ABSTRACT

Henry Miller's Writings on D.H. Lawrence by Mark W. Levy, M.A. I. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Master of Arts in English, McGill University, April, 1970.

It is the intention of this thesis to set forth a critical examination of Henry Miller's writings on D.H. Lawrence and thereby explore the parallelisms existing between their respective arts. The nature of the relationship of these two figures has remained largely unexplored outside a brief treatment in William A. Gordon's work on Miller, and one of the best modes of exploration of the problem seems to be through a critical discussion of the published fragments from the incomplete volume The World of Lawrence, which was in preparation during the years 1933-1944.

Miller, like Lawrence, was concerned primarily with the nature of self and its relation to the artistic quest for fulfilment. There remains, in Miller's works, the unmistakable stamp of a period of involvement with Lawrencian thought. This thesis contains comment upon that involvement and its consequences.

After an introduction which locates Miller's writings on Lawrence within the context of their respective careers, four essays by Miller, fragments from the projected work on Lawrence, are examined. A chronological bibliography of Miller's writings is provided in an appendix, for placement of his works in chronological perspective.

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PREFACE

It is the intention of this thesis to set forth a critical examination of Henry Miller's writings on D.H. Lawrence. During the years 1933-1944 Henry Miller was engaged in the preparation of a volume of criticism of D.H. Lawrence's works, to be called The World of Lawrence. Although the work was never completed, portions of it appeared in print between 1939 and 1945, in various collections of essays. After an introduction which locates the problem within the larger context of the works of Miller and Lawrence, four essays forming the core of Miller's writings on Lawrence are examined.

As the final segment of the bibliography indicates, there are few critical works which deal directly with Miller's confrontation of Lawrencian thought. Apart from a brief treatment of the topic in William A. Gordon's work on Miller, there exist no critical discussions of the nature of Lawrence's influence upon Miller. This scarcity of critical materials dictated, to an extent, the nature of my approach to the problem. The parallelisms existing between the respective arts of Miller and Lawrence are best explored, I feel, by means of an examination of those essays I shall discuss. An appendix containing a chronological bibliography of the works of Miller is provided for placement of his works in chronological perspective.

My thanks are due Professor Alan Heuser for his help in the preparation of this thesis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

While to some minds the works of D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller might seem as alike as peas in a pod, that is, in the sense of their being unacceptable in any broad intellectual framework, frankly unwholesome, or even subversive, the results of the recent debates concerning pornography and obscenity seem to have preempted the necessity of apology in turning serious critical attention to the works of these men. The once notorious Lady Chatterley's Lover and Tropic of Cancer are now receiving the blessings of the most serious critics. One can dismiss these considerations peremptorily and return to the main task, which is understanding.

In the language of the introduction to an interview with Henry Miller conducted in Paris in 1962, one can sense the emergence of a new, and perhaps disturbing view of the place of Lawrence and Miller in our culture:

> Like D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller has long been a byword and a legend. Championed by critics and artists, venerated by pilgrims, emulated by beatniks, he is above everything else, a culture-hero - or villain, to those who see him as a menace to law and order.[1]

In this interview, which was conducted for the Paris Review while Miller was visiting his biographer Alfred Perles, Miller was asked about the process of "dictation", which is a name for the kind of writing to which Miller is often prone, a kind of pure and spontaneous recording of the emanations of the unconscious mind. Miller said:

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1. George Wickes, "The Art of Fiction XXVIII," The Paris Review, VII (Summer-Fall 1962), 128-159.

> It occurred most strongly in the work on D.H. Lawrence, a work I never finished - and that was because I had to do too much thinking.... In that book I was grappling with ideas. I'd been on it, I suppose, a good two years. I was saturated with it and got obsessed and couldn't drop it. I couldn't even sleep.[2]

When asked why he never finished the projected work on Lawrence, Miller replied:

> The further I got into the book, the less I understood what I was doing. I found myself in a mass of contradictions- I found that I didn't really know who Lawrence was, I couldn't place him, I couldn't put my finger on him, I just couldn't cope with him after a while. I got completely bewildered. So I abandoned the work.[3]

The interviewer questioned Miller further, inquiring whether he necessarily subscribed to Lawrence's ideas. Miller replied:

> No, not altogether, but I do admire his quest, his search, his struggle. And there are many things in Lawrence I agree with. On the other hand there are many things I laugh about in Lawrence, things which seem absurd, and stupid, foolish. I have a better perspective of him today, but I no longer find it important to say anything about him. Then he meant something to me. I was completely in his grip.[4]

There follows, in the interview, a discussion of pornography and obscenity, precipitated, no doubt, by this mention of D.H. Lawrence. Lawrence and Miller have long been mentioned in one breath whenever the topic of pornography and obscenity is broached, most obviously because their works stand as pre-eminent examples of the misapplication of ill-conceived

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2. Wickes, p. 134.
3. Wickes, p. 147.
4. Wickes, p. 147.

laws. There is a more coherent rationale, as I hope to show, for the grouping of Lawrence and Miller within a distinct tradition. Their lives and works bear a great similarity, and there is, as is obvious from Miller's references to Lawrence, considerable reason to believe that Miller was significantly influenced by his study of Lawrence. It is the intention of this thesis to examine Henry Miller's writings on D.H. Lawrence in detail, and as far as possible, to elucidate Miller's admittedly confusing confrontation with the core of Lawrencian doctrine.

The similarities between the lives and works of Lawrence and Miller are manifold and striking. Both were expatriate novelists concerned with the revision of traditional morality; both were concerned explicitly with the emergence of the individual as the spiritual goal of a heavily mechanized civilization; both were writers concerned with the revelation of all that was most sacred and of greatest moment within their lives; and both were artists whose quest for identity drove them to near-madness, and eventual rebirth.

There can be little doubt that an evolution is traceable within the lives of both men which would show them being brought to a crisis of self-realization, a kind of spiritual rebirth, which was at the very core of the art of each. It is no mere accident that both men display a preoccupation with the symbology of sex as a working principle in the construction of a novel, nor is it

coincidental that both are concerned with the psychology of the individual ensconced within an expanding artistic awareness. Furthermore, there is, throughout their works, a concern with the nature of self-liberation, and with the creation of a tenable ethical position through art. These are all fruitful bases of comparison between the works of Lawrence and Miller, and shall be further elucidated.

If their careers display a great similarity, a great similarity is likewise to be found in implicitly autobiographical works. The stories of their respective love relations is the very stuff of their work. From Sons and Lovers through Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence's primary concern was an adequate depiction of the nature of the love relation itself, and the progressive liberation (or enslavement) of the individual through the described relationship. From Tropic of Cancer through the last book of Miller's The Rosy Crucifixion, he set out to describe his own evolving relation with Mara, or Mona, his great love. Both men were clearly haunted by the image of woman, and directed most of their artistic efforts toward the goal of defining the nature of sexual relations, or just as frequently, of sexuality itself.

This data should not obscure the fact of their essential differences, which are many. It is clear that Miller and Lawrence were quite different in respect of their mutual conceptions of the love relation. A brief

consideration of biographical data might be helpful in suggesting the origin of their differences in outlook. Miller was born in 1891 in that district of Brooklyn known as the 14th Ward. Although transplanted on several occasions to different parts of New York City, Miller remained, as is often noted, "just a Brooklyn boy". Early in the 1930s, after leaving a home and a secure job, Miller travelled to Europe where he worked and wrote until the outbreak of the second world war. Returning to the United States, Miller settled in California on the Big Sur peninsula, where he remained for many years, travelling abroad frequently. No brief consideration of biographical detail could be complete without mention of the many tempestuous human relationships in which Miller found himself involved during the course of his life. Several unhappy marriages and an indeterminate number of other liaisons must be credited him. Lawrence, it should be noted, was married in 1914 to Frieda von Richthofen, and remained with her more or less constantly until his death in March 1930. Their tumultuous relationship is the subject of numerous accounts, and need not be chronicled here.

Lawrence's home was, of course, the midlands of England. When the indignities Lawrence suffered during the war of 1914-1918 caused him to leave England at the end of the conflict, he and Frieda migrated to Italy, Australia, and finally to America. Lawrence lived in New Mexico for several years, until sickness forced him to leave the

New World and return finally, after many travels, to Europe.

As even this brief glimpse of biographical factors would indicate, the two writers stem from wholly different traditions of culture, and despite their wanderings, remained ultimately within the boundaries of their respective traditions. It might be noted however, that where Lawrence loved England passionately, its countryside, and even to an extent, the superficies of its culture, Miller despised what had become of the American environment, and reacted violently against its encroachments upon the freedom of the individual.

Furthermore, Lawrence never completely broke away from a purist approach to human sexuality out of an English Puritan heritage, while Miller, observing a hearty German Lutheran heritage, did break free of Puritan attitudes. So while it can be said that the works of the two men bear a great similarity, their tastes remained indisputably different, reflecting the great difference in their initial perceptions of environment and society.

In examining Henry Miller's writings on D.H. Lawrence it should be borne in mind that Miller's preoccupation with self was of a very different nature than that of Lawrence, in exact proportion to the degree to which their "unique, integral selves" differed. There can be little doubt, as the Wickes interview would indicate, that Miller reacted against much of the Lawrencian body of thought, especially

against those portions which, to him, were an attempt to placate the obsessional character of self or society. Miller persisted in the acceptance of all that appeared to him as "self", even in the face of almost universal condemnation for "obscenity", or worse.

Of the utmost importance to a reading of Miller on Lawrence is the placement of the works in a proper perspective within the greater body of writings by Miller. As indicated in the chronological bibliography in the appendix, Miller was concerned with D.H. Lawrence largely in the period 1933-1944, (although the publication of his writings on Lawrence took place between 1939-1944). So far as can be determined, Miller first mentions D.H. Lawrence in a letter to Emil Schnellock, dated June 12, 1933. Miller, then a struggling writer in Paris, lashed out against the master's water-colors in typical inflammatory fashion:

> I am a little annoyed that Lawrence's lousy water-colors should have been preserved in such a handsome volume. I don't see him as much better than myself, to tell the truth. There is something too pretty, too delicate, too precious about his work. I don't mind deformity, as Matisse or Picasso, or Cezanne deform. But Lawrence's deformities have a perverse quality. The men are eunochoid, and the grass is spinach, and the whole thing is done in an old-fashioned way that I detest.5

Further on, Miller mentions that he will not let anyone talk of him "as Murry talked of Lawrence". Evidently Miller was aware, as early as 1933, of Lawrence both as writer and artist.

