

A LANGUAGE OF THE BODY:
IMAGES OF DISABILITY IN THE WORKS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

By
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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of PAMELA WRIGHT find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

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A Language of the Body:

Images of Disability in the Works of D.H. Lawrence

Abstract

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Chair: Virginia Hyde

It should not be surprising (though it may seem so at first) that D.H. Lawrence—who suffered himself from ill health—was an early proponent of disability theories that gain support today. Shocked by the modern world's damage to the human body and spirit—in a new statistical, mechanistic environment and in the devastation of the most industrialized of wars—he wrote often about disability and the need for renewed balance of faculties. This dissertation investigates Lawrence's interesting, mostly unexplored, link to disability theory. Employing his unique approach to Eastern Tantric philosophies, which help to promote holistic healing of the body, this work argues that Lawrence is a pioneer of modern theories of body and soul.

Some of his texts about disability are placed in a

comprehensive Lawrentian context that embraces his major canon, including non-fiction pieces (like *Fantasia of the Unconscious*). A chapter on his colliery settings probes the effects of the modern industrialized world—and its reliance on statistics and abstraction—in such works as “Odour of Chrysanthemums,” *Sons and Lovers* and other texts. This examination quite easily leads to the effects of the first mechanized world war as seen in “England, My England” and “The War Again” chapter in *Aaron’s Rod*. During and after the war, Lawrence began to develop further the Christological resurrection pattern that many critics find in his work. In works like “The Blind Man,” *The Ladybird* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, for instance, disability leads to a pursuit of balance, mutual healing and inner beauty as well as compensatory sensory development. Finally, the dissertation concludes with a discussion of the importance of an autobiographical approach to Lawrence to reveal his empathy with the disabled, wounded and ill. Through such works as “The Thorn in the Flesh,” “The Nightmare” chapter in *Kangaroo* and his poetry, we see that when he said his writing could “help” people not to be “dead” in life (“Why the Novel Matters”), he meant it literally.

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Abbreviations

(For complete references, see Works Consulted)

Works by D.H. Lawrence

<i>A</i>	<i>Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Aaron's Rod</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Complete Poems</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>England, My England and Other Stories</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious</i>
<i>K</i>	<i>Kangaroo</i>
<i>LB</i>	<i>The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>
<i>LEA</i>	<i>Late Essays and Articles</i>
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Letters of D.H. Lawrence</i>
<i>Plays</i>	<i>The Plays</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>The Prussian Officer and Other Stories</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine</i>
<i>SL</i>	<i>Sons and Lovers</i>
<i>STH</i>	<i>Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays</i>
<i>VO</i>	<i>"Vin Ordinaire"</i>
<i>WL</i>	<i>Women in Love</i>

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother and father, Jackie and Walter Hooper, who were always there to foster my education. Thanks for all the words of encouragement and guidance as well as gentle challenging that has allowed this moment to finally arrive.

D.H. Lawrence's Language of the Body: New Insights

D.H. Lawrence finds in "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*" that "[t]he body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. [...] All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognised by the mind" (311). Readers and scholars of D.H. Lawrence immediately understand the importance this principle holds in the totality of his life and works: whether it be his fiction or non-fiction writing, his painting, or other forms of expression. Indeed, Lawrence spent much time and energy on this concept, fine-tuning it and employing it repeatedly. In fact, in one of his most famous essays, "Why the Novel Matters," he says the novel "can help you not to be dead man in life" (STH 197). So totally did he believe in this theme that not even harsh criticism, censorship, confiscation of his work and threat of trial could deter him from continuing and promoting beliefs regarding the human body. These beliefs come to center in his understanding of the disabled body—sometimes in surprising consort with modern disability claims.

Lawrence's own frail health and body most assuredly played a role in his focus on the body. Rather than succumbing to a societal standard that might find him worthless as a human being because of physical abilities or appearances, he strove to find a place where all functioning bodies—no matter how awkwardly functioning or seemingly different—would be of some importance and value. Therefore, his theory is simple enough: the body is a living, feeling organism in itself—with its own emotions. It is only through the body that we truly experience anything. Our mind only registers and records these genuine life experiences:

My hand as it writes these words [...] has its own rudiments of thought, and is as much me as is my brain, my mind, or my soul. Why should I imagine that there is a me which is more me than my hand is? Since my hand is absolutely alive, me alive. (*STH* 193).

