence of the drives and boundary chaos in abjection, are being deployed at an essential transition point in the novel. Lilly initially responds to Herbertson's account with denial and dissociation:

"...they want to hypnotise me. And I won't be hypnotised. The war was a lie and is a lie and will go on being a lie until somebody busts it."  
[Aaron:] "It was a fact--you can't bust that. You can't bust the fact that it happened."  
"Yes, you can. It never happened. It never happened to me. No more than my dreams happen. My dreams don't happen: they only seem." (113)

"They" then are elaborated by Lilly:

Damn all leagues. Damn all masses and groups, anyhow. All I want is to get myself out of their horrible heap: to get out of the swarm. The swarm to me is nightmare and nullity--horrible helpless writhing in a dream. I want to get myself awake, out of it all--all that mass-consciousness... (114)

Aaron's shameful impotence and paranoid confusion in post-War England is given a sharp focus, as Lilly suddenly presents the crucial possibility of emerging from inner chaos by projecting chaos as "enemy" forces: the massed ranks of political, economic and martial powers. Aaron's dissociation is transformed by Lilly's grand speech into a logic of totalising aggressivity, centring on the epiphanic disclosure of a superior self marking a fixated "reunion" (in primal space) with a fraternal leader.

The Covent Garden section, then, is a staging post in the novel where a single isolated character is "doubled" and transformed into the beginnings of a phratry:

The two men had an almost uncanny understanding of one another--like brothers. They came from the same district, from the same class. Each might have been born into the other's circumstance. Like brothers, there was a profound hostility between them. But hostility is not antipathy. (100)

Hostility is not antipathy. In military training schools described in fascist texts, violent disciplinary practices "harden" men, but a uniform opposition to the enemy is everything, and the trainees are not ideologically antipathetic to each other. Hostile interactions

between trainer and trainee are diffused in the latter's identification with a superior self, which then extends into envy of the actively engaged soldier, which, in turn, generates a narrative of advancement to the cathartic battlefield, the supreme objective of an upwardly mobile fascist (cf. Theweleit 1989, 118 ff.). In Aaron's Rod, there is an artist-foreigner's version of such a narrative. A "homeless" wanderer is presented with the prospect of aggressive empowerment by a "trainer/leader/self", who then is displaced to become the central locus in a search for the "elsewhere", which, although ideologically opposed to battlefields, is an equivalent utopian space of homosocial dis-infection. Having "homosexualised" male alienation, and sown the seeds of its reinvestment in transgressive opposition, the narrative abruptly separates Lilly and Aaron: Lilly is despatched abroad, where he becomes an enigmatic Kurtz-like figure, regarded with wonder by dislocated Englishmen, while Aaron trails in his wake, a Marlowesque representative of "fundamental ordinaryness ... the commonness of the common man" (132). This Everyman, however, wants to obliterate humanity, while his quest to "[w]ake up and enter on the responsibility of a new self" is indistinguishable from his need to "get a new grip on his own bowels..." (146).

Aaron's journey across Europe, I have said, is characterised by encounters with "impotent" men, and also by tests of his resolve to suppress sexual desire in both its homosexual and heterosexual aspects. In Milan, for instance, Aaron meets by chance the compatriot travellers, Angus and Francis (183 ff.). The arch conversations between the "two weird young birds" (187) echo Lilly's teasing before the narrative shifted into a "latent-homosexual" leadership field and its quest travelogue. Francis is wildly enamoured of Aaron's rod:

... "perfectly divine!!!: I adore the flute above all things----" And [he] placed his hand on Angus's arm and rolled his eyes ... Francis was one of those men who, like women, can set up the sympathetic flow and make a fellow give himself away ... So handsome, so very, very impressive ... He made such a bella figura. It was just what the Italians loved. (186, 191, 194)

The confluence of homosexual desire and sympathetic love double-registers the "return" to Aaron of England, the "origin" of loathed homosexual and feminine desire. Despite compliments, and dining out, and invitations to hotel rooms, the ménage eventually breaks up in Florence. It has been a test of the voluntary will and a continuation of the narrative's

"flirtation" with homosexual desire sustaining the quest. Aaron, at this point, is getting close to Lilly and the utopian "elsewhere" space in which their reunion is staged.

### **Florence: Land of the Phratry, Home of the Bowels?**

Aaron at last reaches the promised land: "he stood and looked around him in real surprise, and real joy" (207). The Piazza della Signoria is a "perfect centre of the human world..." (208). The narrative's descriptions here of naked statues are usually associated with repressed homoeroticism; but they blend into something akin to the responses to size and power intended by the statuesque male body in fascist art:

...the David ... standing forward stripped and exposed ... enormous in keeping with the stark, grim, enormous palace ... And behind, the big, lumpy Bandinelli men ... with the water trickling down their flanks and along the inner side of their great thighs, they were real enough, representing the undaunted physical nature of the heavier Florentines. (207)

In the fascist/infantile mind, the symbol is undifferentiated from the culture which produces it, inseparable as a pure form of the "people's" spiritual essence.<sup>103</sup> Florence, Aaron deduces, is a "town of men, in spite of everything. The one manly quality, undying, acrid fearlessness ... [they] existed without apology and without justification" (209). Yet it is here that he slips up once again, in a sexual liaison with an American woman, the Marchesa del Torre: "He knew that they understood one another, he and she ... Outside-- they had got outside ... the horrible, stinking human castle of life. A bit of true, limpid freedom. Just a glimpse" (224). Immediately Aaron is set upon and robbed by a milling crowd of Italian soldiers (225). The sympathetic/heterosexual alliance seems to generate this scene, which derealises the pure machismo of the statues in the violence -- without apology and justification -- of real Italian men, while Aaron's filiative quest is ominously threatened by this paranoid vision of a chaotic and aggressive horde. He nevertheless

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<sup>103</sup>In a speech made in 1937 at the opening in Munich of the House of German Art (cited in Welch 1995, pp. 170-4), Hitler derides modern "primitive" art, by which he means "Impressionism, Futurism, Cubism, perhaps even Dadaism", with its "[m]isformed cripples and cretins, women who inspire only disgust, men who are more like wild beasts, children, who, were they alive, must be regarded as under God's curse" (*ibid.*, pp. 171, 173). Hitler advocates instead a "purified" German art which looks back to "eternal" classical forms of human physical perfection, and, at the same time, serves as "the expression of the essential character of the abiding people ... I shall see the standard for that art in the German people, in its character and life ... The new age of today is at work on a new human type. Men and women are to be healthier and stronger ... Never was humanity in its external appearance ... nearer to the ancient world than it is today..." (*ibid.*). This neo-classicist focus on the external human body in Nazi art, particularly the muscular male physique, substantially informs Theweleit's "body-ego" model of the fixated fascist psyche.

returns repeatedly to the Marchesa, his mind "infected" by lust: "the memory of the last time ... the naked desire was getting hold of him" (260). Each time he goes to her, there is death by sex: his "faculties being quenched or blasted" (255). Florence is not, after all, a "home" free of desire.

What saves Aaron is the destruction of his rod/flute/desire by an anarchist or socialist bomb. "Throw it in the river..." (275), Lilly orders.

Aaron had been through it all. He had started by thinking Lilly a peculiar little freak: gone on to think him a wonderful chap, and a bit pathetic: progressed, and found him generous but overbearing: then cruel and intolerant ... then terribly arrogant ... And all the time ... seeing through one. All the time, freak and outsider as he was, Lilly knew ... and his soul was against the whole world. (279-80)

The two narrative strands forming the (lower?) backbone of Aaron's Rod, argues John Worthen, are "the necessary submission of the woman to the man ... [and] the submission of the individual to the superior man" (1979, 131); but these strands are entwined around even more essential representations of estrangement (the freak), and a counter-investment in magnetic doubling. Aaron's awareness of Lilly's total knowledge of him captures the radical dynamic of unifying penetration by which, and recalling Theweleit words, "the leader makes 'Volk' of the mass ... implants his seed within it and prepares it to give birth to masculine organisations" (1989, 95). Aaron can now, indeed, throw away his ocnophile "anxiety penis" evoking the sublime mother, coextensive with woman's sex, since his bowels have been stimulated and seeded by a revelation of man's legitimate and necessary "power-urge" (288).<sup>104</sup>

Having traced the narrative's unfolding and firming up of the leadership nexus, we then, however, see this development undercut: "[a]nd whom shall I submit to?" (290) are Aaron's final words in the novel. "Being alienated from myself, as painful as that may be", says Kristeva, "provides me with that exquisite distance within which perverse pleasure begins..." (SO, 13). The writer's black dog melancholic moods, projected in narratives fascinated by dislocation, restrict the text's "healing" of identity to provisional moments of imaginary transference. Aaron, while always being magnetised in attraction (and not antipathetic) to Lilly, remains largely hostile to his mentor; meanwhile Lilly declares that

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<sup>104</sup>Lawrence sets out something of a manifesto for empowered individuality over-against relationship love, in his 1925 essay, "Blessed are the Powerful" (Lawrence 1988, pp. 321-8).

he, as a self-sufficient type, is not looking for disciples. Within Lawrence's (notional) three-volume leadership project, however, an initiation of sorts has taken place. Forbidden secrets have been disclosed about the transgressive potential of masculinity split from, and over-against, sexual desire and national identification. Specific brotherhoods of grouped-homosexuals, who reject the feminine while seeking to displace/replace the father's law, are elaborated in subsequent narratives.

## **2. Kangaroo**

Scott Brewster, in "Jumping Continents: Abjection, Kangaroo, and the Celtic Uncanny" (1999), has used Kristevan theory to map Lawrence's second leadership novel around the central character's national/cultural alienation. I want to acknowledge key elements in this mapping, and then to identify, in line with the themes pursued in this chapter, an aspect of the pre-oedipal imaginary which Brewster's essay elides.

Brewster traces back Kristeva's interweaving of psychic and national space to Freud's Uncanny (which Kristeva herself specifically addresses in Strangers to Ourselves [1991, 182 ff.]), to see in Lawrence's narrative unconscious desire for the maternal body coextensive with cultural identity and geo-topography. "Home" is both Cornwall's Celtic mysticism and Australia's vast (female) "Bush", which together represent aboriginal authenticity over-against England and Europe, but which also generate the excessive language of a liminal "stranger" caught between sublime nostalgia and uncanny angst. Brewster sees Kangaroo's Australia as a "new" imperialised country, whose modern democratic veneer veils an ancient, dark maternity, a primal scene of murder and blood sacrifice, a semiotic fringe haunting the white strangers who have imposed civilised (symbolic) order. The novel's protagonist, the Englishman Richard Somers, mourns from a position of exile a lost origin, whose unnameable "Thingness" (as a semiotic fringe) is also the condition of a narrative full of voids, contradictions and androgynous identifications. These, for Brewster, are crucially represented in the ambivalent relationship of Somers with the strange combination of maternal nurture and patriarchal leadership that is Ben Cooley, or "Kangaroo".

Brewster's analysis of Kangaroo hinges on his negotiation with Judith Ruderman, who, as we noted, sees Lawrence in flight from the devouring mother while reconstituting

forms of paternalist authority. The critic decides to "adapt Ruderman's schema" (1999, 220) by bringing in Kristeva's "Imaginary Father". I explored in the last chapter the imaginary father's matrix of love, maternity, transference and metaphoricity. Brewster somewhat briefly delineates the principle as a combination of "masculine and feminine, maternal and paternal characteristics", a metaphorical "identification with the mother's love" (*ibid.*, 219). Properly speaking, it is the mother's desire for an other that conditions the subject's empathy, or love, of which metaphor (we recall) is the linguistic correlative. Brewster, in this case, complicates the emotional positivity of the imaginary father's gestalt potential, set over-against dyadic paranoia, when he sees Kangaroo's androgyny as the centre of affective (as well as identificatory) ambivalence in the novel's "boomeranging" movements between attraction and repulsion. Furthermore, in following Ruderman, Brewster makes the same essential mistake as she does when conflating pre-oedipal and patriarchal identifications. The imaginary father evokes the Symbolic as a pre-linguistic, primary-narcissistic Otherness, whose attraction merges into the maternal gaze (away) that cannot (or does not-yet) constitute the subject under patriarchal law. To "address" the imaginary father is to write outside the domain of the super-ego: there is no perception of an actual father.

I am indebted, below, to Brewster's largely sensitive Kristevan reading of Kangaroo. Yet his distorting conception of a "patriarchal" imaginary father perhaps indicates the appropriateness of co-opting within a "pre-oedipal" analysis of Lawrence's masculinist tendencies the analytic field of the homosexual phratry, or primal horde. Characterising fascism in terms of counter-paternal filiative impulses matches history (the crisis in national/paternal leadership) with the Innenwelt of phantasy; in similarly characterising the poet's oedipal crisis, the Kristevan reader is less likely to founder on category error when determining an artist's orientation to the Symbolic father, which is precocious (not patriarchal) in its ceaseless opposition.

### **A Paranoid Son**

In an extended chapter in Kangaroo (1980 [1923]), "The Nightmare", we find essential contributions to any fascist construction of Lawrence:

They are canaille, carrion-eating, filthy-mouthed canaille, like dead-man-devouring jackals. I wish to God I could kill them, I wish I had the power to blight them, to



slay them with a blight, slay them in thousands and thousands. I wish to God I could kill them off, the masses of canaille. ... So ... the feeling of terror came over [Somers] ... the feeling of being marked out by society, marked out for annihilation... (Lawrence 1980, 277)

England is "They", a father collapsed into a devouring mother, complete with paranoid evocations of an infecting vagina dentata: "I shall watch them that they never set their unclean teeth in me, for a bite is blood-poisoning" (ibid.). In this primal topography, in the void following the cultural father's death, Lawrence's paranoia once again is expressed in phantasies of being bitten (by the absence/bad breast). Meanwhile, in the novel's imbricated "homosexual" vector, England has always-already invaded the protagonist's body in an anally fixated series of army medical inspections. Since such inspections were carried out on the biographical Lawrence, it is easy to suppose that the grand Lawrentian theory of voluntary centres and stiffened backbones, etc., which substantially begins in 1916 with Rupert Birkin's loins of darkness, radically responds to these wartime incidents of the penetrated, transgressed anus. However this may be, England's devouring/penetrative homosexuality in Kangaroo is countered by elaborations of the "dark" voluntary discourse along with the rise of a masculinist counter-cultural group. Although the discourse and the group, as we will see, are not associated in ways one might expect, both can be seen to emerge as products of Lawrence's continued flirtations with a language of homosexual desire.<sup>105</sup>

### Uncanny Silence and Innovation

Kristeva describes the sense of linguistic potential which may be experienced by an exile abroad:

Not speaking one's mother tongue. Living with resonances and reasoning that are cut off ... You improve your ability with another instrument ... You can become a virtuoso with this new device that moreover gives you a new body ... You have a feeling that the new language is a resurrection: new skin, new sex ... [You] reach--within that speech of others, imagined as being perfectly assimilated, some day-- who knows what ideal... (SO, 15)

A new language, coextensive with a new culture, seems to present an elsewhere space of potential where, in moving from old to new meanings, the (speaking) self can be reinvented. Yet, and expressing Kristeva's characteristic dialecticism, the foreigner's

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<sup>105</sup>All subsequent quotations from Kangaroo in this section of the main text are referred in parentheses by page number only.

intimations of linguistic resurrection are undercut by the shock of intertextual displacement, leading to partial silence, an impasse of speech. Homi Bhabha speaks of the colonial self's alienation in a subaltern other which disturbs the representational effectiveness of the "home" discourse. Bhabha sees the Englishman abroad experiencing an "uncertain colonial silence that mocks the social performance of language..." (1994, 124). Kristeva similarly addresses the notional foreigner: "between two languages, your realm is silence. By dint of saying things in various ways ... just as approximate, one ends up no longer saying them" (SO, 15). Bhabha's colonially appropriative subject is linguistically destabilised somewhere "between" universal meanings and the non-sense of differentiation. Kristeva's always-already alienated foreigner (a stranger to himself), however much in abjection of his own nationality, must endure an estranging dissolution of his home language/identity in uncanny approximations. He may end up rejecting speech altogether; at the same time, the linguistic encounter with the other offers an "extravagant ease to innovate" (SO, 32), to play with new meanings, to rebirth within this new "skin".

Richard Somers, a "foreign-looking little stranger" (11) newly arrived in Sidney, immediately has trouble with the strangeness of the English language. He stares at the name of the house which he and his wife are to rent:

"Forestin," he said, reading the flourishing T as an F. "What language do you imagine that is?"

"It's T, not F," said Harriet.

"Torestin," he said, pronouncing it like Russian. "Must be a native word."

"No," said Harriet. "It means To rest in." She didn't even laugh at him. He became painfully silent. (15-16)

After a few such "approximations", Somers has "a rabid desire not to see anything and not to speak one single word to any single body -- except Harriet, whom he snapped at hard enough" (24). On the other hand, he becomes increasingly interested in the potential of two ubiquitous Australian words.

### **Mates and Diggers**

"Mate" is initially proffered as a casual term of masculine affection by Somers' new friendly neighbour, Jack Callcott. As Jack goes on to groom Somers for membership of a mysterious brotherhood (much as Birkin groomed Ursula for the "balance"), "mates" is imaginatively linked to another local term of affection. The "diggers", in Kangaroo,

approximate to the Freikorps as a group of ex-soldiers responding to a crisis of national identity, while their sense of revolutionary purpose contrasts developmentally with the "pre-Freikorps" castrati scattered across Europe in Aaron's Rod. Theweleit's fascist soldier, we recall, specifies rejection of his cultural "paternity" when professing total ignorance of multi-party politics. Jack proudly asserts: "I really don't care about politics. Politics is no more than your country's housekeeping ... I'd rather have no country than be gulped in politics..." (71-2). Digger men, he informs Somers, completely dissociate themselves from a democratic state ruined by self-regulatory failure. Trained by his country to fight, Callcott is marshalling against his country's degeneracy: "[w]hen you've been through the army, you know that what you depend on is a general, and on discipline, and on obedience. And nothing else is the slightest bit of good" (101). The diggers exist in clandestine militarised clubs, a horde of disaffected Australian "sons" preparing to overthrow the "fermenting rotten" (101) government. Yet their own identity is indistinct: they stand for nothing precise that Somers can see, apart from rancour and matiness: "there he was with Jack's arm around him. Jack would want him to be his 'mate'. Could he? ... Could he ever be mate to any man?" (104).

