CHAPTER - V

SOCIAL IMAGINATION AND THE NON-RATIONAL

"......I don't feel there is any very cordial or fundamental contact between me and society or me and other people. There is a breach. And my contact is with something that is non-human, non-vocal."

- D.H. Lawrence in

"Autobiographical Sketch",

Selected Literary Criticism

The increasing emphasis of sex and love between man and woman in Lawrence should not obliterate the fact that he also stressed the predominance of a societal instinct in man in the wider perspective. Lawrence's intense preoccupation with sex during his writing of such novels as The Rainbow and Women in Love gave way to a gradual delineation of such an instinct in some later novels. On an emotional and personal level love has its glorious contribution. For the enrichment of a healthy rejuvenating life, love, and for that matter sex plays the important role. But in the
circumembient universe, to fulfil the need of a man, to be the essential part of a greater community beyond the personal self, man must transcend himself from the constrictions of the individuality. A sense of brotherhood among men is the preliminary requisite for that quest ahead.

Lawrence is particularly weary of the individual self dominating the social self and he is antipathic towards such repression of the social instinct. He comments while writing an a letter on this societal instinct - "What ails me is the absolute frustration of my primaeval societal instinct. The hero illusion starts with the individualistic illusion, and all the resistance ensue. I think societal instinct much deeper than sex instinct - and societal repression much more devastating. There is no repression of the sexual individual comparable to the repression of the societal man in me, by the individual ego, my own and everybody else's. I am weary even of my own individuality and simply nauseated by other people's".1

So it is a matter of difference between the individual, consciousness and social consciousness and the triumph of the later one on the former. Though immense stress is put on the individual on a personal basis yet on a

broader perspective the importance of the individual becomes minimal and political context.

On the relative importance of individual consciousness and collective or social consciousness Lawrence comments very clearly in *Apocalypse*, - "The mass of men have only the tiniest touch of individuality if any. The mass of men live and move, think and feel collectively and have practically no individual emotions, feelings or thoughts at all. They are fragments of the collective or social consciousness. It has always been so, and it always will be so".  

Then it naturally follows that as an integral part of a social unit man has options left for fulfilment of his power sense. Since he is also a member of a political unit he has in him a power mode to fulfil along with the love mode.

The two vital urges in human beings life namely the power urge and the love urge are reflected through various impulses, both voluntary and involuntary. The

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3. Ibid. p. 875.
Nietzschean "will to power" seems to be analogous to Lawrence's power cult reflected in different forms in two of his novels - *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*.

For an individual to develop one's love instinct and ignore the power urge is the most convenient refuge for shunning the responsibility. Though the involuntary instinct is to ignore the latter yet for being fulfilled, the individual has one domineering trait to his personality and that pertains to the power-mode he has to exercise on the fellow individuals and the surroundings.

The death of the individual consciousness and triumphing over of the collective and social consciousness is not every thing for the happy breakthrough the civilization needs. It is simply a part of the quest on Lawrence's part to find a meaningful existence in the void. Yet the acceptance of the ritualistic details of the new mode of mystic socio-religious concept in *The Plumed Serpent* and the leadership theme of *Kangaroo* are but partial and beset with terse ambiguity. Kate and Somers, the protagonists of *The Plumed Serpent* and *Kangaroo* respectively suffer from this deep sense of ambiguity. The acceptance is half hearted yet for the time being this is the only alternative the world has to offer to the wearied, exhausted soul. The ritualistic
old Mexico instead of institutionalised Christianity is the only refuge people can find shelter in. Because it has got vast potential of a great religion which is characterised by full communion with natural landscape and cosmos. It is the revival of great Pan-power which Lawrence eulogizes and admires.

The Mystico-spiritual revival under the leadership of Don Ramon and Don Cipriano — head for double benefits in two diverse fields. Though Don Ramon denies his being involved in any political upsurge to catch power and he talks of attaining only mystical spiritual power from the bowels of the earth, yet after a dispassionate analysis he seems to be as intensely involved as Cipriano, in the military power pursuit. As Quatzalcoatl he has to depend on Cipriano, the prototype of the wargod, for maintaining the source of power with himself.

The cult of power brings us back to a discussion of Carlyle the prophet of 'hero and hero worship'. The society is led forward by a chosen few — leaders with inherent potentials.

Carlyle's idea of government was that it should be of the people, by the people and for the aristocracy. But
Nietzsche's idea is even more extreme; It is of the people no doubt but it is for the aristocracy and by the aristocracy.\(^4\) Denouncement of democracy is somewhat akin to Lawrence's, for whom democracy is the rule and power of the average men, the 'standard'\(^5\) and in which the people deserving the power are excluded by the average, the so-called dead ideal of equals. He clearly says - "Men are not equal, and never were and never will be, save by the arbitrary determinaion of some ridiculous human ideal".\(^6\)

Nietzsche's vehement repugnance against democracy is because of its crushing of creative genius by the numbing weight of mediocrity.\(^7\) Lawrence's concept of inequality amongst men is analogous to the German philosopher's two distinct concepts of master-morality and slave-morality. The ultimate aim of the master-morality is to produce a band of leading individuals, creative genius - supermen. Similarly Lawrence too talks highly of the need of bestowing power to a group of people, with inborn traits of leaders.