The first serious critical mention of D.H. Lawrence

5. Henry Miller, Semblance of a Devoted Past (Berkeley, 1944) p. 18.

comes in Black Spring in the essay entitled "A Saturday Afternoon", which is the most representative piece in that volume. In that essay, which is concerned with the world of the artist, Miller deals jokingly with Robinson Crusoe as "the story of the first genuine neurotic, a man who had himself shipwrecked in order to live outside his time in a world of his own."[6] This theme does have serious connotations however, when considered as bearing upon the mental life of the artist transposed into fictional accounts. The artist in the modern world flees himself to live out the dream of Robinson Crusoe:

> Henceforward no more desert isles. Henceforward wherever one happens to be born is a desert isle. Every man has his own civilized desert, the island of self on which he is shipwrecked: happiness, relative or absolute, is out of the question. Henceforward everyone is running away from himself to find an imaginary desert isle, to live out this dream of Robinson Crusoe. Follow the classic flights of Melville, Rimbaud, Gauguin, Jack London, Henry James, D.H. Lawrence....thousands of them. None of them found happiness. Rimbaud found cancer. Gauguin found syphilis. Lawrence found the white plague. That's it - the plague. The Plague! The plague of modern progress: colonization, trade, free Bibles, war, disease, artificial limbs, factories, slaves, insanity, neurosis, psychosis, anemia, strikes, lockouts, starvation, nullity, vacuity, restlessness, striving, despair, ennui, suicide, bankruptcy, arterio-sclerosis, megalomania, schizophrenia, hernia, cocaine, prussic acid, stink bombs, tear gas, mad dogs, auto-suggestion, auto-intoxication, psychotherapy, electric massages, vacuum cleaners...7

This brief mention of Lawrence is very obviously grounded

6. Henry Miller, Black Spring, (New York, 1963), p.39.
7. Miller, Black Spring, p. 40.

in Miller's own sentiments vis-à-vis the society which he felt was driving him progressively insane. Still, his "white plague" was the substance of much of Lawrence's writing, specifically those portions dealing with what Lawrence termed "the plague of modern progress." One wonders whether Miller was at the time familiar with Lady Chatterley's Lover, the Lawrencian work in which this theme is most amply set forth. Thematically, Black Spring is concerned with a thorough revolt against a maddening industrial society, and it is fitting that this early mention of Lawrence should fall within such a context.

Tropic of Capricorn is the next work in which an understanding of Miller's thematic development is germane to a discussion of the later critical essays on Lawrence. Tropic of Capricorn is often spoken of as Miller's most important work. Certainly, in this novel, or auto-novel, the foundation is laid for much of Miller's later work, especially those portions which are explicitly autobiographical. The groundwork for the three autobiographical volumes of The Rosy Crucifixion is to be found in Tropic of Capricorn.

According to William A. Gordon's work on Miller, Tropic of Capricorn "is primarily concerned with the first stages of growth of the man and the artist, the descent through the biological levels of life to the womb, to the undifferentiated narcissistic state."[8]

8. William A. Gordon, The Mind and Art of Henry Miller (Louisiana, 1967), p. 110.

The self-liberation or self-realization which is accomplished by this return to the "undifferentiated narcissistic state" forms the primary narrative strand of the work. The whole movement of the book is toward a rebirth of self into a fuller consciousness. Miller was at this time "vitally concerned with the process of unification through which man experiences body and spirit as one."[9] The emphasis in our own time on integration (or "getting together" as it is commonly referred to), clearly parallels Lawrence and Miller's emphasis on the unification of consciousness as the means by which self-expression may be facilitated in a highly complex industrial society. It comes as no surprise that Tropic of Capricorn should be concerned with an indictment of contemporary values as well as with the dangers of "automatism" , which is considered as one of the prime factors in the leading-astray of many poor, empty spirits. Automatism, in essence, may be considered as the gradual assimilation of individual identity within a precise, mechanistic social, cultural or ideological framework. Automatism can make inroads into the very core of a person's biological being, to wit, his sexuality, inhibit it, and thereby thwart its purpose.

The subtitle of Tropic of Capricorn is "On the Ovarian Trolley", the journey which is meant to symbolize the venturing forth from the womb, which leads one through

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9. Gordon, p. 110.

the path of self-realization to self-liberation, and in the case of Miller, to an attempt at the conversion of life to art. In Tropic of Capricorn Miller is beginning a quartet which will include Sexus, Nexus and Plexus, the three books of The Rosy Crucifixion, "the story of his fulfilment as an artist and the simultaneous discovery that in fulfilling himself as an artist he has discovered himself as a man."[10] From this point, the initial self-discovery, Miller must go further in order to define the growth of the self, for it is in growing that the self truly reaches definition. In the broadest sense, Tropic of Capricorn is concerned with self, and self is its unique theme:

> There is only one great adventure, and that is inward, toward the self, and for that, time, nor space, nor even deeds matter.[11]

It is, in short, all a matter of self-realization, which, for Miller, can be completed as easily in a pissoir near St.Cloud as in an armchair in a university library.

Yet if self-realization and a species of artistic rebirth are at the root of Tropic of Capricorn, the death of the self occupies at least as prominent a place in the scheme of things. For this portion of the work, a continuously developing and expanding narration of Miller's past life with his first wife Maude and their child, his job at the Cosmodemonic Messenger Service, and his idyllic wanderings

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10. Gordon, p. 113.
11. Henry Miller, Tropic of Capricorn (New York, 1961), p. 12.

in the urban jungles of the 1920s is necessary, and occupies a considerable portion of the work. Tropic of Capricorn is, then, also "the story of a rebellion against a universe of death, and the beginnings of a descent into chaos. A part of this death is conceived as a purely negative process of emptying oneself, or of descending to the purely biological level of life, affirming that level first."12 In order to accomplish the affirmation which proceeds from negative perceptions, it was first necessary for Miller to depict sex on a level at which it bears no relation to anything external to itself, as, for example, persons, love, or procreation. It must be conceived as unrelated to anything but pure biological being. This is accomplished in "The Land of Fuck", where "the spermatozoön reigns supreme." Pure biological fecundity is, in essence, what Miller seeks to depict in his most "objectionable" passages. Of this "Land of Fuck" Miller wrote:

> This is all a figurative way of speaking about what is unmentionable. What is unmentionable is pure fuck and pure cunt: it must be mentioned only in de luxe editions, otherwise the world will fall apart. What holds the world together, as I have learned from bitter experience, is sexual intercourse. But fuck, the real thing, cunt, the real thing, seem to contain some unidentifiable element which is far more dangerous than nitro-glycerine.13

The "late city man" of which Spengler speaks, is, according to Miller, "at the last decimal-point of sexual calculation";

12. Gordon, p. 121.
13. Miller, Tropic of Capricorn , p. 192.

and the world "turns like a rotten egg in its crate of straw."[14] We are all, Miller intimates, awaiting a rebirth into a fuller conception of the role of man, but it is not within the province of Tropic of Capricorn to describe Miller's rebirth in detail.

Partially through the realization of the essentially biological cast of life through sexuality, the nature of self steadily revealed itself to Miller. The soul is seen as an unending network of all life, organic and inorganic. The universe is thus "on the journey toward full consciousness, which is God. Man then, is God, in embryo."[15] The self of which Miller speaks is "not the self about which books are written." It is "the self more ultimate, anterior to all forms ordinarily presented to consciousness." The struggle of this self is between unity in the assertion of identity and dissolution in automatism. If the wanderer steps outside into the external world, he is faced with annihilation; to achieve his identity, man must find an infinite realm within him, which is trackless, and whose vast potential he must actuate internally, before proceeding to have commerce with the external reality. Within this trackless realm of self it is impossible to take root at any given point, since the rapport with environment must be continually re-established, that the soul not wither. Just when some means of rapport are established, the "whole known universe, including the imperishable self, starts moving toward an

14. Miller, Tropic of Capricorn, p. 195.
15. Miller, Tropic of Capricorn, p. 207

unknown, unseen destination," on the journey of continual self-realization. Gordon sums this up by indicating that Miller's sense of self-discovery consists in two movements, the first of which is the loss of self, the retreat to the dead center from which time itself is reckoned, and the second the rebirth of a new self, free and independent. The temporary substitution of an intellectual goal for a societal or sexual one can have the effect of hastening the process of self-liberation, but it is also certain to induce within the individual a sense of isolation, and of the other-ness of the world around him. The rebirth invariably brings one to a new world:

> I say it was a new world I was describing, but like the new world Columbus discovered, it turned out to be a far older world than any we have known. I saw beneath the superficial physiognomy of skin and bone the indestructible world which man has carried within him. It was neither new nor old really, but the eternally true world which changes from moment to moment.16

This recapturing of a new world, this "return to the undifferentiated narcissistic state", this rebirth into a fuller consciousness of self resembles in most respects the necessary return to the "unique, integral self" which Lawrence advocated, and which, in any case, will come about as a result of the unification of the conscious and unconscious portions of the mind. This projected world of self, which is the true world of the artist, cannot be reached without the adjustment of the life-rhythm in contradistinction to the death-rhythm of industrial society.

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16. Miller, Tropic of Capricorn, p. 286

In both Lawrence and Miller it seems true that the coming into artistic consciousness by means of an intensely irrational self-confrontation is at the heart of the works of each. The exploration of the perceptions is the only foundation for a true, uncompromising knowledge of self.

On finding one's own life-rhythm, nullifying the death-rhythm of industrial society, Miller wrote:

> But when you drive a man almost crazy and when, to his own surprise perhaps, he finds that he still has some resistance, some powers of his own, then you are apt to find such a man acting very much like a primitive being. Such a man is apt not only to become stubborn and dogged, but superstitious, a believer in magic and a practitioner of magic. Such a man is beyond religion+ it is religiousness he is suffering from. Such a man becomes a monomaniac bent on doing only one thing, and that is to break the evil spell which has been put upon him. Such a man is beyond throwing bombs, beyond revolt; he wants to stop reacting, whether inertly or ferociously. This man, of all men on earth, wants the act to be a manifestation of life. If, in the realization of his terrible need he begins to stammer and stutter, to prove so utterly unadapted as to be incapable of earning a living, know that this man has found his way back to the womb, and source of life, and that tomorrow, instead of the contemptible object of ridicule you have made of him, he will stand forth as a <u>man</u> in his own right, and all the powers of the world will be of no avail against him.[17]

This statement of the coming into being of a man driven beyond the limits of his tolerance for "civilized" society seems applicable to D.H. Lawrence and Miller alike, and becomes, in fact, the substance of much of Miller's criticism of Lawrence. Lawrence and Miller alike were driven deeply within themselves by the insanity of their

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17. Miller, <u>Tropic of Capricorn</u>, p. 289.

society, and this confrontation, for Miller at least, had partaken of the nature of a return to the womb, to the source of consciousness. The extreme knowledge of self which goes to the root of all perceptions of reality is born of the return to the womb. There are many ways to return however, and the voyage may be either fruitful or positively destructive, according to the nature of the art which is produced by this return. Miller found that Lawrence's return was a fruitful one.

