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## D. H. LAWRENCE, JOHN THOMAS, AND DIONYSOS

*Eric Russell Bentley*

### Sayings of D. H. Lawrence:

Let us submit to the knowledge that there are aristocrats and plebeians born, not made. . . . Some amongst us are born fit to govern and some are born only to be governed.

The sight of a true lord, a noble, a nature-hero, puts the sun into the heart of the ordinary man.

The hero is obsolete and the leader of men is a backnumber. . . . The leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and men and women, and not the one up one down, lead on I follow, *ich dien* sort of business.

I can never see how my fellow man should make me kill another man. . . . I do esteem the individual above everything else.

CRITICS of D. H. Lawrence's thought have been either scornful or soulful. Some early evaluators of Lawrence's "message" were so blind with zeal that they did not trouble to think out social implications at all. Other critics have been content to show that Lawrence was a fascist, on the assumption that this discovery disposed of him once for all. Others thought the merit or the modernity of Lawrence's work sufficient proof that he was not a fascist. But, in truth, Lawrence's thought is sufficiently clear in 1942 and, if it is often illiberal, readers of today will not be so surprised at the fact as were the reviewers of the 'twenties.

Since the Christian religion ceased to be accepted automatically by men of imagination, many myths have been devised. *The Four Zoas* was Blake's attempt to interpret the creation of man in the light of his own awareness. In the twentieth century the two greatest mythopoeic geniuses have been W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence. (T. S. Eliot and James Joyce have employed old myths rather than created new ones.) The myth that is set forth in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* is a pure

emanation of Heroic Vitalism.<sup>1</sup> This myth is the core of Lawrence's teaching.

Like Carlyle and Nietzsche, Lawrence was born into a very religious home where the mother ruled. Like Carlyle and Nietzsche he was taken out of the warm bath of his early evangelicalism and plunged into the rational and scientific skepticism of his time. What the eighteenth century was to Carlyle, the nineteenth was to Lawrence. Carlyle's life was a battle against the eighteenth century, Lawrence's against the nineteenth. Carlyle had his roots in the eighteenth century (b. 1795), was more widely read in that period than in any other, was early "emancipated" by Gibbon and Hume, and lived to hate them for their pains. Lawrence had his roots in the nineteenth century (b. 1885), was more widely read in that period than in any other, was converted to the attitudes of Huxley and Haeckel, and later revolted against these attitudes. Science rendered a wholly negative service to Carlyle and Lawrence. It stripped them of their Christianity and left them, as far as religion is concerned, a *tabula rasa*. Carlyle ended with a religion of his own that was neither Christian nor eighteenth-century. Lawrence ended with a religion of his own that was neither Christian nor Victorian.

It was Lawrence's friend E. T., the Miriam of *Sons and Lovers*, who told us, in her charming *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, about Lawrence's period of scientific skepticism. It was she too who revealed the fact that the greater part of Lawrence's formative reading was in the literature of the nineteenth century. E. T. mentions close upon fifty nineteenth-century writers whom Lawrence read in late adolescence. The only others mentioned are (not insignificantly) Swift and Blake. E. T. mentions Bacon only to add that Lawrence preferred Charles Lamb. Carlyle is mentioned, though no more conspicuously than many others. Lawrence read Nietzsche but somewhat furtively and without encouraging E. T. to read him. Nietzsche is mentioned by Lawrence some half a dozen times, but these allusions are never very significant. For the most part Lawrence covered up his traces.

The dichotomy of religion and politics, the eternal and the temporal, the metaphysical and the historical, must be at the back of any

<sup>1</sup> A term used in the work of which this essay is a portion to cover the faith of Thomas Carlyle, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Stefan George. The Heroic Vitalist thinks in terms not of good and bad but of high and low, courageous and cowardly—the ethics of Launcelot rather than Galahad. Attacking democracy for its vulgarity, and hoping for aristocracy in a post-industrial world, he formulates a new religion of which the pivotal concepts are Heroism and Life.