"The next relation has got to be a relationship of men towards men in a spirit of unfathomable trust and

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6. Ibid, p. 75.
7. Mc Govern, From Luther to Hitler, op. cit. p. 413.
responsibility, service and leadership, obedience and pure authority. Men have got to choose their leaders, and they obey them to the death. And it must be system of culminating aristocracy, society tapering like a pyramid to the supreme leader. "^8 (emphasis Lawrence's)

So as indicated earlier, the beginning of a collective life or social consciousness lies at the formation of the unit for the next society which is nothing else but awakening up of the self "every morning out of the dark sleep of the passionate hoarsely calling blood."^9 The formation of the unit thus would call for the polarising of the passionate blood in the individual towards life, and towards leader. ^10 It can very well be imagined that this kind of relation between the individual and the leader, the chosen individual is a most dynamic, intimate and intense one. There is involuntary submission on part of the individuals and once it is established - it becomes binding and "to the death". This strong urge for loyalty and submission comes of the deep root of the unconscious or the spontaneous self, as he sometimes calls it and it is the most important, vital relation next to sex, which too is nothing but "the polarisation of the individual blood in men towards the individual blood in women."^11

8. D.H.L. Fantasia of the Unconscious, op. cit. p. 183
9. Ibid. p. 183
Whether Lawrence could draw on ultimately on the passionate and religious belief of his on the intense passionate yearning of the soul towards the soul of a stranger, greater individual\textsuperscript{12} and find a fruitful culmination through it as he called it the "next motive for life,"\textsuperscript{13} still remains doubtful, for the reason that, he couldn't show a fruitful culmination of the leadership motive in both two novels under scrutiny - Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent.

Whatever be the inherent gain or failures of the concept of power as materialised in his execution in these novels, yet the fact, that Lawrence was once thoroughly shaken up and absorbed in the rumination of this power concept shows, his interest in it and he even started regarding it as a mode of saving the corrupt humanity. The sense of power and authority born out of money and mechanical victory over natural factors is something which is devoid of life giving force - it is anti-life but the source of power originating our of people's voluntary obedience, before a chosen leader, is spontaneous and life-enhancing.

The role of the leader is to "shelter mankind from the madness and the evil of antilife"\textsuperscript{14} as observed by

\textsuperscript{12} D.H.L. Fantasia ........ op. cit. p. 183.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid. p. 183.
\textsuperscript{14} D.H.L. Kangaroo, Penguin, op. cit. p. 126.
Kangaroo, the great chosen messiah of the Diggers' in the novel.

The ugly looking Jew, the number one of their club professes what is clearly Laurentian, though from him, Somers, the real Lawrence - prototype ultimately departs.

The great reality in life - living, needs much tolerance and wiser manipulation to overcome the "subtle and even conflicting impratives"\(^{15}\) and the common people "needs to be relieved from this terrible responsibility of governing himself when he does know what he wants, and has no aim towards which to govern himself.\(^{16}\)

Between the leader and the masses the relation is that of ruling and obeying - but that obedience need not be based on presumptuous mechanical automatism - but it must be essentially that of pure spontaneity. The sympathetic flow between the leader and the common people assumes the identity of a vertebrate correspondence that verges on telepathic communication. The leader of the ruling authority emits "two great telepathic vibrations".\(^{17}\) Emitted unconsciously it is "the great influence of shadow of power,

\(^{15}\) D.H.L. Kangaroo, op. cit. p. 125.
\(^{16}\) Ibid, p. 126.
\(^{17}\) Ibid, p. 330.
causing trust, fear and obedience and second it is the great influence of protective love causing productivity and the sense of safety."  

The behaviour of the masses too depends upon the balance acquired between the vertebrated telepathy of the leader flown towards the people and the flow of power from the people culminating in one individual through circles of aristocracy towards "one grand centre". Then it will be decided what form the masses will acquire - whether it will degenerate into mobs or whether they will still keep a spark of direction.  

In Kangaroo, the clash between the Socialists and the Diggers too culminates in the mob psychology - the ultimate victim is the chief - the Kangaroo. He is shot at and after protracted illness dies. The death of the leader unobtrusively keeps the most obvious questions hanging - was Kangaroo right in his theory of love or in other words, did Lawrence find - self justificatory answer in the love mode proclaimed by Kangaroo?  

Now we would enter into a detailed discussion of these two novels of Lawrence - namely Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent, keeping an eye on the non-rational

19. Ibid. p.331.
elements expressed in the characters and situations and also in the technique of the novels. We would see how the non-rational manifests itself in the revelation of the societal instinct.

Modern rationality is associated with rational rules and procedures. In human relations it takes the form of law, a set of rules governing inter-personal behaviours in the light of individual interest as well as calculated social norms. This sort of rational social relation fails according to Lawrence to meet man's deeper needs. Even romantic love and social philanthropy cannot fill the void as these are only a decorative and sentimental projections of the rational self. Hence Laurentian notion of brotherhood and collective human existence occupy a space beyond the rational sphere.

Kangaroo: The most striking phenomenon in the novel is the spirit of the place evoked in Austrilia and also the origin and root of power expressed in different spheres of life - in domestic affairs, and in socio-political life. Individual distinctions in characters in relation to non-rational or illogical trends are less stressed on, than the involuntary basis in authority over men and common people and the involuntary response and sense of

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20. On the spirit of the place in Australia as projected in Kangaroo, a note has already been offered towards the end of Chapter 1 of the present study.
absolute obedience in their turn. At the helm of affairs lies Kangaroo, the proto-dictator of the Diggers' union seeking absolute control over the whole of Australia. Richard Lovat Somers stands as the typical Lawrence representative with ideological and biographical similarities, and also of ideas and aspirations, dreams and failures. The peculiar 'love-late relationship between Somers and Kangaroo the actual Ben Cooley - Offers a poignant portrayal of this complex state of affair, namely the personal relation between man to man and the projection of it in social or collective life. The degeneration of power principle, showed with devastating effect on Kangaroo and his shattered love-ideologies reminds Somers again of the nightmarish days of Cornwall and the ghoulish experiences of military medical examinations, rising to the surface in retrospect. The feelings are analogous to the sense of nullity felt after the fiasco of his relation with Kangaroo.

Somers is a man who is shown to have possessed in a very high degree, "the power of intuitive communication with others." Such a man as him who is intense and uncommonly high-strung, is used to develop very intimate and undefinable relationship with people. This very characteristic in him is generalised by Lawrence when he

21. D.H.L. Kangaroo, p. 44. Hereafter the page number within brackets indicated would refer to Kangaroo the novel.
comments on the ultra-sensitive and vibrant communication the common people can establish with the people of his own class. Somers. Like Lawrence hails from a mining village and the humble background he maintains in the novel is similar. He talks of this urge - for vital and essentially spontaneous brotherhood between man and man. But that urge does not speak of the inner man who rather wants to be alone. The strong individual personality of Somers coalesces with others but does not mingle properly, not with the members of the Digger's Club nor with the socialists.