The body then, for Lawrence, is a seat of reality, for he imagines that the soul is seated there and that a perfect balance of all our faculties is experienced bodily. He even challenges the Platonic (and Christian) notion of a purely mental or spiritual seat of reality, calling Plato (and Christ) pessimistic for teaching "that the only happiness lay in abstracting oneself from life" (*LCL* 330).ⁱ Lawrentian reality lies in the full-on, robust existence of this life.

Such radical views actually seem, in an odd way, to fit the mood and attitude of some of his predecessors. During the Victorian era, there was a change in the more conservative, "traditional" religious barometer due to the many philosophical thinkers involved in seeking some rational, physical proof of the existence of God. Many were disaffected with the organized efforts of Christianity and how these efforts were distorting or losing altogether what they perceived as the true meaning of their faith. As it now stood, to these thinkers, humankind seemed divided, and no true equality could be reached without some radical restructuring of the religious and social system. Many sought the answer in the hearts of humans themselves, resulting in a more secular theology.

The environment surrounding such a reformation, coupled with the "decidedly liberal" preaching at Eastwood [England] Congregational Chapel while Lawrence worshipped there, fostered his own intellectual questioning and the subsequent formation of the type of eclectic religious ideals found in his works. T.R. Wright's *D.H. Lawrence and the Bible* records that Robert Reid, a minister at the chapel during the time Lawrence was there, advocated a knowledgeable "debate" about religion and the explication of the Bible (22). Lawrence's extensive reading of and about the Bible in this environment, especially those books like R.J. Campbell's *The New Theology*, among others, which

advocates a non-literal, parabolic reading of the Scriptures, influenced his thought and is at least partially responsible for his rewriting of the Bible in many of his works; however, Lawrence "never, of course, abandoned his love for the Bible" (Wright 29).ⁱⁱ Like some of the Victorian questioners, Lawrence found fault with the organized attempts of Christianity, not the spirit of reform and renewal that it intended. This disenchantment, in part, led him to take a more existential approach in his work, attempting to find and maintain the delicate balance that allowed for a sense of completeness (the wholeness of both mind and body).

Influenced by the changing times, Lawrence began to explore other religions and philosophies to define and develop this new, more experiential look at life. One such investigation of James M. Pryse's *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, an occult interpretation of St. John's *The Book of Revelation*, introduced him to the Tantric or Yoga Chakra system. As Anodea Judith explains in *Wheels of Life*, chakras are "organizing centers for the reception, assimilation, and transmission of life energies," and "together the seven chakras form a profound *formula for wholeness* that integrates mind, body and spirit" (4). In a "fragmented" culture where the aspects of life are often severed, especially mind from body, many see the chakras as a system that allows for such an integration as well as a vehicle through which to

experience "new and expanded realms without denying the mundane realities we all face on a daily basis" (7).

This concept informs much of Lawrence's work; he examines the struggle against Cartesian duality and upholds the human need for some type of balance. Lawrence's interest in the relation between a person's individuality and one's societal instinct is demonstrated through an investigation of the human body. Chakras, which serve as a coordinating network for our mind/body system, gave Lawrence an already established philosophy to use in illustration of his belief in an actual consciousness of the physical body, where this struggle of duality is played out.ⁱⁱⁱ

Lawrence outlines his own unique understanding of how this energy system works within the body in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* and *Apocalypse*. In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence finds the number three to be sacrosanct, related to the creation of the universe from water, fire and earth. Dissimilarly, Lawrence finds the number four to be merely a human value, associated with the scientific division of the heavens into four quarters (*F* 100-103). The body, then, acting as a cosmic mirror, reflects this same system of correspondences. The three lower chakras for Lawrence become sacred because they are the most fundamental and unmanipulated, whereas the four upper ones are shaped and trained by humans. In essence, Lawrence inverts the

traditional understanding of the chakra energy, yet he retains the same values of harmony and balance.

