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The Shape of Openness: Bakhtin, Lawrence, Laughter

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Abstract

How is Bakhtin's conception of novelistic openness distinct from modernist-dialectical irresolution or open-endedness? Is *Women in Love* a Bakhtinian "open totality"? How is dialogic openness (as opposed to modernist indeterminacy) a "form-shaping ideology" of comic interrogation?

This study tests whether dialogism illuminates the shape of openness in Lawrence. As philosophers of potentiality, both Bakhtin and Lawrence explore the dialogic "between" as a state of being and a condition of meaningful fiction. Dialogism informs *Women in Love*. It achieves a polyphonic openness which Lawrence in his later fictions cannot sustain. Subsequently, univocal, simplifying organizations supervene. Dialogic process collapses into a stenographic report upon a completed dialogue, over which the travel writer, the poet or the messianic martyr preside.

Nevertheless, the old openness can be discerned in the ambivalent laughter of *The Captain's Doll*, *St. Mawr* or "The Man Who Loved Islands." In these retrospective variations on earlier themes, laughing openness of vision takes new, "unfinalizable" shapes.

Résumé

Quelle est la spécificité propre du concept bakhtinien d'inachèvement? En quoi ce concept se distingue-t-il des notions modernes de non-résolution dialectique ou d'ouverture? Peut-on voir dans *Women in Love* un exemple de "totalité ouverte"? En quoi le concept d'ouverture dialogique peut-il être, à la différence de la notion moderne d'indétermination, une idéologie formatrice d'interrogation comique?

Dans cette étude, nous vérifions dans quelle mesure le concept de dialogisme peut expliquer les formes d'ouverture propres à Lawrence. Tous le deux philosophes de la potentialité, Bakhtine et Lawrence puisent dans l' "entre" dialogique une source d'être et d'écriture romanesque authentique. Le dialogisme est constitutif de *Women in Love*. Le roman parvient à un degré d'ouverture polyphonique que Lawrence, dans ses romans ultérieurs, ne peut pas maintenir. Par conséquent, interviennent des structures de simplification et d'univocité. Le processus dialogique s'effondre et devient le rapport sténographié d'un dialogue clos où préside le narrateur de récits de voyage, le poète ou le martyre messianique.

Néanmoins, la vision ouverte qui caractérise son premier travail se discerne dans le rire ambivalent de *The Captain's Doll*, *St. Mawr* ou "The Man Who Loved Islands." Dans ses variations rétrospectives sur des thèmes antérieurs, une ouverture riante de vision prend de nouvelles formes auxquelles on ne saurait assigner une finalité.

Acknowledgements

My sincerest thanks to Professors Peter Ohlin and Leonore Lieblein for their encouragement and support, and to my supervisor, Professor David Hensley, whose generosity of mind and spirit is truly unbounded. Professors John Ripley and Lars Troide provided helpful criticism, and Dr. Stewart Cooke has acted as an invaluable guide throughout. At Colgate University, President Neil Grabois, Deans of the Faculty Charles Trout and Bruce Selleck, and Associate Provost Karen Leach made gifts of time, resources and trust without which this work would have been impossible. The encouragement of Professor Peter Balakian was strenuous, persistent and necessary. I made use of the library of Terrence Des Pres, thanks to Elizabeth Des Pres, and Aimee Wheeler provided stenographic help early on. The lifelong support of Denise and Anne was essential, and I thank Peter for sleeping through most nights. Professor John Gallucci translated the abstract, and Alan Brown gave hours of technical assistance. I am grateful to them all.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Works by and about M. M. Bakhtin

1. Anthologies and Secondary Sources

AA *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin.* Eds. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Trans. and Notes Vadim Liapunov. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.

DI *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin.* Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.

MB *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics.* Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.

SG *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.* Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: U of Texas P, 1986.

2. Individual Works

AiG "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity." AA 4-257.

BSHR "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Topology of the Novel)." SG 10-59.

DiN "Discourse in the Novel." DI 259-422.

EaN "Epic and Novel." DI 3-40.

FTC "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics." DI 84-258.

IiO "Art and Answerability." AA 1-3.

KFP "K Filosofii postupka" [Toward a Philosophy of the Act]. Selections translated in MB.

MHS "Toward a Methodology of the Human Sciences." SG 159-72.

N70-71 "From Notes Made in 1970-71." SG 132-58.

PDP *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* [the 1963 edition of the Dostoevsky book]. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.

PS "Problema soderzhaniia, materiala, i formy v slovesnom khudozhestvennom tvorchestve" [The Problem of content, material, and form in verbal art]. Selections translated in MB.

PT "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis." SG 103-31.

RAHW *Rabelais and His World.* Trans. Helene Iswolsky Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.

RQ "Response to a Question from the *Novyi Mir* Editorial Staff." SG 1-9.

TRDB "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book." PDP 283-302.

Works by D.H. Lawrence

A II "Apocalypsis II." *Apocalypse.* Ed. Mara Kalnins. New York: Viking, 1982.

AR *Aaron's Rod.* Ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

CD *The Captain's Doll. D.H. Lawrence: Four Short Novels.* New York: Viking, 1965.

CL	The Cambridge Edition of *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*. Gen. Ed. James T. Boulton. 4 vols. to date. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979- .
CP	*The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*. Eds. Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts. New York: Viking, 1971.
EP	*Etruscan Places*. New York: Viking, 1960.
Fantasia	*Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.
K	*Kangaroo*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972.
Man	"The Man Who Loved Islands." *The Complete Short Stories*. 3 vols. New York: Viking, 1961. 722-47.
P	*Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers*. 1936. Ed. Edward D. McDonald. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1968.
P II	*Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works by D.H. Lawrence*. Eds. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore. New York: Viking, 1970.
Psycho-analysis	*Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious. Fantasia*. 197-250.
Rainbow	*The Rainbow*. Ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
SCAL	*Studies in Classic American Literature*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.
SE	*Selected Essays*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972.
Sea	*Sea and Sardinia*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.

StM *St. Mawr and Other Stories*. Ed. Brian Finney. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

WL *Women in Love*. Eds. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey, and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

"Unity of a Higher Order": Dialectics, Dialogics, Laughter

> All is two, all is not one. That's the point. That's the secret of secrets. You've got to build a new world on that, if you build one at all. All is two, all is not one. In the beginning, all was two. The one is the result, that which is created is One. That's the result, the consummation. But the beginning is two, it is not one.
>
> D. H. Lawrence[1]

> Unity not as innate one-and-only, but as a dialogic *concordance* of unmerged twos or multiples.
>
> M. M. Bakhtin (TRDB 289)

Interest in rethinking Lawrence grows, and, as Avrom Fleishman notes, "the terms of discussion are proving, often enough, to be Bakhtinian terms" (*Rethinking* 109). The renewed interest is international: André Topia in France, G. M. Hyde and David Lodge in Great Britain, Mei-Ying Chen in Taiwan, Fleishman in the United States, these and others have approached Lawrence recently from the vantage point of dialogism.[2] Indeed, rethinking Bakhtin seems to have advanced the rethinking of Lawrence. One observes, for

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[1]From a manuscript of the Hardy study, in Stephen Miko, *Towards Women in Love: The Emergence of a Lawrentian Aesthetic* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1972) 268-69.

[2]André Topia, "Dialogisme et relativisme dans *Women in Love*," *Etudes lawrenciennes* (Nanterre: Universite de Paris X, 1988) 21-37; G.M. Hyde, *D.H. Lawrence* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990) 76-92; David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Mei-Ying Chen, "A Bakhtinian Approach to Point of View in Three D.H. Lawrence Novels," diss., U of Iowa, 1989; Avrom Fleishman, "Lawrence and Bakhtin: Where Pluralism Ends and Dialogism Begins," *Rethinking Lawrence*, ed. Keith Brown (Philadelphia: Milton Keynes, 1990).

example, that *Rethinking Lawrence*'s title itself is an appreciative sideways glance at *Rethinking Bakhtin*.[3] The growing conviction is that study of Bakhtin improves understanding of Lawrence. A further implication of this investigation is that study of Lawrence improves understanding of Bakhtin as well, and that, in fact, the two share extraordinary affinities which allow them to enter into fruitful dialogue.

The work to date of exploring Lawrence from a Bakhtinian perspective is preliminary, and to some extent unavoidably oblique in its approach. A large part of the interest, for instance, has concerned Lawrence's polyvocality, particularly his attempts at parody and farce. However, Lawrence is rarely an enthusiastic parodist, except in those significant instances when his derision turns inward, to self-parody.[4] The conception of his polyvocality as a process of self-testing, as a vocation for depth and novelistic complexity, is, of course, an approach whose rewards have been recognized. As Fleishman remarks, "We are increasingly being asked to see the novelist not as a single-minded 'monological' spokesman for a home-brewed ideology—whether approved or disdained, as by the older critical school—but as offering the rhetoric,

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[3]Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, eds., *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1989).
[4]See, for example, David Lodge's work cited above, and Roger Fowler, "*The Lost Girl*: Discourse and Focalization," in *Rethinking Lawrence* 53-66.

ideas and other inputs of a whole range of characters, representatively modern men and women" (*Rethinking* 109).

Whether the judgemental "older" school discovered in Lawrence the novelistic complexity of "a whole range of characters" or just the voice of a "single-minded" author is moot. One considers the highly nuanced, thinking (or self-testing) image of Lawrence that emerges from a work such as Ford's *Double Measure*, or Daleski's *The Forked Flame* (both critics are approving in their judgements, but this does not seem to obstruct their awareness of multivoicedness in the prose).[5] One may also consider, conversely, a negative (perhaps even "disdainful") "older school" study of Lawrence such as Kingsley Widmer's *The Art of Perversity*, in order better to realize that not all that reveals itself to the Bakhtinian approach is exclusively new to it.[6] Perhaps no thinker is more sensitive than Bakhtin to the contextual nature of "newness," and to the reach of intellectual indebtednesses. While Bakhtin, like Lawrence, is an enthusiastic advocate of "surprisingness," of the "new word" when it is voiced, he is acutely conscious that the "new word" does not spring up *ex nihilo*. The "new word" for Bakhtin arises from the "immense semantic possibilities" that remain untapped, immanent and potential, within the

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[5]George H. Ford, *Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Holt, 1965); H. M. Daleski, *The Forked Flame: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Faber; Evanston, Il.: Northwestern UP, 1965).

[6]Kingsley Widmer, *The Art of Perversity in D. H. Lawrence's Shorter Fiction* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1962).

old word. One of the lessons Bakhtin teaches is historical modesty. The awareness he insists upon is that "nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world" because of the inexhaustible richness of "*past* meanings":

> Even *past* meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all)—they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments . . . they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. (MHS 170; italics his)

Both Lawrence and Bakhtin have extraordinarily developed historical sensibilities at the core of their future-orientedness, or of their appreciation of genuine newness. Lawrence, for his part, has a Bakhtinian or dialogic-contextual view of a "living," unfinalizable past. His formulations are continually provocative in this regard. He claims, for example, that the "only riches" are "the great souls" (SCAL 187). In this instance Lawrence is referring to Whitman, with whom he imagines himself in "living" or "real" and "present" dialogue. Bakhtin is similarly "soulful." He believes that the "creative nucleus of the personality [always] continues to live, that is, it is immortal" (MHS 168). So too for Lawrence: "The dead don't die," he consoles

Murry on the death of Katherine Mansfield, "They look on and help."[7]

Both Lawrence and Bakhtin devote much attention to the contextual nature of newness. Since this is so, they should provoke corresponding sensitivities in those who think they themselves see something new when they invite the theoretical Bakhtin and the practicing novelist Lawrence to enter into dialogue together. New meanings *do* emerge from the application of Bakhtin's terms to Lawrence's work. However, it would be inaccurate to imply that all these meanings were "missed" by earlier criticism. Some were simply unavailable to it; others were not missed at all. In either case, the new context (part of which is accounted for by Bakhtin's emergence itself) makes genuinely new meanings possible.

The "new" Bakhtinian discovery of Lawrence is indebted to past discoveries in ways which this chapter will briefly canvas. There is, however, need for initial caution. The current influence of Bakhtin on the study of Lawrence is significant, but *which* Bakhtin or *whose* Bakhtin does one have in mind in making such a claim? Bakhtin, as Morson and Emerson indicate, recently has attracted diverse advocates. "As structuralism began to ebb in the United States, a new post-structuralist, post-modern, deconstructionist Bakhtin was born":

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[7]Harry T. Moore, ed., *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, vol. 2 (London: Heinemann, 1962) 736.

> Thus, a thinker who spent his life trying to understand personal ethical obligations was presented as an antinomian or nihilist. No less odd, Bakhtin is routinely cited as a proponent of impersonalist 'intertextuality' even though he insisted that dialogues (including those between authors and readers) are never mere verbal exchange but are always a moral encounter of people and a 'contact of personalities.'[8]

Just as Lawrence attempts to express himself "at the maximum" of his imagination, where one is "religious," and where, one might add, one is messily uncategorizable in the extra-generic freedoms one presumes to take, so too Bakhtin attempts to explore the heights and depths of consciousness, tracking the "unfinalizable" word into "metalinguistic," often obscure zones (P 559). Both writers manifest allegiance to an overreaching, albeit principled and consistent, messiness of exploratory range (Bakhtin's favorite description of his work is as "philosophical anthropology" [N 70-71, 146]). As a consequence of their scope, both men expose themselves to vagaries that naturally encourage expropriation. Bakhtin's concept of polyphony in the novel, for example, has been misconstrued as relativistic, despite his explicit efforts to the contrary.

Which or whose Bakhtin emerges from this study is a question that the following chapter ("Glossary of Indistinctions") attempts to answer. It introduces Bakhtin as a theoretician of becoming who is highly compatible with

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[8]Gary Saul Morson, "Bakhtin and the Present Moment," *The American Scholar* (Spring, 1991): 201.

Lawrence as a novelist of becoming. The one elucidates the other because both are intimately concerned with the relation of unity, newness, and the creative process. For Bakhtin the crucial effort is "to rethink the concept of unity in order to allow for the possibility of genuine creativity": "The goal, in his words, was a 'nonmonologic unity,' in which real change (or 'surprisingness') is an essential component of the creative process" (MB 1-2). "Monologism" is Bakhtin's covering term for false conceptions of unity in art, culture, or the world generally that presuppose "conformity to an underlying structure or an overarching scheme":

> Bakhtin believed that this [monologic] idea of unity contradicts the possibility of true creativity. For if everything conforms to a preexisting pattern, then genuine development is reduced to mere discovery, to a mere uncovering of something that, in a strong sense, is already there. (MB 1)

The Bakhtin whose thought provides the most reliable access to Lawrence's contradicts the possibility of finalization or closure in art or expression, and affirms the "nonmonologic" openness or "vital brimming of the creative self."[9] How unified or coherent is Lawrence's expression, and how might that unity best be described?

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[9]Brian John, *Supreme Fictions: Studies in the Work of William Blake, Thomas Carlyle, W. B. Yeats, and D. H. Lawrence* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queens UP, 1974) 7.

1. Two Minds, Two Voices: Lawrence's Unresolved Contrariness

Fleishman is correct in suggesting that an "older critical school" saw Lawrence as a "single-minded 'monological' spokesman for a home-brewed ideology." But no critic berates Lawrence for monologism more harshly than Lawrence does himself. The autobiographical Birkin, for instance, is a "prig," a "preacher," a "Salvator Mundi" who "cries you down"; he is the worst sort of "fool," as he himself and other characters persistently call him (WL 130; 263; 385). In this regard his double-voicedness—or complex introspection and circumspection—has never gone completely without notice; however, it is interesting to observe what an "older school of criticism" makes of Lawrencian double-voiced self-contradiction. For Frank Kermode, Lawrence is purely a prophet crying in the wilderness; it takes just a footnote to dismiss his antithetical gestures, particularly those that are expressed at his own expense:

> It is worth remembering Lawrence's capacity for having things both ways. He balances his more extreme metaphysical and occult fantasies with a sophisticated pragmatism; the effect in his fiction is to have passages that jeer at Birkin's doctrines. This hedging of bets I occasionally refer to, but it gets in the way of exposition, and the reader might like to reintroduce it into his reflections if he finds something that seems unexpectedly and positively

absurd in my account of Lawrence's crisis-philosophy.[10]

What is for Kermode Lawrence's "hedging of bets" is, for this study, his dynamic of doubt, and it is generative of the interplay of "other voices" that constitute the dialogic novel. Kermode apparently believes that "passages that jeer at Birkin's doctrines" are inauthentic, and that other characters, Gudrun, Loerke, Gerald, indeed *all* other characters, are not "experimental" selves of the author, but rather pure and dismissible straw men, sharing no true dialogic intersubjectivity with the primary author.[11]

Margery Sabin, who, though she owes no explicit debt to Bakhtin, clearly has been influenced by Bakhtinianism, evaluates Lawrence's "hedging of bets" differently. What "gets in the way" of Kermode's exposition of a supposedly monologic author is for Sabin nothing other than that author's intelligence and value. Of *Women in Love* she notes: "But the language of intelligence—concrete, particular, socially intelligible language—retains the power to criticize the artist's contrary impulses toward abstraction, system, and self-deification."[12] Sabin's definition of intelligence, in other words, is nearly a paraphrase of Lawrence's own famous dictum, "Never trust the artist.

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[10]Frank Kermode, *Continuities* (London: Routledge, 1968) 125 n.
[11]For Milan Kundera, a "character is not a simulation of a living being. It is an . . . experimental self." *The Art of the Novel* (New York: Grove Press, 1988) 34.
[12]Margery Sabin, *The Dialect of the Tribe: Speech and Community in Modern Fiction* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987) 64.

Trust the tale" (SCAL 8), or of another equally famous passage:

> If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail. . . . When the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection, that is immorality. (P 528)

Much of the "older," modernist school of Lawrence criticism already sees at least double-voicedness, an actively intelligent tension of contradiction, in his expression. It does not require Bakhtin to discover doubly voiced self-contradiction in Lawrence. Sandra Gilbert's *Acts of Attention*, for example, presents a writer who reserves a "single-visionary" focus for his lyric poetry: there is little "irony, ambiguity, and paradox in it. . . . For him poetry, unlike the novel, did not involve elaborated relationships."[13] Obversely, for Gilbert, his prosaic expression does involve what one might now term polyphonically "elaborated relationships." Indeed, Gilbert hints at the possibility of a Bakhtinian or polyphonic unity in the multiplicity of contradictory voices in him when she notes: "Despite the frequent violence of his literary voice, there is an interior tranquillity in Lawrence's prose, a confident walking in the darkness of understanding" (*Acts* 194). Gilbert's hint (she is after all primarily concerned

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[13]Sandra M. Gilbert, *Acts of Attention: The Poems of D.H. Lawrence* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972) 9-10.

with the monologic poetry) is of Lawrencian unity as "tranquillity," a unity born, apparently paradoxically, of the dialogic or polyphonic "violence of his literary voice." Such "tranquillity" is what Bakhtin means by "open unity," or what this study means by Lawrence's embracing laughter.

The charge against Lawrence of "single-mindedness," like Eliot's charge of no-mindedness (leveled against him in *After Strange Gods*), has incensed generations of critics to rejoinder. The usual shape this rejoinder has taken is to argue for a Lawrence of *two* minds, with the concomitant pitfalls of such an approach more or less apparent in the effort. Ragussis, as one of the more articulate proponents of a Lawrence of two minds, discovers a "double perspective" or ironic dimension in his prose. Lawrence "writes in the realm of timelessness and unity, but much more he writes of the impossibility of man's entering this perfect realm. This tension between perfection and imperfection lies behind all his work, and accounts for the irony of his novels."[14] Ragussis astutely traces what Lawrence refers to as "the struggle for verbal consciousness," or what Bakhtin might refer to as the intense inner dialogicality by which Lawrence arrives at open totality in his work. In Lawrence's way of reading novels as a "morality" and the "criticism of that morality," Ragussis finds support for his sense that Lawrence's work is structured around "different perspectives." To this

[14]Michael Ragussis, "The Double Perspective: A Study of D. H. Lawrence's Novels," diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1970, ii.

extent Ragussis's insights anticipate those of Bakhtinian Lawrence criticism.

However, it is indicative of a modernist frame of mind, or what might be termed a "broken dialectical" model of thought, that Ragussis, despite his admiration of the strenuous intellectuality of such a conflicted Lawrencian method, sees severe limitation in it as well.[15] To Ragussis's way of thinking, "dichotomies and opposites" cancel each other out as conclusive thought ("Double" 101). Of course, dichotomies and opposites do cancel each other out if one is applying a Hegelian dialectical (or absolutist and not relativistic) model of thought to him. Yet, it is such absolutism that Lawrence specifically seeks to discredit (as does Bahktin) throughout his career. The failure of Ragussis's attempt to discover dialectically synthetic thought in Lawrence leads him to find instead "emptiness" ("Double" 24). The only possible "unity" of such expression, according to Ragussis, is "unity [that] grows out of lack, desire, and separation, and perfection can only be momentary and immediately implies imperfection" ("Double" 73).

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[15]As Morson and Emerson observe, Hegelian or Marxist dialecticism presupposes an ideal "synthesis" or merging of points of view. Whereas dialogue, on the contrary, "is not a self-consuming artifact, nor is it 'dialectic,' for dialectic (in the Hegelian or Marxist sense) can be contained within a single consciousness and overcomes contradictions in a single, monologic view. By contrast, in 'a dialogic encounter of two cultures . . . each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched' (RQ 7; italics his)" (MB 55-56). Ragussis's discovery of Lawrencian contradiction is based upon monologic and dialectical presuppositions.

Without a Bakhtinian conception of unity as "open totality," or of the possibility of artistic expression whose openness corresponds to essential unfinalizabilities in life and language, there is apparently no going beyond the conclusion that Lawrence's irresolution is, in fact, failure. Ragussis follows the logic of his interpretative tack to its end in *The Subterfuge of Art*. Here he acknowledges only a single voice of opposition in Lawrence, a purely "repudiative" voice of the sort that he himself ascribes to Cézanne. Such an author (monologically) says what his expression is "not." The ultimate effect is of blankness and void (P 581).[16] Thus for Ragussis *Women in Love* manifests not a positively conceived openness, but rather a "non-ending": "I mean for us to see literally at the end of the novel a blank, a white space of emptiness and silence . . . " (*Subterfuge* 224).

By contrast, this study contends that Lawrence is himself intimately aware of the potential extremity of his contradictoriness, and of its possible consequences. In *Women in Love*, the potential monologism (or absolutism) of nihilism is criticized and contradicted, graphically, by Ursula and her robust dialogic opposition to Birkin's misanthropic complacencies. Slowly, with Ursula's help, Birkin extricates himself from a deadening world of "actuality" and comes to incorporate primally positive

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[16]Michael Ragussis, *The Subterfuge of Art* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978) 224.

oppositions as an inner voice.[17] (Later chapters will trace how *Women in Love* shapes its active oppositions into a unifying totality of expression.)

Lawrence never fully overcomes the enticements of misanthropic nihilism, the allure of emptiness and of the silence of the void (which is Birkin's favorite fantasy of a "world empty of people, just uninterrupted grass, and a hare sitting up" [WL 127]). However, in Lawrence's most actively conceived expression he opposes (or provides the "essential criticism" of) precisely this tendency to single-voiced (or "no-voiced") disintegration and ultimate authorial irresponsibility. In "The Man Who Loved Islands," for example, it is precisely Lawrence's own misanthropic, destructive and self-destructive fantasy which is comprehensively explored and resisted, and it is out of this ultimate self-criticism that "open totality" of expression, or the "tranquillity" of laughter, not blankness and the void, emerges.

The temptation is great to view as pathology Lawrence's contradictoriness and latent nihilism, his increasingly pervasive love of silence and death. It is so, however, primarily because he himself so views it. Lawrence also correctively or affirmatively counters his nihilism whenever he can, and makes of such inner opposition the active dialogic struggle of his "art-speech."

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[17]Peter Balbert writes convincingly of Ursula as a "corrective" to Birkin in "Ursula Brangwen and 'The Essential Criticism': The Female Corrective in *Women in Love*," *Studies in the Novel* 17 (1985): 267-85.

(Opposition, as Blake observes, is not "negation."[18]) Lawrence possesses the Bakhtinian awareness that "there is no alibi for being," and that he must make of the potential chaos of his being a "project of integrity" (KFP 112, 119; MB 31). His "art-speech" in its entirety represents such a "project." As Brian John remarks, "[Lawrence's] vitalism envisages a creative mode of knowing which harmonizes the dialectical and quaternary nature of the self."[19] That his unifying task of integrity (his "art-speech") is inconclusive or unfinalizable is not a defect. On the contrary, while such self-testing or exploratory growth continues (it demonstrably diminishes after *Women in Love*), it is a positive aspect of his expression and of its inherent values.

Without Bakhtin, the tendency may be to view Lawrence's struggles against himself in dialectical as opposed to dialogical terms, as contradiction without synthesis, or in Freudian terms as pathology. David Gordon, for example, follows Ragussis's model of viewing Lawrence as a failed Romantic, who pursues the goal of "pure being" only to be denied, and whose work consequently is tinged throughout with "nostalgia." The view is of a writer whose double-voicedness arises from an essential *anti*-dialogicality within him. The argument is that there is a

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[18]Blake has long been an important touchstone for Lawrence study, principally because both are proponents of creative strife. Both men possess a vision of chaos as prolific potentiality. The following chapter ("Glossary of Indistinctions") explores Lawrence's vitalistic credo in greater detail.

[19]*Supreme Fictions* 248. For John, Blake, Carlyle, Yeats and Lawrence are "Romantic vitalists." It may be that Bakhtin is one as well.

"gulf" of silence, or of failure of communication, between the artist who yearns for perfected being and the worldly-wise man who knows that such pure being is impossible here and now. For Gordon, Lawrence is like Rousseau, "theoretically" optimistic about human nature (his own, of course) but "experientially" pessimistic.[20] There is, in other words, a form-shaping defect or schizophrenia in his essential vision, in which "a gulf always remained between the optimistic teller and the pessimistic tale" (91). In Gordon's modernist theoretical framework there is always a "gulf," split, limitation, or failure in Lawrence's conflictedness:

> Lawrence's hopefulness never died. . . . On the other hand, Lawrence was always committed—in his imaginative as distinct from his intellectual will—to the pessimistic version of the myth of origin. . . . He could only truly imagine joy when confronting a nonhuman world, a world tinged with the glamor of an unrecoverable past, or, more important, when dramatizing love as pure potentiality, as (in Wordsworth's phrase) a something evermore about to be. ("Dual Myth" 91)

Gordon tinges the gulf of Lawrence's duality with nostalgia, the nostalgia of the inevitable failure of an essentially modernist conception of artistic unity. What does this view make of Ursula's and Birkin's "achieved" and "perfect" being in *Women in Love*? The present study, in its chapters on that novel, attempts to demonstrate that Ursula

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[20]David J. Gordon, "D.H. Lawrence's Dual Myth of Origin," *Sewanee Review* 89 (1981): 87.

and Birkin's laughing achievement is essentially affirmed without reservation on the ontological plane, in a manner that unifies the utterance. ("They were glad. . . . They laughed" [WL 314].)

The unfinalizability of Ursula's and Birkin's "conjoined" "perfect" achievement *is* the achievement. It is not a matter for nostalgia or regret. It is as if for the "broken" dialectical view of Lawrence's double-voicedness he had written not "Look! We Have Come Through!" as a chronicle of his achieved relationship with Frieda (out of which Lawrence says *Women in Love* springs), but rather "Look! Did We Not *Nearly* Come Through?" The essential point, accessible to Bakhtinian terminology, is that in Lawrence's ontology, being is the creative gesture or expression of openness-to-being, and that his most dialogic work, especially *Women in Love*, originates from such an awareness: "That little laugh of achieved being is all," proclaims Lawrence (P 235). The "all" so conceived is neither absolute, nor static, nor final. It is relative, dynamic, and always becoming itself.

Such laughter or "joy" is the existential ground of his certainties, the certainties from which his uncertainties, in a dynamic of doubt, arise. "Joy" of this sort is the "angelic" laughter of Kundera's definition, indistinguishable from "demonic" or nihilistic laughter, but ontologically speaking its exact, dialogically engaged, opposite.[21] Lawrence's "joy"

[21]Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) 56-58.

or laughter, it must be emphasized, is not the "imagined joy" of Gordon's modernist or negative conception. Lawrence does not laugh nostalgically or defeatedly from the dialogic perspective. Rather, he laughs fully or wholly, from the core of his polyphonically expressed dynamic of doubt (as faith, or "primal positivity"[22]).

It is nonetheless true that the modernist double vision of Lawrence is far preferable to an "older" single vision of him, and that it goes a long way toward dialogism. Gordon observes, for example, that Lawrence's "fictions are most successful . . . when these contrary wills [optimistic and pessimistic] are brought to bear closely on one another" ("Dual Myth" 91). That unresolved contrariness can be "successful" goes beyond the conventional modernist mentality. It suggests a dialogic awareness.

Gordon provides additional insight into the complex organization of dialogically envisioned polyphonic unity. Of *Women in Love* he remarks: "Lawrence is both a last witness to a major nineteenth-century tradition—Gerald Crich . . . is perhaps the last fully tragic figure in the history of the romantic novel—and an important innovator" ("Dual Myth" 94). Apart from the romantic tragedy of Gerald, the novel is modernist, essentially "ironic rather than tragic in structure" ("Dual Myth" 94). For Gordon the phenomenon of *Women in Love*'s mixed or extra-generic nature is primarily indicative of the writer's inner divisions. From the

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[22]Leone Vivante, *A Philosophy of Potentiality* (London: Routledge, 1955) 99.

Bakhtinian perspective, however, *Women in Love*'s extra-generic characteristics may have their personal artistic significances, but they also reveal its larger dialogic purposes: Lawrence creates a novel of emergence of "the fifth type" (BSHR 23).[23] Not only are the characters within it "epochal," the novel itself is self-consciously epochal; it is in transition in the future-oriented direction of the "new word." Gerald's nineteenth-century, romantic "tragic" nature (and the chronotope that he informs) is effectively in a dialogic or oppositional relationship with Birkin's "ironic" modernism, just as Birkin is in dialogic oppositional relationship with Loerke's "post-modern" cynicism, or satiric "anti-anti-heroism."[24]

In a sense, the novel on the "great dialogic" or authorial plane is documenting its own evolutionary struggle, its own effort to "break a way through" to utter the "new word." Loerke, as futuristic alter ego to Lawrence, represents a possible (perhaps likely) future for artistic expression, one that the author clearly finds terrifying.

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[23]In such a "novel of emergence," according to Bakhtin, the hero is "on the border between two epochs. . . . He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being" (BSHR 23). This study's penultimate chapter ("Is Our Day of Creative Life Finished?") examines the epochal ramifications of *Women in Love*.

[24]Bakhtin devotes nearly two hundred pages to an attempt to define the neologism "chronotope": "We will give the name chronotope (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. . . . What counts for us is . . . that it expresses the inseparability of space and time . . . " (FTC 84). "Competing Chronotopes" in this study's third chapter ("The Shape of Openness in *Women in Love*") provides additional clarification of the term.

Women in Love's unity is of the "higher order" of which dialogism promises to provide the tools of inquiry (TRDB 298).

Unity is the sticking point for the dialectician in regard to Lawrence. While Ragussis, for example, observes the competition of thesis and antithesis in his method, he sees synthesis of any sort as at best problematic. For some modernists even the orderliness of Lawrencian "irony" becomes, under sustained scrutiny, a kind of disorder or chaos of negation. Kingsley Widmer's *Art of Perversity* and *Edges of Extremity* are classic modernist interpretations of Lawrence in this regard. Widmer is drawn to the writer's "redeeming skepticism about his own doctrines."[25] However, in Widmer's view there is no effective reciprocity between Lawrence's opposed "angelic" and "demonic" impulses. Nothing balances nihilism: "No angels usurp the demons. . . . Only by and with the perversities, not in spite of them, do we find Lawrentian being" (*Perversity* 167-68). Widmer's conclusion, all but explicit here, is that Lawrence is perverse in his core ontological or religious dimension, in his very "being." His assessment concurs with T.S. Eliot's judgement that Lawrence was "a very sick man indeed."[26]

In this view his "existential code" (to borrow Kundera's formulation)[27] is identical with Hegel's "infinite

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[25]Kingsley Widmer, *Edges of Extremity: Some Problems of Literary Modernism* (Tulsa: U of Oklahoma P, 1980) 31.
[26]T.S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938) 66.
[27]Kundera, *Art of the Novel* 29.

absolute negativity."[28] Again modernist dialectical thinking "solves" the problem of unity by discovering the "unity" of disorder or nothingness. It would seem hardly to matter whether one were referring to Lawrence, Hemingway, Conrad, Forster or any number of others when making the "discovery" of nothingness as form-shaping negation.

The more recent "deconstructive turn" in Lawrence criticism, furthermore, appears to concur with modernist, broken dialectical interpretations of elusive Lawrencian unity. Doherty, for example, observes that the writer's "theology," like Derrida's, is "negative": "Like Derrida, Lawrence works unremittingly to overturn those metaphysical oppositions which have structured Western modes of perception. . . ."[29] For Doherty, too, like Widmer, Lawrence's demons outlaugh his angels—his work is ultimately, monologically, iconoclastic. That is, Lawrence is valuable as one who inverts established values. However, such inversion cannot be confused with Bakhtin's notion of carnival "decrowning," in which the same act that decrowns authority (both the novel's own, and society's) crowns vitality as achieved or perfected utterance (PDP 124).

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[28]Georg W. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston, vol. 1 (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1920) 93-94. "Absolute negativity" is a sinkhole of negation; it is negation without an essential affirmative core, or what Alan Wilde refers to as an "anironic" core. See his *Horizons of Assent: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic Imagination* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981) 10 n.

[29]Gerald Doherty, "White Mythologies: D.H. Lawrence and the Deconstructive Turn," *Criticism* 29 (Fall 1987): 478.

For the "deconstructive turn of mind," on the contrary, ultimate affirmation, Lawrence's "primal positivity," is merely a credulous confusion about the nature of the self. Doherty claims that for Lawrence unquestioned belief in the "role of language as mediating agent, as spontaneous revelation of essential form, is taken for granted" ("Deconstructive" 479). Yet, far from being "unquestioned," Lawrence's "belief in the role of language" is one of the fundamental foci of his dynamic of doubt. Birkin, for instance, when he is not entirely disgusted with the "dumb show" of "words," is profoundly involved in the self-testing doubts about the connection of his own utterance to the "deep self." At one point Birkin wonders whether his desire for a new kind of love (and the knotted words it seems to call forth) "was only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning?" (WL 252). Of this passage Sabin notes that the novel "dramatizes" an "ambiguous relationship of all utterance to the deep self" (*Dialect* 137).

In the Derridean deconstructive perspective, there is the tendency, as there is in modernist criticism, to split Lawrence's consciousness and its voice in two, and to privilege one or the other. Doherty splits off the iconoclastic or demonic revolutionary Lawrence from the credulous affirmative Lawrence, who is presumably naïve about language. On the one hand, there is the nihilist who is busy laughing with the demons of deconstruction; on the other, there is the *naïf* who is unquestioningly attached to

deep sources and to the making of daisy chains. The contradictions that result are ascribed to his schizophrenic personality. He is "trapped in radical self-contradiction, between, on the one hand, arguments which assert the absolute self-presence to itself of the self and the art-work, and, on the other, arguments which undermine the grounds upon which any such unbreached self-presence is possible" ("Deconstructive" 479).

Lawrence himself formulates a conception of wholeness or integrity that takes a complex understanding of radical self-division into account. His conception is remarkably Bakhtinian, in that it involves "noncoincidence": "We are only the actors, we are never wholly the authors of our own deeds and works" (SCAL 26). He understands the self to be essentially connected to otherness. The self is a "mixed self" that, in its intersubjective interrelatedness, embraces that which is other and enters into dialogue with it (P 262). His model of identity is Socratic daimonic; like Socrates, he believes in "inner oracles." "Gods" come and go in "the dark forest" of his "soul." Lawrence is most provocative (and playful) in this regard when he declares his credo in opposition to Ben Franklin's (SCAL 22). (The next chapter continues discussion of his conception of the "mixed self.")

Like Bakhtin, for whom "a man never coincides with himself," Lawrence's understanding of wholeness involves noncoincidence, and is a conception of unity in multiplicity

(as a project, not a given), of "open totality," or of self and essential utterance as an "unclosed whole" (PDP 59, 63). One advantage of the self dialogically conceived is that it does not, as the modernist broken dialectical model seems to do, presume that oppositions within the self are defects or pathologies, or that their complex manifestation in novelistic expression tends naturally to contradictions of the "emptying out" variety. With respect to Lawrence, at least, modernist dialectical criticism seems most capable of creating, not "well-wrought urns," but well-broken urns of interpretation.

2. The Search for Unity: Questioning, Innocence, Laughter

There are critics within the modernist camp who do find both intelligence and a kind of unity of openness in Lawrence's expression. They find a complex unity in the basic orderliness of interrogation itself. Widmer comes close to leaping the barriers of dialectical "either-or's" when he observes that the problem of modernism was "doubt and denial, but so was the answer" (*Edges* 72). When Widmer is not preoccupied with constructing roadblocks to facile strollers along the *via positiva* of Lawrence interpretation, he approaches dialogism. From the contemporary vantage point, it seems that Widmer is often on the verge of exploring the dialogic possibilities of the interrogative dynamic itself, but draws back.

Some modernist approaches to Lawrence go beyond the observation of "double vision" and its implicit schizophrenia and nullity. For some, openness, interrogation and laughter become avenues of understanding the challenge, in the presence of apparent multiplicity and irresolution, of unity of achieved expression. Leavis probably initiates this approach to the much-vexed problem of Lawrence's "formlessness" as early as 1950 in *Scrutiny*. He does so in the dialogic context of a rejoinder to T.S. Eliot's dismissal of Lawrence as a thinker or artist. In addition to Leavis, there have been numerous voices concurring in the notion of the interrogative role of a unified or integral artist. In the work of Daiches, *Women in Love* "ends on a question."[30] For Bersani, despite "Birkin's insistence, the dominant mode of *Women in Love* is interrogative rather than assertive."[31] For Bersani and Leavis, questioning is constitutive of an inclusive, unifying activity in Lawrence.

Friedman argues that Leavis does not fully appreciate the open-endedness of *Women in Love*, and that Leavis sees "something wrong with a novel which . . . is *far* from embodying a final solution."[32] This is not the case. Leavis does remark, "If a certain symmetry of negative and positive was aimed at in *Women in Love*, Lawrence has been defeated by the difficulty of life: he hasn't solved the

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[30]David Daiches, *The Novel and the Modern World*, rev. ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1960) 168.
[31]Leo Bersani, "Lawrencian Stillness," *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976) 166.
[32]Alan Friedman, *The Turn of the Novel* (New York: Oxford UP, 1966) 138.

problems of civilization that he analyzes."[33] However, Leavis immediately goes on to note that "this criticism, if it *is* a criticism, is different in kind from that called for by the close of *The Rainbow*. And in any case . . . both books are, in sum, magnificently achieved great novels, major creations" (DHLN 29).

Leavis emphasizes that *Women in Love* is an "achieved" creation of a "different" kind. In *The Rainbow* there is the tacit invocation of Biblical authority, implicit in the conclusive rainbow symbol itself, that attempts monologically to finalize discourse, or to have the ultimate word. In contrast, Leavis is clearly aware that the ending of *Women in Love* is an achievement different in "kind." It manifests "wondering" as an inclusive, diversely embracing novelistic attitude. Such an attitude for him has nearly the full force of the addressivity and receptivity of true dialogic (or open *and* whole) utterance. He is always explicitly aware that Lawrence is "exploratory and experimental" because "it was not in Lawrence's nature to rest in negation" (DHLN 30). It is constitutive of his method, according to Leavis, to be "self-questioning," experimentally "self-testing" (DHLN 37).