What, then, is the full ideological background of Miller's writings during the period in which he was concerned with Lawrence? The writers Miller harkened to during the decade preceding the second world war were members of a relatively coherent tradition, who, like Nietzsche, addressed themselves to the problems of mass evolution in an evolving universe, and attempted to propose some order whereby man might survive within his individual identity, and stave off the encroachments of automatism. Nietzsche placed the individual entirely on his own, and substituted life-enhancement as the motivating principle. The movement was no longer from man to God, but from man to himself, into the realm of pure being, as the existential sense of life emerged. Miller similarly looked forward to an image of man who, upon liberation,could live life out on a higher plane than had previously been achieved. Here Miller found special support in the works of Otto Rank and Elie Faure.

Rank's analysis of the creative process had a great influence upon Miller's thought in the period of the late 1930s, and is perhaps the most important single factor which led Miller to a detailed consideration of the works of D.H. Lawrence.

As a psychologist Rank was noted for the affirmation of a self which, contrary to orthodox Freudian thought, is more than the sum total of biological functions. Lawrence, it might be noted, posited the existence of a self quite similar to that proposed by Rank. As far as art was concerned, Rank held that the creative process provided the means by which the individual artist might discover his "real self", and grasping that self as an ideal, project it into a work, which would become the "world" in which his life-purpose might be sought. This, in contrast to the Freudian view of art, saw art as the completion of the being of the artist, rather than as a mere extension of the unresolved conflicts of the artist. Rank foresaw, in similar fashion, that the artist would one day make of his own being the work of art, the great artistic effort, thereby creating a conflict between the demands of artistic and non-artistic being.

Rank's theory of birth trauma and its ramifications in the theory of artistic being form the outlines of one of Miller's principal themes:

> Once the individual has been born, the way back to the womb is blocked by the birth-trauma. Yet because of the attraction of the unconscious life of the womb, the individual must strive

> constantly toward independence. The goal of life is self-dependence, which means separation from the mother.[18]

Lawrence and Miller both exhibited a concern with this aspect of individual growth, as is amply illustrated in Lawrence's writings in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious, and Miller's writings on Lawrence, to be discussed below. Art is very much a struggle between the freedom of the individual and his slavery to the biological process.

What may be observed here is that D.H. Lawrence and Miller were both concerned with the artistic process as being precipitated and characterized by a return to the womb, to the unconscious mental life, and significantly chose to regard this return as self-constructive in the Rankian manner, rather than self-destructive in the Freudian manner.

A further point might be made with regard to artistic self-dramatization. Rank held that the dramatization of self by an author involving the re-examination of his life had the effect of modifying the present reality of the author's identity, and consequently must be regarded as constructive, rather than escapist. A further manifestation of the creation of self via autobiographical narrative is noted by Gordon, a point which seems applicable to both Lawrence and Miller; that "the creation of the self accomplished by autobiographical narrative enables the

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18. Gordon, p. 51.

individual artist to form new ethical ideals independent of the social context in which he lives."[19] This is of the utmost importance to a reading of either Lawrence or Miller. It must be recognized that both were concerned with the revision of traditional morality, and for very similar reasons.

Furthermore, it was Rank's theory of duality which led Miller in the direction of D.H. Lawrence, and toward the paradox which associates sexuality with both life and death. Man may be saved by love from slavery to his own instinctual being, but in the process of loving he must sacrifice a considerable portion of his ego, which has the effect of inducing a sense of the loss of the integral self. With man's final destiny being the creation of outward culture, the surrender of the totality of this prerogative in the act of loving can have the effect of enslaving man even further to biological process. Before man can act fully in these terms, he must undergo a severe self-confrontation by means of entry into the unconscious life of the mind, and sail past the dangerous reef of idealism.

As Gordon says, "Miller's attitude to Lawrence reflects his preoccupation with certain themes which were important to him, and which appeared in his own work. These themes center on an awareness of life, but an awareness which is inclusive, which embraces the polarity of experience."[20]

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19. Gordon, p. 52.
20. Gordon, p. 57.

The reality the artist creates in his work becomes the means by which he lives many lives, triumphing over the restrictions of personality. In embracing the whole of reality, both conscious and unconscious, the artist prevents the progressive idealization of life, which is the death of all feeling and love.

In the final phases of the art, when the artist discovers the limitations placed upon the endless urge to creation by death, the supremacy of the body asserts itself, and body, mind, and soul are forged into a holy trinity, through which the artist perceives what Miller refers to as "the organic relatedness, the wholeness, the oneness of life." The fulfilment of individual identity does not rest upon externals, but rather upon the developing awareness of the individual, and upon his realization of his own isolation and integrity, his identity, his self.

To best summarize the approach to Lawrence which Miller formulated on the basis of his own understanding of selfhood and the artistic quest, a few comments on artistic greatness might be drawn from a later work of Miller, The Books in My Life. Speaking of the men of wisdom, the great artists, religious figures, pathfinders, iconoclasts and innovators (like Lawrence, Lao-tse, Buddha, Christ), Miller says:

> For what distinguishes the men I have in mind is that they did not impose their authority on man; on the contrary, they sought to destroy authority. Their aim and purpose was to open

up life, to make man hungry for life, to exalt life- and to refer all questions back to life. They exhorted man to realize that he had all freedom in himself, that he was not to concern himself with the fate of the world (which is not his problem), but to solve his own individual problem, which is a question of liberation, nothing else.[21]

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21. Henry Miller, The Books in My Life (New York, 1969), p. 126.

II. MILLER AND THE WORLD OF LAWRENCE

Five critical essays written during the period 1933-1944 and published between 1939 and 1944 form the core of Henry Miller's writings on D.H. Lawrence. Drawn from three collections of essays, The Cosmological Eye (1939), The Wisdom of the Heart (1941), and Sunday After the War (1944), only four of these essays were technically meant for inclusion in the projected work on Lawrence to be called The World of Lawrence.

There is, strictly speaking, no order in which Miller intended these essays to be read; indeed, there is considerable ambiguity in the order in which they might be considered as a coherent statement on the works of Lawrence. I have chosen to begin my analysis of these essays with a consideration of an essay entitled "Reflections on Ecstasy", an essay about a Czech film from The Cosmological Eye. In this short review Miller delineates the nature of his concern with Lawrence's major themes in a somewhat oblique manner which, upon reconsideration, becomes more cohesive. This essay was not meant for inclusion in the projected work on Lawrence and seems to antedate all the fragments of the projected work, except "Shadowy Monomania."

The second essay, also from The Cosmological Eye , is entitled "The Universe of Death", and forms the last part of the introduction to the work on Lawrence. In this essay, Miller scarcely considers Lawrence at all, but rather treats of the works of Joyce and Proust in an effort to define the nature of Lawrence's approach to his

art by a method of negative example. This essay goes further than a consideration of the art of Proust and Joyce in trying to define the ideological groundwork for a fuller consideration of Lawrence's role with regard to the efforts of his contemporaries. The essay declares that the works of Proust and Joyce are based upon an unhealthy unification of the conscious and unconscious spheres of thought, and are representative of a return to the womb which is neither fruitful nor justified.

The Wisdom of the Heart contains two fragments from The World of Lawrence, "Into the Future" and "Creative Death," essays which deal exclusively with an abstract consideration of Lawrence's doctrine. Finally, there is a lengthy essay, "Shadowy Monomania," from Sunday After the War. This essay is the lengthiest and most problematic of Miller's essays on Lawrence. Although published last and probably assembled last of all the essays, it was written in note form in 1933, at the very beginning of Miller's confrontation of Lawrence. Perhaps for this reason it is the most difficult to deal with, and I have accordingly resolved to treat it last.

It should be stressed at the outset that Miller's critical writings are, in more than one sense, impressionistic. No attempt is made at any point to systematize or otherwise logically validate any statements made with regard to Lawrence or any other literary figure. Close textual criticism is out of the question for Miller, and he consequently relies on his own intuition and the responses invoked by

readings of those authors about whom he wishes to write. The resulting writings are impressionistic; i.e. their validity is grounded in Miller's perceptions rather than in the interpretational value of the criticism with regard to works or authors discussed. Miller nowhere implies that he "holds the key" to the Lawrencian mystery, or that the reader will be in any way enlightened as to the nature of Lawrence's works. Miller allows us rather to observe the process of developing awareness in himself, and come to our own conclusions in that way. Strong objections to the value of such criticism will be raised, especially by those who insist on close textual criticism, yet I think Miller's position is defensible from a number of points of view. I shall leave this matter for the conclusion of the paper.

The film Ecstasy by the Czech director Machaty is about the love relation. It is similar in purpose, if not scope, to Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover, in the sense that a love relation is depicted in which a frustration of the ability to experience love in the husband leads to the wife's desertion of him in favor of a lover, whom she also later deserts. Miller notes that it is "not only the scenario but the mode of expression (which) emanate directly from D.H. Lawrence."[22] Further, Miller feels that if Lawrence had ever written a film, this would have been it, and Machaty would have been director. While critical

22. Henry Miller, The Cosmological Eye (New York, 1939) p. 65.

discussions in Miller's time centered largely on the morality or immorality of the film, Miller feels that it was really the presence of a new and disturbing element which made the public think in these terms- namely, the presence of that element of which Lawrence speaks whenever he considers "blood-consciousness" The hostility of the audience derives from their realization of the presence of a new and upsetting consciousness whose center is the plexus, the body-rhythm, and is essentially a negative response to the challenge of a new life-mode.

Miller turns aside for a moment to attack the "terrible emphasis" on plot, action and character analysis in most films as a manifestation of emotional bankruptcy. We demand violence and drama of art because there is nothing but terrifying sterility in our own lives:

> We want plot because our lives are purposeless, action because we have only an insect activity, character development because in turning in upon the mind we have discovered that we do not exist, mystery because the dominant ideology of science has ruled mystery out of our scope and ken. In short, we demand of art a violence and drama because the tension of life has broken down.[23]

The very motivating idea of Ecstasy is in its approach to life's essential mystery, and this approach links it to one of Lawrence's primary themes- the idea of an "automatic death" or a "death-in-life" To approach these concepts, no callow devices of plot, characterization, violence or action are necessary.

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23. Miller, The Cosmological Eye , p. 70.

