CHAPTER 1

LAWRENTIAN CONCEPT OF PHALIC CONSCIOUSNESS
D. H. Lawrence believes that there existed a 'great age' which was characterized by 'the pristine consciousness'. The spirit was yet to be born. There was no internal conflict and hence no permanent external conflict. Man's consciousness flowed unaware as in the animals. But with 'the Fall' which came 'through woman', 'the consciousness of the flesh', which was 'the movement into the conscious possession of a body' came into being. The Garden of Eden was the unconscious state of mankind. Adam and Eve, the first

2 DHL., 'Study of Thomas Hardy', Phoenix, P. 453.
ever created human beings, were related to each other with 'blood knowledge' by which Lawrence meant 'instinct, intuition, all the vast vital flux of knowing that goes on in the dark, antecedent of the mind'. The moment they tasted the forbidden fruit, they became conscious; the progression from unconscious to conscious was thus complete. Man's consciousness became split and he had an inward sense of 'separateness'. With that came 'knowing' and 'understanding' resulting in mind knowledge which is associated with 'self-consciousness', 'imagination', and 'self-watching'.

The moment man becomes 'self-aware-of-itself', the wholeness of the 'pristine consciousness' is cut off. The greatest enemy of man is said to be his own spirit, his own 'self-aware-of-itself'. This 'self-aware ego' knows that it has no power over the original body. So it begins to store up, pure abstractions, ideas, which always have a moral, or good and bad implications. He calls it the 'secondary consciousness', or 'cerebral consciousness'. Lawrence connects this idea with the Biblical myth:

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4 Ibid., P. 79.
5 Ibid., P. 79.
6 Ibid., P. 79.
The moment an idea forms in the mind, at that moment does the old integrity of the consciousness breaks. In the old myths, at that moment we lose our "innocence", we partake, of the tree of knowledge, and we become "aware of our nakedness" : in short, self-conscious.7

In the consciousness, the sexual relation between a man and a woman also undergoes a change. They want to 'know' what they were doing and to watch what happened to them. This knowing and watching brings them 'self-consciousness' which makes them realize that sex 'act' is a sin. They thus attain 'mind knowledge', wedded to the 'dirty-understanding'.

Lawrence explains 'self-consciousness' as the realization that all spontaneous life, desire, impulse, and first hand individual consciousness arise and are effective at the great nerve-centres of the body, and not in the brain. The great nerve centres are the 'solar Plexus' of the abdomen, which is sympathetic and the 'lumbar ganglion', which is volitional.8

7 Ibid., P. 79.
8 DHL., 'Education of the People', Phoenix, P. 628.
consciousness, primary impulses, desires and motives arise at these great centres. They are located below the diaphragm. Immediately above the diaphragm there is cardiac plexus and thoracic ganglion, which are acting in immediate correspondence with the two lower centres. These two constitute the four great nerve centres, of our consciousness and psyche. We live and move and have our being at these great nerve centres. Thought and idea do not enter here. It moves spontaneously with the effect of dark vibrations, which establishes the life circuit. This life circuit is our profound primal consciousness and it contains all our radical knowledge, 'knowledge non-ideal, non-mental, yet still knowledge, primary cognition, individual and potent'.

From the 'primal consciousness' or the 'primary consciousness' which is centralized in the great affective centres, and circulating in vital circuits of 'primary cognition' is distilled or telegraphed the 'mental cognition' or consciousness. Lawrence calls the 'primal consciousness' as the 'vital consciousness'. The mental consciousness is only one-tenth of the 'vast surging primal consciousness, the affective consciousness of mankind ...'

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9 Ibid., P. 628.
10 Ibid., P. 628.
11 Ibid., P. 629.
Life is issued spontaneously at the great primary affective centres which he calls 'potent spontaneous consciousness'. But the mind or mental consciousness has seized control over it and as a result it controls our own feelings and impulses. The primal consciousness has now only a subordinate position to mental consciousness. The result is pseudo-spontaneous modern living:

The old polarity has broken down. The primal centres have collapsed from their original spontaneity, they have become subordinate, neuter, negative, waiting for the mind's provocation, waiting to be worked according to some secondary idea. Thus arises our pseudo-spontaneous modern living.

In this way, we limit the 'potent spontaneous consciousness' to the 'poor limits of the mental consciousness'.