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study of Heroic Vitalism. In Lawrence the dichotomy is clarified into that of Love and Power. All his endeavors, personal and literary, are attempts to know more fully the meaning of these two words. On Lawrence's investigation of Love there has always been a spate of comment. His life and his works have been the subject of chit-chat, scandal, and psychoanalysis. The focus is chiefly on love in *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which are of all Lawrence's works the most widely read. But in *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent*, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, *Apocalypse*, in many of the letters and in many of the essays of *Phoenix*, it is the relation between Love and Power that Lawrence examines.

Lawrence has told us that "this pseudo-philosophy of mine . . . is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse." Let us, therefore, look for a moment at one of Lawrence's novels on power, *The Plumed Serpent*. This book Lawrence meant to be his greatest and he insisted that he agreed with the opinions of the chief hero, Don Ramon, who represents the marriage of love and power.

The book tells of a British émancipée, Kate, through whose eyes most of the story is viewed. She goes to Mexico and finds in progress a religious and social movement for national regeneration. The leaders of the movement are Don Cipriano, an Indian soldier, and Don Ramon, whose wife, Doña Carlota, symbolizes Christianity. The sexual problem, which also depends on the balance of love and power, is solved when Kate learns to forego her feminist independence and submit to a servitude that is perfect freedom as wife of Don Cipriano. Kate's final view of marriage is Milton's: "He for God only, she for God in him."

If we read: "He for God only, *they* for God in him," where *they* are the people, we have Lawrence's account of the relation of the masses to the hero and of the hero to "God," the life-force, the cosmos. Don Ramon is the model here. After the death of Doña Carlota, he solves the sexual problem by marrying Teresa, a simple girl, who finds her fulfillment in her husband and learns not to ask questions; this solution has a wider application. The nationalist movement offers the people a new religion whose emblem is not the cross but the serpent and the eagle. This Mexican emblem, of course, is the emblem also of Nietzsche's Zarathustra—the serpent and the eagle, wisdom and pride, not conjoined in enmity, the serpent in the eagle's claws, but embracing

in happy union. Don Ramon communes with the sun—another Nietzschean touch.

The new vitalistic religion which preaches that life is cruel and holy is opposed by Doña Carlota, whose Christianity had removed from life the holiness and the cruelty. Doña Carlota attends a service of the religion of Quetzalcoatl (equals bird-serpent. The dragon is a combination of the bird and the serpent, a primordial version of Zarathustra's emblem.) . In her efforts to protest, she has convulsions and dies. It is thus that Don Ramon breaks free of Christianity and marries an Heroic Vitalist. The *Plumed Serpent* ends with the personal and social success of all the main characters.

It is Lawrence's worst novel, a grotesque mixture, as Mr. Hugh Kingsmill suggests, of Rider Haggard's *She* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The type of badness that is most relevant here is the use of symbolism. It is too ponderous and *voulu*. The cult of Quetzalcoatl is unconvincing hocus-pocus. The regular symbols of Heroic Vitalism are of course frequent. "I wish the Teutonic world would once more think in terms of Thor and Wotan and the tree Igdrasil," says Don Ramon. Nietzsche's Dionysos appears as Pan, "the God-demon Pan, who can never perish, but ever returns upon mankind from the shadows."

Since Carlyle, Heroic Vitalism has involved an enthusiasm for human flesh and blood. Carlyle wondered what the members of parliament would look like without clothes. Lawrence takes up the challenge and Cipriano shouts to his soldiers: "I am a man naked inside of my clothes as you are." Lawrence has not Carlyle's sense of feature and physiognomy. He imparts a sense of the physical presence and potency of a man without giving a description of his face. In *The Plumed Serpent*, Lawrence's physical awareness is at its most intense. The word *naked* occurs hundreds of times. An arm cannot be bare without Lawrence's calling attention to a "naked arm." A man cannot be clothed without Lawrence's mentioning that he is "naked under his clothes." Carlyle took up the cry of Novalis that the body is holy, and Lawrence is obsessed with the thought. He looks through the eyes of Kate, as in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he looks through the eyes of Connie, in order that he may describe male beauty the more passionately. Only Alfred Baeumler's homoerotics can rival Lawrence's love of the manly male.