According to ancient teachings and belief, chakra energy or kundalini flows upwards, with the crown chakra (Sahasrara), linking us with the universal source of creation. But for Lawrence, the upper centers were created by individuals and societally-driven. They were the source of much unhappiness, mechanization and withering of the flesh; the "living in the head" that Lawrence rails against in many works begins with this chakra. As he explains in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, this energy flow must be redirected, releasing the long-barred natural, elemental springs to cleanse and resurrect the fatigued flesh. The technique is often understood to be sexual, but upon closer examination, it actually suggests the full rejuvenation of the corporeal body through the delicate nurturing of touch.^{iv}

Lawrence's particular adaptation of this ancient energy system fueled his desire to adequately explore and portray the "unspeakable intimacy" of human relationships, necessarily leading him to rely at least as much, if not more, on sensations like touch as he relies on dialogue.^v Many times, the indeterminacy and insufficiency of verbal language makes it difficult to portray an emotion or a feeling effectively. Recognizing this flaw of speech, coupled with his emphasis on the lower chakras, Lawrence often favors other, subtler forms of

communication between characters/bodies.^{vi} Lawrence believed that not only was society living too exclusively from the upper centers, but it was "also ruthlessly exploiting one particular centre, the thoracic, ganglionic dynamo behind all shows of envy, manipulation, and the *Wille zur Macht*" (Doherty 82). For Lawrence, then, the most telling moments of truth and honesty come with nonverbal communication.

Perhaps one most obvious illustration of this philosophy in Lawrence's fiction comes from the short story "Hadrian," which was originally published as "You Touched Me." This complex, dramatic story centers upon the Rockley family, specifically Ted, the father; Matilda and Emmie, his two older, unmarried daughters; and an adopted son, Hadrian. Not being happy and comfortable with his situation, Hadrian ultimately leaves home for Canada and, later, Europe. Hadrian eventually returns home to a dying Ted, and his return proves awkward because of the way he left years before and because he has not really kept in touch during his five-year absence. This is one of the story's first ironies, underlying the importance of tangible contact.

Matilda, late one night, forgetting her father's bed has been moved to the first floor (because of his illness and Hadrian's return), goes to his former room to check on him. She gently touches the sleeping man and both are shocked—she by the fact that it is Hadrian she has touched, and both by the

emotions her touch stirs within them. Hadrian, realizing his need for her, requests that he be allowed to marry Matilda; and Ted fixes it so that she has no choice but to marry Hadrian, if she wishes to keep her inheritance upon his death. At first, Matilda is disgusted and flabbergasted at Hadrian's request and her father's behavior, but in the end she relents and sees reasons of her own to marry the young man.

Although the sexual politics between men and women, and the father's control over the woman, are important and problematic, especially for feminists, they should not obscure another major message of the piece—the importance of the sensation of touch. Lawrence's illustrations here demonstrate his belief that the body, sometimes even more than speech, can express definite meaning. After Matilda touches the man, Lawrence writes, "A sort of surprise stirred her, in her entranced state," and for Hadrian, too, something is awakened, "[...] the soft, straying tenderness of her hand on his face startled something out of his soul" (*E* 100). Lawrence then alludes to what "truth" has been revealed to Hadrian through Matilda's delicate touch: "The fragile exquisiteness of her caress startled him most, revealed unknown things to him" (100). As a "charity boy," he has never really been exposed to this sort of gentleness, caring and desire.

Of course, this is all problematized by the fact that Matilda originally thought she was touching her father's face, but "accidents" rarely occur in Lawrence; and they always reveal some deeper meaning. Therefore, the "unspoken intimacy" between Matilda and Hadrian has been revealed to them both through this "accidental" touch. From this point in the story on, we are constantly reminded of this unspoken connection, this silent but significant consciousness between the pair. Diane Richard-Allerdyce explains in "*L'écriture Féminine and Its Discontents*," that

Lawrence's sensitivity to and awareness of inarticulable effects manifest in his writing in a way that illustrates the materiality of language as well as his need to defend against what in Lacan's thought is known as the Real. (207)

In Lawrence's terms it is more akin to the real or realistic, but Lacan's terms, too, illuminate something about Lawrence. The seat of "unfulfillable" needs that dwells in human existence, Lacan's Real, represents something that defies verbal expression and explanation but is still obvious when its influence is felt (Richard-Allerdyce 208). For Matilda and Hadrian this lack or need is also unspoken, but the emotion—even mutual healing, the wholeness for each—that accompanies the touch has a palpable effect on the pair. Hadrian sees past her

age, her looks, even her air of superiority: "The same glamour that he knew in the elderly man [Ted] he now saw in the woman" (*E* 100). Matilda continues to treat Hadrian as she has always treated him: "he was a young boy who lived in the house with them, but was a stranger" (101). However, she too feels something new: "[...] she dared not remember his face under her hand. When she remembered that, she was bewildered" (101). This ability and willingness of Lawrence to focus on the body as being valuable for its representation of a type of consciousness, as well as the capacity to access spheres beyond language is often associated with the feminine mode of perception as well (Richard-Allerdyce 209).