The husband in the film, an engineer, is a man who somehow, in the midst of life, has gone dead at the core. Machaty seized upon the corpse-like quality of the film's central protagonist, and leaves no doubt in the viewer's mind that he is "hopelessly bogged in the morass of cultural values which he has established," and it is this, more than any other single factor, which is presented as the essence of his deathliness. Pursuing this theme through symbol, the engineer's eye-glasses themselves become suggestive of "the modern way of seeing things", which acts to produce a blindness to the beauty of life. Further, the eye-glasses become representative of "the stigma of dead knowledge", and the obsessive pursuit of lifeless forms which characterizes the plight of the engineer. Contrasted with this are the lovers who represent the life-force struggling blindly to assert itself. The female protagonist is still alive, aggressive, capable of self-assertion. The lovers closely parallel a Lawrencian pattern, which Miller elaborates upon:

> Lawrence's animal natures, just because of their irreducible obscenity, are the purest bodies in our current literature. Animated by a metaphysical conception, they act through obedience to fundamental laws of nature. Of these laws Lawrence admits his complete ignorance. He created his metaphysical world by faith; he proceeds only by intuition... He reflects, furthermore, the hunger and desperation of an age seeking a vital reality.[24]

A further Lawrencian element in the film is the woman's act of submission to the lover. This is not merely

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24. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 70

the surrender of her pride or her bourgeois ideals, but the surrender of herself, of her incarnation as woman. Miller sees this as "the great act of submission Lawrence so often stressed in his books (which) forms the cornerstone of his religious edifice."25 In the final analysis, the desertion of the lover is not necessarily a contradiction in the Lawrencian terminology of the film. "The important thing, from the Lawrencian standpoint, is the recognition of the sacred aspect of sex, of life through sex." Thus, although the woman has lost a husband and deserted a lover, the spark is passed on; the life-rhythm which was implied by the union of the lovers is accepted within the symbolic terminology of Machaty's film as the dominant reality. The end of the film, with the deserted lover sitting forlorn on a railway bench, was, for the French audience c. 1939, "the last straw in a lack-logic concatenation of events." Miller saw that the rage which overtook a portion of the audience was not without meaning, but was rather an indication of the piercing reality of the film. With characteristic mockery, Miller asks whether there is so much as a "flicker of suspicion in their addled pates that life is passing them by..."

This essay, casual and detached as it is, reflects the nature of Miller's steadily increasing involvement with Lawrencian thought. The important thing to observe is that Miller is approaching a separate, integral artistic

25. Miller, The Cosmological Eye , p. 75

statement, and by applying Lawrencian terminology and Lawrencian insights, creates a critical statement which is both unique and wholly refreshing. The primary points of stress are these: that a recognition of the "sacred aspect of sex" and of "life through sex" as well as a realization of the full nature of primordial man were facilitated by Lawrence's work, and remain primary attributes of the artistic tradition with which Miller identified:

> Always in Lawrence's work there is this reducing down to some primitive creature, half goat, half man, in whom there exists the feeling of unity- the preconscious individual who obeys the voice of the blood. Wherever such a literature appears, it passes beyond all the artificial frontiers of the intellect. Such a literature also brings about a great confusion. Values are either overlooked or misunderstood. What sweeps it along with overpowering illogicality, is the basic life-impulse, the innate chaos out of which it emerges and to which it appeals with all its fecundating allure.[26]

Miller's concern with the preconscious individual who is obedient to the illogical dictates of self has much to do with his concern with Lawrencian thought at this early stage. Perhaps even a greater concern however, is with the literature which, by virtue of its treatment of selfhood, passes beyong the "artificial frontiers of the intellect" Tropic of Capricorn, published the same year as this essay, indicated by its very nature Miller's attempt at fulfilment of this intellectual ideal. Furthermore, all Miller's artistic tendencies at this time seemed to be leading him in the direction of the exploration

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26. Miller, The Cosmological Eye. p. 68.

of this primitive creature for whom the voice of the blood is so powerful a motivating force.

It is only through a recognition of the sacred character of sex and the nature of primordial man that automatism, or death-in-life might be avoided. The "ghastly mob sleep" of which Lawrence spoke had become a living reality for Miller during the period immediately preceding the second world war. The death of the waking, conscious self which forms the core of resistance to the dictates of the primordial, "undifferentiated, narcissistic" self was what Miller was after, and what he felt Lawrence was concerned with in so much of his writing. The first published fragment from The World of Lawrence, called "The Universe of Death" sets about to define the nature of the artistic tradition which, according to Miller, devoted itself consciously to a surrender to sterility, logomachy and onanism; in short, Proust and Joyce are taken as exemplars of despair, and examined in that light:

> Life can be more deadly than death, and death, on the other hand, can open up the road to life. It is against the stagnant flux in which we are now drifting that Lawrence appears brilliantly alive. Proust and Joyce, needless to say, appear more representative: they reflect the times. We see in them no revolt: it is surrender, suicide, and the more poignant since it springs from creative sources.[27]

While Miller saw both Proust and Joyce surrendering to the universe of death, he maintains that Lawrence resisted to the very end the urge to abandon self-realization in

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27. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 109.

favor of the "living death" to which both Proust and Joyce ostensibly succumbed. In fact, Miller maintains that Lawrence's life and works "represent a drama which centers about the attempt to escape a living death, a death which, if it were understood, would bring about a revolution in our way of living."[28] The full exploration of this aspect of Lawrence's doctrine is reserved for the later essays "Creative Death" and "Into the Future." In the meantime, Miller restricts himself to an exploration of the symbolic capitulation of the two illustrious contemporaries of D.H. Lawrence, Proust and Joyce.

Throughout the essay, one central point remains dominant: that for these men, the creation of works of art was an escape from a hideously ugly reality. Both Proust and Joyce return to the unconscious as an alternative to the process of becoming rather than as a necessary , fecundating adjunct to the process, as was the case with D.H. Lawrence:

> It is in the examination then, of these two contemporaries of Lawrence that we see the process (of surrender, suicide) all too clearly. In Proust the full flower of psychologism- confession, self-analysis, arrest of living, making of art the final justification, but thereby divorcing art from life. An intestinal conflict in which the artist is immolated. The great retrospective curve back toward the womb: suspension in death, living death, for the purposes of dissection...A worship of art for its own sake- not for man... Art as a substitute for life. The literature of flight, of escape, of a neurosis so brilliant that it almost makes one doubt the efficacy of health.[29]

28. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 107.

29. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 110.

The above passage reveals Miller's opinion of an art which does not participate in the creation of a fuller human reality, which does not expand man's awareness of himself, but rather leaves the artist "abandoned on the door-step of his mother's womb." Proust, who wished to make of art the final reality, does, in a sense, triumph over an insane and unjust world, but only at the expense of his ability to meet the challenge offered by day-to-day existence, or propose reasonable human alternatives to despair.

Similarly, in Joyce, the "soul deterioration" of modern man is made most explicit in Ulysses, in which we have a view of modern man "lashing about in his steel and concrete cage" admitting finally that there is no escape, only capitulation. Where Miller found a certain questioning of values in Proust, in Joyce he abandoned the search, having found only the negation of all values. Throughout the works of these men, a perceptual weariness makes itself felt. The worlds of Joyce and Proust, Dublin and Faubourg St. Germain respectively, are both equally symbolic of a dead past whose persistence in the presence can diffuse only the stale aromas of decay, and fail ultimately to infuse even the most perceptive reader with a sense of new life or vitality:

> In these epics, everything is of equal value whether spiritual or material, organic or inorganic, live or abstract. The array and content of the works suggests the interior of a junk shop. The effort to parallel space, to devour it, to install oneself in the time

> process- the very nature of such a task is foreboding. The mind runs wild. We have sterility, onanism, logomachy. And the more collossal the scope of the work, the more monstrous the failure.[30]

Such epic or mock-epic works as those to which Miller refers are "naturalistic" only in the sense that nature-morte is naturalistic. The reality of such works does not abide in the living world, but rather in the mind. Joyce and Proust, in Miller's view, are naturalists who present the world as they find it, say little or nothing about it, nor derive from their "findings" any conclusions. "They are defeatists, men who escape from a hideous, cruel, loathsome reality into ART."[31] It is interesting to note that Lawrence shared Miller's negative opinion of the works of Joyce, and referred to them as "dirty-minded" journalism. Miller continually re-emphasizes the escape into art as the return to the unconscious which may act either as a substitute for life, or as an enhancement of it, according to the nature of the self-confrontation which takes place in the innermost integral self. It would be a confusion of issues to interpret Miller's evaluations of the art of Proust and Joyce as value-judgements solely, for while this aspect of his treatment of them may be established, he goes much further, as indicated below:

> The formidable picture of the world-as-disease which Proust and Joyce have given us is indeed less a picture than a microscopic study which, because we see it magnified, prevents us from

30. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 112.
31. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 118.

> recognizing it as the world of everyday in which we are swimming. Just as the art of psycho-analysis could not have arisen until society was sick enough to call for this peculiar form of therapy, so we could not have had a faithful image of our own time until there arose in our midst monsters so ridden with the disease that their works resembled the disease itself.[32]

Having established the matter of Joyce and Proust, Miller goes on to quote from Lawrence's Apocalypse to the effect that creation must contribute to the achievement of a vivider, more inclusive cycle of life- and this is the goal of living- the achievement of a fuller consciousness. Proust and Joyce are cited as having relinquished the struggle early in life; their art is based on submission and surrender while they remain in the iron grip of a forever unreachable Absolute which dominates and destroys them. Lawrence's virtue in this regard was his ability to continually renew the struggle toward some positive value, and not merely acquiesce to the rape of his consciousness by mechanical detail. The confrontation between Lawrence and the source of his creativity was a fruitful one, rather than sterile and retrograde, as in the cases of Proust and Joyce.

Miller comments characteristically on Joyce's failure to communicate with his audience:

> His language is a ferocious masturbation carried on in fourteen tongues. It is a dervish executed on the periphery of meaning, an orgasm not of blood and semen, but of slag from the burnt-out crater of the mind.[33]

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32. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 121.

This inability to communicate is further linked with the basic inability of modern man to cope with an evanescent, transitional reality; it is the struggle of a man who finds himself in the grip of a living death. This statement is substantiated by Proust's acknowledgement that it was death which kept him company "as incessantly as the idea of his own identity", and that his art was one of re-imagining, of musing among sunken treasures. Art is life affirms Miller, and Proust mistakenly eschewed life to give birth to his works. Small wonder, then, that his art was imbued with the feeling of decay:

> Proust was pre-eminently a man of the 19th century, with all the tastes, the ideology and the respect for the powers of the conscious mind which dominated the men of that epoch. His work now seems like the labor of a man who has revealed to us the absolute limits of such a mind. [34]

Just as Proust's hatred was directed against the terms of a life which denied him entrance, so was Joyce's bitterness directed against a Philistine world; at bottom, Joyce had a profound contempt for humanity- the scholar's contempt. "One realizes that he has the neurotic's fear of entry into the world of men and women"; the living world which is being created from moment to moment, Miller affirms. It is not to be forgotten that Lawrence bore a similar hatred for man, although one might find greater justification for this hatred in the external facts of Lawrence's life than in those of Joyce or Proust.

