APPENDIX

The Boy in the Bush (1914)

The Boy in the Bush is not Lawrence's original novel. It is based on a manuscript sent to him by Wollie Skinner, the nurse Lawrence and Frieda had met in Australia. It is an Australian novel based on the story of Wollie Skinner. The title of the novel, originally given by her, was "The Boy in the Bush". The Australian version is a story which Lawrence considered rather too "naive" (it contains a clashing, and a little too much psychic development than (she) had done." Lawrence found the original version "a queer boundless musk" and because he "felt a good deal of sympathy for her", he "tried the thing, and wrote it all over again". The original version of the novel did not impress Lawrence because Wollie Skinner "left the character psychologically at a standstill." Lawrence responded to it, it may be said, in the background of his loneliness and his hatred against England, but actually the novel is unfinished with Laurentian colour. It covers "some of the recent experiences such as horseback riding, etc. That's much," Moore points out. "Lawrence revised the book with generous personal touches; some of the horseback and horse riding scenes were apparently out of his own later "Lawrentian" experience, and he gave the hero three women as lovers instead of one he found in the original version." Furthermore, the hero of the novel becomes an advocate of the Laurentian War. etc.

3. Ibid.
4. The Intelligent "Boy", Moore, op. cit., p. 36.
Lawrence makes Jack Grant the figure of his dreams. He is, indeed, a servant of the dark God. This dark God is identified here with "one's own inward soul." Jack does not fit in England and escapes to Australia. He adopts the primitive environment of the farmers and ranchers and woodsmen of the interior which is devoid of any contact with civilization and after five years he becomes mature, married and with a growing family. He becomes a successful miner in the wilderness of the north. Lawrence presents Jack amidst a trio of conflict which he too faced in his life: the conflict with the environment, with God and with one's self.

The conflict with the environment is present in the very beginning. Jack, a child in England, comes to West Australia with the hope of freedom in a new land but with a determination not to relax his grasp upon the essentials of a civilized life. He adopts the life of the farmer and develops in hardihood of body and strength of the spirit. But the conflict starts when he notices that in this new land, in the primitive surroundings, the community tends to subject the individual to constraints and henceforward the hatred against the new land develops. Jack cannot mix with the colonial commonness of the new land. Out of this dilemma the real man is born relying on lonely spark of the self deep within him.

The conflict with God is symbolically presented. To Jack God is the mysterious spell of the bush which incites the individual on to adventure, to conquest and to freedom. The Bush symbolises an unmixed, unformulated world where life can be confronted at its starkest: "he felt as if the old world had given him up from the womb, and put him into a new weired grey-blue paradise, where man has to begin all over again. That was his feeling: that the human way of life was all to be begun over again." 1. Jack 1.

Sure that he can only commune with the Lord when he is absolutely alone, in "the sanctity of his own isolation;" for, he thinks that God glows in the colours and lights of the bush. While he absorbs the pristine spirit of the bush, he communes with the Lord and with his own real self. He acknowledges the darkest desires only to keep his heart pure.

The body acting in unison with pure desire becomes a "spiritual body", agent of the God; for, like Lawrence, his nature is "emotionally mystical". This symbol of the bush is sustained and not out of joint with the rhythm and theme of the novel.

So far as the conflict with the self is concerned, Jack, struggles with the force of physical desire which in conjunction with the claims of the community produces hindrance in his free action and tries to subject his action.

The life of real courage is always the controlling theme of this novel.

In Australia Jack comes into contact with the Ellis family. There he marries Monika who has children by other men. He loves Mary, a Miriam-like girl but she refuses him. This shocks him and he indignantly rides off on his red stallion alone. At the end of the novel he has Hilda, a governor's daughter riding out after him to offer herself to him. She is on her blue-grey mare and Jack is on his red stallion. Both separate again to meet finally by Jack's promises.

"'Till Christmas', he answered. 'Then the moon will come to the sun, eh? Bring the mare with you. She'll probably be in foal." And he rode over the crest and down the silent grey bush, in which he had once been lost. Here mare is symbolic of female submissiveness and the stallion that of the virile male power. Even sun and moon carry the same symbolic

1. Ibid., p.167.
2. Ibid., p.358.
3. Ibid., p.390.
4. Ibid., p.391.
overttones and the bush symbolizes "the sanctity of his own isolation" to commune with his "inward soul" which is the seat of the dark God: "in life one can only be true to the spark."

