APPENDIX No. 4.

"DIAMOND? WHAT! THIS IS CARBON"

The main purpose of this appendix is to show how Lawrence's sense of form is closely associated with the development of "A belief in the blood." It is popularly believed that Lawrence never cared for "form" in literature. His saying, "Tell Arnold Bennett that all rules of construction hold good only for novels which are copies of other novels. A book which is not a copy of other books has its own construction," is well-known. His contempt for the usual form is never concealed. He describes the conventional form as "pernicious, ossiferous, skin-and-grief form." 2

His words of anger may not reveal the whole truth. His critical as well as creative writings, nevertheless, record his intermittent preoccupation with the problem of form. He wrote and rewrote many times almost all his novels. This incontrovertible fact not only discredits the myth of Lawrence's utter negligence of "form," but also indicates the nature of the form he was struggling to achieve from time to time. While writing his first novel The White Peacock, Lawrence is fairly under the influence of the conventional narrative form. He describes it,

retrospectively, as a "decorated idyll running to seed in realism." His casual remarks in his various letters of this period reveal more or less the same regard for the accepted method of narration. He notices "the drag" of a particular story, and its "slowness in accumulating." He speaks of Oedipus as "terrific in its accumulation—like a great big wave coming up." The Stranger is more or less an aberration, and its origin is more in the enthusiasm consequent upon the first success rather than in any genuine creative urge. It is an unimportant pot-boiler.

Sons and Lovers reveals a different concept of form. There is much excitement for the author in vividly visualising the scenes, and he says that he has "patiently and laboriously constructed" the novel. The novel is in "that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation." There is a feeling of actuality throughout the novel; there is no question of exploring the unknown region with "plenty of fire beneath." Form is the problem of vividly recording one's emotions in order to "shed one's sickness" and "to be master of them." It is also a severe task of selecting and pruning. Lawrence has the confidence that

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Sons and Lovers has got form, and asks rhetorically if he has not done it "out of sweat as well as blood." 11

The earlier chapters of The Rainbow vaguely suggest (in the chronicle aspect of the novel) the influence of Arnold Bennett, for whom, of course, Lawrence has scant respect. 12 The Rainbow really marks a transition in the art and life of the novelist. He admits it frankly in his letters. The inherent difficulty of this transition and the unfavourable response from Edward Garnett compel the author to self-examination. He is conscious that he has neither the interest nor the ability to adopt the same method of Sons and Lovers. The newness of the material as well as the nature of Lawrence's creative imagination necessitates a change in the form.

If the main problem in Sons and Lovers is the problem of pruning and describing the experience already lived through, the chief task of The Rainbow and Women in Love is to know "exactly the form one's passion wants to take," 13 and to make it sufficiently "incorporated," 14 The method is "exhaustive, analytical and discursive." 15 There is plenty of fire underneath." 15 Nevertheless, the novelist does not clearly know what the novel is about even when he has written about one hundred and forty pages of it. 16

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what has been said above is really regarding the newness of the material of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, as against the familiarity of the stuff of *Sons and Lovers* prior to the writing of it. To put it in a different way, there is additional difficulty while writing *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, as they are less autobiographical than *Sons and Lovers*. Equally important, however, is the essential nature of Lawrence's creative imagination and its functional process, of which Lawrence is increasingly becoming aware while plodding through *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Primarily, Lawrence is a "passionately religious man," and his novels must be written from the depth of his "religious experience." He must "stand naked before Almighty God as in prayer and allow the fire to pass through him." "One has to be so terribly religious to be an artist." Elsewhere, he writes that he is fascinated to see art coming out of religious yearning.

From the pen of this type of creative writer come "the novels unsung." And Lawrence can give what is most palpitant and sensitive. A belief in the blood, the flesh being wiser than the intellect goes well with this kind of creative artist. Lawrence writes to Lady Ottoline Morrell:

"It is not your brain you must trust to, nor your will, but to that fundamental pathetic faculty for receiving...

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References:

Lawrence could fortunately realise the nature of his creative imagination as early as 1912-13. This realization is discernible in his comments on his own work as well as on the works of other artists, such as Flaubert and Thomas Mann. Lawrence, while writing of Thomas Mann, refers to "form" in fiction as "that passionate desire for the mastery of the medium of narrative, the will of the writer to be greater than and the undisputed lord over the stuff he writes. This craving for form is the outcome, not of artistic conscience, but of a certain attitude to life." Such a suicidal attitude is effectively described: "The artist has absorbed the man, and yet the man is there, like an exhausted organism on which a parasite has fed: itself strong."25

An artist's mode of apprehension affects his concept of form. Lawrence's mode, abilities and gifts are surely different from those of Flaubert. Aldous Huxley, in his introduction to The Letters of Lawrence, most precisely describes Lawrence's peculiar gift, and works out the

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consequences of this gift in Lawrence's life and art.
"Lawrence's special and characteristic gift was an extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called
"unknown mode of being."... Lawrence could never forget
"the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind." Huxley further explains that this ability made the Lawrencean attitude to sex, his hatred of science, his belief in the blood, his doctrine of cosmic Pointlessness and of Insouciance, and his concept of artistic form inevitable.