As the presence of a digger "general" is disclosed by Jack, "mate" is further reinvested with covert homosexual connotations, while desire is acknowledged in heterosexual terms and repudiated. The following speech encapsulates these shifts in meaning.

In a job like this ... a man wants a mate -- yes, a mate -- that he can say anything to, and be absolutely himself with ... Kangaroo could never have a mate. He's as odd as any phoenix bird I've ever heard tell of. You couldn't mate him to anything in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. No, there's no female kangaroo of his species. (117)

Kangaroo is the guarantor of matey bonds, while somehow transcending matiness -- as well as women -- himself. He is both "one of us", and sui generis, a unique species-in-himself, an apparently godless and motherless messiah. Cooley emerges from the desiring miasma of mating humanity, and generates a renewal of "mate" in charismatic filiation. This semantically uncanny word crucially functions to transgress heterosexuality and transform homosexuality in an elaboration of the grouped-homosexual horde-ego. As the novel's flirtation with homosexuality proceeds, Jack Callcott seems to be proposing

marriage: "Somers was tempted to give Jack his hand there and then"; but diffidence again prevails: "I'm not sure that I'm a mating man, either" (118).

Somers' wish to join his lot with this aspirational dominion of sons is countered by the exile's/stranger's perverse passion for solitude: as Kristeva says, "the foreigner excludes before being excluded..." (SO, 24). Like Aaron Sisson, Somers longs for meaningful relationships, but refuses concrete opportunities and experiences exquisite (anal) retention, a not-yet-fully-born vision of his potential:

...he wanted some living fellowship with other men; as it was he was just isolated. Maybe a living fellowship! -- but not affection, not love, not comradeship. Not mates and equality and mingling. Not blood-brotherhood. None of that. What else? He didn't know ... Perhaps the thing that the dark races know ... the mystery of lordship. The mystery of innate, natural, sacred priority. The other mystic relationship between men, which democracy and equality try to deny and obliterate... (120)

While the narrative here looks ahead to the primitivist cultural appropriations in The Plumed Serpent, Somers hovers at a borderline between acceptance and rejection of the diggers, effectively between the solipsism of a dislocated and embittered foreigner, and the affiliated foreignness of a grouped-homosexual movement. Can direct acquaintance with Ben Cooley, Kangaroo himself, generate sufficient "magnetic" force to convince Somers to, as Jack puts it, "come over..." (118)?

### **Kangaroo**

One of the elements in Kangaroo that might be seen to ameliorate allegations of Lawrence's authoritarianism is Ben Cooley's Jewishness. While the novel contains some of the most explicit racist moments in Lawrence's work -- "Japan the same. And China, in part, the same. The niggers the same. The real sense of liberty only goes with white blood" (102) -- Cooley, it seems to Somers, has

...surely ... [t]he very best that is in the Jewish blood: a faculty for pure disinterestedness, and warm, physically warm love, that seems to make the corpuscles of the blood glow ... And he was almost purely kind, essential kindness, embodied in an ancient, unscrupulous shrewdness ... An extraordinary man. (123-4)

Kangaroo's love, however, as one expects in a Lawrence novel, has a negative charge, one which I will negotiate in due course. Cooley is, in any case, both kindly and unscrupulous;

he can smile "like a flower" (123), and he can turn "really ugly" (127); if you submit to the manly embrace of the diggers, he loves you; if you do not, "[h]e had only to turn on all the levers and forces of his clever, almost fiendishly subtle will, and he could triumph. And he knew it" (124). This janus-faced presentation can be elaborated by turning to the account of anti-Semitism in Powers of Horror, where Kristeva describes the multi-layered complex which forms the phantasised "Jew".

### Jewish Excess

During her analysis of Céline, Kristeva, like Theweleit, observes the generic fascist's troping of libidinal excess in the "Jew", who is the locus of manic ideas about contagion spread by sexual and financial lust (& v. Theweleit 1989, 7 ff.). Kristeva, moreover, argues that Old Testament patriarchy feeds into Céline's paranoid vision of Jewish control embodied in a French Masonic Republic (v. PH, 176). The Jew, as well as representing an excessive femininity, merges into the paternal field of the actual French democratic state to become a paradigmatic focus for impulses to destroy the father's authority. The oppositional "power" of the Jew perceived by the fascist therefore is immense; though it

...does not arouse respect as does paternal authority. Edged with fear, to the contrary, it unleashes the excitement brought on by sibling rivalry; the Aryan who engages in it is then swept into the fire of denied homosexual passion. (PH, 182)

There is, then, a third level in the fascist's overdetermined response to the Jew: sibling rivalry, in virtue of the Jew's access to a father (God) "lost" by the abject fascist. The fascist is "swept" into homosexual submission: a "frightened desire for the inheriting brother" (PH, 185). Céline imagines himself "cornholed" by the "kikes" (PH, 184), and so on. The Zionist drifts in the fascist imagination from the contagious feminine, to oppressive Law, to an envied, and thence libidinally cathected, sibling.

Within the "incomprehensible jouissance" (PH, 183) of an "impossible" cycle of displacements, the Jew emerges in fascist phantasy as,

...the feminine exalted to the point of mastery, the impaired master, the ambivalent, the border where exact limits between same and other, subject and object, and even beyond these, between inside and outside, and [sic "are"] disappearing--hence an Object of fear and fascination. Abjection itself. (PH, 185)

Theweleit explains the fascist's fascination with homosexuality as an escape from the father's heterosexual codification through investments in a transgressive discourse, while

the Jew is subsumed with negative phantasies about sexually active homosexuals, women and Bolsheviks. Kristeva, while working in the same pre-oedipal field of psychotic phantasy (the devouring mother, the horde, homosexuality), emphasises a combination of identificatory paradox and gestalt phantasy in the primal scene, and argues that the Jew in anti-Semitic writing is "an emanation of the Everything Everywhere" (PH, 182), a totality of (biblical) Law, filiation and infection by desire.<sup>106</sup> In Lawrence's novel, Kangaroo seems to offer Somers a homosocial plenitude, but this master's "fascinating" power is "impaired" by paranoid uncertainty about his authority and gender, which recapitulates the foreigner's crisis of identity. Ben Cooley ultimately is not presiding Führer-like over a series of homosexual reinvestments in male bonding and regeneration. In fact, as we will see, his Jewishness is conflated with "sympathetic" tropes, in a process whereby the initial magnetising status is subverted, and his voluntary regenerative potential displaced to Somers himself.

### **The Magnetising Speech**

During their first meeting, Cooley informs Somers that he wants to turn Australia into a "kind of a Church, with the profound reverence for life, for life's deepest urges, as the motive power" (125). Somers agrees, in principle. Cooley emphasises individualism in this talk of redemptive motive power; "I believe that too" (125), says Somers, who seems to be hearing what he has always known but never rationalised. Klaus Theweleit argues that speeches by fascist leaders function to present a double of oneself who is privileged to say what "I" alone could not articulate (1989, 120). The fascist's formal speech objectifies my alienation, "my" loss of (national) identity, and shows "me" spontaneously rebirthed and transcendent. The communication between self and higher-self is a revelation, an access to emotions formerly dammed up in shame and depression, a discharge catalysed by fusion-doubling with a prophet of forbidden identifications beyond ideology, politics and law: "I offer no creed. I offer myself" (126), says Kangaroo. Moreover, like Lilly with Aaron, Kangaroo crystallises Somers' abject aggressivity in a cathartic splitting of the embattled self and its hated "enemy", here troped as the "life principle" and its opposite,

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<sup>106</sup>Kristeva places greater emphasis than Theweleit on the phantasmatic "Jew", first, because her analysis of Céline is directly related to the earlier analysis of Jewish scripture in *Powers of Horror*, and, secondly, because Theweleit primarily focuses on *Freikorps* texts, in which the main enemy is the Bolshevik, while Céline writes as an adherent of the intensely anti-Semitic German National Socialist Party in the 1930s and 1940s.

...the principle of resistance ... The life opposers. The life-resisters. The life enemies. But we will see who wins. We will see. In the name of life, and the love of life, a man is almost invincible. I have found it so. (127)

Here is a Brother-self who answers a "massive need for identity, a group, a project, meaning" (PH, 136). Kangaroo, a foreigner in his own country, offers the dislocated Somers a "delirium that literally prevents one from going mad" (PH, 137), a field of oppositionality naming the self and the enemy mass. The democratic "life-resisters" can be a delirious target for the otherwise unheimlich aggressivity of Somers, while Kangaroo himself, to the thrilled listener, seems a conduit for supernatural charisma: "Why, the man is like a god. I love him" (128). The relationship of the two men even seems pre-destined: "[d]o you know ... that I loved you long before I met you?" (152), says Kangaroo. There is a mutual intensity: Kangaroo desperately wants Somers to join him in the revolutionary cause, while Somers keeps "wanting to be convinced" (147). He comes closest to being convinced when Kangaroo's language turns from man-woman love to man-man love, and when an "unnatural" adversary is identified. Then, "[a] sort of magnetic effusion seemed to come out of Kangaroo's body" (152). Kangaroo might, at times, be paraphrasing "Study of Thomas Hardy":

"This is the lesson for us. Man has loved the beloved for the sake of love, so far, but rarely, rarely has he consciously known that he could only love her for her own, separate, strange self ... We have made a fatal mistake. We have got to know so much about things ... Only two things we can know of [a man] ...: if he is true to the flame of life and love which is inside his heart, or if he is false to it. If he is wilfully false ... then he is my enemy, as well as his own." ... Somers listened ... "Yes," he said, "I believe that it is all true." (150)

But in this magnetising speech is one key word which will prevent the leadership bond developing.

### **Wrong Speech/Wrong Body**

It is already clear in the second meeting between Somers and Cooley that universal filiation and sui generis birth through this "womanless ... son of man" (135) is problematic: "'I love them,' he [Kangaroo] shouted ... I love them. I love you, you woman born of man, I do, and I defy you to prevent me" (136). Kangaroo (here addressing Somers' wife) loves woman after all; in fact he loves everyone. The fires of his revolution are fires of love to kindle the human soul. "Somers .. was filled with fury. As for loving mankind, or having a fire of love in his heart, it was all rot. He felt almost fiercely cold" (139). Cooley

repeatedly betrays Somers by shifting the discourse of filiative plenitude into one of sympathetic, radically maternal, appropriation, which has a penetrative effect also recalling the shameful trauma of the Father's (England's) anal invasion. The negative jouissance of Kangaroo crystallises in the stereotype: "[y]ou're too much like Abraham's bosom. One would feel nowhere" (133), says Harriet Somers; "to my nose ... I am a Jew..." (139), Cooley acknowledges. Richard Somers links Kangaroo to paternalist oppression in the Old Testament, while Cooley's long features, stooped posture, clumsy movements and "clownishness", produce in Somers "a vicious kind of hate..." (146). Maternal imagery, meanwhile, clusters around Kangaroo, centred on the motif of his "pouch to carry young Australia in" (134), while the impaired master's excess is further registered through his identification with the Bush. Cooley's "Jewish" face is a kangaroo-like emblem for the diggers' new, aboriginally pristine Australia; but Somers' fear and loathing reaches new heights as the nurturing pouch dissolves in nightmarish phantasy: a kangaroo's entrails are torn out by a wild cat (130); white ants emerge from the Bush and devour living puppies (137). Cooley declares that he, like the ants, swarms to "collect" the fires of human love: "I'm as cold as they are ... And as cunning, and quite as vicious" (137).

As Kangaroo's charisma is dispelled in ambivalence and paranoid fantasy, there emerges an "anal" discourse of renewal and mastery. Somers, it is, who defiantly tells Cooley of the dark God, who "enters us from below ... a great God on the threshold of the lower self. My lower self" (151). Speaking "gently and dispassionately" (153), Somers here himself becomes the divine super-self, opening up in the narrative a thrilling forbidden space where, "in the sacred dark men meet and touch, and it is a great communion..." (153). The narrative in Kangaroo, in fact, can be understood as a battle between two super-brothers to determine who has the authentic Über-discourse.

### Supermen

Klaus Theweleit's soldier-male, as we have seen, is precociously uncertain about his ego boundaries, and he tropes excessive libido when aggressively rejecting the world en masse in the name of "orphaned brothers" in an oppositional horde. Theweleit, moreover, argues that the fascist brother has a variant ego-maintenance strategy, another layer of fantasy whereby the enemy during the martial encounter becomes a respected double,



...the brother in the soldier's "likeness" -- the man of equal status with whom he does battle. The question over which the "brothers" do battle is that of who is to succeed the father as master of the [*sic*] Mother Earth. (Theweleit 1989, 279)

The fantasy is effectively one of two super-heroes in a titanic struggle to determine who will replace the father and kill desire. It is a kind of Marvel Comic-books scenario -- Theweleit often uses evocative illustrations from Marvel comics -- in which the villain is a flawed version of the self. The X-men title, with its running theme of good and bad mutants (sui generis, genetically spontaneous brothers), ostracised by culture and at war with each other, might offer a paradigm, while Theweleit's ideas here are consonant with Kristeva's ideas about the transformation of anti-Semitic *jouissance* into the hallucination of an impaired master, who is also my powerful brother, against whom "I" must test myself. Comic-book battles are a series of highly stylised poses by muscular male bodies, in which motion, fluidity and desire are displaced by verbal sparring (super-heroes talk as they fight) and impacts of bodies. The tableaux are invested with absolute significance: the future of the world depends on whose identity emerges intact from explosive fusions of boundary symbols (on the heroes' costumes) "holding together" the body. Theweleit calls this Doppelgänger effect in the fascist psyche, "self-coupling", the nearest the soldier comes to experiencing loving empathy, a coupling with an other who resembles the super/Über-self in a supreme contest of "unbending wills" (1989, 276). Somers and Kangaroo, then, can be seen self-coupling, in a stylised series of verbal clashes, a "Battle of tongues" (140), to determine whose body-ego mapping, sympathetic or voluntary, will be the "sacred" template for mankind. An Olympian contest takes place "above" the shifting, uncertain identifications, one which polarises the somatic/tropical fields of love and the dark gods, front and back, phallus and anus, etc. This narrative becomes one of eventual triumph over "the exhaust of love, and the fretfulness of desire" (154), through an inversion of Kangaroo's own division of the world into life-lovers and love-resisters. Somers' defiant refusal of love is what gradually saps Cooley of his magnetic effusion: "it seemed as if the glow and vibration left Kangaroo's body ... Somers went, leaving the other man sunk in a great heap in his chair, as if defeated" (153).

### **Always Un-homed**

Meanwhile, Somers is engaged in a parallel conflict with his wife: "he stuck to his guns. She was to submit to the mystic man and male in him, with reverence, and even a little awe [for] ... the lordship of the forward-seeking male..." (194). She, however, is resistant:

Him, a lord and master! Why, he was not really lord of his own bread and butter; next year they might both be starving ... If he had been naturally a master of men, general of an army, or manager of some great steel-works, with thousands of men under him--then, yes, she could have acknowledged the master ... Whereas, as it was, he was the most forlorn and isolated creature in the world, without even a dog to his command. (195)

Like all of Lawrence's heroes, Somers fights to retain his manhood against a devouring woman, though what Harriet threatens, ironically, is the doomed relationship with Cooley: "They might be man and wife" (316). Is Kangaroo a father, a mother, a wife, a brother-leader or an enemy brother? Beneath the Olympian contest of discourses is his pervasive identificatory jouissance, often registered in paranoid visions of the unsublimated pre-object,

...a close-eyed horrible thing ... Yes, a thing, not a whole man. A great Thing, a horror ... and his heart melted in horror lest the Thing Kangaroo should suddenly lurch forward and touch him. (234)

Cooley's excess generates a pre-objectal Thingness, coextensive with Somers'/Lawrence's projection of fragmented identity: a moment of fixation (rather than fixed identification) in abject fear and revulsion.

Kangaroo eventually is wounded in the stomach during a riot begun by the diggers at a Socialists' convention, and his "pouch" is ruined: "[m]y sewers leak" (355). Scott Brewster's Kristevan approach sees the moribund Cooley in terms of Lawrence's abject phantasies of body fluids and corpses (Brewster 1999, 227; *v.* PH, 3). The uncontrollable fluids, moreover, within the frame of the super-hero struggle, represent a collapse of the opponent's boundaries, of Love's body armour, of the exteriority "holding together" the sympathetic paradigm. At one level, Kangaroo's unresolved identity is a Thing signalling the narrative's "failure" to integrate uncanny experience through the paternal function. At the level of self-coupling, by contrast, there is a triumph over abjection, as the investment in leadership is unsettled and eventually displaced by the "sibling rivalry", which gives the satisfaction of penetrating and destroying the body (of discourse) of another son (always bound up with the father's Law and the incestuous mother's desire). Somers is presented extradiegetically as a foreigner "roaming the face of the earth trying to soothe himself" (290), while in Australia he searches for authentic communal identity hypostasised in a leader who reduplicates the questor's dislocation. The narrative at the same time responds

to its own excessive signification by splitting, and aggressively cathecting an impaired master, and an impaired master-word, "love", the enemy of the anal master-term, "dark gods". The "as-if" fascist novel, then, articulates this essential movement: the fixated imaginary constructs grouped-homosexual identity in counter-paternal transgression, though the filiative process is disrupted by an entanglement of leader-magnetism in uncanny conflationary excess, which then is crystallised as a Semitic locus of paranoia.