In Leavis there is the Bakhtinian awareness that the unity of creative expression can be based upon the openness (or negative capability) of the interrogative mode itself. Of *The Ladybird*, for example, he notes that the "largeness, the

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[33]F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964) 29. Hereafter DHLN.

inclusiveness" of the tale rests upon interrogative "preoccupations":

> What, then, was this authority . . . which she herself, standing for 'truth' and 'love,' has actually relied on [and] is now failing her? In what terms other than the merely negative are we, contemplating this malady of modern civilization, to express and explain the inadequacy of 'love'? The tale asks these questions; they are involved in its essential theme. (DHLN 63)

If there had been any doubt of Leavis's appreciation of Lawrence's open-endedness, then by the appearance of *Thought, Words and Creativity* surely there is none. In Leavis's last study of him, *Women in Love* is "art-which-is-thought" and a "marvellously organic and comprehensive totality."[34] By its "organic" nature Leavis has in mind its creation "by potential." Lawrence writes to "discover what he thinks," as Oates remarks.[35] Leavis is keenly aware that Lawrence, in his process of self-discovery, assumes what Bakhtin terms a "dialogic position" with respect not only to his readers, but to his characters as well. It is "one that affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy of the hero" (PDP 63). If self-discovery is a genuine intention, the author must be willing to be surprised by his own work.

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[34]F.R. Leavis, *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976) 77.
[35]Joyce Carol Oates, "Lawrence's Götterdämerung: The Tragic Vision of *Women in Love*," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1978): 564.

For Leavis, Lawrence's thought (and the shape of his novelistic expression which is his thought) is deeply self-exploratory, questioning, or "wondering." He is not dogmatic or absolutist. His certainties, however "loud," are connected "organically" to his uncertainties in a dynamic of doubt (WL 263). As Leavis understands it, Lawrence's thought is "open to the deep source, to the unknown, [it] had [its] part in the creativity that kept civilization rooted and changing—that is alive" (*Thought, Words* 91).

In the emphasis on rootedness and change one also sees Leavis's dialogic concern for the unfinalizability of discourse as the life and continuity of culture. He sees in Lawrence a fundamental belief in the reality of surprisingness, newness, or creativity itself as an active principle of composition. Leavis's essential insights, like Bakhtin's and Lawrence's, are free of deterministic or monologic presuppositions about the nature of society or of the individual. Indeed, from the outset of his published criticism of *Women in Love* in *Scrutiny* (1950), Leavis communicates an appreciation of the newness of its form-shaping ideology when he entitles his study "The Novel as Dramatic Poem." He is already aware of an "extra" or "anti-generic" informing ideology of the novel as thought, one that challenges conventional notions of form, and one that obviously engages the charge that Lawrence lacks unity. "Tell Arnold Bennett that all rules of construction hold good only for novels which are copies of other novels. A book

which is not a copy of other books has its own construction, and what he calls faults . . . I call characteristics" (CL 2, 479).

The dialogic awareness in Leavis is that interrogation, when it is not of the skeptical emptying-out sort, is a principle of unfinalizable openness that is inclusive, shaping and unifying. Questions, particularly naïve questions of the sort that Lawrence fundamentally asks, are the informing principle of the dialogic novel. In other words, Lawrence asks questions that are, by Kundera's definition, "naïve" or "truly serious":

> Only the most naïve of questions are truly serious. They are the questions with no answers. A question with no answer is a barrier that cannot be breached. . . . [It] is questions with no answers that set the limits of human possibilities, describe the boundaries of human existence.[36]

The "truly serious" question for Kundera may seem at first glance to contradict Bakhtin's notion of unfinalizability, in that Kundera describes the question as a boundary, or perhaps an "ultimate" word (of which there is none in the dialogic imagination). However, when the "boundary" that Kundera describes is "human existence" itself, it is clear that the "question" for Kundera is an inclusive, open term. It is open, obviously, in its naïveté, and what is innocence but an assured ground of being? For

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[36]Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) 139.

Lawrence, innocence is the self's connection to the "living continuum of the universe": "It is the last and deepest feeling that is in a man while he remains a man" (P 541). It is humanity's rootedness in constancy and change; it is its potentiality and freedom. Indeed, for Lawrence, innocence is the nexus of his most cherished values of openness, potentiality and vitality:

> This naïveté is the opening of the soul to the sun of chaos. . . . This opening, and this alone, is the essential act of attention, the essential poetic and vital act. . . . In this act, and this alone, we truly *live*: in that innermost naïve opening of the soul, like a flower . . . to the sun of chaotic livingness. (P 261)

Innocence is humanity's "primal positivity." In its connection to "chaotic livingness" or carnival abundance, innocence is humanity's unfinalizable surplus of being.

Perhaps the most influential work to address the issue of Lawrence's openness has been Alan Friedman's *The Turn of the Novel.* He views Lawrence as a philosopher of potentiality: "Only becoming, process, promise, transcendence, has value in Lawrence's stream of life; in conclusion, may I add, lies corruption" (*Turn* 178). Indeed, Friedman discovers that the openness of Lawrence's work is of such magnitude that it obliterates distinctions between art and life. His perception is Bakhtinian in its implications: "Can we distinguish at all properly between a theory about life when it is expressed in fiction, and a theory about fiction? . . . [A] novelist should conceive his

theory of life in the shape of novels, that he should think in novels when he thinks of life" (*Turn* 159). Earlier, Friedman quotes Lawrence to this effect:

> 'Nothing outside the definite line of the book' is a maxim. But can the human mind fix absolutely the definite line of a book, any more than it can fix absolutely the definite line of action for a living being? (P 308; *Turn* 139)

"Those who criticize Lawrence," Friedman concludes, "for failure to organize his fiction toward an inevitable close, ought in fairness to recall his harsh judgement in *Women in Love* of Gerald Crich, whose strength . . . was 'hollow'":

> Only let him grip hold of a situation, and he would bring to pass an inevitable conclusion. (*Turn* 139)

Friedman thus accurately stresses Lawrence's insistence—an insistence with dialogic implications—that "you mustn't look in my novels for the old stable *ego* of the character" (CL 2, 183). "Stable" ego is conclusive in the Geraldian sense; it is fixed, static, finalizable in the Bakhtinian. The self, in sum, is "noncoincident" with itself only when it is connected to the "deep source," or to its own possibilities of growth and change. Friedman's assessment of Lawrence corroborates a Bakhtinian approach by almost completely hurdling the barriers of modernist dialectical, necessarily reductive judgements about openness or inconclusiveness of

expression. He valuably observes, for instance, that "the new novel is open . . . because the new novelist conceives that the experience in life itself is open." Openness is "an underlying and organizing vision of experience" (*Turn* 179-80).

Yet Friedman's leap into dialogical openness is only *nearly* complete. While Friedman does see that openness "reflects a profound movement in our way of seeing ourselves in the world and through time," he nevertheless concludes that openness is "inconsistent," and is "on its face an impossible vision, though it can be understood as a possible (and desperate) attitude" (*Turn* 187). Openness for Friedman is finally "so utterly paradoxical as to be irrational—as irrational as a good myth ought to be" (*Turn* 187). Thus the vision of open unity in Lawrence proves to be disturbing and ultimately incredible to Friedman: "Like the modern cosmos, the modern novel is ever expanding, and it is running away fastest at its outermost reaches" (*Turn* 188). The rather dizzying insight here is that the Lawrencian novel is "running away" from the Hegelian dialectical net. It follows that a new net is needed to encompass a new vision of openness. Do recent "dialogic" examinations of Lawrence provide the new net?

3. Recent Bakhtinian Approaches

Critics have yet to weave a thoroughly dialogic net for Lawrence. In some respects, the emergence of Bakhtin in the world of Lawrence scholarship has only increased confusion about the nature of his unifying openness. For example, in certain Bakhtinian approaches to his work there is the consistent misconception that his "dialogism" is really no more than a kind of unending debate dramatized. There are current "Bakhtinian" views which are profoundly relativistic and indistinguishable from earlier modernist dialectical views of Lawrence as self-contradictory, endlessly argumentative and ultimately uncommitted to "truth" as a unifying purpose.

For instance, Chen proposes that Birkin and Ursula express Lawrence's "response to various aspects of the world, but he also subjects them to the criticism of other characters, who have their equally valid ideas, values, and pursuit [sic]" ("A Bakhtinian" 168). Relativistic interpretation would seem to imply that Hermione or Halliday or Sir Joshua have "ideas, values" and pursuits equal in validity to those of Ursula or Birkin. The vision is of a novel in effect *without* an authorial dimension, without any "great dialogue" encompassing (organizing, judging) the whole. Bakhtin's view, on the contrary, is that while author approaches character in the dialogic novel as an "equal," the

author has a basic responsibility—just as does any individual—to integrity of expression. Art and life both share "the unity of answerability" (or "responsibility") (IiO 4). The "great dialogue of the novel as a whole" is an inherently organizing and thus evaluative activity. Polyphonic open totality is not simply another term for free-floating antinomies of consciousness: "Dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue . . ." (PDP 40). As Bakhtin insists, "all authentic dialogue" is neither relativistic nor dogmatic: "both relativism and dogmatism equally exclude all argumentation . . . by making it either unnecessary (relativism) or impossible (dogmatism)" (PDP 69).

Fleishman evinces a sense that a good deal of the new "Bakhtinian" approach to Lawrence is proving old in its presuppositions about the nature of both writers' thought. For example, Lodge's understanding of Lawrence's dialogism, according to Fleishman, does not "go much beyond the Jamesian norm of the non-intrusive author in practical criticism" (*Rethinking* 99). Furthermore, Fleishman contends that Lodge's norms are typically "negative." In order to demonstrate "dialogism" Lodge feels it is enough that a character simply never deliver a "finalizing judgement" (*Rethinking* 99). While Fleishman faults Lodge for translating the dialogic as "polite and permanent competition of ideas," he himself nonetheless views *Women in Love* in a Lodgian way as a "novel of ideas." He claims it

is "polyphonic" in that "all its discourses are double-voiced":

> . . . characters talk not only about people and ideas but about words, they quote those words when making their own responses, other speakers chime in with their own rhetorics—and so on, so as to constitute a world of words. (*Rethinking* 113)

One notes that Fleishman's approach is purely "verbal" in a way that Morson and Emerson refer to as "intertextualist" and view as a misrepresentation of Bakhtin. Fleishman's "rhetorics" seem to be purely "verbal exchange." His is precisely the interpretation arrived at by Ragussis in *The Subterfuge of Art*, where it is as if Birkin, the "word-bag," had written the novel in which he is himself a character. In Fleishman's interpretation, Birkin-Lawrence is still a word-bag, but now he is a ventriloquist as well. Dialogism in the novel becomes endless debate carried on by a single gifted ventriloquist, and little more.

It would appear that Fleishman would fit Bakhtin into a mold congenial to narrowly constructed verbal or linguistic analysis, while Bakhtin himself (like Lawrence) insists on being "messy," "metalinguistic," and on blurring distinctions between "art" and "life." Bakhtin's conception of other-voicedness in discourse is incomprehensible without a metalinguistic affirmation of connectedness—the connectedness, in this respect, of language to that which is

other than language, to its "deep source," to the Lawrencian "unknown," or to potentiality as unfinalizability itself.

Without considering both Bakhtin and Lawrence as philosophers of potentiality, one has difficulty breaking away from unsatisfactorily dialectical interpretations, or interpretations that leave Lawrence "broken" or incoherent, tossed between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of his own expression, with no center of gravity. When one follows Lawrence into the unfinalizable regions of his expression, one locates his center of gravity in the lightness of laughter.

4. "That Little Laugh of Achieved Being": The "Counterpoise of Affirmation and Ridicule"

That affirmative laughter is potentially a unifying or comprehensive gesture in Lawrence's expression is a hypothesis that has some precedents in the scholarly response. Leavis makes a strenuous case for the *The Captain's Doll* as a "drama which affects us . . . largely as comedy" (DHLN 227), but prior to Bakhtin's influence the notion of a comic Lawrence was mostly considered eccentric. There now seems to be increased interest in investigating a laughing Lawrence, though so far such attention has been directed largely toward his most obviously carnivalesque efforts, those that are least like *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love.*

For John Bayley, for example, Lawrence's "high spirits" are a "unifying force" in his work, though it soon becomes clear that Bayley's conception of unifying laughter is reductive. Lawrence's "unique gifts," according to Bayley, are of "the showman in art." His laughter is essentially that of the monologic gadfly. It is combative-argumentative, its purpose being to goad "his audience to a comparable liveliness of response" (*Rethinking* 4).

Lawrence, notes Bayley, "startles the reader by sudden changes of tone; he suddenly swerves away from one literary context into another, as if deliberately to baffle the reader and rouse him to a new kind of attention" (*Rethinking* 4). To an extent Bayley's understanding here is Bakhtinian. It is of a heteroglossic and profoundly allusive writer, and Bayley in fact goes on to adduce, in the example of the gamekeeper motif, a vision of him as deliberately partaking of a kind of carnival of generic borrowings and implied voices: "Mellors is at once an observed human being and a Lawrencian day-dream out of books" (*Rethinking* 5).

Throughout, the case that Bayley makes is of a showman who "drastically alters" ordinary relations with his readers by "substituting for the agreement between writer and reader a rivalry, the war of superiorities, with comic overtones. The reader is in a sense encouraged to retaliate, to make his own protestations in comic style . . . to defend himself against Lawrence's strokes." Surely there is a Lawrence, particularly the later writer of self-imposed

exile, who needs company at the same time that he rejects it, and there is intense passionate conflictedness in this regard.[37] But the problem with Bayley's conception of laughter as aggressive play is that it tends to be merely a "game": "Such play is highly aggressive, competitive: a war of superiorities with Lawrence is always match play" (*Rethinking* 5-6).

Bayley thinks Lawrence is "at his natural best when most playfully antagonistic, irrespective of argument or doctrine." Now it appears that he is not only a "word-bag" debater, but a facetious one at that. The implication is that his effort goes into teasing arousals that bespeak an ultimate nihilism. He is interested only in quasi-personal interactions with the reader, and the kind of lively or carnival atmosphere that such mutual arousals might produce. Such a view leads to enthusiasms and excessive claims for works such as *Mr. Noon*. That the novelist chose never to publish *Mr. Noon*, or even to finish it, goes unremarked.

In the same spirit of "personalistic" criticism that ignores the explicit injunctions of the personality in question, Bayley reverses the famous Lawrencian dictum and advises the reader, in order to understand what is "best" in him, to keep in mind that "it is he, the teller, whom we should trust, rather than his tale" (*Rethinking* 11). Such an

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[37]"Myself, I suffer badly from being so cut off. . . . At times, one is *forced* to be essentially a hermit. I don't want to be. . . . One has no real human relations." Moore, ed., *Collected Letters*, vol. 2, 993.

approach to laughter dismisses the impersonality of Lawrence's urgencies, his dialogic commitment to asking "serious and sincere" questions (RQ 7). As Bayley comments:

> . . . it is this sense of liberation and irresponsibility, rather than any more positive message, which is Lawrence's truest gift to his reader. He wants us to be superior along with him; even to share, along with him, the ultimate joke. (*Rethinking Lawrence* 10)

What is the "ultimate joke" for Bayley? And how is that "joke" different from the vacuity or "void" that Ragussis and other "broken dialecticians" see in Lawrence's "ultimate" expression? The difficulty with such a personalistic sense of the writer (trust the teller, not the tale, as Bayley puts it) is that it makes the "serious and sincere" thought of the author subservient to merely personal needs. Affability becomes more important than answerability.

James Sipple is modernist in orientation, yet he is not reductive in his judgements. He understands laughter to be a fully unifying dynamic. Essentially, Sipple accepts a kind of dualistic model of the artist. In his case the interest is in his "combination" of both a religious and a skeptical imagination. Lawrence is "a monumental figure for the distinctly religious imagination" because he combines the "modern critical and skeptical intelligence with the

consistent reassertion of the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans* of the Creative Life. . . ."[38]

Sipple notes that he is indebted to George Ford, who anticipates this insight in *Double Measure* by alluding to the "recurring tactic" of the Brangwen women in *The Rainbow* to "laugh in church"; that is, to let the "light of critical intelligence flood in upon dark religious mysteries."[39] Ford also calls attention, in *The Plumed Serpent*, to the "ironic juxtaposition of the religious solemnities with Kate's mocking intelligence, her sense of absurdity, her capacity to laugh in church." Ford's intention, Sipple clarifies, is to illuminate Lawrence's "dual nature"; and, as Sipple suggests, Lawrence creates such a duality by being "ironic," or by dramatizing the "interplay of compelling opposites" within himself.

What is new in Sipple's comments is that his sense of laughter is such that this perceived duality does not cancel itself out, suspend itself over a void, or indict Lawrence as incoherent or schizophrenic. Instead, there is a Bakhtinian sense that "opposites" of this "angelic" and "demonic" sort interact contrapuntally. Sipple is interested in the "counterpoise of affirmation and ridicule" as a form-shaping dynamic: "Laughter in the cathedral" is the "paradigm for a

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[38]James B. Sipple, "Laughter in the Cathedral: Religious Affirmation and Ridicule in the Writings of D.H. Lawrence," *The Philosophical Reflection of Man in Literature*, ed. A.T. Tymieniecka (Hingham, MA: D. Reidel; sold and distributed in the USA and Canada by Kluwer Boston, Inc., 1982) 213.
[39]*Double Measure* 120.

"critical understanding of Lawrence's work as a whole" ("Laughter" 214).

The meaning of "counterpoise" in Sipple's thesis is clarified by his explanation of what it is not. In the "best" expression, Lawrence has a "heightened sense of affirmation and ridicule." In his late works (which are "less valuable"), the "tension has been collapsed" ("Laughter" 217). Sipple speculates that these works (*The Plumed Serpent, The Man Who Died, Lady Chatterley's Lover*) were "written by man facing the finality of death. The tension of affirmation and ridicule is essentially abandoned, and it is this which gives to these works their testamental, humorless, doctrinal tone" ("Laughter" 227). In a sense, Sipple accuses the later writer of laughing entirely with the angels, or of laughing in what Bakhtin might consider a one-sided way (PND 71). The "laughing truth" that inspires the novel genre, as Bakhtin sees it, praises and blames, affirms and ridicules at once. Such "truth" is self-corrective and circumspect. It has the impersonality or inherent "outsideness" of other voices; its expression is never permanently fixed or monologic, and its laughter is always richly ambivalent.

Sipple suggests that at the end of his creative life, Lawrence's laughter diminishes because the tension of opposition in his world view diminishes: "Nurtured in the school of religious apocalypse," he adopts a vision "in which power and innocence . . . cease to be opposed, but . . . in which innocence *is* power, and power *is* innocence. The vision is

Utopian . . ." ("Laughter" 217). And, according to Sipple, the vision is false: "It does not see the creative-destructive tension in all activity." Sipple (like Miko, Jarrett-Kerr and others)[40] appeals to a metalinguistic or ontological dimension as the ultimate basis of analysis. Lawrence's later "innocence" is "false" because in the "ontologic structure of Being itself . . . there is an essential unity of form-creating and form-destroying strength" ("Laughter" 217).[41]

The clearest example of the interplay of angelic and demonic laughter in Lawrence is for Sipple the scene in *The Rainbow* in which Anna and Will are in Lincoln Cathedral, where Will's ecstatic appreciations "irritated her." Will refers to the cathedral as "she": "The 'she' irritated her. Why 'she'? It was 'it.' What was the cathedral, a big building, a thing of the past, obsolete, to excite him to such a pitch?" ("Laughter" 222). What is for Will the "perfect womb" of the cathedral is for Anna "dead matter," "obsolete." "How well Lawrence knows the modern skeptical intelligence!" notes Sipple. Anna denies the organic contemporary meaningfulness of the cathedral; she denies presence. (It is useful for later purposes to note that nearly all skeptics in Lawrence are female, most believers are male, and that Anna

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[40]See Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (London: SCM Press, 1961), and Stephen Miko, *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Women in Love (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969).
[41]The interplay of oppositions Sipple recognizes is Heraclitean. For Lawrence's affinity to Heraclitus see Mara Kalnins, "Symbolic Seeing: Lawrence and Heraclitus," *D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1986) 173-91.

will be the mother of Gudrun and Ursula in *Women in Love*, though it is only Gudrun who inherits her skepticism.) Anna finds her objective correlative in the cathedral's gargoyles, "wicked, smiling little faces": "Sly little faces peeped out of the grand tide of the cathedral like something that knew better. They knew . . . that the cathedral was not absolute. . . . [The] little faces mocked" ("Laughter" 223).

Not only does Sipple nicely corroborate the dynamic of doubt in Lawrence, which he calls the "tension of affirmation and ridicule," but he also suggests in embryo a sense of Lawrence as, like Bakhtin, a "philosophical anthropologist." The "real struggle" between Anna and Will is "not only on the level of character":

> The real struggle is the analogical struggle between cultural forces: . . . between the inclusive God-mystery, deeper than consciousness, in conflict with the critical intelligence that surfaces in action in the pose of a jeering interrogator. ("Laughter" 224)

Inherent in Lawrence's laughter is a chronotopic dimension. His characters are "epochal." They exist in a "zone" of "great time," in which they act representatively (albeit "freely") of cultural and existential forces greater than themselves.

Sipple registers the force of Lawrence's chronotopicity and polyphony as wholeness or unity of expression. He insists that "*both* the solemn doctrine and the jeers are Lawrence!" ("Laughter" 225; italics his).

> He can only be evaluated on the strength of his novels as composed in their wholeness, not in the truth or falsity of this or that opinion contained within them which is identified in the popular imagination as the author's 'doctrine.' ("Laughter" 225)

Thus unity, in Sipple's view of Lawrence, is a matter of the "counterpoise of affirmation and ridicule" ("Laughter" 225). Ultimately, Sipple conceives of unity as "laughter" that looks beyond dialectical antitheses or "oppositions" of meaning to the (Gilbertian) "tranquillity" of a "higher order" (TRDB 298). Sipple's thesis implies that beyond the dialectical silence of the "void," there is the possibility of another sort of silence in Lawrence's expression: the silence, in Bakhtin's terms, of ambivalent, "reduced laughter," or of dialogic openness (PDP 127; 164). Such silence is a "counterpoise of affirmation and ridicule"; it is indistinguishably angelic and demonic, and a plenum of potential call and answer.

Is the concept of "silent laughter" or of "open unity" hopelessly vague, or does it have substance and use, particularly in the context of *Women in Love*? It is this question that will be pursued in the following chapters.

Glossary of Indistinctions

1. The "Between"

If a Bakhtinian approach to Lawrence's fiction seems apt, it is because of the compatibilities of Lawrence and Bakhtin as philosophers of potentiality. In their philosophies of potentiality, in which being is becoming, both writers direct attention to the sphere of the "between," or to threshold or boundary phenomena, where categorical distinctions between what is and what is about to be do not exist. Their concern is with context, and the flux of change. As Bakhtin notes, "The word lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien context" (DiN 284). Or, "Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it" (PDP 183). Bakhtin is interested in language not as *langue* (nor as *parole* simply as instantiation of *langue)*, but rather in its betweenness as "living" conversation. Lawrence frames a similar interest in the "living" "betweenness" of language in terms of an aesthetics of "relatedness." The "business of art," he claims, is to reveal "the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment" (P 527).

Bakhtin and Lawrence reconceive language and art ("utterance") as boundary or threshold phenomena. They deliberately blur conventional distinctions of all sorts, between self and other, conception and realization, text and

context, art and life.[1] In their study of interactive dynamics, both grope toward what Lawrence admitted to be highly provisional terms of a "science of life" (EP 82).[2] His vision is of interanimating or dialogic vitalities. Again and again he attempts to reconceive Genesis. Of the Etruscan cosmos, for example, he speculates:

> The whole thing was alive, and had a great soul, or *anima:* and in spite of one great soul, there were myriad roving, lesser souls; every man, every creature and tree and lake and mountain and stream, was animate, had its own peculiar consciousness. And has it today. (EP 82-83)

Lawrence's cosmology grandly blurs ordinary "scientific" distinctions between animacy and inanimacy, and does so in the characteristically unguarded way that has brought down so much scorn upon him as a retrograde thinker or primitive. Bakhtin (to my knowledge) has never been accused of primitivism, but he nevertheless makes a similarly animistic distinction, or indistinction: "perhaps not only animals, but trees and grass also witness and judge . . . " (N 70-71, 137).

Interanimacy appears to be crucial to the dialogic imagination. Lawrence's and Bakhtin's cosmic vision is of unity in the multiplicity of living dialogic relationships.

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[1]Doherty observes that "Lawrence frequently practices this strategic overturning of categories" ("Deconstructive Turn" 481).
[2]"I believe I am only trying to stammer out the first terms of a forgotten knowledge" (*Fantasia* 14).

Bakhtin variously contemplates the possibility of "open unity," or "open totality" (RQ 6-7), while Lawrence recurrently rewrites Genesis to fit his dialogic or Heraclitean proclivities: "Earth and waters lay side by side, together, and utterly different" (EP 84). "Earth" and "water" in this instance are his objective correlatives for a dialogic vision of genesis, described elsewhere more abstractly by saying, "In the beginning, all was two. The one is the result, that which is created is One." For Lawrence, interactive "two-ness" is "the secret of secrets."[3] Two obviously is the minimum requirement for the genesis of a dialogic cosmos.

The resultant primordial oneness of "that which is created," as Lawrence has it, is again split into two by the introduction of consciousness into the cosmos:

> The universe, which was a single aliveness with a single soul, instantly changed, the moment you thought of it, and became a dual creature with two souls, fiery and watery, forever mingling and rushing apart, and held by the great aliveness of the universe in an ultimate equilibrium. . . . And everything was dual, or contained its own duality, forever mingling or rushing apart. (EP 84)

Lawrence is not opposed to "thought," which is here associated with a dialogic (or creative-oppositional) consciousness itself, despite what detractors like Eliot have made of his "primitivism." Rather, his point is that duality

[3]From a manuscript of the Hardy study, in Stephen Miko, *Towards* 268-69.

arises naturally from the reality of consciousness in the cosmos, and that thought (as consciousness) is an *epiphenomenon* that needs to be taken into account as such in any epistemology. Lawrence favors epistemologies that do so, such as the Heraclitean, and disfavors those that do not, or that reverse priorities, such as the Platonic idealistic.

He would find abundant reason to favor Bakhtin in this regard. When Lawrence remarks that the universe "instantly changed, the moment you thought of it, and became a dual creature," he shows a sensitivity to the effects of observation upon its object that has an affinity to the then newly formulated Heisenberg uncertainty principle, as well as to aspects of Einsteinian thought in the physical sciences.[4] Bakhtin makes a remarkably similar point:

> The Witness and the Judge. When consciousness appeared in the world (in existence) . . . the world (existence) changed radically. A stone is still stony and

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[4]Lawrence is "very pleased with Mr. Einstein for knocking that external axis out of the universe. The universe isn't a spinning wheel. It is a cloud of bees flying and veering round. Thank goodness for that, for we were getting drunk on the spinning wheel."

"So that now the universe has escaped from the pin which was pushed through it . . . the multiple universe flies its own course quite free, and hasn't got any hub, we can hope also to escape" (*Fantasia* 25). Lawrence's chaotic-dialogical cosmology is quite evident in this "appreciation" of Einstein, however homespun the terms. The appreciation is of multiplicity as in its own way a unifying conception, and of freedom from a "monological" or Newtonian mechanical view of the cosmos, in which accident or unfinalizability as a potential for newness is impossible. Lawrence appreciates Einstein for giving him a cosmos in which everything is "between" or relative to everything else, and there is no fixity.

Compare Bakhtin's: "The unity of the Einsteinian world is more complex and profound than that of the Newtonian world, it is a unity of a higher order (a qualitatively different unity)" (TRDB 298).

> the sun still sunny, but the event of existence as a whole (unfinalized) becomes completely different because a new and major character in the event appears for the first time on the scene of earthly existence—the witness and the judge. And the sun, while remaining physically the same, has changed because it has begun to be cognized by the witness and the judge. It has stopped simply being and has started being in itself and for itself (these categories appear for the first time here) as well as for the other. . . . [T]his has caused it to change radically, to be enriched and transformed. (N 70-71, 137)

For Lawrence even more radically there is the conviction that the "need for life to be rooted in the cosmos is not one-sided."[5] Not only is the "cosmos . . . certainly conscious" (Ap II 172), but "the whole cosmos would wear out and disintegrate if it did not rest and find renewal in the quick center of creative life in individual creatures." Or, "even the sun . . . depends on the dynamic of the soul-impulse in individual creatures" (Fantasia 131).

In the dialogic conception of unity or coherence, everything that is cognizable is interconnected, interanimating—all things in consciousness can potentially engage the other in "living conversation." For anything to fall out of conversational or dialogical potential connection with another is to fall out of life, out of reality. As Bakhtin puts it, "question and answer" (as constitutive of dialogic interaction) are not categorically distinct. Instead, "any response gives rise to a new question" (MHS 168). And

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[5]F.R. Leavis, *Thought, Words* 45

"languages become implicated in each other and mutually animate each other" (DiN 410). Discourse is a complex, vital two-way street. Were this not so, individuals would fall out of "living" connection or "conversation," not only with each other as distinct personalities, but also with what Lawrence terms the entire "circumambient universe."

Indeed, Lawrence's view of the dialogic web of "question and answer" is cosmic. Not only is "a man's soul a perpetual call and answer," so is all "life," the whole universe "Call and Answer": "So it is forever, the eternal weaving of calls and answers, and the fabric of life woven and perishing again" (K 295-6).

The central positivity in his dynamic of doubt (or faith) is that the dialogic nature of reality is indestructible: "But the calls never cease, and the answers never fail for long" (K 296). Lawrence is ultimately affirmative because he believes it is finally impossible to fall out of dialogue with a living "God," for an individual or a people, alive to their own openness, to fall out of dialogic connection with all else: "In the center of your being . . . do not groan./ For perhaps the greatest of all illusions/ is this illusion of the death of the undying" ("Stoic," CP 703).

Lawrence obviously claims greater poetic license than does Bakhtin in the bold and sweeping style of his affirmations. Lawrence has a flamboyance characteristic of his embattled innocence, and of a religiosity which is obviously more active and eager, or at least more inflamed,

than Bakhtin's. Yet even in an atmosphere of official and highly repressive atheism, Bakhtin throughout his career interests himself in a kind of "unity of style" in artistic expression that is conditioned by "a religious confidence or faith in the fact that life is not solitary, that it is intent and does not proceed from within itself in an axiological void" (AiG 202). Bakhtin, perhaps to as great an extent as Lawrence, is vitalistic. He was clearly influenced by Vladimir Vernadsky, who, as a founder of geochemistry and biogeochemistry, lectured extensively on "the wholeness and connectedness of the cosmos" (SG 156n).[6]

In the context of present concerns, the interest is not in Bakhtin's and Lawrence's "animistic" or vitalistic tendencies per se, but rather, in why both thinkers should feel compelled to extend their beliefs in the interconnectedness of consciousness and the cosmos as far as they do. In this regard, several suggestions are in order. It would appear that fundamental to the dialogism that both writers share are, preliminarily at least, three tenets:

(1) that "life is *always* individual, and never controlled by one law, one God" (*Fantasia* 131);

(2) that individual sentiences collaboratively (dialogically) undertake the work of integrity (or of momentaneously forging unity in multiplicity) as a project, not as a given; and

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[6]Vernadsky's "Paris lectures in the early 1920s on what he called the 'biosphere' influenced Teilhard de Chardin" (SG 156n).

(3) that language, particularly in its prosaic or multi-voiced evocations, is the truest means of dialogic understanding.

Taken in order, and in greater detail, Lawrence's and Bakhtin's shared "betweennesses" involve:

(1) *That "life is* always *individual, and never controlled by one law, one God" (Fantasia* 131). Lawrence unfailingly insists on the individuality of all life: "Each human self is single, incommutable, and unique. This is its *first* reality" ("Democracy," SE 90). Bakhtin is equally insistent: "Science, above all philosophy, can and should study the specific form and function of individuality" (PT 108). Emphasis on individuality is a way for both men to avoid the falsification of abstraction when studying the "science of life." Both abhor systematizing abstraction, particularly of the sort that would "monologize" or rationalize being:

> Our life, our being depends upon the incalculable issue from the central Mystery into indefinable *presence*. This sounds in itself an abstraction. But not so. It is rather the perfect absence of abstraction. The central Mystery is no generalized abstraction. It is each man's primal original soul or self, within him. And *presence* is nothing mystic or ghostly. On the contrary. It is the actual man present before us. The fact that an actual man present before us is an inscrutable and incarnate Mystery, untranslatable, this is the fact upon which any great scheme of social life

must be based. It is the fact of *otherness*. ("Democracy," SE 90)

In both men the fact of individuality makes for a vision of a cosmos as myriad othernesses, dappled, multi-form (not uniform), unfinalizably diverse, potentially chaotic, clustering and unclustering around cynosures of consciousness, "acts of attention," or individual projects of integrity. The self, furthermore, in this conception, is a "speckled leopard of the mixed self" (P262). It is connected to othernesses within and without. Like Whitman's "self," it is large, and contains multitudes.[7]

In its expansiveness, such a "self" is fundamentally noncoincident with itself, or with that aspect of itself one might call the isolated ego. (An "actual man present before us is an inscrutable and incarnate Mystery.") For Bakhtin, "self" similarly has an unfinalizability or inclusiveness that manifests itself as "voices": "But I hear *voices* in everything and dialogic relations among them" (MHS 169).

Tone is an essential feature of every speech-act for Bakhtin because it is tone that registers newness and individuality of expression:

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[7]As John observes, Lawrence made a study of the "creative whole self" in the works of Blake, Coleridge, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Carpenter, Carlyle and Whitman (*Supreme Fictions* 254). Lawrence scrutinizes Whitman's expansive self in SCAL. In "The Business of Art," this chapter will return to what John calls the "vitalist vision" of the "dynamic fabricating self" in Lawrence (*Supreme Fictions* 13).

> Emotional-volitional tone opens up the locked-in, self-sufficient content of a thought, attaches it to a unified and singular being-event. Every generally signifying value becomes truly signifying only in an individual context. (KFP 108-9; MB 133-34)

Tone is the "imprint of individuality" in speech. It is a phenomenon of infinite variety and multiplicity, impervious to systematization or "theoretism." And while Bakhtin notes that the "ambiguity of language" would permit transcription of individuality as tone into "theoretical terms," inevitably by so doing "we will end up with an empty formula" (KFP 111; MB 134).

Context (or what is often termed connotation) is a palimpsest of tonal individuality. Any utterance

> . . . reveals to us many half-concealed or completely concealed words of others with varying degrees of foreignness. Therefore, the utterance appears to be furrowed with distant and barely audible echoes of changes of speech subjects and dialogic overtones, greatly weakened utterance boundaries that are completely permeable to the author's expression. (SG 93)

"Differences" inherent in the word ("after all, there are no words that belong to no one" [PT 121-22]) do not drain meaning. For Bakhtin, they enrich it with interanimating vitalities. Each word has an internal dialogism; it accrues a "stylistic aura" of recollected earlier contexts (SG 87-8): "This

aura is, in fact, the effect of manifold voices that do not reduce to unity or yield a center" (MB 138-39).

Bakhtin's famous notion of heteroglossia clearly has its foundation in a conception of multiplicity that also derives primarily from irreducible individuality. Language, as Bakhtin is fond of stating, is always *languages*. The interest is not only in conventional linguistic dialects or jargons, but more importantly in "languages" within the centralized tongue that reflect cultural and social multiplicity, a carnival of intersubjective riches. At the core of tonal and heteroglossic variety is a vitality that inheres in individual consciousness. Discourse is always a matter of a unique "living impulse" in the speaker toward the object (DiN 292). Dialogic expression for Bakhtin, like Lawrence, is always the manifold utterance of "the mixed self" (P 262).

(2) *That individual sentiences collaboratively (dialogically) undertake the work of integrity (or of momentaneously forging unity in multiplicity) as a project, not as a given.* While multiplicity as the reality of discrete individuality is always potentially chaotic, it is, both in individual consciousness and in the socio-historical sphere, ultimately not so. That there is integrity or unity of being is a constant source of admiring wonder for both writers, and a cynosure of their affirmative beliefs. Immanent in manifold reality is an active organizing principle, one that Lawrence usually refers to as "soul": "The whole [cosmos] was alive,

and had a great soul, or *anima*" (EP 82). Lawrence's cosmos has "a" soul, but its oneness is not reductive or uniform. Rather, such an *anima* partakes of a Bakhtinian vision of unity as "open," or as a "unity" "not as an innate one-and-only, but as a dialogic *concordance* of unmerged twos and multiples" (TRDB 289; italics his).

There is unity in multiplicity, but that unity is of a special sort. For Bakhtin and Lawrence it is not "monologic." Dialogic unity is a vision of interconnectedness, interanimation, or conversation among voices. Voices may be in disagreement, as those who construe the dialogic to be endless debate exclusively seem to think, but more characteristically they are the voices of *agreement* or shared correspondences. For Bakhtin dialogue in this special sense is an "open unity" (RQ 6).

The dialogic imagination has a conception of creative chaos (as the reality of unfinalizability, as active possibility) *prior* to thought or language, one that falsely unifying conceptions of reality miss. Both thinkers attack brainspun theoretical constructs or systems that Bakhtin variously terms "theoretism" or "monologism." For Lawrence the enemy similarly is the "curse of monos." He looks to "living chaos" to save him "from the strain of the monos, from homogeneity and exaltation and forcedness and all-of-a-pieceness, which is the curse of the human consciousness" (P 261). (He is here praising Crosby's poetry for *failing* to be conventionally coherent. Lawrence likes its "chaos" because

of the possibilities for surprisingness or genuine newness, however unrealized, that it contains.)

The comprehensive insight for both Bakhtin and Lawrence is of a complex unity prior to and as the basis of duality or dualistic modes of thought. Systematic or dualistic thinking confuses the chaotic (unfinalizable) nature of reality by reversing the priority of phenomena and epiphenomena. Dualism privileges its own distorting impositions of consciousness upon the prior turbulent or polyphonic "unity" called chaos.

In a sense, both thinkers are vitalists in the tradition of Blake, Wordsworth and other Romantic poets and theorists. They oppose Newton's mechanistic cosmos and Descartes' dualistic model of mind and attempt to replace them by a Heraclitean "tension of antinomies," or a vision of chaos as prolific potentiality. As vitalists they believe that Heraclitean strife affirms the reality of creativity: it "provides for growth and development." "The difference between the two cosmologies, mechanist and vitalist, is thus between a closed and an open universe" (*Supreme Fictions* 9). Lawrence and Bakhtin are proponents of a "messy" reality that has the potential to organize itself into singular—opposed and related—unities, coherent consciousnesses that cluster and uncluster, "surging with full life" (EP 64).

Put another way, both men are deeply "prosaic" thinkers: "If one thinks prosaically, one doubts that any aspect of culture from the self to a language, from daily life

to all of history, could be organized tightly enough to exhibit an all-encompassing pattern" (MB 28). For them, the solution to the distortions of systematic (mechanistic or dualistic) thinking lies in prosaicism: "The promised land . . . lies away beneath our feet," claims Lawrence (*Fantasia* 19). His most energetic thinking is never utopian.[8] He almost always fails to finish the utopian fantasies he begins, such as "Autobiographical Fragment" (P 817). Indeed, affirmation of the supreme value of the terrestrial and the quotidian led Aldous Huxley to term Lawrence a "mystical materialist" (Moore, CL 2, 1259). For his part, Bakhtin champions the virtues of prose to the extent that for some critics it becomes his most distinguishing feature.[9]

Clearly, for both thinkers the first step in the rebuttal of "monologism" or "closed" systems of thought lies in an admission of the priority of chaos as unfinalizability. For the prosaic believer, the ordinary and the everyday is grounded in an infinite abundance of potential meaning and value. The truest relation of an individual to such a reality is an acknowledgement of personal limitation of perspective, and of essential ignorance: "The first business of every faith is to declare its ignorance" (Fantasia 20). Declared "ignorance" opens consciousness to the possibility of wonder and of growth in understanding. The first business of serious

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[8]Certainly *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has elements of utopianism; it also has elements of authorial exhaustion.