As a neighbour he is all familiarity with Jack and Victoria but does not mingle too much to loose his individualistic ideas. When he sits with Jack for a game of chess and Jack very characteristically broaches Politics to the discussions, he becomes alert. "Coming here just to draw me and just to draw me and get to know what's inside me" is the thought in his mind and he would carry the conversation no further.

The much desired comradeship between man and man can be an important factor in formulating future collective action for further benefit of the social units and Lawrence, as has already been hinted at, was emphatic about such a

22. Ibid. p. 49.
vital relationship between man and man and also between man and woman. The living relationship between men, when occurs, in the context of the social units, takes a reformative spirit as it does in *Kangaroo* and the *Plumed Serpent* but its occurring in the personal context with individual ideosyncracies of the persons leads the individual concerned either to a blockade or to a course of personal development and prosperity.

Here between Somers and Jack though the relation starts between them as neighbours and the relation on personal grounds does not survive but soon it takes up something external - working for or working under some ideological principles. Somers cannot be a 'pal' to him as their ideas and thoughts do not show affinities. From the very beginning Jack tries to exert influence over Somers and he does not broach the subject of Kangaroo till he feels, Somers will not negate. Of course not that, everything is conscious manipulation on his part, between the men, involuntary and intutive reactions also is prominent. For instance, in the chapter "Jack and Jeal", while they play chess - an inexplicable peace and understanding prevails...
"Somers too played without any zest. And yet they were satisfied, just sitting there together, a curious peaceful ease in being together. Somers wondered and it, the rich, full peace that there seemed to be between him and the other man. It was something he was not used to. As if one blood ran warm and rich between them. Then shall thy peace be as a river *(p.61)*

Jack's definition of fate is somewhat similar to Lovat's concept of fate. For the former as he describes it before Somers "Your instinct brought you here ...... and brought you straight up against me. Now that I call fate" *(p.63)*

But ironically though both talk about the deepest instincts, yet Jack is a man - who stands at the opposite pole to Somers - who is not as instinctive and impassioned and individualistic as him.

Through their differences, one common aim binds them together, that is "a sort of revolution and a seizing of political power" through organization of the Diggers club and carefully selecting the hierarchy of power among them. Somers has an institution that Jack is trying to "get a hold
over him" by trying to persuade him to join with the Diggers.' He felt like an animal that is being lassooned. Yet there was his chance, if he wanted to be a leader of men. He had only to give himself, give himself up to it and to the man" (p.106)

So if Jack has a secret design in inducing him to their club, Somers too has his ideals showing its bright illusions through the same avenue. Otherwise inwardly he is not much impressed by the other man's saying apparently he does not cherish any political ambition in the ordinary sense of the terms yet he yet has his dreams of collective activity with other man.

"Politics - conspiracy - political power: it was all so alien to him. Somehow, in his soul he always meant something quite different, when he thought of action along with other man. Yet, Australia, the wonderful, lonely Australia, with her seven million people only - it might begin here." (p.105)

The power Somers wants to grab is not something merely for the sake of aggrandizing the sense of authority over people. The necessity for power is there, as he tries
to convince Harriet. It lies in the fact that a few people have the natural gift for it and also a sense of "reverence for the sacredness" (p.113) of power itself - so that the leader or the leaders can bring about the necessary control over the material possessions of the land - "world's material riches and supplies" - in order to prevent the masses grabbing hold of the possessions for themselves. (p.112). But the leaders, as Somers envisages would need to be unselfish and relentlessly steadfast in their purpose.

Now his experimental involvement with Jack for collective group activity clashes with his personal commitment to Harriet. As she sees it, it is "a breach of faith on his part, wounding her." (p.107)

Because he keeps her apart, because he does not disclose to her what goes on between Jack and him, Harriet remains antagonistic to the whole idea of group male activity. Her involvement with Somers' total personality has to be a complete one and she considers it a breach of trust in the integrity of their marriage. But Somers too, has his limitation. With clear Laurentian belief he considers it essential to keep the women away from the male impersonal
activity. Somers' ideas are - "He was also determined that it was not a women's matter. As soon as he could he would tell her about it: as much as it was necessary for her to know. But, once he had slowly and carefully weighed a cause of action, he would not hold it subject to Harriet's approval or disapproval".

Her viewpoint is entirely different. She wants to join in the enterprise, and does not want "to be left out lonely". So the inevitable tension and sense of alienation prevail between them. Each one in his or her individual self is pretty confident and convinced that this must be so.

"She agreed with the necessity for impersonal activity, but oh, she insisted on being identified with the activity, impersonal or not. And he insisted that it could not and should not be: that the pure male activity should be womanless beyond woman". (p.108)

He has an individual notion of a group male activity. Yes, but when Jack calls him for such a mission under Kangaroo, he feels some misgivings. Deep inside his heart he does not find the inner promptings and the urge to go ahead. The spontaneous reaction in him is that of hesitation and reluctance. One part of him wants to join yet he cannot get over fully the "mistrust and reluctance" he
feels. The quality of feeling occurring in him perhaps serves him right, as he feels clearly the pulling of "an invisible hand for behind", preventing him from joining, he is not in a position to grasp the opportunity offered to him instantly. Devoid of exaggerated enthusiasm he can now observe the merits and also apparent demerits of the movement of the Diggers' club. On one level as Somers has this duality of feeling deep inside his heart, a dilemma in him, so in another level in the outside perspective, Somers observes the subtle game of power the Diggers and the socialists are playing. As he observes the Diggers' movement from the inside with Jack being a prospective member for them, so he has the chance to see the socialists because he hears their viewpoint from Willie Struthers, who too considers Somers, a bright prospective participant of their movement.