In Fantasia of the Unconscious, 'pure blood consciousness' is equated with sex. 'It is utterly non-ideal, non-mental. It is pure blood consciousness. It is the basic consciousness of the blood, the nearest

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12 Ibid., P. 629.
13 Ibid., P. 629.
thing in us to pure material consciousness'. Mankind, had denied the existence of matter thinking that matter is only a form of spirit. But the realization came only later that matter is only a form of energy. The mental consciousness is a feeling like 'the tyranny of mind, the white, worn-out arrogance of the spirit ...', whereas the blood consciousness is something which we convulsedly know - 'the existence of matter'.

Man's sexual and procreative being depend mainly on his deepest instincts and the flow of his intuition. He believes that the only genuine form of thought is instinctive or intuitive, since life is beyond mental analysis: 'The thought-adventure starts in the blood, not in the mind'. This 'warm flow of the intuitional awareness' helps the human beings to make relationship and relations attractive. With the break of this 'flow' began the nervousness of mankind:

15 DHL., 'Introduction to these Paintings', Phoenix, P. 568.
With the collapse of the feeling of physical, flesh-and-blood kinship ... came the failing of our intuitive awareness, and the great unease, the nervousness of mankind ... we know one another only as ideal or social or political entities, flesh-less, bloodless, and cold ... 17

In Apocalypse he says that what man wants most passionately is his living wholeness and his living unison. Through physical fulfilment, he can be alive in the flesh and become a part of the living, incarnate cosmos. The real man of flesh lives in the body and tries to know the world through his instincts and intuitions, and he becomes himself by his procreative blood rather than through mind and spirit. But unfortunately, the man of flesh is undermined and preference is given to the man of spirit. 'The man of flesh has been slowly destroyed through centuries, to give place to the man of spirit, the mental man, the ego, the self-conscious'. 18

Lawrence calls the 'spirit' as the 'pernicious mental consciousness'. In the modern civilization, all our

17 DHL., Phoenix, P. 568.
18 Ibid., P. 568.
emotions, passions are mental, 'an intensely elaborate and intricate clockwork of nerves and brain ... A mechanism, and hence incapable of experience'. The brain has the power to transform spontaneous energy into voluntary energy, or consciousness. 'The brain can transfer', says Lawrence, 'spontaneous consciousness, which we are unaware of, into voluntary consciousness which we are aware of and which we call consciousness exclusively'. He adds that, mankind's history is 'the nauseating and repulsive history of the crucifixion of the procreative body for the glorification of the spirit, the mental consciousness'. Today, we are either in the grip of 'masturbating consciousness' which produces all kinds of novelties which thrill us for a moment, and then go away dead, or we have the mind that 'prostitutes the sensitive responsive body, and just forces the reactions'. The blood consciousness and mind consciousness are always in conflict:

19 DHL., 'Introduction to Pictures', Phoenix, P. 766.
20 Ibid., P. 767.
21 DHL., 'Introduction to these paintings', Phoenix, P. 569.
22 Ibid., P. 575.
The blood *hates* being known by the mind. It feels itself destroyed when it is known ... the mind and the spiritual consciousness of man simply hates the dark potency of the blood-acts: hates the genuine dark sensual orgasms, which do, for the time being, actually obliterate the mind and the spiritual consciousness, plunge them in a suffocating flood of darkness.²³

Lawrence has in mind the achievement of the 'whole consciousness', which can only be attained with the reconciliation of blood consciousness and mental consciousness. He confesses - 'My beliefs I test on my body, on my intuitional consciousness, and when I get a response there, then I accept'.²⁴ Any creative act requires the 'whole consciousness' of man: instinct, intuition, mind and intellect. The fusing of these elements bring the 'complete consciousness' which is also described as 'complete truth'; 'a complete vision' or 'a complete revelation in sound'.²⁵

²⁴ DHL., 'Introduction to these Paintings', p. 575.
²⁵ Ibid., pp. 573-74.
'Phallic Consciousness' is a vital part of the 'Whole Consciousness'.²⁶ It is to be interpreted as healthy sex relationship, by which Lawrence means, 'warm, blood sex', that establishes the living and vitalizing connection between man and woman against the modern sex which is 'a pure matter of nerves, cold and bloodless'. The blood has a perfect, but untranslatable consciousness of its own. It thinks in desires and revulsions inside the man darkly and ponderously and reaches in strange conclusions. It knows that there is no such thing as perfection, whereas the spirit seeks perfection in everything. Our 'head and spirit' wish to 'eliminate the tiresome reality of our obstinate blood-being'.²⁷