In a wider frame, the novel's twin-track catharsis in filiation and enemy destruction takes its place as one Lawrentian narrative among many which construct identity within the shifting, not-yet space of primal phantasy and the ideal ego. Lawrence the "fascist" is, as always, a provisional narrator who

...lacks the Law that belongs to a prophetic stance; the abjection that he stages, contrary to that of the prophets, will not be relieved, not through any Name; it will merely be inscribed in enchantment ... here and now, in the text. (PH, 186)

The voluntary field of anal mastery in Kangaroo is linked to Somers, and thus the potential of the dark gods is withheld from the narrative's destructive process, and exquisitely (anally) "retained". The final Naming of the metaphysical self is a potential event conceived within the semiotic enchantment of a text "in ... competition with biblical abominations and even more so with prophetic discourse" (PH, 186; Kristeva's italics). Lawrence, always the apocalyptic writer of *Becoming*, is here a prophet of filiarchal congress, whose heterogeneous construction of the Jew is partly informed by a subversion of the patristic, and irresolute mimicry of the logic of holy scripture. Kangaroo, in this respect, produces -- and subverts -- its "new-sacred" narrative of rebirth from abject isolation, by showing a potent symbol of the biblical father as both false and devoid, an Everything which amounts to nothing (an unbordered Thing), and (in a logic of separation) abominating/defeating the feminine/enemy trope. The re-naming of the murdered God-father in metaphysical usurpation by the horde is then deferred by the writer of not-yet narratives -- "perhaps" -- until the next novel.

In conclusion here, Kangaroo, the sui generis leader, will not give birth to a new Australia (Elsewhere). Somers does not learn to commune with mates, while his leader speaks of dark gods entering, until a climactic moment of social revolution transforms Australia into a land of latently affiliated men. Before we move on, therefore, it is worth

re-emphasising a crucial point in this thesis: recognition of Lawrence's abject indeterminacy in no way should be taken to militate against recognition of his fascist or authoritarian tendencies, which are a product of the same crisis of identity/location that generates the indeterminacy. In Aaron's Rod, the riotous explosion which destroyed Aaron's flute seemed to prepare the way for a new narrative, one that would end estrangement by elaborating male leadership in the "horde imaginary". This presentiment may often seem valid during a reading of Kangaroo, but, as we saw, there is a radical collapse and conversion of Ben Cooley's function in the narrative. By the time we come to the novel's own explosive moment towards the end, however, we might regard it as a signal that Lawrence is ready to produce a genuine leadership narrative and an unambiguous "voluntary" power discourse. Is it possible that Kangaroo, after all, is in some sense transitional, and that, despite the customary irresoluteness of Lawrence's writing, The Plumed Serpent is the "dark gods" novel, Lawrence's "successful" homosexual power fantasy? This suggestion has some merit, as we will see.

### **3. The Plumed Serpent**

If there is a novel in which Lawrence creates a fictional culture analogous to the Teutonic Volk, then it must be The Plumed Serpent (1987 [1926]). This is to say that Lawrence adapts the archaic cultural heritage of Mexico to produce a kind of "foreigner's" equivalent of the combination of nostalgic nationalism and apocalyptic renewal identified by Germans in relation to their own cultural heritage, complete with a mystical relationship between a charismatic leader and his people. Before looking closely at the novel, I want to think about why Mexican cultural anthropology in particular might have seemed to Lawrence a rich imaginary field for a leadership novel "proper", and to broaden the context in order to discuss his archaism as a "primitivist" phenomenon. This discussion, moreover, will eventually enable us to explain why a woman character is so prominent in Lawrence's most elaborate masculinist narrative.

#### **Mexican Hordes**

Douglas Veitch, in Lawrence, Greene and Lowry: The Fictional Landscape of Mexico (1978), discusses the fascination for Mexican cultural and aesthetic traditions expressed by some inter-war English writers disillusioned with European values. Things, argues Veitch, seemed to be clearer in Mexico to minds struggling with loss of faith in cultural identity;

clearer in the paradoxical sense that Mexican history was largely an account of schisms, fractures, violence and revolution, making it a very good place to clarify one's own concerns about destabilised European identity, and, as George Woodstock glosses, to "raise them to the level of apocalypse" (in Veitch 1978, xiii). Indeed, when The Plumed Serpent was written (1923-5), a particular phase in Mexico's revolutionary irruptions had been going on since 1910. The country's social chaos could, in Lawrence's epoch, be characterised in terms of cycles of disintegration and re-integration whereby cultural identifications never synthesise in a stable set of principles. Mexican history presented a shifting mozaic of authority, giving rise only to "personal or regional interpretation[s] of law and government..." (Veitch 1978, 8). This was a land of no fixed identity, in which feuding armies are led into battle by a series of charismatic generals, latterly opposing a corrupt and unrepresentative government.<sup>107</sup>

The Mexican psycho-topography of roving hordes of "brothers", each group magnetised by a leader claiming to represent an indigenous people, and opposing the inauthenticity of a betraying/weak father might, then, be taken as the initial "event" in Lawrence's literary appropriation of the country. Nevertheless, it is clear in The Plumed Serpent that contemporary Mexico is a bad place. It is an uncanny space where the overshadowing presence of America's messy, ill-formed democracy somehow merges with the Mexicans' (non-)culture of violence, in an infection by, as a Mexican character puts it, "the two great diseases in the world today, Bolshevism and Americanism..." (Lawrence 1987, 44). Beneath this unsettled surface, however, is the authenticity of Aztec culture, residual in the Mexican Hopi Indian. Don Ramón Carrasco, the novel's leader figure, is "pure Indian", while his comrade, Cipriano Viedma, is "almost pure Spaniard" (64); yet they were educated, respectively, at Columbia and Oxford Universities. Such Western infection is the prime target of Ramón's new movement, which centres on a revival of the religion of Quezalcoatl. We observe an acute point of distinction when noting that, although the aboriginal Bush in Kangaroo similarly underlies and undermines the infection of "democratic" degeneracy, Australia, as far as Lawrence is concerned, lacks the intertextual potential conferred by a much greater awareness of Mexico's history and

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<sup>107</sup>A constitutional revolutionary government in Mexico was set up in 1917. The iconic bandit general, Emiliano Zapata, was killed by government militia in 1919, and another, Pancho Villa, was assassinated in July 1923, just after the end of Lawrence's first stay in Mexico.

mythology.<sup>108</sup> The "failure" of Kangaroo, then, in a context of Lawrence's three-volume project, is due to his embodiment of an Australian landscape insufficiently "populated" by historical discourse to generate a construction of quasi-völkisch leadership; Cooley, as the prime locus of primordial jouissance, becomes an infection trope. There is no clear narrative of national identity, beyond one of dislocation from pommie England and an indefinite exposition of an archaic spirit of place. Neil Roberts states simply that,

...Lawrence evidently could not imagine an Australian aboriginal Don Cipriano, or a white Australian equivalent of Don Ramón, who identifies himself with the native traditions of his country, or a politicised movement, based on an aboriginal religion, which might have engaged his hero... (1996, 134)

The Plumed Serpent, by contrast, however "foreign" it might be, must at some point be seen as a creative revival of the specific modes and patterns of an ancient indigenous culture. So is Lawrence a modernist primitivist?

### Primitivism

John McGovern offers a useful definition:

Primitivists suppose that primitive man was or is superior to modern man. The primitive mode of being, they claim, shows a unity of consciousness and inclination that escapes the modern fragmented self. Immersed in Nature, the primitive acts with spontaneous purpose. (1998, 167)

The Romantic movement's typical reconciliation of human consciousness and Natural purpose was directed at achieving a state of unity higher than either element. Primitivists, by contrast, aspire to no more than the wholeness and unity they see as inherent within primitive cultures, a social condition which contrasts with, and relieves, alienated modern man. Primitivism is a tendency in post-Romantic thought which embeds,

...[an] ontological doctrine of primal unity ... in a historical or, rather, pseudo-historical, context ... What motivates that tendency is a desire that there should be reconciliation of self and world on the plane of empirical existence. (*ibid.*, 169-70).

Primitivism is not fascism; it is a nostalgic fantasy about uncorrupted humanity. Similarly, völkisch nationalism, in itself, is not fascism: as Benedict Anderson says, "nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations,

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<sup>108</sup>A list of works on Mexican history known to have been read by Lawrence appears in the Introduction to the edition of The Plumed Serpent used here (Lawrence 1987, p. xxv, n. 49). See also *ibid.*, p. xxxii, n. 89, for a list of works that are either known or assumed to have informed Lawrence about Mexico's religious and mythological background.

transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history" (1983, 136). Fascist discourse combines cultural nostalgia and contemporary nationalism with corruption tropes. But primitivist writing, in this case, does not exclude fantasies of totalitarian oppression by the phylogenetic inheritors of an homogenous race destined to eradicate infection. And The Plumed Serpent, as I will try in essence to show, is a primitivist narrative whose nostalgic fantasy of brutal cultural reconstruction correlates to fascist appropriations of völkisch ideology, which are doing the same kind of pseudo-anthropological and pseudo-historical construction of an empirical nation's origins, enemies, and destiny.

Aside from any specific fascist correlation, and in a general context of primitivism, Lawrence's Mexican novel is representative of a strand in Western writing tending to render iconic the archaic cultural other. Robert Berkhofer's The White Man's Indian (1978) describes how perhaps as many as two thousand Indian cultures came to be seen by Europeans as one nation, simultaneously underdeveloped, "savage", and Romantically ideal, the "noble savage". Wayne Templeton (1996) moves from Berkhofer via Edward Said's Orientalism (1978), and ideas about the untranslatable "reality" of other cultures, to identify Lawrence's anxious and reverential responses to "Indian" (actually Apache, Navaho and Hopi) ceremonies as a typically ignorant articulation of Western cultural romanticisation (1996, 19).<sup>109</sup> Margaret Storch observes that Lawrence's fascination with the "true primitive",

...long antedates his period in the Americas. A key motif in Women in Love ... is the West African figurine whose blind sensuality is regarded by Birkin with loathing ... this female figure stands for qualities that Lawrence later came to accept unequivocally: dark unconscious knowledge and pure carnality. (1996, 49)

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<sup>109</sup>The field of Lawrentian criticism is replete with writers complicit with Lawrence's modes of idiolectual transcendentalism, writers (some of them modern) who make him a "teacher" in matters of "true spontaneity", "soul intuition", "religious feeling", "Life", and so forth. This attitude to Lawrence results in what Wayne Templeton (a refreshingly frank debunker) calls an "appalling lack of 'textual attitude' evident in the various scholars and readers ... who accept him as gospel" (1996, p. 21). Templeton goes on to look at some writers whose faith in Lawrence "as a kind of mystic whose powers of understanding extend[] beyond the merely empirical" leads to an absence of independent research into the artist's "Indian" period. These critics "blindly follow Lawrence's penchant for indiscriminate blending of the various Southwest Indian ceremonies, customs, and religions into an homogenous single culture, about which they occasionally make astounding statements and draw unsubstantiated conclusions" (ibid.). See also, below, n. 110.

Storch's psycho-sexual dichotomisation of Lawrence's paranoia about the savage primitive and his later admiration for the purity of the savage, reflects the position of Marianna Torgovnick, in Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals: Modern Lives (1990). In Women in Love, argues Torgovnick, "Birkin glaringly reads African and Oceanic art according to what we would now call the expressionist misreading; he sees in it the expression of violent emotions and taboo sexuality" (Torgovnick 1990, 161). The novel's dominant version of the primitive, Torgovnick continues, is degenerate and feminine, while in The Plumed Serpent (1926) a masculine primitive's regenerative possibilities are in the ascendant (v. ibid., 162-3). Thus the critic reformulates Kate Millett's distinction between Lawrence's periods of misogynist love-revisionism and masculine leadership. In doing so, however, Torgovnick ignores her emphasis elsewhere on Lawrentian undecidability, particularly on the inextricability of taboo-savagery from pure-savagery, and the fact that some primitivist tropes in the earlier novel form part of Birkin's regenerative discourse: the Pharaoh fantasy in "Excuse", for example.

Crucially, as Brett Neilson has observed, Lawrence's regendering of the primitive is not stable or linear, but rather functions to generate, in both novels, "the coexistence of heterosexual and homosexual modes of desire" (Neilson 1997, 311). These modes, in Women in Love, argues Neilson, align with a dichotomisation of Western/Northern and African/Egyptian, and, respectively, with spiritual knowledge and sensual knowledge, with fragmentation and unity, and with progress and dissolution. Lawrentian dialectical tropes of progress and dissolution, moreover, Neilson continues, often synthesise in some kind of Third Space (the Rainbow, the Crown, the Holy Spirit). The critic then identifies in Women in Love a Third Space of "potential" hetero- and homosexual interaction, emerging within a dialectical and dialogical interplay of race, temporality and sexual identity. The novel's clusters of eroticised anal "true primitive" imagery -- the African figurine's huge buttocks, Egyptian dung beetles, etc. -- align with the counter-phallic Bludbrüderschaft, while the Brüderschaft is terminologically linked to Ursula's and Birkin's stellar relation as a,

...Paradisal entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union ... a lovely state of free proud singleness [which] submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness... (Lawrence 1995a, 254).



The novel's primitive space, concludes Neilson, embodies a "single impulse for knowledge" (*ibid.*, 253), and it is the main textual locus of Birkin's wishful combination of marriage to Ursula and a male-only brotherhood.<sup>110</sup>

### Return of Mothering Illusion

Women in Love's negotiation of heterosexuality and (suppressed) homosexuality, then, consonant with an interfacing of cultures through the expressionist troping of "dark races", is effectively rediscovered in The Plumed Serpent, whose narrative of male archetypal revenance is compounded with a novelistic revival (after Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo) of (in our terms) Lawrence's familiar deployment of compliant woman. The European foreigner, Kate Leslie, fascinated by Ramón and Cipriano, repeatedly looks at their hierophanically symbolised bodies, and simultaneously "looks away" from modernity at the "infinite" possibilities of a worldwide revision of Catholicism in the wholeness of an archaic race and religion -- and this is also to say that Kate plays the "good-enough mother" to pre-odipally characterised, total(itarian)ised projections of homosexual filiation. In short, by seeing as crucial Lawrence's confluences of types of desire in primitivist tropes in Women in Love, we are able to explain the apparent anomaly of a strong re-emergence of mothering illusion in The Plumed Serpent, which is, in theme and elaboration, by far the most "totalitarian" of Lawrence's leadership/brotherhood narratives.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>"Third Space": W. K. Buckley, in his essay, "D. H. Lawrence's Gaze at the Wild West", situates Lawrence in a line of British authors (Stevenson, Wells, Chesterton, and others) fascinated by the "spirit" of the American West. Lawrence's imaginative construction of America is placed by Buckley in a context both of romanticised cowboys and Indians, and of the utopian possibilities of "wide open spaces". Buckley characterises Lawrence's gaze at America as a search for a transitional "middle ground" (1996, p. 42), a Third Space formed by the desert between the primitive and the civilised, coextensive with change and freedom. I cite Buckley's essay, first, as a divergent comparative account of Lawrence's negotiation of Thirdness and primitivism, and, secondly, to give an instance of modern criticism of the type identified by Wayne Templeton (see immediately prior footnote), which is complicit with Lawrence's mystic positivity, specifically in the artist's representations of the Southwest American landscape. Buckley uses poststructural terminology, citing from Baudrillard and Lacan, and deploys ideas about "the gaze"; yet the critic enthusiastically "follows" Lawrence's own mystic gaze "into the peculiar wisdom of geology" (*ibid.*, p. 43). This leads to what Templeton would recognise as an unsubstantiated and, indeed, astounding conclusion, supposedly based on, but actually leaving far behind, Baudrillard's understanding of the American desert as an "ecstatic critique of culture" (Baudrillard 1988, p. 5, cited Buckley *ibid.*), and rather suggesting Buckley's faith in Lawrence's mystic awareness of a veiled reality: "[Lawrence] came looking at the American West in ways completely different from his British contemporaries ... He discovered [*sic*] ... that the real power of the American desert can be seen in its ancient and inhuman intelligence, in its geological indifference, where space and time freeze. He found that Geologic Self in pure, hard thought, and in the acknowledgement of the body that was then, and is now ... [a] hard connection to the desert... [etc.]" (*ibid.*, p. 44).

<sup>111</sup>Kimberly Vanhoosier-Carey uses the central presence in The Plumed Serpent of Kate Leslie to distance the Mexican novel from the masculinist focus in Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo, and compare it instead to Women in Love. VanHoosier-Carey observes the development of Kate's relationship to the Men of Quezalcoatl, from

And it is these "totalitarian", or "fascist", elements that I want to emphasise in my close reading of The Plumed Serpent, in order to give as clear an account as possible of Lawrence's only extended narrative conversion of homosexual desire into latent homosexual affiliation. I will, therefore, during most of the reading, not register Lawrence's (inevitable) polysemic ambivalence, and instead deal with this towards the end of the chapter, when incorporating the familiar idea of the artist destabilising his own "metaphysic". This agenda, however, should not exclude an ongoing awareness of the novel's fragmenting of identity as a function of the power phantasy, and this will be presented at two levels: one of paranoid constructions of "modern" Mexico as a mass formation set over-against the anality/archaism of Quezalcoatl. Secondly, and continuing the theme of the foreigner, I want to emphasise the identificatory instability of the novel's central female character, whose catalysis of male supremacy hinges on a displacement of this instability by her unambivalent idealising gaze. And I begin with this character.<sup>112</sup>

### **Kate: An Unstable Ego**

Kate Leslie, the protagonist in The Plumed Serpent, is a highly overdetermined character. On the one hand she is a kind of abject hero in the mould of Rupert Birkin, Aaron Sisson and Richard Somers. Kate vacillates in her relations to others, between sociopathic revulsion and attraction to some notional Über-relationship which transcends existing forms of love. A naturally superior and diffident soul, she is aware of,

...a proud old family. She had been brought up with the English, Germanic idea of the intrinsic superiority of the hereditary aristocrat. Her blood was different from the common blood, another, finer fluid. (416)

Kate's innate racial superiority is the obverse of her fascination with Ramón and Cipriano, and the reason why they seek her involvement in the emergent cult of Quetzalcoatl. Lilly's

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Lawrence's initial draft, published as Quezalcoatl: The Early Version of The Plumed Serpent (1995b), to the extensively revised, final novel. Quezalcoatl, for the critic, is a kind of regressive transitional text, leading from the masculine excesses of Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo, to The Plumed Serpent, which privileges the feminine in ways redolent of Women in Love. VanHoosier-Carey argues that Kate, in Serpent, is much less a student or disciple than she is in Quezalcoatl (Cipriano no longer commands her to drink his blood), and instead is actively engaged in the rise of the movement, and thereby much nearer to being an equal in status to the leaders. This makes Kate both reminiscent of Ursula Brangwen and a prefiguration of Constance Chatterley, while The Plumed Serpent shows Lawrence already moving away from leadership values and looking back/forward to narratives of heterosexual sublimation.