With his halfhearted interest and enthusiasm when Somers meets Kangaroo for the first time instantaneously the man interests him. And with his peculiar intuitive faculty he gauzes the character of Benjamin Cooley, Kangaroo, from a deeper level. The man seems to be a real Kangaroo - with his pendulous face and protruding belly. But apart from the facial characteristics, Somers sees deep inside the man. He
He seems to be a Jehovah - and "lamb of God grown into a sheep". His sharp reaction to this alien man of alien features - "and when he smiled like that, there came an exceedingly sweet charm into his face, for a moment his face was like a flower. Yet he was quite ugly - The man had surely Jewish blood. And he was almost purely kind, essential kindness, embodied in an ancient, unscrupulous shrewdness ...... It had given his soul an absolute direction whatever he said about relativity. Yet once he felt any man and woman is could, mean, barren of his warmth which was in him, then he become at once utterly unscrupulous in defeating the creature.(p.124)

Kangaroo the man, the chief of the Diggers' interests him too much at first sight to be repelled at his ugliness - he wonders at the intuitive faculty Kangaroo shows in detecting the notion of power he has in the mind. He reacts involuntarily - "why, the man is like a god, I love him."(p.128)

The not too secret indignation, Harriet felt at Somers' ousting her from his working sphere at the Diggers', vanishes into the air and is replaced by a sense of pride, when Kangaroo very cunningly weighs Harriet and asks
for Somers from her, for their use. Her female self is flattered and when she sends her reply to Kangaroo, dedicating Lovat and also her sympathy (as Kangaroo calls it) for the cause, she feels even more flattered than when she had signed the marriage register."(p.139)

But the exuberance of Somers diminishes considerably after the first spark of vigour.

The usual disinterestedness and indifference come back to him. The feeling for mankind and an active life for the progress of entire humanity falls flat in him. "He did not care a straw what Kangaroo said or felt, or what anybody said or felt, even himself. He had no feelings and speech had gone out of him. He wants to be cold, cold, and alone like a single fish, with feeling with his heart at all except a certain icy exultance and wild fishlike rapacity."(p.140)

This sudden shifting of tone has much more to do with his intermittent periodical gush of depression, than to somethig external. So their relation too undergoes periodical shift of ebb and flow of kindness, generosity, apathy and hatred.
In reality it is because of a deep sense of ambivalence prevalent in Somers' soul that he cannot wholeheartedly go forward with Kangaroo's men. As he remains faithful to the inner voice inside him, he does not haphazardly and blindly follow Kangaroo in his socio-political pursuits. He is already a frustrated man completely disillusioned by the war-mongering in Europe. He intensely wishes — "that a flood would rise and cover Europe entirely, that he could have a little operation performed that would remove from him for ever his memory of Europe and everything in it — and so on" (p. 170)

So the external phenomena of things are tiring enough for Somers. Reason and argument of his 'pals' Jack, William James and Kangaroo seem to work on him quite momentarily. He thinks for some moments of asking Jack to teach him the art of shooting with a rifle so that he too could be actively involved in the activity. Yet that too does not remain in the surface for long. The next moment he sees the utter futility of shooting with a rifle. Then the novelist himself answers the most obvious question risen to the force — if he is totally frustrated — what is his refuge or why is it that Somers cannot accept the most convenient alternative i.e. outward activity offered to his bruised
soul? Because he already has his notion of things and he knows convincingly that man has a last refuge after all the avenues are exhausted. That serene shrine of comfort lies deep inside his soul— in his unconscious. "So again came back to him the ever-recurring warning that some men must of their own choice and will listen only to the living life that is a rising tide in their own being, and listen, listen listen for the injunctions and give heed and know end speak and obey all they can. Some men must live by this unremitting inwardness, no matter what the rest of the world does." (p.127)

Away from the maddening torture of the outward world and its unbearable tension, the sea of his own inward soul comes to rest. "He feels himself drifting back again like a creature into the sea. The sea of his own inward soul, his own unconscious faith, over which his will has no exercise." (p.173)

That Somers fumes and rages over the possibilities of a revolution and is rather sceptical about it and expresses it before William James, is another matter but his meddling about this business however slightly, brings a certain breach in his relation with Harriet, because he
wants to withhold facts from her, she becomes more forceful and furious. Somers too resists. And the result is occasional outbursts of venom in both the characters towards each other.

Somers' constant wish for constructive group activity halts in the midway, because the spontaneous inward voice does not side with him, however he is trying for Kangaroo's revival of labour organisation for the salvation of Australia. Though Willie Struthers has not been drawn in details and in large yet Somers seems to have been more impressed by Struther's fiery enthusiasm than by Kangaroo's principle of love. Of course to him both of them are evil and he rejects both.

"Kangaroo wants to be God himself, and save everybody, which is just irritating, at last. Kangaroo as God himself, with a kind of marsupial belly is worse than Struthers' absolute of the people. Though it a choice of evils, and I choose neither". (p.334)

His relation with Kangaroo passes through different phases of tide and flow but ultimately it cannot triumph - the culmination is rather disastrous and disturbing
for them. They feel a peculiar bond between them. Specially it is Kangaroo who offers himself as a true mate for Somers and wants Somers also to dedicate himself heart and soul for him. But Somers cannot accept his principle in toto. The principle he proclaimed is "the principle of love, the maximum of individual liberty, the minimum of human distress", which Somers instantly recognises as unfeasible.

He is sceptical of the principle of love because he believes, human love is disastrous when it starts out to individuals together; it is welcoming great peril for the society, of course he admits that "love is the greatest thing between human beings, men and women, men and men, women and women."(p.220)

But he concedes, "Absolute lovers always smash one another, absolute trusters the same. Since man has been trying absolutely the love women, and women to love man, the human species has almost wrecked itself. If now we start a still further campaign of men loving and absolutely trusting each other, comrades or mates, heaven knows the horror we are laying up."(p.220) So against Kangaroo's desperate appeal for love Somers retorts.
"Don't love me. Don't want to save mankind. You're so awfully general and your love is so awfully general: as if one were only a cherry in the syrup. Don't love me. Don't want me to love you. Let's be hard, separate men. Let's understand one another deeper than love". (p.223)

This meeting of two individuals on an impersonal plane confirms Lawrence's earlier belief expressed in *Women in love*. Between Ursula and Birkin the bone of contention is that, against Ursula's absolute trust in love and absolute possessiveness Birkin offers a deeper relation on an impersonal level. What he wants in her is not her as such but the essential isness of her personality. The understanding and attachment between them should go beyond their individual selves.