Don Ramon might have come out of Byron or even P. C. Wren. Lawrence's is the Heroic Vitalism—is it not the most widely disseminated brand?—of boys' adventure stories and of Hollywood. One recalls

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many such sentences as: "Don Ramon was flashing his knowing Spanish eyes and a little sardonic smile lurked under his moustache." Sometimes, there is a sadistic touch. "The soft, cream-brow skin of his back, of a smooth, pure sensuality, made her shudder. The broad, square, rather high shoulders with neck and head rising steep, proudly. The full-fleshed, deep-chested, rich body of the man made her feel dizzy. In spite of herself, she could not help imagining a knife stuck between those pure, male shoulders. His nakedness was so aloof."

Ramon's political philosophy is not new. "There is no such thing as liberty," she heard the quiet, deep, dangerous voice of Don Ramon repeating. "There is no such thing as liberty . . . . You only change one sort of domination for another. All we can do is to choose our master." Ramon explains that a man is led by an appetite, an ideal, or by an inspiration. The categories are Lawrentian. Among the men of appetite are the egotists, among whom he numbers Alexander, Napoleon, Caesar, Sardanapalus, and Saul. Shelley and Woodrow Wilson are men with an ideal. ("Has President Wilson, or Karl Marx, or Bernard Shaw ever felt one hot blood-pulse of love for the working-man, the half-conscious, deluded working man? Never.") Who are the men of inspiration? Lawrence offers Don Ramon. All these ideas are so far in the tradition of Heroic Vitalism that it is absurd to dismiss them as mere whimsies.

Lawrence pretends to accept a destiny without repining, yet in fact he is forever complaining of his lot, as was Nietzsche. Lawrence sometimes seems to admire nature more uncompromisingly than he admires men. He finds animals more agreeable than people (Cf. Nietzsche and Wagner's Siegfried). He derives much of his pungency from a certain immoralism *jenseits von Gut und Böse*, yet he is himself persistently didactic. He was born poor but rose to the heights of Bloomsbury, where he was not at home. He loved to play the part of the fish out of water, *unzeitgemäss*. He planned Utopian settlements in Florida and New Mexico; they were to be stocked, like Nietzsche's projected Swiss chateau, with a select party of his friends and disciples. Everyone noticed the analogy between his farewell party in London (1923) and the Last Supper.

The detailed similarities of Lawrence to his predecessors are innumerable. What Lady Ashburton was to Carlyle, Lady Ottoline Morell was to Lawrence: his combination of an ill temper and a soft heart suited a patroness because it argued genius. Like Carlyle and

Nietzsche, Lawrence was always a spectator of the human problem-play slightly jealous (but more enamored) of real leaders. As Carlyle's critics have found him politically ambitious, so Middleton Murry has found in Lawrence capacities for leading men. Lawrence wrote: "I would like him [the common man] to give me back the responsibility for general affairs." An American fascist, Mr. Stebelton H. Nulle considers Lawrence an unfulfilled Hitler, the hero as politician, "dark brooding, inward-looking, both of them, with the same capacity for attracting loyalty and the same disdain for intellectuals and aesthetes." Perhaps Lawrence had hoped to enter politics under the patronage of Asquith, whose wife he cultivated, even as Carlyle had hoped to be patronized by Sir Robert Peel. Lawrence's political views (to cite his most forthright statements) are: that authority and obedience are the basis; that everyone is either a born aristocrat or a born democrat, a master or a slave; that the present aristocracy has something to be said for it, but that aristocracy is not necessarily hereditary; that regionalism is preferable to internationalism;<sup>2</sup> that it is foolish to try to abolish suffering<sup>3</sup> and that therefore the hero must rule (in Carlylean phrase) "as he can";<sup>4</sup> that history is cyclical, consisting of alternating periods of peace which palls and of war which releases pent-up energies and, finally, that the unity which good Europeans desire will only be achieved when Europe unites round a single figure, a hero responsible only to "God," a hero who can lead a great war as well as administer a wide peace.<sup>5</sup> But the Heroic Vitalist has a final card to play. Ignorant of economics (only Carlyle among the Heroic Vitalists even toyed with the subject) he makes a merit of his ignorance by making Money, along with Christianity, the great foe. His enemies, in psychological terms, are appetites and ideals. The corresponding material enemies are money and the churches. Heroic Vitalism is anti-bourgeois and therefore against capitalism. It is anti-proletarian and therefore against Christianity.