[9]"Creation of a Prosaics" is the subtitle of Morson and Emerson's *Mikhail Bakhtin.*

thought engaged in a dynamic of doubt, in other words, is attention to its own unexamined certainties, particularly if those falsifying "certainties" refer to the "totality of things" as if they were a "seamless whole," and presume to speak with the single voice of irrefutable authority (MB 28).

Freud is just such an "authority," according to Lawrence and Bakhtin. He is the exemplar, particularly in his conception of the "unconscious," of "all-of-a-piece" or systematic thought, and for this reason Freud becomes the object of their sustained attention.

(a) Freud and "the scientists"

For both Bakhtin and Lawrence Freudianism is a prime example of monologic thinking. They believe that Freud denies the possibility of the "accidental, meaningless, or unrelated" in mental reality (MB 28). Basically, Freud's monologism denies Lawrencian immanency of creative chaos. Freudianism denies existence of an innate, unifying "soul" as a universal active principle. In the Freudian unconscious there is no conception of a "soulful" or spontaneous connection to the "deep source" as a potentially unifying dynamic. There is no connection to a messy (chaotic *and* creative) God. Nor could the Freudian unconscious ever be mistaken for a "fountain" of unique creativity, or the source of the primal positivity of Lawrencian "identity" (P 533).

Freud's monologism is such that he could not believe in the reality of "internal (psychical) accidental events."[10] Mental activity is presumed to be a "seamless whole"; all things—conscious or "unconscious"—are explicable, if one has the code. Clearly from this perspective, Freud's way of thinking is a "semiotic totalitarianism," in which even errors (so-called "Freudian slips") are necessarily purposeful. Even forgetting, for Freud, "results from 'an intention to forget'" (MB 28).

There is a presumption of certainty about the nature of reality in such monologism; there is arrogance, as Lawrence and Bakhtin see it, in the Freudian presumption of the existence of a single fixed explanatory key to human behaviour. Lawrence naturally (given his reputation) was most incensed by Freudianism when the explanatory "key" to human behaviour was said to be sex, or the "incest-taboo." Lawrence believes in no one explanatory key to behaviour, least of all in "sex": "All is *not* sex. And a sexual motive is *not* to be attributed to all human activities" (Fantasia 17).

Given that Lawrence attempts to rebut Freud at book-length (*Fantasia of the Unconscious* and *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*), as does Bakhtin's collaborator Voloshinov (*Freudianism: A Critical Sketch*), it would be vain to aim at exhaustive review here. Fundamentally, both Lawrence and

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[10]Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. Alan Tyson, ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1965) 257. See too MB 28.

Bakhtin reject Freudianism's unconscious as an "impoverished" notion (MB 175), in that it is seemingly unconnected to positive creativity as unfinalizable potentiality. For Lawrence, the unconscious simply is "soul"—and soul is "the creative element" (Psychoanalysis 215).

To Lawrence, Freud's "unconscious" hardly seems unconscious or categorically distinct from consciousness at all. It seems rather an inverted shadow-consciousness. Lawrence refers to Trigant Burrow who says that "Freud's *unconscious* does but represent our conception of conscious sexual life as this latter exists in a state of repression" (Psychoanalysis 206). Lawrence takes it that by the "unconscious" Freud does not wish to imply "nascent consciousness," but rather "that which recoils from consciousness, that which reacts in the psyche away from mental consciousness":

> [Freud's] unconscious is, we take it, that part of the human consciousness which, though mental, ideal in its nature, yet is unwilling to expose itself to full recognition, and so recoils back into the affective regions and acts there as a secret agent, unconfessed, unadmitted, potent, and usually destructive. The whole body of our repressions makes up our unconscious. (Psychoanalysis 209)

It is a significant aspect of Lawrence's carnival playfulness that he has fun with Freud, or with *his* Freud. (This study of course is interested in Lawrence's Freud as

revelatory of Lawrence's and Bakhtin's thinking, even if their "Freud" may be a straw man, and not necessarily or ever Freud at his most persuasive.) Lawrence remarks on the excitement Freud caused his contemporaries, seeming as he did to step suddenly "out of the conscious into the unconscious . . . like some supreme explorer" (Psychoanalysis 203). Freud, in other words, trespasses upon Lawrence's favorite activity as a crosser of boundaries, an explorer of betweennesses. Freud "walks straight through the wall of sleep, and we hear him rumbling in the cavern of dreams." Lawrence then asks what this "supreme explorer" has brought back from the nether regions of the dreaming unconscious:

> What dreams, dear heart! What was there in the cave? Alas that we ever looked! Nothing but a huge slimy serpent of sex, and heaps of excrement, and a myriad repulsive little horrors spawned between sex and excrement. (Psychoanalysis 203)

Obviously Lawrence is having fun, but what is at stake for him is supremely serious. He feels he must rescue from Freudianism his most cherished (essentially dialogic) beliefs in the "pristine unconscious," and in the nexus of values it shelters: individuality, spontaneity as primal positivity of being, and the "liberty of newness," by means of which the individual engages in the work or project of shaping self from active chaos ("Whistling of Birds," SE 112). The Freudian unconscious, for Lawrence, is a sewer or a "cellar,"

"in which the mind keeps its own bastard spawn," whereas "the true unconscious" is a limpid "well-head" and "fountain of real motivity" (Psychoanalysis 207).

The Freudian conception of dreams, in which not even the thinnest wisp of a dream can be said to be insignificant or accidental, unattached to the "seamless whole" of meaning, becomes one of Lawrence's main points of attack. In the unfolding argument of *Fantasia* and *Pyschoanalysis* it is clear that Lawrence is not just locally concerned with the psychology of dreams; he is, rather, defending an entire philosophy of potentiality against a monological view of humanity.

Lawrence first allows that there are significant dreams, but contends that most dreams are simply excreta of daily consciousness, and utterly insignificant: "We should not think of taking all these [dreams], piecing them together, and making a marvellous book of them, prophetic of the future and pregnant with the past. . . . [Their] significance is so small that we relegate it into the limbo of the accidental and meaningless." "Most dreams are purely insignificant":

> They are the heterogeneous odds and ends of images swept together accidentally . . . and it is beneath our dignity to attach any real importance to them. It is always beneath our dignity to go degrading the integrity of the individual soul by cringing and scraping among the rag-tag of accident and of the inferior, mechanic coincidence and automatic event. Only those events are significant which derive from or apply to the soul in its full integrity. (Fantasia 164)

The challenge represented by Freudianism is to dialogic-individualistic belief in "the soul in its full integrity." For Lawrence Freudianism very clearly is an "idealism," a monologism. Freudianism is deterministic and totalitarian. In its unconscious there is no "surplus," no unfinalizability, no positive or rich sense of spontaneity and individual freedom of response: "The scientist wants to discover a cause for everything. And there is no cause for the religious impulse. Freud is with the scientists" (Fantasia 19). Bakhtin too, like Lawrence, is not "with the scientists," but with the faithful, where what this means is "[n]ot faith (in the sense of a specific faith in orthodoxy, in progress, in man, in revolution, etc.), but a *sense of faith*, that is, an integral attitude (by means of the whole person) toward a higher and ultimate value" (TRDB 294).

For Lawrence and Bakhtin the emphasis is all on "higher" values of indeterminacy (surprisingness, originality, surplus) and freedom: "a rich understanding of selves must begin with a sense of people as free and morally responsible agents who are truly unfinalizable" (MB 175). Bakhtin and Lawrence would concur that "in the self, in culture, and in language, it is not (as Freud would have us believe) disorder or fragmentation that requires explanation: it is integrity" (MB 31). Hence Bakhtin's and Lawrence's life-long dedication (each in his own way, of course) to the novel as the genre of emergence. Every individual in Lawrence's or

Bakhtin's moral universe has a supreme responsibility to the "project of selfhood." As Bakhtin puts this, "There is no alibi for being" (KFP 112, 119; MB 31).

Freudianism has vast cultural-historical implications for both thinkers. As an implicitly deterministic "scientist," Freud is the "prophet" of a "new doctrine." Lawrence warns that "Freud is on the brink of a *Weltanschauung*—or at least a *Menschanschauung*, which is a much more risky affair." Like Bakhtin and his colleagues, Lawrence sees the issue of Freudianism unequivocally: "The issue first and foremost is a moral issue. It is not here a matter of reform, new moral values. It is the life or death of all morality" (Psychoanalysis 201-2).

In a sense Lawrence's deepest objection to psychoanalysis, like Bakhtin's, is not psychological but philosophical. Lawrence accuses the "scientists" or monologic determinists of having things both ways. While psychoanalysis as a semiotic totalitarianism denies the accidental or unforeseen, denies the sphere of freedom, originality, and ultimate responsibility to the individual, at the same time it arrogates total or "*ideal* liberty" to itself:

> Hence psychoanalysis as the advance-guard of science, the evangel of the last *ideal* liberty. For of course there is a great fascination in a completely effected idealism. Man is then undisputed master of his own fate, the captain of his own soul. But better say engine-driver, for in truth he is no more than the little god in the machine, this master of fate. He has invented his own automatic principles, and he works

himself according to them, like any little mechanic inside the works. (Psychoanalysis 211)

Psychoanalysis as a deterministic science appropriates for itself the "key" to its own world of ideally pure and perfect comprehensibility. By so doing, according to Lawrence's dialogic belief, psychoanalysis severs itself from the dimension of creative chaos (unfinalizability, potentiality, freedom), where individuals are "noncoincident" with themselves because they are connected to living othernesses in the collaborative work of making meaning, organizing potential chaos into coherencies or unities large and small. "We are only the actors, we are never wholly the authors of our deeds and works," as Lawrence says (SCAL 26). Or as Bakhtin remarks, "The word in language is half someone else's" (DiN 293). What is lost to psychoanalysis is unique individuality or "soul," where "soul" is vital, intersubjective otherness as "noncoincidence" of self with self, and where individuality consequently is always more than isolated ego. What is lost to psychoanalysis is what Lawrence refers to as the "religious" dimension of reality.

For Bakhtin, too, psychoanalysis is responsible for an "impoverished" monologic view of the unconscious and human nature. He resists the notion of "a separate and inaccessible structure out of which our impulses, fears, and surprises come, and argues instead for a richer, more varied,

and more diverse picture of *consciousness*" (MB 175). Bakhtin criticizes theories of

> forces that lie outside consciousness, externally (mechanically) defining it: from environment and violence to miracle, mystery, and authority. Consciousness under the influence of these forces loses its authentic freedom, and personality is destroyed. There, among these forces, one must also consign the unconscious (the 'id'). (TRDB 297)

Like Lawrence, Bakhtin is intent on blurring specious distinctions between conscious and unconscious. He works instead to describe the "numerous, diverse, socially heteroglot voices present in inner speech" (MB 175). That is, he works to develop an understanding of conscious dialogue as negotiation between living othernesses in the unfinalizable or soulful dimension of individuality—individuality in its full "depths and heights" as "creativity, activity, rebellion, freedom," in the "conscious sphere" (MB 198).

It is in this context that the importance of spontaneity in Lawrence's thinking becomes evident. His dialogism opposes systems of thought that see only necessity or chance in natural processes. He affirms a "fundamental reality which, on the one hand, is not absolutely necessitated and, on the other, is not chance; and which, again, is not a mixture or a blending of necessity and chance." This reality for Lawrence, as Vivante explains, "is called spontaneity, or

originality, or grace (using this word in its deeper meaning)" (*Phil Pot* 79).

Lawrence's spontaneity, in other words, is a "betweenness": it exists between necessity and chance as an emanation of the "deep source" or of Vivante's "active principle" (*Phil Pot* 95). By invoking spontaneity, Lawrence signals his opposition to any sort of monologic thinking that would render behavior automatic, mechanical, encodable, or explicable in a conclusive, certain, or finalizing way:

> 'Standard—no. I hate standards. . . . It's the hardest thing in the world to act spontaneously on one's impulses—and it's the only really gentlemanly thing to do—provided you're fit to do it.' (WL 32)

So Birkin lectures Gerald. Birkin is uncertain of Gerald's spontaneity or gentlemanliness, but not yet despairing of it. Gerald responds with outraged disbelief: "'And I . . . shouldn't like to be in a world of people who acted individually and spontaneously, as you call it.—We should have everybody cutting everybody else's throat in five minutes'" (WL 33). Gerald is a "denier." He lacks Birkin's "primal positivity." Gerald's thinking is deterministic and monologic in that for him all natures are one nature—the beast's.

Gerald's sense of "order" as the norm involves a totalitarian vision of authority necessarily imposing itself upon behaviour. For him disorder has none of the "grace" of

dialogic chaos (fecund, immanently purposeful, potentially unifying). Rather, for Gerald, disorder is, as it is for psychoanalysis, pathology. When, by contrast, spontaneity is the conduit of Lawrencian chaos, it has the values of "unity," "simplicity," freedom, creativity, vital potentiality and substantiality (see *Phil Pot* 79ff). Spontaneity is essential to the project of selfhood, and thus the "only really gentlemanly thing to do."

(b) Beauty, mess

Just as order and disorder are blurred distinctions in Lawrence and Bakhtin, so too are beauty and mess. In opposition to monologism, dialogism presents a "prosaic" view in which "order needs justification, disorder does not. The natural state of things is *mess*" (MB 30). Bakhtin envisions turbulent cultural and creative forces, incessantly at work in a push-pull of centripetal and centrifugal oppositions. Even the centrifugal forces tugging at the falsely unifying centripetal ones are not organized—there is no one organized opposition to unity of self or culture in the prosaic-dialogic imagination (MB 30). Beauty *is* "mess." Thus Bakhtin's close examination of the "grotesque" in *Rabelais and His World* is not peripheral to his fundamental world view. Nor is the emphasis on "mess" in Lawrence's "Red Geranium and Godly Mignonette":

> But imagine, among the mud and the mastodons
> God sighing and yearning with tremendous creative
> yearning, in that dark green mess
> oh, for some other beauty, some other beauty
> that blossomed at last, red geranium, and mignonette.
> (CP 691)

"That dark green mess" is itself "beauty." God yearns for "some *other* beauty" in addition to it (my italics). Mess is abundantly, "beautifully" immanent in creative reality. Mess is unfinalizable vitality itself, a surplus of potential creativity. Mess or the beauty of mess is inherently purposive, and ultimately unknowable or, in Lawrence's terms, "mysterious." The messy mystery of beauty is particularly hateful to "science," according to him, "because it doesn't fit in the cause-and-effect chain" (SE 14).

Living or messy beauty is "primary, not instrumental. It is an original motive-value. It is not an extrinsic end, not an object" (*Phil Pot* 82). Lawrence's recurrent interest in sex in his fiction and philosophy is an interest due in part to what he considers to be monologic science's inability to come to terms with the reality of chaotic "beauty." In this regard Lawrence and Bakhtin anticipate interests and directions taken by contemporary theoreticians of chaos. Lawrence's point of attack is the monologic basis of the "science" he knew:

> How delightful, how naïve theories are! But there is a hidden will behind them all. There is a hidden will

> behind all theories of sex, implacable. And that is the will to deny, to wipe out the mystery of beauty.
>
> Because beauty is a mystery. You can neither eat it nor make flannel out of it. Well, then, says science, it is just a trick to catch the female and induce her to propagate. How naïve! As if the female needed inducing. She will propagate in the dark, even—so where, then, is the beauty trick? (SE 14)

In reference to the above passage, Vivante notes that "it is indeed a curious problem, why many a scientist admits the preservation of the species as an end in itself, not needing explanation, and refuses the intrinsic purposiveness of form" (*Phil Pot* 82). An appreciation of the "beauty" of mess (or of its "intrinsic purposiveness"), particularly when such appreciation is in opposition to a monologic, single cause-and-effect view of "science," is an essential condition for seeing prosaically, or for seeing as Lawrence and Bakhtin do. Affirmation of carnival in them is affirmation of "mess" as abundance, as a plenitude of purposive meaning and being; it is affirmation of the goodness and essential "gaiety" immanent in the prosaic moment or in everyday life.

Bakhtin studies carnival positivity in *Rabelais*; Lawrence's fundamentally "angelic laughter" is ubiquitous. Commenting on the Etruscan world view, for example, he notes admiringly that their tomb-paintings are "surging with full life": "life on earth was so good"; there is profound "belief in life, acceptance of life" and "gaiety" (EP 64). In other paintings, "the stream of dancers leaps wildly, playing music, carrying garlands or wine-jugs, lifting their arms like

revellers, lifting their live knees, and signalling with their long hands" (EP 80). The vision in Lawrence is—as it nearly always is (in whatever local form his expression happens to take, including of course that of "demonic" laughter or carnival "decrowning")—of the messy vitality of carnival celebration of life.

Those critics like Gordon who sense a certain nostalgia or emotional distance between Lawrence and his carnival vision are not entirely wrong. In this instance, for example, he regrets having been shut out of the Etruscan party, and he laments the moroseness of his own time and place. But he is always and only sure, as a matter of personal experience, of a primally positive "creative nucleus" immanent in all life, at all times. Personal exclusion from the Etruscan party, or one like it, is for Lawrence merely accidental and insignificant. Exclusion is a fact of mortality, as he well knew. Part of the "nostalgia" that some critics sense is simply the intimation, in his later work, of his own mortality. His is not a nostalgia that contradicts his fundamental ontological valuations or his essentially celebratory outlook. As Lawrence writes to Lady Cynthia Asquith, "It is a great thing to realize that the original world is still there—perfectly clean and pure, many white advancing foams . . . " (CL 2 375).

His diction in expressing the world's "original," integral and still operative purity is revealing in its omnipresent dialogicality: "many white advancing foams" suggests the

values of a varied and momentaneous unity ("many"), a strong future-oriented arrow of time ("advancing"), and potentiality as incessant, immanent becoming. His "original world" that is "still there" is ontologically akin to Bakhtin's dialogic word itself. There is no debilitating nostalgia or incipient despair in either Lawrence or Bakhtin. They are both quintessential philosophers of potentiality.

(3) *That language, particularly in its prosaic or multi-voiced evocations, is the truest means of dialogic understanding*. With its prosaic emphasis on disorder or beautiful mess as the norm and on order as always suspect (as imposition of authority, monologism), it is understandable that dialogism would privilege prose, specifically the novel, as, in Lawrence's famous words, the "one bright book of life" (P 535). The novel is especially "moral" because it has the dialogic virtue of "relatedness." Lawrence puts it in a manner worth repeating and exploring in greater detail.

> The novel is the highest example of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered. Everything is true in its own time, place, circumstance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circumstance. If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail. (P 528)

A more Bakhtinian or prosaic sense of the novel is unimaginable. The novel's inherent prosaics oppose monologism:

> Now here we see the great beauty and value of the novel. Philosophy, religion, science, they are all of them busy nailing things down, to get a stable equilibrium. Religion, with its nailed down One God, who says *Thou Shalt, Thou shan't*, and hammers home every time; philosophy, with its fixed ideas; science with its 'laws': they, all of them, all the time, want to nail us on to some tree or other.
>
> But the novel, no. (P 528)

The novel's greatest prosaic value is that it is incapable of the "absolute" or monologic imposition of authorial totalitarianism (P 536). Dialogic prose involves the rough and tumble engagement of "primary author" and his work. The *"fully realized and thoroughly consistent dialogic position"* is one that "affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy of the hero":

> For the author the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a fully valid 'thou', that is, another and other autonomous 'I' ('thou art'). (PDP 63)

Prose is inherently messy, or vital. It has no monologic uniformity; it admits sometimes obstreperous othernesses within itself, or what Lawrence terms the *"resistance* of life" (CL 2, 638; italics his). Bakhtin has a similar sense of the novel's resistant liveliness. "Intensely

dialogic discourse," he observes, includes a sense of active rejoinder or resistance. It has a "hidden polemic" in which "every word [is] reacting intensely to someone else's word, answering it and anticipating it" (PDP 197). Dialogic prose proceeds strenuously, inviting resistances and rejoinders within itself; it does not seek facile resolutions. In a word, it thinks messily, which does not mean, of course, that it does not think "beautifully" or precisely in its own way. Bakhtin and Lawrence do not simply or perversely praise the novel, in opposition to Jamesian standards, as a "loose and baggy monster." Rather, the novel is a "supreme" form of expression because of the precision and vividness with which it can embrace the quiddities of prosaic "laughing" reality.[11]

It is revealing of their essential agreement about the nature of the novel that both writers independently trace the origins of the kind of novel they care most about to the Socratic dialogues. The novel's "spirit" is of "process and inconclusiveness," as is the daimonic spirit of Socratic dialogue (EaN 7). The novel is the "language of the marketplace" (RAHW, Chapter 2).

For Lawrence "Plato's Dialogues are queer little novels" (P 520). Correspondingly, Bakhtin traces the origins of the

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[11]Both Bakhtin and Lawrence locate intimately cherished values of their dialogic-vitalistic world view in the novel and in laughter. "The principle of laughter," declares Bakhtin, "destroys all pretense of an extratemporal meaning and unconditional value of necessity. It frees human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities" (RAHW 49). Lawrence in EP implicitly makes similar claims about laughter and the highest human reality.

prosaic imagination to "elemental popular laughter" or folklore which "gave rise to a field of literature labeled *"spoudogeloion,"* or the "serio-comic," in which the Socratic dialogues are included (EaN 21). Serio-comic genres such as the Socratic dialogues are precursors of "the novel as the genre of becoming" in that laughter "demolishes" distance and hierarchy. As Lawrence says of the novel: "Art-speech is the only truth. An artist is usually a damned liar, but his art, if it be art, will tell you the truth of his day. And that is all that matters. Away with eternal truth. Truth lives from day to day . . . " (SCAL 8). Not only is the artist in Lawrence's conception "decrowned," or divested of his dictatorial or monologic authority over his own creation—indeed, the artist in his view cannot even prevent his own tale from ratting on him—but the novel is also crowned supreme in a momentaneous *and* eternal realm: the realm of "truth," the perfectly prosaic realm of the "day to day."

Of the novel's special presentness of perspective Bakhtin notes: "Even where the past or myth serves as the subject of representation in these genres there is no epic distance, and contemporary reality provides the point of view" (EaN 23). The novel's "spontaneity" is its contact with the "inconclusive present; this is what keeps the genre from congealing" (EaN 27). Its fundamental "laughter" or prosaicism is a matter of being in touch with the rough and tumble, here and now:

> It is precisely laughter that destroys the epic, and in general destroys any hierarchical (distancing and valorized) distance. As a distanced image a subject cannot be comical; to be made comical, it must be brought close. Everything that makes us laugh is close at hand. . . . Laughter [draws an object] into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it. . . . [Laughter] delivers the object into the fearless hands of investigative experiment—both scientific and artistic. . . . Familiarization of the world through laughter and popular speech is an extremely important and indispensable step in making possible free, scientifically knowable and artistically realistic creativity in European civilization. (EaN 23)

Lawrence manifests a similar awareness of the nature of novelistic thought as investigative laughter when he notes not only that Plato's dialogues are "queer little novels," but also that philosophy and fiction "used to be one": "it was the greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split" (P 520). His dialogic novel, of which *Women in Love* is the epitome, is in a sense an experiment in reconciling philosophy and fiction, a reconciliation made in the spirit of laughter (when laughter is considered in its full Bakhtinian import). *Women in Love*, like Bakhtin's literary critical analysis itself, attempts with investigative laughter to reunify philosophy and fiction.

Clearly for dialogism, vitality as potentiality is a boundary phenomenon. It resides in the space between individuals, in "living" language, particularly in its prosaic evocations. Language is the best conduit of "life" so conceived. Conversation (including that which is between author and reader), when it is "serious and sincere," a "moral encounter of people," and not "mere verbal exchange," is "living."[12] The novel is the highest example of living discourse, or of the dialogic word, because of its momentaneous relatedness, its incapacity for the absolute. Thus for the dialogic imagination, the "science of life" (Lawrence) or the preferred "methodology for the human sciences" (Bakhtin) is the science of language, particularly when it takes the form of "serious and sincere" exploratory prose fiction. For both men language is the "living" or plastic means by which the individual works at the "project" of integrity, and creates (or fails to create) a unity of selfhood from the chaos of vital possibility.

It is in this sense that nearly all of Lawrence's novels are novels of becoming or emergence (*Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, and *Women in Love* famously so), and that Bakhtin prefers the novel as "the genre of becoming" (EaN 22ff). "This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not

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[12]Morson, "Bakhtin and the Present Moment," *The American Scholar* (Spring 1991) 201. See too PT 121-22; DiN 280, and Lawrence's "Morality and the Novel," P 527-38.

superimposition of a theory. *It is the passionate struggle into conscious being*" ("Foreword," WL 486).

What holds true for the individual in the effort of self-realization holds true for humanity as well. For both thinkers as self-styled "philosophical anthropologists," humanity itself is engaged in the strenuous effort of emergence (N70-71, 146). In *Women in Love*, Birkin ruminates on humanity's collective future: "should [humanity] too fail creatively to change and develop," the "eternal creative mystery could dispose of man, and replace him with a finer created being: just as the horse has taken the place of the mastodon" (WL 478-79).

Be it individually or aggregately ("anthropologically") considered, the challenge and responsibility of becoming—becoming or the project of selfhood as an effort of "finer" utterance—are the same. It is for both Bakhtin and Lawrence humanity's greatest responsibility. From his earliest published essay Bakhtin emphasizes that "personality must become responsible through and through. . . . Art and life are not one, but they must become united in me, in the unity of my responsibility" (TiO 5-6). The problem and challenge of forging a complex unity or integrity is one that both thinkers acknowledge, and take on squarely.

It is sometimes suggested (in the criticism of Albright and Ragussis, for example[13]) that Lawrence incipiently

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[13]Daniel Albright, *Personality and Impersonality: Lawrence, Woolf, and Mann* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978) 17-95; Michael Ragussis, *Subterfuge*.

despairs of language (as verbal exchange), and to an extent this observation is accurate and important: "[Ursula] knew, as well as he knew, that words themselves do not convey meaning, that they are but a gesture we make, a dumb show like any other" (WL 186). Lawrence does "decrown" or discredit the word's monopoly on meaning explicitly here (and elsewhere). However, where there is loss of absolute or exclusive right to make meaning (words are a "dumb show *like any other*"; italics mine), there is also gain. As "dumb show" human discourse is potentially like the primordial creative urge itself. Language is potentially in touch with that which is prior to language and the pollutions or accretions of idealistic, mechanical, or monologic fixities and inertnesses.

As "dumb show," the word is intimately related to those values that have been referred to here as the Lawrencian and Bakhtinian "symbolic" dimension, the "fourth dimension" (Lawrence), the "deep source" (Leavis), the "metalinguistic" dimension" (Bakhtin), the "soul," or "God" (Lawrence). As "dumb show," the word has the potential to renew itself at any time and in any place: "He turned in confusion. There was always confusion in speech." (Lawrence here acknowledges "confusion" as "mess," or as the possibility of newness.) "Yet it must be spoken. Whichever way one moved, if one were to move forwards, one must break a way through. And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through the walls of the

prison, as the infant in labour strives through the walls of the womb" (WL 186).

Can a more affirmative declaration of the supreme value of the dialogic word (as unfinalizable potentiality itself) be imagined? Perhaps, but only in Bakhtin: *"Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future"* (FDP 166; italics his).

In the dialogic imagination, as we have seen, humanity finds itself poised between creation and chaos, between being and becoming, in the sphere of the "between," where the challenge is of self-realization as unfinalizable creativity (utterance), or of death (as fixity, mechanical abstraction). The "business of art" takes place in the "between."

2. The "Business of Art"

Buber's conception of the "between" is helpful in understanding Bakhtin's and Lawrence's. His "between" is the "oscillating sphere" of the I-Thou relationship:

> The word that is spoken is found . . . in the oscillating sphere between the person, the sphere that I call 'the

between,' and this we can never allow to be contained without remainder in the two participants.[14]

"The between" is where the dialogic interaction of the spoken word occurs for Bakhtin. In "telegraphic" models of communication, such as Saussure's or Jakobson's, there is according to Bakhtin a misleadingly "passive" understanding of how messages are sent and received. In the Saussurean model there is a fundamental division in language in which utterance *(parole)* is simply an instantiation of the linguistic system *(langue)*, where an addresser formulates a message, encodes it, and "telegraphs" it to an addressee. The addressee's role in understanding is essentially passive. In this model even if the addressee were to be absent or asleep, the essential content of the original message would remain unchanged (MB 128).

In Bakhtin's view, by contrast, utterance is never simply a matter of linguistic units or "abstract elements of language" (MB 131) exchanging information with themselves, but rather utterance is always "living conversation" and "interindividual" (PT 121). "There can be no dialogue between sentences" (MB 131). Nor is argument, particularly of the Hegelian dialectical type, necessarily

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[14]Martin Buber, "Biblical Humanism," *On the Bible*, ed. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1982) 112. Steven Kepnes's article, "Buber and Bakhtin: Towards a Dialogical Theory of Language and Interpretation," cogently indicates similarities between Buber's and Bakhtin's conception of the "between." It will appear in a future issue of *Jewish Thought*.

"dialogic." Rather, dialogue involves "addressivity," or "the quality of turning to someone" (SG 99):

> The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue. (DiN 280)

Bakhtin's attention to the sphere of the "between" renders inoperative usual (or "telegraphic") distinctions between self and other. Utterance demands speaker and listener, writer and reader, and their reciprocity is such that both "own" the discourse and neither "owns" the discourse. As Buber remarks, the word is "found" in the "oscillating sphere" between conversants, neither of whom can be said to contain or possess the entire meaning "without remainder." It is "remainder," Bakhtin's "surplus," or Lawrence's "fourth dimensional" "gleam," that is found in the "between," and that is the object of their "metalinguistic" attention.

The word's "interindividuality" means that

> everything that is said, expressed, is located outside the 'soul' of the speaker and does not belong only to him. The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable rights to the word, but the listener also has his rights, and those

> whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it have their rights (after all, there are no words that belong to no one). The word . . . is performed outside the author, and it cannot be introjected into the author. (PT 121-22)

In Bakhtin's view, linguists misapply "ownership" of the utterance to the speaker, whereas for him there is reciprocity, culturally collaborative sharing in the active making of meaning. Far from being an "anxiety," influence is constitutive of integrity of authorship.

Lawrence wholly assents to such a conception of mutuality, of interanimating exchange between self and other, or, in a word, of impersonality. His "one writes for the race, as it were," is not simply megalomaniacal, any more than is his Blakean sense that "Not I, but the wind that blows through me," is simply boastful or irresponsible. No more than in Blake ("And tho' I call them mine, I know that they are not mine"[15]) can Lawrence's conception of the intrinsic impersonality of successful creativity be reduced to Romantic or post-Romantic "aesthetic" notions of art as individualistic "inspiration." Rather, Lawrence, like Bakhtin, ascribes the essential impersonality of creativity ("surprisingness," "newness," "unfinalizability") to the promptings of the "otherness" of the "living" word as discourse.

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[15]*The Letters of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1968) 8.

Bakhtin and Lawrence could not be farther from telegraphic models of the "work of creation":

> The mystery of creation is the divine urge of creation,
> but it is a great, strange urge, it is not a Mind.
> Even an artist knows that his work was never in his mind,
> he could never have *thought* it before it happened.
> ("The Work of Creation," CP 690)

Creative expression is not first formulated, encoded, and then telegraphed to a passive receiver of an encapsulated (finalized) message. Rather, there is essential dialogic activity in two spheres. The author internally engages impulse ("urge," otherness) within the self, at the same time as externally engaging the listener without, in the active making of meaning. The work of creation involves "betweennesses": it occurs not only between addresser and addressee, but also between the author and impersonal living otherness.[16]

For Lawrence there is the Yeatsian awareness that creative expression is the "dialogue of self and soul," in which "dialogue" has its full Bakhtinian impressiveness. That is, in true dialogue the self is not merely soliloquizing with itself in mental consciousness (which would truly be a form of monologue or mere "verbal exchange"), but is rather connected to "soul" as "deep source" or "voices" of living

[16]Doherty suggests a similarity between Lawrence's and Derrida's conception of the "between" as a "non-dialectical middle, that which elides and eludes [oppositions]" ("Deconstructive" 484).

othernesses. Soul is one's connection to the "deep source," or Lawrencian "chaos." It is that part of one that is submerged in Bakhtin's "primordial elements of the origins of existence." Soul is one's "wholeness" or unity, but it is so only because of its dialogical connection to creative chaos as multiplicity and potentiality. As Lawrence notes, "the human soul itself is the source and well-head of creative activity" (P 216).

But man is not (and here is the break in his thought with Romantic heroic or Byronic aesthetics) "a supreme soul isolated and alone in the universe." His ideal man is no "soulful" Hamlet. On the contrary, "a soul is something that forms and fulfills itself in my contacts, my living touch with people. . . . I am born with the clue to my soul. The wholeness of my soul I must achieve. And by my soul I mean my wholeness" (P 192).[17]

Lawrence's "soul" is closely analogous to Bakhtin's definition of "spirit." "Spirit" is a comprehensive term for Bakhtin: "The real object of study is the interrelation and interaction of 'spirits'" (N70-71 144). As in Lawrence, Bakhtin's "spirit" (a more inclusive notion than Bakhtin's definition of "soul") is always more than itself, reaching out beyond itself in dialogic give and take: "The soul is a gift of my spirit to the other" (AiG 116). Lawrence's "soul" is even more inclusive or noncoincident with itself than is Bakhtin's. Lawrence's soul has "deep fountains" "which the world has

[17]See too, "'One Hamletizes, and it seems a lie'" (WL 187).

known as God": "Those whose souls are alive and strong . . . constitute the great base of all peoples at all times. . . . For the creative soul is for ever charged with the potency of still unborn speech, still unknown thoughts" (P 608).

"Soul" in this sense has Bakhtinian fecundity and unfinalizability as "potency of still unborn speech." As in Bakhtin, where the "creative nucleus" is "immortal" (MHS 168), Lawrence believes that one's soul exists in a kind of eternal agora within the godhead, where "great souls" in "great time" are always on hand (close by, personally) and ready for lively conversation: "The only riches, the great souls" (SCAL 187). Such a conception utterly blurs distinctions of past and present, living and dead, in the realm of creative expression.

Thought or "idea" in the dialogic conception is, moreover, never merely "formulation" or encodable message. If "idea" exists at all in "art-speech," it is subsequent or secondary, an epiphenomenal aspect of creativity. When Sir Joshua Malleson in *Women in Love* (thought by some to be a parody of Bertrand Russell) pontificates, "'Knowledge is, of course, liberty,'" Birkin rejoins sarcastically, "'In compressed tabloids.'" He then explains, "'You can only have knowledge, strictly, . . . of things concluded, in the past. It's like bottling the liberty of last summer in the bottled gooseberries'" (WL 86).

Lawrence's dialogic point is that "living" thought is unfinalizable. It is in this sense that Birkin makes the

otherwise seemingly absurd statements to Ursula that he does not want to "know" her, or even to "see" her as a form of recognition (WL 187, 147). Birkin does not want his knowledge of Ursula, or his ongoing relationship with her, to be finalized or finalizable. He wants his love to be redolent of the dialogic values of unfinalizability, potentiality, surprisingness, and the "living" virtues. With Ursula, Birkin wants to occupy the dialogic zone of the living "unknown," or the future-oriented zone of the about-to-be (WL 144). He does not want their love to exist in the "past," as a conclusive, thus finished or "known," thing.

Birkin's words may be philosophically apt; they remain, nonetheless, diplomatically obtuse in the new and delicate state of his and Ursula's relationship, in ways of which the novel takes comic advantage. At times Birkin seems more concerned with winning an argument than with winning a wife. When Ursula in "Mino" forces Birkin to admit "grimly" that he loves her, the laugh is on him, and on his "truth-loving" and "purity-mongering" rigidities. The laugh is on his brainspun abstractions and absolutisms (WL 154; 307).

For Lawrence, thought is an epiphenomenal aspect of creativity: "This pseudo-philosophy of mine—"pollyanalytics" . . . is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse. The novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen" (Fantasia 15). Lawrence is no anti-intellectual; he "love[s] thought" (CP 673). But he is nearly always

careful to keep his priorities dialogically intact. After authorship, comes the "absolute need . . . for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general [that] makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one's experiences as a writer and as a man" (*Fantasia* 15). To his mind, God does no less:

> God is a great urge, wonderful, mysterious,
> magnificent
> but he knows nothing before-hand.
> His urge takes shape in the flesh, and lo!
> it is creation! God looks himself on it in wonder, for
> the first time.
> Lo! there is a creature, formed! How strange!
> Let me think about it! Let me form an idea!
> ("The Work of Creation," CP 690)

Creation or expression resides in a messy or prolific "urge" between form and formlessness, between the creating impulse and the thing created. Lawrence's "God" or author, like Bakhtin's "primary author," is immanently purposive, but not "thoughtful" or deliberately purposive. God or author is situated, as it were, between cause and effect, between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, in the region of "silence" (N70-71 149). In a sense Lawrence's God as "urge" converses dialogically, by uttering discourse that "lives . . . beyond itself, in a living impulse toward the object," and then invites of the word or thing created a surprising or creative response (DiN 292).

It is specifically monological thought or "after-thought" that creates falsifying distinctions in the beautiful "mess" of creativity. Bakhtin microscopically explores the region of the dialogic word to discover myriad "messy" indistinctions. Put another way, the dialogic word is the active blurring principle itself in the sense that it negotiates between voices as distinct othernesses in "living conversation." Moreover, these othernesses, speaker and listener, or self and other, may be distinct, but they are never monadic. Rather, for both writers, the self is always to some extent extraterritorial, or "located outside" itself. There is a "nonself-sufficiency" of the self:

> To be means to be for another, and through the other for oneself. A person has no sovereign internal territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself he looks *into the eyes of another* or *with the eyes of another.* (TRDB 287)

At times in Lawrence's thinking, precisely such a conception of the "nonself-sufficiency of the self" provokes strenuous explication, in that he is acutely concerned to avoid confusion between his concept of ideal connubial love as "star-equilibrium," and the cliché of marriage as merging. Ursula herself voices confusion in this regard throughout *Women in Love.* However, Bakhtin too must concern himself with the possibility of confusion between his profound sense of the "nonself-sufficiency" of the self as vital reciprocity, and simplistic conceptions of merging or "empathy": "What

would I have to gain if another were to fuse with me? . . . let him rather remain outside me" (AiG 78; AA 87).

For the dialogic imagination there is loss, not gain, by merging, or perfect empathy. Otherness (individuality, distinctness) is crucial to the vitality of dialogical conversation as momentaneous relatednesses that indeed "author" the human world. Thus, while there is reciprocity and deliberate erasing of conventional self-other distinctions, there is an equally great emphasis on the essentiality of otherness and boundaries per se. The very reality of dialogicality resides in its vision of instantaneous, shifting virtualities and opennesses between distinct individualities. There is no possibility of "betweenness" and lively exchange without boundaries, however protean and momentaneous they may be. Indeed, for Bakhtin every "cultural act" occurs "at the boundaries." All is fundamentally "between": "The realm of culture has no internal territory: it is entirely distributed along the boundaries, boundaries pass everywhere, through its every aspect. . . . [I]n this is its seriousness and significance" (PS 25; MB 51).