In Women in Love, Lawrence speaks of the 'strange fountain of ... body'. The warm blood-sex is related to 'the floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches'.²⁸ The sexual union of a man and a woman is the way of the blood, the way of the power, the way of the darkness which

leads them to the Beginning. 'In the beginning ...
everything was engulfed in total darkness ...'\textsuperscript{29}

Darkness, for Lawrence represents God, the creator. In
the sex union he says:

I come to the Source of Power. I am
received back into the utter darkness
of the Creator, I am one again with
Him ... the rocking blood goes forward,
quivers on the edge of the oblivion,
then yield itself up.\textsuperscript{30}

Here perhaps, Lawrence suggests that phallic worship
might lead us to primordial darkness, which he believes
to be God. Phallus is a symbol of male power, the godly
vitality in man. He speaks of the figure of Buddha that
is installed on the place of stupa as a monumental phallic
symbol. Explaining this idea Lawrence writes:

The phallus is a great sacred image:
it represents a deep, deep life which
has been denied in us, and still denied.
Woman deny it horribly, with a grinning

\\textsuperscript{29} The Bible
travesty of sex ... And with the lingam, and the mystery behind it, goes beauty.  

Next, Lawrentian concept of phallic consciousness is to be evaluated on his principle of duality. The Biblical myth of the creation of the universe provides for him the pattern of the working of the whole universe which is entirely based on the principle of balance - Light and Darkness; Lion and Lamb; Male and Female. Though these are opposite and contending forces, they are complementary too. Similarly, sensual ecstasy and spiritual ecstasy, male principle and female principle, mind consciousness and blood consciousness in man are eternal. Neutralizing the one with the other is impossible. The division of male and female is pernicious, but inevitable. It causes strife, conflict, restlessness which are necessary for our earthly existence. Rest and peace invite our destruction. The inter-opposition is a necessary condition for our survival. The diminution of the opposition can result in universal nothingness.

Our being is divided into male and female principles. The mind is the active male principle which is always in strife with the senses, the passive female principle. So strife in every man and woman is part of their being. Sex

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is a means of self-perfection and self-fulfilment. The same impulse which puts male apart from female also draws them together. Sex is meaningful when there is an act of coition. In the sex union, a man becomes a pure male and a woman a pure female. But the source of creative life is the impulse received from the opposite principles within us. Fundamental happiness can be achieved only when one has this basic knowledge. These ideas lead us to the concept of polarity between the sexes. Man and woman are in constant struggle for pure maleness and pure femaleness. As a result, in human relationships, there is powerful attraction and repulsion.

Lawrence associates the male principle with 'the Love, the Spirit, the Mind, the Consciousness' and the female principle with the 'Law, the Soul, the Senses, the Feelings'. The principle of law, which is the natural law of the body is found to be strongest in woman and the principle of love, the counter movement of the spirit is found to be the strongest in man. In a sexual union, the conflicting principles of Love and Law are united. Here the male principle may be equated with the mental consciousness and the female principle with the blood consciousness. The female principle is later termed as 'phallic consciousness'.

32 DHL., 'Study of Thomas Hardy', Phoenix, P. 513-14.
Flesh is considered wiser than the intellect. Mind can go wrong in its conclusions, but what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The real way of living is to answer to one's wants. It is answering to the call of the blood, direct without fribbling intervention of mind or moral implications. Phallic consciousness is a great religion that believes in instinct and intuition. It also demands acceptance of one's physical and animal nature. Lawrence elaborates his point further in the following statement:

The real way of living is to answer to one's wants. Not 'I want to light up with my intelligence as many things as possible', but 'For the living of my full flame - I want that liberty, I want that woman, I want that pound of peaches, I want go to to sleep, I want to go to the pub and have a good time, I want to look a beastly swell today, I want to kiss that girl, I want to insult that man.'

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According to the myth of creation in the Bible, man has lost the bliss of Paradise and gained the knowledge of the flesh or the consciousness of the flesh. The denial of blood sympathy and blood contact result in rage and hatred to themselves and to others. The genial influence of the phallus alone can regenerate active and happy forms of human society.