So the true comradeship offered by Kangaroo cannot convince Somers and with the ending of the chapter 'A Row in Town' the incidents in Australia come to a close, with Kangaroo's being shot at and his being killed.

When we come to the end of *Kangaroo*, it appears that the course of the story is in a form of judgment of Lawrence. He shows that the scheme of Kangaroo fails and the
whole movement collapses. Though Lawrence had high hopes on the motif of Leadership among men, perhaps the paragmatic analysis of the theory shows that, there is, no doubt the necessity of such a leadership, to pave way in darkness yet in practical situations these leaders fail, as it is shown they have done in the novel. For a successful implementation of the schemes of the leader, there is need of, more organic collective activity. Moreover the mob-psychology is a quite complex phenomenon. Unless the leader establishes an unconscious vertebrate telepathic contact with the people, they should not be expected to behave in a particular fashion. In the novel, the leader, Kangaroo and to a lesser degree Will Struthers and Jack are not capable of coming to the close proximity of the people they want to represent and rule over. As no reciprocality is visible between the leader and the people - the Diggers' mission or for that matter, other too are bound to turn into a failure.

The Plumed Serpent

The Plumed Serpent is not a novel which is widely popular as Sons and Lovers or Women in Love or even The Rainbow. Rather it has a dubious reputation. First because Lawrence here is more of a prophet than of a novelist and secondly because it propogates a 'cult of blood', that to
some, is abominable and mystifying. To us, this novel holds
great significance not because it contains the mystic
experience of human beings in close contact with the cosmos
but because we consider it as a culminating point on
Lawrence's quest for the leadership theme or a meaningful
social relation between man and woman. Lawrence epitomises
the clash of individual will and social consciousness in the
personalities of Kate Lesley, the Irish Individualist and
through Don Ramon and Don Cipriano, two self-styled Mexican
quasi-religious leaders. The human relations be it between
Kate and Capriano or Kate and Ramon or between Ramon and
Capriano and between Ramon and Carlota or between Ramon and
Teresa - the personal notes are juxtaposed with the
collective note of events and incidents.

The reverberation of the non-rational elements is
best to be found in the various individual consciousness or
psyche, for that matter and also in the close proximity of
individual to the collective (here cosmic) and in the man
and man and man and woman relationship.

Disgusted by the element of automation and
antinatural mechanical settings in the prolonged quest for
a meaningful living throughout his peripatetic life
Lawrence arrives at Mexico and New Mexico and finds something primeval about the place. The spirit of the place strikes him and he searches into the rituals and myths associated with the primitive religion of the Aztecs.

The conscious self, progeny of the white Europeans is in negation of the primitive blood consciousness—the true effectiveness in personal and social relations. Only blood affinity between men and men and women and women can give birth to the great unconscious gush of life.

Kate Lasley, the Irish middle-aged lady is at the centre of the story and the pivot of the meeting point of the white European blood being and the primitive Indian blood being. She is the hypnotised observer or the revival of the primitive religion of the Quetzalcoatl through the powerful leadership of Don Cipriano and Don Ramon. From the very beginning her acceptance of the old religion is tinged with horrific and sceptical outlook. When she first hears of Quetzalcoatl, she is spiritually exhausted with her European life. She is sure it has nothing new to offer to her.

"Over in England, in Ireland, in Europe, she had heard the consummatumest of her own spirit. It was finished, in a kind of death agony. But still this heavy continent of
dark-souled death was more than she could bear". (p. 56)

But till date Mexico seems to have possessed nothing new and promising. Instead some uneasy and uncanny imitating spirit of the place has apparently disturbed her and made her burning with "furious rage". To herself she is otherwise quite good tempered but because of the influence of the place her calm composure has given way to all pervading frustration and burning irritation. She concludes perhaps this is the result of something, very much potent working inside the bowels of the earth of Mexico. She tries to find the root of this vital essence in the rugged landscape of the country and also in the "silent Serpent like dark resistance of those masses of ponderous natives whose blood was principaly the old, heavy resistant Indian blood" (p. 61)

Now the emphasis on the term blood and that too 'Indian' presupposes the grave sombre identity, Lawrence is going to impose on the quality a distinction of 'blood'. The distinction between the 'white and non-white' is not simply the superficial distinction of race and tribes or the colour of the skins but it goes certainly deeper in the sense that the very root of a people lies in its mythical beliefs and
ritual traditions which in turn are invariably linked up with their very existence. And that entity of theirs is cosmic.

An immense power exudes from the bowels of the earth. It is "dragon of the earth, some effluence, some vibrations". It then works up on the very composition of the blood and nerves in human beings: this colossal power from 'the volcanoes', as Kate believes. With her potential to apprehend the non-rational she senses something 'very potent' though with her European national mind she cannot explain the phenomenon. She theorises, yet has to conclude - "who knows"?

This sceptical comprehension of Kate is her first step into the dark mystical world of Quatzalcoatl, the centre of rumination in *The Plumed Serpent*. When she comes across the newspaper paragraph on the revival of Quatzalcoatl on the lake of Sayula, she is fascinated and longs to know more about it. Her European soul is already exhausted, she has no feeling nor longing for love and fickle human emotions. She almost gets a flickering hope of revival in the name Quatzalcoatl and an intuition like instinct propells her.
"The name Quatzalcoatl, too fascinated her. She had read bits about the god. Quatzal is the name of a bird that lives high up in the mists of tropical mountains, and has very beautiful tail-feathers, precious to the Aztecs. Coatle is a serpent. Quatzalcoatl is the Plumed Serpent, so hideous in the fanged, feathered writhing stone of the National Museum.