As a boundary phenomenon, the values of dialogic discourse spring from the reality of their "betweenness." Such discourse has, for example, the value of "surprise." The dialogic word is always becoming itself; it is never entirely determined by before or after or by addresser or addressee (it manifests Buberian "remainder"), and to this extent is

always unpredictable and potentially "new." Moreover, in its liminal, protean nature the dialogic word has the value of creativity. It has about it an "unfinalizable" responsiveness or opportunistic openness of form. That is, in its unfinalizability, dialogic discourse is profoundly interrogative. It "provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" (PDP 166). Inherent in it is "addressivity" *(obrashchennost')* and "responsibility" or "answerability" *(otvetstvennost')*.

The conception in Lawrence which corresponds most closely to the dialogic word in its betweenness is that of "art-speech" or the "only truth" as momentaneous relationship (SCAL 8):

> The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment. As mankind is always struggling in the toils of old relationships, art is always ahead of the 'times,' which themselves are always far in the rear of the living moment. (P 527)

Like Bakhtin, Lawrence places primary emphasis on "living" relationships, be they "voices" or other sorts of correspondences (such as between van Gogh and sunflowers). Lawrence is equally emphatic about essential momentaneity or presentness in "art-speech" as a negotiation between past and future ("art is always ahead of the 'times', which themselves are always far in the rear of the living moment"). For him the novel is the apex of "art-

speech" because it reveals "the changing rainbow of our living relationships" (P 532). Bakhtin has a similar appreciation of the novel's momentaneity: "The novelistic word registers with extreme subtlety the tiniest shifts and oscillations of the social atmosphere; it does so, moreover, while registering it as a whole, in all its aspects."[18]

Profoundly like Bakhtin, Lawrence is concerned with how art can be both true, that is "eternal and perfect" (*pace* the relativists), and momentaneous or incessantly changing in its alert or "living" dialogic contextuality. How can "art-speech" seem to accommodate both unfinalizability (or "change") and completed (meaningful, "perfect") expression? Can art have a "quality of eternity and perfection" and yet be "momentaneous"? Can it be, in Bakhtin's terms, an "unclosed whole" or an "open unity?" (PDP 63; RQ 6).

> When van Gogh paints sunflowers, he reveals, or achieves, the vivid relation between himself, as man, and sunflower, as sunflower, at that quick moment in time. . . . It is a revelation of the perfected relation, at a certain moment, between a man and a sunflower. It is neither man-in-the-mirror nor flower-in-the-mirror, neither is it above or below or across anything. It is between everything, in the fourth dimension. (P 527)

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[18]Of this observation by Bakhtin, Hyde comments, "Here, or hereabouts, is the 'dialogic principle.'" He also pertinently remarks that "like Lawrence, Bakhtin has an almost religious belief in the power of the novel to articulate the unseen and to recover the lost totality of experience." *D.H. Lawrence* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 57; 121n.

"Art-speech" is "between everything" at "that quick moment in time," in "the fourth dimension." In momentaneous relatednesses as focused "acts of attention" the artist "opens" self to "living chaos" (P 261). Thus it is that the self undertakes the project of selfhood or the making of integral identity as uniquely coherent utterance:

> The essential quality of poetry is that it makes a new effort of attention, and 'discovers' a new world within the known world. Man, and the animals, and the flowers, all live within a strange and forever surging cosmos. The chaos which we have got used to we call a cosmos. The unspeakable inner chaos of which we are composed we call consciousness, and mind, and even civilization. But it is, ultimately, chaos, lit up by visions, or not lit up by visions. . . . But man cannot live in chaos. . . . Man must wrap himself in a vision, make a house of apparent form and stability, fixity. In his terror of chaos he begins by putting up an umbrella between himself and the everlasting whirl. . . .
>
> Man fixes some wonderful erection of his own between himself and the wild chaos, and gradually goes bleached and stifled under his parasol. Then comes a poet, enemy of convention, and makes a slit in the umbrella; and lo! the glimpse of chaos is a vision, a window to the sun. (P 255)

"Art-speech" is a matter of momentaneous, incessant "acts of attention" or of dialogic interactions. The making of "art speech" is always simultaneously the unmaking of "old" relationships, the discarding of old words, or old ideological "umbrellas." The unfinalizability of reality obliges the individual to construct unique "truth," coherency or unity—

an "umbrella" of one's own—in the midst of animating chaos. In "true poetry," claims Lawrence, "there is a bursting of bubbles of reality, and the pang of extinction that is also liberation into the roving, uncaring chaos which is all we shall ever know of God" (P 259).

Clearly Lawrence possesses what Brian John calls the "vitalist vision" of the "dynamic fabricating self." In the Romantic vitalist conception, the "business of art" is to make "supreme fictions" that "construct an order out of the chaos of existence" (*Supreme* 13). However, Lawrence's "fabricating self" is not content simply to replace an old "supreme fiction" with a new. His dynamic dialogicality (or commitment to chaos) is such that he substitutes a "window" for an "umbrella." He wants through his utterance to remain open to a primary vitality. With messianic zeal he hopes to "wake" the reader (the "race") to "a nascent world of inner and outer suns," or to "a core" of reality which is "quintessentially chaotic and fierce with incongruities." Lawrence's "supreme fiction" does not attempt to be a static "construction" of reality at all, but rather a dynamically or dialogically conceived reality of incongruity, "dappledness," and change (P 262). The only constant in the "strange and forever surging cosmos" that Lawrence apprehends is the "fabricating self." Wedded "ultimately" to chaos, the self can be only partly known to itself; it must be "mixed" with chaotic and unknown elements, and always about to be. It must manifest Bakhtinian "noncoincidence."

For all Lawrence's commitment to questions and not answers, he holds one answer with great tenacity and enthusiasm, and that is the "answer" that the dialogic world view itself represents. The promise of liberation from "fixity," existential incarceration and psychic death, lies in a "vision" of chaos. Such a vision is a "window to the sun" (P 255). So too his "answer" to the project of selfhood perceived as "efforts of attention" and connection is never monologically or statically conceived. It is, rather, a matter of "answerability" itself, or of "responsiveness" to "living chaos" dialogically envisioned as a complex unity.

Lawrence is earnest and simple enough to believe that there is a "solution" to what he sees as humanity's deathward spiral, and that there is a way of redemption from mechanical death: "All we have to do is to accept the true chaos that we are . . . " (P 262). He is also complex enough to realise that the way of "chaos" is no simple (or simply chosen) way.

The liberation of chaos is the work of carnival laughter, as Bakhtin notes, and it is a deeply ambivalent activity. While Lawrence never phrases it in carnivalesque or Bakhtinian terms, at some level he is aware that the "business of art" is inherently the business of carnival. Laughter works by making and unmaking, crowning and "decrowning" provisional or momentaneous (and always incipiently monologic or authoritative) organizations of reality. The business of art lies in the expression of laughing

"betweennesses," or in the process of freeing chaotic potentialities, and of thereby creating fertilizing destructions. His personal symbol of the phoenix speaks to his awareness of the ambivalent—creative and destructive—nature of his purpose or "business." However simply and urgently he preaches the "solution" of redemptive "chaos," he is aware that to embrace "chaos" is to embrace creation *and* destruction: his "solution" remains poised between the two, and between being an answer and a non-answer to the salvation he seeks.

3. Lexicon of "Betweennesses"

The "betweennesses" or indistinctions that Lawrence's and Bakhtin's thought obliges one to confront are myriad. Both are, first of all, thinkers whose vision straddles the boundaries between being and becoming, chaos and creation. In the present chapter, a by no means exhaustive glossary of indistinctions suggestively reveals the extent of Bakhtin's and Lawrence's liminality or "betweenness." A summary review of their shared sense of "betweenness" yields the following list of terms and issues, to which are added comments in the form of a basic lexicon.

A. Being, becoming

a. Self, other

In Lawrence and Bakhtin the self is, if anything, more distinct from itself than it is from the other. That is, the self is "noncoincident" with the self in Bahktin, while for Lawrence "we are only the actors, we are never wholly the authors of our own deeds or works" (SCAL 26). Moreover, both writers are deeply concerned with kinds of inauthentic being in which there is, in Bakhtin's terms, "pretendership," or self-deception, or in which there are distinctions to be made between "I-for-myself" and "I-for-another" (AiG 28-31; KFP 95).

In *The Captain's Doll*, for example, Lawrence creates a comedy which pivots essentially upon the travails of the "pretender" self. Hepburn's "I-for-another" is so well-developed that it takes on a quasi-independent existence in the shape of a doll, over which the significant others—wife and mistress—grapple. At first, he is so removed from essential self-responsible identity as to be indifferent to the struggle over his pretender self, or selves (he is existentially incoherent or lazily dis-integrated). He learns to care even about the projections of himself, his "doll-likeness," those aspects of self that he has allowed to become appropriated by others. In short, he learns in the course of the successful comedy to become fully self-responsible in the work of identity, and never to delegate to another, especially in

marriage, the essential, incessant, collaborative work of self-definition or becoming.

A "true self" for Lawrence and Bakhtin is always "yet-to-be" (MB 195). Thus, in the collaborative project of selfhood, "true self" dynamically shares an overlapping identity (a subset of itself) with the other, and with otherness. So Hepburn, for example, learns. Self and other are more indistinct or joined in work than are self and self, with whom it is more difficult to enter into cooperative effort or dialogic conversation. Between self and self it is hard not to "pretend"—"one Hamletises" or enters into the monologue of soliloquy, as Lawrence puts it (WL 187).

Self and other have a conjoined (not merged) identity in dialogic thought: "To be means to be for another, and through the other for oneself. A person has no sovereign internal territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself he looks *into the eyes of another* or *with the eyes of another*" (TRDB 287).

b. Question, answer

The dialogic process by which self and other undertake the work of identity is profoundly interrogative. Such speech acts involve addressivity and responsivity. In them the speaker or actor has "responsibility" in the full sense of the term. The dialogic word in "living conversation" is primarily a question-word, "directly, blatantly oriented toward a future answering-word: it provokes an answer,

anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. . . . Such is the situation in any living dialogue" (DiN 280). At the heart of dialogism is the understanding that question and answer are dynamically joined: "any response gives rise to a new question" (MHS 168). Question and answer define an unfinalizable (hence "living") dynamic of consciousness.

In Lawrence the dialogic or interrogative capability of a character is the surest measure of worth. Those characters capable of the dialogic word (which is interrogative, searching, "open" or innocent, cooperative, magnanimous), characters such as Ursula and Birkin, engage in vivid, exploratory, unfinalizable conversation or "true" dialogue, while characters such as Loerke or Gudrun do not.

For Gudrun, Loerke, Mrs. Hepburn, Mrs. Witt, and numerous more or less unsympathetic characters, question and answer are categorically distinct, whereas for the dialogic imagination, "question and answer are not logical relations (categories)" (MHS 168). Lawrence, as a novelistic principle, tries not to be narrowly judgemental of his characters. However, he has difficulty overlooking the "sin" of anti-dialogicality: Gudrun's "questions and answers" are nearly always "categorically distinct." She "finishes off" conversation the way she "finishes off" Gerald. In that respect she is the villainess of Lawrence's most dialogic novel.

c. Knower, known

Bakhtin's and Lawrence's epistemology is characterized by unfinalizability, active uncertainty, dynamic indistinction between what is known and what is about to be known (and, as soon as "known" or fixed, lost to "living" or momentaneous knowledge). Their concern is only with "living" knowledge, or that "science" which is connected to the "unknown" or unfinalizable element of language and the human world. Just as self is never entirely coincident with self, so too self can never be wholly commensurate with dialogic knowledge, or wholly in possession of a "complete" (finalized) truth. Positive knowledge in dialogism is actively incomplete. Fixed "truth" is monologic, absolutist, totalitarian. It is the death of knowledge.

All certainty is suspect in the world of dialogically conceived "chaotic" creativity. Moreover, the individual (much less the isolated ego) can never personally "possess" knowledge, any more than the subject can wholly or permanently possess self. As Lawrence declares, "You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable *ego* of the character" (CL 2 183). Meaning as wholeness or integral coherency is a momentaneous, contextual, collaborative effort. Knowledge is always a shared unfinalizable task. It is never a given, never a possession of the "stable ego." Lawrence's abhorrence of intellectuals such as Hermione and so many others in his work closely approximates Bakhtin's attitudes to the "intelligentsia" of his time and place. Both

thinkers direct definite animus against "possessors" of "knowledge" in "compressed tabloids" (WL 86).

d. Conscious, unconscious

Bakhtin's and Lawrence's dialogism utterly blurs ordinary distinctions between conscious and unconscious. Both writers endeavour to give consciousness maximum depth and height. "At the maximum of our imagination, we are religious," claims Lawrence, and he nearly always endeavours to write at that religious maximum, and from a fully unified conception of consciousness (P 559). For Bakhtin, similarly, complex dialogic utterance derives from a fully engaged consciousness. His contention is that "thinkers turn to an unconscious when they have an extraordinarily impoverished idea of consciousness" (MB 175). He finds "consciousness more terrifying than any unconscious complexes" (TRDB 288). Both thinkers attempt to root consciousness in "the primordial origins of existence," or in the intrinsically purposeful creative "urge" or "mess" itself (TRDB 297). Both in this regard sustain a lifelong debate with Freud.

B. Unity, multiplicity

a. Beauty, mess

Chaos is immanent in existence. "Soul" connects the individual who is not an "isolated ego" (incapable of spontaneity) to chaos, according to Lawrence. In these

soulful matters, his belief is traditional, however untraditional the context, or the shapes his fictions take. Bakhtin in his understanding of unfinalizable potentiality or "abundance" as immanent in the world and in language approximates Lawrence's conception of chaos. For both dialogicians "mess" is intrinsically purposeful; it is responsive to "form-shaping ideologies," projects of selfhood, or novelistic enterprises. "Mess" is primordial vitality, carnival abundance itself. It is "good," beautiful, and not to be forsworn.

b. Unique, prosaic

Everyday reality, every moment's reality more precisely, is uniquely valuable in dialogism. The immanence of the unfinalizable surplus of individuality (as task) in each moment creates a strong arrow of time, or an intense contextuality in dialogism's world view. If disorder is the norm and order the exception, then every moment is uniquely busy with the project of integrity, of purposeful collaborative effort.

Lawrence has the perfectly novelistic or prosaic valuation of the quotidian:

> "A thing isn't life just because somebody does it. . . . By life, we mean something that gleams, that has the fourth-dimensional quality. If the bank clerk feels really piquant about his hat, if he establishes a lively relation with it, and goes out of the shop with the new straw on his head, a changed man, be-aureoled, then that is life." (P 530-31)

The novel, he says famously, is the "one bright book of life" (P 535). "Gleam" is a matter of connection to the entire span of consciousness at any moment.

"Gleam" (or the "truth" of utterance), artistic or otherwise, has, in dialogism, no necessary connection to the extraordinary. For example, Lawrence finds Raskolnikov's murder of the old woman in *Crime and Punishment* "actual" enough, but "never quite real." The extraordinary murder "gleams" less for him than the buying of a hat might do in another novelistic context. Simply for an event to be out of the ordinary is not sufficient to make it significant, ontologically considered, or "gleaming."

c. Animate, inanimate

Dialogism is a world view of interconnected individualities, in which universal addressivity and receptivity are crucial. Without such a conception of interanimacy or potential for connection, there is no possibility of unity in multiplicity, or of integral consciousness. As Lawrence indicates, one shapes one's world, and connects it to others, in the momentaneous relatednesses that the individual effects ("Morality and the Novel").

Thus dialogism makes no categorical (or incommunicable) distinctions between human consciousness and that of "a stone" or "trees and grass" in their potential

for addressivity and responsivity. As Bakhtin notes, "perhaps not only animals, but trees and grass also witness and judge" (N 70-71 137). For Lawrence, simply, "the whole thing [the cosmos] was alive" (EP 82).

d. Past, present; Living, dead

Interanimating connectedness originates in the "creative nucleus," according to dialogism. "Chronotopes" or heterogeneous space-time zones are "creatively rejuvenating." "The creative nucleus of the personality . . . is immortal," claims Bakhtin (MHS 168). Lawrence for his part always imagined himself in dialogue with "the only riches, the great souls" (SCAL 187), while Bakhtin affirms: "A meeting with a great human being, as something that determines, obligates, and unites—this is the highest moment of understanding" (N 70-71, 142).

In this regard, it is easy to imagine both men being rather bored with each other at this very moment. Contentious souls, each might look in this study for more resistance from the other than the other in good conscience can provide. Lawrence in particular has a constitutional indisposition to too much agreement.

C Laughter, wisdom

Both writers are adherents of "serious laughter." Both hold to an inherently "gay" or affirmative world view, a

vision of carnival. They are abundantly, primally positive. Their laughter (the kind that Bakhtin affirms in his study of carnival and of the grotesque in *Rabelais*) is a conjunction of the "angelic" (as active affirmation) and of the "demonic" (as "decrowning" or celebratory liberation of the forces of chaos). For both, laughter serves the forces of a chaotically conceived vision of life. All true dialogic contexts are serious—and gay.

"They Were Glad. . . . They Laughed." The Shape of Openness in *Women in Love*

> It seems to me there is a whole world of knowledge to forsake, a new, deeper, lower one to *entamer*. . . . The old world must burst, the underworld must be open and whole, new world. [sic]
>
> D. H. Lawrence (CL 3, 180)

> The study of culture (or some area of it) at the level of system and at the higher level of organic unity: open, becoming, unresolved and unpredetermined, capable of death and renewal, transcending itself, that is, exceeding its own boundaries.
>
> M. M. Bakhtin (N70-71, 135)

> Without *one's own* questions one cannot creatively understand anything other or foreign (but, of course, the questions must be serious and sincere). Such a dialogic encounter . . . does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched.
>
> M. M. Bakhtin (RQ 7)

1. "Transcending Itself"

Not only is *Women in Love* open-ended or unresolved, it is *about* its open-endedness or unfinalizability. In methods and meanings, in informing depths and explicit surfaces, *Women in Love* is dialogic. And the shape of its dialogicality or openness is interrogative. The novel engages the reader in a movement of thought from the known to (or toward) the unknown; it manifests and provokes future-

oriented seeking, in which each response "gives rise to a new question."

In other words, the "messiness" by which *Women in Love* proceeds is deliberate. Not only does the novel pose "messy" questions that spill out over the rim of its own formal resolutions or closures; it also, more significantly, poses questions that, in their egregious naïveté, gather all the negative capability at their disposal in an effort to "break a way through" the known (the "actual," the "finalized") to the unknown or "new world," where all things are both "open" and "whole"—where all things exist in an "underworld" of "organic unity."

Such a unified "underworld" has the value of being, in Bakhtin's words, "open, becoming, unresolved and unpredetermined, capable of death and renewal, transcending itself, that is, exceeding its own boundaries." In a word, *Women in Love*'s dialogism finds mess (as inherent potentiality) beautiful. It finds such mess both "open" and "whole." Dialogic mess has the intrinsically purposive "organic" shape of unfinalizability. Birkin, for instance, in the "project" of selfhood, wants "to get right, at the really growing part of me." He is afraid that he "can't." The essential nature of his appeal to Ursula, who is a "queen" of becoming, is to help him in the project of becoming himself, or of becoming both "open" and "whole."[1]

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[1]Birkin worships Ursula. He is apt to be at her "beck and call" (WL 258, 369).

In effect, on the ontological plane, Birkin asks Ursula, by means of her abundance of potentiality, to share and to shape, but certainly not to obliterate, his own (WL 125, 130).

Women in Love's newness—the transitional nature of its expression—is such that there is a range of character types, a range that moves from "old stable egos," particularly of the more minor characters such as Sir Joshua, Alexander Roddice, Thomas Crich, Hermione and the like, to the unfinalizable, "open" or messy characters of Ursula and Birkin (CL 2, 183). Gudrun and Gerald are interesting "betweennesses," in that they are closed, finalizable (or "old stable") *and* complex. That is, they seem capable of extended conversation, if not quite of intersubjective dialogue or collaborative connection, with the protean or positively dialogic Ursula and Birkin. (Birkin in this regard extends the offer of "love," or of dialogic intersubjectivity, to Gerald, only to be rejected: "'I've loved you as well as Gudrun, don't forget,' said Birkin bitterly" [WL 440].) Gudrun and Gerald at times seem capable of dialogue, but ultimately (at least with each other) they are not. How and why this is the case is the substance of their "barren tragedy." On account of their "betweenness," if for no other reason, Gudrun and Gerald will reward future investigation.

The new, unstable egos of Ursula and Birkin require a new conception of character in the novel, not only in the novel of romance, but in the *bildungsroman* as well, at least

as Lawrence knew it. Of an earlier version of *Women in Love* ("The Sisters"), Lawrence remarks that by comparison to *Sons and Lovers*, it is "written in another language almost" (CL 2, 132). His evolving language is profoundly dialogic, questioning, and open-ended. Thus, all characters minor or major in *Women in Love* have, at the core of their "imperatives of existence," a question that spans the heights and depths of their individual consciousnesses.

Kundera, in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, reveals the genesis of his principal character, Tomas, as follows:

> I have been thinking about Tomas for many years. But only in the light of these reflections did I see him clearly. I saw him standing at the window of his flat and looking across at the opposite walls, not knowing what to do. . . . He looked out over the courtyard at the opposite walls, seeking an answer. (*Unbearable* 6-7)

The "imperative" of Tomas's existence, his "existential code," is this "seeking" of a rather open-ended or naïve "answer" to the question of his existence. As such he is the prototypical hero of the interrogative novel.[2] All characters in *Women in Love* (except the most minor, such as Sir Joshua) are more or less sincerely seeking an answer to the question of their existences. Their questions, from the Bakhtinian perspective, become the "form-shaping ideologies" of their

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[2]Bakhtin traces the origins of the dialogic novel to such interrogative genres as the Socratic dialogues and the Menippean satires. The Menippea are, he claims, the "genre of 'ultimate questions'" (PDP 115).

individual consciousnesses, and, by being so, are the plastic or evolving means of their identification. Characters are defined by the questions they ask. For example, the four principal characters pose these self-shaping queries:

(1) "'How much do you love me?'" (Gudrun, WL 442)

(2) "'What *do* women want, at the bottom?'" (Gerald, WL 428)

(3) "'Do you really love me?'" (Ursula, WL 251)

(4) "Is our day of creative life finished?" (Birkin, WL 254)

In large measure, my analysis of the novel will revolve around these characters and the issues that their identifying questions raise. "Character" in this conception is essentially a question personified, one that is made to walk and talk, as it were, within the intersecting chronotopes or "time-space" zones of the novel. Such ambulatory interrogations then either connect or fail to connect with other characters-as-questions in "living conversation." Correspondingly, such characters either connect or fail to connect with the "deep source" within—with, that is, the "open," "whole" underworld or creative chaos within self that sometimes in Lawrence goes by the name of "soul" (CL 3, 180). The factor determining connection (or integrity as "open unity") is whether the questions asked of self and of other are (in Bakhtin's terms) "serious and sincere."

Naturally, characters-as-questions have varying degrees of openness or inclusiveness about them. In this sense *Women in Love*'s shape resembles nested Russian dolls of interrogation, with Gudrun's (of the four major characters) being the smallest and most enclosed: her questioning, like her artwork, is incisive, or "savage carving" (WL 94). She "likes little things," and indeed generally Gudrun "likes to look through the wrong end of the opera glasses, and see the world that way" (WL 39). The largest and most encompassing interrogative "doll" in this respect is of course Birkin's. Like his author, he often takes it upon himself to speak "for the race." Ursula's characteristic, repeatedly asked question (Birkin calls it her "war-cry"), of "'Do you really love me?'" is more narrowly self-centered than Birkin's, but it may also be more open than he is to hope and futurity.

Gerald, too, repeatedly asks his defining question. But as a question it reveals its own limitations of perspective (Gudrun aptly calls Gerald *"borné"*) rather than a truly dialogic desire to transcend itself, "exceeding its own boundaries" (N70-71 135). In this regard Gudrun's self-revealing "'How much do you love me?'" is even more closed than Gerald's question. Indeed, it is entrapping. Gudrun's question mirrors Ursula's comparatively open one superficially, only to expose itself finally (or, contrary to Gudrun's deepest proclivities, to "give itself away") as purely rhetorical, and a murderous trap for Gerald. Her question is

a set-up for "'Try to love me a little more, and to want me a little less,'" by which Gudrun effectively emasculates Gerald (WL 443).

In such a manner *Women in Love* creates a hierarchy of questions that proceed from the neatly closed (Gudrun's) to the messily open (Birkin's). In large part interrogation forms the novel's "open totality." Thus in the dialogic conception, shape is not static, it is driven by an interrogative dynamic of doubt. Character may not conform to Freudian preconceptions of the "ego." Indeed, principal characters in Lawrence almost certainly will not conform to Freudian models of identity, given his Bakhtinian opposition to Freud's "monologic" (and "soulless") presuppositions. Ultimately Lawrence grants nothing to Freud. Lawrence never "presumes an *ego* to feel with" (CL 2, 183). In the dialogic novel characters as interrogative imperatives exist in "time-space" zones or "chronotopes" of their own making or choosing. Challenges facing characters are fundamentally moral; they are challenges of and to freedom. Such challenges are not "psychological" in any reductive or deterministic sense. As Lawrence on more than one occasion notes, his artistic concerns are essentially "moral." (See in its entirety, for example, his "Morality and the Novel.") Bakhtinian dialogism similarly grants vast tracts of freedom or openness of choice to the individual. In its view, as in Lawrence's, "there are no alibis for being" (KFP 112, 119).

In such an ethical conception the individual has interrogative powers in the broadest sense. The individual has the power to seek solutions, and by so doing to embark upon the "project" of individual identity. That, as Bakhtin remarks, "any response gives rise to a new question," does not empty the seeking of meaning. Rather, in Lawrence's terms, it makes the seeker an affirmative "thought-adventurer," shaping time and space, making a human world both microcosmically and macrocosmically (in "great time") as one goes (MHS 168). Unfinalizable interrogation is a constituent element of discourse and character in the dialogic imagination.

Moreover, the concatenation of open-ended questions that results is not simply the reverberations or echoings of the same unanswered or unanswerable questions rumbling down the long corridor of the novel. On the contrary, dialogically unfinalizable questions distinguish themselves by their difference from Kierkegaard's "great master of irony," called "Echo," where "each time I wish to say something there is another who says it at the very same moment. It is as though I *thought double*. . . ." Kierkegaard's parodic Echo empties words of meaning by its doubly voiced sameness, or what Bakhtin might call its reverberating monologism. Kierkegaard addresses Echo as "you who parody in yourself the highest and deepest on

earth: the word which created the world, since you merely give the contour, not the fullness."[3]

For dialogism, unfinalizable interrogation is the "fullness"; it is the polyvocal discourse of *other* voices, or of voices as othernesses; there is duality and multiplicity, not echoing sameness, in dialogism's interrogative discourse. Discourse in the dialogic conception gives both Kierkegaardian "contour" and "fullness" to the "world" and its novelistic expression.

The inexhaustible interrogative nature of discourse makes possible the positivity or "fullness" of an intersubjective world, a world in which questioning need not (though it might) separate or isolate individual consciousnesses, but rather connects subjectivities in reciprocal efforts of self-realization. Such "serious and sincere" (or dialogic) questions shape the "open totality" of culture and of its complex expression in the novel (RQ 5-7). In fact, in one sense *Women in Love* is in its totality a graphic illustration of two diametrically opposed sorts of questions. There is, on the one hand, the Gudrunesque question as a mode of satiric distancing of self from self and of self from other. Gudrun's characteristic interrogations are "alibis for being" and "savage carving" of the emptying kind. On the other hand, there are the egregiously open, vulnerable, messy dialogic questions of Ursula and Birkin.

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[3]Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony,* trans. Lee M. Capel (New York: Harper, 1965) 23.

Lawrence is acutely aware that not all questions are dialogic; not all uses of language are affirmative in the Bakhtinian sense. By means of its dynamic of doubt, *Women in Love* expresses a fundamentally affirmative vision of the nature of discourse and of the world that such discourse calls into being, while at the same time it provides the necessary qualifications and refinements that intelligence and prosaic experience demand. Dialogic unfinalizability, for instance, may be the "truth" about discourse. It need not, however, be true of every demonstrable or conceivable use of discourse. Moreover, it may not be the preferred use of discourse in a given chronotope. *Women in Love* raises the spectre that in the "actual world" dialogism may be an endangered species of expression.

Perhaps one reason why the novel has seemed contradictory and demanding to many readers is because it includes more than one kind of discourse, and more than one "world." The world that Ursula and Birkin collaborate in making is not the world of Breadalby, Shortlands or Loerke's mountain-top. Characters are embedded in their own "time-space zones"; their language is nominally English, yet heteroglossia and not a unitary language prevails. Chronotopes compete in *Women in Love*, and it is from this dialogic strife that unity emerges. Before one engages character and chronotope in their special "density and concreteness" (FTC 250), it is useful to introduce Bakhtin's conception of chronotopicity in some detail.

2. Competing Chronotopes

For both Lawrence and Bakhtin, the novel is the ideal forum for exploring the complex moral intersubjectivities of personality and of language itself. The novel does so prosaically, by dramatically enacting or polyphonically orchestrating "living" conversation between its characters (or the "experimental selves" of the "primary author"). Better to get at the distinctly un-monologic unity inherent in the dialogic novel's multiplicity, Bakhtin coins the term "chronotope." The chronotopic conception is a means of exploring the special "density and concreteness" of the narrative form (FTC 250). Bakhtin has the Blakean (and Lawrencian) awareness that truth exists in "minutely organized particulars."[4] "Chronotope" refers to the "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (FTC 84).

The concept of chronotopicity in Bakhtin's thinking has a strong and acknowledged indebtedness to Einstein's relativity theory (FTC 84). Character as "zone" is itself intrinsically chronotopic, in that individual character is both distinct and potentially interrelated (dialogically interrelated or connected by the give and take of interrogative conversation) to other characters.

One reason why a novel such as *Women in Love* does not manifest the "finish" or closure typical of the genre of

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[4]William Blake, *Poetry and Prose*, "Jerusalem," Chapter 2, 192.

prosaic romance is that it is made up of competing chronotopes. Typical interest in plot or in psychological niceties takes a back seat to interrogative and chronotopic concerns of the sort that persuade Bakhtin to consider himself a "philosophical anthropologist," and Lawrence to consider himself, messianically, a writer "for the race." For similarly "messy" motives *Women in Love* is explicitly experimental; Lawrence expresses no interest in "creating vivid scenes" or in "plot" (CL 2, 142-43). In this respect *Women in Love*'s allusions to Austen and Meredith subtly underscore its innovativeness or difference in kind. Even its title in this sense is an ironic "sideways glance" at conventional romantic expectations on the reader's part. Contrary to generic presuppositions, *Women in Love* is not simply a festive comedy; rather, it circumscribes an interrogative field—it has the shape of "open totality."

Put broadly, *Women in Love* has affinities to the genre of Socratic dialogue as well as to that of prosaic romance. In significant respects, *Women in Love* remains closer to its Socratic roots than to more immediate generic precursors. For example, fully two-thirds of its chapters take a kind of Socratic disputation as their informing principle. Instead of the primacy of plot and of the study of character as "old stable egos," there is the primacy of minutely organized—chronotopically organized—oppositions of individual consciousnesses (or Bakhtinian "voices") as questions.

Like other Bakhtinian concepts, chronotopicity proves to be both self-evident and surprising in its ramifications. For Bakhtin there are at least four reasons why the special "density and concreteness" of the dialogic novel requires a kind of Einsteinian theory of prosaic relativity, or a theory of chronotopicity:

(1) As in relativistic physics, time and space in the novel are not separate; they are "intrinsically interconnected." In each chronotope there is a "fused" sense of time and space. It is a falsifying abstraction to separate the two. If one were to apply this descriptive clue to *Women in Love*, one would see that the chronotope that Gudrun and Gerald inhabit has as its space the entire "actual" world of the novel; its space extends from mine to mountain-top, and it is governed by mechanical-materialistic principles. Correspondingly, its sense of time is mechanical, or "Newtonian," and distorting. Time and space are "fused" in the Gudrun-Gerald chronotope of "actuality." Thus Gudrun contemplates the "wheels within wheels of people—it makes one's head tick like a clock, with a very madness of dead mechanical monotony and meaninglessness. How I *hate* life, how I hate it. How I hate the Geralds, that they can offer one nothing else" (WL 464).

Together with Gerald, Gudrun is constrained by a chronotopic actuality which is, in fact, an anachronism, a Newtonian distortion of the "real" or open (unfinalizable)

dialogic time experienced by the lovers Ursula and Birkin, in which the moment is both momentaneous (or evolving) and eternal. The dialogic imagination, like the dialogic lovers Ursula and Birkin, can see infinity in a grain of (Blakean) sand. And that infinity is not a mechanical, arithmetic progression of repeatable samenesses, as it is for Gudrun. On the contrary, the "true" lovers in their achieved "eternal" or timeless moments of commingled being, experience the dialogic virtues of unfinalizability, surprise, wholeness, and the like (WL 309-20).

So too the "real" or "achieved" world of Ursula and Birkin is at the same time both anywhere in the "actual" world of the novel (the world of mines and mountain-tops), and "nowhere" (Birkin's professed destination for their future together [WL 315].) In other words, Ursula and Birkin are both in and out of time and in and out of place. Their "true" or dialogic chronotope is both infinite (in a "fused" sense of space and time) and immanently potential in all of the separate realities or distinct chronotopes that the novel describes. Ursula's and Birkin's achievement of "being" (being viewed as incessant becoming) gives them the freedom to wander the face of the actual time-space of the novel, to move in and out, up and down, forward and backward, but mostly *away* from the fixity, pastness, and deadness that the "actual" world is perceived as manifesting. Thus, both in Gudrun and Gerald's and in Ursula and Birkin's

cases, "time-space" is a fused, comprehensive, distinct totality.

The chronotope, that is, is a *more* or *less* distinct totality. Birkin wants to invite others to join him and Ursula in their "new heaven." (Gudrun never for a moment enters into Birkin's enthusiasms; she provides the dialogic counterpoint to Birkin's innocence by repeatedly mocking "Rupert's Blessed Isles," or "le paradis!" [WL 438, 291].) However, it is unclear to Ursula (not to mention Gudrun, who has her negative certainties all along) that Birkin's utopian enthusiasm is advisable, or even possible. Whether Ursula and Birkin's "heaven" is open to others or not—whether its dialogicality extends to others, such as Gerald—remains one of the novel's major unresolved interrogations.

Indeed, part of the novel's debilitating dependence upon the notion of "strangeness" (and its overuse of the word) may be due to its sense that certain chronotopes may be exclusive of each other—each seems "strange" to the other.[5] To the extent that *Women in Love* entertains belief in the complete exclusivity of distinct chronotopes (those, for example, inhabited respectively by Birkin and Gerald), it doubts the range and importance of its own ultimate affirmations of openness or dialogue. Perhaps the greatest or most messy question that informs *Women in Love* is exactly the question of the future of the dialogic imagination

[5]"Strange" and its synonyms appear over three hundred times in the novel, by the count of a colleague, Michael Coyle.

itself. Birkin asks: "Is our day of creative life finished?" when he contemplates the "barren tragedy" of Gerald's killing alienation and final disbelief. "Creative life" here has the complete force of a Bakhtinian emphasis on "living" or unfinalizable conversation. Why, Birkin essentially asks himself, does Gerald reject his (dialogic) offer of "love," or of "living" collaboration and intersubjectivity in the "project" of becoming? Is the dialogic faith itself an illusion or anachronism?

(2) Bakhtin understands Einstein's theory of relativity to allow for a variety of senses of time and space to be simultaneously available. To be available is not necessarily to be accessible to all other time-spaces. Newtonian time-space may govern one sphere, while other spheres, such as those of subatomic particles, may be governed by quite another chronotope. The universe for Bakhtin, in brief, may be "heterochronous." *Women in Love*'s universe is distinctly heterochronic, in ways that my study hopes cumulatively to demonstrate. For instance, the Gudrun-Gerald chronotope obeys Newtonian rules of time and space, while Ursula-Birkin's obeys Einsteinian-relativistic or "dialogic" rules.

A profound heterochronicity is essential to the Lawrencian world view, as it is (as Bakhtin acknowledges) to other novelists of emergence such as Goethe. (Bakhtin deals extensively with Goethe's heterochronicity in "The *Bildungsroman*" fragment [BSHR 25-54].) Part of the

beautiful messiness of the novel of becoming is that it has a special appreciation for the heterochronicity of its world. Lawrence's pithy appreciation of the novel's heterochronic virtues warrants reiteration here: "The novel is the highest example of subtle inter-relatedness that man has discovered. Everything is true in its own time, place, circumstance, and untrue outside of its own place, time, circumstance" (P 528).

That is, what is true for Birkin and Ursula, the truth of "love" as "living" conversation, the truth of dialogic unfinalizability and the reality of hope, is for Gudrun and Gerald untrue (or at least inaccessible to them). The one's truth does not contradict the other's in some reduced Hegelian dialectical sense of contradiction as antithesis. Rather, the truths of each are distinctly *other*. They exist in distinct chronotopes. This is not to imply (as some relativistic criticism has done) that the "truths" of distinct chronotopes are "equally valid." They are not, principally because for Lawrence and Bakhtin chronotopes have a historical dimension. There are chronotopes that are "future-oriented," or intrinsically dialogic, and there are those which are "backward-oriented," or "finished" burdens of the past. Each chronotope may have its own arrow of time, and purely "backward" chronotopes, those unconnected to the possibility of future growth and change, may have a negative value.

(3) Thus chronotopes, like the genres they inform, have a historical dimension and a unique value. Prior chronotopes can live on in the present, as does the "Newtonian," for example, in Gudrun and Gerald's sense of the real. Pastnesses "can cling on" to the present and not "let go": "'I don't mind about the dead . . . once they are dead. The worst of it is, they cling on to the living, and won't let go'" (WL 185). Shortlands' arrow of time points backwards towards the already "finished" and dead. Gerald, who belongs to its world, cannot disemburden himself of the memory of the brother whom he has accidentally murdered. His sister Diana causes the death of the young doctor who tries to rescue her from drowning by clinging to him. Even in life, Birkin tells Ursula, Diana was a "negated thing." Her life "belongs to death" (WL 185-6). Shortlands' present is cluttered with the detritus of the past; it is a repository of outmoded ways of thinking and being. Like Breadalby's, its contemporaneity becomes a kind of "pastness" surviving in the present.

Birkin associates "home" or England with this "pastness" or deadness, and strenuously seeks to escape it. The novel's present is complex and layered. It has the kind of "multitemporality" Bakhtin attributes to the dialogic imagination, and in particular to Goethe's novels of becoming, where "contemporaneity . . . is revealed as an essential multitemporality: as remnants or relics of various

stages and formations of the past and as rudiments of stages in the more or less distant future" (SG 28).

In this respect the dialogic novel can be viewed as an "open totality" that includes or encompasses "pastnesses" or anachronistic chronotopes within itself. As in Haeckle's theory of recapitulation in the biological sciences, where the embryo recapitulates prior evolutionary stages of the species ("ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"), the "multitemporal" novel includes in embryo the precursors it supersedes. Thus in *Women in Love* each chronotope has clinging to it the "stylistic aura" of characteristic literary forms (AiG 87-8). Breadalby has the aura of Austen and Meredith; Gudrun and Gerald's "actual" or present world retains the aura of several static or "finalized" generic forms, such as faddish primitivism, melodrama, and tragedy (Gerald's is a "barren tragedy"). In this regard, Loerke's mountain-top is a chronotope of isolated extremity and of futurity, envisioned as a monologic dystopia. His "stylistic aura" is the renegade iconoclasm of what from the contemporary vantage point appears to be a kind of formalist *post*-modernism.