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34. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, pp. 126-127.

Miller displays an ambivalence with regard to the great monument of the tradition of which he speaks- i.e. Ulysses. While he states that it is clearly not Homer but defeat which forms the ground plan of Ulysses, Miller is far from denying the validity of Joyce's post-mortem on man of the machine age. Ulysses can be seen as a heroic striving of the soul of man- yet on the personal level, the artistic level, Miller cannot refrain from condemnation of the work as a capitulation of self, as a consignment of masculine identity to an interrelation with the eternal, devouring image of woman, the Magna Mater. This, screams Miller, is a retreat, a retreat to the womb:

> And so, with a final triumphant vengeance, with suicidal glee, all the threads which were dropped throughout the book are recapitulated; the pale, diminutive hero, reduced to an intestinal worm and carried like a tickling little phallus in the great body of the female, returns to the womb of nature, shorn of everything but the last symbol. In the long retrospective arc which is drawn, we have the whole trajectory of man's flight from unknown to unknown. The rainbow of history fades out. A great dissolution is accomplished. After that closing picture of Molly Bloom a-dreaming on her dirty bed we can say, as in Revelation- "And there shall be no more curse." Henceforth no more sin, no guilt, no longing, no pain of separation. The end is accomplished. Man returns to the womb.[35]

As in the essay "Reflections on Ecstasy" Miller's use of Lawrencian terminology is the keynote to his criticism. As he notes early in this essay, Lawrence's attempt was to escape a living death, rather than to surrender to it in any fashion. The living death Lawrence experienced, he experienced in creative fashion, in

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35. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, pp. 133-134.

contradistinction to the deaths experienced by Proust and Joyce, which were almost wholly negative when considered on a personal, or artistic plane. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Miller's evaluation of the tradition within which Lawrence wrote (a tradition which demanded the explicit revelation of negative cultural values), we must be aware that his intention in introducing the Proustian and Joycean modes of artistic consciousness is honorable; he is speaking in defense of the alleged failure of Lawrence to present his doctrine in cohesive fashion.

The single most coherent point established in "The Universe of Death" relates to the manner in which the writer engages the data confronting him:

> Where Proust held himself suspended over life in a cataleptic trance, weighing, dissecting, and eventually corroded by the very skepticism he had employed, Joyce had already plunged into the abyss. In Proust there is still a questioning of values. In Joyce there is a denial of all values. With Proust, the schizophrenic aspect of his work is not so much a cause as a result of his world-view. With Joyce there is no world-view. Man returns to his primordial elements. He is washed away in a cosmological flux. Parts of him may be thrown up on some foreign shores, in alien climes, in some future time. But the whole man, the vital, spiritual ensemble, is dissolved. This is the dissolution of the body and soul, a sort of cellular immortality in which life survives chemically.[36]

What D.H. Lawrence and Miller both harkened to was the regeneration of this "vital, spiritual ensemble" which

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36. Miller, The Cosmological Eye, p. 111.

had somehow dissolved, washed away in a "cosmological flux." For them, unlike Proust and Joyce, there was a way out, a manner in which the unity of being might be reconstituted in the face of an overwhelming dissolution which assaulted the senses from all sides.

"Creative Death" is the first essay in the volume The Wisdom of the Heart, and together with "Into the Future" forms the core of Miller's most abstract treatment of Lawrencian themes. It is here that one may observe most directly the relation between Miller's concern with his own themes and those of D.H. Lawrence. The first passages examine Lawrence's paradoxical relations to his predecessors. While acknowledging his indebtedness to Jesus, Nietzsche, Whitman and Dostoievski, to name but a few, Miller notes that Lawrence had to reject all those men and their doctrines in order to assert his own power and vision. Of all these men, the poets of life, "victims of the Holy Ghost," mystics, D.H. Lawrence had the most difficulty in shaking off the influence of Dostoievski, whose poles of being and non-being were the most impressive, and restricting:

> Strange as it may seem today to say, the aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware. In this state of God-like awareness one sings; in this realm the world exists as a poem. No why or wherefore, no direction, no goal, no striving, no evolving... This is the sublime, the a-moral state of the artist, he who lives only in the moment, the visionary moment of utter, far-seeing lucidity...,By the force and

> power of the artist's vision, the static, synthetic whole which is called the world is destroyed. The artist gives back to us a vital, singing universe, alive in all its parts.[37]

The artist's assertion of his humanity is in the moment which is the eternal here and now, the "expanding, infinite moment which is flame and song," and it is only in living out his pattern as an individual, obedient to every urge without distinction of morality ethics, law, custom etc., by opening himself to everything, that the artist can assert himself fully and reach his identity. Miller is making a point about Lawrence which derives from an ancient tradition, but which is still applicable. Further, the "final reality" which is recognized by the mature artist is that symbolic paradise of the womb, that "China" as Miller calls it, which the psychologists place somewhere between the conscious and unconscious mind. Speaking of the artist Miller says:

> Each time he is born he dreams of the impossible, the miraculous, dreams he can break the wheel of life and death, avoid the struggle and the drama, the pain and the suffering of life. His poem is the legend wherein he buries himself, wherein he relates the mysteries of birth and death. <u>His</u> reality, <u>his</u> experience.[38]

The symbolic paradise of the womb, the "China" of the mind is akin to the Bhuddist nirvana, in which there is no more struggle to escape becoming. It is an expression of man's wish to triumph over being and becoming, over reality

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37. Henry Miller, <u>The Wisdom of the Heart</u> (New York, 1941), p. 2
38. Henry Miller, <u>The Wisdom of the Heart</u> , p. 3.

itself; the poem becomes the dream made flesh. It can also become a negative force, as was the case with Proust and Joyce, in the sense that the artist may be left abandoned "on the door-step of his mother's womb with his race-memories and incest longings."[39] Art can thus become the mode in which the individual resolves the tension between life and death; the artist establishes himself as the hero and God of his universe, and art becomes the abstraction wherein he triumphs over life.

> In the case of a man like Lawrence we are dealing with one who glorified the obscurity, a man who raised to the highest that source and manifestation of all life, the body. All efforts to clarify his doctrine involve a return to and a renewed wrestling with the eternal, fundamental problems which confronted him. Life is forever bringing one back to the source, to the very heart of the cosmos through a mystic labyrinth. His work is altogether one of symbol and metaphor. Phoenix, Crown, Rainbow, Plumed Serpent, all these symbols center about the same obsessive idea: the resolution of two opposites in the form of a mystery. Despite his progression from one plane of conflict to another, from one problem of life to another, the symbolic character of his work remains constant and unchanged. He is a man of one idea; that life has symbolic significance. Which is to say that life and art are one.[40]

Several points within this passage are important to the essay as a whole. That any contact with Lawrencian doctrine implies a renewed wrestling with the "eternal, fundamental problems" is undeniable. Yet it is not wholly true that Lawrence's work is altogether one of symbol and metaphor. Certainly, Lawrence relied heavily upon symbolic device,

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39. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 4.

40. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 5.

but this is not the whole of his art. Most important here is the sense of Lawrence's work as the resolution of opposites. This point is well taken, and reflects the concept of art as a union between the "warring selves" of the artist. Art, Miller affirms, must give life meaning, for assuredly, life has none of its own to offer outside the external biological facts of its nature.

Specifically applicable to D.H. Lawrence is the idea that by living his art, the artist creates his own world, a world in which he is all-powerful, and dominates thoroughly. This world, says Miller, is realizable only through the deepest sense of frustration and failure in the world of external experience. Death itself may be defeated in this way, but only within the realm of idea. The resolution of opposites refers to the resolution not merely of the artist's internecine conflict, but the conflict with life, which is essentially a conflict with the overwhelming fact of death, of physical failure. Escape, says Miller, is the deepest wish, and the escape from death can be facilitated only by an escape from life into the creative reality.

The Rainbow symbol in Lawrence is thus seen as a bridge the artist throws out over the gulf of reality, bespeaking his belief in eternal life, and the continued and perpetual virility and power of mankind. Yet successive actual failures in Lawrence's life brought him back across the failure of his symbolic reality to a renewed interest

in artistic illusion:

> His whole art is the pathetic and heroic effort to deny his human defeat. He works out, in his art, an unreal triumph- since it is neither a triumph over life nor over death. It is a triumph over an imaginary world which he himself has created. The drama lies entirely within the realm of idea.[41]

When the artist finally gains entry to a mature mode of vision, he can gradually accept his destiny as an artist, which is to act as the very symbol of destiny itself- he fulfils himself through the destruction of his own ego. He must be continually reborn, thus incarnating for all humanity the drama of individual life, which, to be tasted and experienced, must embrace the reality of dissolution. In order to accomplish this however, the artist must withdraw from life into a world of his own, utilizing just enough of actual experience to present the flavor of the real struggle of life. By living vicariously, by creating and dissolving his identity in symbolic fashion, the artist is enabled to play the monstrous role of living and dying innumerable times. He becomes, in this way, the symbol of individual identity. In each successive work the artist undergoes the incarnation and death of one particular self-structuring and the re-distribution of any charisma associated with that self-structuring. Miller implies that behind the sacrifice which is the work of art lies "the very substantial idea of the sacrament; the person incarnating the power is killed in order that his body be consumed and the magic powers re-distributed."[42]

41. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 7.

In this way the artist is always crucified in order to be consumed, in order to be divested of the mystery and robbed of his power and magic.