"But Quatzalcoatl was, she vaguely remembered, a sort of fair-faced bearded god; the wind, the breath of life, the eyes that see and are unseen, like the stars by day". (p. 64)

Like somers of Kangaroo, she too is weary of a fixed parport of life, of definite rigid meanings, she longs for a new life— with her former husband Joachim she crossed into certain eternity in life. "She has to be reborn. But this new life is not to be touched by love, excitement and 'dragon of degeneration'. Kate has a belief inside her that beyond love there is something. Her intuitive reflection at times gives her a flicker of hope. perhaps it was her fate that brought her to Mexico "to be alone with the unfoling flower of her own soul, in the delicate, chiming silence that is at the midst of things." (p. 66)
But that aspiration in her too is tinged with scepticism and doubt. She cannot easily get used to that idea of staying back in Mexico. Of course after her meeting with Don Ramon and listening to him regarding the past and feature of Mexico, she begins to place some sort of confidence in them - Don Ramon and Cipriano.

At the root of his trying to find the godhead of Quetzalcoatl and thereby the old religion of Mexico back, is his belief that not only his soul but the souls of the people are nauseated by the 'Will to assert themselves.' He tries to explain different political trends and revolutions too in the context of exerting will and bullying tactics. To him Bolshevism is one sort of bullying and Capitalism another. What man needs at the hour is finding up of his lost soul and that in other words is finding one's true 'manhood' and true 'womanhood.' (p. 81) When he drifts to a panegyric of the gods giving her sermons she does not let him go into further 'banalities'. But at the end of the conjectures and speculations she decides to stay at least for a longer period in Mexico. As slowly she gets acquainted with the mission heralded by Ramon and his deputy Cipriano, she is propelled forward against her conscious will and desire. At the back of her mind she always feels the strangeness and oppressiveness of the place. She observes the
rituals attached with the rise of Quetzalcoatl with mystified wonder and hypnotised mesmerism.

She does not cherish any hope of marrying again and indeed she does no longer have the need for love and tenderness from any individual after her second husband Joachim's death. But when Cipriano places the proposal of marriage before her, it seems incredible that she would ever marry Cipriano - the Indian Mexican, of all the persons. But she goes on doing every thing against her conscious will. Cipriano suggests the most incredible thing to her, he offers her the proposal that she should be the goddess in the Mexican pantheon. In a lamblike state she listens, but cannot will fully and consciously react. Quite feebly she protests - But I don't feel like a goddess in the Mexican pantheon she said "Mexico is a bit horrible to me. Don Ramon is wonderful. But I'm so afraid they will destroy him." (p.248)

But he is a Mexican general; with every drop of blood, an intensity of a native. He waive it easily "get used to it, he said. Get used to it that there must be a bit of fear, and a bit of horror in your life. And marry me, and you will find many things that are not horror. The bit of horror is like the sesame seed in the nougat, it gives the sharp wild flavour. It is good to have it there" (p.249)
Though she is not in a position to apprehend every thing that have been propounded by him - yet she seems certain of the point that "surely, Surely it would not be herself who could marry him. It would be some curious female within her, whom she did not know and did not own." (p.249)

She feels hypnotised. So even after he goes away she feels as if in a trance. Things are happening very fast for her to see things distinctly.

But the conscious wish in her ṃ ṃ flee and escape from the country. After he goes away and she lay forming plans to escape. "She must escape. She would hurriedly pack her trunks and disappear ........ Suddenly escape, and flee away to a white man's country, where she could once more breathe freely." (p.251)

The dichotomy between her individual self and her collective or social consciousness is the conspicuous phenomenon regarding Kate Lesley's character. Her free self longs for liberty on one hand avoiding the fascination and commitment she at time feels for Mexico and at the other hand she feels propelled towards the strange religion of the Quetzalcoatl. At the root of the fascination and mesmerised attraction towards the primitive spirit of Mexico
lie her attitude toward Don Ramon. He fascinates her more than Mexico fascinates her. His impersonal and indifferent self seemingly apart from any one attracts her like a magnet. When, Cipriano in 'Cipriano and Kate' speaks about meeting Ramon for his advice she readily agrees to go to him. "Kate also wanted to see Ramon : she always did. (p. 150)

Though she does not give any serious consideration to the thought of marrying Cipriano, she sets off to see him to talk about the marriage.

It is a 'death' to her, "she must go to Jamiltepec in a motor boat, to see Ramon. To talk to him even about marrying Cipriano ...... weight of this darkness on her breast, the heaviness of this strange gloom ?" (p. 259)

She meets Ramon and in the midst of their conversation she discloses to him one of her traits - her dislike of the people. And Ramon Pacifies her misgivings about joining "the salvation army" of Mexico as she puts it, by declaring that he too at the bottom of his heart despises the mass of people but at the same time is intensely conscious of his social responsibility which of cause she lacks or is missing in her till date. At the same time one has
to remember that she belongs to a completely different world - and that her 'blood' is different, she is white and her consciousness is European.

Whether it is a foreign country or not, the mass of people annoy her every where. Ramon analyses her inward tendencies in the light of his own belief, that as she is obsessed with the people in her consciousness - the outcome is hatred of humanity - and only way to overcome the feeling is to disentangle oneself from persons and from people - "to turn beyond them, to the greater life". That is exactly what he does, as he too is full of apathetic feeling towards the people. That is in the personal level. "She and Ramon had sat down on a bench under the white flowering oleander of the garden downstairs. His face was impassive and still. In the stillness, with a certain pain and nausea he realized the state she was in, and realized that his own state, as regards personal people, was the same. Mere personal contact, mere human contact filled him, too, with disgust. Carlota disgusted him. Kate herself disgusted him. Sometimes, Cipriano disgusted him.