Chronotopes are more than vestigial remnants of former styles and times, however. Breadalby, for example, has an active internal coherence—it "works" as a world and as a world view—and yet it is, in the novel's terms, "past": "One wanted to swoon in the by-gone perfection of it all" (WL 100). So too is the chair that Ursula and Birkin first

decide to purchase, and then discard, an encumbrance of the past, and of all that England (and English domesticity) represents and oppresses them by. The chair, as a complete utterance or coherent speech-act, is an active anachronism. It has the capacity to be actively entrapping or beguiling (as does Breadalby and its static beauty) in the present: "What a snare and a delusion, this beauty of static things," Birkin thinks of Breadalby (WL 97). Of the chair he muses:

> 'My beloved country—it had something to express even when it made that chair.' . . . 'When I see that clear, beautiful chair, and I think of England, even Jane Austen's England—it had living thoughts to enfold even then, and pure happiness in unfolding them. And now, we can only fish among the rubbish heaps for the remnants of their old expression.' (WL 355)

As distinct world views, and because of their temporal dimension, chronotopes may dispute (or agree with) each other. That is, the relation of chronotopes to each other in itself "may be dialogic" (MB 369). While Bakhtin clearly sees the panorama of cultural (and particularly novelistic) expression as a carnival of competing chronotopes, it is unclear whether he ever envisioned a novel which is as thoroughly dialogic in the competition of distinct chronotopes within *itself* as is *Women in Love*. Hermione tries to entrap Birkin in her world. He and Ursula struggle to break away. Birkin tries to free Gerald from the deadening confines of Shortlands and its mentality, and so on. Strenuous competition between chronotopes is an

organizing principle in the novel, and one to which this study will need to return.

(4) Chronotopes may not so much be visible in activity as they are the "*ground* for activity" (MB 369). The chronotope "is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belong the meaning that shapes narrative" (FTC 250). "Because for Bakhtin all meaning entails evaluation, chronotopes define parameters of value" (MB 369). Despite persistent confusion in this matter in relativistic Bakhtinians such as Chen, not all points of view and the chronotopes in which they are grounded are "equally valid" in dialogic interpretation.

In *Women in Love*'s own frame of reference, Hermione's conception of truth and beauty (or anything else) is not just as valid as Ursula's or Birkin's. Between and within chronotopes there is the possibility of lesser and greater connection to the "deep source" and authenticity. At some level Bakhtin and Lawrence share a more or less naïve conviction (or "primal positivity") that the "really real" is purely accessible to dialogic imaginations (imaginations of their own sort), and from this belief follows a hierarchy of values.

3. Dialogic Multiplicity

When exploring the principal characters of *Women in Love* and the self-defining interrogations of each, one should keep in mind that each set of characters defines a "zone" or chronotope that may itself develop in a dialogic relation with others. Thus, "true" or Bakhtinian-Lawrencian dialogue posits the possibility of dialogic interactions on several planes. It is not possible for this study to address all of the ways in which characters (as zones, or as microcosmic "form-shaping ideologies" of the chronotopes they inhabit) may converse dialogically with each other, or, indeed, to explore all of the planes on which dialogue occurs in the complex unified utterance that *Women in Love* represents. If one were even to begin to describe the multiple planes on which dialogue in Bakhtin's sense occurs in the novel, it might be productive to investigate dialogue in the following contexts.

(1) *There is dialogue within self,* or the Yeatsian "dialogue of self and soul," where "soul" is impulsive or spontaneous connection to a "deep source" or a creative chaos of becoming.

(2) *There is dialogue between self and other within chronotopes,* such as that between Ursula and Birkin, or Gudrun and Gerald.

(3) *There is dialogue (or the possibility of dialogue) between chronotopes.* There is, for example, dialogic interaction between the "actual" or static world of Gudrun and Gerald (which extends from mine to mountain-top), and the "really real" or dynamic world inhabited by Ursula and Birkin. In some ways the more interesting conversations in the novel are interchronotopic, such as those between Gudrun and Ursula, or between Gerald and Birkin. In inter-chronotopic exchanges, tensions between the genuine need to know (the vivid presence of what is unknown or "strange" about the other) and the incomprehensions, the witting (and unwitting) cross-purposes of truly alien speech, are at their height. Curiously, malice and genuine threat to the other seem more commonly aspects of intrachronotopic conversation than of interchronotopic ones. Gudrun mocks Birkin, but she does him no lasting harm (indeed, in the final "Pompadour" scene, Gudrun proves a friend to Birkin). By contrast, she eviscerates Gerald. Proximity is obviously dangerous within the chronotopic zone.

Interchronotopic conversation has the potential to reveal surprising connections and disconnections of understanding and confusion, the quick lights and darknesses of vivid conversation, though of course it always remains an open question whether such conversations attain the level of intersubjectivity suggestive of true dialogicality. Gudrun's and Ursula's discussion of marriage, which begins the novel, for example, is a *locus classicus* of

interchronotopicity. The question is of marriage: "'Ursula . . . 'don't you *really want* to get married?'" (WL 7).

The reciprocal cross-examination between the sisters is vigorous and candid on both sides; there are at least three dozen questions and responses exchanged. Yet Gudrun, despite her desperate need to test her own entrapping disillusionments about marriage, finds five times that her interrogations themselves inadvertently create "pauses," "closings," and finally the "end" to discussion. Ursula's nearly as numerous questions create only one "pause." Gudrun's queries are categorically distinct from the answers she receives or anticipates. Hence there are five dramatically significant "voids" or "terrifying chasm[s]" in their brief confabulation (WL 10).

By contrast, Ursula's gestures (verbal and otherwise) manifest "sensitive expectancy" (WL 8). Her "expectancy" is itself dialogic or unfinalizable, imbued with "an intimation of something yet to come" (WL 9). Ursula by her very being invites openness of response. Her regal largess implies the dialogic values of receptivity and addressivity. In conversation with Ursula "any response gives rise to a new question" (MHS 168). Dialogicality in such pure and expansive form, when confronted by the undialogic (defensive, disillusioned, ironical) need-to-closure in Gudrun, makes for a graphic conversational mixture. What meanings truly get delivered and received between the chronotopically (or constitutionally) distinct sisters remains

an open question. It is precisely the one that begins the novel.

(4) *There is dialogue between individual chronotopes embedded within the novel, and the novel's own chronotope.* Such dialogue may take the form of parody of the sort represented by Halliday's drunken intoning of the Birkin-Lawrence credo: "'But surely there is in you also, somewhere, the living desire for positive creation, relationships in ultimate faith, when all this process of active corruption . . . is transcended, and more or less finished—'." To these words of Birkin, Halliday adds parodically, "'Surely . . . surely goodness and mercy hath followed me all the days of my life—'" (WL 383-4).

The "faith" Halliday so savagely mocks—by alluding to its Biblical overtones or its presumption of authority—is the dialogic faith in unfinalizability itself, which is of course the affirmative impetus or "form-shaping ideology" of *Women in Love* as a whole: "'Oh, isn't it beautiful! I love reading it! I believe it has cured my hiccup!' squealed Halliday" (WL 383). Halliday is not here simply referring to his own response to Birkin's absurdly solemn letter; he is also anticipating the response to *Women in Love* by its "knowing" or worldly-wise reader.

The dialogicality of the novel is such that one of its own "voices" can correctively (multi-voicedly) mock its own tendency to monologism—the voice of "authority," with its

Biblical overtones in this case—while at the same time chastising the reader who may have joined in the Pompadour fun. Gudrun calls the Pompadour set "'*Dogs!*—they *are* dogs! Why is Rupert such a *fool* as to write such letters to them?'" (WL 385). Clearly the author's "essential criticism" of self, his dynamic of doubt, can assume complex, polyphonic, intelligently circumspect formulations (P 476).[6] Multiplicity of perspective can assume a coherent or intelligent unity of its own, a devastatingly incisive form, as it does in the example of Halliday's mockery of the novel's own "verities," and the novel's subsequent mockery of him.

(5) *There can also be dialogue between the novel's chronotope and that of the genre to which it belongs, historically considered; there can be dialogue between genres and their extra-generic context at the broader level of cultures; there is dialogue between the novel as a unified utterance and its responsive reader, both individually and historically (or aggregately) considered*; and so on.

Clearly there are numerous levels on which to discuss the dialogical interconnectednesses of the novel's "minutely organized particulars." And clearly it is impossible in one study (or for one individual ever, given inevitable limitations of perspective) to address them all. Perhaps all

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[6]The famous Lawrencian formulation is: "Yet every work of art adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. And hence the antinomy, hence the conflict necessary to every tragic conception" (P 476).

one can do reasonably at present is to explore the degree of openness or closure evident in the characteristic interrogations of the main characters—to explore, that is, the degree of dialogicality within and between certain representative characters—and, as one does so, to gesture at the wider regions of dialogicality between chronotopes, and between those chronotopes and the novel's own. The dialogicality of *Women in Love* in relation to its generic or cultural context must remain for this investigation *terra incognita.*

4. Egos Opened and Closed, Messy and Neat, New and Old

Each principal character in *Women in Love* is, indeed, best understood as a question that is more or less "open" depending upon the connectedness of that character to potentiality, or to the unfinalizable, chaotic (inherently messy) Lawrencian "underworld." The more messy a character, the more open, of course; the more open, the greater is that character's dialogic potentiality or intrinsic value. The more capable a character is of "acting spontaneously on one's impulses," the more "gentlemanly" or intrinsically valuable the individual is.[7] One moves, for

[7]From this perspective, Ursula is clearly the most "gentlemanly" character in the novel, since she is the most spontaneous. It is not to be presumed that Lawrence is impeded by superficial gender biases in his assessments: "I think the only re-sourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman. I think *the* one thing to do, is for men to have courage to draw nearer to women . . . and be altered by them: and for women to accept and admit men"

example, from the perfectly closed or "finished" isolation and anti-dialogicality of Loerke at one extreme (who, having sufficiently "gnawed at the roots of life," no longer has any spontaneity or rootedness to speak of), to the perfectly open spontaneous dialogicality of Ursula at the other.

Significantly, the "autobiographical" Birkin is less purely positive or estimable than is Ursula. In this regard Birkin inhabits a middle or mixed ground with Gerald. Birkin is far closer to Ursula's dialogicality (her "sensitive expectancy," or receptivity) than he is to Gerald's ultimately frozen "instrumentality," and Birkin is far removed from Loerke's or Gudrun's alienation, but at the start of the novel, at least, he inhabits no "new heavens," or new earth. His spontaneity and connectedness are deeply suspect throughout; they are particularly suspect when he is not physically in touch with Ursula.[8]

For positive connection or wholeness Birkin needs Ursula, and she (though less so) needs him. At the end Birkin still may not be a permanent resident of the new world of becoming, whereas Ursula reigns there *in perpetuo*. That the dialogic "new heaven" is ruled by a female is consistent throughout Lawrence's expression, but in itself hardly surprising or new. Given the biological exigencies of

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(CL 2, 181). Recall that both bride and groom act "spontaneously," or with proper "gentlemanly" form at the wedding (WL 19).

[8]In this way too Birkin is autobiographical: "I daren't sit in the world without a woman behind me. . . . [A] woman I love sort of keeps me in direct communication with the unknown, in which otherwise I am a bit lost" (CL 1, 503). Lawrence thought of *Women in Love* as a joint creation with Frieda.

child-bearing, and given his own mother's large role in his life, it is understandable that the female for him would be associated with the promise of new life, or of the dialogic virtue of unfinalizability.

The more "stable" or "old" the "ego," the more neatly finalizable or "encodable" are the character and its zone or chronotope. The more open, messy or "becoming" a character, the more he or she requires extensive novelistic or prosaic investigation. For the messy or unfinalizable character there must be the opportunity to explore the "eventness" or unique specificities of those contexts and choices that shape the life, and influence its emergence. Hermione, Gudrun, Gerald, and Loerke rapidly become predictable in their responses; Ursula and Birkin are less so. Consequently, it is for ethico-philosophical reasons that Lawrence is committed to the novel as the highest form of dialogic expression. That is, no messy or positively dialogic character can be minor, or briefly encountered.

Birkin's messiness, for example, is not satisfactorily contained by the entirety of *Women in Love*, and Ursula's dialogicality or potentiality is such that she requires of Lawrence not one long novel, but two. (*The Rainbow* is the other.) One way to suggest the magnitude of Ursula's importance to Lawrence in this respect is to consider the possibility that she is his dialogic rejoinder to Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, the gist of Lawrence's protest being that Anna need not have been conceived monologically or tragically;

that Anna, the challengingly passionate woman, need not be entrapped by the condemnations, the inevitabilities and fatalities, the monologic and essentially patriarchal obsessions felt by her author ("Vengeance is mine . . ."). Ursula is Lawrence's relatively liberated or unfinalized version of Anna.

The more conventionally conceived minor characters are "neater" and consequently more vivid than the messy or partly unformed (closer to "the growing tip") characters of Ursula and Birkin. Moreover, it is the vividness itself of the "old stable egos" that is their deficiency, as Lawrence sees it. Gudrun is mostly "finished" in the project of her selfhood; she is "old" and "stable," deliberately distanced from the messy possibilities of change, or from dialogically conceived "life" itself. She is as a consequence studied, vividly so. (The reader knows precisely of what her vividness consists: her choice of stockings, for one thing.) By contrast Ursula is often nearly invisible, and Birkin would wish her to be, if anything, more so. At one point he exclaims, "'I don't want to see you'" (WL 147).

5. Hermione, Breadalby, the Past

Hermione is a purer example than Gudrun of a vivid, monological, self-enclosed "stable ego": "It did seem as if Hermione, like the moon, had only one side to her penny. There was no obverse. She stared out all the time on the

narrow, but to her, complete world of the extant consciousness. In the darkness, she did not exist" (WL 292). Even for Hermione there is a characteristic interrogative style, though it is one of closure, or, more precisely, self-enclosure:

> 'Do you really think, Rupert . . . do you really think it is worthwhile? Do you really think that the children are better for being roused to consciousness?' (WL 39)

Hermione is so idea-bound and unconnected to the messy "deep source" as to seem disembodied, a *"revenant"* (WL 90). Her words wheel in upon themselves. They are tendentious, oppressive, obsessive: "'Do you really think? . . . Do you really think? . . . Do you really think? . . .'" Hermione always seems "almost drugged, as if a strange mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness with her, and she was never allowed to escape" (WL 15). Birkin fears he is himself a "contravened knot," a monster of mental consciousness, but by comparison to Hermione (and this is in part how the novel's "relativity" works, by myriad momentaneous comparisons), Birkin is a blithe spirit (WL 126). Hermione's limitation is that she lives in the anti-dialogic realm of words as "mere verbal exchange," and dies there, spiritually.

Hermione's "darkness," in this instance, is not fecund with the yet-to-be, as Ursula's is on "Sunday Evening," when "darkly, without thinking at all, she knew that she was near to death." "Death" for Ursula is actual or threatening enough, but it is also a positive threshold phenomenon or

"betweenness"—death is a potential liberation from her "old" (prior to Birkin) ego (WL 191). By contrast, "in the darkness, [Hermione] did not exist" (WL 292). Hermione's "darkness" can only be empty space; her darkness is simply an unlit storehouse for predictable, repeatable mental constructs. It is not coincidental that Hermione's interrogations are repetitious.

Lawrence, in the Foreword to *Women in Love,* is himself nearly apologetic about the "repetitive" nature of his own style. To some extent Hermione's style correctively mocks the novel's own style, just as does Halliday in the Pompadour. However, Hermione's repetitiveness as a "form-shaping ideology" is not finally the novel's. In this way as well the novel contains its own "essential criticism." The lesser chronotope (Hermione's) mocks the greater (the novel's own). The repetitiveness of Hermione's style is an example of such a self-corrective or refining gesture. The active dialogic intelligence proceeds by adopting and "dialogizing" otherness, as resistances or doubting "voices," and thus makes corrective gestures. Just as chaos theoreticians in the physical sciences seem to be discovering in "chaotic" phenomena an organizing pattern of "self-similarity across scales," so too the special "open totality" or "chaotic" organization of *Women in Love* manifests "continual, slightly modified repetition" that may work in an analogous manner ("Foreword," WL 486).

In other words, *Women in Love*'s self-testing capability, proceeding as it does by near "repetition," is the novel's unified shape (and its intelligence) as a dynamic of doubt. The most obvious example of its intelligence is its satire on itself. Its counterpoint or polyphony is not simply a matter of contradiction, or of ironic negations that somehow cancel each other out to produce "blankness," the "void," or Kierkegaardian echoes. Hermione's repetitiveness, for instance, enters into parodic or corrective dialogue with the novel's own "continual, slightly modified repetition." But Hermione's verbal tics do not by any means, by mocking it, discredit the novel's own form of repetitiveness, which, as Lawrence claims, attempts to be a "pulsing, frictional to-and-fro," or "the *passionate struggle into conscious being* " itself ("Foreword," WL 486).

Rather, Hermione's pathological repetitiveness accentuates by contrast the novel's stylistic repetitions as positive efforts at "breaking a way through" to health and open wholeness. In essence Lawrence sees the novel's "pulsing, frictional to-and-fro" as procreative, Hermione's as masturbatory. The sterility of the one accentuates the fertility of the other, or so the novel implies. Put in Bakhtin's cooler or unerotic terminology, the novel's "struggle into conscious being" is the give and take of dialogic interaction in its effort to transcend itself, to exceed "its own boundaries."

It is understandable that what I had earlier termed "broken dialectical" criticism would presume that the "frictional to-and-fro" of apparently repetitive contradiction and qualification would wear down meaning, and would produce, in effect, "blankness" and the "void." However, for Lawrence "frictional . . . slightly modified repetition" is not a covertly nihilistic effort to empty his utterance of meaning, as some have suggested, or to despair of language as a "dumb show." Rather, the attempt is to work "up to culmination" or unity of expression by means of polyphonic multiplicity, or of what Lawrence at times calls the "resistance of life" that must be incorporated into "art-speech" (CL 2, 638). His thought proceeds by giving voice to oppositions as Blakean "contraries," not "negations." Hermione's parodic repetitiveness is one instance, the derision of Birkin's most cherished beliefs by the Pompadour set a more sustained one, of the ways in which the novel is a polyphonic orchestration of self-corrective "resistances" dialogically conceived as "other voices."

In such a conception there is no mere canceling out of meaning such as would occur when equal weight or "validity" is given to all negations or contradictions. Rather, in the polyphonic novel there is hierarchy within the otherness of opposition. Voices of opposition carry with them the "aura" (in Bakhtin's terms) of their chronotope (AiG 87-8). Not all chronotopes are created equal—not all

have the same degree of access to the "deep source" or futurity dialogically conceived as potentiality.

Some contradictory voices (and the chronotopes from which they arise) discredit themselves by their monologic absolutism or their "pastness." Dialogism suspects all things monologic, absolute or unconnected to the possibility of growth and change. Such opposition extends even to the author's own tendency to absolutism, as a betrayal of dialogic (or prosaic momentaneous) principles: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale." Lawrence's mentality, that is, is prosaic as a matter of principle; he values the absence of an absolute perspective. And while he may yearn for the authority of absolutism or monologism, he is deeply mistrustful of the impregnable, the sacrosanct, the solemn. Absolutism is "ugly imperialism": "There is no absolute good, there is nothing absolutely right. All things flow and change, and even change is not absolute" (P 536). Not even the dialogic virtues exalted by him as inherent in the activity of "breaking a way through" to futurity in the activity of becoming are immune from a relativizing or ironic perspective. This is not to suggest, however, that his prosaic theory of relativity is the equivalent of extreme relativistic morality. That there is no "absolute good" does not imply that there is no better, or worse.

Hermione's repetitive consciousness finally does not discredit or reduce the positivity of the novel's own shape, however close her "coiled" thoughts are to the

autobiographical Birkin's "contravened knot" of consciousness, and however much the ensuing similarity comments ironically upon Birkin's (or the author's implicit) claims to absolute "truth" and "authority." Hermione's way of being is just not as valid as that of Birkin or Ursula. Hermione's repetitive, vatic style has the value of parody—it correctively mocks the novel's own destructive tendencies in that direction, but it is in itself "corrected" ultimately as a self-enclosed, monologic (or soliloquizing) "deficiency" of being (WL 16).

In essence, the isolated egoistic limitations of Hermione's queries ultimately work by contrast to highlight the addressivity and receptivity—the reciprocity—of true dialogue, and of true subjectivity as intersubjectivity. True dialogue and subjectivity, the reader comes to see, are different from Hermione's brand. True subjectivity involves dialogic interaction or interrogative intersubjectivity of the sort in which her rival, Ursula, and Birkin engage.

If Hermione asks questions at all, the "other" to whom they are addressed is incidental. Were the other to be absent or asleep, it would make no difference to the shape and tone of her own incantatory utterance. She exists in a "drugged" narcissistic trance. Her questions are always of and to herself, and as a consequence, predictable and inauthentic. As Bakhtin notes, questions are "dialogic" or conducive to "open totality" only to the extent that they are "serious and sincere," or addressed to another in "living

conversation." If Hermione's bullying rhetoric, or that which the Pompadour crowd mocks in Birkin, somehow monologically spoke for the novel, instead of for a strictly delineated character zone within the novel, Lawrence's notoriety as a "preacher" who "cries you down" would be better deserved.

Hermione, as her definitive interrogation suggests, is of-a-piece with her world. Time, space and voice (Hermione's) are fused in the Breadalby chronotope, which is "unchanged and unchanging." "'Isn't it complete!'" thinks Gudrun. "'It is as final as an old aquatint'" (WL 82). As a chronotopic entity Breadalby and its mistress seem to "have a magic circle drawn about [them], shutting out the present, enclosing the delightful, precious past, trees and deer and silence, like a dream" (WL 84).

Again, as so often, what are perceived to be the limitations of a devalued chronotope nearly repeat or mirror the workings or aspirations of a favored one. Breadalby here bears distinct resemblances to Birkin's misanthropic dream of "a world empty of people, just uninterrupted grass, and a hare sitting up" (WL 127). Were it not partly for Ursula, and the strenuous resistant-dialogic effort she causes him to undertake, and were it not for Hermione, who forcibly expels him from her paradisal "magic circle" with a "biff" on the head, Birkin might simply belong to Breadalby. After all, his dream of a nonhuman future is essentially

indistinguishable from the "trees and deer and silence" of Breadalby's "past."

In this respect it is essential to note that Breadalby's completeness (like Birkin's dream of a "world empty of people") is associated not only with finality or finish, but also with "silence." Hermione and her guests' telegraphic mode of communication is not dialogue, or "living" conversation. It is silence as the void. In this regard, Birkin's broadest challenge is to resist the allure of silence that both his fondest (deathly, misanthropic) wishes, and Breadalby, represent. At times in the Breadalby chronotope the "silence" of their socio-political talk is "curiously anarchistic" (WL 90). (The implication is that Breadalby's reactionary stasis is at base irresponsible and destructive.)

More often in the Breadalby chronotope, however, silence assumes the sound of literate chatter: "'There is the most beautiful thing in my book,' suddenly piped the little Italian woman . . . " (WL 86). Breadalby is invariably silent or void of substantial content. Revealingly, the most telling communication at Breadalby takes the form of the "dumb show" of dance (WL 91). When substantial topics are broached as subjects of conversation, they are trivialized. The issue of spontaneity or intrinsic freedom, for example, becomes a matter of sensation:

> 'm- m- m- I don't know. — — —But one thing was the stars, when I really understood something about the stars. One feels so *uplifted* , so *unbounded* — — — — —'

> Birkin looked at her in a white fury.
> 'What do you want to feel unbounded for?' he said sarcastically. 'You don't want to *be* unbounded.' (WL 86)

Thus at Breadalby the dialogic value of unfinalizability (the "unbounded") is reduced to sensation by Hermione. "'Yes, but one does have that limitless feeling,'" says Gerald, coming to Hermione's defense. This comes from the *"borné"'* Gerald, the reader may note ironically. Knowledge itself at Breadalby is a mental trick by which one "feels" free, without wanting the responsibility of being free in its full Lawrencian-Bakhtinian import: "Thank God I am not free, any more than a rooted tree is free," Lawrence once affirmed (Moore, CL 2, 719).

Active Lawrencian freedom is a matter of opening oneself to the challenge of affirmative belief. It is a condition of being informed by a robust dynamic of doubt, or interrogative rootedness to the messy "unknown." Freedom is a welcome but weighty burden, not a weightless sensation. It is revealing to note in this context that for Gudrun "the complete moment of . . . life" occurs in the weightless swoop of downhill skiing (as it does identically for Nick Adams in *In Our Time*) (WL 421). Both Nick Adams and Gudrun might be said to suffer from "existential neurosis," or from the madness of imagined self-entrapment in the bodily here and now—the madness of feeling

intrinsically cut off from creative becoming.[9] For such sufferers the best that can be imagined of freedom and fulfillment is purely weightless, mindless sensation.

Indeed, knowledge does not offer the possibility of positively conceived freedom for anyone trapped in the Breadalby chronotope. When Sir Joshua offers the trite aphorism, "'Knowledge is, of course, liberty,'" Birkin rejoins: "'In compressed tabloids.' . . . 'You can only have knowledge, strictly . . . of things concluded, in the past. It's like bottling the liberty of last summer in the bottled gooseberries'" (WL 86). Knowledge as a fruit of dialogic engagement must be future-oriented in its interrogative seeking. Hermione's and Breadalby's "pastness" is a product of fundamental disbelief in creative futurity:

> . . . there was a devastating cynicism at the bottom of [Hermione]. She did not believe in her own universals—they were sham. She did not believe in the inner life—it was a trick, not a reality. . . . She was a priestess without belief, suckled in a creed outworn, and condemned to the reiteration of mysteries that were not divine to her. Yet there was no escape. She was a leaf upon a dying tree. (WL 293)

Belief in the unfinalizable dimensions is the key to release from the confines of the "past," the "horrible snare and delusion, this beauty of static things," or of the Breadalby zone itself (WL 97). Breadalby's cornerstone is

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[9]Salvatore R. Maddi, "The Existential Neurosis," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 72 (1967): 311-25.

the certainty of knowledge, yet as Birkin challenges Hermione, "'How can you know anything, when you don't believe?'" (297). Hermione and all of Breadalby's knowing and being are divorced from intrinsic connection to the unknown, or to the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans* that informs the Lawrencian "underworld," and that makes knowledge complete by making it a product of active doubt.

For its denizens, Breadalby's static beauty is paradisal. There Birkin is noted to be a "creature of change." He is out of place. Put another way, Birkin refuses to eat of the Tree of Hermione's cynical, "outworn" Knowledge. He refuses to be her Adam, and so Hermione herself, not God but acting as God (she rules her chronotope with an "indomitable . . . static and mechanical" will), expels Birkin from Paradise, or from its English suburban equivalent. Hermione "biffs" Birkin, and the blow proves to be a *felix culpa*, one for which Birkin is truly grateful: "'But it is quite all right,'" Birkin writes graciously to her, "'I don't want you to mind having biffed me, in the least'" (WL 108).

Why should he mind? Following his expulsion from the false garden, Birkin immediately enters into communion with creative chaos or primal mess, where all is interanimate and "responsive": "He was happy in the wet hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers." Cast out of the ideal English (or domesticated) paradisal garden, Birkin is cast into the "open and whole" "underworld" that is the true goal of his seeking: "He wanted

to touch . . . all [the bushes and flowers]. . . . He took off his clothes. . . ." Repeatedly he is "enrichened" by the "responsive" or interanimating "vegetation." Birkin has found the still point in his turning world: "This was his place, his marriage place. . . . He knew now where he belonged. He knew where to plant himself, his seed. . . . "

His marriage here to the dialogic cosmos, one notes, occurs prior to his marriage to Ursula. The implication is that the one is a precondition for the other (WL 106-8). Birkin must disengage from Hermione and Breadalby before the robust Ursula will have him. (Ursula is aware—particularly in the example of Birkin's behaviour—that "even fighting the old is belonging to it" [WL 437-8].)

Just as Ursula suffers symbolic death on "Sunday Evening" before she can be reborn to dialogic life (life in dialogue with Birkin), so too Birkin "dies" to be reborn in the wet grass. Birkin has successfully resisted the allure of "silence." Gerald too suffers death, but his is "actual" in the fictional frame of reference. Yet death for him as well is profoundly liberating, in terms revealingly similar to Ursula's and Birkin's: "Wide, wide his soul opened, in wonder, feeling the pain" (WL 471). The "pain" is concomitant with his own death and Gudrun's—he is trying to murder her at this moment. (All murder is self-murder, as Gerald and Birkin previously debated [WL 33].) Most surprisingly, even this "double death" of Gerald (death of self and nearly of other) has its Lawrencian or dialogic

positivity—it contains soulfulness, openness and wonder, albeit in an ironic context, the context of "actual," or finalizing death.

There is a crucial difference between Birkin's and Gerald's response to the murderous gestures of Hermione and Gudrun. Birkin affirmatively resists the finality of death: "'I don't let you,'" he tells Hermione (WL 106). Gerald, in contrast, invites finish and closure. From the start, Gudrun has promised to "strike the last" blow in their relationship (WL 171). Perhaps Gudrun's deepest attractiveness for Gerald is that she facilitates his desire to see his life "through." Gerald has an aestheticized conception of self, one that demands closure. It is a form of escape from responsibility, of the sort to which Bakhtin alludes in various contexts (IiO 5; MB 183). Death as finalization or closure is the quintessential aesthetic pleasure, one that Gerald profoundly needs, and one that the novel as a whole refuses to allow itself. The novel holds out for wholeness and satisfaction (expressed as laughter) of a higher, dialogic order.

6. Loerke, Mountain-tops, the Future

If the Hermione-Breadalby zone is the novel's chronotope of a fixed, static past, then Loerke's mountain-top is the novel's chronotope of a possible (perhaps likely) destructive future. Between past and future the novel's four

principal characters divide the zones of the "present." Both past and future in themselves are dialogically inert, or dynamically disconnected, as is Loerke, from "before and after" (WL 427). The major characters by contrast reside in a region where at least the possibility of living (as dialogic intersubjectivity) still seems to exist. Gudrun, Gerald, Ursula and Birkin are situated in the novel's temporal "between." In that "between" there is the further division between the Gudrun-Gerald "actual" world and the gradually unfolding Ursula-Birkin "new heaven," new earth of "achieved" being.[10] However, before one explores the chronotopic and interrogative dynamics of the novel's "present" zones, it is helpful to trace the parameters of the "future" that Loerke represents.

Loerke, even more than Hermione, is the novel's arch anti-dialogician, and as such he is the author's alter ego. No character is as powerfully closed (closed to sympathy, to humanity, to connectedness, to belief) as Loerke, as his self-defining interrogation amply demonstrates: "'Monsieur! . . . Quand vous aurez fini,'" he interjects, as Gerald is in the process of strangling Gudrun (WL 472). Loerke's question involves "finish" and is itself mockingly unfinished. That is, by the precision of its unfinishedness it mocks the messiness of the novel's own deliberate interrogative unfinishedness

[10]It is Lawrence's belief in the possibility of a paradisal here and now, or a "new heaven," new earth for the conjoined lovers, that persuades Huxley and others to view him as a "mystical materialist." See too Joyce Carol Oates, *New Heaven, New Earth: The Visionary Experience in Literature* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1974).

or unfinalizability. Here again the encompassing chronotope of the novel, in dialogue with a narrower internal chronotope, provides its own ironic self-correction or refinement of meaning.

More to the immediate point, while Loerke may be intimately involved with the deadly matters and moments of the novel, he is nonetheless "future" in his time-space zone. Loerke is the "wizard rat that swims *ahead*" (italics mine): "He seemed to be the very stuff of the underworld of life. There was no going beyond him" (WL 427). Birkin tells Gerald that Loerke is a "'good many stages further than either you or I can go'" (WL 427-8). Later, Gudrun speculates on the ways that Loerke is advanced beyond the limitations of the obtusely phallic Gerald and the "actual" patriarchal realm over which he rules: "He, Loerke, could penetrate into depths far out of Gerald's knowledge, Gerald was left behind like a postulant in the ante-room of this temple of mysteries, this woman" (WL 451).

Loerke is exquisitely penetrating in every form and gesture of his being. His artistry, like Gudrun's and (in a more plodding or workaday sense) Gerald's as well, defines his very project of selfhood. From the Bakhtinian perspective, Loerke's consciousness is engaged in a deeply suspect "aestheticizing" activity, a defensive-aggressive belligerence. His preciosity and wit exemplify utter deracination; Loerke prefers to speak in languages other than his or the addressee's native tongue. The more

unfamiliar or cut off he feels from the messy "deep source" of discourse, the happier Loerke is. That is, the freer he feels artfully to play with meaning and effect, or to manipulate language as "mere verbal exchange" for his own egoistic purposes.

In this respect it is significant that, when Loerke is introduced to the reader, he is conducting a satiric monologue in "the Cologne dialect" (WL 405). He is a "chatterer, a mag-pie, a maker of mischievous word-jokes" (WL 422). In a word, Loerke travesties dialogic values in every aspect of his being. His "word-jokes" in the present instance invert the dialogic value of heteroglossia as a manifestation of language's unfinalizable vitality. In the same sense his habitation of the "underworld of life" travesties the "open and whole underworld" to which the novel attempts positively to "break a way through" (CL 3, 180). At one point Loerke is described as a "brown seal" (WL 427). Lawrence associated seals with certain "Hebridean Songs," which he noted were "songs of the damned: that is, songs of those who inhabit an underworld which is forever an underworld, never to be made open and whole" (CL 3, 180).

Loerke's deracination and physical slightness is deliberately deceiving. His aestheticizing project of being has, in the "actual" world, the world of Gudrun and Gerald, a killing effectiveness. The elegant interrogation of Gerald in the present instance, for example, has extraordinary

finalizing power—his unfinished request is the utterance of the perfectly undialogic "ultimate word." His wit proves stronger than Gerald's brute rage, his nonphallic resources of mind prove stronger than Gerald's phallic insistence, so that in direct response to Loerke's query a "weakness ran over [Gerald's] body, a terrible relaxing, a thaw, a decay of strength. Without knowing, he had let go his grip . . . " (WL 472).

Loerke's nonverbal artistry receives extensive attention in the novel. The subject matter of his great granite "frieze for a factory in Cologne" is highly revealing:

> It was a representation of a fair, with peasants and artizans in a orgy of enjoyment, drunk and absurd in their modern dress, whirling ridiculously in roundabouts, gaping at shows, kissing and staggering and rolling in knots, swinging in swing-boats and firing down shooting galleries, a frenzy of chaotic motion. (WL 423)

Loerke's subject is a travesty of what, in Bakhtin's terms, are the affirmative creative-chaotic or laughing values of carnival—the values, that is, at the core of the dialogic vision. Loerke and his threateningly futuristic chronotope invert the carnival values; he self-consciously derides them, and makes of carnival not life-affirmative celebration but rather, simply, a degenerate riot or orgy. Gerald, similarly in this regard, is capable of "Saturnalia," or of an analogously

degenerate form of carnival: "'*He's* a whole Saturnalia in himself, once he is roused'" (WL 394; italics his).

Neither Gerald nor Loerke has any desire to partake in carnival "decrowning"—neither Loerke's witting nor Gerald's unwitting mockery of carnival values is even remotely a "decrowning" in the affirmative spirit of dialogically conceived carnival. In such an affirmative spirit, "decrowning" would be the "demonic laughter" that accompanies (and is indistinguishable from) the "angelic laughter" of eventual re-crowning of the vitalistic values of becoming or of potentiality itself.

Women in Love, that is, recognizes the innovativeness and difficulty of its new "open" form, and as a consequence proceeds "to-and-fro" in a "continual" motion of "slightly modified repetition." The novel, in the instance of Loerke's granite frieze, proceeds apophatically or in the negative way, by means of the import of the frieze, to describe what the meaning or laughing goal of its own expression is *not*. Loerke's cold, chiselled fixity and finality of expression highlight by contrast the novel's own messy changeableness, its openness to the unresolvable "resistance of life," its opposition to semiotic totalitarianisms or permanencies of all sorts, particularly those carved in stone.

Correspondingly, the thematic implications of Loerke's expression diametrically oppose the dialogic carnival vision. Loerke believes that "art should *interpret* industry, as art once interpreted religion" (WL 424). Industry is the new

religion for Loerke, and "what man is doing at a fair like this" is "fulfilling the counterpart of labour—the machine works him, instead of he the machine. He enjoys the mechanical motion, in his own body" (WL 424). What man is doing at a carnival in Loerke's vision, then, bears distinct resemblance to Gudrun's "most complete moment" of the out-of-body, out-of-mind sensation of skiing. Man is celebrating not human creativity or surprising unfinalizability, but rather pure mechanical instrumentality. In Loerke's religion there is "nothing but work": "'No, it is nothing but this, serving a machine, or enjoying the motion of a machine—motion, that is all.—You have never worked for hunger, or you would know what God governs us'" (WL 424-5). The dialogic carnival requires belief in individual freedom, spontaneity, unfinalizable creativity and a host of intimately related values, all heightened by their absence in the Loerke granite vision.

Loerke may seem in his mockery energetically to oppose the mechanical materialism that governs the "actual world" of the novel, but ultimately he is simply its negative image. His negation is not an active opposition or Blakean "contrary." As Birkin notes of Loerke: "'He's further on than we are. He hates the ideal more acutely. He *hates* the ideal utterly, yet it still dominates him'" (WL 428). Loerke may hate (or at least mock and distance his isolated ego from) the mechanical materialistic absolutism sometimes called Mammon, but it "still dominates him." If even "fighting the

old is belonging to it," then Loerke, who is worldly-wise beyond the folly of fighting (as Birkin-Lawrence obviously is not), is *doubly* bound by his irony to the old bankrupt monologic "ideal" of the primacy (if not the dignity) of labor. In the philosophic-anthropological dimension of *Women in Love*, the resonances of which always echo around the rim of Birkin's said and unsaid utterances ("Is our day of creative life finished?"), Loerke represents the threat of utter deracination, disbelief and devolution.

The novel chooses to explore a second artwork of Loerke's in even greater detail: "The statuette was of a naked girl, small, finely made, sitting on a great naked horse" (WL 429). Gudrun asks of it the neat, professional formalities of size and material. Ursula asks the amateurish and messy: "'Why did you make the horse so stiff? It is as stiff as a block.'" Ursula is obviously angry and offended by the tacit violence of the expression:

> "The girl was young and tender, a mere bud. She was sitting . . . as if in shame and grief, in a little abandon. . . . Her legs, scarcely formed yet . . . dangled childishly over the side of the horse, pathetically. . . . But there was no hiding. There she was exposed naked on the naked flank of the horse." (WL 429)

The brutality of expression, committed significantly against "the scarcely formed yet," or the unfinalized and the female, has made its impression upon Gudrun, but her formalist aesthetic creed will not allow her to acknowledge

the gaucherie of emotional, ad hominem communication in art which she nonetheless feels. Upon first viewing the statuette, "Gudrun went pale." She feels an undisciplined squad of emotions, unacknowledged and unexamined as a matter of artistic principle, which include "shame," and a desire for "supplication, almost slave-like."

To an extent Gudrun is hiding behind the cool professionalism of her conception of art, desperate not to "give herself away" as a latent masochist. Her attraction to Loerke is identical in kind with her earlier attraction to Gerald and the brutality of power. In Gerald she eventually discovers, despite his control over the entire actual world of men and machines, a limiting phallicism. In Loerke Gudrun senses that the possibility of domination (or "interdestruction," in the novel's inverted dialogic terms) is more complete, and consequently more fatally alluring.