<sup>112</sup>All subsequent quotations from The Plumed Serpent in the main text are referred in parentheses by page number only.

special interest in Aaron, and Kangaroo's urgent desire for Somers' affiliation, are characterised by the same conversion of alienation in a projection of mutual need.<sup>113</sup> This, however, is not a closed circle, since Kate's European heritage is otherwise opposed to the "fatal" effects of ancient Mexico's "strange, overbearing insistence, a claim of blood-unison" (416). Should Kate allow herself to be absorbed in primordial identification with the (expressionistically misread) Amerindian darkness?

Her borderline position, in fact, is made explicit: "It was a blow, really. To be forty! One had to cross a dividing line..." (49). There again, Kate's age is crucial in dispelling the identification with European aristocracy through her cosmopolitanism:

She was going to be forty next week. Used to all kinds of society, British, continental, and American, she read the social world as one reads the pages of a novel, with a certain disinterested amusement. She was never in any society: too Irish, too wise. (42)

Her "foreigner's" detachment, though, we also see being undercut here -- even as the English and Germanic background is displaced -- by the "Celtic" as a privileged archaic essence aligned with Mexico's aboriginal regeneration: "Ah the dark races! Kate's own Irish were near enough, for her to have glimpsed some of the mystery" (148). Kate, like Mexico, longs for lost leadership, and this is manifested in grieving memories of her husband, a martyred Irish political activist. This trope leads, by a further turn, to an identification of the compliant woman (good-enough mother) who supports/recognises the grandiose, belligerent rhetoric of her soldier-male:

With Joachim I came to realise that a woman like me can only love a man who is fighting to change the world, to make it freer, more alive ... A woman who isn't quite ordinary herself can only love a man who is fighting for something beyond the ordinary life. (70)

But then the alignment of Mexican and Irish essences collapses into a haunted elemental vision of lost European vitality, suggesting its supercession by Mexican aboriginal rebirth.

Finally here, in this account of febrile characterological overdetermination, we see Kate, early in the novel, physically squeezed between two Americans: Owen, "a great

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<sup>113</sup>The fascist public speaker seems to look only at "me", to need "me" to join/merge with him, his need dispelling "my" need for identity in a magnetic conversion of the self: "[o]ne writer even feels Hitler's eyes as hands reaching out to him..." (Theweleit 1989, p. 121).

socialist" (8), and Villiers, who represents capitalism's sensation-seeking "happiness" generated in a "business-like fashion" (9). Kate is, once more, at a borderline where the narrative dissolves differences, this time as a tourist "between" bolshevism and capitalism, themselves troping the miasma of modernity. This miasma, "a sort of infectious disease, like syphilis..." (101), is represented in a colonial "surface" where revolution and capital merge into images of chaos and alienation. Mexico is contaminated and corrupt, a swarming mass with no coherent motivation; though this is exactly what prepares it, and the foreigner Kate, for an apocalyptic renewal (facilitated by the "good mother" Kate).

Notwithstanding The Plumed Serpent's indeterminacy -- which I have just sketched out in relation to one, albeit central, character, and to which I will return -- I am, as I have said, primarily concerned here with the narrative's linear and homogenising elaboration of a totalitarian brotherhood. Since this mythopoeic "fascist" formation, moreover, is bound up with a sacred element in the religion of Quezalcoatl, it is worth recalling here the developmental phantasy "journeys" to Symbolic order undertaken in Leviticus and "Study of Thomas Hardy" (v. supra, Ch. 3). These journeys begin with the "blood and guts" of sacrificed bodies, a sacred-logical abjection of maternal "insides" marking the first stage in a process attempting to sublimate the body within an inscription of Law.

### Sacrifice

The Plumed Serpent opens with a bullfight in Mexico City, attended by Kate, Owen and Villiers. Like Richard Somers on arrival in Australia, Kate is alienated and profoundly cynical, repelled both by her American companions and the native population. The stadium is like a "prison", a "big concrete beetle trap" (8). She, like the animals, will be tortured here. Mexico is free-indirectly presented as an uncharacterised mass: "the voice of mob authority ... the degenerate mob...", a "people" formed by chaotic "revolutions" (11). Even here, in the bullring stadium, there is a spontaneous revolt:

...at some unknown signal, the masses in the middle, unreserved seats, suddenly burst and rushed down on to the lowest, reserved seats. It was a crash like a burst reservoir, and the populace in black Sunday suits poured down and around... (11)

The horrible descending mass, bursting through "clean and proper" social boundaries, is displaced to a mess in the ring:

...she was watching a bull ... goring his horns up and down inside the belly of a prostrate and feebly plunging old horse ... When she looked again, it was to see the horse feebly and dazedly walking out of the ring, with a great ball of its own entrails hanging out of its abdomen ... Human cowardice and beastliness, a smell of blood, a nauseous whiff of bursten bowels! (16)

After the experience is repeated with a second horse -- "a huge heap of bowels coming out" (18) -- Kate has had enough: "they might just as well sit and enjoy somebody else's diarrhoea" (19).

The Americans and the Mexicans have enjoyed this production of waste matter, which represents, respectively, an insatiable lust for sensation, and unpredictable violence. At another level, the bull's thrusts between the hind legs of the horses overlays the anality of the scene with passive homosexual significance, merging into castration and an "absent" phallus reinforcing the narrative's primordial psychological location. And this, as noted above, leads to an understanding of the events in the ring as constituting the very first (primal) "scene" in a new-sacred elaboration. There is a ritual cutting of skin and the "sacrifice" of an heterogeneous mess, recapitulating the "murder" of the mother which begins the self's psychic birth: a "violent act of expulsion through which the nascent body tears itself away from the matter of maternal insides..." (PH, 101). The mass/mess in the bullring, coextensive with Bolshevism and Americanism and the modern Mexican miasma, is a stage in a sacred narrative of rebirth by expulsion -- though it simultaneously projects the writer's primary correlation with the abject, as a metaphor of infection by uncontained somatism.

The emergent cult of Quetzalcoatl will function to "seal" flayed and disembowelled Mexico, by forming a kind of "Kultur" above the heterogeneous mass, as leaders emerge from the social mess to generate fascination for the skin of dark bodies, in a progressive displacement which magnetises infected Mexico in/to filiative unification: a cult of the body-ego militating against the body's cultural fragmentation.

### Concretised Words

Archaic Mexico, then, is The Plumed Serpent's "culture" of leadership in a narrative fascinated by embodiment and materiality. Before considering the novel's body-ego elaborations, it is worth registering again the presence in Lawrence's textuality of synaesthetic "concretised" signifiers (v. supra, Ch. 2): "[t]he name Quezalcoatl ...

fascinated her ... 'I love the word Quezalcoatl'" (58, 61). In a narrative where the Name of the Father is foreclosed, Kate is drawn to the sound and feel of dark gods, to their abstract materialised names. The sensory word saturated with affect is suckled like a dummy, filling the mouth with ecstatic speech both meaningful and meaningless. A disciple of Ramón, Mirabel, reflects Kate's enthusiasm:

Ah the names of the gods! Don't you think the names are like seeds, so full of magic, of the unexplored magic? Huitzilopochtli!--how wonderful! And Tlaloc! Ah! I love them! I say them over and over, like they say Mani Padma Om! in Thibet. I believe in the fertility of sound ... Itzpapalotl! Tezcatlipoca!... (62)

Such "true-real" embodying (somatised) hypersignification, then, is elemental in The Plumed Serpent's anal reinvestment of Indian primitivism as a fraternal congress centred on the secret transgressive power of men's bodies.

### **Muscle-Physique**

And they must be dark men:

...all the efforts of white men to bring the soul of the dark men of Mexico into final clinched being has resulted in nothing but the collapse of the white men. Against the soft, dark flow of the Indian the white man at last collapses ... the white man has fallen helplessly down the hole he wanted to fill up. (78)

Lawrence's primitivism merges here with explicit anti-colonialism, while ambivalently freighting homosexual desire and paranoia, in a suggestion that the European way of consciousness, frankly, has failed to achieve orgasm and deflated within the "hole" of Indian masculinity. Indian males, meanwhile, appear to Kate's desiring gaze as potent iconic figures: "there was a physical beauty in these men, a wistful beauty and a great physical strength" (89). Men's bodies are all that prevent her from returning to Europe; these awesome and exquisite images counter her depressed and fearful perceptions of hopeless, violent, sterile Mexico. They often emerge above the landscape. On one occasion, a group of bathing men rise from a "sperm-like" (93) river, "men whose wet skins flashed with the beautiful brown-rose colour and glitter of the naked natives, and one stout man with the curious creamy-biscuit skin of the city Mexicans" (90). The Indian male is an enigmatic super-hero, a kind of Dark Man (or Voluntary Man, or Anal Man), freeze-framed to display prominent pectorals on a supremely powerful torso, which is set against fat creamy-biscuit men and their modern, phallic, city, "white" consciousness.

The Indian's glistening body, of course, is primarily understandable as a focus for lust. Linda Ruth Williams (1993) sees Lawrence's general fascination with darkness in terms of Freudian disavowal, a "blindness of the seeing eye" which looks erotically at men through women's eyes, and elsewhere censures the female gaze. The pre-visual sensuality of the anus shifts, *via* Lawrence's privileged metaphors of obscurity, into women's conformity to the dark vision of men, which hides, as it exposes, his desire. Williams, however, is working with an oedipal model of repressed homosexuality. My pre-oedipal approach, by contrast, identifies in Lawrence a pervasive dialectic of libidinal excess and the ego's inceptive formation: in this chapter, while registering his female-channelled homosexual impulses, my main concern is with the artist's "pragmatic" investments in homoeroticism to re/birth the ego in the primal field of the horde-self. The Kultur of Darkness in The Plumed Serpent, in this case, uses synaesthetic dark-god symbols and images of the male body within a primary-repressive production of the body-ego as a self-aware self, yet not-yet-fully (gender-)differentiated, in a narrative whose earlier sections, particularly, often trope unresolved separation.

The Plumed Serpent's Mexico is "waiting, eternally waiting..." (161). It waits for rebirth in a revival of the dark religion, and its secession from a mongrel Mexican nation of "incomplete selves, made up of bits assembled together loosely ... Half-made creatures, rarely more than half-responsible and half-accountable, acting in terrible swarms like locusts" (106-7). This non-integrated and unformed "body" of humanity is restated in Mexico's "unfinished" (97) geo-topography characterised, for Kate, by hiatus, gestation, suspension, irresolution: a primal Thingness,

...an aboriginal, empty silence, as of life withheld ... Always something ghostly. The morning passing all of a piece, empty, vacuous. All sound withheld, all life withheld, everything holding back. The land so dry as to have a quality of invisibility, the water flimsy and earth-filmy, hardly water at all. (97)

As she moves among Mexico's "not yet men ... [and] not yet women" (199), Kate is increasingly drawn to the integrating "touch of male recognition, a man glad to retain his honour, and to feel the communion of grace ... of the dark, strong, unbroken blood, the flowering of the soul" (107). Here, as one comes to expect, Lawrence's nascent religion of Quezalcoatl expropriates Christian signification -- the "grace" facilitated by "communion" -- while the fluid interiority of blood, otherwise linked in the novel with incoherent violence, is peripherally displaced in identification with men's skin uniformly "patterned"

by dark desire. This conflation of darkness, blood and skin forms a "racial" metaphor of identity, a uniform boundary pattern that enables recognition of a kind of new species: a "greater manhood" (131).

As six partly naked men prepare to sing the first in a series of "hymns" to Quezalcoatl, Kate observes,

...[t]he soft, full, handsome torsos ... the soft, easy shoulders, that are yet so broad, and which balance on so powerful a backbone ... the beautiful ruddy skin, gleaming with a dark fineness; the strong breasts, so male and so deep, yet without the muscular hardening that belongs to white men ... [The Indians'] very naked torsos were clothed with a subtle shadow ... Their very nakedness only revealed the soft, heavy depths of their natural secrecy, their eternal invisibility. They did not belong to the realm of that which comes forth. (121)

Nakedness, in The Plumed Serpent, is almost always that of the male upper body, whose mystified eroticism draws Kate's gaze away from the phallus ("which comes forth"), while displacing the secret softness of the "deterritorialized" anus in a muscle-physique radiating mystic power. Men's thrilling, forbidden, unspeakable "depths" are transformed as dark torsos profoundly bonded in transgressive significance. As the beautiful bodies of the Men of Quezalcoatl emerge from the mass of the people, and grow in number and power, splitting articulates across the familiar voluntary and sympathetic trope clusters, the latter comprised by democracy, Bolshevism, Christianity and heterosexual love. And, as in Kangaroo, this is registered in conflict with an enemy brother.

### **Brother**

The first hymn to Quezalcoatl celebrates the separation of Indian manhood from Christianity:

My name is Jesus, I am Mary's son  
I am coming home ...  
Jesus the Crucified  
Sleeps in the healing waters  
The long sleep.  
Sleep, sleep, my brother, sleep. (119-20)

In an "Olympian" world struggle between super-heroes, Jesus/Christ is both enemy and brother to Quezalcoatl, a noble counterpart of the self freeze-framed (on the cross) as an heroic suffering body, a fellow "son" deserving the utmost respect, yet who is "flawed", infected by the feminine through his love for mankind. Kangaroo's characterological



jouissance centred on his Jewishness, which made him, in Kristeva's words, a "preferred son, chosen, availing himself of paternal power ... a brother, superior and envied..." (PH, 181). It is inevitable, then, that the son of God returns throughout Lawrence's career as a fixated object, a "preferred" brother (a fathered son) both envied and repudiated by the post-theological writer (abject orphan). And, like Kangaroo, Jesus will be destroyed in the Mexican novel, in a battle to determine who inherits the power (discourse) of the father. Meanwhile, a parallel vector in the splitting between Quezalcoatlian manhood and Christianity is articulated in Ramón's hatred for the pious, devouring love of his wife, the Madonna-like Carlota. Quezalcoatl, as Judith Ruderman observes (1984, 144), has no mother. He/it has/is a "strange nuclear power" manifested sui generis through total repudiation: "Repellent the silent, dense opposition to the pale-faced spiritual direction" (122). Accordingly, as it becomes increasingly apparent that the dark Indian phratry is a religious movement, the importance of capitalist and socialist "infection" fades, and the doomed brother-warrior Jesus appears, along with Carlota, whose brutal abjection is a key indicator of the profound misogyny within Quezalcoatlian negativity. I will return to this. I want, first, to further consider what significance absolute divinity might have in an abject-fascist narrative perversely opposed to the Father-God, while seeking to displace his power.

### **Abstract Father**

A fascist brotherhood seeks a father-figure; yet it owes its existence to rejection of the father. Fascists want a father to guarantee cohesion and give access to power; yet they must reject the repressive paternal function. This is the double-bind identified by Theweleit (1989, 369). Fascist writers do speak of a father, albeit not the "real" father embedded in the Christian tradition and embodied in a German administration which has betrayed them. There is rather an ambiguous idealisation which expresses longing for a father, "who might once have saved them from the morass into which they now feel themselves sinking" (*ibid.*). The Führer, argues Theweleit, "seems to represent a link connecting the sons to the domain of an abstract father's power" (*ibid.*, 373). A fascist organisation is a pre-metaphysical imaginary structure within which a magnetised leader is umbilically connected to a paternal space prior to the Symbolic function. This space of the father is always-already foreclosed in the psychotic text, which means He cannot be Named. His identity is coextensive with the German Will to power and purity, a

noumenal abstraction that is literally unquestionable. In Kristeva's terms, abject-fascist narratives nostalgically tend towards, but anally (retentively) defer, re-naming the Father/God, and rather strip away His mature authority to its primordial potential, which then is counterpoised, via the homosexual phratry, against society's gender-codifying god/s. This dynamic, which amounts to the Imaginary Father implicated in the horde imaginary, is made explicit in The Plumed Serpent.

Quezalcoatl, for his Men, is a god; but not the God of Law, not the father. Don Ramón several times posits an unknowable paternal presence, a god who cannot be named. A late hymn to Quezalcoatl has it that, "[n]o man knows my Father, and I know Him not" (339). Transcending the names of the gods is an abstract super-ego: "Jesus is going home, to the Father, and Mary is going back, to sleep in the belly of the Father ... The Nameless said: It is time" (125). Brett Neilson observes that "Ramón's movement aims at a breakaway from the Mexican nation, prompting a worldwide renewal of traditional modes of religious identification--for example, a Celtic revival of Celtic gods, etc." (1997, 321). The renewal dynamic, however, is a bit more complicated: Jesus and Quezalcoatl, like Thor and Loki, are good and bad brother-gods (and super-heroes) produced from, and returning to, the same ambiguous paternal space, while this space simultaneously undercuts Jesus's paternity since the father is identified with a seminal, unknowable Mexican Will.