In his plot the deepest response Jack feels is from the daughter of Easu whom he brings up after killing her father in a fight. The fight with Easu adds a touch of frontier ferocity that reaches a violent climax when the two enemies come to the death-grips. Faith Sagar observes: "the slaughter of Easu is so powerfully described and prepared for that we can hardly question its rightness. It is Easu who stands for brutality as well as for all the instinctive hatred of the mass for the life-adventure."

In this novel Lawrence's sense of aloneness is much more in focus. We find that Jack prefers the bush to the society and the stable to the household. His horse is the only creature with which he seems to have established the right relation:

"Vision is no good. It is no good seeing any more. And words are no good. It is useless to talk. We must communicate with the arrows of sightless, wordless knowledge, as Jack communicated with his horse, by a pressure of the thighs and knees."

It is also because Lawrence believes: "The horse is always the symbol of the strong animal life of man."

About this sense of aloneness Ford points out: "At the time of writing The Boy in the Bush (Sept.-Nov., 1923) Lawrence's sense of aloneness was most acutely awakened. After severe quarrels Frieda had sailed from Europe to England to visit her children. She refused to rejoin her husband in America where he was wandering across the continent alone. In this state of low spirits his sense of

1. Ibid., p.356.
alienation was as intense as Gulliver's after the fourth voyage.¹ This sense of aloneness is the outcome of Lawrence's hatred against the mechanical life as well. It is not synonymous to solitude. Solitude is rooted in pleasure while aloneness is confined to pain; "solitude which may be and loneliness, which is always painful."² This sense of hatred is present in the personality of Jack Grant too:

"Even his horse knew it; even old Adam. He pressed the animal's sides with his legs, and made silent pact with him; not to make this compromise of animality and casual friendship, not forever to be making it and allowing himself to be carried backwards in the weary flood of the old human direction. To forfeit the casual amiables, and go his way in silence. To have the courage to turn his face right away from mankind. His soul and spirit had already turned away. Now he must turn away his face, and see them all no more."³

Semers, too, like Jack and Lawrence reflects over the truth of the dark God:

"Man's isolation was always a supreme truth and fact, not to be foreword. And the mystery of aloneness, And the greater mystery of the dark God. Beyond a man, the God that gives a man passion, and the dark, unexplained blood-tenderness that is deeper than love: ... This dark, passionate religiousness and inward sense of an inflaming magnificence, direct flow from the unknowable God ..."⁴

He further reflects:

"... the only thing to wait for is for men to find their aloneness and their God in the darkness. Then one can meet as worshippers, in a sacred contact in the dark."⁵

Thus Lawrence advises: "You must have deep control from within. You must have a deep, dark weight of authority in your own soul. You must be most carefully, sternly controlled

¹. Double Measure, op.cit., p.66.
². Double Measure, op.cit., p.67.
⁴. Lampireen, op.cit., p.360.
⁵. Ibid., p.361.
from within. You must be under the hand of the Lord. You can't escape the dark hand of the Lord."¹

Murry maintains, "Jack Grant finally becomes a chimera: the hard, indomitable male, with Lawrence's psychological revulsions and Lawrence's imaginative satisfactions." In nothing is this so apparent as in Jack's repeated determination to be one of "the Lords of Death".² Indeed, it was the inertia and cowardice and life-hatred that made impossible his triumph in life and so he imagined a triumph in death for consolation. If Jack lacks Somers's sense of obligation towards the world of men and civilised effort, this sense of triumph in death as consolation is the main reason for this.

On the whole, in this novel Lawrence has successfully attempted to convey his vision of the dark God through the sustained symbolism of the bush and other symbols like horse, mare, and cosmic symbols. Jack's pioneering into the bush is symbolic of a human quest for life and for a greater God than any known God:

"As if life still held great wells of reserve vitality, strange unknown wells of secret life-source, dusky, of a strange, dim, aromatic sap which had never stirred in the veins of man, to consciousness and effect."³

Though the novel is based on some other person's material, it bears the strong stamp of Lawrence's own attitudes and experiences. It is indeed "an admirable novel of action."⁴ The Boy in the Bush clearly presents the "drama of the instinct"⁵, although his great accomplishment is "to give elbow-room to our imaginations in an intensely vital world."⁶ Lawrence admits, "I think myself The Boy is a fine book. It turns on to its inevitable conclusions. But I know the world does not like the inevitable."⁷