"But this was because, or when, he met them on a merely human, personal plane. To do so was disaster : it filled him with disgust of them and loathing of himself".(pp. 264-265)
But as has been pointed out his mind is full of leadlike numbness at this duality between his deep love for his countrymen and consequently a deep desire to do something beneficial for them and inherent sense of antipathy for individuals at the personal level. The notion of meeting people in an impersonal level is nothing new in Lawrence. As has already been pointed out, Somers in Kangaroo, Birkin in Women in Love showed the same trend of belief - Ramon also maintains same conspicuous Laurentian trends in him.

So like Kate Lesley, Don Ramon too has moments of frustration, moments when his ambittered soul sinks to a desperate depth. With Carlota, his wife, his sense of failure is absolute. She wants him in perfect intimacy, she wants to be "eternally and closely identified with Ramon", failing which "she hated him and hated everything which she thought drew him away from this eternal close identification with herself". (p. 265)

That is why there is fierce antagonism in her heart against Ramon's mission of reviving the old religion of Mexico, and that is the reason that she is unknowingly all the more attracted and propelled towards Virgin Mary and
her Christian Catholic church. For her Ramon has committed utter blasphemy and casual sin against the church. So against her hatred and apathy against Ramon, her husband is coolly indifferent towards her and retains his sense of dedication towards his cause. She is simply instinctive, her rational self being twisted by her repressed sensual desire for her husband, and which finds expression in constant attempt to humiliate and hurt Ramon.

Her love inside her undergoes a transformation as his. His is the old passional self going "hard and congeal upon him, like the shell on a chrysalis. It was the old caterpillar stage of Christianity evolving into some thing else.

But her love and turned from being the spontaneous flow, subject to the unforeseen comings and goings of the Holy Ghost, and had turned into will. She loved now with her will: as the white world now tends to do. She became filled with charity: the cruel kindness. (p.220)

The essence of their relation comes out in the chapter titled 'Home To Sayula'. (Carlota enters his room and casually sits upon his unmade bed as if asserting her right).
His mission holds nothing significant for her: for her it is "Quetzalcoatl nonsense" (p. 22). But it seems, he has attained quite an impersonal self around him and with infinite patience (thought he knows it to be fruitless) he sets out yet again to narrate the inherent significance of his goal. But inwardly he too is disturbed with her. He rather avoids her disturbing presence, because they are two planets of two different orbits - nothing seems to be there as connecting point. Even the Children, his sons, are her preserves and he gladly has resigned them to her. After futile points being exchanged without any consensus achieved, he loses patience suddenly and dismisses her but at the next moment withdraws himself. He does not want her presence because "To Ramon, Carlota was still, at times, a torture. She seemed to have the power still to lacerte him, inside his bowels. Not in his mind or spirit, but in his old emotional, passional self: right in the middle of his belly, too tear him and make him feel he bled inwardly". (p. 219)

She still has that capacity and she uses it deliberately, willfully. Lawrence's rejection of the principle of love as ultimate reality is projected not only in The Plumed Serpent but also equally conspicuously in other
novels. In Kangaroo we have already observed in the protagonist, Somers a deep sense of antipathy for the love-mode of Kangaroo. And the reason behind Kangaroo's failure to emerge as a leader of Australia was that he propagated the idea of love with no real feeling for the mass of people he tried to rule.

Though Kate Lesley's sceptical attitude towards the socio-religious revival of Quatzalcoatl, Lawrence projects the inevitable clash of individual will and social consciousness.

The social consciousness in her was thwarted when she lost her second husband, the revolutionary, who died for Irish politics. The meaningless fighting for freeing Ireland and making it a great country resulted in his own death. Kate thus does not have any meaningful previous experiences. Her involvement in his work was minimum as she later discloses to Dona Carlota. 'I knew it was wrong. What does Ireland matter, what does nationalism and all that rubbish matter, really! And revolutions! They are so, stupid and vieuxjeu. Ah! It would have been so much better if Joachim had been content to live his life in peace, with me" (p. 177)
Now also her involvement is partial. Whatever contact she feels with these non-whites stems from her involuntary attraction towards Don Ramon. He fascinates her and yet she knows that it is the incompleteness of Cipriano that would seek her and not Ramon who is beyond personal love. (p. 200)

Though Kate has been denying consciously the overpowering presence of these two men in her life - there are moments when she is outside her ordinary self and in such moments as if in revelation she feels the mystery of the inner universe. Such an incident occurs, while she goes to Jamiltapec with Cipriano to meet Ramon after his accident. Inside the motor-car, while they are sitting side by side, suddenly Kate drifts away into another area of knowledge - area of pre-cognition and clairvoyance. She begins to see "the black fume of power which he emitted, the dark, heavy vibration of his blood, which cast a spell over her". (p. 324)

The power that is emitted from his blood is infused with the nature, she feels the vibrations in the sky; she feels the "phallic mystery rearing itself like a whirling dark cloud; to the zenith" And this mystery is of
the primeval world where great Pan is still there. In a trancelike state she observes the undying Pan face superimposed on Cipriano's. In this instant he becomes the representative of the "living male power, undefined and unconfined." (p.324)

She sees into him and his power and feels herself slowly succumbing before it shedding her old individual private self. This is the moment of revelation for her - marrying Cipriano now will not be an absurd thing and even the idea of placing herself in the Maxican pantheon, seems probable. "As he sat in silence, casting the old pan-power over her, she felt herself submitting, succumbing. He was once more the old dominant male, shadowy, intangible, looming suddenly tall, and covering the sky, making a darkness that was himself and nothing but himself, the pan male. And she was swooned prone beneath, perfect in her proneness" (p. 325) So she marries Cipriano. The ritualistic marriage that is conducted by Ramon under the bower in nature, the scene of the bride and the groom standing drenched in rain, characteristically, is marked by close affinity with nature, the hymns of marriage being for the bride - "This man is my rain from heaven" and for the groom - "This woman is the earth to me." "And with it Lawrence adds
another characteristic belief of his total submission of the female before the male power - the man preceding the female.