In this manner Lawrence illustrates his ability to express something like feminine *jouissance*, or the ability not only to interpret the body but also to transcend the limits of the corporeal self. He allows his characters (and himself) to cease to be tied to any physically limiting and binding element. As Ellie Ragland states, "The subject lives in the blind spot between his objectal *being* and the language that seeks to represent this" (195). Lawrence, then, uses the actual bodily sensation to embody that for which language fails. Similarly, Lawrence also understands physical sight to be limiting, strengthening this association to feminist theory. Feminist film theory (and related literary theory) finds that the "male

gaze" is always seeking to possess its object. Lawrence, who would agree with this theory, prefers not so much physical vision as another way of seeing, though he might ascribe this dangerous gaze to the opposite sex at times. Anaïs Nin, Richard-Allerdyce's subject, also finds, "Lawrence had that quality of genius which makes a man realize experiences unknown to other men" (Nin 14). Therefore, as Anaïs Nin and others find, Lawrence probes beyond the boundaries of gender, reason and knowledge to illuminate an unconscious, perhaps universal, "truth" (Richard-Allerdyce 213).

And because Lawrence was so familiar with the Bible, one almost immediately recognizes in the story of Hadrian the numerous stories of Jesus' healing touch. We have already seen that Lawrence even echoes the title of one such Biblical story with the original title "You Touched Me." The Gospel of Mark records the story of a woman who is in need of healing. Though she had spent all she had on treatments and numerous doctors, she had only become more ill. She came upon Jesus in a great crowd and touched his cloak, believing that if she only touched his clothes she would be healed. We are told that after this touch, she was immediately healed of her affliction. Jesus, "aware at once that power had gone out of him," turned and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples wonder why he asks, "Who touched me?" (Mark 5:25-34). Traditional Christian

doctrine views this story as a lesson about faith in Jesus as the Son of God. The woman's faith heals her because she believed that just by touching his garment she would be healed.^{vii}

In true Lawrentian fashion, however, this story also lends itself to the followers of the kundalini/chakra system because Jesus immediately notices that power has gone out from him. Since the chakras are gateways that allow for the passage and exchange of energy, the "*Christ Light*" is sometimes said to be the angelic presence associated with the crown chakra, which connects us to the divine consciousness, in turn bringing about wholeness, oneness (at-one-ment), as *the* enlightened being, Jesus would immediately be aware that his energy was being radiated. As Anodea Judith finds, "The birth of Christ, said to be the Son of God, symbolized the blending of the divine and the mortal, characteristic of the half-way point that the fourth chakra represents" (388). A recognizable technique of Lawrence's is to use just such a blending of traditional Christian doctrine and other religions and philosophies to reconcile what he believed best suited humankind in its battle with duality.

Lawrence's desire to depict the "unspeakable intimacy" of human relationships, and his penchant for portraying the body as an important site of communication, goes beyond his writing and

can be seen in his paintings as well. Though many critics may not give his work as a painter much credit, citing his unwillingness to conform to traditional artistic conventions, his lack of fine arts training as well as his surprising opposition to using live models and to anatomical studies, each of Lawrence's human figures reveals the same awareness of the palpable body and need for intimacy that his writing so effectively explores. These paintings, mostly nudes, show the human form in various states of action and life—and with few exceptions, the bodies are all touching in some way or another, as if to amplify the Lawrentian belief in touch. In those paintings, like *Contadini*, where there is no real interaction between the two figures, the solitude and pensiveness of the main figure seems almost inconsolable and again reflects Lawrence's belief in the human need and desire for touch and intimacy.

Lawrence explains his position on painting and intimacy in "Introduction to These Paintings." His belief is that human beings have become too "mental." Instead of allowing their bodies and whole selves to know and understand one another in a more intimate, "intuitive" way, people let their heads interfere with the capacity to know each other "in the flesh." He states,

We have become ideal beings, creatures that exist in idea, to one another, rather than flesh-and-blood kin.