Loerke responds to Ursula haughtily, in the terminology of formalism: "'Wissen Sie . . . that horse is a certain *form*, part of a whole form. It is part of a work of art, a piece of form'" (WL 430). Ursula is unintimidated by Loerke's sophistication. She sees his art purely as an escape from responsibility, personal and public: "'I know it is a picture of himself, really.'" Ursula provides the dialogic rejoinder to formalism. As Bakhtin puts it, "Art and life are not one, but they must become united in myself—in the unity of my answerability." And, "the individual must become answerable through and through." ("Answerability"

and "responsibility" are variant translations of the same word, *otvetstvennost* [IiO 2].)

In both Lawrence's and Bakhtin's artistic creed, that is, no divorce is allowed between the relativities and responsibilities of everyday life, and the relativities and responsibilities of "art-speech" (Lawrence's "only truth"). It is this conception of a mundane relativity and self-responsibility governing both art and life (and unifying them) that makes both thinkers profoundly prosaic champions of the novel form. Loerke's arguments are a pure contradiction of the credo that the novel represents:

> 'A picture of myself!' he repeated, in derision. 'Wissen Sie . . . it is a work of art, it is a picture of nothing, of absolutely nothing. . . . [It] has nothing to do with anything but itself, it has no relation to the everyday world of this and the other, there is no connection between them, absolutely none. . . . Do you see, you *must not* confuse the relative world of action, with the absolute world of art. That you *must not do'*. (WL 430-1)

Loerke provides the perfect manifesto of dialogic prosaicism, negatively expressed. For dialogism, art has nothing to do with bullying absolutism, and everything to do with prosaic relativity—the unity in responsibility of all utterance. All expression, dialogically considered, is both personal in its answerability and impersonal in its intersubjective relatedness (in discourse itself) to

collaborative efforts of integrity, as those efforts manifest themselves in "living conversation."

Gudrun echoes Loerke's refutation of the unity of art and life: "'That is quite true,' cried Gudrun. . . . The two things are quite and permanently apart, they have nothing to do with one another. *I* and my art, they have *nothing* to do with each other. My art stands in another world, I am in this world'" (WL 431). From the Bakhtinian perspective, Gudrun simply offers her art as an "alibi for being." For both Gudrun and Loerke and the chronotopes they represent, the "actual" world is so horrible that each must withdraw to a room of one's own. They feel obliged to withdraw to the purity and incipient sterility of an isolated egoistic world of art as a "picture of absolutely nothing."

One may note the similarity between Gudrun's and Loerke's world of "art" and the Ragussean interpretation of *Women in Love*'s world as a blankness and void. In this study's interpretation, by contrast, the world of the void is the world from which Ursula and Birkin successfully escape. In Bakhtin's terms, both Gudrun and Loerke try to live as "pretenders" in a "purely generalized abstract place" (MB 180). Ursula and Birkin, on the contrary, seek authenticity, messiness, openness and "life," as opposed to inauthenticity, neatness, closure and "art."

The debate between the messy, dialogic Ursula and the neat, formalistic Loerke and Gudrun has the simple conversational pattern of Socratic dialogue. It also, on

another level of abstraction, engages anticipated formalist objections to the novel itself. Just as much of Bakhtin's thought has as its implicit reader the Russian formalist critic, so too Lawrence and the novel in its entirety engage Clive Bell and the school of "significant form."

The credo that Gudrun directly refutes is that which informs Lawrence's expression in the novel *and* in the conduct of his subsequent life. Art and life, saying and doing, are a "unity" for the committed dialogician: "'If what they say *were* true, then they couldn't help fulfilling it,'" Birkin tells Ursula (WL 127). Of Van Gogh, Lawrence reflects:

> I see Van Gogh so sadly. . . . [If only] he could have known a great humanity where to live ones [sic] animal [self] would be to create oneself, *in fact, be the artist creating a man in living fact* . . . and where the art was the final expression of the created animal or man—not the [. . .]be-all and being of the man—but the end, the climax. And some men would end in artistic utterance, and some men wouldn't. But each one would create that work of art, the living man, achieve that piece of supreme art, a man's life. (CL 2, 299)

The priority is prosaic, the opposite of Gudrun's or Loerke's and of their chronotope. "Life" comes first; art, as achieved expression of the project of selfhood or integrity, comes second. Lawrence's position may be messy and amateurish,

as Ursula's is, but it has behind it the force of his entire life-affirming credo.[11]

Part of the messiness of such a prosaic dialogic belief is that so much depends upon the responsiveness and good will of the other, in the joint project of one's being and of one's self-expression. Lawrence's wistful allusion to a "great humanity," one that Van Gogh did not find, has its poignancy in relation to the autobiographical Birkin. If Birkin, Ursula and *Women in Love* finally achieve dialogic fulfillment, or the laughter of "supreme art," they do so in the reduced and problematic fulfillment of a "great humanity" of two attenuated souls.

At the conclusion of the novel, Birkin and Ursula are left the only revelers in the carnival of perfected being. Two make it possible to laugh, sanely to share laughter, but are two ultimately enough to sustain the festivities? Or are Gerald (in his symbolic significance as owner of the "actual" world) and "a few others" essential? In sum, the informing open-ended question remains for Birkin and for the novel: "Is our day of creative life finished?"

Gudrun's and Loerke's formalist insistences make it possible for the novel to expose its own intrinsically dialogic and vulnerable shape. *Women in Love*'s deliberate openness to "life" (as unfinalizability, as creative chaos of becoming) gives itself away, as does Ursula, to the knowing

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[11]Just as Tolstoy made shoes as a symbolic statement of essential priorities, Lawrence wrote messy or personally undisguised prose. Both meant to affirm that "life" comes first, "art" second.

professional establishment of "art" for which Loerke and Gudrun speak. If "soul" in Bakhtin's definition is "a gift of my spirit to the other," then the novel makes a decision to expose its "soul" to the slings and arrows of outrageous ("soulless") incomprehension and ridicule, as Ursula exposes herself in the present scene, and as Birkin's letter does at the Pompadour. The allegiance clearly is to the profession of a messy faith in potentiality or dialogicality itself, and even to martyrdom for its sake.

As a matter of principle and not as a matter of disorganization (or an inability to make up its mind in "unending debate"), *Women in Love* refuses the neatness of closure, the elegance of wit, the safety of certainty and the dramatic appeal of high tragedy. It has all of these at its disposal (as the examples of Gudrun and Loerke amply show) and yet prefers something far more problematical: the serious, laughing exposition and celebration of an achieved philosophy of potentiality, or mess. The work sacrifices the sharp delineations of purely demonic laughter as a principle of organization in favor of the complex unity in multiplicity of demonic and angelic laughter, negation and affirmation, combined.

Women in Love manages to be both a *cri de coeur* of exposed soulfulness, and a celebration of an affirmative, ultimately laughing achievement of body and soul, self and other. As Ursula finally rejoins in her argument with the dialogic disbelievers: "'The world of art is only the truth

about the real world, that's all—but you are too far gone to see it'" (WL 431).

"Is Our Day of Creative Life Finished?" *Women in Love*'s Unanswerability

1. Gudrun, Gerald, Mines, Mountain-tops, the Present

Two chronotopes in *Women in Love* compete for the present: Gudrun and Gerald's "actual world" vies with the evolving new heaven, new earth of Ursula and Birkin's dialogic paradise. Both exist between Breadalby's pastness and Loerke's (and the mountain-top's) extremity or futurity. How distinct these chronotopes of the present are from each other is a question that perplexes Birkin, and motivates his (and the novel's) "thought-adventure." The dialogicality between these chronotopes tends to be graphic, a matter of striking differences, so that, for example, Gudrun and Gerald's relationship is "interdestructive," while Ursula and Birkin's is collaboratively creative. Gudrun and Gerald's "actuality" is monologic, tightly circumscribed by absolute inevitabilities of all sorts, while Ursula and Birkin's "reality" is dialogic, open and unpredetermined. "Actuality" is "tragic" and "barren," "reality" is comic, pregnant with potentiality.

Just as starkly, the chronotope of "actuality" manifests deadening (absolute, fixed or monologic) connections both to the past and to the future. Its time scheme is inevitably synchronic, or bound to a narrowly constructed "present," in

the sense that it has no "living" (or progressive, evolving) communication with before and after. Gerald, for example, has a tight and deadly grip on the past. He cannot let go of the horror and guilt of having accidentally murdered his brother in their childhood. As a consequence of his guilt and of the obsessive fixations by which it shackles him, Gerald must always see "things through" (in a ghastly parody of self-responsible behaviour), however inevitable or mechanically predetermined and therefore "finished" they may be. There is no true openness or self-responsible freedom of action about Gerald that would connect him livingly or dialogically to past or future.

Gudrun is like Gerald in her fixity or entrapment in the present. Just as Gerald is arrested by a false conception of the past, she is constrained by a false conception of the future, as Loerke represents it. Gudrun must follow the "wizard rat that swims ahead" to the farthest reaches of his vision, where materialism and anti-materialism converge in a kind of dystopian nowhere.

In contrast to Gerald and Gudrun, Ursula and Birkin's chronotope of "reality" deliberately struggles to sever itself from "actual" (or false) past and future, "actual" here and now, in favor of a dialogically (and diachronically) realized here and now that is both present *and* future (or "eternal"), everywhere and "nowhere." The lovers' destination at the end of the novel is "nowhere," conceived as a plenitude of potentiality, not as a Loerkian emptiness.

It is precisely because the novel's open unity is a matter of "minutely organized particulars" that an abstract, necessarily reductive analytic response seems to be called for. Each of the four principal characters who inhabit the "present" has, as an "existential code," a question. Characters-as-questions interact intersubjectively (or interdestructively as the case may be). As they do so, they shape the immediacy of the novel's here and now. One proceeds from closed to open forms, from actualities to "realities," from the incontrovertibly "true" to the most controversially speculative—from, in short, Gudrun to Birkin.

Interrogations form the fluid field or the dynamic of doubt by which the novel's openness is made whole. The questions on which this study focuses (as listed in the previous chapter) are: (1) Gudrun's "'How much do you love me?'"—directed intrachronotopically to Gerald; (2) Gerald's "'What *do* women want, at the bottom?'"—directed interchronotopically to Birkin, but whose subject is Gudrun; (3) Ursula's "'Do you really love me?'"—directed intrachronotopically to Birkin; and (4) Birkin's "Is our day of creative life finished?"—directed both to himself and, apparently, beyond the internal dimensions of the novel itself, to "the race, as it were."

(1) *"'How much do you love me?'"*

Both chronotopes of the present describe struggles essentially enacted interrogatively or conversationally. The

struggles in both zones are initiated by remarkably similar questions. Gudrun's "'How much do you love me?'" superficially corresponds to Ursula's "'Do you really love me?'" However, the former precipitates death, the latter "new life." Like Loerke, Gudrun is characteristically anti-dialogic, mocking, closed and satirical. Her questions are always aggressive, challenging the male, as she does the "wild Scotch bullocks" in "Water-Party" (WL 168). (In conversation with her sister, Gudrun is more openly inquisitive, though barely.) Gudrun *literally* interrogates. Her questions of Gerald might be asked to best effect from behind a bright light at the station house, and they nearly always have a single destructive certainty about them. As this study noted earlier, her "How much . . ." proves to be a set-up for the eviscerating "'Try to love me a little more, and to want me a little less'" (WL 443).

With the devastating understatement of cool appeal Gudrun delivers the *coup de grâce* to Gerald's manhood. Her "request" here has the incisiveness of "savage carving." Without the messiness of outward show, the vulgarity of bloodshed, she unsexes Gerald: "he was degraded at the very quick." Like Loerke, Gudrun can close upon and finish the bullish Gerald with the artistry of purely murderous "ultimate words" (of which dialogic discourse has none).

That is to say that while Bakhtin observes that "question and answer are not logical relations (categories)," and that in dialogic discourse "any response gives rise to a

new question," Gudrun's question of Gerald is categorical, sharply distinct from his response (MHS 168). Her speech-acts in relation to Gerald are murderous, finalizing. They drop the curtain on future speech, and provoke the silence (or applause, depending on one's tastes) proper to a well-wrought "barren tragedy" (WL 476). Gudrun's interrogative mode has the formality and finish of the consummate tragedienne. From the start her workings have the dramatic inevitability and "fatality" of high tragedy: "'You have struck the first blow,' [Gerald] said. . . . 'And I shall strike the last,' she retorted involuntarily, with confident assurance" (WL 171). She has the gift of uttering the "ultimate," decisive or killing word, for putting the "finishing touch" on expression, and on Gerald's life.

Artistry for Gudrun is not only a form of escape from responsibility and from actuality itself ("'My art stands in another world'"), it is a lethal weapon. Her inauthentic question to Gerald merely confirms her prior certainty that "[He] was *bagatelle*. . . . She thought of Cleopatra—Cleopatra must have been an artist; she reaped the essential from a man, she harvested the ultimate sensation, and threw away the husk . . ." (WL 448). In diametric opposition to the unified, responsible dialogic artist, Gudrun (like Loerke) sees "life" as answerable to art, not vice-versa. Life's messy unfinalizability always potentially threatens the control she wishes to exercise over her art. Her compulsive anxieties suggest the extent to which she feels insecure about her own

being. Gudrun is never certain that she is wholly alive. Her artist's vision is her armor and her prison. In a moment when she is driven nearly to madness, Gudrun thinks of herself. "She never really lived, she only watched" (WL 465). "Life" is that which is most desired and most feared by her. When life takes the form of Gerald's escalating demands of intimacy, and cannot be disarmed by a satiric-reductive telescopic vision ("'She likes to look through the wrong end of the opera glasses'"), it provokes from her a preemptive first strike (WL 39).

Gudrun is never not performing as a destructive artist, a *femme fatale* of the Midlands. Even in her private moments she conjures up factitious dramatic images and scenes that "save" or distance her from the barrenness or horror of actuality. As a way of separating herself from the moment, and from responsibility for the moment, she repeatedly affects to be the anti-heroine in a Zolaesque melodrama. For example, when she is most humiliated by the brutishness of Gerald's lovemaking, she imagines: "So, the colliers' lovers would stand with their backs to the walls, holding their sweethearts and kissing them as she was being kissed . . ." (WL 331). When Gudrun feels "humiliated" by Gerald's post-coital presence in "Death and Love," she again "saves" herself with "an idea" or a sentimental fabrication in the naturalistic mode: "'It is like a workman getting up to go to work,' thought Gudrun. 'And I am like a workman's wife'" (WL 347-8).

Gudrun's project of selfhood, in Bakhtin's terms, is basically inauthentic—she is a self-abdicating "pretender" (KFP 115; MB 179). Her fantasy of being "like a workman's wife" is not only irresponsible, it is "the really chic thing." Gudrun, just returned from London Bohemian circles, informs Ursula that "'you'll find the really chic thing is to be so absolutely ordinary, so perfectly commonplace . . . that you really are a masterpiece of humanity, not the person in the street actually, but the artistic creation of her—'" (WL 51). Gudrun's "creativity," then, is very much determined by the faddish present. In other words, she chooses to be entrapped in a narrow temporal zone—"choice" in this regard being an illusion. Gudrun's certainty is negative. She does not believe that farther horizons—horizons beyond the "really chic present"—exist. Dialogism, by contrast, is momentaneous in its perspectives because it believes affirmatively in meaningful contextuality (past and future-oriented contexts) and choice. There is no real possibility of choice in Gudrun's world view; therefore, there is no real present moment to be seized. There is only an actual present to be suffered.

Gudrun in art and in life (though she does not know it) eschews the risks and rewards associated with the heights and depths of dialogic creativity, connection to overworlds and "underworlds," past and future. For her there is no possibility of freedom, surprisingness or affirmative becoming. She cannot utter the "new word," or attain

"liberty of newness." She believes in no such things. In this respect, Ursula's response to Gudrun at this juncture is apposite: "'How awful!' . . . 'It's very dull to create oneself into nothing better' . . . " (WL 51). Ursula is not the professional artist, but in her "serious and sincere" project of integrity she manifests the kinds of freedom, surprisingness and affirmative creativity that Gudrun can only envy from the outside.

It is more than simply Gerald (for all his obtuse, phallic insistence) that oppresses Gudrun. She is "imprisoned within a limited, false set of concepts" of the sort Birkin may have had in mind when he challenges Hermione in the classroom (WL 41). (Birkin, *pace* the critics of Lawrence's anti-intellectualism, rejects the claim that "knowledge" destroys "spontaneity." The young are not automatons because of "too much mind, but too little," he tells Hermione [WL 41].) For all her exquisite self-conscious cleverness, Gudrun is insidiously self-deceptive. She thinks that her "ideas" (or her art) save her from actuality and despair. They do not. When, for example, she ponders marriage,

> She thought of Gerald and Shortlands—marriage and the home! . . . She suddenly conjured up a rosy room, with herself in a beautiful gown, and a handsome man in evening dress who held her in his arms in the firelight, and kissed her. This picture she entitled 'Home.' It would have done for the Royal Academy. (WL 376)

The question at hand—marriage—is of course one of the novel's central preoccupations. The best Gudrun can manage in exploring its dynamic spaces is to conjure up a hackneyed, albeit ironically framed, picture. Gudrun's art may give her at times the illusion of freedom, but ultimately it just binds her to her own maddening "negation." ("Everything was intrinsically a piece of irony to her" [WL 418].)

When Gudrun is not applying her alienating artistry personally in order to distance herself from the proximity of desperation and psychic disintegration, she is exercising, in conversation, the artistry of a good trial lawyer, who never asks a question to which she does not know the answer beforehand. Her conversational art is as a consequence alternately withering and savage. Gudrun provides nearly all of the novel's *bon mots*. "'Where does his *go* go to?'" she asks, when Ursula reflects on Gerald's rage for the latest appliances (WL 48). Or, "'Yet he [Birkin] wants marriage!—Marriage—*et puis?' 'Le paradis!'* mocked Gudrun," as she and Gerald, in earshot of Birkin, agree that for them love is "real abandon," not commitment (WL 291).

Gudrun's wit is quick and sharp throughout. She is devastating, particularly intrachronotopically speaking, because her insights are "so true" (WL 263). It is vital for Gudrun that her perceptions of the "everyday world" (her particular chronotope) hold "good," since she then "need not

recognize anything beyond" (WL 286). In regard to Birkin, who inhabits another zone, the "truth" of Gudrun's observations is more complex. As she so aptly informs her sister, Birkin is "not clever enough, he is too intense in spots." He "cries you down." He lacks "self-criticism," all of which Ursula finds "so true" (WL 263).

In the negative-critical realm, Gudrun is nonpareil. Her limitation is that she is blind to unfinalizability as Bakhtinian "surplus," or to the immanence of infinitude; Gudrun does not see infinity in a grain of sand, or anywhere else. Having been profoundly jarred by the truth of Gudrun's criticisms, Ursula then "started a revulsion from Gudrun. She finished life off so thoroughly, she made things so ugly and so final":

> As a matter of fact, even if it were as Gudrun said, about Birkin, other things were true as well. But Gudrun would draw two lines under him and cross him out like an account that is settled. There he was, summed up, paid for, done with. And it was such a lie. This finality of Gudrun's, this dispatching of people and things in a sentence, it was all such a lie. (WL 263)

Gudrun's "truth" is "so true," so "finally" true, that it becomes "a lie." Gudrun, and the zone she inhabits, denies the reality of what Henry James calls the "principle of growth." The confirmation of Ursula's revelation about her sister occurs when she sees "a robin." Gudrun performs a "savage carving": "'Doesn't he feel important?'" To which

Ursula responds in kind: "'Isn't he a little Lloyd George of the air!'" (WL 263-4). Soon after, for Ursula, comes the final flight from Gudrunesque ironic-reductive modes of perception. Ursula thinks to herself:

> After all, it is impudence to call them little Lloyd Georges. They are really unknown to us, they are the unknown forces. . . . They are of another world. How stupid anthropomorphism is! Gudrun is really impudent, insolent, making herself the measure of everything, making everything come down to human standards. . . . The universe is non-human, thank God. (WL 264)

Ursula has her dialogic epiphany here, as does Birkin in the "wet grass" of Breadalby. She has the experience, in the apprehension of the robin, of dynamic otherness, of the unknown "underworld" which is intrinsically "open," "whole," and perfectly independent of reductive (monologic) cognition. In the robin Ursula sees one of Blake's "infinite particularities": "How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,/ Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?"[1]

At one moment Gudrun approximates a dialogic or "true" unknown, when she begins to ask questions that are nearly or potentially "serious and sincere." Here she aggressively interrogates Birkin at the core of his misanthropy (or promiscuous philanthropy: love and hate

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[1]William Blake, *Letters*, 28; "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," *Poetry and Prose*, 35.

converge at the extremities Birkin represents). Gudrun's precise question concerns the future of England or the race: "'You think there is no hope?'" She persistently grills Birkin: "'You think the English will have to disappear?'" "'But in what way do you mean, disappear?'" Throughout Gudrun has "dilated dark eyes"; she is absorbed in a "spell of divination." She is, as an exception to her characteristic attitude, genuinely drawn by the allure of the unknown, by a real need to know answers to her questions. For an instant in the openness of her "dark, dilated eyes" there is a hint of the possibility of true addressivity and receptivity in the exchanges: "Her dark, dilated eyes rested on Birkin, as if she could conjure the truth of the future out of him, as out of some instrument of divination" (WL 395).

However, it becomes clear that Gudrun's receptivity is not quite (and finally not at all) dialogic, in that she withdraws from an effort of reciprocity in the exchanges. There is ultimately no hope, and therefore no possibility of creativity in her seeking. Gudrun cannot help but presume that answers to her morbid questions already reside in Birkin's ostensible silence—from her point of view Birkin is merely withholding the *already* known, even about such a speculative subject. She has no capacity collaboratively in discourse to explore the unresolvable or unfinalizable regions where humanity makes a future world (and finds its "answers" in the making) or fails to do so. Gudrun's presupposition is that, as in divination, answers already

exist, the "future" has already happened, or has been fated to happen, as in the artifice of tragedy.

When Gudrun finds Birkin unforthcoming or, from her perspective, evasive, she turns "purely cynical." She mocks Birkin's patriotism. She "sneers." She "smiles." She causes Gerald to laugh. She has succeeded in exposing Birkin's nakedly open, "soulful" love of country. The exposure of that which is open, credulous and ridiculous in Birkin prompts that which is closed, disbelieving and impregnably cynical in herself. She discovers an absolute, negative certainty in herself. She laughs her strictly monologic or demonic laughter.

While the characteristic interrogative mode of the novel's chronotope (and Ursula-Birkin's) is open, a soulful "giving away" of oneself and one's most vulnerable affirmations, Gudrun's representative questions, by contrast, close and finish. Her "How much" finishes off Gerald, all men and all hope of connection to the "deep source." Gerald

> was to her the most crucial instance of the existing world, the ne plus ultra of the world of man as it existed for her. In him, she knew the world, and had done with it. . . . But there *were* no new worlds, there were no more *men*, there were only *creatures* like Loerke. The world was finished now, for her. (WL 452)

Gudrun thinks Gerald "a fine thing really" (WL 419). But he and the world to which he and she are fused is a "farce." She muses bitterly: "Who cares a button for our

national ideals, any more than for our national bowler hat? Aha, it is all old hat, it is all old bowler hat?" (WL 419). Gudrun's "bowler hat" represents a progressively corrosive betrayal and disbelief in father, fatherland, all men, all mankind and ultimately herself. With Gudrun's destruction of Gerald there is destruction of "the world." "The world was finished, now, for her."

Even Gudrun, however, makes one final effort in the ultimate mountains to "break a way through" to a new world, but again she is stymied by a freezing disbelief. In the snow, "Gudrun was driven by a strange desire":

> She wanted to plunge on and on, till she came to the end of the valley of snow. Then she wanted to climb the wall of white finality, climb over, into the peaks that sprang up like sharp petals in the heart of the frozen, mysterious navel of the world. She felt that there, over the strange, blind, terrible wall of rocky snow . . . she would be a oneness with all, she would be herself the eternal, infinite silence, the sleeping, timeless, frozen centre of the All. (WL 410)

Gudrun's desire is to break a way through the old dead world to a new dead world. Her vision of achieved being is the perfect inversion of the dialogic new heaven of collaborative conversation in prosaic valleys, where "cabbages will grow" (as Hepburn puts it in *The Captain's Doll*). Instead, Gudrun's vision is reminiscent of the deepest bolgia of Dante's Inferno, where the arch-betrayer hangs inverted, permanently fixed in ice. Her desire is to join the

"eternal, infinite silence, the . . . timeless, frozen centre of the All."

In breaking a way through to somewhere else, however infernal, Gudrun nonetheless breaks down the "actual world of man." The novel has little sympathy for Gerald's patriarchal, phallocentric world. As an instrument of destruction, the novel admires Gudrun and her work, for there is no doubt that her symbolic castration of Gerald resonates to the broadest reaches of "great time" in the novel. Her actions, like those of all the main characters, has epochal ramifications.

> [She] wanted to gather the glowing, eternal peaks to her breast, and die. [Gerald] saw them, saw they were beautiful. But there arose no clamour in his breast, only a bitterness that was visionary in itself. He wished the peaks were grey and unbeautiful, so that she should not get her support from them. Why did she betray the two of them so terribly . . . Why did she leave him standing there . . . like death, to gratify herself among the rosy snow-tips? (WL 446-7)

Gudrun finds her consummate destructive intercourse in and *with* the inhuman, phallic mountains. She destroys Gerald, his world and her own in the process. In so doing, she attains the farthest heights available to her chronotope of actuality: she achieves tragic heroism. Hers is by no means a despised achievement from the novel's broader perspective; Gudrun is not simply a villain, a Freudian castrating female, an anti-dialogician. She has her

impressive stature. But her impressiveness is within a limited (self-limited) chronotope, albeit the chronotope of the entire extant "world of man."

(2) *"'What do women want, at the bottom?'"*

By comparison to Gudrun, Gerald's self-defining interrogative gesture is simple, in its way earnestly questing, stupidly insistent, and finally pathetic. He is, as Gudrun in a variety of ways notes, "obtuse" and inept in his essential relation to the female of the species (WL 416). His ineptitude is not a matter of impotency, but rather the reverse. It is a matter of "obtuse," "boring" potency or phallicism. Gerald is circumscribed by purely phallic consciousness. His monologic existential code—the principle of organization of the "project" of his being—is a phallic will to power:

> [Gerald] had a vision of power. . . . He was the God of the machine. . . . Suddenly he had conceived the pure instrumentality of mankind. . . . The will of man was the determining factor. Man was the arch-god of earth. His mind was obedient to serve his will. Man's will was the absolute, the only absolute. (WL 222-23)

Gerald is the patriarch of his realm, of the entire monologically conceived "actual world" of the novel. He attempts to dominate, to enclose and possess Gudrun within the tight hot circle of his willful desire, just as he attempts

to possess all other elements of "his" world. For a time this attempt fascinates and flatters Gudrun. Yet ultimately Gerald's "form-shaping ideology," his simply phallic interrogation or appeal, proves too stupid, gross and "boring" for Gudrun: "Nothing is so boring as the phallus, so inherently stupid and stupidly conceited," she concludes. As she does so, she tolls the death-knell of phallicism as far as the novel is concerned (WL 463).

That Gerald is monotonously phallic in relation to Gudrun is of course something for which they are both responsible; they impose their personal limitations, their self-defining needs and desires, upon each other. Gudrun is as much transfixed by phallicism and the appeal of power as is Gerald. Or she is at first, until she realizes that she is herself more powerful in her destructive cynicism than he is at the phallic source. When Gudrun realizes just how vulnerable and needful Gerald, for all his phallic insistence, really is, the spell of phallicism is broken for her, and she can feel only the entrapment and enslavement it effects: "Like a child at the breast, he cleaved intensely to her, and she could not put him away" (WL 345). Later Gerald is "an infant crying in the night, this Don Juan" (WL 466).

Gerald and Gudrun's "lovemaking" more and more bares its essential nature, until finally in the eroticized landscape of the phallic mountain-top, where the high valley is a "white perfect cradle of snow," or a frozen womb, their "lovemaking" becomes purely and simply rape: "His heart

went up like a flame of ice, he closed over her like steel. He would destroy her rather than be denied" (WL 402). With visionary clarity Gudrun sees that Gerald's project of becoming has been a process of reduction to pure "instrumentality": "Gerald is so limited. . . . He would grind on at the old mills forever. They grind on and on when there is nothing to grind" (WL 418, 463).

As a consequence Gudrun absolves herself of responsibility. She becomes in her mind simply a victim of Gerald's brutality: "She sighed. She was lost now. She had no choice" (WL 343). And Gudrun feels this way until the "barren tragedy" of their interdestruction works its way to its "inevitable conclusion": "But always it was this eternal see-saw, one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because the other was nulled" (WL 445). Thus Gudrun and Gerald enact the perfectly anti-dialogic relation of essentially alienated egoistic interdestruction.

Gerald, in ways that his characteristic question makes clear, is *"borné"* (WL 452). Not only is he *borné*, he is *passé*. His "what *do* women want?" is deeply, inadvertently anachronistic. For all Gerald's desire to be *à la mode*, to apply "the latest appliances," and to exercise "go," he is nevertheless as much as Hermione "suckled in a creed outworn" (WL 293). Gerald's creed is chivalric; his question of "what *do* women want?" has the noblesse oblige of the patriarch, or of the questing knight.[2]

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[2]Gerald's chivalry is an observation of Pamela Yaco, 2 Dec. 1990.

Unconsciously perhaps, but nonetheless strikingly, his question makes a "sideways glance" at the "olde dayes of the kyng Arthour," when the "lusty bacheler" knight is dispatched by the queen to discover "what thing it is that women most desire." It is obtuse of Gerald not to know in advance the answer to this time-honored question of romance. In Bakhtin's terms, Gerald's question has the "stylistic aura" of chivalric romance: there is an "echo of the generic whole that resounds in the word" (SG 87-8). Gerald is dull to the sounds of the past as they resound in his own words. Not hearing (or heeding) the past, he is doomed to repeat it. Apparently Gerald does not know, as the knight in "The Tale of the Wyf of Bathe" discovers, that "Women desiren to have soverayntee/ As wel over their husbond as over their love,/ And for to be in maystry him above."

Birkin has the sharper dialogic or contextually attuned ear. He knows, as I have noted previously, that he too is apt to be at the "beck and call" of the woman, particularly of the queenly Ursula: "He worshipped her as age worships youth . . ." (WL 258, 369). But Birkin actively resists the anachronistic desire to fall to his knees before Ursula. Birkin possesses the Lawrencian virtue of knowing that subservience is destructive not only of the man, but of the woman as well. ("When the man goes dead, the woman goes inert" [P 538].)

Birkin instead tries creatively to resist—or to oppose in kind—Ursula's powers, even (or especially) her dialogic (open, unfinalizable, abundant) ones. He tries to destroy the

"moon's dominion," the absolute or monologic hegemony of "Cybele, the accursed Syria Dea," over his being,[3] whereas from the start, Gerald courts his own destruction at Gudrun's hands. Like Gudrun, Gerald is driven by the "aesthetic" compulsion to "see things through," however ghastly or inevitable (WL 327). Or he must see things through *especially* if they are ghastly and inevitable. He must see through his father's death, though his mother warns him that he will end up "on Queer Street": "'You mind *yourself*, or you'll find yourself on Queer Street. . . . You're hysterical, always were'" (WL 327). Burdened as Gerald is with the guilt of his fratricide, his need for finality is consistently both a self-abdication and a death-wish.

Thus *Women in Love* is far from a simple indictment of the castrating female in the person of Gudrun on the one hand, or a paean to the cliché of fecund womanhood in the person of Ursula on the other. It is nothing less than the monologic limitations—all that is *borné* and *passé*—about the phallocentric consciousness (a consciousness shared and recreated momentaneously by Gerald and Gudrun in their relationship) through which the novel attempts to "break a way."

In this regard it is important to note that Birkin, like Loerke, is non-phallic. He considers sex "destructive," and

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[3]Gavriel Ben-Ephraim explores the extent of the female dominance of Lawrence's imagination in *The Moon's Dominion: Narrative Dichotomy and Female Dominance in Lawrence's Earlier Novels* (East Brunswick, NJ: Associated UP, 1981).

prefers "stillness" to action in his intimate moments with Ursula (WL 252). Moreover, Birkin certainly has no truck with the "actual" patriarchal world of the novel. He rejects it all, from mine to mountain-top, and would rather opt to be "nowhere" than to be a part of any of it (WL 315).

If for Gabriel Garcia Marquez it is the "autumn of the Patriarch," then for Lawrence it is dead winter: "Birkin went home again to Gerald. . . . Dead, dead and cold!" Birkin's thought immediately extends to the heights and depths of consciousness, or to his philosophic-anthropological orientation in "great time," when he muses significantly on "Imperial Caesar dead, and turned to clay . . ." (WL 479).

The death of Gerald is the death of an epoch. With him dies the validity of the materialist world view, or the philosophy of "instrumentality." Gerald, and Gudrun too, in her way, reduced to their starkest instrumentality, *will* their own death. Gudrun muses bitterly on "the Geralds of this world": "So manly by day, yet all the while, such crying of infants in the night. Let them turn into mechanisms, let them. Let them become instruments, pure machines, pure wills that work like clockwork, in perpetual repetition" (WL 466). Both come to enact the desperation inherent in the Blakean perception of "single vision and Newton's sleep": "The bounded is loathed by its possessor. The same dull round even of a univer[s]e would soon become a mill with complicated wheels[.]"[4] Before his death, Gudrun comes to

[4]William Blake, "There is NO Natural Religion," *Poetry and Prose*, 2.

see Gerald as "a million wheels and cogs and axles" (WL 466).

With Gerald dies the monologic absolutism of patriarchy. Just as Gerald has superseded his father in the mine, where the father represented a more gentle or Christian form of materialism, so now Gerald is superseded in the "actual" world by Loerke, where the single motive principle is an inversion of benevolent materialism, where it is in fact the devolutionary "principle" of dog eat dog. *Women in Love* is one of the more sustained indictments of the phallocentric patriarchal consciousness in the language, *and* of that which supersedes it.

2. "The New, Central Clue": Ursula, Birkin, Open Totality

By struggling to define their relationship while living it, Ursula and Birkin enact dialogism. "Their dialogues," as Fleishman notes, "are already an enactment of the star-equilibrium which is the ostensible goal of their striving—a condition in which the lovers are alone together, communicating but different, dynamic but enduring."[5] Lawrence's love-ideal is fundamentally a conception of messy (prosaic) reciprocity in discourse (where discourse, of course, may be more than the "dumb show" of words). Relations, according to Lawrence, are always striving to be

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[5]Avrom Fleishman, "Lawrence and Bakhtin," *Rethinking Lawrence* 114.

new, and "a new relation, a new relatedness hurts somewhat in the attaining; and will always hurt. . . . And moreover, between living things at least, an adjustment means also a fight, for each party, inevitably, must 'seek its own' in the other, and be denied" (P 530).

Ursula and Birkin dramatize the "new central clue to human life." It is what Bakhtin might call the dialogic clue: "And the relation beween man and woman will change forever, and will forever be the new central clue to human life. It is the *relation itself* which is the quick and central clue to life . . ." (P 531). In Ursula and Birkin's "living conversation" all is "quick" and changing; the constant is the dialogic "relation itself," which informs the "open totality" of their chronotope and of the novel.

All other chronotopes embedded in the novel are distinguished by their "fixity," so that even the figurative language that pertains to fixed chronotopic characters is itself fixed. Gerald's "totem" is the "wolf." He remains "bathed in arctic light" throughout (WL 14). The "actual" world is in a state of corruption represented by the wooden African fetish of a woman locked immemorially in the anguish of childbirth. The fetish has its poignancy, or its interrogatively challenging responsiveness in the novel's own chronotope of "great time," in the sense that when Birkin and the broadest authorial latitudes of the novel ask, "Is our day of creative life finished?", the fetish tacitly responds in the affirmative. This unspoken question hovers

in the farthest interrogative reaches of the novel in a manner to which the fetish spectacularly, tacitly responds. According to it, the future *is* "powerless" to be born. Or it is so if civilization takes the "African" way of sensation to be its way. The fetish is eloquent in interchronotopic dialogue, or in dialogue with the novel's largest interrogative concerns. Within its own tightly circumscribed chronotope (the novel's "actual" world), it is narrowly significant. In its bohemian London context the African fetish is simply another sensational, fashionably gruesome example of primitivism, another example of a devotion to decadence on Halliday's part.

Ursula and Birkin, by contrast, have no such fixed self-descriptive signs. All their utterances are both symbolic and profoundly prosaic. Symbolic actions "cluster and uncluster" in their chronotope, shaping evolving meanings as they go. Thus, for example, the daisies that Birkin absent-mindedly scatters on the water ("tiny radiant things, like an exaltation") take on increased (unfinalized) meaning as Ursula and Birkin's "freedom together" evolves (WL 131, 132). Ursula, for instance, ruminating on the image of the daisies, asks, "Why did they move her so strongly and mystically?" Her answer at that moment must be incomplete, and will remain so, even as it absorbs positive content in the experience of their "freedom together."

Their relationship has its active potentiality. "Something" is always "taking place" as a newness or

ontological "surprisingness," and their language and the language that describes their chronotope reflect this open-endedness. Their symbolic language has the dialogic value of "fused mystery" (MHS 159). It has Blakean "infinite particularity": "The content of a true symbol," remarks Bakhtin, "is correlated with the idea of worldwide wholeness, the fullness of the cosmic and human universe. The world has contextual meaning. 'The image of the world appears miraculously in the word' (Pasternak)" (MHS 159).

The "image of the world" appears in Ursula and Birkin's discourse. It is the ideal world of dialogic connectedness to the heights and depths—the "cosmic" unfinalizable heights and depths—of consciousness, and its activity mainly takes the form of "serious and sincere" questions.

(3) *"'Do you really love me?'"*

At first Ursula's self-descriptive question may seem trite and monological, or to be angling for a single, fixed or unchanging answer. She undoubtedly has a desire for finality, security in her relationship with Birkin (he is, after all, a "changer," a "chameleon," "not one of us" [WL 92]). And Birkin does with justification mistrust the desire for permanency that her "war-cry" seems to demand. Yet the gesture made by her being, the import of her interrogative code, is not simply negative or entrapping. Her "war-cry" is

also an open challenge to the vigor of Birkin's faith in her own (and his own) primal positivity.

Ursula's question, in other words, has a regal expansiveness and magnanimity about it. She is the Beatrice at the heart of Birkin's "rose." Her question is ultimately more an open invitation to partake in commingled being at the "heart of the rose" than a non-negotiable demand for the institutional fixity of marriage (WL 247). Ursula's question, however similar in form it may at first appear to Gudrun's "'How much do you love me?'", ultimately turns out to be its opposite.

Birkin finally admits that he loves her "too much" (WL 408). Together, they undertake the collaborative project of selfhood that leads to the heart of the rose of "perfect" conjoined being as becoming, which is the "new heaven" of dialogism (WL 311). In accepting the challenge of Ursula's love (she never withdraws the term, for all Birkin's protestations against it), Birkin is effectively modifying (and in some sense rejecting) his own nearly desperate misanthropies and disbeliefs in the unfinalizable verities. He is rejecting Breadalby, the London of the Pompadour, the entire "actual" world as he has known it.

Some of their liveliest dialogue is *about* dialogue; it is about the ground rules by which the "living conversation" of their relationship will abide. Its serious moments are also its laughing moments. For example, Birkin struggles to define his ideal of "star-equilibrium": "'What I want is

strange conjunction with you . . . not meeting and mingling; you are quite right:—but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings:—as the stars balance each other'" (WL 148). What Birkin wants, as Fleishman suggests, is for the dialogic ideal of conversation to define their relationship. To this central seriousness Ursula responds with inviting mockery: "'Isn't this rather sudden?'"