Of course there is nothing personal about the marriage. The whole ceremony is induced by a will tinged with a mission, the cause of the people, the installation of the gods and goddesses in the temple of Quatzalcoatl which was once the abode of Christ.

The ceremonial installation of the Mexican god Quatzalcoatl inside the church and earlier on demolishing of Christ from the altar in one way epitomises the Lawrentian denial of institutionalised Christianity and the ethics of love proclaimed by the religion. The extremity of the situation is heightened when Carlota, in a dazed state, as the sole representative of the wiped out religion, enters the temple of Quatzalcoatl and sends out Horrified shrieks to the saviour while the whole assembly of men and the prototypes of the Mexican god stand transfixed in horror and outrage. The gradual draining out of Carlota or Christianity is dramatised in the intense moment when at a moment of nervous agitation her body shrinks in spasms and she falls flat at the feet of Don Ramon. Kate Lesley's oblivious moments and absorption in the religious rituals of
Quatzalcoatl are very few and after she regains her composed rational self she falls back to her individual misgivings regarding the efficacy of the religion. Most of the time she ruminates over the possibility of being free from this burden in which her individuality is denied. "And deep in her soul came a revulsion against this manifestation of pure will. It was fascinating also. There was something dark and lustrous and fascinating to her in Cipriano, and Ramon .......... "At the same time, as is so often the case with any spell, it did not bind her completely. She was spellbound, by not utterly acquiescent."(p.401)

She feels alienated and outcast not only because she is an outsider and does not belong to this country of the non-whites but also because she senses the role she has to play at the hands of the males. She is nothing but "asubservient, instrumental thing: the soft stone on which the man sharpened the knife of his relentless volition ......"(p. 402)

Though officially she has been termed as Malintzi, the bride of Huitzilopochtli, yet inwardly she is conscious that her role is not above that of Teresa, the new bride of Ramon. For Cipriano she is not a separate self. She is to be
reciprocal towards him - in being the answer to "his call, the sheath for his blade, the cloud to his lightning, the earht to his rain, the fuel to his fire". (p.403)

The rituals connected with the religious revival of quetzalcoatl are marked by sharp mystical overtones. The power invoked from the universe, the bowels of the earth and the might of the sky infused into the inner being of the leader Don Ramon. In the chapter titled "Lords of the Day and Night", Don Ramon offers silent prayer to the dark God above, in a closed dark room. The dark still figure with his clenched first upward," in a temible tension of stretched upright prayer" offers the image of the priemeval man extracting his power from the cosmos. It is a state supposedly of "mindless" meditation, only" a powerful will" stretching itself towards a communion with the great power. Curiously this is just after he feels disturbed by his tumultuous meeting with Carlota, who other wise is secluded from his mission, having deep hatred and indignation for his works. He gets back the strength he needed after this prayer -"He had broken the cords of the world, and was free in the other strength .(p.181)
It is somewhat different to offer rational explanations of these experiences. But they are nevertheless true to the persons concerned who undergo them. Cipriano's involvement in the primitive dance of the Indians shows the same line of development of events. For him the dance by the old Indians of the north still have the secret of animistic rituals. "They dance to gain power; power over the living forces or potencies of the earth. And these dances need intense dark concentration, and immense endurance." (p.380)

He the living incarnation of the old war god Huitzilopochtli, gathers power from these dances - he is infused with the mysterious power of the cosmos and he in turn radiates that aura of power and it gets into their bodies. "and then he felt his limbs and his whole body immense with power, he felt the black mystery of power go out of him overall his soldiers..... His own dark consciousness seemed to radiate through their flesh and their bones : They were conscious, not through themselves but through him. (p. 381)

Cipriano's initiation ceremony into the world of red god, Huitzilopochtli, conducted by Ramon is characterised by its intense mystical significance. Ramon casts a magnetic spell over him as usual by his order over
Cipriano and he is hypnotised. He does not remain in his ordinary self. In a trance he experiences strange 'dark' oblivion - "In Cipriano, another circle of darkness had started slowly to revolve, from his heart. It swung in widening rounds, like a greater sleep. . . . . Cipriano began to feel as if his mind, his head were melting away in the darkness; like a pearl in black wine, the other circle of sleep began to swing, vast. And he was a man without a head, moving like a dark wind over the face of the dark waters. (p.384)

The plumed Serpent is the novel in which Lawrence comes to a culmination of his belief in an impersonal male activity and leadership of man. He propagated his theory of affinity and differences of blood, streams - white and non-white and also two types of sensibilities. This dilemma of the differences of blood is synchronised and brought to a solution in another theory that perhaps before the glacial period, there was "a mysterious hot-blooded, soft footed humanity with a strange civilization of its own".

And that projects itself anywhere on earth, sometimes in America and sometimes in other countries as well. The shadow of that world is so strong in each of us.
sometimes that we tend to go beyond the conscious, and begin to be close to the old mode of consciousness, true "old dark will, the unconcern for death, the subtle, dark unconscious, non-cerebral, but vertebrate". In Kate's European sensibility lay hidden, her aboriginal self as a residue of memory, a dormant myth. Ramon's attempt through the religious revival is this fusion, she concludes. Yet this solutions do not bring the end of the story. The story ends with that eternal question everpresent in Kate's consciousness, would she attain complete surrender of her individual self? So the Kate that stays back in Mexico is the same woman wanting regeneration, yet not ready for total surrender of her individuality. She is confused and restless, forever searching.

Lawrence could not and would not let Kate Lesley succumb - like her, he too had high hopes which got shattered, because he can no longer believe in the regeneration of a country through mystic revival of dark Gods. In a letter to Witter Bynner dated 13 March, 1928 he writes, "mean about The Plumed Serpent and the hero, on the whole I think you are right. The hero is absolute and leader of men is a back number. ----- On the whole I agree with you, the- leader-cum-follower relationship is a bore. And the new
relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive between men and men, men and women, and not the one up and one down, lead on I follow, ich, dien sort of business." 24

Now he will start his quest in Lady Chatterly's Lover for a more meaningful existence.