The craving for knowledge marks the birth of sin in the Bible. Action itself is not sinful, but the knowledge about it is a sin. The blood is the substance of the soul and of the deepest consciousness. It is momentous and vital. Knowing and feeling are undivided in the blood. Lawrence goes a step further when he declares a little knowledge of his-self in 'Benjamin Franklin':

That I am I.
That my soul is a dark forest.
That my known self will never be more than a little cleaning in the forest.
That gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest into the clearing of my known self, and then go back. That I must have the courage to let them come and go. That I will never let mankind put anything over me, but that I will try always to recognize and submit to the gods in me and
the gods in other men and women.\textsuperscript{35}

Male and female are brought together in marriage by the Unknown. From the Unknown profound desires enter into us and fulfilling these desires is fulfilling of creation.\textsuperscript{36} It demands obedience to react according to the way in which we are impelled in faith and pure spontaneous morality. Those who are united can 'go into the wilderness to know a new heaven and a new earth'.\textsuperscript{37} It gives fulfilment, stability and fixed centre to life. It is not a fusion of two into one, but it is a union of the two contending forces who retain their separate identities. It is 'the conjunction, the union-inspite-of difference, the harmony inspite of dissimilarities that matters here'.\textsuperscript{38} Man and woman have degenerated to be just personalities and they come together in marriage when they are thrilled by each other's personality. This affinity of mind for marriage is a disastrous basis. The 'sympathy of nerves and mind and personal interest' which is 'hostile to blood sympathy in the sexes'. It is 'white,
cold, nervous, poetic, personal sex'. This exhaustive and debilitating sex relation in marriage, Lawrence calls 'counterfeit'.

Morality is implicit in the very nature of existence. Lawrence calls the instinct of fidelity as the deepest in the great complex we call sex. Man becomes part of nature only through sex relationship. God is in nature and every part of it is a manifestation of God. A connection between thought and action, word and deed are necessary. We have to act according to our thoughts and think according to our acts. When a balance is kept in between words and deeds, then only we can think of sex 'fully, completely, honestly and cleanly'. Lawrence in 'The Reality of Peace' speaks about the courage to show fidelity to one's feelings:

If there is a serpent of secret and shameful desire in my soul, let me not beat it out of my consciousness with sticks. It will lie beyond, in the marsh of the so-called sub-consciousness, where I cannot follow it with my sticks'.

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40 Ibid., P.489.
We live in a world of 'realization' rather than that of action. In the past there existed sexual action without corresponding thought and realization. Now that situation is reversed. Men and women prefer to keep themselves 'sexually apart' quite 'clean'. The realization of sex is given importance rather than the action itself. As a result of the imbalance caused, the mind is interested in sex activity, but the body has to be provoked (Mental consciousness). Lawrence suggests harmony between words and deeds for keeping the balance.

The mind and the body have to retain the natural balance and each should have a natural respect for the other. Words are the natural part of the mind's consciousness. But the modern culture and civilization have taught us to avoid the so-called obscene words. As a result we daren't speak of sex naturally. Lawrence holds the view that modern man is in a state of funk.

So in order to get out of the state of funk — 'sex funk', the acceptance of the sexual and physical being of one's own self and of every other creature is necessary. If our mind has fear associations caused by words it is an unhealthy state of mind. One can use the so-called obscene words without fear, for they are the natural flow of the consciousness. Lawrence suggests a proper understanding for the individual's fulfilment.
The timeless quality of being is understanding; when I understand fully, flesh and blood and bone, and mind and soul and spirit one rose of unison, then I am.  

Mankind, Lawrence says, for the last three thousand years, has been in an excursion to 'ideas, bodilessness and tragedy ...'. The great crusade against sex and body is said to have started in full blast with Plato, and it has been a crusade for 'ideals', and for 'spiritual' knowledge. The idealist philosophies and religions deliberately have tried to kill sex. Here starts, says Lawrence, mankind's excursion to tragedy. He takes into consideration the teachings of the 'great idealists'. The Gospel preaches the way of salvation through certain ideals. But salvation and human tragedy go together:

The Gospel came to tell us we were all saved. We look at the world today and realize that humanity, alas, instead of being saved from sin ... is almost completely lost, lost to life, and near to nullity and extermination.

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42 Ibid., P. 680.
43 DHL., 'A Propos', Phoenix II, P.511.
44 Ibid., P.510.
Buddha, Plato and Jesus are described by Lawrence as 'utter pessimists', for they find life to be a futile struggle. The only happiness is in 'abstracting oneself from life'. What they attain for is living in the 'immutable' or eternal spirit. They completely disregard the cyclic pattern of the universe, 'the daily, yearly, seasonal life of birth and death and fruition'. This is a situation of nullity. Thus the great saviours and teachers only cut us off from life.

Man has committed a mistake by disregarding his deeper needs and living for his little needs. The deeper needs demand deeper morality and the little needs demand little morality. The deeper morality has a universal significance as it effects the destiny of mankind. It is always in conflict with little morality and little needs. Man should have a tragic consciousness which is the greater need of man, i.e., 'a knowledge and experience of death; every man needs to know death in his own body'.