Where one might expect to find a defensive authorial reaction in the presence of the holy of holies, the novel's *raison d'être*, here in the form of the concept of "star-equilibrium," instead one gets laughter: Birkin "began to laugh." The novel consistently sticks to its dialogic-prosaic principles. Nothing is "absolute," not even "change" or dialogically conceived relatedness itself. The laughter of the moment signals the achievement of "living conversation," so that where Gudrun's mockery reduces, finishes, closes conversation, Ursula's expands, initiates, opens or, in a word, enlivens its passionate, struggling context.

When a "young cat" crosses the lovers' field of vision and begins to cuff his mate, Ursula and Birkin have a ready-to-hand exemplum for clarification and debate: "'Now why does he do that?' cried Ursula in indignation." To which Birkin responds provocatively: "'They are on intimate terms.'" To Ursula, Mino is "a bully like all the males." "'Oh it makes me so cross, this assumption of male superiority! And it is such a lie!'" She compares Mino's "bossiness" with Gerald's "Wille zur Macht," and thus with the entire

chronotope of "actuality" or inert phallicism and materialism in the novel.

Birkin for his part combatively suggests that Mino's behaviour, on the contrary, is simply another sort of effort at "star-equilibrium"—and here he and Ursula join battle in earnest. The entire dialogue elaborates, in a laughing context, the ideal of animating intersubjectivity. When, for instance, the landlady interrupts them, "[t]hey both look at her, very much as the cats had looked at them, a little while before." The significant, unvoiced difference between the homo sapiens and the cats, one that is clearly part of the comic context, is that whereas in the example of the cats it is clear that Mino "entertains" the female with his "superior wisdom," there is no such clear superiority in Birkin and Ursula's battling.

Increasingly as the argument continues, it is Ursula who "cuffs" Birkin into submission. At the close she presses him: "'Say 'my love' to me, say it, say it'" (WL 154). And he does, "murmuring in a subtle voice of love, and irony, and submission: 'Yes,—my love, yes,—my love.'" Without equivocation Birkin submits to Ursula. All that exists of his chaffing "male superiority" fits with room to spare in the tiny space of a "subtle" overtone of "irony." Birkin is certainly no Mino, no Gerald. His ideal of "star-equilibrium" is no prescription for "male superiority." If anything, quite the reverse. What Birkin (and his and the novel's dialogic values) must fear is being at "the beck and call" of the more

vital female. His challenge is to engage in "passionate struggle" with the other, in order ultimately to "be denied." In the course of their dialogue, "wild gaiety" comes over Ursula's face. The carnival world is being born in them; the unfinalizable, laughing carnival world is "breaking a way through" the integuments of their "old stable egos."

The most significant stumbling block to achieved dialogicality in Ursula-Birkin and in their chronotope of hope is the presumption by Birkin-Lawrence of *female* superiority. Early on Gerald mocks the doctrine of "Salvator femininus" in Birkin (WL 98). In "Moony," Birkin tries to destroy the monologic or absolute domination of the female over his being. He stones the image of the moon on the lake: "'Cybele—curse her! The accursed Syria Dea!—Does one begrudge it her?—What else is there—?'" (WL 246).

The finality of all absolutes must be denied to the seeker of true becoming. Yet as Birkin continues to stone the moon's image, "The waters were loud on the shore. He saw the moon regathering itself insidiously, saw the heart of the rose intertwining vigorously and blindly, calling back the scattered fragments, winning home the fragments, in a pulse and effort of return" (WL 247). Birkin cannot abolish the "moon's dominion." To do so finally would also be an achievement of absolutism, and as a consequence equally deadly. The effort to destroy absolutism, even of the "female" (procreative, "living") virtues, must be made, and

must be denied. Hence the moon's image regathers as "the heart of the rose," the heart of vital reality itself.

The effort of stoning, viewed as a dialogue between Birkin and the moon, or as an interanimating dynamic of destruction and re-creation, also symbolizes the novel's own broadest activity of shaping unity from multiplicity, or of expressing "open totality": the waters were "loud," the moon is "calling back" its "scattered fragments." The moon is blind, yet vigorous in its "effort of return." It is actively responsive in its project of re-integration, just as Birkin is in his project of selfhood at this moment. For as long as Birkin stones the image, the moon's effort of becoming is never finalized but always potential, always centered in contact with the unknown silent depths, the creative-chaotic "underworld" of waters. The moon continually, in its "passionate struggle" with Birkin, forms and re-forms the "heart of the rose," the ontological heart of the "really real." Analogously, the novel in its entirety forms its open totality in the dialogic competition of chronotopes and voices, shaping its complex integrity from the violence of voices, each urgently, interrogatively seeking its own in the other, and being denied.

Ursula and Birkin progressively make dialogic believers of each other. Their fulfillment occurs in a moment of physical contact in "Excurse": "It was a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being . . . outflooding from

the Source of the deepest life-force . . . " (WL 314). They have broken a way through to the "open and whole" "underworld," or "new world" of pure potentiality: "They were glad. . . . They laughed . . . " (WL 314).

It is a curious problem that generations of criticism would puzzle over the oddities of Lawrence's conception of sexuality, curious in the sense that his principal mouthpiece, Birkin, admits to hating sex as "destructive." Lawrence's attention to sex here is, as are his fundamental fictional preoccupations at all times, "axiological and ontological."[6] He, like Bakhtin and other philosophers of potentiality, owes his primary allegiance to manifestations of the "Source of the deepest life-force." Sex, when it can be interpreted as dialogic intersubjectivity or "living conversation" between lovers, happens to be for him a vivid instance of fundamental positivities. Here, sex is for Ursula and Birkin an expression of belief in potentiality. As such, it is the source of all knowing and being. Birkin challenges Hermione, "'How can you know anything, when you don't believe?'" (WL 297). How can one know *anyone,* Birkin might proceed, without belief? Lovemaking by Ursula and Birkin is an effort of understanding, of hope and of belief. Its "living conversation" is an activity of connection to unfinalizable sources of being. To Ursula's "war-cry" there is only one fitting response: shared laughter.

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[6]James B. Sipple, "Laughter," 218. Sipple notes that Jarrett-Kerr and Miko are also of this opinion.

(4) *"Is our day of creative life finished?"*

Birkin's characteristic question encompasses the others. In this sense Birkin is autobiographical, or, as an experimental self of the author, closer than the others to autobiographical or authorial inclusiveness. Yet Birkin's inclusiveness is not *con*clusive, as the nature of his interrogation suggests. His questioning, particularly early on, is nearly closed in despair, as it verges on monologic certainty of response. The alarming implication of the novel throughout is that, yes, "our day of creative life" may well be "finished": "There remained this . . . awful African process, to be fulfilled" (WL 254).

But by the same token, Birkin's question is open in its earnest or soulful giving of self "away." In dialogic connection to Ursula, he refuses to *act* as if "our day of creative life" is "finished." His reciprocated effort at creativity with Ursula has, as its source, the openness and positivity of hope and wonder. Creativity is an immanent reality in their dialogic relationship. They live the dialogic virtues of future-oriented openness and hope, and they do so despite the encrustations of Birkin's incipient despair on the one hand, and Ursula's absolute need to be worshipped as a *magna mater* on the other.

One of the myriad dialogic struggles in the novel is Birkin's fight against "fixities" or negative certainties, the

certainties that Ursula helps him to see as part of the old, dead world—the world of Hermione and Breadlby—of which he is so fond. Together with Ursula, Birkin reviews the negative certainties—misanthropy is one of them—that challenge his ability to live. Indeed, one of the freedoms of their "freedom together" is the freedom of open inquiry. More than any other, it identifies their combined project of integrity. Would the instinctively robust Ursula marry an absolutely misanthropic Birkin, or he her? Such a question implicitly reverberates in Birkin's consciousness, and makes its many momentaneous corrections.

They rouse "each other to a fine passion of opposition" (WL 126). What is mainly opposed is the monologic resolve (and guilty pleasure) with which Birkin clings to his despair, his prophetic role. His misanthropic, ridiculous "final solution" to the human condition, "a world empty of people," is the most suspect monologism or absolutism of all in the novel's purview. *Women in Love*'s messiest questions remain unresolved by recourse to the absolutism of misanthropy, as Ursula, Birkin and the authorial dimensions of the novel well know. While Birkin rants against humanity as "anti-creation," Ursula registers a "certain impatient fury in him . . . and at the same time a great amusement in everything, and a final tolerance. And it was this tolerance she mistrusted, not the fury" (WL 128).

Birkin is here negatively voicing a central principle of the novel's dialogic belief. That humanity is fixed in "anti-

creation" implies the obverse, that affirmative creativity is at least a potential reality. Constantly, the novel itself reaches out for a positively creative or dialogic connection with the reader; it "addressively" anticipates or "turns toward" a responsive reader or "superaddressee," and invites dialogue. Were there no belief in the possibility of such a creative-dialogic connection with the human world of potential readers, there would be no novel. The novel by its very existence contradicts Birkin's most radically misanthropic absolutisms.

To the extent that Birkin (and the novel) from time to time cozily settle into any such misanthropic finalizing positions (including love of silence, love of Breadalby, love of a vision of the end of the world), the novel is quick to indicate that the "answer" to these negations (expressed in Birkin as "amusement," "final tolerance") is falsifying. The active irresolution of "impatient fury" is by far the preferred dialogic-prosaic attitude to finalizing judgements, as in Ursula's reaction just cited: "And it was this tolerance she mistrusted, not the fury." Elsewhere, Ursula likewise remonstrates, "'How can anybody ever be right, who is so cocksure? It shows you are wrong'" (WL 153).

Increasingly in the novel, as Ursula and Birkin's love-relation is more securely achieved, Birkin's misanthropy takes on the appearance of promiscuous philanthropy, foolish patriotism, a giving of self away to various and sundry, in the ultimately exposed "holy foolishness" of being

a self-proclaimed "Salvator Mundi" (WL 130). At these times the lovers' "passion of opposition" assumes explictly satiric-comic forms, with Birkin-Lawrence becoming the butt of the joke: "'And if you don't believe in love, what *do* you believe in?' she asked, mocking. 'Simply in the end of the world, and grass?'"

At this moment Birkin (justifiably) is "beginning to feel a fool," but, characteristically (and autobiographically), rather than make an effort of ironic self-protection in the manner of Gudrun, he further "gives himself away," or flaunts a kind of "holy foolishness": "'I believe in the unseen hosts'" (WL 129). As a matter of dialogic principle, he responds to a potentially finalizing attack with egregiously exposed openness or candor. Earnestness encourages an answering earnestness, and thus enables the continuing dialogic open unity of their discourse. Their unfinalizable interrogative dialogue always takes them deeper and higher into the "soulful" regions of the spirit (where one makes a "gift" of one's spirit to the other); their exchanges reveal self and create self (and other) as they go. Together in dialogue and in its physical expression, they connect not only to each other, but to the "open" and "whole" "underworld" of the active principle: ". . . the life flowed through him as from some new fountain, he was as if born out of the cramp of a womb" (WL 311).

Indeed, their intersubjectivity attains at times a perfection beyond the reach of dialogue (as "mere verbal

exchange"), beyond a need for it. They attain the special unfinalizable consummation of angelic laughter, or of silent "bliss":

> In the new superfine bliss, a peace superseding knowledge, there was no I and you, there was only the third, unrealised wonder, the wonder of existing not as oneself, but in a consummation of my being and of her being in a new One, a new, paradisal unit regained from the duality." (WL 369)

All of the other main characters address their typical interrogations to an other; however, Birkin's most representative question forms itself in interior monologue or investigative meditation: "Was this then all that remained? Was there left now nothing but to break off from the happy creative being, was the time up? Is our day of creative life finished?" (WL 254). The reverberating inwardness of Birkin's interrogative reverie would seem to suggest Hermione-like self-enclosure, or "Hamletising." "Hamletising" is in fact one of Birkin's egoistic flaws of which he is aware (as he also recognizes other "deadening" connections to Hermione and her chronotope): "'I hate myself serious'" (WL 187). However, there is complexity (the "contravened knot") in Birkin that monological characters like Hermione lack. In addition to incipient closure (or self-enclosure), there is the openness or impersonality of the broadest perspective. That is, Birkin's questions are both inclusive, and finally inconclusive. They,

more than the questions of the others, make of the novel an interrogatory assembly of nested Russian dolls.

Birkin's questions, as the largest, are also the most empty. They are messy, vast, unanswerable, and often enough foolish. They engage human consciousness at its "maximum," where, as Lawrence puts it, "we are religious" (P 559). The concerns revealed by Birkin's queries, in other words, are those of the committed, profoundly responsible individual who "writes for the race" and who shares its fate. By their very messiness they make implicit appeals to the reader for support. There is obvious solidarity in the effort of expression, despite (and because of) its notorious misanthropic manifestations. Gudrun, typically, sees through Birkin's misanthropy. To her he is simply "a patriot" (WL 396).

Birkin's characteristic question, then, approximates authorial inclusivenesses, and reveals the impersonal or epochal dimension of his and Ursula's zone. Birkin and Ursula exist in "great time"; they are vitally connected to the past and future as the others are not. They are in dialogic transit between epochs:

> They seemed to fall away into the profound darkness. There was no sky, no earth, only one unbroken darkness, into which, with a soft, sleeping motion, they seemed to fall, like one closed seed of life falling through dark, fathomless space. . . . To him, the wonder of this transit was overwhelming. He was falling through a gulf of infinite darkness, like a meteorite plunging across the chasm between the

> worlds. The world was torn in two, and he was plunging like an unlit star through the ineffable rift. What was beyond was not yet for him. He was overcome by the trajectory. (WL 388)

Birkin and Ursula fall into a new accession of being within (and between) themselves, but they simultaneously fall out of the "actual" world and toward the new world they both so urgently anticipate. At the unresolved or unfinalizable ending, they are situated in the dark, "living" dialogic "between," or the region of perpetual becoming.

Women in Love is clearly a "novel of emergence" of Bakhtin's "fifth and last type."[7] In such novels, Bakhtin notes, the hero (in *Women in Love*'s case the conjoined Birkin-Ursula) "emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself":

> He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. The transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. The organizing force held by the future is therefore extremely great here—and this is not, of course, the private biographical future, but the historical future. It is as though the very *foundations*

[7]Of this type of novel, Bakhtin notes that "man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence. Man's emergence is accomplished in real historical time, with all of its necessity, its fullness, its future, and its profoundly chronotopic nature" (BSHR 23). See too page 19 of this study.

> of the world are changing, and man must change along with them. (BSHR 23-4; italics his)

The "organizing force held by the future" is "extremely great" in Ursula-Birkin's chronotope. Together, they are in transit toward the "new man," "plunging across the chasm between the worlds." It is impossible to imagine a novelist more explicitly, thematically aware of the transitional nature of his subject—and of the required "dialogic" means of expressing it—than Lawrence. The "form-shaping ideology" of the novel manifested by Birkin's characteristic interrogation is of competing chronotopes, of a new world (and a "new man") struggling to be born out of the cramp and grip of the old. "Is our day of creative life finished?" speaks directly to the issue of competing chronotopes and of futurity. Birkin, in conjunction with Ursula, hopes to discover a new Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. Directly before Birkin decides to propose to Ursula, "He saw the town . . . and it looked like Jerusalem to his fancy. The world was all strange and transcendent" (WL 255). However "contravened," inward and tormented Birkin's (and the novel's) self-questioning may become, there remains the primal positivity of the trajectory of transcendence, or the promise of an affirmative or dialogic future. It is in this active hope that the dynamic of doubt finds its source.

3. "Man is not the criterion"

There is emptiness and folly in the encompassing (but not enclosing) nexus of Birkin-Lawrence's questions. Yet too there is the fullness or plenitude of their engagement to hope or promise as unfinalizable potentiality, even if this potentiality or promise of the new is not limited to foreseeable human forms or futures: "Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion" (WL 478).

There seems to be persistent debate about the apparent "paradox" of Lawrence's "misanthropy." Levenson, for example, sees "contradiction" between Lawrence's religious affirmations and his misanthropic rantings. The one seems somehow to diminish the other.[8] But what could be more traditionally religious in its way than the combination of the affirmation of a nonhuman godhead, an active principle of "mystery," in which "man is not the criterion," and disgust at human actuality, particularly in its aggregate forms?

Lawrence's belief is indeed unrevolutionary in its most basic form. His theism is only perhaps surprising in its

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[8]Levenson sees contradiction between "radical individualism" and "collective misanthropy." Further, *Women in Love* "does not transcend or overcome its contradictions but presents contradictions alongside its resolutions. To make matters more difficult, the two cannot always be distinguished." Michael Levenson, "The Passion of Opposition in *Women in Love*: None, One, Two, Few, Many," *Modern Language Studies* 17 (1987) 2: 22-36.

modernist, largely negative ontological and religious context. His conservative affirmations of "soul," of "unseen hosts," of God, take on remarkable or revolutionary newness only when transplanted to the rocky "wasteland" soil of his specific milieu, as do Bakhtin's primal positivities when voiced in the context of the institutionalized "negative theology" of Marxism.

Like Lawrence's, Bakhtin's beliefs on a fundamental plane are simply put: "In the deepest part of myself, I live by eternal faith and hope in the constant possibility of the inner miracle of a new birth" (AiG 127). Here, as elsewhere, Bakhtin is arguing affirmatively in the implicit negative context of Marxist dialectical presuppositions about historical inevitability, or the predictability of human nature and of its future. In defiance of all semiotic totalitarianisms or monologisms, Bakhtin and Lawrence affirm a consistent belief in potentiality, a potentiality which in its most radical form cannot have "man" as the "criterion," any more than it can have any single monological criterion. In dialogic thinking, the only possible "criterion" for creation is a "mysterious" or multiplex (manifold) otherness, or "God," an otherness with which humanity enters into "living conversation." Their belief (expressed prosaically as a dynamic of doubt) may be surprising in its negative or modernist context, but it is hardly new in its deep form.

Women in Love's most encompassing "form-shaping ideology" is belief in a laughing, unfinalizable active

principle of "living conversation" on all scales. It is a belief in the intrinsic coherence of utterance grounded in primal positivities, and of the possibility of meaningful, "living" "open totalities" of expression. *Women in Love*'s interrogative nature is not a matter of "endless debate" in the dialectical mode of thesis, antithesis; nor is it facile or complacent in its irresolutions. Rather, there is the deliberate exploration of what "resolution" or closure might mean, and of how an "open unity" might be conceived. Opposed to the inauthentic or "aestheticizing" resolutions or closures that are indicative of the characters of the "actual" world, the world of Hermione, Gudrun and Gerald, there is the open, becoming or dialogic intersubjectivity indicative of the "new" and "whole" world, the world of the dialogic believers, Ursula and Birkin. It is they who are in transit to a "new heaven" or "Jerusalem," where "all is fulfilled of God's last and greatest laugh/. . . the silence of the last of the seven great laughs of God" (CP 698).

4. "This Struggle for Verbal Consciousness": Indeterminacy and the Dialogic Position of the Author

Women in Love is dialogic on every plane, including, or especially, the authorial. Its Foreword functions as a kind of "penumbral text" by declaring not only the novel's creative history but its credo as well, its belief in

unfinalizability, potentiality and dialogue.[9] As Lawrence states in the Foreword, the novel is a record of the "promptings" or "struggles" of the "creative, spontaneous soul" with its "unborn needs and desires." It records and momentaneously *enacts* the "new unfoldings" that "struggle up in torment" in the consciousness of the writer, who is busy trying "to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art" (WL 485-6).

The creative credo that shapes the novel stresses the presentness, open-endedness and potential messiness of process as a "passionate struggle into conscious being." Clearly *Women in Love* is not a case of the writer first arriving at "truths" and then telegraphing them ready-made as information (or even as plot, theme or the like) to its readers: "there is no Morse-code for interpreting the new life-prompting. . . . It needs a new term of speech invented each time" (K 326). *Women in Love* views itself as a "new term of speech" and considers the nature of its truths as organic or growing, unfixed and mechanically unpredetermined:

> Every man who is acutely alive is acutely wrestling with his own soul. The people that can bring forth the new passion, the new idea, this people will endure. Those others, that fix themselves in the old idea, will

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[9]Gary Saul Morson, *Hidden in Plain View: Narative and Creative Potentials in* War and Peace (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1987) 176.

> perish with the new life strangled unborn within them. Men must speak out to one another. (WL 486)

Lawrence's philosophy of potentiality works by means of dialogue ("Men must speak out to one another") to express its unfinalizable affirmations. He articulates his method in letters to friends detailing the progress of "The Sisters": of this early version of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* he writes, "I am doing a novel which I have never grasped. Damn its eyes, there I am at page 145, and I've no notion what it's about." He goes on to suggest the "living" conversational means—discussions with Frieda—by which he tries "to know and understand what is happening": "I hate it. F. says it is good. But it's like a novel in a foreign language I don't know very well—I can only just make out what it's about" (CL 1, 544). Lawrence here is precisely documenting what Bakhtin refers to as the "new," "fully realized and thoroughly consistent dialogic position" of the author with regard to the hero in the "polyphonic novel," where the author

> realizes a dialogic relationship toward his characters at every moment of the creative process and at the moment of its completion; this is part of his general design, and thus remains in even the most finished novel as an indispensable element for shaping form. (PDP 63)

The polyphonic or dialogic novel seems to speak "in a foreign language" even (or especially) to its author. In Bakhtin's words, the author's "consistent dialogic position" affirms "the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability and indeterminacy of the hero" (PDP 63). Some relativistic interpreters of Bakhtin mistakenly imply that in the polyphonic novel the "independence" of the characters is absolute, and that in a sense the author is in a dependent or subservient position to his characters, or he is for all intents and purposes absent altogether. This is not how Bakhtin sees it. For him the "primary author" has a responsibility to unity or coherence of expression, just as the individual voices within the work—voices of otherness, or of Lawrence's "resistances of life"—have responsibilities to their respective integrities as "projects," not "givens." Lawrence does not abdicate authorial responsibility for integral (unified, coherent) expression. He simply acknowledges the relativity of that expression on every plane, even the authorial. The author above all in his artistic credo must guard against absolutism, or the tendency to be a bully and a "liar" in regard to his own material: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale" (SCAL 8). His "passionate struggle into conscious being" is in Bakhtin's terms the messy or prosaic struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces within the author as he wrestles, not for absolute, falsifying control, but for authentic relatedness or dialogue with characters as voices of otherness, or as manifold "resistances."

To borrow from Isaiah Berlin's famous parable, the author who practices "creation by potential" is a hedgehog engaging characters as foxes in the incessant struggle for wholeness and sincerity.[10] The dialogic author, in other words, is engaged in a self-testing dynamic of doubt. Concerning the confession episode in *Anna Karenina*, for example, Tolstoy claims that he tried to make Levin's agnosticism more convincing than the priest's faith, because he himself was "on the priest's side, but did not want to show it."[11]

Such a novelist is in a "real," "present," positively creative struggle with "voices" as othernesses within the "great dialogue of the novel as a whole."[12] He resists objectifying and finalizing authorial absolutisms (of the sort that Gudrun, for example, finds irresistible in her reductive "savage carving"). Bakhtin observes that in the polyphonic novel

> The hero is the subject of a deeply serious, *real* dialogic mode of address, not the subject of a rhetorically *performed* or *conventionally* literary one. And this dialogue—the 'great dialogue' of the novel as a whole—takes place not in the past, but right now, that is, in the *real present* of the creative process. (PDP 63)

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[10]*Hidden* 181.

[11]Judith M. Armstrong refers to Tolstoy's claim in *The Unsaid Anna Karenina* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) 187-8.

[12]Bakhtin, contrary to Morson, Armstrong, and others, does not hear polyphony in Tolstoy: "[His] world is monolithically monologic. . . . [A] monologically naive point of view permeates everywhere" (PDP 56).

The "great dialogue" of the novel itself is never merely the "image of dialogue." The polyphonic novel

> is no stenographer's report of a *finished* dialogue, from which the author has already withdrawn and *over* which he is now located as if in some higher decision-making position: that would have turned an authentic and unfinished dialogue into an objectivized and finalized *image of a dialogue*, of the sort usual for every monologic novel. The great dialogue in Dostoevsky is organized as an *unclosed whole* of life itself, poised *on the threshold*. (PDP 63)

Women in Love is the quintessential "unclosed whole," not "the image of dialogue" but dialogic through and through. Gudrun's and Gerald's fate may be predetermined (mainly because they deny "life" *as* dialogic and unfinalizable); but Ursula's and Birkin's is not. The latter have no fate, and therefore no character, in the ordinary sense, in which, as Heraclitus claims, "character is destiny." In the extraordinary sense, on the other hand, their emergent "characters" are precisely their unfinalizable "destinies." Both characters exist at the "growing tip" of self and epoch. They are "transitional" identities. Nothing about them is mechanical or strictly predictable.

Concomitantly, their dialogue is neither microcosmically nor macrocosmically predetermined. Is it inevitable that Ursula turn on that muddy road in "Excurse" and return to Birkin, return to be his wife? Not at all. The novel eschews stock comic devices that would telegraph

happy endings and bind characters to predetermined (however felicitous) ends. The reader does not feel entirely free to laugh at (or with) the lovers in "Excurse" when, for example, the cyclist "cheerfully" interrupts their weighty battling, because the reader has not been prepared to be cheerful by the certainty of a happy outcome for the lovers in their crucial struggle (WL 308).

Conversation, even between characters who discover their certainty in one another, has an effective open-endedness and indeterminacy about it. It is as if, as Bakhtin notes, the author is in a "new position" with regard to character and moment, a "fully realized and thoroughly consistent dialogic position . . . that affirms the independence . . . and indeterminacy of the hero" (PDP 63). What the novel lacks in conventional suspense it makes up for in dialogic suspense. The outcome of crucial intersubjective moments has the surprisingness and unpredictability of "living conversation": "She was coming back. . . . 'See what a flower I found you' . . . " (WL 310). Had Ursula come back not to give Birkin a flower but to "biff" him as Hermione had done earlier, the reader would not be any more (or less) surprised.

Women in Love is an "unclosed whole" on every scale. On the microdialogic scale, the specific words and symbols that cluster about Ursula and Birkin are imbued with the unfinalizability of "sensitive expectancy" and of hope: "His soul . . . had only one grain of living hope, like a grain of

mustard seed" (WL 8; 369). On the macrodialogic scale of the novel's own "great dialogue," with its unanswerably innocent or "ultimate" questions ("Is our day of creative life finished?"), *Women in Love* also has a dialogic, or interrogative and indeterminate, relation to its subject (PDP 134). Its achievement is of openness, arrived at by open-ended means.

"'I like it. It doesn't feel *finished*'": Laughter and the "Final Word"

> Combined in the act of carnival laughter are death and rebirth, negation (a smirk) and affirmation (rejoicing laughter). This is . . . a laughter that contains a whole outlook on the world. Such is the specific quality of ambivalent carnival laughter.
>
> (M. M. Bakhtin PDP 127)

1. Unities of a Lower Order: An Overview

What becomes of Lawrence's openness after *Women in Love*? How does its dialogic achievement affect his subsequent expression? What shapes do his later laughters take? *Women in Love* represents a watershed in Lawrence's development. After its polyphonic "unity of a higher order," he frequently chooses monologic and simplifying (or at least less ambitious) organizational alternatives for his fictions. In Michael Bell's terms, "the delicate organicism of the Lawrencean novel . . . fragmented into its elements of 'poetic' vision, travel writing, essayistic commentary and public self-analysis. . . . The novel-form came apart in his hands."[1] How and why Lawrence's vision breaks down has been the subject of previous study. Bell's account of his "disintegration" implies that Lawrence loses faith in the

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[1]Michael Bell, *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 201, 192.

possibility of "modern cultured consciousness" to renew itself in dialogue with "the other":

> The openness to the other, and the continuity with other forms of life, which Lawrence saw as necessary to emotional fulfilment, were incompatible with the conceptual possession of the world typical of modern cultured consciousness. Without this, the individual psyche no longer had a properly microcosmic value. And so the elements comprising the classic Lawrencean novel begin to come apart. (*Language and Being* 145)

Undoubtedly Lawrence does see intersubjectivity, or "openness to the other," as essential to individual value: he perceives the malady of "modern cultured consciousness" in dialogic terms. In the last decade of his life, faith in "living conversation" becomes attenuated at the same time that it becomes the subject of his appeal. Aaron's "rod," in the 1922 novel by that title, is the hero's flute-voice and his potency. It is also, by broader implication, symbolic of Lawrence's vocation to speak for the "race." At that novel's demoralized ending, the rod is smashed. Throughout the decade, the presence of a confidently dialogic author, open "to the other" and speaking as a conduit of lively, resistant voices, remains problematic. The dominant voice of the fictions vacillates, sometimes wildly, between authoritarianism and exhaustion. This is not to suggest that dialogue does not continue to be the solution he proposes for the modern crisis of isolated egoism, but only that his

relation to dialogue grows wistful. It is now more theme than method. Its immediacy is in question. In this regard, his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is an appeal for "tenderness," or for a shared responsiveness beyond the need for words. Yet how adequate a "solution" to the ills of "modern cultured consciousness" is the tenderness that Lady Chatterley and her lover enjoy? Such a question is never directly engaged. By contrast, the testing of Ursula and Birkin's "solution" of marriage is the sum and substance of their novel. In comparison to *Women in Love*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (like *The Virgin and the Gipsy* and much of the fiction of the twenties) is more fabulous than dialogic. Dialogue is a subject and a "solution" in the later novels rather than a *modus operandi;* as such, it threatens to become merely an "objectivized and finalized *image*" of itself (PDP 63; italics Bakhtin's). After *Women in Love*, Lawrence is as confident as ever that he has dialogic truths to convey, but he doubts his readers' ability to hear them, and to respond in kind. As a consequence, his voice is less democratic, unguarded, or engaging in its processes of thought; it becomes insistent even by the generous standards of his prior "loudness."

"Disintegration" may be too drastic a way to describe the increasingly monologic modes of address of his last decade. Nonetheless, it is indisputable that the complex novelistic unity one associates with *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* dissolves as faith in a sympathetic

readership weakens. Paul Delany accounts for Lawrence's evolution, or dialogic devolution, in biographical terms. During and after writing what would eventually become *Women in Love*, Lawrence endures the "nightmare" of the war years; the banning of *The Rainbow*; the failure to find for *Women in Love* an English publisher; and self-imposed exile from England and his primary audience.[2] Bell and Delany identify centrifugal forces tugging at the center of Lawrence's "delicate organicism." They do so profitably at book-length. The aims of this chapter are more circumscribed, and offer two main observations.

(1) Lawrence's accomplishment of dialogic openness in *Women in Love* marks its high point in his writing. After it, he adopts a retrospective relation to his vision of openness. He becomes more a proponent than a practitioner of dialogism. Lawrence knows that the "novel-form [is coming] apart in his hands": "When a man writes a letter to himself, it is a pity to post it to somebody else. Perhaps the same is true of a book" (AR 264). Yet, as faith in an actively dialogic relationship with his readers fades, his monologic preaching of the virtues of a dialogic world view intensifies. Indeed, his philosophy of becoming threatens to congeal into dogma. For example, in *Kangaroo*, dialogue becomes the subject of a rewritten Sermon on the Mount. In *The Plumed*

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[2]See Paul Delany, *D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

Serpent, his vitalistic credo is particularly overbearing, though Kate provides a welcome, if nearly drowned out, voice of opposition to the predominant mentality.

(2) Notwithstanding his increasing removal from community and its "living conversation," an embattled dialogism does survives as more than a memory in Lawrence's writing of the twenties. It survives in two sorts of laughter. The first is "angelic," or the laughter, in Kundera's terms, of pure delight.[3] Such laughter manifests itself most vividly in the travel writing. "Delight is the dominant tone in *Sea and Sardinia*," notes Sabin, "a delight which can include squalid detail because it depends not on the beauty of objects, but on Lawrence's own indefatigable alertness to every ragged bit of life as it goes by" (*Dialect* 150).

It is a misleading generalization to describe Lawrence after *Women in Love* entirely as strident, demoralized, fragmented or exhausted. His "pilgrimage" is not monotonously "savage."[4] One real accomplishment of *Women in Love*, if only for Lawrence and Frieda personally, is that it cements their determination to lead the life of carnival. They follow Ursula and Birkin down from the

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[3]Kundera defines angelic laughter as "an expression of being rejoicing at being." By contrast, demonic laughter deprives things "suddenly of their putative meaning." Its satiric-ironic skepticism distances the self from joyful or unreflective being. *Laughter and Forgetting* 56-63.

[4]Catherine Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage: A Narrative of D.H. Lawrence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932).

exalted heights of mystic mountain-tops and "ultimate questions" to domesticated valleys, "where cabbages will grow" (CD 256). When Lawrence allows himself to indulge in the prosaic messiness of life experienced as a "succession of living moments," he approaches the openness, freedom and delight that typify prosaic carnival vision (*Dialect* 177). The writer more interested in the price of eggs in Cagliari market than in whether "our day of creative life is finished" exercises an "intense activity of response" that is itself fundamentally dialogic (*Dialect* 154). Lawrence is a prolific chronicler of his travels in the twenties, not only in travelogues such as *Sea and Sardinia*, *Mornings in Mexico* and the like, but in nearly all his novels as well. It is in such writing that he discovers "the cheerfulness that inheres in all things when they are distinct."[5]

Good cheer, assured connection to "life" experienced as grainy or resistant to isolated egos and their importunities, consistently characterizes Lawrence's descriptive prose throughout his career, from *Twilight in Italy*, to the observations of *Etruscan Places* and beyond. The same engaged, delighted or "angelic" spirit informs his essays, which he describes as "thought adventures." *Studies in Classic American Literature* is an experiment in what Bakhtin might term "live entering" (KFP 93; MB 54). Lawrence believes himself to be joined in dialogue with

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[5]Howard Jacobson and Wilbur Sanders, *Shakespeare's Magnanimity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978) 46.

"great souls" like Whitman "in the *real present* of the creative process" (PDP 63; italics his). Such is his operative creative myth. As a result, long after his fiction is constrained by doubt that anyone is attending to it, his essays practice cheerful "living conversation" with "great souls."

A second sort of laughter expressed by Lawrence is more complex. It is the laughter that Bakhtin terms "ambivalent" or "reduced"; it combines angel and demon, affirmation and negation, and thus "contains a whole outlook on the world" (PDP 127). This chapter details three examples in which ambivalent laughter, or a strenuous counterpoise of celebration and ridicule, affirmation and negation, is attained. *The Captain's Doll*, *St. Mawr* and "The Man Who Loved Islands" all rework themes introduced by *Women in Love*. To this extent they are all retrospective, or "framed" in the "image of dialogue." *St. Mawr* and "The Man Who Loved Islands" begin as reductive satire: the author has already assumed a telescopic distance from his work and is now "located in some higher decision-making position" (PDP 63). Yet each of the works resists its own framework. The natural contrariness of laughter has its way, and what begins as a "jeer" ends as a complex, ambivalent and open expression. *The Captain's Doll* is more resistant to generalization than the others, in that its voices and modes are at odds with each other. It is festive-comic and affirmative in conception, and to that extent "angelic" in its

laughter; yet, just as it approaches the happy "solution" of marriage, it seems to pick a quarrel with itself. At the end, doubts and darkness assail its certainties and obscure the affirmative predictabilities of its mode of address.

St. Mawr begins with jeers and ends with affirmations. Distancing mockery of Rico and his world of "modern cultured consciousness" is increasingly infiltrated by expansive or affirmative impulses as Lou ascends the American mountains. By its end, the laughter of Lou's rediscovered innocence counters her mother's mockery, and results in a dynamic or unfinalizable standoff of indistinguishably angelic and demonic laughters. Finally and surprisingly, in what at first appears to be a monologic moral fable, "The Man Who Loved Islands," Lawrence confronts himself interrogatively at his "maximum." He asks the "ultimate question" of his deepest creative *raison d'être*, and thereby achieves his most purely ambivalent, open, yet oddly neat, laughter of "silence."

This chapter first consolidates an understanding of Lawrence's most egregious monologisms in the twenties. It then explores three increasingly "pure," "reduced" or open expressions of the later laughters.

2. "Nothing Doing": Disintegration and Monologization in *Kangaroo*

Individually considered from the dialogic perspective, Lawrence's fiction after *Women in Love* is a record of decreasing innovativeness and complexity, both for the now dialogically initiated reader, and clearly for Lawrence himself. For instance, in his longer attempts at fiction directly after *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, there is very evidently a powerful prosaic mentality at work—a consciousness alert to "living voices" of the here and now—but there is also on occasion the author's complacency, fatigue and discouragement. One expects to find from the author of novels of emergence like *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow* or *Women in Love* the "passionate struggle into conscious being," the essentially dialogic struggle to shape multiplicity into integral unity, albeit only finally to "be denied" by the "resistances of life." One expects, that is, to discover a "primary author." Increasingly one discovers instead a demoralized "pretender."

A "pretender" in Bakhtin's sense abdicates the essential responsibility of self-authorship in "serious and sincere" dialogue with others. Thus, in *Aaron's Rod* Lawrence drops his authorial guise and admits with chagrin that he has written a book "to himself." A "book" written to oneself is no book; it is certainly no dialogic book. The admission is obviously that of an author fundamentally

shaken in his certainty of sympathetic response, indeed, of any responsive readership at all. From this lamentable perspective, the give and take that the dialogic novel demands of both writer *and* reader becomes conspicuous by its absence. Dialogism is a vulnerable attitude of mind, and the doubts that now assail Lawrence about the nature of his audience (or its very existence) are not always of the active, affirmative sort. Increasingly his doubts are negations, gnawing at the roots of "life," where life is viewed dialogically as hopes and purposes shared in the human realm, in language, "dumb show" and all.

A responsive readership, without which the "responsibility" of a dialogic author is superfluous or foolish, becomes explicitly problematic for him. The effects of this corrosive negation upon the dialogism of his expression are extensive, and perhaps obvious enough not to require lengthy elaboration. In *Kangaroo*, for example, the messy, prosaic virtue of unrestricted involvement in the momentaneous "eventness" of life as it presents itself willy-nilly to the sentience of the intelligent observer, the virtue that Bakhtin so admires in Goethe's travel writings about Italy, deteriorates into "Bits." An entire chapter in *Kangaroo* is composed mostly of "bits" gleaned from The Sydney *Bulletin*, "bits" which have their local interest and amusement, but which are more interesting in what they reveal, by their inclusion in the novel at all, about the author.

The chapter preceding "Bits" ends with the utterly undisguised autobiographical Somers having just rewritten the Sermon on the Mount into the dialogic terms of Lawrence's philosophy (now religion) of dialogue. Somers rewrites the Sermon on the purely dialogic basis of the "relativity" of "listeners" and answerers":

> Life is so wonderful and complex, and always relative. A man's soul is a perpetual call and answer. He can never be the call and answer in one: between the dark God and the incarnate man: between the dark soul of woman, and the opposite dark soul of man: and finally, between the souls of man and man, strangers to one another, but answerers. So it is forever, the eternal weaving of calls and answerers, and the fabric of life woven and perishing again. . . . And when the fabric becomes grey and machine-made, some strange clarion-call makes men start to smash it up. (K 296)

The translation of belief in dialogic relativities (the fabric of "call" and "answer" as the "fabric of life," or of the human world itself) continues at some length, so that *"Blessed are the pure in heart"* becomes glossed as "That is absolute truth, a statement of living relativity, because the pure in heart are those who quiver to the dark God, to the call of woman, [and] men. The pure in heart are the listeners and the answerers" (K 296). And so on.