Lawrence maintained with Stefan George that a new aristocracy was needed to combat the commercial spirit and to inaugurate a new age. The whole effort of Heroic Vitalists is towards excellence in an

<sup>2</sup> *Sea and Sardinia* (London: Heinemann, Ltd., 1934), pp. 134 ff.

<sup>3</sup> "The Crown," in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine* (Philadelphia: The Centaur Press, 1925), pp. 43 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *The Plumed Serpent* (London: Secker, 1932), p. 439.

<sup>5</sup> *Movements in European History*. Written by D. H. L. under the pseudonym of Lawrence H. Davidson. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 306.

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age of mediocrity, dignity in an age of vulgarity, courage in an age of fear or complacency, honor in an age of chicanery. Lawrence's desire for aristocracy was no mere wish for a ruling caste. It was a desire for a renewal of manhood and of vitality. Lawrence came to regard as misguided the need which he had felt for absolute friendship with his peers. It was a legacy of the era of universal benevolence, the "man of feeling," and the myth of perfectibility. In the new age, all equalitarianism must go. The place of friendship will be taken by lordship, even as the place of cash-nexus will be taken by mastership and servanthship. "Lordship" means the relation between men which was encouraged by Carlyle. Lawrence defines it as "the other mystic relationship between men, which democracy and equality try to deny and obliterate. Not any arbitrary caste or birth aristocracy. But the mystic recognition of difference and innate priority, the joy of obedience and the sacred responsibility of authority." A whole view of life is implied in these opinions and I shall try to outline it.

Heroic Vitalists have tended, since Carlyle, to regard history in terms of spiritual epochs and cycles. They have never shrunk from large generalizations about these cycles, although they are not always clear about the motive-forces of history. They are unwilling to grant much efficacy to everyday cause and effect. They hate mechanical determinism. Heroic Vitalism is a protest against the machine, and therefore Heroic Vitalists substitute a Higher Causality such as fate or destiny, or they assert free will through the living power of the hero. The taproot of their sociology is the concept Power, which they interpret broadly. "There is physical strength," says Lawrence, "like Samson's. There is racial power, like David's, or Mohamet's. There is mental power, like that of Socrates, and ethical power, like that of Moses, and spiritual power, like Jesus' or Buddha's, and mechanical power like that of Stephenson, or military power, like Napoleon's, or political power, like Pitt's." Lawrence says that destructive power is also valid, if it is the old divine power and not the new passionless power. The power of Napoleon and George Washington was right. So was Attila's, for "he was the scourge of *God*; not the scourge of the League of Nations, hired and paid in cash." As for Lloyd George, Wilson, and Lenin, "they never had the right smell."

Blessed are the powerful, says Lawrence, for this world is the greatest kingdom and it is theirs.



"The reign of love is passing, and the reign of power is coming again.

"The day of popular democracy is nearly done. Already we are entering the twilight, towards the night that is at hand.

" . . . If you want a dictator, whether it is Lenin, or Mussolini, or Primo de Rivera, ask, not whether he can set money in circulation, but if he can set life in motion by dictating to his people."

Lawrence's view of history is expounded in *Twilight in Italy*. His conclusions are often contrary to those of Nietzsche and Stefan George, and more akin to Carlyle's. The Middle Ages were healthy because of the tension set up between man's animal nature and Christian spirituality, the lion and the unicorn. The Renaissance was unhealthy because spiritual and mental powers exceeded the Dionysian. The modern epoch (here Lawrence comes close to Nietzsche) has tried to annihilate the ego and its legitimate self-regard in an orgy of sympathy, emancipation, and insurrection. "When they beheaded Charles the First, the King by Divine Right, they destroyed symbolically for ever the supremacy of the Me. . . ." This method of picking out a single figure and a scene to enforce a view of life is characteristic of the "metapolitical" historian. Carlyle exhibits Luther at Worms, and Spengler shows Jesus before Pilate.