The pre-tragic epoch teaches us that 'the greatest need of man is renewal forever of the complete rhythm of life and death, the rhythm of the sun's year, the body's year of the life time, and the greater year of the stars, the soul's year of immortality'. Lawrence calls

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45 Ibid., P.511.
46 Ibid., P.509.
47 Ibid., P.510.
The Word is already uttered; so it is out of place asking for it. We have only to pay attention to it. But the real need is to pay attention to the Deed:

It is the Deed of life we have now to learn:
we are supposed to have learnt the Word, but, alas, look at us. Word perfect we may be, but Deed—demented. Let us prepare now for the death of our present "little" life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos.

Phallic consciousness is a return to the 'greater consciousness' which can be achieved only by keeping a three-fold blood relationship. A relation to the living cosmos is of primary importance. The pagans seems to have lived in 'togetherness with the universe, the togetherness of the body, the sex, the emotions, the passions, with the earth and sun and stars'. But with the rise of Christianity, and ultimately in Protestantism that balance is lost. The greater consciousness can be

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48 Ibid., P.510.
49 Ibid., P.510.
50 Ibid., P.512.
achieved only when we preserve the religious rhythm and ritualistic rhythm of the year in human life. We have to live in ritual adjustment to the living cosmos in its revolutions, in eternal submission to the greater laws. Marriage is a part of the greater laws, the cosmic rhythm which sway life always. Lawrence exhorts: 'mankind has got to get back to the rhythm of the cosmos, and the permanance of marriage'.

'Knowledge' has killed the Sun, the Moon and the Earth. They do not provide joy. Our little mind inhabits in the 'dry and sterile little world' of reason and science. We have to return to the world of our soul - "dark forest" - where our greater consciousness lives in. For achieving it we must return to the 'vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe'. It is possible only when we practice the rituals:

We must once more practice the ritual of dawn and moon and sunset, the ritual of the kindling fire and the pouring water, the ritual of the first breath, and the last. This is an affair of the individual and the household, a ritual of day. The ritual of moon in her phases, of the morning star is for men and women separate.

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51 Ibid., P.509.
52 Ibid., P.510.
The second in the three-fold blood relationship is the relation of man to woman. The modern civilization is in the grip of 'white' sex, which means, the 'nervous, personal, the disintegrative sort' of sex. The phallus has degraded to be the symbol of the 'poor, nervous, counterfeit ... love'. The regeneration of man is possible only through a phallic regeneration. It is:

the arising of a new blood contact, a new touch, and a new marriage. It will be a phallic rather than a sexual regeneration. For the phallus is only the great old symbol of godly vitality in man, and of immediate contact.53

The lost vitality of the phallus should be brought back, for it is the bridge to the future. The 'warm blood-sex' can establish the 'living and revitalizing connection' between man and woman.

The third in the three-fold blood relationship is the relation of man to man. The presence of every man is a menace and a cause of threat to the other. The idealist philosophy disregards sex and body and thus causes the

53 Ibid., P.508.
destruction of friendship and hope. 'Kindness' is the order of the day and underneath this kindness we find 'a coldness of heart, a lack of heart, a callousness, that is very dreary'. The cultured society gives emphasis to the development of 'personality' and 'individualism'. Lawrence says it as a 'state of unconscious menace and fear'. Man's awareness of himself in apartness is destruction. Class consciousness and class hatred indicate that the old togetherness and old blood-warmth have collapsed. Man is aware of himself in apartness. The result is hostile groupings of men for the sake of opposition and strife. The working classes alone retain the old blood-warmth of oneness and togetherness for some more decades.

Phallic consciousness is thus the religion of the blood. As a religion, it is more pagan rather than Christian. Man with this consciousness answers to the blood without the intervention of the mind or unconcerned about morality. It is a living according to the deeper needs which demand a deeper morality in relationship with the living cosmos. This consciousness is in contrast with mental, spiritual, cerebral, masturbating consciousness. Phallic consciousness can be regained only if we destroy our mental consciousness which is false inorganic connections and money mindedness.
It is to be noted that Lawrentian concept of phallic consciousness is a progression of his twin concepts of 'the dark forest' and 'blood consciousness'. It is an important antidote to the arrogance of scientific rationalism. It is an assertion that man cannot be simply seen as an object of scientific study like other objects. In reality he is a living organism who has an organic relationship with cosmos. Lawrence shares this truth in both his poetry and prose. But I have chosen to study his novels with a view to pointing out how he has structured phallic consciousness artistically.