And then, of course, there is the leader's umbilical connection. Ramón addresses Kate:

There must be manifestations. We must change back to the vision of the living cosmos ... I am the first man of Quezalcoatl. I am Quezalcoatl himself, if you like. A manifestation, as well a man. I accept myself entire, and proceed to make destiny (316)

Hitler preferred to be known as the "first SA-man of the German Reich" (Theweleit 1989, 369). He is neither a father nor a god; he rather, like Ramón, manifests an abstract Will and Destiny which comprehends all archaic cultures/gods within a prototype existing before the contagion of divergent, fragmented, modern cultures. Ramón's identification with the Men of Quezalcoatl is comparable to Hitler's identification as first-among-men in the Sturm Abteilung, an organisation maintained through identifications of infection. Such organisations tend, like their projected infecting objects, to proliferate. Biblical identity, notwithstanding active sites of borderline codification such as Leviticus, is stable relative

to the fascist's psychotic production. While mimicking the exclusive and mystical functions of sacred discourse and the father's law, the fascist "solidifying" internal organs in peripheral displacement to bodies of men, endlessly reorganises the self. Late in The Plumed Serpent, as Ramón takes hold of the country, the Men of Huitzilopochtli appear, along with a proliferation of new "magical" power symbols -- "the Lords of Life ... the Masters of Death" (378) -- which constantly regenerate the discourse, while always being guaranteed by the unifying paternal "home" of sui generis identifications. Only the end of Lawrence's narrative stops the proliferation of "magically" emergent bodies, symbols and organisations; as only the end of the war stopped the intensely mythological "creativity" of Nazi propaganda.<sup>114</sup> If Lawrence is not a creator of a fascist ideology, it seems to me that the (maintenance) mechanism of a desire for world domination exists within The Plumed Serpent.

In the remainder of this reading I want to mark some of the key stages in the rise of the Quezalcoatl movement, which centres on the leader's hieratic expansion as a body-ego merged into a metaphysical symbol, and on violent eradications of infection. I then conclude the chapter with a discussion of, among other things, elements in the novel that destabilise its "fascist" metaphysic.

### **Mothering the Horde**

The Plumed Serpent's pre-oedipal imaginary, I have suggested, operates in two fields of phantasy, addressing the imaginary father moment of maternal separation in combination with the primal horde's transgressive potential. Elaborating this projection, then, requires a "good mother's" gaze, which is supplied by Kate Leslie's sense of her "greater womanhood" (131), and her presence at key events in the revival of Quezalcoatl: particularly those in

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<sup>114</sup>Towards the end of the Second World War, Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry was attributing magical powers of revenge to V1 and V2 bombs, while, in 1945, the feature-length film, Kolberg, demanded German identification with a miraculously successful Prussian resistance to Napoleon. The film was the last in a series of imaginary identifications of the nation with supernaturally "defiant" events in Volk history. Similarly, Hitler was identified in fascist art with a series of mythological figures, and with great historical men, notably King Frederick the Great, in the film, Der Grosse König (1942). The point is the sheer number of shifting identifications, which appear in response to specific threats/crises of infection -- Kolberg responded to the final crisis in Berlin during the Russians' advance -- and demonstrate the weakness of the reality principle: Napoleon historically overran the Prussians at Kolberg (see David Welch 1995, p. 120 ff.). At the level of propaganda produced for the German people, the Third Reich constantly throws up new mystical images "rebirthing" the self with a febrility indicating that primary process fantasy is substituting for the coherence and security of oedipal Law.

which the leader's body is magnetised as a manifestation of the god, and a conduit for the abstract paternal Will. Kate accordingly is "there" when Cipriano lays his "blackish hands on the naked shoulders of [Ramón] ... and for a moment was perfectly still on his breast. Then very softly, he stood back and looked at him ... as if he, Cipriano, were searching for himself in Ramón's face" (181-2). Kate and Carlota gaze at the tableau "in absolute silence" (182). Kate is there to witness Ramón walking among his men as they create the first iconic symbols. A bird-snake image is being struck in iron: "a little more slender--so!" (171), Ramón advises an awe-struck smithy. A carpenter chisels a likeness of his leader's head. Stimulated by the effigy's "dark aura of power" (172), Ramón stretches his backbone to make a body shape bringing him into contact with the dark power. Like Superman about to take flight, "[f]or some moments he stood gathering himself together. Then ... he flung his right arm up above his head, and stood transfixed, his left arm hanging softly by his side" (172-3). The terrified carpenter imitates Ramón, and, thus magnetised, his body-ego unified with the leader, enters into a "trance" state of "noble, motionless transfiguration" (173).

Kate also is there to see the first Quezalcoatlían salute to darkness, with the back of the right hand placed over the eyes; and she observes the weaving of the bird-snake motif into a sarape, or woollen cloak, to be worn by the Men of Quezalcoatlí. The subsequent frequency with which sarapes are put on and then removed to reveal naked torsos makes The Plumed Serpent seem at times like a tale of Mexican male strippers ("The Full Montezuma?"); but, and more pointedly, the dialectic typifies a narrative whose symbolic legitimacy depends, not on socio-political incorporation, but upon empowering transformations of desire. Kate's gaze, implicating eroticisation with (maternal) recognition of male empowerment, observes Cipriano's "living male power, undefined, and unconfined" (310), through the "power of his blood ... a great pliant column, swaying and leaning with power ... this huge erection..." (311). Later he will be "her husband in Quezalcoatlí" (333) when she is rechristened Malintzi. This is a significant event in the narrative's transgression of heterosexuality, and analogous to fascist texts' nomination of the desire-free woman as the "valiant German wife..." (Theweleit 1987, 150), a "high-born" woman (*ibid.*, 367), and so forth, consonant with sculpted and painted images of ideal femininity in the völkisch mythological community.

Cipriano's commitment to the "body" of the brothers, in fact, depends on crushing sexual desire in Kate/Malintzi:

She realised, almost with wonder, the death in her of the Aphrodite of the foam ... [Joachim] could give her this orgiastic "satisfaction," in spasms that made her cry aloud. But Cipriano would not. By a dark and powerful instinct he drew away from her as soon as this desire rose... ( 422)

The precocious male ego, combating desire and terrified of the incestuous maternal body, withdraws to avoid fusion, as Kate, in bed with this "stranger", discovers a de-eroticised ecstasy, a "mindless communion of the blood ... And somehow, there was no need for emotions" (423). The female body dissolves in conformity with the language of fraternal magnetism. During sex, Kate is a nurturing mother who regenerates her fighting man: sex separates man from woman, as the triumph of abstention hardens the body armour in preparation for martial encounters and their "legitimate" penetrations of body-ego boundaries.

In this martial register Kate's "eyes" remain crucial to the formation of explosive heroes; as when she witnesses Ramón's supreme fighting skills, freeze-framing him in mid-flight during a rebel attack, "like a great cat ... some blind super-consciousness seemed to possess him" (294). This scene of visceral violence perversely rejoices in the catastrophe of battle, each death an abjection, a fascination with the moment which creates a corpse:

It crashed down, the buttocks of the body heaving up, the whole thing twitching and jerking along, the face seeming to grin in a mortal grin. Glancing from horror to horror, [Kate] saw Ramón ... holding down the head of the bandit by the hair and stabbing him with short stabs in the throat, one, two: while blood shot out like a red projectile, there was a strange sound like a soda-syphon, a ghastly bubbling, one final terrible convulsion from the loins of the stricken man, throwing Ramón off ... [Another] bandit dropped ... the red pommel of the knife sticking out of his abdomen ... Then he slowly bowed over, doubled up, and went on his face again, once more with his buttocks in the air. (295-6)

This is an orgasm "legitimated" by filiation and battle. After the jerking buttocks comes a "post-coital" withdrawal from the writhing man (comparable to pre-coital withdrawal from Kate's aroused body), and the momentary triumph of an abject son spectacularly refusing the Symbolic's prohibition of (primal) murder (phantasy). As Kristeva says, the fascist/object imaginary has "an ingrained love for death, ecstasy before the corpse..." (PH, 150). The eroticised death drive is literally transformed by Lawrence in desire for a corpse, overdetermined by homosexual jouissance. At the same time, a ferocious mass of

banditry is crystallised in splitting between the self and a penetrated opponent, as death-driven desire is displaced in an exposure/explosion of sanguine superfluity, which vitally empowers the peripheral self. As Theweleit says, "[c]orpses piled upon corpses reveal [the soldier] as victor, a man who has successfully externalised that which was dead within him, who remains standing when all else is crumbling" (1989, 19). Ramón, observed by Kate, rises from the murderous homosexual melee, his body-ego enhanced, "with that strange beauty that goes with pristine rudimentariness" (296).

And Kate continues to be there, fascinated by the strange beauty of what men say and do, at high points in the narrative's construction of, as Kristeva puts it with reference to Céline, a "post-Catholic destiny for mankind bereft of meaning" (PH, 173). Ramón triumphs over Catholicism's contagion through a removal of iconic images from Sayula church, and the ritual burning of the "body" of the Dead Christ, making the village "empty of God" (287). Kate witnesses the consonant defeat of the "sympathetic" Carlota, as Ramón's wife crawls into the re-opened church, now a temple dedicated to Quezalcoatl, pleading for a return to God's love (343); and Kate is there when, as Carlota calls on her deathbed to the Holy Virgin, Ramón successfully urges, "Oh die!--die!--die! Die and be a thousand times dead! Do nothing but utterly die!" (347). In the church, Cipriano's Men of Huizilopochtli, an organisation of bloody civil enforcers whose uniform is a red sarape, intimidate the congregation into forming the new salute, and deal with those who have "betrayed" Ramón by dehumanising them as grey dogs and grey bitches, and garrotting and stabbing them to death. "The Lords of Life are Masters of Death" (380), intones the killer, Cipriano. Meanwhile Don Ramón presides over his movement's development in a production of body postures, power icons, ritual dances, enigmatic "hymns", and assertions of what the Men of Quezalcoatl are not: not a Church, not a state, not socialists, and not, ironically, to be associated with Mexico's Italian-influenced "Fascista" (308).

Eventually, Ramón allies himself with the elected president: "[t]hen Montes declared the old Church illegal in Mexico, and caused a law to be passed, making the religion of Quezalcoatl the national religion of the Republic" (420). Churches are closed, priests vanish, the Archbishop is deported, and, as a result, "[t]he whole country was thrilling with a new thing, with a release of new energy ... There was a great sense of

release, almost of exuberance" (420). Cleansed and purified Mexico seems poised for a glorious future.

## VI. FASCISM AND ART: CONCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS

My reading of The Plumed Serpent was intended to give a strong flavour of the strand in The Plumed Serpent that articulates "fascist" or "totalitarian" desire; in other words, I read the novel primarily as if it consisted just of the rise of the Men of Quezalcoatl, and as if Lawrence were a propagandist for his imaginary movement as Theweleit's fascist writers are propagandists for the Freikorps and the Reich. At this point, then, we should recall what has been elaborated at various points in this thesis, the fact that Lawrence consistently "criticises" his novels' "metaphysics" as an element in his undermining of modes of coherent identity; and it is no different in The Plumed Serpent. For every moment that Kate Leslie spends gazing in admiration at the Men of Quezalcoatl, there is at least one moment when she expresses, usually to herself, scepticism, impatience and contempt. One outburst will serve as an example:

For heaven's sake let me get out of this, and back to simple human people. I loathe the very sound of Quezalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli ... Horrible, really, both Ramón and Cipriano. And they want to put it over me, with their high-flown bunk, and their Malintzi ... I am sick of these men putting names over me ... Loathsome, really, to be called Malintzi--I've had it put over me. (371)

Kate's negative perceptions of the Thingness of modern, colonised, "massed" Mexico, in this respect, are often indistinguishable from the mindless brutality and vacuous narcissism of the Quezalcoatl movement. As well as channelling the writer's homosexual gaze and being a "good-mother", Kate is the novel's prime locus for a destabilisation of the emergent discourse, which is implicated with her instability as a character having many incompatible levels of allegiance.

Virginia Hyde and L. D. Clark locate Kate's unstable identity in the broad frame of Lawrence's formal experiments with meaning, and see The Plumed Serpent practising a "dialogical method similar in some ways to Bakhtin's..." (1996, 141), a method set out by Lawrence in "Why the Novel Matters" and the other "novel" essays (Phoenix, 517-38). The Mexican narrative's "finely interweaving mesh of language and symbolism ... [forms] a mobile illustration of the freedom and design that are its themes", claim Hyde and Clark (ibid., 144). Neil Roberts deploys Bakhtin to understand Kate Leslie's travel observations,

whose bleak contingency and un-narrated atemporality the critic sees as a chronotope opposed to a second chronotope which propels the authoritarian discourse, that of Mexico's "enormous depth of history and cultural memory" (1996, 135). Such readings, which exalt Lawrence as both a theorist and artist of polyvalence subverting realist representation and logocentric discourse (including his own), can, however, lead to bias and misrepresentation. In a most obvious sense, one that I have been concerned with before in this thesis, identifying a "revolutionary" language fails to address the psychological issue of the artist's investments in empowering fantasy and his characterological projections of desire. These critics read The Plumed Serpent according to Lawrence's doctrine of rupture and polyvalence, which means that the novel's modes of disruption are privileged over-against its authoritarian vector, which is put there by Lawrence only to be disrupted. While this approach substantially registers textual ambivalence, it disregards the considerable apparent effort that has gone into creating what is being "opposed", and thereby, as Margaret Storch says, elides Lawrence's potential identification with his own "vivid world of male fantasy, combining brotherhood, military glory and prowess, and uninhibited blood violence" (1996, 58). When concentrating on polysemic form, there is a danger of eliding content, which is to say Lawrence's definite "motifs of masculine power, sadism, and women forced into submission that characterise the fiction of the American years" (ibid., 57). The artist's textual form destabilises his content -- though not, argues Storch, to the extent that his brand of modernist chauvinism and imaginative excesses can be ignored.

On the other hand, Lawrence does undermine his totalitarianist language, and characterologically oppose its authority -- Kate is never completely forced into submission to Quezalcoatl -- and so what emerges, once again, as the propellant mechanism in a Lawrence production is a dialectic of affirmed and negated identity.

I have already focused closely on ways in which Lawrence both constructs and deconstructs "authorised" identity. Within an "as-if" typological frame, I observed the artist's use of unsustainable predications compounded in his "pollyanalytic" doctrine, which forms the subjective function, and re-ontologises the world, even as its shifting paradigms/discourses reveal Lawrence's dislocated condition. In terms of sacred logic, I observed the artist's borderline identificatory instability in the service of his metaphysical



production, as he sublimates abjection in a staged movement from the body to Laws of identity. Here, I want to reframe the essential question applicable to a psyche oscillating between Symbolic and semiotic fields: how can an authoritarian fantasist also be an anti-authoritarian destabiliser of meaning? Are we not dealing with two types of conflicting essentialism? Or is it rather, as we saw with the "scribe" and the "poet", in "Study of Thomas Hardy", that narcissistic hierarchalism and the embodiment of drive in language are intertwined? If so, then how, specifically, does this occur in Lawrence's most "fascistic" period of production? This is the point at which to consider, as promised, Anne Fernihough's claim that a certain kind of organic aesthetic is not consistent with fascist discourse.

Earlier in the chapter, I argued that Fernihough, in deploying Kristeva's theory of provisional identity, is hardly best placed to refute accusations of Lawrence's totalitarian tendencies on the grounds that he also uses other, very different, kinds of discourse. Fernihough develops her refutation when arguing that Lawrence's Spenglerian, post-Romantic organicist rhetoric is eclipsed by what she calls his "fractured organic" aesthetic, which advocates polyvalence, contradiction, ruptures, absences, voids, and so forth:

The point cannot be overemphasised that in much of Lawrence's writing on art, an organicist aesthetic does not imply that a work of art embodies a single, unifying, totalizing meaning. (Fernihough 1993, 42)

Fernihough's point is that accusations of fascism made against Lawrence hinge on an understanding of organicism as a totalising linearity, a Destined sublation of mind, body, nation and language in an "ultimate transcendent rapport" (*ibid.*, 34), whereas Lawrence's aesthetics of fragmentary "semiotic" production exclude him from the German tradition of "pure form" and "ultimate reality" and its racist-authoritarian lineage. This distinction between Lawrence's fractured organic aesthetics and his totalising organic discourse, however, breaks down at two levels.

First, a problematic I dealt with in Chapter 3, an aestheticist polemic advocating collapsed identity may, as in "Study of Thomas Hardy", disguise a discursive unfolding in transition from body to Law. I have suggested the presence of this formative sacred movement in The Plumed Serpent. Secondly, and a point I want to be concerned with here for a while, it is possible to see the pure/fragmented distinction of Lawrence's organicist

rhetoric undercut by synchronically mapping his tropes to observe their ideological redolence. In an earlier section, I suggested that a fascist may be "anti-fascist" and, indeed, an artist, by virtue of a shared comprehension of metaphysical crisis and linguistic dislocation, and corresponding expressions of primal phantasy. Obversely, the artist expressing such phantasy, as we have seen for some time, may construct identity in the imaginary field of the primal horde. What I want to clarify here is how specific metaphorical modes, links and oppositions which distinguish totalitarian typologies also function within Lawrence's ideological articulations, however characterised by "fracture" these may be. I will address this issue by looking first at such a construction of Luce Irigaray's theory.

### **Fascism and Écriture**

Elana Gomel, in "Hard and Wet: Luce Irigaray and the Fascist Body" (1998), reads Theweleit's Male Fantasies to argue that Irigaray's valorisation of somatic woman reverses the anti-feminine, corporeal rhetoric of fascism, only to produce a fascist rhetoric of feminine corporeality. The crux of Gomel's argument is that,

...ideology is less a catalogue of statements than a system of tropes. Ideology is inseparable from its rhetoric ... Systems of tropes retain their ideological charge even ... [detached from] their sociopolitical foundations ... A metaphor is always a political statement, whether we will it or not. (Gomel 1998, 203)

Gomel then reads Irigaray's rhetoric through what she sees as its appropriation of figures redolent of fascist discourse, and a structuring of these figures in similar basic oppositions.