And with the collapse of the feeling of physical, flesh-and-blood kinship, and the substitution of our ideal, social or political oneness, came the failing of our intuitive awareness, and the great unease, the *nervousness* of mankind. We are *afraid* of the instincts. We are *afraid* of the intuition within us. We suppress the instincts, and we cut off our intuitional awareness from one another and from the world. (LEA 190)

According to Lawrence, no human can truly know and appreciate the beauty, even the kind that comes through an imperfect body, love and life of another person, a piece of art, or anything in this mortal life if he or she is too confined by so-called "ideals." This is why Lawrence is so accepting of the disabled or deformed, and why he is so adamant in his writing and his painting that people should learn to live more by instinct and intuition, experiencing *both* the physical and cerebral. He advocates a balancing in all things.^{viii}

In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence finds that education should be "the harmonious development" of "modes of consciousness" (105). He goes on to state, "The development of the *original* mind in every child and every man always and only follows from the dual fulfillment in the dynamic consciousness" (107). This fragment of Lawrentian philosophy helps to explain

what critics have often found to be wrong with his paintings. He refuses to conform to traditional artistic conventions because he is opposed to seeing the world as a defined set of "ideals" for all to follow. Lawrence, then, would naturally believe that anyone can be an artist, a painter, without formal training. And he resists the use of live models or the study of anatomy because he believes in knowing the subject with all the senses, and he refuses to break a subject down into scientific fragments. Having a live model in front of him would interfere with his intuitive portrayal of the human form because he may have resorted to painting by actual sight.

Lawrence takes great care in his attempts to "seize us intuitively" in his writing and his painting (*LEA* 194). In fact, he explains that the problem with most artists, especially the moderns, is that "they never get beyond studio models and clichés of the nude.... The image never gets across to us.... It remains merely optical" (194). Just as the slightest gesture or description speaks volumes in his writing, it is the same in his painting.

Accident in a Mine depicts four miners, three gathered around a fourth on the ground. The faces of the three miners who seem to be rushing to the fourth are blurred, muted, with only the hint of facial features; the fourth man's face, the one apparently in trouble, is completely blocked by one of the

miner's legs. One understands the features of the miners' faces are not the most important thing in the painting. Lawrence does not want his viewer to focus on the optical here—he is attempting to convey a feeling, a mood. He is appealing to the viewer's intuitiveness, and he is quite successful. The perceptive, instinctual viewer is immediately struck with the urgency and concern for the downed miner in the painting, and the individual faces, bodies and other features of the miners become less important.

In a similar manner, a kinetic energy and celebration of bodies in motion can be seen in "Dance Sketch" and "Fire Dance." The individual features of all four dancers become less important than the action and vitality Lawrence is trying to convey in these works. The abundant energy of the figures in these paintings closely mirrors the experiences of the Brangwen family Lawrence portrays in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, or of the lovers in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

In the "Anna Victrix" chapter of *The Rainbow*, for instance, we are told of the greatly pregnant Anna dancing "before the Unknown," full of joy and sensation:^{ix}

She suddenly realized that this was what she wanted to do. Big with child as she was, she danced there in the bedroom by herself, lifting her hands and her body

to the Unseen, to the unseen Creator who had chosen her, to Whom she belonged.

...She danced in secret and her soul rose in bliss. She danced in secret before the Creator, she took off her clothes and danced in the pride of her bigness. (169-170)

Not only is the spirit of this scene captured in paintings such as "Fire Dance" and "Dance Sketch," where the dancing couples are free and unashamed of their nakedness—in fact, enjoying and reveling in their nakedness—but a similar spirit can also be felt and seen in a work like "Yawning," where the primary female figure seems to have a fullness and roundness to her belly and hips that might suggest a pregnancy. In all three of these paintings the bodies are successful in illustrating Lawrence's emphasis on the physical and instinctive awareness of others, not the "optical" or the "clichéd" stiffness of studio models, and not adherence to "ideals" that would make one embarrassed or ashamed to be dancing naked with others.