Christianity, according to Lawrence, has been the greatest thing in the world so far. But history (as for all Heroic Vitalists) is organic. The flower blooms and fades, and so does Christianity. Or, to use Lawrence's favourite symbol (Carlyle had used it in *Sartor Resartus*), the phoenix dies but a new one arises from the ashes. Heroic Vitalists, and Lawrence among them, wish to assist at the birth of a new phoenix. Lawrence's criticism of Christianity is substantially that of Nietzsche. There are two Christianities. The first is that of Jesus, and its ethic is to render good for evil and to submit to the aggressor's violence. The second, according to Nietzsche, is that of Paul, and its motive is resentment and pride. This second kind of Christianity D. H. Lawrence attributes not to Paul but to John of the Apocalypse.

The two little books on the unconscious provide myths for the new order. There is a myth of creation, involving a whole cosmology, and, more especially, there is a physiological myth of man. These myths are necessary because, as Carlyle knew, science and industry have taken the kernel out of the universe and Christianity stands helpless by. It is absurd to say that the sun is gas. It is absurd to regard men biologi-

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cally. These scientific computations forget Life. Where Carlyle attacks Bentham and vindicates the soul, Lawrence attacks Freud and vindicates the unconscious.

The basis of the whole myth is the idea of polarized duality. Heroic Vitalists have always replaced the uniformities of liberalism with conflicting opposites, and Lawrence re-iterates their doctrine. "The Infinite," he says, "is twofold, the Father and the Son, the Dark and the Light, the Senses and the Mind, the Soul and the Spirit, the self and the not-self, the Eagle and the Dove, the Tiger and the Lamb." This duality, which Carlyle and Nietzsche make much of, springs from despair of finding *oneness* in love. The complete identity for which lovers strive is only attained in the womb and at the breast. Lawrence's love-poetry indicates a tremendous yearning for love through the philosophy of courage which is Heroic Vitalism.

The body, according to Lawrence's theosophical myth, original only in the interpretation which he puts upon it, has four primary centers of consciousness in polarized relationship. Two are located in the thorax, two in the abdomen: the point of this is that the brain or mind is not primary. The electrical circuits which constitute life are not all completed within the individual. There are three groups of circuits: those which run between one center and another within the individual; those which run between individuals; and those which run between an individual and the nonhuman cosmos. The hero is a necessity because most people lack the third kind of circuit, that which runs between man and the cosmos. The hero is the man who is most fully alive because he possesses all three groups of circuitry. He is necessary because other people do not. Carlyle said that while the law of matter and man is inexorable, every man may be in his degree heroic. The act of worshiping a master puts a man in vital rapport with the heart of the cosmos. "Give homage and allegiance to a hero," says Lawrence, "and you become yourself heroic, it is the law of men."

So much for the need of heroes at all times. The need is especially acute today because of a steady decline in human vitality and impulse. Though many little serpents sting us, the great divine dragon of vitality is inert. Lindbergh and Dempsey, says Lawrence, are lifted for a while to a certain level of heroism. "But on the higher planes, there is no glimpse or gleam of the great dragon." A new phoenix-hour is awaited.

The leader will bring in the Great Year. In this age there will be

no newspapers because the people will not be taught to read and write. There will be no feminism, for women will descend from the garret of intellect to the warm cellar of phallic consciousness. Children will not be taught about sex, and when they ask: Why is grass green? father will reply: Because it is. No one will allow science to limit his horizon. Let a man believe not that the sun creates human life but that the sun was originally a piece of primordial animal and is even now kept alive by human life. Here are a few selections from Lawrence's blueprint for the Heroic Age:

All schools will shortly be converted either into public workshops or into gymnasia. . . . Active training in primitive modes of fighting and gymnastics will be compulsory for all boys over ten years of age.

The great mass of humanity should never learn to read and write—never.

First and foremost establish a rule over them, a proud, harsh, manly rule.

There are wars in the future, great wars, which not machines will finally decide, but the free indomitable life spirit. No more wars under the banners of the ideal, or in the spirit of sacrifice, but wars in the strength of individual man.