At first glance Irigaray's theory and fascist discourse are very different: the fascist fuses an undifferentiated mass into a totalitarian state (of mind) characterised by a solid body-ego, while Irigaray's Woman "de-fuses" phallogocentric "solid-state physics" with a positive mass of "'dissipatory' structures" formed through a "mechanics of fluids", in a discourse of "hydraulics ... congruent with the female bodily experience" (Gomel 1998, 213). But, argues Gomel, "the metaphor of corporeal fluidity that Irigaray uses to express the natural essence of femininity is historically linked to the fascist rhetoric of the organic state" (*ibid.*, 203). There is, in this respect, within European fascism and Irigaray's writing, an analogous Romanticist appeal to the "blood". Gomel emphasises the policing function of the organic metaphor: the fascist "solid man's" body-ego confines racial blood within proper channels, whose "limit" is the permanent invasive presence of Jewish fluidity; for

Irigaray, similarly, the hydraulic, paradigmatically menstrual, "blood roots" of Woman face the constant threat of Man's invasive appropriations of the female bodily experience. The theorist thus is culpable of "naturally selective" authoritarianism: "one can freely flow, but only as long as one flows in a prescribed channel", which is formed by absolute splitting into "sexuate being", man or woman, a "natural law" of separation which must not be broken through commingling of the sexes and patriarchal-cultural identifications of the self, "in terms of race, class, ethnicity, civic identity" (*ibid.*, 217). Irigaray's Woman is both over-against, and free of, rigid Laws of identity, but a correlative metaphorical field of unified identity is produced. Her lyrical invocations of a maternal sea dissolving and blurring identities veil the fact that "fluidity is aligned with wholeness, and suppleness, solidity..." (*ibid.*, 206). Gomel stresses that,

...[t]hese parallels ... are not due to any direct influence but are the result of the same underlying ideological structure which is the opposition of organic/mechanical. In fascist discourse it is translated into terms of race, in Irigaray into terms of gender. (*ibid.*, 214)

Irigaray's project, argues Gomel, is superficially a critique of liberal democracy, but it projects an organicist vision of the only "natural" form of being, wherein all other forms are perverse and unnatural through a "conflation of error and disease":

[Irigaray] often refers to the modern condition as sick, the technological world having been severed from the natural rhythms of growth and becoming ... The sickness of democracy was a favourite trope of fascism ... What seems to be new is Irigaray's location of the sickness of the body politic in the symbolic economy of the same. But it is precisely in this critique of sameness ... that the parallels with fascist thought become most troubling... (Gomel 1998, 216)

Not so new, perhaps, since Lawrence's theory can be seen to have a similarly monolithic vision of natural processes, whereby the pure non-integrated body triumphs over democratic "mechanical" homogeneity. There is a similar fascination with the superiority of a special (artist) "type" formed in "dissipatory" lapses from consciousness, a corporeal rhetoric obsessed by sanguine metaphoricality, and a loathing of sick democracy, of national and ideological, "solid" or "mechanical" metaphors. I do not want to elaborate aspects of Lawrence that we have looked at in some detail, in this chapter and previously. The point which should resonate here is that Lawrence's links with purifying and totalising discourse (his anti-Semitism, his Spenglerian apocalypticism, his male-centred primitivism, and so forth) are not, as Fernihough suggests, eclipsed by his fractured-organic rhetoric, since the polysemic "fluidity" of the latter merges into the narcissistic "hardness" of the former

through the ideological redolence of the organicist tropes, and an essentialist dynamics of infection.

### **Dark Brothers...**

Whether Lawrence's writing is understood synchronically at a systematic level of metaphorical essentialism, or whether it is characterised through spontaneous phantasy and syntactic rupture, if not a fascist, he is always the fascist's "brother". When we see his rhetoric mimicking sacred discourse in rejection and abomination; when we look at how he foregrounds language's inherent instability to form a "culture" of idiolectual self-renewal; when we see him as a decadent symbolist, a defiant adolescent, a new-sacred scribe, an amorous revisionist, and, indeed, as a proto-fascist -- there is always his oscillation between, on the one hand, desire to represent loss of the Symbolic function in semantic and syntactic rupture, and, on the other, an essentially anxious response to loss of referential identity in phantasies of omnipotence. These primary narcissistic phantasies naturally (as we saw in Chapters 1 and 2) centre on the creative "power" of the artist, but, in specific narratives, they may be characterised through identifications with totalitarian groups and leaders. Both the fascist and the artist are, for Kristeva, traumatised and societally dysfunctional orphans involved in radically aggressive constructions of the transcendent counter-cultural self.

### **...Some Closer Than Others**

It is evident, however, that while artists may have a potential to become fascists, not every fascist can be an artist. I want, in this respect, and as a final negotiation of this nexus, to distinguish Kristeva's fascist-artist from Theweleit's fascist, whose homosocial "molarity", however under threat from its projected enemies, is not seriously placed in question by writers who are never less than propagandists for the Freikorps or the Nazi Party.

Kristeva speaks of art "stirred by epiphenomena of desire", art that "could only offer a perverse negation of abjection, which, deprived in other respects of its religious sublimation ... allowed itself to be seduced by the Fascist phenomenon" (PH, 155). Céline, on one level, is seduced by fascism, committed to Nazi discourse; but at another level his perverse negation of religious codes of abjection conditions a pre-oedipal "X-ray of the 'drive foundations' of fascism" (PH, 155). Céline "speaks from the very seat of ... horror,

he is implicated in it, he is inside of it. Through his scription he ceases to exist..." (*ibid.*). The writer's ideological identifications, largely to be found in his fascist pamphlets, are re-registered in the apocalyptic nihilism of his war novels, in which the death drive is given a gory, yet sublime, phenomenology. Céline then comes to "master this latent psychotic state through ... literary devices and writing style" (KI, 231), which is to say that an aesthetic experience of hovering at the edge of psychosis (loss of identity) depends on his creative ability to represent the repressed "body" in language. Thus, "the internal economy of [Céline's] writing runs parallel to his experience of exile and singular negativity", so that "the music and structure of [his] texts speak about the right to be different ... [though he] didn't know it" (KI, 233). Céline's opposition to the paternal function leads to his Nazi identification and omnipotent aggressive phantasy, but also to semantic and syntactic "aggressivity" directed at the Symbolic, which establishes a unique text, the experimental, solipsistic art-work.

Most of the Freikorps texts which Theweleit studies are novels: are these not artistic works? In the end, as always in psychoanalysis, it is a matter of degree. In the Freikorps tales, there is much less, or no, semantic and syntactic aggressivity. These writers do not effectively "master" their psychotic phantasy in experiments with the novel's structures and meanings, because they are not great, or even good, artists. There is a fascination with death, dissolution and borders in images which "X-ray" primal phantasy; but the fixated vision does not result in anything like the level of linguistic experimentation to be found in Céline's work, nor the "scrupulous precision" with which the artist weaves "threads of instinctual drive" (DL, 144) in his plural narrative. The Freikorps soldier-males are historically set in a linear narrated journey to the battlefield, where stereotyped scenes of penetration, dissolution and triumph are repeatedly staged. The artistic value of Céline, for Kristeva, resides in his ability to provisionally cohere (narrate) highly spontaneous linguistic and phantasmatic jouissance, which then both complements (as a foundational X-ray) and subverts (as a refusal of identity) the writer's appropriation of the Symbolic function with/in fascist discourse. And, in this context, we can again get the measure of Lawrence.

While his semantic and syntactic pre-oedipal mastery may be comparable to Céline's, Lawrence is not a committed historical fascist. His "seduction" by fascist tropes

is an element in intertextual negotiations with many discourses, whose metaphysical codes and laws "filter" and "screen" advent phantasies, and thus idiolectually re-map the authentic self in the world (v. supra, Chapter 2). In juxtaposing the two writers, then, what becomes immediately obvious is that Lawrence's pollyanalytic doctrine, in approximation to Céline's pamphleted fascist polemic, is far more intertextually active, and so creative. Accordingly, in the leadership period, Lawrence's "seduction" by horde-phantasy discourse is at one and the same time a production of such discourse. The Quezalcoatlían religion, albeit elaborated in a novel rather than doctrinally, is a "new" fascist discourse, a wishful "as-if" idiolect, a provisional unfolding of identity which parallels the rise of fascism, while having no Célinian parallel. Lawrence's post-War exile from social identity, then, is marked by his elaboration of primal horde phantasy -- and also by the fact that the unfolded ab/original "elsewhere" is distinct from cultural horde discourse: the foreigner creating and regulating his uncanny space of being is in exile/abjection from European fascism itself. And, of course, in the end, Lawrence is exiled from his own para-fascist topology, whose impressive imaginative scope correlates to the intertextual febrility which makes it just another transient idiolect, both affirmed and deconstructed even in the process of its production, within a process of such productions.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the core of Kristeva's psycho-poetics is the absolutely coextensive status of pathology and creativity in the modern artistic/psychotic text. This is to say that post-metaphysical art-speech is authentically read as the complex, Imaginary and Symbolic, symptom of a failure to repress unconscious mechanisms through which the speaking subject is constantly being formed and dissolved. The successful artist therefore has a heavy price to pay in psychopathology. I hope, although this thesis has not (or only very briefly and occasionally) been a comparative study, to have conveyed here something of my personal belief that no modern creative writer is more successful than Lawrence.

\* \* \* \* \*

But what, finally, of the woman who "creates" a theory of ontology based on dialectical/dialogical process, linguistic materiality and subjective estrangement?

Julia Kristeva has said that "[t]o work on language, to labour in the materiality of that which society regards as a means of contact and understanding, isn't that at one stroke to declare oneself a stranger (étranger) to language?" (quoted Roland Barthes, cited Moi 1995, 150). Is Kristeva a stranger? Is she "working through" her own cultural abjection when she writes on abjection? Come to this, is she a decadent symbolist, a regressive adolescent, a mimic of religious forms, a reinventor of love; is she, indeed, in some sense a fascist? This text has, up until now, been almost entirely complicit with Kristevan theory, since my main aim has been to support by exemplary application her claims about the cardinal abjection status of modernist writers. In the Conclusion, however, I want to interrogate Kristeva's textuality in order to identify what surely must, itself, be a post-metaphysical site of abjection, with its own idiolectual tropes and underlying pathology. I will, therefore, be offering some balance in a work which has not yet seriously questioned Kristeva's meta-discursive status, while this reversal of focus, as I suggested in the Introduction, might also be seen as an initial gesture towards a projected comparative study of Lawrence and Kristeva which locates them as paradigmatic modernist and postmodernist analogues.

## **CONCLUSION: THE ANALYST'S SYMPTOM**

Donald Kuspit (1990) presents the view that postmodern theories built around privileged aporias in meaning, such as the Lacanian Real, the Derridean trace, Lyotard's unrepresentable, Kristeva's Thing/chora/semiotic, etc., however consciously engaged these theories are in responding to a post-metaphysical crisis in meaning, should also be understood as more or less unconscious expressions of the crisis. The sublime-based aesthetics of Lyotard and Kristeva, Kuspit continues, are themselves a "species of avant-garde art", whose "oceanic" basis is an "artistic illusion serving [the theorist's] most desperate infantile needs" (1990, 55-6). Kristeva's theoretical production, in this case, folds in upon itself as a symptom of that which it diagnoses.

Kuspit's perspective might appear to be blocked by Kristeva's repeated insistence on the modern analyst's identification with the subject in crisis: moments of stylistic "poetic" extravagance often display her commitment to the semiotised text, while her literary readings hinge on the counter-transference of affect and phantasy. She registers her own desire and explores her own suffering. In her book on melancholia, she says:

I am trying to address an abyss of sorrow ... [that] lays claim upon us ... Where does this black sun come from? ... The wound I have just suffered, some setback or other in my love life or profession, some sorrow or bereavement affecting my relationship with close relatives--such are often the easily spotted triggers of my despair. (BS, 3)

Widespread depression is a sign of loss, "the loss of my being--and of Being itself. The depressed person is a radical, sullen atheist" (BS, 5). And Kristeva's writing preoccupied with a dead God is, she believes, permeated by her own "anxiety in Being" (BS, 7) -- "[m]y pain is ... [a] side of my philosophy..." (BS, 4). While philosophical treatises associating melancholia with lost meanings go back to the ancient Greeks, Kristeva has her analytic philosophy "share" the death-driven experience of an age characterised by Symbolic weakness, even as this experience is described. Clinical analysis similarly requires a register of the analyst's empathetic, or loving, identification.

For if I do not really love my patients, what could I understand in them, what could I tell them? Countertransference love is my ability to put myself in their place; looking, dreaming, suffering as if I were she, as if I were he ... A generous love ... Always compounded of regression and a certain amount of distance. (TL, 11)



A necessary distance exists, of course, inasmuch as the analyst must elaborate modes of negativity generated in the analysis, and hence the patient's suffering. The point is that with Kristeva herself saying she is a transference sharer, as well as a theoretician, of the epoch's psychic trauma, it might seem pointless to develop Kuspit's postmodern theorist characterised by infantile anxiety and oceanic illusion.<sup>115</sup>

Such an approach, however, might be valid if the Kristevan textual unconscious could be analysed according to Kristeva, as if Kristeva were a "patient", and not an analyst whose identification with forms of psychosis is pre-requisite to the symptom's elaboration. A procedure along these lines would maintain her basic theoretical principles, while identifying her desire exorbitant to the position she assumes *qua* producer of these principles. This is to say that I/we would undercut and assume the analyst's authority, which then is not carried over to sublimate the Kristevan symptom within her own counter-transference practice. As an example, take Kristeva's essay, "Stabat Mater", which rationally argues the need for a post-Virginal discourse of the mother, while a parallel textual movement gives a highly "poetic", phenomenological account of Kristeva's own pregnancy. Reading "Stabat" symptomatically, I suggest, means dispelling Kristeva's theoretical intentionality framing the semiotised passage. And this might involve seeing in the elaborative discourse (as we take the analyst's place) a fetishisation of the Madonna's reliquary significance, and a melancholy rumination on how to replace Her transcendental and ethical functions and thereby sublimate modern female (including the theorist's own) paranoia. Similarly, Kristeva's study of Symbolism in *Revolution in Poetic Language* would fold in upon itself as an intellectualisation of her own precocious fascination with the sublime, which collapses the analyst's "distance", and, as Kuspit suggests, makes the analysis inextricable from primary narcissistic phantasy.

None of the above, of course, elides, and it rather specifies, the paradox of using a discourse to undercut the discourse. In using Kristeva to undercut Kristeva, moreover, I

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<sup>115</sup>Sylvie Gambaudo precisely elaborates Kristeva's dialectical approach: "Kristeva envisages the interpretative discourse of the analyst as twofold. On the one hand, psychoanalytic discourse is a system of representation, that is to say a theoretical, normative construct of reality within which psychical activity occurs and can be known. On the other hand, the relationship between the analyst and the patient mobilises the affect and psychical representations of both protagonists and through the process of transference and countertransference creates a space where the desire and *jouissance* of her patient are respected and maintained" (Gambaudo 2000, p. 108).

psychologically complicate this paradox through my identification with Kristeva the analyst. Inasmuch as the Kristevan subject constructs self-identity in imaginary relations to the other, my belief that I can analyse her, as her, is both a subjective illusion and a function of the theoretical paradox. I am, quite simply, imagining that Kristeva is identified with the post-metaphysical psyche rather more than she knows, and that I, knowing what she knows, can know this. In the section below, then, I performatively eliminate the initial distinction which principally regulated this thesis, one between modernist symptom/catharsis and postmodern elaboration, and set up another (and quite imaginary) distinction between myself as analyst and Kristeva as analysand. I therefore continue, in accordance with my stipulation in the Introduction, to reify an objective analyst/meta-subject; though I will, at the very end of this thesis, speculate about personal intersubjective transformations that I may (be seen to) have undergone in relation to Kristeva and Lawrence. The following section, then, and as we might expect, broadly recapitulates key Kristevan perspectives used in this thesis: symbolism, intellectualism, sacred discourse, love, and aggressivity.

### **1. Decadence and Symbolism**

Kristeva's states the essential dialectic of the subject-in-process: "no writing exists that is not amatory, nor does an imagination exist that is not, manifestly or secretly, melancholic" (OMI, 13). The subject oscillates between nostalgia for the maternal Thing, and (amatory) attraction to the other/text. Kristevan discourse is based on identifying in other texts a nexus between uncompleted mourning for the mother, and symbolic jouissance as catharsis of the original loss. Her writing, however, is suffused by phantasmatic and affective responses to the absence and ecstasy it identifies.

Kristeva, in Black Sun, ruminates on loss, burial and grief, notably when seeing Holbein's The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb (1522) as an image of Mankind forsaken by God:

Does Holbein forsake us, as Christ, for an instant, had imagined himself forsaken?  
Or does he ... invite us to change the Christly tomb into a living tomb, to  
participate in the painted death and thus include it in our own life ... for if the  
living body, in opposition to the rigid corpse, is a dancing body, doesn't our life,  
through identification with death, become a "danse macabre" ... ? (BS, 113-4)

Kristeva is identifying a moment in Renaissance art foreshadowing the modern demise of Catholicist faith, and the correlative emergence of drive ambivalence between destruction and renewal. Holbein's painting suggests a "new" psychic space of death-in-life, though this pre-modern work presents God's brief absence as it is imagined within the Christian narrative. Kristeva's cultural-aestheticist standpoint, meanwhile, is inextricable from a melancholic reverie repetitively cycling terms -- "life", "death", "body" -- while her interrogative syntax narcissistically echoes the painting's negation of symbolic meanings. Her language sometimes explicitly signals a withdrawal from culture, and desire for the unsignifiable Thing: "I say that the object of my grief is less the village ... or the lover that I miss here and now than the blurred representation that I keep and put together in the darkroom of what thus becomes my psychic tomb" (BS, 61). In a discourse that is neither metaphysics nor poetry, Kristeva is a morbid Decadent fascinated by suicide, as her complex negotiation of language and inhibition merges into an eroticisation of (signifiers of) death. Her "invitation" to the reader to see the borderline psyche represented in (Holbein's) melancholic art, is couched in a sepulchral rhetoric of enigma through which she characterises the modern psyche. We are melodramatically seduced into a "living tomb", the symbolic space of her depressive contemplation which she insists on making "our" space too.