The life instincts, goading the artist on to ever-greater expressions of self, have the effect of inducing him to overlook the most fundamental aspect of his being; specifically, his own animal nature, his own body:

> It is only at the last limits of creativeness, when his form world can assume no further architectural dimensions, that he suddenly begins to realize his "limitations." It is then that fear assails him. It is then that he tastes death truly- a foretaste, as it were.[43]

Suddenly, the life instincts, which have become transformed through the creation of a higher, artistic reality to a death-urge unify "the trinal division of body, mind and soul" and make of the fragmented man a unified being. It is here, Miller asserts, that the wisdom of life attains its apogee in the creative individual, and is converted to an acceptance of the laws of one's being. Here, at the summit, "when the limits have been felt and perceived, there unfolds the grand perspective, and one recognizes the similitude of surrounding beings, the interrelationship of all forms and laws of being- the organic relatedness, the wholeness, the oneness of life."[44]

The consequence of this realization is that the artist must, in order to preserve the element of creativity within himself, convert his doctrine (or the obsession of individuality) into a common, collective ideology-

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43. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 9.
44. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 10.

which is to say that truths being known profoundly within the self must be given to others.This, Miller states, is the meaning of the Master-Exemplar of the great religious figures who have captivated the mind of man since the dawn of civilization:

> At their furthest peak of blossoming they have but emphasized their common humanity, their innate, rooted, inescapable humanness.[45]

The artistic conversion of the life instincts and the attendant changes undergone by the artist are the roots of this essay on "Creative Death." In the closing remarks of the essay, Miller links the concept of the rebirth into a creative identity with the Nietzschean statement of the transcending reality of art:

> It is at this point in the cultural cycle of history that the "transvaluation of values" must set in. It is the reversal of the spiritual values, of a whole complex of reigning ideological values. The tree of life now knows its death. The Dionysian art of ecstasies now reasserts its claim. The drama intervened. The tragic reappears. Through madness and ecstasy the mystery of the God is enacted and the drunken revellers acquire the will to die- to die creatively! It is the conversion of that same life instinct which urged the tree of man to fullest expression. It is to save man from the fear of death so that he may be able to die! To go forward into death! Not backward to the womb![46]

The extroardinary complexity of this short essay is an ample illustration of the depth of involvement Miller reached in an attempt to "place" Lawrence within a definite cultural stream, thereby indicating the importance of his place in it. Clearly, much of what Miller says with regard to Lawrence's art is anchored

45. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 10.
46. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 12.

in a developing awareness of his own, but several points remain valid for their depth of insight into the career of Lawrence. Among these stands out the idea of a wisdom of life attaining an apogee, facilitating the conversion of knowledge of the self into a coherent doctrine which may be disseminated via a common, collective ideology, or its dramatization within a myth of identity. The later stages of Lawrence's career exhibit this process clearly. The abortive attempt at the dissemination of a spiritual doctrine in The Plumed Serpent, and the more successful attempt in Lady Chatterley's Lover exemplify this. While Lawrence attempted in the first instance to bring the reader to an awareness of his spiritual reality by means of the metaphorical interaction of the male and female protagonists, the attempt failed, perhaps as a consequence of insufficient development of the awareness of self. The last novel however, was so thoroughly anchored in profound self-awareness that scarcely a reader can escape an involvement leading to an enhanced awareness of a spiritual reality made (most literally) flesh.

Further, the roots of Lawrencian art, as Miller intuitively divined, remain in the idea of a sacramental relation between artist and reader. More than perhaps any other previous literary figure of Lawrence's milieu, Lawrence's identity was the core of his art, and the projection of this identity the process of the art. Lawrence's incarnations as Richard Somers, Birkin, Mellors etc.,

are easily perceived, and understood. Lawrence recognized that his role as novelist consisted in successive self-structurings, and in the dissolution of these successive selves in favor of a new incarnation. While Miller utilizes the formal device of characterization to a lesser extent in his own works, the substantial reality of successive incarnations remains present in the manner in which Miller presents himself. He seems to have an uncanny memory for all the phases through which his being passed, and presents them unabashedly throughout The Rosy Crucifixion and other auto-novels.

"Into the Future", an essay from The Wisdom of the Heart is the third fragment from The World of Lawrence to be considered here. Having attempted in the previous essay to arrive at a synthesis of his conceptions of Lawrence's artistic identity and the artistic identity in itself, Miller turns to the oracular aspect of D.H. Lawrence's work. Having labored so heavily in the relation of so many abstractions, Miller seems to be starting to tire, and frankly admits his perplexity:

> Before me lie the notes from which this book on Lawrence will emerge. They make a huge baffling pile. Some of them I don't understand myself any more. Some of them I see already in a new light. The notes are full of contradictions. Lawrence was full of contradictions. Life itself is full of contradictions.[47]

Consequently, Miller feels impelled to contradict himself immediately by stating that Lawrence was not really full

47. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 160.

of contradictions, but always was curiously "right." He was opposed to the world as it is, a world which is eternally wrong but which eternally wags its head NO to any suggestion that it change.

Miller tells us that Lawrence must be seen as a man who most nearly attained full consciousness of self in our time, and a comparison with Christ is immediately pursued. Creatures endowed with a fuller knowledge of self find it necessary, it seems, to make man aware of "a deepening in the conception of the role of man,"[48] through a denial of the material world and a loud proclamation of the dominance of the "inner reality":

> There is the world of outer reality, or action, and the world of inner reality, or thought. The fulcrum is art. After long use...the fulcrum wears itself away. Then, as though divinely appointed, there spring up lone, tragic figures, men who offer their own bare backs as the fulcrum for the world.[49]

Such a man, Miller states, was Lawrence, the incarnation of the renewed, and perpetually renewing spirit of man. In this world which Lawrence harkened to, each individual must create his own reality. It is simply not enough to subscribe to the program offered by even the best of artists or spiritual leaders. Miller insists that each man faces an absolutely new condition of life, which demands the creation of an entirely new cosmos out of our separate, living parts. That Miller should so tenaciously

48. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 162.
49. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 162.

seize upon this topic indicates he must have surely been aware of what Lawrence was so vitally concerned with at the outbreak of the first world war. Lawrance's new world, his Rananim, was clearly something to be found by each man within himself. Miller observes that we are entering, as Lawrence predicted, the era of the Holy Ghost. "We are about to give up the ghost of our dead self and enter a new domaine."[50] Against this new order Lawrence set up no opposition. He welcomed it, in fact, but could not help voicing agony as he was borne away in the tide of change. The greater part of the world was dying without having the chance, like himself, to be even partially reborn. What D.H. Lawrence feared and despised was the horrible "death in the womb" taking place all around him.

In turning once again to Lawrence's art, Miller utilizes another comparison with Proust, who, by "collecting all the images of himself which he had ever glimpsed in a mirror, recomposed a final seed-like image of which he had no knowledge."[51] On the other hand, what Lawrence stressed in his art was the flowering of personality. He was deeply impressed that man, psychologically speaking, is still in a state of infancy, and neither the dynamic idealism of the West or the almost fanatic quietism of the East appeared to him as a viable alternative. They both appeared, in fact, equally inadequate.

50. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 164.
51. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 167.

Lawrence's first serious work was, according to Miller, The Crown, in which he attempted to elucidate the meaning of the Holy Ghost, primarily "as a way of referring to the mysterious source of the self, the creative instinct, the individual guide and conscience."[52] What apparently agonized Lawrence, even at this early stage, was that man, by taking the road to the true self, was cut off from the world. This seemed to him especially applicable to the role of the artist. The consequent breakdown of understanding between the artist and public was of much concern to Lawrence, as it left the artist no choice but to surrender to the flux, "to the drift toward a new and unthinkable order."[53] That Lawrence understood, that he revealed the trend and that he offered actual solutions, is what Miller is trying to demonstrate in this essay.

Part of Lawrence's solution Miller saw as his ability to accept his individual destiny (as noted in "Creative Death"), to become the very symbol of man's adaptation to a new sense of selfhood. In this respect, the oracular or prophetic function superseded all other roles in Lawrence's life, as he gradually surrendered to experience. The final passages of "Into the Future" deal with the distinction between those modern spirits whose self and art swim meaninglessly in the current, communicating only the semi-useful, semi-meaningful data of experience as processed by the intellect alone, and those whose inner reality is dominant:

52. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 168.
53. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 169.

> But there is another kind of modern who enters the conflict blindly, to establish that for which as yet there is no name. It is to this order of men that Lawrence addressed himself. The Apollonian show is over. The dance has begun. The coming men are the musicians of the new order, the seed-bearers, the tragic spirits.[54]

On the brink of this new world of Dionysiac revelation stands man, who, as an artist and creator, must first see himself reborn, re-created, born of his own spirit, as it were:

> Whatever is valuable, whatever is creative must now reveal the pure and flaming spirit. The poet is bound to be oracular and prophetic. As night comes on man looks out toward the stars; he no longer identifies himself with the world of day which is crumbling, but gives himself to the silent, ordained future. Abandoning the cunning instruments of the mind with which he had vainly hoped to pierce the mystery, he now stands before the veil of creation, naked and awe-struck. He divines what is in store for him. Everything becomes personal in a new sense. He becomes himself a new person.[55]

This essay then, identifies the prophetic, oracular nature of Lawrence's work, and with only a single actual reference to a text, attempts to define its nature. The proclamation of the inner reality both by auto-symbolic and literary means is what Miller sees at the core of Lawrence's oracular and prophetic functions, and at the core of meaning in his works. The acceptance of individual identity is the cornerstone of the prophetic edifice, the means by which Lawrence hoped to engage the consciousnesses of those moderns who would be the "seed-bearers" of a new order, and the primary point of contact with Miller, for whom a similar realization would act as the key to a new world.

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54. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 171.
55. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 172.

Finally, I come to "Shadowy Monomania", the lengthiest article written by Miller on Lawrence, and the most explicit with regard to the natures of several individual works of Lawrence. Written during the period 1933-1944 while Miller was in Paris, the conception was evidently much influenced by Knud Merrild's book A Poet and Two Painters, in which there is what Miller calls a "warm, glowing portrait" of D.H. Lawrence. The approach in Miller's essay is more casual, less vermiculate than in the other essays, having been conceived, as is evident, at a time when Miller still found it possible to maintain a detached attitude toward Lawrence. "Shadowy Monomania" was published in 1944 in the volume of essays entitled Sunday After the War.