Incidentally, it may be noted that an attempt to picture this "otherness" of things, particularly the complex "otherness" of the sophisticated human mind, has resulted in the "stream of consciousness" novel. But it would be ridiculous to associate overtly the stream of consciousness novel with Lawrence. For, Lawrence is uninterested in mental consciousness: he is probing the region that is below the consciousness level. He is as much different from the writers of the stream of consciousness doctrine as from sociological writers like Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett. In his essay on Galsworthy, Lawrence deplores the collapse from the psychology of the free human individual into the psychology of the social being. Similarly, he disapproves

27. Selected Literary
of Joyce, and Dorothy Richardson, for they "tear themselves
to pieces, strip their smallest emotions to the finest
thread, till you feel you are a sewed inside a wool
mattress." 27 He tells Edward Garnett: "You mustn't look
in my novels for the old stable ego of the character.
There is another ego, according to whose action the indivi­
dual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were,
dilatropic states, which it needs deeper sense than any we've
been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same,
single, radically unchanged element (like a diamond and
coal are the same pure single element of carbon). The
ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond — but'
I say: 'Diamond, what! This is carbon.'" 28

Form is not a personal thing like style. It is
impersonal like logic. 28 The impersonal quality of
Lawrence's writing, though much of the material is from
his autobiography, is further explained by what he says in
his letter of June 1914, to Edward Garnett:

"I think the book (Women in Love) is a bit futuristic—
quite unconsciously so. But when I read Marinetti —
the profound intuitions of life added one to another,
word by word, according to their illogical conception,
will give us the general lines of an intuitive
physiology of matter — I see something of what I am
after." 30

27. Selected Literary Criticism, Heinemann, 1956, p. 115.
The profound intuitions in their illogical conceptions are likely to cause "certain qualities of violent monotony and intense indistinctness, qualities which make some of them, for all their richness and unexpected beauty, so curiously difficult to get through, " or which "will give most folk extreme annoyance to read." These qualities may induce T.S. Eliot, the author of the "objective correlative," to write thus: "Lawrence was a man of fitful and profound insights, rather than ratiocinative powers.... He expressed some of his insights in a form not likely to be accepted by his contemporaries, and sometimes in a form that wilfully encouraged misunderstanding."

Saxon's Dog, The Lost Girl, and Kangaroo are not by any means noteworthy examples of any form. With the periodical ebbing of creative energy, certain slackening of form becomes increasingly obvious. They are uninteresting novels with a good deal of irrelevant actualities directly transported to literature. The Plumed Serpent is better than the three novels immediately preceding it, mainly for the reason that it has a strong unity of theme and atmosphere. Lady Chatterley's Lover has an apparent classical form, but the defect of the book has been dealt with in the earlier in the thesis.

Some of Lawrence's short stories and short novels are admirable examples of popular narrative form. They are most eminently readable. There is neither the terribly dizzy search for the "carbon," nor is there a complete lack of form such as the lack of form in many of his poems, in the name of spontaneity and freshness. It is true that in these tales there are no new and unexpected growing points, which are found in his major novels. But in them one finds the beauty of perfect crystallization.

In a synoptical view of the development of the English novel, Lawrence's contribution to prose narrative is not so much in inventing and popularising any new technique, or in creating a few brilliant architectonic beauties, as in revolting against the mechanical rules of form, and insisting on the fundamental integrity of the artist. "The business of art," he says in his essay "Morality and the Novel," "is to reveal the relation between man and the circumambient universe, at the living moment." There is no Absolute, except life itself, and hence, there is no absolute and specific rule for translating that ever-changing true "relatedness" of life into art. Since life is an ebb and flow, such a mechanical rule is a monstrous incongruity. His works, however, suffer from the general defects of the romantic artists: imagination imperiously flouting any control or discipline, a ravelling of the details mischievously defying any pruning.
Lawrence found the novel the most satisfying medium for exploring and recording "the changing rainbow of living relationships." He is proud to be a novelist, because he thinks that a novelist has an edge over the philosopher or a saint or a scientist or even a poet. For, according to him, they are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but they never get the whole hog, which the novelist does. In addition to this, the novel is a better medium of educating the people: "It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead."

Hence, one finds Lawrence's contribution in the right emphasis he laid on the usefulness and effectiveness of the narrative medium, and also on the fundamental integrity of the artist, rather than in any specific perfection of that medium. Such a specific perfection was not in accordance with his belief and the nature of his ability. His significant contribution lies, as illustrated and violently asserted by F.R. Leavis, in effecting a new awareness, and an increase in one's capacity for fresh and significant possibilities of life itself.

34. Selected Literary Criticism, Heinemann, 1955, p. 113.