Is it beside the point to recall that the advocate of the permanence of marriage ran away with the mother of three children, that the advocate of harsh rule was goaded to fury because the state interfered with him to the extent of stripping him for a medical examination, that the advocate of fighting gladly evaded military service in the only war for which he was eligible, that the advocate of gymnasia was himself a self-conscious weakling? The subjective element in the Heroic Vitalist has been important in three ways. First, Heroic Vitalism has been a projection of his own sense of vitality and superiority. Second, Heroic Vitalists have made an implied exception of themselves when advocating harsh and immediate action. Third, they have all retained the right of man in perpetual opposition to oppose in any and every way without regard to consistency. Nietzsche's attacks on the state, for instance, he contradicts elsewhere, and the chief interest of Lawrence's disclaimers of political intentions and of Stefan George's aloofness is that they prove the literary Heroic Vitalist's bark to be worse than his bite. He is not really in favor of the violence he appears to countenance. But this is to say that there is an element of irresponsibility in

Heroic Vitalists. Many people protest against utopian liberalism and are later shocked at the result of their own protests. If you have talked like a man in perpetual opposition, it is embarrassing to find yourself in office. Hence Stefan George's embarrassment at the Nazi victory of 1933. Death spared Lawrence a similar shock. It was better that his political disciples restricted their activities to folk-dancing.

The ambivalence of Lawrence's character, his tenderness offset by violence of temper, is paralleled in Carlyle and Nietzsche and is equivalent on the psychological plane to the mixture of mysticism and militarism that characterizes Heroic Vitalists. Because Lawrence was more religious and less violent than some others, charity is more conspicuous in his social philosophy. In the essay on Whitman called "Democracy" he longs for the abolition of politics because the problem of love and life cannot be faced until the problem of food is disposed of. Heroic Vitalism is an attempt to get beyond politics with its parties, its economics, and its business men.

Lawrence's hunger for immortality was as strong as Carlyle's or Nietzsche's, and like them he was haunted by Jesus of Nazareth. *Apocalypse*, his last work, exactly parallels Nietzsche's last work, *Antichrist*. Both books are a sharp assault on Christianity. The criticisms are substantially the same, and so is the animus. Yet, much as they hated Jesus' indifference to power, Nietzsche and Lawrence were never fully convinced of the untruth of Christianity. Suppose the rich young ruler, when told to give his wealth to the poor, had given it to Jesus, suggests Lawrence, looking elsewhere for the merger-immortality which the half-hearted Heroic Vitalist requires. Lawrence embarked on the same quest for a new immortality as have Carlyle and Nietzsche and, subsequently, Robinson Jeffers, J. W. Dunne, P. D. Ouspensky, Gerald Heard, and J. B. Priestley.

In the volume of poems entitled *Look! We Have Come Through*, the idea of Resurrection was used to support Lawrence's faith in the renewal of the phoenix-life of mankind. There is a *Selbstödtung* followed by new life as in *Sartor Resartus* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Historic Vitalism attracts the twice-born. But there is a further point to Lawrence's two essays entitled "The Risen Lord" and "Resurrection" and to the story, "The Man Who Died," in which, following George Moore and Frank Harris, Lawrence has the crucified Jesus nursed back to health to live a new life according to the ethics of the modern writer.

The Heroic Vitalists have the courage of their historical imagination, the courage to abandon morals and metaphysics, the courage, they insist, to accept life. So far their view is consistently in terms of time. But in their historicism they strained so hard at the leash of time that it snapped, and, if we are to believe what they say, they found themselves in a preternatural timeless world. Instead of repudiating this world of eternity, as would have befitted them, they drew from it energies with which they attacked those philosophies which asserted the importance of the eternal. They betrayed their own experience. They found in their mystical experience not an argument against vitalism but a fund of strength to uphold vitalism, not an impersonal doctrine of atonement but an added devotion to the hero. They strained at the leash of time and they strained at the leash of intellect. The leash of intellect broke, too, and Nietzsche, despite his sporadic encomia on the critical brain, formulated the mind of man, with everything else, in terms of power, while Lawrence thought complete mindlessness the necessary prelude to correct living. Don Ramon's prayers consisted of standing rigid with arm upraised until he became mindless, a column of dark blood.

It is easy to end with the vague conclusion that Lawrence preached regeneration, and not much harder to comb his life and works for activities and remarks which prove him fascist. But my analysis, if it proves anything, proves that Lawrence belongs not with the Nazis—even if he unwittingly strengthened the Nazi cause—but with those artists who in longing for perfection attacked democracy for its record of venality and vulgarity. Because Lawrence could not find the perfect democracy which he speaks of in his essay on Whitman, he rejected democracy altogether.