Kristeva's depressive engagements with the art-text are the obverse of her representations of the provisional subject's emergence from melancholia, in semiotic language that is both infinitely allusive and estranged from meaning:

FLASH -- instant of time or of dream without time; inordinately swollen atoms of a bond, a vision, a shiver, a yet formless, unnameable embryo. Epiphanies ... Words that are always too distant, too abstract for this underground swarming of seconds, folding in unimaginable places ... WORD FLESH. From one to the other, eternally, broken up visions, metaphors of the invisible. ("Stabat Mater" KR, 162)

Kristeva's language is again exorbitant to description, but rather than a retentive, inhibited identification with death, there is a manic vision of dislocation and transcendence. As she oscillates between analysis and self-identification, Kristeva's identifications vary between melancholy and ecstatic registers of affect. She characterises as pathological the tendency in symbolist and modernist art to compensate for lost hieratic discourse with fetishised hyper-signification (Symbols), whose "universal soul" the delusory artist presides over like a priest. Yet she generates her own discourse of mystic apocalyptic Flashes which

"empathise" with the artist's manic delusions, while also being a product of her faith in the iconography of psychoanalysis.

## 2. Revolutionary Scribe

Kristeva is an observer and producer of secular epiphanies which "convert" the unified writing subject through linguistic heterogeneity as a revelation of primary processes. The epiphanic/symbolist text, she argues, exposes the psychosis latent in the subject's perpetual linguistic estrangement, as words collapse into pre-oedipal space where orality (narcissism) and detachment (alterity) are confused. This space, Kristeva contends, founds the omnipotent hallucinations of patriarchal religious discourse -- but in the Kristevan economy of desire, we see the pre-oedipal substituting for religion, as Freudian drive theory is used to reinvent religious structures. For Patricia Waugh, Kristeva's modifications of (Romantic and modernist modifications of) Christian epiphany articulate a desire to transcend that is as old as identity crises themselves, here transformed within a mystic essentialism of the infantile body (cf. 1992, 10). In Kristeva's epiphany, the body repressed in hieratic discourse is nostalgically glimpsed as a Real heavenly home, a maternal Eden, corresponding to a somatic accession which undercuts metaphysical transcendence by revealing its essence in primal forces.

In Revolution in Poetic Language the primum mobilis of the subject appears as the chora,

...a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated, ... [an] extremely provisional articulation ... We differentiate this uncertain and indeterminate articulation from a disposition that already depends on representation ... although our theoretical description of the chora is itself part of the discourse of representation that offers it as evidence ... [it] precedes evidence ... Although the chora can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitively posited: as a result, one can situate the chora and, if necessary, lend it a topology, but one can never give it axiomatic form. (RPL, 25-6)

The chora is not a conceptual object. We can talk about it (in a discourse of representation), and we can experience (as *jouissance*) its radically creative presence: but we can never comprehend it. The above block citation gives just an indication of the paraphrastic pains Kristeva takes when repetitively distinguishing (and protecting) the chora's quasi-spiritual purity from "profane" predicative discourse. It is, curiously, possible to see in Revolution, as in "Study of Thomas Hardy", a sacred-logical bifurcation

between defence of an always-already essential category of creative authenticity, and an unacknowledged codifying movement forming the theorist-self's border against the "abject" of metaphysically defined culture. Like the "Study", Kristeva's text articulates a logic of separation operative through a highly exclusive preoccupation with the body, and moving to a final section handing down moral Laws of aesthetic signifying practice (a perhaps interesting notion which cannot be elaborated further here).

In Tales of Love the chora's function as ontogenic first cause is overlaid by the Imaginary Father, the infantile experience of transition between mother and father which is "addressed" by Flashes of saturated metaphoricity, correlative to the creative subject's transferential openness to the other (text). Kristeva's insistence (following Winnicott, as we saw) that the imaginary father's paradox of primary narcissism and idealised alterity be accepted and not rationally questioned, contributes to the Kristeva reader's sense that a mysterious exalted space is being defended. While continuing her revolutionary refusal of logocentric transcendence, and marking the modern poet's delusional faith in a language of collapsed meanings, Kristeva intensifies her own fundamentalist commitment to the "magical" status of primal space and its maternal/semiotic "woman-effect". The chora is central during the phase in her work when psychoanalytic principles are being deployed to conflate style with somatism, and so to emphasise art's transgressive function. The imaginary father's infinite love, by contrast, emerges after Kristeva has firmly located the suffering artist in a post-metaphysical crisis, when she is explicitly reinvesting exhausted theological elements, and, in the process, bringing the hieratic status of psychoanalysis into clearer focus.

### **3. Preacher-Prophet of Love**

As the artist's privileged access to pre-oedipal space becomes, in Kristeva's writing, more and more a product of post-theological angst, she increasingly analyses modern art's reliquary fascination with Christian imagery, an approach which contains her own narcissistic expropriation of religious tropes. As Kristeva explores Dostoevsky's preoccupation with forgiveness (in Black Sun), she simultaneously replicates Christianity's topoi of revelation and redemption within her analytic discourse. Instead of sin being washed away by God's redeeming love, abject horror is purged in speech acts addressing the imaginary father, whose vision of the infinite crystallises as a vista onto the promised

land by a "cosmopolitan" community of those who have heard and understood the psychoanalytic Word. Kristeva seems to be in a pulpit, addressing rows of occupied couches, interpreting a sacred text:

According to Dostoevsky, forgiveness seems to say: Through my love, I exclude you from history for a while, I take you for a child, and this means that I recognise [your] unconscious motivations ... and allow you to make a new person out of yourself ... Forgiveness does not cleanse actions. It raises the unconscious from beneath the actions and has it meet a loving other--an other who does not judge but hears my truth in the availability of love, and for that very reason allows me to be reborn. Forgiveness is the luminous stage of dark, unconscious timelessness--the stage at which the latter changes laws and adopts the bond with love as a principle of renewal of both self and other. (BS, 204-5)

The opaque language resonates as a prophet's (and notably suggests Lawrence's) discourse of mystified "darkness" and purifying unconsciousness. The language, however, is Kristeva's, and the artist's catharsis is serving to illuminate analytic knowledge.

"[W]hat", asks Kristeva, rhetorically, "is psychoanalysis if not an infinite quest for rebirths through the experience of love...?" (TL, 1). Transferential empathy dispels abjection through an experience of the other's unlimited potential, and thus "asserts the end of codes ... [and] the permanence of love as a builder of broken spaces" (TL, 381-2). Transference love "transcends the hazards of love" (TL, 382) defined by faith in Christian codes of brotherhood and marriage, and revives the relational subject in a space beyond these voided (psychotically hazardous) identifications. This might seem a familiar rhetoric, rather Birkinesque in fact. The Kristevan analyst is a didactic figure privileged within apocalyptic humanity as the prophet of an amatory relation that both essentialises and transcends its societal form/s. Transference mobilisation "causes truths to emerge...", truths of unconscious free association which liberate modernity's "false selves ... Has not the art of all periods already blazed that trail?" (TL, 380). From Tales of Love onward, there is a subtle shift in Kristeva's writing in which psychoanalysis often subsumes the artist's authentic status, a shift reflecting her emphasis on art as a locus of suffering (rather than revolutionary expression). Analysis, not modern art, is the "new form of self-knowledge", which comprehends "the very essence of the psyche ... [in] interminable construction-deconstruction" (NM, 44). The transference is paradigmatic of the intersubjective imaginary at work, the "art of living [in] a modern era" (SO, 13), while the

art-text's "sacred" illuminations are a function of the artist's paranoid confusion which is understood by the analyst as an element in her universal enlightenment project.

Kristeva's reader might, of course, choose to be a postmodern "ironist", a deconstructive "advocate of emptiness..." (SO, 10), irreverently cavorting among futile, signifying displacements. But s/he should, Kristeva argues, be a "believer..." (SO, 32), who reads (everything) analytically, and thus meditatively accesses textual-unconscious processes in an "intense ... exploration of memory and body" (*ibid.*). S/he will thus achieve a state of free association, and a sense of "weightlessness in the infinity of cultures..." (*ibid.*). Epiphany merges *via* Paradise into Utopia, as the speaking subject's "fire of tongues" (TL, 253) is afflated in Kristeva's Rapture: the Unconscious returns, cultural-linguistic borders dissolve, and (weightless) people are lifted out of abjection to form a joyous community of (constantly) speaking subjects. So can we say that the imaginary father is a kind of God, not of Progress, but of Process? We can, because Kristeva says it: "it is this God who ... must be recovered to try to valorise the function of the father..." (FB, 182). The cosmopolitan foreigner's sophisticated inter-culturalism (intertextualism) centres on his worship of the archaic father's sublime enigma, a Genesis moment when the paternal guarantee of Symbolic attraction appears before the "No" of the super-ego as a pre-cultural Other, a totality of love/transitivity.

Kristeva's cerebral work, then, is peppered with inspirational hyperbole in the representational service of a mystic absolute space. I want, nevertheless, at this point in the analytic inversion, to move to another Kristevan theoretical vector, and thus take a more secular approach to the symptom within her production.

#### **4. The Intellectual/ist**

"Can we really speak of inhibition when faced with so much intellectual curiosity?" (NM, 92). This, we recall, is Kristeva's rhetorical question about "Martine", the intellectualising patient whose fascination with abstract theory forms a defensive screen of discourse repressing free association and affect. In Chapter 2, I argued that Kristeva draws (albeit indirectly) on Anna Freud's model of the adolescent intellectualist who fervently takes up a series of metaphysical positions "as-if" each is the absolute truth. I went on to work with the idea of an artist-intellectual whose metaphysics is characterised by textual eclecticism,

terminological free association, and a dialectic of ego-formation and dissolution. In this model, the writer creates a series of transient theoretical paradigms, which function in a narcissistic economy to re/generate the self and its ontological reality. Such a writer, who appropriates from a vast range of discourses while "filtering" primal phantasies of emergence into being, I argued, is Lawrence. But is Kristeva also a creative intellectualist whose eclectic theory is reducible to narcissistic phantasy? In the final section in this analysis (on aggressivity) I will speculate on Kristeva's unconscious relations to metaphysical theorists whose terminology she appropriates. I want, here, to continue by describing a general instability within her paradigms and ideal identifications.

Kristeva ostentatiously declares herself a function of intertextual processes: "as you may have noticed, I have no 'I' anymore, no imaginary, if you wish; everything escapes or comes together in theory, or politics, or activism..." (DL, 161). Her theoretical modulations, however, suggest a volatile imagination articulating an anxious logic of separation. Jacqueline Rose argues that Kristeva's shifts from a "celebration of the semiotic [Revolution] to abjection [Powers] and back to ideality [Tales and beyond] reveal the instability of fantasy itself" (1990, 163). In the early-1970s, the chora's rhythms were absorbed in stylistic analyses which made language the site of estrangement. In Powers of Horror, by contrast, Kristeva exposes the abject maternal body which metaphysical language repressed. The imaginary father of love might then be seen to alleviate Kristeva's own horror, as she imagines a third term, a paternal function, a new mode of transcendence. Kristeva writes herself out of the abjection to which she exposed herself. An increasingly personal, self-analytic inflection appears in her writing during the late-1970s and early-1980s, during her explication of the abject body. This is followed by the imaginary father paradigm, the meditation on depression in Black Sun, and her "re-emergence" in the cosmopolitan project, which, in series, vacillate between positive and negative poles of phantasy, and intellectually act out borderline instability and inner conflict on the broadest scale.<sup>116</sup>

Leslie Hill (1990, 137 ff.) observes Kristeva's shifts in nationalist identifications, as she extols and subsequently rejects French Marxist Communism, the Chinese Cultural

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<sup>116</sup>Jennifer Stone sees Kristeva's oscillations between horror and attraction as a "Freudian paradigm for neurosis" (1983, p. 45).



Revolution and American postmodernity. In a context of the "adolescent" psyche, there is something of Lawrence's projected locations of Ranim about Kristeva's marginalisation of the avant-garde in Left Bank cafés, Chinese communes, and the lofts and studios of New York, set against an exhausted and sterile Europe -- though France is rehabilitated by her in the late-1980s, through its tradition of welcoming foreigners. These foreign places, these "elsewheres", become provisional ideal spaces in which to project ideas about a revolutionary language and subject. Like Lawrence, Kristeva uses entire countries to symbolise the potential of creative production, while her analytic social project merges (as the Ranim social project does) into an exclusive, even elitist, vision of the unhomed subject. Kristeva reifies alienated subjectivity in/as the "deject", "immigrant", "cosmopolitan", and so on, whose abstract location at the borders of language and primal phantasy correlates to her vision of radical thinkers exclusively capable of journeying within the modernist narrative: "[s]uch a text necessarily attracts a certain number of admirers or even accomplices from among the 'others,' the 'dissimilar,' the strange, foreigners, and exiles" (DL, 158). The aesthetic text is another country reserved for the Stranger, an angst-ridden anti-hero, the noble, wounded writer-intellectual. If, moreover, countries are symbols of estranging textuality, while estranging texts are countries, then Kristeva rigorously polices these textual states.

## 5. Aggressivity

People are sometimes attracted to Kristeva's theory because of their sense of her compassion, particularly in the later work. And, indeed, her nurturing voice can be seductive:

I also hope you share my sincere belief that I am concerned about other people. Take my son, for instance. I am forever intrigued by his first steps, his first words, his schoolwork, his loves, his successes, and his failures, which inspire me and exhaust me. To tell you the truth, any sign from him makes me melt. The people we love strip us of our means such that reason, which never ceases to construct a logical framework for action, is brought to a halt ... Love is neither a predilection nor a dream, but an absolute identification, a reshaping of boundaries ... Love is a short circuit in the unconscious space that sustains another person... (TS, 331)

What (intellectual) reader, estranged and melancholic in vacuous modernity, and nostalgic for his mother, could resist? Kristeva's personal statement of devotion merges into one of her evocative celebrations of love's regressive mystery. Such expressions, as Juliet Flower MacCannell says, "account in part for [Kristeva's] popularity with those who are

attitudinally frustrated with 'deconstruction'; colleagues and students alike voice the sentiment that she is 'more serious' than Derrida, she 'cares more'" (1986b, 326). These postmodern camp followers become complicit, through narcissism, with Kristeva's own position against the violence that deconstruction does to a non-reified, unacknowledged, but presently alienated subject of desire (v. supra, Introduction).

I, of course, have latterly situated the "love" element in Kristeva's model of primal separation as in some sense a therapeutic strategy in her own abject imaginary. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that the foundational element in Kristeva's thinking is hatred. Her theory incorporates Freud's identification of the psyche as a battleground between love and hate, along with Klein's conception of hate as a projection of the death instinct rooted in infantile separation. To speak precisely, Freud's universal dialectic is combined with Kleinian maternal negativity and filtered through Lacan's theory of desire and language, in Kristeva's account of abject violence to the mother as an archaic, and permanent, requirement of Symbolic identity. These destructive impulses are made explicit by Kristeva's privileged alienated subject, who constantly addresses primal abjection in an aggressive logic of self-separation from established meanings. And Revolution in Poetic Language itself is, in an obvious sense, an aggressive work absolutely hostile to meaning and identity: indeed, Kristeva the writing subject might be said to have a pronounced aggressive streak.

Jan Campbell links the mother in Powers of Horror to a pervasive misogyny and homophobia in Kristeva's writing, which is "intolerant of feminism, lesbians and single parents for their dangerous rejection of the paternal role, because for her this signals a failure to internalise phallic lack and castration..." (2001, 106). Indeed, many critics have argued that Kristeva's insistence on violence to the maternal/feminine/body reflects her loyalty to the paternal principle.<sup>117</sup> This typically feminist perspective sees the analyst first reducing the maternal body to a field of energy which is sublimated by male artists, and then worse, in the late-1970s, revisiting the Freudian primal scene only to out-Herod Herod with the horror-mother of abjection. Kristeva, from this point of view, identifies with the masculine imaginary, specifically Freud's Unconscious, which, in Lawrence's

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<sup>117</sup>See, for example, Jardine (1986), pp. 110-15; Gross (1990), pp. 94 ff.; Rose (1990), pp. 144 ff.; and Smith (1996), pp. 152 ff.

terminology, is a cellar of horrors containing the mother's bastard spawn of incest, anal aggressivity and fetishistic orality.

It is only fair, however, to observe that feminist critics of Kristeva play down her working distinction between patriarchy in the Symbolic and the artist's revolutionary aesthetics; they fail properly to register that Kristeva's insistence on radical violence coextends with her insistence that paternal/metaphysical guarantees cannot be rehabilitated. When she talks about a need to recover the paternal function, Kristeva is not talking about Symbolic order and its constitutional Other, but about the Other qua guarantee of limitless intertextual activity, an imaginary space addressing the pre-oedipal space of infinite attraction, the imaginary father. This is not to say that Kristeva's subversive writing is not oriented positively to traditional paternalist discourse through her ambivalent appropriation of religious language. And it is not to say, either, that her textual aggressivity cannot be thought of as a masculinist identification which centres on rejection of the feminine as an expression of her "cult" of the primal mother's compliance. Rather, instead of elaborating an oedipal Kristeva, or taking her side against those (feminists) who do, it is more interesting to situate her notional phallic aggressivity in her own terms, as an aspect of paternal foreclosure or super-ego suspension, generating a power-identification, not with patriarchy, but with a "horde" of infantilised men.