The essay begins with a treatment of current attitudes toward the respective merits of Lawrence's earlier and later works. There had been much controversy in recent years concerning the validity and artistic merit of much of Lawrence's later works, and even relatively sympathetic critics found it possible to denounce Lawrence with impunity. Sons and Lovers, Miller notes, contained the germs of an artistic consciousness which, by virtue of its ability to harness tradition and its facility for description, might have made Lawrence the darling of literary England. After Sons and Lovers however, "he appears on the horizon of his unknown world as an archangel flourishing a glittering sword. His tongue becomes sharp, his words are bitter."[56]

56. Henry Miller, Sunday After the War (New York, 1944) p. 234.

Miller further implies that the world may remember Lawrence only through Lady Chatterley's Lover, which is the most extreme expression of his soul, and though perhaps the most representative piece, is by no means the single factor upon which one may base an evaluation of the Lawrencian art:

> Lady Chatterley's Lover is no more the substance of Lawrence's gospel than are the loaves and fishes which Christ distributed among the multitude: it is only the evidence of unseen powers.[57]

Miller pursues this analogy further in defense of the work:

> The book is obscene and there is no justification for it. Because it requires none. And the miracles of Jesus are obscene. Because there is no justification for them either. Life is miraculous and obscene, and neither is there any justification for life. The crowd will accept neither life, nor obscenity, nor miracle; all that is sacred is taboo, nay, incomprehensible to the multitude.[58]

The appraisal of the "obscenity" of Lady Chatterley's Lover leads Miller to the realization of the nature of the symbology underlying the so-called obscenity of the book. Lawrence became preoccupied with the symbology of sex in an effort to counteract the insufficiency of symbols which had been traditionally employed to make the world of man supportable and comprehensible, for, as Miller observes "in the riddle of sex man comes closest to tasting the full savor of death."[59] This goes back to what was said in the first part of this paper concerning the Rankian paradox which associates sex both with the renewal of life and the death of the individual identity. In using sex as a symbolic

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57. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 235.
58. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 235.

device to uncover the sham and hypocrisy of existence, Lawrence was unleashing a great power:

> When, consequently, in his effort to annihilate the fraud and sham of existence (all that is embraced in the word "civilization"), Lawrence concentrates on the symbology of sex, it is with the cunning and malice of the female. It is an act of the deepest betrayal, a treachery toward a masculine world which he despairs of overthrowing. He understands too well the role of each. He struggles to go beyond the point at which they separated, to achieve some super-human hermaphroditism which would unite the warring forces within him...59

This is a perceptive analysis of D.H. Lawrence, certainly, but is applicable also to Miller's own, more consciously developed technique of utilizing the sexual symbology at his disposal to create emotionally and intellectually significant statements bearing on the bases of individual and social identity.

To balance the statement about Lawrence's destructive intentions in Lady Chatterley's Lover, Miller quotes Apocalypse on the necessity of establishing a "living organic connection with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind, and nation and family." Thus early, Miller was aware of the encroaching awareness of "the oneness, the organic wholeness of life,"

Miller turns at this point to an examination of the man himself, with a brief examination of Lawrence's career, his prodigious artistic activity, his wholeness as an artist, his ability to experience all forms of life. As for the other side of Lawrence, that side which was "pathetic and ridiculous", Miller notes that at least

59. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 136.

some of the crowd appreciated his Chaplinesque role:

> They adore seeing him thumb his nose at a giant or stick out his behind, or escape with his breeches coming down, or slip on a banana peel.[60]

Miller was always quite critical of Lawrence's biographers, who seemed intent on revealing his inadequacies or covering them up. Miller notes that their dubious concern for detail "can even make the bed squeak." Further, and most important, he remarks that "while they write their biographies the author spills his heart's blood writing the autobiography of his soul"[61] The germ of Miller's appraisal of the sacramental aspect of Lawrence's work is to be found here.

> The only value of an artist [Lawrence] used to say, is whether he reveals life. Lawrence brought life and revealed life. Men will feed on him for generations to come, as they fed on him while he lived- "sucked the life out of him," to use his own words.[62]

The sacramental role seems to have extended itself deeply into Lawrence's role as husband and lover. Miller's passage on the women in Lawrence's life is revealing:

> Mabel makes Brett out to be an idiot; Brett makes Frieda out a slut and a hussy; Frieda makes them all out to be a pack of intruders. The Carswell woman writes of him as if he were a saint; Brett writes about him as if he were Sir Lancelot; the Luhan woman sees him as a composite of saint and devil.[63]

Murry's criticism of Lawrence Miller found wholly unsatisfactory, yet notes that even Murry "cravenly acknowledged Lawrence's

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60. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 243.
61. Miller, Sunday, p. 244.
62. Miller, Sunday, p. 242.
63. Miller, Sunday, p. 244.

greatness" by indicating that our appreciation of him must be tempered by the fact that he was more than "abnormal"; he was himself the soul of the future. The real unsatisfactoriness of Murry's approach Miller finds to rest in his psychoanalyzing Lawrence according to a formula- something to which Lawrence would never have submitted,and is in itself somewhat slanderous. Further, Miller speaks of "the inefficacy of the psychological approach" when the subject of analysis is a "fluid, protean nature", an artist and creative genius:

> The man of genius is he who makes his own laws, his own formulae; it is because they are uniquely his and that in obedience to them he alienates himself from the rest of men that he defies the categories of the critics, scientists and philosophers.[64]

One need scarcely mention the importance of this stance to Miller, for whom rationalistic detractors (Time magazine included), were mere worms burrowing in a decaying cadaver. Murry's emphasis on "sex" in the Lawrencian myth is further criticized by Miller, who notes that it is really the thirst for fulfillment of an isolated union with the universe that emerges dominant in Lawrence, and that it is precisely the spiritual insufficiency of the sex act which points up the need for a creative evolution.

The urgent quest for something beyond immediate gratification is the story of The Rainbow, in which it is implied that no mortal man or woman can satisfy the individual soul's craving for the realization of its

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64. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 254.

identity. That is the reason that love, marriage, and even friendship were all added burdens to Lawrence's existence. Nevertheless, as Lady Chatterley's Lover indicates, the artist, the man, craves some gratification whose immediacy is apparent. The sex act is full of implications in this regard, yet Lawrence was really seeking "a perpetual renewal of the spirit, a faith built on the recognition of an innate antagonism, so that man could go to his beyond, to his business of creation."[65] The dual goal in Lawrence was obviously a perfected sex union coupled with a simultaneous creative effusion:

> The great goal of creative or constructive activity..must always be the goal of the day-time self. But the very possibility of such a goal arises out of the vivid dynamism of the conscious blood. A perfected sex circuit and a successful sex union. And there can be no successful sex union unless the greater hope of purposive, constructive activity fires the soul of man all the time; or the hope of a passionate, purposive destructive activity..Sex as an end in itself is a disaster: a vice.[66]

Miller himself implemented those Lawrencian concepts in many of his works; one can find a critique of pure sex in the studies of the character of Van Norden in Tropic of Capricorn and Quiet Days in Clichy, to name but a few instances.

Yet for all the idolatry with which Lawrence's women approached him, there remained a struggle between them. According to Lawrence it was woman's demand to be loved, her inability to relinquish her own self-assertion that is

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65. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 257

66. Miller, Sunday, p. 258

the key to the struggle between the sexes:

> Man, in fulfilling his biological functions through sex does not establish a sufficient value for woman. Though this is what she demands of him through the rigorous laws of her being, in reality, she as well as he requires the illusion of greater purpose. The building of a masculine world, all that is implied by the world culture-is a necessity imposed upon the man by the woman in order to sustain an illusion.[67]

Miller goes on to imply that man is almost unnecessary in the Lawrencian scheme, as it is chiefly through woman and for her that our own grandiose structures, illusions, myths and legends become the substance of our religions, philosophy and science. But when the sexual polarity breaks down and an unhealthy fusion of the identity of the sexes takes place, then does man become subject to the encompassing, devouring love-will of the female, and stands exposed to "the scorpion of maternal nourishment." This is, in turn, bound to lead to an open contempt on the part of the female, and the thwarting of the collective will as embodied in human culture. Proust and Joyce are cited here as victims of such a usurpation of the masculine cultural prerogative. Miller notes that "Joyce drags us through the dreariest pages in order to attack an outworn institution like the Catholic Church, which is really his mother."[68] The ultimate results of such a usurpation of the masculine role are explored:

> The result, in the case of Proust, is his love for an invert; in the case of Joyce it is his glorification of the eternal whore in woman. In the case of Lawrence it is his search for a mythical man who is not a pervert, but who

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67 Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 260

> understands the finesse and amplitude of earthly love. Incest motive! The root malady, the horror the pain, the torture from which springs their art.[69]

At this point, after elucidating the manner in which the breakdown of sexual polarity becomes a culturally operative factor, Miller launches into a recapitulation of the evolution in Lawrence, taking as his starting point the early failure in the relationship with Miriam. In this first love, Lawrence began to sense the fearful, paralyzing grip of his mother's all-encompassing love. Lawrence transferred emotions at this time, later becoming aware of the extreme damage done to himself and others. The roots of Lawrence's rejection of white idealism lay in his reaction to the strangle-hold his mother had placed upon his emotions, and it is only with the death of his mother that he can realize an ability to turn inward, and discover in himself the true source of his power and significance.

With Women in Love, the problem began to shape itself more definitely, as, for example, in Birkin's statements to Ursula concerning the self she must encounter in him. Lawrence began at this point to express a desire for an equilibration of two beings based on a sexual freedom from inhibiting taboos and ideals, "human absolutes in sex", as he phrased it, or "human beings who stand apart from the corruptive flux of disintegration."[70] The self

69. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 262
70. Miller, Sunday, p. 264

beneath the ego came to represent for Lawrence the incurruptible self, the immortal, absolute self:

> Because, in his belief the petty, willful ego the superficial self that responds to ideals etc., is nothing but a cold surface of consciousness, consumed by the horror of not-being; the self which is crippled from birth and unable to have experience of any sort.[71]

It is the self beneath the consciously formulated ego, the wholly responsive, liberated, unconscious self that Lawrence wished to see cultivated, and which must be cultivated in order that identity be consummated:

> Once aware that his destiny is to symbolize for all time this great conflict which is going on in man, once aware that he is victimized by this conflict and must dedicate himself to expressing it, he embarks with savage earnestness, power and fluency in expressing every phase of the conflict.[72]

This aspect of Lawrence's struggle was taken up in the essay "Creative Death" and received its fullest treatment there. Thus, Lawrence, paralyzed by the white idealism of the world, held fast in the grip of inhibiting taboos and ideals, began the struggle to free himself, a struggle which began quite naturally with the acceptance of the dark, instinctive side of his being. Hence the re-enthronement of the "dark gods" and "a synthesis of the conflicting human spirit which reasserts its divinity by stressing the animal nature of man."[73] The symbology itself is a variable factor; it matters little whether God be a plumed serpent, or an idea. Lawrence always pays tribute to "the great

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71. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 265
72. Miller, Sunday, p. 265
73. Miller, Sunday, p. 267

dynamic principle which religion symbolizes," whose essence is to be found in the liberation of the self, the creative death which fecundates humanity:

> Mired as he is in the unquenchable Absolute, Lawrence nevertheless does revive in us the life instincts- at the cost of his own life. By his very detachment he was able to create a new world, and though it is not a real world, it serves as a magnet, a goal, a motivating and inspiring force. By reanimating the old symbols it gives new meaning to the fundamental problems of life which were in danger of stagnation.74

The "shadowy monomania" from which this essay derives its title is extracted from Lawrence's poem on the Etruscan cypresses; "They are dead, the Etruscans, and all that is left is the shadowy monomania of some cypresses and tombs." Lawrence evidently wished to express the eternal quest of the Absolute which has strewn life with monuments, with mournful trees, and with tombs. Miller feels that Lawrence, in returning to the dark, animal side of his nature was again inducing an awareness of the Absolute within men which, he hoped, would awaken them to the necessity of the individual incarnation of the god. The death of the rational, idealistic self would thereby function to produce the birth of a new spirit, a new life, and ultimately, a new world. The real horror then, is not the unleashing of the dark god, but rather the death-in-life of modern man whose inability to respond forces him to give way to a soul-destroying automatism:

> By rediscovering his animal nature, by giving

74. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 267

expression once again to his primal instincts, man will destroy the old being that was hidden away under the carapace of ideals. He must not go on in this hideous biologic immortality. He must learn to die in his corruption in order to be reborn, to enjoy a new spirit and a new body, and a new life.[75]

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75. Miller, Sunday After the War, p. 274.