Poignantly, Lawrence's undisguised dialogic credo ends in this manifestation with Somers surrendering the effort of utterance: "A man must even know how to give up his own earnestness, when its hour is over, and not to bother about

anything anymore, when he's bothered enough" (K 296). There is a certain light-heartedness to be gained by giving up "earnestness," and even a reward of unfinalizability, of a diminished sort: "'I like it,'" Harriet (Frieda) says of Wolloona. "'It doesn't feel *finished*'" (K 301). Yet there are costs for choosing to live and write in insouciant, drifting, unfinished regions. For instance, on the following "day" in the novel's reckoning, the day in which "bits" are recorded in place of fiction (or travel writing, or domestic comedy, or political diatribe, or whatever it is that one wishes to call *Kangaroo*), Somers-Lawrence "felt savage with himself again": "'Fool that I am, fool!'" (K 297).

He is simply weary of playing the holy fool, making a gift of his spirit to the other when it is, strictly speaking, uncalled for. Hence, one witnesses the violent authorial reaction, the disingenuous (and hostile) offering to the reader of "bits" of other writers' newspaper droppings, where one has just before offered one's soul on a platter. The center of his equanimity clearly cannot hold. Without faith in responsive readers, the dialogic writer, with all his principled opennesses exposed, cannot coherently or novelistically proceed: "Chapter follows chapter, and nothing doing" (K 312).

Somers-Lawrence attempts to right himself, characteristically, with self-mockery:

> He could have kicked himself for wanting to help mankind. . . . And he kicked himself still harder thinking of his frantic struggles with the 'soul' and the 'dark god' and the 'listener' and the 'answerer.' Blarney—blarney—blarney! He was a preacher and a blatherer, and he hated himself for it. (K 300)

Often after *Women in Love* the reader is forced reluctantly to play Gudrun's satiric-reductive role (before, that is, Lawrence rushes in and plays it himself); often the responsive reader must assume telescopic distances from the authorial voice, or try (if one feels generous) to save the intelligence of its expression with an assumption of ironic multiplicity of perspectives and voices. In the twenties Lawrence often appears to be an erstwhile dialogic novelist who is now either too loud or too soft, in either event having crept up on his reader, authorial mask removed, to assume oppressively intimate proximities.

With the presence of an audience increasingly problematic in his own thinking, the problem of which authorial stance to take, of how to engage not only voices within the self in effective dialogue, but the reader as well, grows more acute. The reader becomes increasingly aware of how fine a line there is between carnival insouciance and incipiently desperate irresponsibility, between openness to life, with its resistances and distractions, and schizophrenia and psychic disintegration.

3. Honoured in the Breach: *The Plumed Serpent* and the "Lords of Life"

One way to resist disintegration is to surrender to the centering tug of an "answer." Birkin successfully resists the tyranny of absolutism; he has Ursula to correct him. Ramon and Cipriano in *The Plumed Serpent* do not; Kate is not quite up to the task. This is to say that temptations to monologism, to preach and to bully, only increase after *Women in Love*, and Lawrence does not always resist them. He never becomes less dialogic as a matter of belief, but he does become so as a matter of practice.[6] For instance, in *The Plumed Serpent*, his favorite philosophy of potentiality becomes more honoured in the breach than the observance. Now possessed as a badge of the initiated, dialogism itself becomes a threat to the "dialogic nature of truth" (PDP 110). *The Plumed Serpent* is the most flagrant example of a series of novels such as *Aaron's Rod*, *The Lost Girl*, *Kangaroo* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, over which Lawrence tries to exercise monologic control. He does not always succeed in

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[6]Socrates's fate at the hands of his acolytes is illustrative of Lawrence's own. As Bakhtin understands it, Socrates is an unequalled dialogician: he knew himself to be a "pander" or a "midwife" of a kind of truth "born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (PDP 110; italics his). Yet even Socrates becomes monologized in Plato's writings. He becomes transformed into a "teacher," and his method becomes "a simple form for expounding already found, ready-made irrefutable truth; ultimately, it degenerated completely into a question-and-answer form for training neophytes . . . " (PDP 110). One difference between Socrates and Lawrence is that while Plato canonizes Socrates, Lawrence canonizes himself.

controlling the messiness of his dynamic of doubt. Yet he tries. In every novel after *Women in Love*, Lawrence seems to be courting a single solution to the existential difficulties he addresses. As a consequence, the author in these curiously authoritarian exercises seems to be located "in some higher decision-making position" relative to his characters. He is a hedgehog possessed of an answer, however provisional that answer finally proves to be, and characters as foxes can merely bark and nip at his heels.

The Plumed Serpent is especially illustrative of the lengths to which Lawrence's bullying certainties—particularly his dialogic certainties—can go. Prophetic insistencies threaten to overwhelm it. "The Lords of Life are the Masters of Death," intones Cipriano to his crowd of fanatically devoted followers, in a moment where the element of wish-fulfillment in Lawrence's writing becomes absurdly obvious (PS 414). The belief, emphatically, is still in potentiality. However, now belief is possessed with the fixity of dogma. Ramon later chants:

> A gate to the innermost place
> Where the Breath and the Fountains commingle,
> Where the dead are living, and the living are dead.
> The deeps that life cannot fathom,
> The source and the End, of which we know
> Only that it is, and its life is our life and our death.
> (PS 421)

The belief poeticized here is still starkly of potentiality, dialogically conceived as unfinalizable ("The deeps that life cannot fathom"), but the mode of address is declamatory, authoritative, monologic. Significantly, Lawrence chooses to abandon prose altogether when he acquiesces so completely to his compulsion to "cry you down," or to "preach" in the manner that Birkin is so roundly mocked for attempting, not only in the Pompadour, but also in his intimate conversations. Birkin bears up very well under the corrective mockery of Ursula and the others, and the novel, because of this dialogic self-scrutinizing toughness or robust dynamic of doubt, gains in intelligence and vitality.

Clearly, by the time of *The Plumed Serpent*, intrinsic supplenesses or dialogic vitalities have suffered losses. At the end, Kate is wisely withdrawn from Ramon and Cipriano when they are "in the thick of their Quetzacoatl mood, with their manly breasts uncovered." The tone is latently ironic; one could easily hear what a Gudrun would make of Ramon and Cipriano "with their manly breasts uncovered," and regrets not being allowed to do so. However, Kate is no Gudrun. She knows "Cipriano . . . was baffled and stung when she taunted him," so she refrains. More's the pity. The obvious impression is that Ramon, Cipriano and the author himself are all too fragile in their manhood to bear the "taunts" of this far from imposing female. Without doubt, robust manhood has suffered a decline in Lawrence,

and so, along with it, have dialogic or strenuous and passionate means of expression.

All is not loss after *Women in Love*. A good deal is gained by its dialogic achievement, and by subsequent alterations in Lawrence's expressive modes. The "image of dialogue" in him also has its powers, principally because such expression shares the historically gathered force of conventional generic resonances and meanings. Monologic speech, for example, with its higher degree of control and rhetorical manipulation, has especially rich comic resources, both festive and satiric, angelic and demonic. Lawrence increasingly exploits both. Laughter allows him to harness his hostility and direct it toward affirmative ends. In the following three examples, his embattled dialogism of the twenties takes the form of increasingly pure ambivalent laughter.

4. "'Don't Be a Solemn Ass'": Darkness and Dialogue in *The Captain's Doll*

The Captain's Doll is a festive comic variation of the Ursula-Birkin motif in *Women in Love*. It comes as the culmination of a series of mostly affirmative stories of combative love written or rewritten after the publication in 1920 of *Women in Love*, among which are "The Horse-Dealer's Daughter," "You Touched Me," "Fanny and Annie," "The Fox," and "Wintry Peacock." Hannele and Hepburn

engage in spirited dialogue in the manner of Ursula and Birkin, and they do so in an eroticized landscape of extremity, amid frozen valleys and sharp peaks reminiscent of the ultimate Alps in *Women in Love*. Hannele and Hepburn, too, have the terms of their relationship to work out, and they do so in a give and take that effectively reveals itself to be an equilibrium, if not quite an ideal "star-equilibrium." For all Hepburn's stubborn demands for "honour and obedience," Hannele certainly gives as good as she gets:

> And this one . . . just blackly insisted that *she* must love *him*. Very well—she would give him a run for his money. . . . No, he must go down on his knees to her if he wanted her love. And then she would love him. Because she *did* love him. But a dark-eyed little master and bully she would never have. (CD 251)

The apparent evenness of the battling, the conjoined poignancy and folly of it (she does already love him, and he does already love her, prior to the "terms" of any agreement), contribute to the work's provocation of laughter. Hannele can and does take care of herself; she is mature enough to esteem and defend herself, *and* to grow. She positively includes Hepburn in her effort of integrity when, after a time, he returns to her, just as she had had the independence to exclude him when he had departed. Her life had gone on, diminished certainly, but not crushed.

And Hepburn respects Hannele's independence and grit. He could have married a number of adoring young "girls of eighteen or twenty" (or so he claims), but instead chooses Hannele as his "hard destiny" (CD 226). The reader laughs readily at Hannele's and Hepburn's crucial-comic battling on the mountain-top because in a sense the reader has been prepared to laugh by all the Beatrices and Benedicts, Lizzies and Darcies, who have come before. Comic expectations of the romantic genre in which the tale endeavours to belong pave the way for the essentially angelic laughter of approval at the achievement of love and marriage.

In this regard, the narrator's casually observed absurdities take on importance as comic reassurances, or signals to laugh, so that Hannele and Hepburn begin their monumental battling where the "mule . . . had to stand . . . to make droppings" (CD 248). More, Hepburn must lug the "Worpswede Stilleben," of which his portrait-doll is an object (along with a "poached egg" and assorted bric-a-brac), up the slope with him in order to be revealed at an emphatic moment in the lovers' argument:

> He unwrapped the thing and handed it to her. It was . . . not very large, painted on a board.
> Hannele looked at it and went pale.
> 'It's *good*,' she cried, in an equivocal tone.
> 'Quite good,' he said.
> 'Especially the poached egg,' she said.
> 'Yes, the poached egg is almost living.' (CD 246)

In festive comedy there is need to communicate to the reader a sense of certainty or happy inevitability about the fate of the lovers. Hannele refuses to be "bullied" by the captain because "she *did* love him" already. Their essential marriage (like Ursula and Birkin's) is continually consummated in their robust dialogue.

Thus Hannele and Hepburn's relationship is graphically distinguished from Hepburn's previous ties to his former wife, whose allure was one of exotic difference, of pure otherness, alienation and (at first) intriguing silence: "'I always felt she was born in the wrong period—or on the wrong planet,'" Hepburn tells Hannele. For all intents and purposes his former wife has no human language: "'She never ought to have been speaking English. I don't know what language she ought to have spoken. . . . And she had no other language. Like a starling that you've made talk from the very beginning . . . its own natural mode of expressing itself has collapsed, and it can only be artificial'" (CD 221). The difference between sympathetic lovers and failed lovers, in other words, is described purely dialogically, in terms of language and chronotope. The former wife cannot enter into dialogue with her husband or his lover—the former is chronotopically distinct from the latter two—and as a consequence, the former is free to function purely as a senex. Mrs. Hepburn is an object of little, only slightly sentimental account, and the narrative expeditiously dismisses her: she conveniently falls out of a hotel window,

and dies. Hepburn's former love for his wife is reduced to immature sentiment. He admits to having loved her as he once loved, in boyhood, a captured bird (CD 222).

The "love" is between human and nonhuman (at another point Hepburn describes his wife as a "fairy"); the "love," in brief, is dismissed as undialogic and impossible. While in *Women in Love* at least the possibility of conversation between varieties of "modern cultured consciousness" still exists, now it does so no longer. Intersubjectivity in language between characters such as Gudrun and Gerald, who inhabit a deadening "actuality," and Ursula and Birkin, who inhabit "reality," is undoubtedly problematic, but it is not impossible. Here it is. A gap of silence has widened between the truly dialogic personalities and the others. A chilling exclusivity, a sharp division of silence—silence as void, not potential speech—separates the laughing "reality" of the dialogic lovers from the "actuality" of former wives, or even from one's own children (Hepburn's concern for his children is perfunctory). Dialogue exclusively occurs between two rare lovers, and no one else. As a presumably unintended consequence, in the later Lawrence the "real" dialogic world of "true" lovers always seems diminished by its very specialness.

In part, what may be working against the realization of a more embracing and less problematic dialogic vision is the tale's comic mode itself. Most sociable laughter is predicated upon a reassuring predictability of outcome and

purposes. In comic genres, sharp distinctions are drawn between heroes and villains, friends and foes, in order better to objectify and "finalize" the foes, and target them for derision. Dialogic expression, on the contrary, is anti-generic and unpredictable. Hence the same generic expectations that make laughter easy may make dialogic expression hard. Predominantly, Lawrence wants *The Captain's Doll*'s laughter to be easy. He does not want the ethical complexity or messiness that would follow from an extensive prosaic engagement with Mrs. Hepburn as a full, rounded or "humanly" realized character. She is denied "humanity," or dialogic potentiality. With barely a nod toward the pathos of her alienation, the work makes Mrs. Hepburn a stock senex of romantic comedy.

Despite the undialogic superficiality of the minor characters, Hannele and Hepburn remain nearly as vital in conversation, particularly in their ultimate battling on the mountain, as are Ursula and Birkin. Here, too, however, qualifications are in order. *The Captain's Doll* is not entirely unaffected by the stresses of Lawrence's "nightmare" experience. In this regard the autobiographical Hepburn manifests a confusion or contradictoriness of personality. Just as Lou in *St. Mawr* begins as a variation of Gudrun and ends as an Ursula (as I shall suggest), Hepburn switches from being a hellcat at one moment to a domesticated tabby at the next. The hellcat is intransigently opposed to dialogue as coequal exchange; the tabby is constitutionally incapable

of it. Somewhere between the poles of his personality a "human" Hepburn emerges late in the tale, and saves its affirmative dialogic vision. However, his conversational transformation is sudden enough so that at the end of the verbal strife, as he pulls back into the "darkness," an open question remains: which Hepburn will appear in the East African future? The hellcat? The tabby? Or the dialogically engaged mate of Hannele?

It is a purposefully focused aspect of the tale's intelligence that, before his wife's death, Hepburn is a divided personality. He is to his wife deliberately a tabby; to his mistress he shows a more feral and free aspect: in her presence his eyes typically are "dilated like a cat's at night." Aloof and inconsequential in his actions, his affinity, in opposition to the world of men, is to the "moon," and he will go in search of a marriage utopia not within the confines of white picket fences of domesticated bliss, but rather in the dark, unfenced potentialities of East Africa. He is in the mold of Count Dionys Psanek, the dionysian "outlaw" lover of Lady Daphne in *The Ladybird*. The movement of thought that produces such characters is desperate: the "sons of God" (of whom Birkin is one in *Women in Love*) have become progressively demonized or inverted in their values just as Lawrence himself feels himself to have become marginalized by society.

Belief in the ordinary individual engaged in ordinary marriage—indeed engaged in any conversation conceived in

ordinary language—has been shaken. Hepburn nearly echoes Birkin when he says: "'Words mean so little. They mean nothing.'" (Birkin muses, "What was the good of talking, any way?" [WL 250].) However, unlike Birkin, who is a "contravened knot" on this point as on others, Hepburn's distrust of the substantiality of the human world prompts him more radically to continue in the negative: "'And all that one thinks and plans doesn't amount to anything. Let me feel that we are together, and I don't care about all the rest'" (CD 191).

Or so Hepburn feels prior to the death of his wife and his subsequent new-found purpose and direction (marriage to Hannele is for Hepburn a "hard destiny," as is "East Africa"). Hepburn may *nearly* return to the positivities that typify Birkin's world of marriage, or he may not, but the basic thing to notice is that, unlike Birkin, he starts out (and may remain) feline, nonhuman, vacant and aloof, uninterested in dialogic relation in ordinary human terms. The communicative resources at Hepburn's disposal—his very belief in language—are diminished in comparison with Birkin's. He may be a "cat" in the same undialogic, nonhuman or disqualifying sense that makes his first wife a "starling." Whether he remains so is a question about which the tale gives mixed signals.

Certainly, despite his transformations, Hepburn retains a feral or demonic streak that is not evident in Birkin. Hepburn never relinquishes his demand for submission

from Hannele, as Birkin effectively does in his softer demands of Ursula. Indeed, Birkin explicitly submits to Ursula and her demands for "love" in "Mino" (where, in fact, self-mockingly, Birkin proves to be not a "mino" or cat at all, but a mino *manqué*). Hannele may give nearly as good as she gets, and she may have the last mocking rejoinder ("'Don't be a solemn ass. Do come in.'"), but it is Hepburn in their battling who withdraws more than once into "darkness" and incommunicative silence. One crucial moment of potential compromise and softening, for example, ends momentarily at least in ominous silence:

> 'You must suffer from megalomania,' she said. And she said what she felt.
>
> But he only looked at her out of dark, dangerous, haughty eyes.
>
> They went on their way in the rain in silence. He was filled with a passionate silence and imperiousness, a curious, dark, masterful force that supplanted thought in him. (CD 250)

"Dark," "dangerous," "haughty " and "masterful" are not hopeful attributes for a dialogic relationship of unfinalizable discourse. Nor is a "silence" filled with *his* "masterful force." The male withdraws into the fragile, deliberately thoughtless incommunicado state of offended pride; he reveals alarming weaknesses and rigidities of personality that bode ill for any ongoing intersubjectivity between the lovers. At this moment in *The Captain's Doll* the reader may

recall Elizabeth Bennet's "project" called Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, where Elizabeth knows that she must bring Darcy around to laugh at himself, eventually, but it is difficult for the reader (and perhaps for Elizabeth as well) to imagine just when this might occur. It is similarly difficult for the reader to imagine just when such "bringing round" might occur for Hannele, though she does emphatically call Hepburn a "solemn ass," and he does not contradict her.

It is particularly difficult to imagine how the necessary education of Hepburn will proceed in East Africa. Hepburn may not yet be a pathetically fragile male of the sort that Ramon and Cipriano prove to be, but he may be on the way to becoming one.[7] It is as easy to imagine that, in the heat of East Africa, he will uncover his "manly breast" (as they do), as it is to imagine that he will stop being "a solemn ass" and revert to the more humane, conversational qualities evident in Birkin. Throughout, Hepburn retains a disturbing tendency to "finalization" or monologic bullying rigidities.

Yet the Hepburn who returns at mid-story determined to marry Hannele has experienced positive transformation and growth. Thus, when Hepburn bares the satiric-reductive "picture" made of the "doll" of himself, the dialogue turns pointedly earnest: "'When . . . we were supposed to be in love with one another, you made that doll of me, didn't you?' And he sat looking at the odious picture" (CD 259).

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[7]*The Captain's Doll* is the earlier work by three years (1923-1926).

"Masterful" silence is nowhere in evidence. This is (and remains until the final "darkness" of the conclusion) the give and take of candor, of reciprocal "gifts" of spirit one to the other. Amid the broad, really farcical physical comedy of their omnibus ride down the mountain, as they are jolted together, Hepburn pursues his earnest purposes: "'When my wife died . . . I knew I couldn't love any more. I realised that, as far as I was concerned, love was a mistake'":

> *What* was a mistake?' she screamed.
> 'Love,' he bawled.
> 'Love!' she screamed. 'A mistake?' Her tone was derisive.
> 'For me personally,' he said, shouting. (CD 261)

The question of whether Hepburn and Hannele will marry after all is "finalized" or preconcluded from the readers' perspective by the farcical context. Of course Hannele and Hepburn will remain together in marriage, they already effectively *are* married, in the sense that they fight fairly, with great gusto, and evidently with the familiarity of long practice. Theirs is the relative equilibrium of "living" conversation, the disturbing implications of Hepburn's previous "silences" for the moment notwithstanding. He is certainly silent no longer, as he tries to shout over the bus's racket. The farcical battling on the bus directly mocks the rigidity, solemnity, and demonism of Hepburn's personality, and, by implication, Lawrence's credo of male dominance. If one trusts the tale, the message is clear: the "solution" to the

challenges facing Hepburn, Hannele or "modern cultured consciousness" in its more attractive incarnations cannot be found in terms of a fixed and hierarchical relationship, but in dialogic strife.

Indeed, and unsurprisingly in this retrospective phase of Lawrence's career, dialogue becomes the explicit moral of the story. Hepburn realizes how he has been objectified by his and his wife's outworn ideas of love: he had allowed himself to be made a "doll of." Just as Birkin fears being "at the beck and call" of Ursula, Hepburn is now aware that he has always allowed himself to be subservient to the women he has loved, and who have loved him:

> 'And you can say what you like, but *any* woman, today, no matter *how* much she loves her man—she could start any minute and make a doll of him. And the doll would be her hero: and her hero would be no more than her doll. My wife . . . had her doll of me right enough. . . . And when she's got your doll, that's all she wants. And that's what love means. And so, I won't be loved.' (CD 264)

Instead of "love" Hepburn demands to be "honoured and obeyed." The essential comedy of this demand is that it comes from a man who, however "masterful" his darkness and silence occasionally appear, is admittedly already housebroken in his habits. In the final battling Hepburn begins to approximate (perhaps contrary to Lawrence's intentions) the Birkin who in "Mino" "submits" to Ursula's demand for love. Where Birkin had his male pride and

aloofness stored in the confines of an "irony" lingering around the corners of his expression, Hepburn has his silence and East African darkness to serve the same purpose. The demands of maleness and its spaces have become greater and to some extent more ominous; they have not yet, however, overwhelmed the superseding demands of dialogic equilibrium in relationship.

"'And the doll would be her hero'": Hepburn now understands the aestheticizing phenomenon by which monologic authors (or wives) objectify their subjects. Now he wants to take the risk of initiating a relationship in which there will be (in *Women in Love*'s terms) "freedom together," an "unclosed whole" or true dialogue between author and subject, complexly viewed as an intersubjectivity in which self authors other, other authors self, reciprocally and continuously, in "living" conversation. Hepburn realizes that (to employ terms from Bakhtin's notion of personality) his "I-for-another" had been overdeveloped in comparison to his "I-for-myself." He had allowed the women who have loved him to appropriate his "gift of spirit" to them, his "I-for-another." As a consequence, his "I-for-myself" had wandered exiled, out of dialogic connection to self or other, or in (relatively) inauthentic dialogue with distant and nonhuman things, such as the moon and the night sky. He had been, in his unaddressed "I-for-myself," a "cat." By the time of Hepburn's final, earnest conversation with Hannele, he is far from the irresponsible tomcat for whom "all that

one thinks and plans doesn't amount to anything" (CD 191). He is also no longer the tabby he was to his first wife. On the contrary, he is trying to be engaged as a fully self-responsible individual in a collaborative, unfinalizable relationship.

Why, then, at the last moment of the tale, has he "pulled back quickly into the darkness"? Hepburn's withdrawal from active dialogic connection with Hannele and toward an ambiguous "darkness" is, in one sense, wilfully contrary and confused. In another sense, it is as if the autobiographical hero pointedly removes himself from the comic frame of the tale and its laughing affirmations, in order to suggest, perhaps, that an unproblematic relation to dialogue, despite the tale's ostensible moral, no longer simply obtains. The open question of the ending, the meaning of the darkness into which Hepburn pulls, forms itself beyond the frame of festive comedy, or breaks a way through that frame. By doing so, it challenges the reader to a new and surprising sort of dialogic engagement with itself; it moves both the reader and the tale into an anti-generic, future-oriented, and messily open zone of contact.

This is to suggest that a certain problematic irresolution or ambiguity at the highest level of the tale's "great dialogue" stubbornly hovers over the "darkness" of the ending. In effect, the final question becomes, who owns the "darkness" of the ending? Do Hannele and Hepburn possess it jointly, as a plenitude of potentiality in their

continuing discourse together? Or does Hepburn alone, in his "masterful force," control it? It would appear that the final darkness contains incompatible implications. On the one hand, darkness is suggestive of the unfinalizable potentiality that exists in ongoing dialogue itself. In this interpretation the tale does not *end*, it *opens* into darkness as futurity and unfixed possibility. On the other hand, darkness is suggestive of Hepburn's feline element. The darkness is the world of the night sky and the moon; he owns it. Yet it is he who chooses Hannele as his "hard destiny," a daylight destiny, and who, having been objectified or "fixed" in a sterile relationship before, presumably would not wish simply to victimize his new mate in the same way. Nevertheless, he pursues his discovery of the dynamic "truth" about love with stubborn singlemindedness. He is monologic and absolutist about his dialogic theory of love. In this he is not entirely unlike Birkin, the "contravened knot"; however, Birkin, and more importantly Ursula, still inhabit a world not yet empty of other people.

The Captain's Doll remains predominantly festive, laughing and open in its vision, but its openness survives on the margins of a desolate world. At its end, Hepburn is a lonely figure determinedly pulling back from intense dialogic contact with his mate, and toward a barely defined, dark and elemental future. The ending is reminiscent of *Sons and Lovers*. In both, a solitary figure moves "quickly"

in darkness toward a vague but positively conceived future. However, in *Sons and Lovers*, the direction is toward a "faintly humming, glowing town." It is toward a quick human world. In *The Captain's Doll*, the movement is toward an unpeopled reality. Lawrence has successfully accomplished a festive comic version of the Ursula-Birkin motif, but just before he ends it, in his messy, anti-generic, intellectually restless fashion, he looks beyond the bounds of its vision, and toward a more elemental challenge to his dialogic beliefs. *St. Mawr* and "The Man Who Loved Islands" employ laughing means to explore Lawrence's evolving concerns with dialogue, connectedness and his vision of wholeness.

5. "Null Correspondence" and Sensitive Expectancy: Dialogic Heaven and Hell in *St. Mawr*

St. Mawr takes a different tack in the variation of prior themes that its laughter represents. It too is determined to laugh in its exploration of previously staked out territories, and in that sense to be an expression of Lawrence's carnivalized life. Here, however, laughter begins by indulging what might be called Gudrun's prerogative for "savage carving." At the start, *St. Mawr* does not advance dialogic experimentation so much as it threatens it, by its means and purposes. Its comedy is satiric-reductive; its laughter is the "sound outsideness makes" (MB 435). As

such it is concerned with the undialogic virtues of finish, and "finishing off."

What *St. Mawr* takes most delight in finishing off are the pretensions of phallicism. The tale appropriates Gudrun's vision and her methods. On the broadest scale the stallion St. Mawr functions to humiliate Rico in his maleness, and to deride the society that would make much (or anything at all) of a Rico. Rico is a celebrated artist. His wife Lou, in a letter to her mother, aptly named Mrs. Witt, notes that Rico has been given a gift by a female admirer of a "lovely intaglio of Priapus":

> The world was always a queer place. It's a very queer one when Rico is the god Priapus. He would go round the orchard painting life-like apples on the trees, and inviting nymphs to come and eat them. And the nymphs would pretend they were real. . . . (StM 114)

Presumably of her own husband Lou knows when the "apples are real" or not. With Rico (and the entire civilized actuality or "modern cultured consciousness" he represents) Lou has no connection. The Gudrun-Gerald drama of interdestruction replays itself, here, however, without the "barren tragedy" of active castration, because Rico has no phallus to be excised. He, like his art, is two-dimensional; he is a caricature of Gerald, utterly without any of Gerald's negative potency in the "world of men." Rico is a nullus.

There is nothing there for Lou to connect to, or disconnect from.

Lou is simply unconnected, as is her mother, from vital otherness of any sort. Her mother prays that death at last might be the final true experience of otherness—she has not experienced it in her life. Like her mother, Lou "felt so weak, that unless something carried her away, she would go on rattling her bit in the great machine of human life, till she collapsed, and her rattle rattled itself out, and there was a sort of barren silence where the sound of her had been" (StM 94). She devoutly wishes for a different fate, but none seems to present itself: "She was tired of everything—weary of the house, the graveyard, weary of the thought of Rico. . . . Poor old Rico, going on like an amiable machine from day to day. It wasn't his fault. But his life was a rattling nullity, and her life rattled in null correspondence" (StM 94).

To distance themselves from the dialogic hell of "null correspondence," Lou and her mother erect the barricade of sarcasm:

> *I should say: Miss Manby, you may have my husband, but not my horse. My husband won't need emasculating, and my horse I won't have you meddle with. I'll preserve one last male thing in the museum of this world, if I can.* (StM 97; italics in the text)

Mrs. Witt's existential gestures (like most of Lou's in England) are purely repudiative. They define positive dialogic virtues apophatically, as Lawrence suggests Cezanne

does: " . . . in other pictures he seems to be saying: Landscape is not like this and not like this and not . . . etc.—and every *not* is a little blank space in the canvas, defined by the remains of an assertion" (P 581). Lou and her mother indulge in Gudrunesque looking through the "wrong end of the opera glasses" as they view their entire actuality, at least as that actuality presents itself to them in England. What is particularly disturbing from the affirmative-dialogic perspective is that the world of actuality (the world of "null correspondence") evidently has extended its realm since *Women in Love*. Ultimately, neither Lou nor Mrs. Witt can discover even one individual—human or nonhuman, man or horse—who can answer their dialogic call. On the scale of the tale's own "great dialogue," the question (explicitly unvoiced in *St. Mawr*, but hovering as a presence nonetheless) of whether "our day of creative life is finished" continues to seek its answer, more and more stoically.

St. Mawr starts out by being mostly unmixed, recognizably demonic-satiric and "finalizing" in its shape. It remains so until Lou ascends her mountain. Until the American episode, the tale is grimly stoic in its seeking of intersubjectivity and dialogue, or of connectedness. Neither Lou nor her mother discovers a voice answering to her needs. Nevertheless, however much the work may exercise its repudiative, finalizing, satiric strategies, *St. Mawr* struggles not to be "finished." It tries to "break a way through" the confines of its own mode of address. Angelic

affirmative impulses mix with the initial demonic reductive ones; ambivalent laughter emerges. The tale discovers a fertile messiness of impulses and voices as Lou begins to sound and act less and less like Gudrun and more and more like Ursula.

When Lou arrives in the mountains of the American Southwest, she enters into affirmative correspondence with them, as does Gudrun negatively with the Alps. At this point Lou rejects Gudrun's direction. She takes instead, despite not having found her "son of God," Ursula's affirmative way: "To go south! Always to go south, away from the arctic horror as far as possible! That was Lou's instinct. . . . Never again . . . to feel the idealistic, Christianised tension of the now irreligious north" (StM 128). Lou's instincts are positive. Even more potentially affirmative, her project of becoming is not dependent upon a man, dominant or otherwise. In the mountains, Lou discovers Birkin's "world empty of people," a "world beyond: a world not of men." Even her mother "could not fail to be roused" (StM 153). Lou moves beyond disillusionment, repudiation, and the ultimately ungratifying amusements of sarcasm (as her mother never finally does). She decides to seek her answer beyond herself, beyond the "world of men": "'I've got to live for something that matters, way, way down in me.'" The "way, way down" is beyond sex, though "sex would matter to my very soul, if it was really sacred" (StM 154). The dialogic connection must be within, to the

creative chaos of becoming, to that something "wild" she discovers in the mountains. That "something," it turns out, is nonhuman, yet she calls and it answers:

> 'There's something else that loves and wants me. . . . It's a spirit. It's here, in this landscape. . . . But it's my mission to keep myself for the spirit that is wild, and has waited so long here: even waited for such as me. Now I've come! . . . . And it doesn't want to save me either. It needs me. It craves for me.' (StM 155)

Lou enters into dialogic correspondence with "wildness," or as-yet-unformed vitality itself. She manifests the "sensitive expectancy" associated with Ursula. Lou is a call waiting to be answered, self-assured and future-oriented in her addressivity and receptivity. She becomes dialogic potentiality itself, utterly earnest in soulful self-exposure, despite the grim reality of having only grass, trees and a persistently sarcastic mother immediately present to answer to her existential gesture. Mrs. Witt, true to her established ego, concludes the tale by responding to Lou's heartfelt ("imbecilic") confession by asking:

> 'How much did you say you paid for Las Chivas?' she asked.
> 'Twelve hundred dollars,' said Lou, surprised.
> 'Then I call it cheap, considering all there is to it: even the name!' (StM 155)

Demonic laughter attempts to finalize, or at least to round off expression in this initially derisive work. However, the affirmative dialogic impulse, despite its increasing attenuation, insists on having the properly *penultimate* word, in the person of Lou. The tension between a demonic vision that would close and finish off its object, and an angelic one that would pursue embracing ends to the "heights and depths" of consciousness, to the messy religious regions themselves, continues to the last word. Ultimately, the laughter of Lou's rediscovered innocence challenges her mother's mockery. A vision of open totality, however expectant or wistful, counters the diminished and demoralized vision of "modern cultured consciousness." The resultant unfinalizable stand-off of angelic and demonic laughters opens the work to the ambivalences of active dialogic discourse.

6. "Confessional Self-utterance" and the "Final Word": "The Man Who Loved Islands"

> Only in the form of confessional self-utterance . . . could the final word about a person be given, a word truly adequate to him.
>
> (M. M. Bakhtin PDP 55-56)

If this study were to end with Lawrence's fictions of the late twenties such as *The Plumed Serpent* or *The Man Who Died*, the effect would be to emphasize, in the years

after *Women in Love*, the fitful closing of his dialogically open expression. However, Lawrence never becomes entirely incapable of the openness of ambivalent laughter. "The Man Who Loved Islands," published less than three years before his death in 1930, perhaps best illustrates Lawrence's later self-investigative laughter in its most complex ("open," "whole," "ambivalent," "reduced") form. On the broadest level of its "great dialogue" it engages epochal concerns. It is, in miniature, a novelistic (or anti-novelistic) expression of transition and emergence of Bakhtin's "fifth type." The successively smaller islands that the hero buys, and upon which he wants to make the impress of his personality, are themselves discrete chronotopes. The tale is an allegory of personality with epochal ramifications.

Its tone reveals an evolving movement in the author's relation to his hero which is itself, in microcosm, characteristic of the shape of his laughter. In an early letter to Garnett, Lawrence observes of himself that when the "deep feeling" of his "passionately religious" nature "doesn't find its way out," a "jeer comes instead" (CL 2, 165). "The Man Who Loved Islands" begins with the jeer, as the hero tries on his first two islands literally to impress the world with his image. He quickly discovers "how tiny" an island "has to be before you can presume to fill it with your own personality" (Man 722). The tone is derisive, reductive. The author indulges in "savage carving" of a character who is so self-enclosed, bullying and undialogic in his "old, stable ego"

that he pushes all otherness to the margin of his consciousness. He tries to isolate himself in space and time, and thereby securely or monologically to make a permanent fixture of himself. He tries to deny the dialogic values of unfinalizablity in space, time, personality, and relationship. Cathcart does so at his peril, as the combined force of the outlawed othernesses begin to haunt him:

> But once isolate yourself on a little island in the sea of space, and the moment begins to heave and expand in great circles, the solid earth is gone, and your slippery, naked, dark soul finds herself out in the timeless world, where the chariots of the so-called dead dash down the old streets of centuries, and souls crowd on the footways that we, in the moment, call bygone years. The souls of all the dead are alive again, and pulsating actively around you. You are out in the other infinity. (Man 724)

"You are out in" the "infinity" conceived in the dialogic imagination, naturally enough, as deathless voices. In the night, ghosts of "Gaul," of pirates, begin to terrify the islander. To this point, Cathcart is a small, fragile, contemptible object of mockery. It is understandable that early criticism in particular would react to the work as a pointed satire directed at Compton Mackenzie, and little more. On the first island Cathcart has a pathetic yearning to escape the terrifying voices of the dialogically active darkness, "to escape any more of this sort of awareness." He pines, "Why should it not be the Happy Isle at last? Why

not the last small isle of the Hesperides, the perfect place, all filled with his own gracious, blossom-like spirit? A minute world of pure perfection, made by man himself" (Man 725).

The world he longs for, in fact, is not Compton Mackenzie's favorite fantasy; it is Lawrence's own. Gudrun brutally had mocked "Rupert's Blessed Isles," yet he and Ursula descend from the Alps to discover them. Cathcart is Lawrence; mockery is (increasingly as the tale continues) self-mockery. What is engaged by the tale's laughter is not individual personality (even Lawrence's), but, rather, the "form-shaping ideology," expressed interrogatively, of Lawrence's entire career. It is, in sum, the question, "Is our day of creative life finished?"

If, indeed, Lou in *St. Mawr* represents the next step for mankind in its emergence, if, in other words, the next dialogic interchange must be elemental, or with "wildness," a "wildness" that "doesn't want to save me either," but "craves me," then what precisely is it that humanity must address and receive? What becomes of humanity in pure dialogue with the elements?

Dialogic heaven becomes dialogic hell. Cathcart on the third island (having expeditiously punctured the vanity not only of his half-hearted belief in marriage as potential salvation, but perhaps the author's as well) moves beyond the shell of old, stable ego and into direct communion with Birkin's favorite fantasy of a "world empty of people." He discovers elemental silence. "He wanted only to hear the

whispering sound of the sea, and the sharp cries of the gulls, cries that came out of another world to him. And best of all, the great silence" (Man 740-41).

Soon Cathcart moves beyond even the "cries of the gulls":

> "Only he derived his single satisfaction from being alone, absolutely alone, with the space soaking into him. The grey sea alone, and the footing of his sea-washed island. No other contact. Nothing human to bring its horror into contact with him. Only space, damp, twilit, sea-washed space! This was the bread of his soul. (Man 743)

In Cathcart Birkin's comic-affirmative desire (the angelic laughing desire or primal positivity) to converse with the elemental all, to go beyond self and humanity in perfect merging, converges with and becomes indistinguishable from Gerald's perfect denial, his death-wish. For Cathcart, "The wind dropped. Was it night again? In the silence, it seemed he could hear the panther-like droppings of infinite snow":

> As he looked, the sky mysteriously darkened and chilled. From far off came the mutter of the unsatisfied thunder, and he knew it was the signal of the snow rolling over the sea. He turned, and felt its breath on him. (Man 746)

Leslie Fielder in a radio talk once described Lawrence as a great "poet of death." Finally in him, the other to which the self engages is the unfinalizable, fathomless, unknown

and silent death itself. The new heaven of dialogue engages its infinite boundary of silence. "Rupert's Blessed Isles" and Gerald's frozen, silent, deadly mountain become one. Lawrence's imagination confronts itself interrogatively at its maximum ("religious") heights and depths; it engages itself in an encompassing dynamic of doubt.

Ultimately, Lawrence's imagination asks itself how its vision of dialogic heaven differs from its vision of dialogic hell (as a frozen silence, as the deepest bolgia of the inferno), and finds this question unanswerable. As early as 1913, he understands that "I'm like Carlyle, who, they say, wrote 50 vols. on the value of silence" (CL 1, 504). Throughout his career, Lawrence knows that the only apt response to the messy, unanswerable questions was silence, *and* that such questions were the ones most worth asking. The "silence" of "The Man Who Loved Islands" moves from detached, jeering mockery of an instance of personality as isolated egoism to a purely ambivalent and comprehensive self-testing engagement to the author's own deepest positivities.

The final (not finalizing or conclusive) silence of such expression is, in other words, a kind of laughter. It is the silent, laughing response to the unanswerable (and thus unfinalizable) question. It is a response deeply informing Lawrence's creativity, taken in its entirety, as a religious gesture. As such, laughter is a comprehensive gesture identical in kind to the divine gesture of creation. Lawrence

understands that individuals in their transitional, unfinished being ("in the sacred silence of gates/. . . in the suspension of wholeness" [CP698]), ultimately, in their answerability, must confront the unanswerable source of all seeking. He celebrates the engagement of the seeker and the unanswerable object of all seeking, and calls the resultant discourse "the silence of the last of the seven great laughs of God" (CP 698). God's ultimate response to inquisitive humanity, like the author's form-shaping response to his own deepest interrogations, is finally the open and unifying, substantiating, not emptying, response of silent laughter.

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