The inclusion of the goat in "Dance Sketch" also recalls a scene from *Women in Love*, when Gudrun dances before the Highland cattle in the "Water-Party" chapter. The cattle are "as if hypnotized...as the white figure of the woman ebbed upon them, in the slow, hypnotizing convulsion of the dance" (168). The human and the beasts seem to have an instinctual, natural

awareness of each other. And to affirm this connection, the scene continues, "She could *feel* them just in front of her, it was as if she had the electric pulse from their breasts running into her hands. Soon she would *touch* them, actually *touch* them" (168; my emphasis).^x As if to reemphasize the importance of this touch and intuitive awareness, throughout his discussion of Cézanne in "Introduction to These Paintings," Lawrence explains the inherent relation between touch and intuition.

Cézanne, according to Lawrence, "wished to displace our present mode of mental-visual consciousness...and substitute a mode of consciousness that was predominantly intuitive, the awareness of touch" (*LEA* 211). This to Lawrence was admirable, in that it fostered a lost faculty to allow true balance, and through his writing and painting, Lawrence attempts the same thing. And though Lawrence makes the famous observation that Cézanne finally found the "appleyness" in his painting of Madame Cézanne, that he was able to portray an intuitive awareness of his wife so that she was not a cliché, Lawrence also finds that Cézanne, "as far as his *life* went," had never "broken through the horrible glass screen of the mental concepts, to the actual *touch* of life" (214). In spite of the painter's inability to break away from his own consciousness and the cliché, Lawrence appreciates the frustration this causes an artist, and he

respects Cézanne for at least being "bitter" about it; in this matter they are kindred spirits.

Just as themes from Lawrence's writings are echoed in his paintings, his impatience with the cliché is evident in both. He did not wish only to portray or deal with healthy, beautiful bodies—that would have been to cater to the stereotypical and to the social more. Lawrence was interested in the real, the actual, and that includes, for him, the inclusion of peoples who are disabled in one form or another. The fusion of spirit and corporeal body to which Lawrence devoted much of his life and works has to include the complicating factors of disability, if it is to be genuine.

During the closing years of the nineteenth century, the body became "a key site of political, cultural and economic intervention," especially in regard "to medicine, disability, work consumption, old age and ethics" (Hancock 1). The body has now "come to be recognized as a contested terrain on which struggles over control and resistance are fought out in contemporary societies" (1). Due to this important change, there has been a shift in focus in the understanding of disability and old age "from a medical and welfare perspective to a focus on embodiment as a human rights issue" (1). So this new understanding and way of perceiving the body has lead to the emerging field of disability studies, which sees disability more

as a social exclusion and oppression than as an actual corporeal status of the individual body (29). The exclusionary social structures that the disability theorist protests, which are rooted in the industrialization and the medicalization of disabled bodies in the nineteenth century, respond to people with impairments by regarding them "as unable to live up to—and cope with—the demands of a normal life" (31). The resulting "struggle for equal rights is a direct attack on the disablist notion that disabled people are nothing more than victims of defective bodies" (31).

Though this new and different way of thinking of disability and the body is relatively late in becoming a written and scholarly theory, Lawrence, or anyone for that matter with an impairment or physical challenge, has understood this concept long before the theory. If we accept that disability is more of a social problem and an identity prescribed to "abnormal" bodies by an "ablist" society, it is readily apparent that many of Lawrence's works dealing with disability directly—like "The Blind Man" and "A Sick Collier"—or containing "disabled" figures—like *Kangaroo* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—become, in some ways, indictments of society and its norms. His impaired characters palpably demonstrate both the frustration and abilities, even benefits, of the "abnormal." As we read of conventional society's denial of these characters' bodies, we

begin to see how Lawrence's impaired characters struggle not only to find their own place in this society but also to find comfort in their own skin. Some critics, like Rosemarie Garland Thomson, even find his treatment of such characters suspect and misanthropic;^{xi} however, Lawrence forces these characters to extend and surpass any corporeal force, just as he does, with communications that do not solely rely on spoken language. These bodies, like all other Lawrentian bodies, speak volumes without emitting a word—often speaking louder and more eloquently than the "able" bodies. Unfortunately, there has been very little investigation of these Lawrentian bodies—this study addresses this omission.

Notes

ⁱ See also Barry J. Scherr, who shows the centrality of Plato in Lawrence's thinking, inspiring him creatively and repeatedly to suggest counter-views to the Platonic spiritual visions.