That is, sometimes. Consistency is not a Laurentian virtue, and one finds in his anarchism, in his unwillingness to kill a fellow man, in his emphasis on tenderness, a rejection of fascist theory and fascist practice. Lawrence esteemed the individual above everything else, and he hoped that workmen, not simply a few supermen, would become true individuals: hence, for instance, he incited the British miners to stand on their own feet.

An inconsistent author can be cited in support of anything. If Lawrence's portrait of Don Ramon convinces the fascist, his repudiation of Don Ramon ("The Hero is obsolete . . .") convinces the democrat. Yet the serious critic of Lawrence must recognize both

sides of him. Don Ramon is the symbol of a great deal in Laurentian thought, a symbol that cannot be canceled by a contemptuous remark in a letter. On the other hand the *palinode* reveals Lawrence's uneasiness. Is inconsistency the best work? Oscillation would be a better description of Lawrence's changes from a philosophy of love to a philosophy of power. It might at first seem that in the late 'twenties Lawrence finally exorcised the fascist demon, and that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was followed by *Apocalypse*, the most fascistic of Lawrence's works. The conflict of Lawrence's life, like Nietzsche's, was unresolved at his death.

"The new relationship," says Lawrence, in a momentary rejection of heroes and hero-worship, "will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive, between men and men and men and women." The basis of this statement, beyond the stock charge of the aesthete that money, industrialism, and democracy have annihilated humanity, is the aesthete's itch for *new* sensations. Everything old is to be destroyed, and a whole world of *new* sensations is to be created. A new love will be created—this is the hope of many proto-fascists—in which all the pleasures of Christian *caritas*, tribal solidarity, homo- and heterosexual passion, will be combined. Mr. Nulle has written of Lawrence and Hitler: "Both are adventurers who point the way to a quality of experience other than any yet achieved, knowing full well that the destruction of what exists is necessary to that which is to supersede it." The comment brings to mind the speeches of one of Lawrence's heroes whose first name is Dionys and whose second is 'Psanek' (the outlaw): "I shall be king in Hades," he says, "when I am dead." Lawrence's Dionysos professes belief in "the blessed god of destruction . . . the god of anger, who throws down the steeples and the factory chimneys. Ah, Lady Daphne, he is a man's god, a man's god."

All this is the talk of a fascist intellectual. One trembles at the conception of manhood implied in this "man's god," or the conception of godhead either. One has of course to hunt for passages as sinister as this in Lawrence, but their existence is none the less remarkable. Lawrence started (with all the great artists of the past one hundred years) from a sense of disvalue in a mechanized world. Nihilism is always close to diabolism, and Lawrence overstepped the boundary. He is not a Hitler, for he never recognized the exigencies of *Massenpolitik* such as trickery and meanness. He is comparable rather to such a man as Ludwig Klages, a German intellectual who for thirty years has

championed a "biocentric" philosophy, a philosophy rooted in life, against the "logocentric" or merely cerebral philosophies of the democrats and Christians. Klages' vitalism ends like Lawrence's in blasphemy against life itself, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is a shocking book not for what it mentions but for what it advocates; it is the complement not the rebuttal of *Apocalypse*. D'Annunzio had mixed the elements of eroticism and fascism similarly. The romantic quest for a life of sensations rather than thoughts reaches its culmination in an orgiastic religion of sex and power, of Lawrence's own John Thomas and Nietzsche's Dionysos.

Aldous Huxley was right when he asserted that Lawrence could only be understood as an artist. His faults at least are those of the Bohemian, the artist who achieves individuality by desperate means. Mr. Nulle genially suggests that Lawrence stands to Hitler as Rousseau to Robespierre. Yes, the brilliant, undisciplined, self-indulgent, anarchistic authoritarian, with all his sophisticated primitivism, emotional naiveté, and utter impracticality, precedes the practical fanatic who makes not dreams but nightmares come true. Lawrence is to be understood as an artist, but the artist's function in recent times has been a peculiar one.