III. CONCLUSION

What remains to be considered in this essay is the nature and extent of Lawrence's influence upon Miller. This is no mean topic and is itself fit subject for a lengthy work. Many questions arise for which there can be no conclusive answers, such as whether Miller was satisfied with his treatment of Lawrence; whether he abruptly dropped the question of Lawrence when he became involved with his own spiritual autobiography; and whether the spirit of Lawrence haunted him as it so obviously did Huxley.

The fact remains that the work on Lawrence was never published, almost certainly never reached completion, and was presented to the public in fragmented form only. If we are to believe secondary sources, Miller had planned other works of a similar nature during the 1930s. The fragments of the Lawrence book remain the most extensive testament to Miller's critical abilities outside The Books in My Life, in which he deals at length with a variety of writers such as Giono, Cendrars, Rider Haggard, Krishnamurti, John Cowper Powys, etc. The work is nothing if not eclectic.

Miller's involvement with Lawrence seems to be of a decidedly different nature than any other critical bypath he pursued in the course of his life. Coming, as it does, in a period of extraordinary stress (the years 1933-1944), the work on Lawrence was, admittedly, "an island

on which for a number of years [he] was stranded." Miller speaks of this island as "the sole remaining link which binds [him] to the past."[76] Indeed, between 1933, when he began writing the notes on D.H. Lawrence and 1940, when he began writing Sexus, Miller had completed his own formal apprenticeship and had come into his own as a writer, having survived the turbulent, enriching expatriate period.

The key to the nature of Miller's involvement with Lawrencian doctrine seems to lie in those innocuous comments made to George Wickes in 1962, when Miller admitted that the further he became involved, the less he understood about Lawrence. He had found himself in a mass of contradictions, and no longer was certain of the very identity of the man about whom he had begun to write. The fascination remained, however, and in the five articles presented in the preceding section, most of what must be known of his involvement is revealed.

If any single statement may be seen as the core of Miller's thought, it is certainly that sentence which begins "There is only one great adventure, and that is inward, toward the self...." When Miller awakened to the reality of this, it was virtually with a copy of Lawrence under the pillow. Lawrence was his guide, his mentor, his guru for many years. And what Lawrence wished, more than anything else, was to awaken man to a deepening in the conception of his role. As Miller indicates, Lawrence was

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76. Miller, The Wisdom of the Heart, p. 176.

one of those prophetic natures who wished to refer all questions back to the source- to life itself- thereby allowing the individual freedom for the development of his identity. Miller stuck fast to this doctrine throughout life, and incorporated it wholly within his thought.

Through writing about Lawrence Miller was discovering himself, revealing himself progressively to his awareness. This type of involvement transcends what is commonly thought to be self-consciousness, for Miller was always aware of Lawrence as a kindred spirit, was continually amazed that all he had to say had, in a sense, already been said. Perhaps most amazing is that in observing Miller's reaction to D.H.Lawrence one is observing the ideal reaction. While Lawrence is nowhere so blunt as to suggest that the reader drop his book and go forth in search of meaningful experience, that seems to be the cumulative effect of a close reading of his works. The implications of an involvement with Lawrence extend themselves further into the reader's prerogatives than perhaps any other author in the language, and it comes as no surprise that the same is true of Miller.

Certainly Miller's life did not stop when he was working on Lawrence, but as he said, he was, for a period of time, "totally in his grip" and in that period, one can only speculate as to the changes wrought. For one thing, it seems most obvious that Miller recognized, through Lawrence, the importance of the sacred character of

sex and of the use of the symbology of sex in eliciting an abnormally strong reader response. This point receives considerable support from the changes in tone of the "objectionable" passages from Tropic of Cancer through the various auto-novels, Tropic of Capricorn and The Rosy Crucifixion. From the treatment of sex as a depersonalized, rather incoherent phenomenon through an ascending value-scale to the depiction of the sex union as one of the consummate expressions of humanity, Miller succeeds in establishing a kind of keyboard with which he may manipulate the consciousness of his readers. Lawrence had no such idea in mind, yet the implications of the technique of Lady Chatterley's Lover substantiate Miller's use of sexual symbology.

Through an increasingly contradictory, irrational confrontation with the enigma of Lawrence, Miller was brought to a renewed awareness of the potential of selfhood, becoming more aware at every turn of the infinitude of his own being. Small wonder if at various points Miller should have felt as though he were lost in a maze of identity, when his own identity was inextricably intermeshed with that of Lawrence!

As the five essays indicate, a central concern to both men was with the nature of self-liberation, and with its dependence upon the psychology of the individual. Miller's approbation of Lawrence's return to the womb seems to rest on the conception of his return as a searching,

a quest, and a struggle, rather than an escape from a loathsome reality. In similar fashion, Miller's auto-novels are a return to the womb and a revitalization of the present reality, rather than a narcotic.

What Miller brought to Lawrence was an openness, a willingness to accept all as truth, as the Word, and Lawrence surprised him by holding up a mirror in which he could see far more than his own face. The awakening to the wholeness, the oneness of life can be accomplished in a variety of modes, and these modes seem to vary according to the nature of the society, yet it can be said with a reasonable certitude that in our own society, the restricting bonds of intellect must be broken in order that the state of "great doubt" be allowed to flourish. For this, a unification of the conscious and unconscious mind is necessary. In Miller's case, the Lawrencian emphasis upon the "dark god", upon the entry of the Holy Ghost, was a call to arms to which Miller could respond only by fashioning an image of the "dark god" within himself.

I would like to close this essay with a note on the relative merits of textual and impressionistic criticism, and the sense in which their differences influenced the conception of The World of Lawrence. As is evident from a consideration of the material at hand, Miller could have chosen no other means by which to explore the Lawrencian mystery than those he seized upon. The essence of the Lawrencian doctrine, as he applied

it to himself, constrained him to follow an intuitional mode of criticism. The impressionistic techniques suited best Miller's own frame of mind, and seemed to best meet the demands of the texts confronting him. When, in 1940, Miller embarked upon the now-famous voyage into the realm of self (on the Ovarian Trolley), it was with a spirit which had been renewed and refurbished by his years of apprenticeship. Miller seems to insist, by his very mode of approach, that a spiritual reality may be apprehended exclusively on a personal basis. That he could never come to grips with Lawrence, that he could never get a full grasp on Lawrence's identity would seem to indicate not that Miller was a poor critic or scholar, but rather that his involvement led him back to the source, to his own life and writings, and to that ineluctable series of changes, the grand illusion, life itself. Close textual criticism would, for Miller, have implied a stasis of which no man is capable, and for which no man is truly responsible.

Later in life, when Miller had tasted the fruits of experience, he justified his approach to literature in the most uncompromising terms:

> The longing to be reunited, with a common purpose and an all-embracing significance, is now universal. The writer who wants to communicate with his fellow-man, and thereby establish communion with him, has only to speak with sincerity and directness. He has not to think about literary standards- he will make them as he goes along- he has not to think about trends, vogues, markets, acceptable ideas or unacceptable ideas: he has only to deliver himself, naked and vulnerable.... The world presses down on all alike. Men are not suffering from the lack of good literature, good

art, good theatre, good music, but from that which has made it impossible for these to become manifest. In short, they are suffering from the silent, shameful conspiracy (the more shameful since it is unacknowledged) which has bound them together as enemies of art and artist. They are suffering from the fact that art is not the primary, moving force of their lives. They are suffering from the act, repeated daily, of keeping up the pretense that they can go their way, lead their lives, without art. They never dream- or they behave as if they never realize- that the reason why they feel sterile, frustrated and joyless is because art (and with it the artist) has been ruled out of their lives. For every artist who has been assassinated thus (unwittingly?) thousands of ordinary citizens, who might have known a normal life, are condemned to lead the purgatorial existence of neurotics, psychotics, schizophrenics. No, the man who is about to blow his top does not have to fix his eye on the Iliad, the Divine Comedy or any other great model; he has only to give us, in his own language, the saga of his non-existentialism. In this mirror of not-ness everyone will recognize himself for what he is as well as for what he is not. He will no longer be able to hold his head up before his children or before his neighbors; he will have to admit that he- not the other fellow- is that terrible person who is contributing, wittingly or unwittingly, to the speedy downfall and disintegration of his own people.77

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77. Henry Miller, Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymous Bosch (New York, 1957) pp. 57-58

IV. APPENDIX

Chronological Bibliography of Henry Miller's Writings

1934 Tropic of Cancer

1935 Aller Retour New York
What Are You Going to Do About Alf?

1936 Black Spring

1937 Un Etre Etoilique
Scenario

1938 Max and the White Phagocytes
Money and How it Gets That Way

1939 Tropic of Capricorn
Hamlet
The Cosmological Eye . . . . . "Reflections on Ecstasy"
"The Universe of Death"

1940 The World of Sex
The Colossus of Maroussi

1941 The Wisdom of the Heart . . . . . "Creative Death"
"Into the Future"

1942

1943

1944 Sunday After the War . . . . . "Shadowy Monomania"
Semblance of a Devoted Past
Obscenity and the Law of Reflection
The Plight of the Creative Artist in the U.S.A.
Varda the Master Builder

1945 The Air Conditioned Nightmare
The Amazing and Invariable Beauford Delaney
Henry Miller Miscellanea
Why Abstract?

1946 Patchen, Man of Anger and Light
Maurizius Forever

1947 Remember to Remember
Blaise Cendrars
Into the Night Life
Of, By, and About Henry Miller

1948 The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder

1949 Sexus

1950 The Waters Reglitterized
An Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere

1951

1952 Plexus
The Time of the Assassins
The Books in My Life

1953

1954

1955 Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymous Bosch

1956 Quiet Days in Clichy
Hatzot Vahetzi
Henry Miller Recalls and Reflects (recorded)

1957

1958 The Red Notebook

1959 Nexus

1960

1961

1962 Stand Still Like the Hummingbird

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