So what, for the precocious Kristeva, might constitute the rejected authority of the super-ego, and who are the horde? Leaving aside the second part of the question for now, her theory obviously deposes the combined authority of traditional religion, rationalist philosophy, objective science and realist aesthetics. This brings us, as promised above, to a discussion of Kristeva's appropriation of metaphysical terms, which will develop the idea of her unstable (intellectualist) paradigm idealisation when identifying destructive impulses propelling this process.

In the Introduction we saw how Kristeva conflates Kant's sublime with Hegel's Notion, two "advent" tropes which are modified and redeployed to characterise the subject-in-process. In a pathological frame, however, Kristeva's inclusive textual landscape conceals a hostile articulation which sees her not so much synthesising ideas as repeatedly "killing" the paternal function. Hegel's Notion of the Absolute is aggressively "suspended",

ob-literated beneath a new language of Freudian drives, Platonic choraism and Kantian sublime immanence -- though Kristeva simultaneously annihilates the seminal meanings of Plato's chora, Kant's moral categories, and Freud's oedipal imperative (I have often referred to her pre-oedipal "revisions" of Freud, which in this context are hostile projections destroying the repressive subject [Freud] in a field of psychotic paranoia). Kristeva, I am suggesting, prolifically synthesises because, like one of Theweleit's embattled super-heroes, like her theorised abject subject, she sees and engages with enemies everywhere. Anna Smith observes that

...those who accuse Kristeva of an out and out hostility to women have obviously not read "From Ithaca to New York". In the midst of her rather patronising dismissal of American feminism, there suddenly occurs an astonishing outburst against (academic) men. The trouble with these "senile" male intellectuals (or "pimps"! ) is that they are either full of "inane gallantry or libidinous paternalism", their avaricious desires fading as soon as the female intellectual begins to speak. (Smith 1996, 64)

And when she speaks, the intellectualist-in-process stages conflicts of transgression between her own forming discourse, and other (almost always male) bodies of theory. The writer is triumphantly, transiently, integrated through acts of synthesis/obliteration which expose and sublimate the other's material interiority. A significant discursive body is "penetrated" and its terminological "blood and guts" ripped out, in a sacrificial moment generating "Kristeva", the advocate of an unregulated (inter)textual Darwinism. The densely proliferated "technical" terms in *Revolution in Poetic Language* celebrate rivalry and destruction, as they strive for mastery of the ineffable space they elaborate, in an intellectual "screen" of theory which (recalling her terms) "disavows available imaginary codes" to erect a terminological monument to the writer at war with the Symbolic. Kristeva's account of the "open" intertextual psyche constructs a fortress of signifiers within which she exists in intellectual abjection, scavenging the intertext's vast range of meanings, only to converge them in a monomaniacal discourse "filtering" infantile rebirth phantasy as the subject-in-process.<sup>118</sup> Her liberating ontology thus conceals a primitive "ego maintenance" dynamic refusing the limits of self-identity, expressed in a tendency to

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<sup>118</sup>"Fortress of signifiers": I allude here, ironically, to Kristeva's own description, in *Powers of Horror*, of the borderline subject whose prolific use of language builds narcissism, while refusing recognition of the Other's desire. "The constituting barrier between subject and object has ... become an insurmountable wall. An ego, wounded to the point of annulment, barricaded and untouchable, cowers somewhere, nowhere ... Separation exists, and so does language, even brilliantly at times, with apparently remarkable intellectual realisations. But no current flows ... into such a 'fortified castle'..." (Kristeva 1982, p. 47).

total (textual) domination through displacement/murder. In this case, we may have a different, and perhaps disturbed, response to Roland Barthes's famous endorsement of Kristeva's theory, which "takes up all the space it deals with, fills it precisely, making it necessary for anyone who counts himself out to reveal himself as an opponent or a censor".<sup>119</sup> Her elaboration of the counter-rationalist sui generis subject who is because he is estranged, is itself intellectually estranged, perversely refusing its place in the history of rational ideas, while yet incorporating these ideas in hostile acts of primary narcissistic omnipotence.

Academic colleagues often induce rage, women theorists are largely disregarded (Kristeva's considerations of feminist theory are brief and curt), "great" male theories are ruthlessly expropriated, and mostly male artists are analysed. As Alice Jardine says,

...[i]t became increasingly clear through the 1970s that Kristeva was not going to participate in hypothetical descriptions of the female subject's potential liberation from patriarchy ... By the mid-seventies, it was obvious that it was the Male-Subject-Creative-of-Our-Dominant-and-Marginal Culture that Kristeva was going to x-ray ... In her book, Pouvoir de l'horreur, Kristeva explored what she sees as the fundamental condition of ... twentieth-century man--and by man she means men: Abjection ... [a] new "male condition"... (1986, 110, 112)

If Kristeva is a narcissist aggressively oriented towards the metaphysical super-ego, then modern/ist male artists, of course, are her precocious horde ranged in experimental opposition to dominant male (patriarchal) culture. When she speaks of a "[s]on permanently at war with father, not to take his place ... [but] rather, to signify what is untenable in the symbolic, nominal, paternal function" (DL, 138), she is (as we saw in Chapter 5) fully aware of associations she makes between modern artists, Freud's lawless horde, and fascist fantasy.<sup>120</sup> The importance of the nexus between stylistic fragmentation and hyper-aggression is apparent in her choice of Céline, an artist who is a fascist sympathiser, as the paradigm of abjection. But does the analyst's investment in filiative rebellion generate a sinister identification with the fascist?

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<sup>119</sup>"L'étrangère", Quinzaine Littéraire, May 1-15 (1970), p. 20 (translated). See also the back cover of Powers of Horror (1982). Previously cited here in Chapter 2.

<sup>120</sup>Interestingly, Alice Jardine sees in the "biographemic texture" (1986, p. 108) of Kristeva's writing an underlying fear and paranoia, which links her early life in communist Bulgaria with the later complex negotiation of "revolutionary" style and fascist tropes.

For Juliet Flower MacCannell, Kristeva's analysis of Céline develops an anti-Semitic orientation in her reading of Jewish sacred discourse. MacCannell cites from Powers of Horror:

The system of abominations sets in motion the persecuting machine in which I assume the place of the victim in order to justify the purification that will separate me ... Mother and death, both abominated, rejected, slyly build a victimising and persecuting machine at the cost of which I become a subject of the Symbolic as well as Other of the Abject. (MacCannell 1986b, 341 [PH, 112])

The critic deduces from this

...that ... the Jews themselves are responsible for the holocaust ... a foregone conclusion built into the[ir] rational, selective and religious basis ... Persecution and murder of Jews is only a return of the repressed, the repression of the "constant" forces of mother and murder... (*ibid.*)

MacCannell's point is that Kristeva's alignment with the artistic horde against patriarchal discourse generates her vision of Nazi violence as being part of Jewish identity, built into the logic of its exclusive, abjecting language. After centuries of transforming the loathed body in codes of abominated alterity, a secular age of weak sacred Law allows an irruption of the abject, historically reified in an apocalyptic revenge of/on the physical body.

"The implications of ... [Kristeva's] writing are chilling ... be a Jew or be a Nazi: two faces of the same thing..." (1986b, 342), observes MacCannell, for whom Kristeva's conflation of psychoanalysis and history is entirely unacceptable.

[It] seems to me a potential abuse, not only of the freedom of allegoresis in respect to ideologies ... but of Freud as well. Freud knew he was engaging in mythic thinking, in rewriting origin myths (Beyond the Pleasure Principle) for the specific purpose of curing our ills, of palliating our contemporary conditions. Kristeva's use of mythified or figural history could make no such claim; indeed, given her faith in the panchronic force of the maternal (Mother Nature?) and of murder, there are no cures. (*ibid.*, 341)

While I would not refute outright this identification of an elementary category error, it does seem to me somewhat disingenuous. Kristeva's ontologising "leap" from psycholinguistic concepts to historical events perhaps implies a "mythical" diachronic model of sacro-textual repression, and the eventual "return" of mortality, violence and chaos; but Powers of Horror's account of fascism centres on synchronic identifications with the abject which integrate the subject's counter-Symbolic orientation through anti-Semitic fantasy. Kristeva makes the fascist a subject of the cultural-imaginary: he engages with the Jews'

textual authority (the Bible) and reifies/imagines an historical timeline of "oppression" by them. The holocaust is an epochal product of the Nazis' imagined relations to the Jew, of their identification with the abject and schizoid phantasy, of their construction of (Jewish) history with themselves as its final solution.

MacCannell also misrepresents Kristeva by eliding her justification for any fascist identifications she might evince, as being her necessary counter-transferential identification with the fascist, specifically Célinian, imaginary. Anna Smith similarly misprizes the analytic context of Kristeva's reading in Powers of Horror, and is made aghast by Kristeva's apparent complicity:

It seems abundantly clear that Kristeva's quest for estrangement has led her to forget her own space and leap to a jubilant identification with the body of Céline's texts. The female voyager identifies herself with Céline's voyage through the night. (1996, 154)

I, too, of course, have set aside the analyst's responsive mobilisation of affect and phantasy, and analysed Kristeva as if her quest for estrangement, her paradigm instability, her religious "feeling", her fascination with love, and her identification with fascism could be seen as a failure to maintain an elaborative distance from her post-metaphysical patient. I initially dealt with the paradoxical, and thereby imaginary and performative, status of this approach. But have I not then increasingly subverted my account of Kristeva's unconscious symptom by refusing to acknowledge her "failure", by registering it as successful counter-transference? I might see this as a failure to sustain my analytic position in relation to Kristeva, which is to say, to sustain the paradox of her analytic relation to herself; but I might also suppose that I wanted to defend and preserve her integrity. Why?

The reason is that my reading of Kristeva and Lawrence in this thesis is a dialogue that contains my own phantasmatic and affective engagement with both writers. In the Introduction, I stated my intention in this thesis to elide explicit registration of these processes, and rather to take up a meta-position in relation to Lawrence as the Kristevan analyst. And this is to say that I would not negotiate my own desire as a mechanism within the intersubjective relations of my text. According to Kristeva, transferential identification exists in all writing as a function of intertextual negativity, but I argued that it is a matter of choice for the analytic reader to "actualise" his unconscious wishes in relation to "other"

textual subjects -- which in my case means not just Lawrence, but Kristeva -- and thus to be a self-analysing writing subject. I thereby ruled out negotiating my own counter-transferential responses on the ground that the desire and jouissance of the "I" who wrote this thesis is there for the willing reader to discover.

I have, then, just recalled an early section in this thesis aimed at situating my position throughout. I want, however, finally and briefly, to assist my notional analyst-reader by offering a partial account of the writing "I"-in-process. My thesis was developed in an argument which contextualised Lawrence's textuality through a series of Kristevan themes. "I", meanwhile, at this stage, have evolved in a series of intersubjective/textual encounters which generatedthetic form and content in a field of infantile affect and phantasy -- and this is to say that my argument was always a function of my desire. Desire, of course, involves hostile and repudiatory as well as empathetic identifications, and, having lately looked through the whole of this thesis, I see a vein of hostility which eventually takes in both Lawrence and Kristeva. I will try below to analyse this stratum in my imaginary through its formal effects, using examples taken from various stages in my text.

I entered into this project assuming that Kristeva is vastly more intelligent than both Lawrence and myself. This idea led to resentment of Lawrence: he was rambling and incoherent, a waste of time as an object of study. Kristeva, by contrast, was a kind of imaginary father, a still largely unmapped field of wisdom consonant with maternal nurture. I, like others exposed to post-structuralist thought, was most attracted to Kristeva's compassionate "caring" voice. I became envious of this stupid "brother" who would be the focus of attention, when I wanted to be the (post-metaphysical) analysand. And so I petulantly refused Lawrence a substantial place in the Introduction. I justified this elision, however, by arguing that I would need to set out Kristeva's theory at length, and in isolation, because of its complexity. At the same time I dismissed a comparative, say post-Romantic, approach to the two writers on the basis that an applicatory text should have priority, and I then characterised this approach using a postmodern-modernist dichotomy widely regarded as spurious (and I said as much): it offered the attractive image of a modernist child-fool, while generalising and dispersing my hostile perception of Lawrence as a privileged analysand, the sole focus of Mother's attention.



Throughout the thesis, and with what I believe was honesty and commitment, I tried to understand Kristeva's theory, and thence reveal Lawrence's unconscious symptom and textual catharsis. Each chapter, meanwhile, contained a number of malicious assaults on Lawrence's integrity. In Chapter 1, for instance, when talking about Lawrence's phenomenology of abject phantasy, I observed his habitual contempt for the epistolary feedback about his work provided by women friends. My overt contempt for Lawrence at this point surely reflects my early aggrieved perception of wasted time in having Kristeva, the great reader of texts, "read" him. When, in Chapter 2, I applied Kristeva's model of the adolescent's open-system psyche and its creatively unstable identifications, I took pains to augment this model with Anna Freud's straightforward pathologisation of the adolescent personality. While this move, again, was justifiable (and justified) as a nexus of Kristeva with a seminal influence which she does not acknowledge, it was also a hostile writing act. Through it I was able to elaborate, beyond Lawrence's precocious semiotics, an unpleasantly immature "personality" constituted by emotional inhibition, moral bullying, betrayal of friendship, self-serving utopianism, and general misanthropic narcissism. I also illustrated Lawrence's "stupidity" by showing his fragmentary incorporation of ideas in philosophy and science.

In Chapter 3, I elaborated Lawrence's logocentrist or Symbolic orientation, with its bi-logical vectors of, on the one hand, pre-predicated (aesthetic) Laws of identity, and, on the other, a journey of (abject) identity-in-process. As the analyst-reader, and as always, I was ostensibly concerned to show Lawrence's oedipal crisis and struggle to re-establish/invent symbolic identity. As a rational argument, Chapter 3 claimed to be (and, I think, was) an innovative perspective on the counter-cultural artist's disguised affiliation to repressive and taxonomic discourse. The theoretical approach, however, continued my perverse assault on Lawrence's integrity: first, by developing his "unpleasant personality" through the idea of a duplicitous (bi-logical) rhetoric, and, secondly, by associating his writing with Leviticus, and thus placing it directly in the line of Kristeva's fire on monotheist sacred oppression. Here, Mother, I seemed to say, is not your patient/son but your (and my) enemy.

In Chapter 4, my animosity to Lawrence diminished somewhat when I addressed the most affirmative vector in Kristeva's psycho-linguistic aesthetics, the nexus of metaphoricity, love and the imaginary father. Nevertheless, desire can again be seen to have generated structure. The obvious Kristevan opposition to an "amatory" thematic of relationality and play would have been (its psychic obverse) abject-melancholic inhibition. While identifying this dialectic in Women in Love, I subsumed it within an oedipal/pre-oedipal opposition through which I was able to associate Lawrence with the repressive misogyny of Lacan, another "enemy" of Kristeva. While the artist's creative imaginary, at this point, was ostensibly aligned with Kristeva against Lacan's "bleak" vision of deluded humanity, I used the familiar idea of Lawrence's polyvalence to permeate the amatory movement with "oedipal" modes of repression. The result was that my analysis of abject pathology and affirmations of the metaphorical imaginary were overdetermined by suggestions that Lawrence is a "Lacanian" thinker. Again, it is worth emphasising my firm view (for otherwise I commit a kind of academic suicide here) that my aggressive impulses were "sublimated" in legitimate theoretical connections.

In Chapter 5, just as earlier I used Anna Freud's theory to equate Lawrence with the biological adolescent, I used Klaus Theweleit's texts to equate Lawrence with fascism per se. Kristeva's essentially amoral correlation of the "psychotic" artist and fascist was thus refracted through an analysis of profoundly immoral historical acts. Kristeva's understanding of the artist's (and our) potential identification with fascism's comprehension of metaphysical loss merged (albeit with terminological consistency) into Theweleit's underscored censure of retrospective fascist novels. I further demonised Lawrence's homosexual tendencies via Theweleit's ideas of the fascist filiarchal bond, cognisant of Kristeva's semiological equation of anal sadism with linguistic aggressivity. By now, however, although still somewhat hostile to Lawrence, the "I" in-process in this thesis had undergone a significant change.

In trying to understand Kristeva I often made use of secondary sources, through which I became unintentionally exposed to negative perceptions of her work. This had an erosive effect on my worshipful identification with the nurturing parent, the One-who-knows. I increasingly felt a sense of betrayal which obliquely permeated into the latter stages of the thesis. Sometimes a footnote registered my "awareness" of some captious

perspective, while in the main text in Chapter 5 -- ostensibly to assist understanding of why a modern analyst can link homosexuality with fascism -- I discussed at some length the extreme homophobia of early object-relations theory. I was, however, forced by the established thetic position (facilitated by continued hostility to Lawrence) to retain my Kristevan identification until the analysis concluded. When it did (in the final chapter), my repressed hostility to Kristeva irrupted in the Conclusion's comprehensive reversal -- I even made a point of structuring the assault according to my prior main themes, as if obliterating each of the five chapters. But then, and responding to a question set some time ago, my aggressive position could not be sustained, and I increasingly defended Kristeva from myself. I, the analysand, thus end/ed up as Kristeva would no doubt want me to end up, having worked through my pathological affect, eventually to give the transference's "poisonous gift" (NM, 86) to the analyst, and so achieve a provisional catharsis. My envious anger at Lawrence was displaced and is discharged, and I accept the "reality" that I am ambivalent about Kristeva. I recognise her flaws and I am separated from this sublime-phallic mother, while I find metaphysical shelter in her model of (further) writing as a function of exile, connection and self-comprehension.

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