ⁱⁱ Hyde states in *The Risen Adam*, p. xx: "Even at a time when his logocentricity is being challenged (as, indeed, he challenged it himself), it is not anomalous to explore his search for meaning in biblical and other models. While Lawrence deconstructed both words and the Word, his search was not only genuine but insistent and pervasive, informing much of his output." See also pp. 1-37; and see Wright, calling his book "a complement" to Hyde's, the "most sustained" study of its kind.

ⁱⁱⁱ Many critics have dealt with Lawrence's use of the chakra system and the flow of kundalini. See, for instance, William York Tindall, D.H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow, and Thomas H. Miles, "Birkin's Electro-Mystical Body of Reality: D.H. Lawrence's Use of Kundalini."

^{iv} See also Gerald Doherty, "Connie and the Chakras: Yogic Patterns in D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*."

^v See also Lydia Blanchard's "Lawrence, Foucault and the Language of Sexuality."

^{vi} Of course, this sort of distrust of language and focus on the limits of communication is one major feature of modernism, distinguishing it from nineteenth-century Realism.

^{vii} See also Carol Siegel's *Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women's Literary Traditions*. It contains a discussion about how Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* influenced Lawrence and how he solves Cathy Earnshaw's dilemma through ignoring the social and the intellectual and focusing on the bodily connection between the two. This short story could be read as Lawrence's rewriting of that tale. Like Brontë's Heathcliff, Hadrian is the adopted son/brother.

^{viii} Many critics discuss his advocacy of this sort of physical/intellectual balancing. See, for example, James C. Cowan's D.H. Lawrence and the Trembling Balance.

^{ix} Though some may see Anna as dangerous in this scene, this scene demonstrates Lawrence's emphasis on the body and not being ashamed of the corporeal self.

^x Again, like the Anna Victrix scene, some may see Gudrun as dangerous here—trying to control the cattle. My argument here is that this is just another example of how Lawrence uses intuition and touch together in the same scene.

^{xi} See "Disability, Identity and Representation: An Introduction" in her Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in

American Culture and Literature. She argues that authors create disabled characters in only a "few determining strokes," naming Lawrence's Clifford Chatterley as an example (10).

Rape of the Lot: Industrialization, Exploitation and
Disability in Lawrence's Colliery Works

As the previous chapter demonstrates, the body's physicality is of extreme importance in any Lawrence text, but this is not because of its purely biological or sensual characteristics. He employs the body as a physical plain on which many political, social and economic issues are engaged. That Lawrence understood this and employed this method early on, finds him, perhaps surprisingly, in the company of contemporary disability theorists. Many may find this perplexing in light of some well-known scholarship. Lawrence is sometimes criticized for authoritarian values that seem to make it unlikely for him to privilege minorities, the disadvantaged or the handicapped. Judith Ruderman, for example, in "An 'Englishman at Heart'? Lawrence and the National Identity Debates," traces his struggle to find a vocabulary to express the ethnic "other."ⁱ Feminist criticism is famous for its split over Lawrence; some commentators decry his depiction of female power (and/or

subjection) in his work while others find Lawrence more sympathetic to the female character.ⁱⁱ Perhaps, above all, Ronald Granofsky points to a whole nexus of Lawrentian philosophy when he places him in the Darwinian camp, working with the concept of "the survival of the fittest"—a topic that can hold great significance for handicapped theory, and not necessarily positive significance. It is my argument that, while Lawrence did work with Darwin's ideas of physical survival, he often turned the popularized version of "evolution" on its head, revealing the multiple ways of survival that are not obvious and often not physical at all. Lawrence did not judge characters by stereotyped norms but was drawn to individuality in its great diversity. In fact, he could even capture the way that a handicap could be empowering. Interestingly, all the critics named here tend to find some Lawrentian characteristics that transcend all the obstacles they find in him. As Ruderman concludes her essay, "After all, respect for uniqueness, sacred separateness, individuality is at the heart of Lawrence's work, in opposition to Lawrence's [personal] tendency to generalize, typecast, reduce, and blur distinction" ("D.H. Lawrence" 107). Granofsky finds, "The positive side of Lawrence's misanthropy is a lack of what we might term species narcissism that allows him to see, Wordsworth

like, into the life of things" ("D.H. Lawrence" 5).ⁱⁱⁱ

Similarly, Mensch finds,

One of Lawrence's remarkable strengths as a novelist turns out to be the sharpness and validity of the psychological portraits he creates; whether these characters prove to be 'authoritarian' or 'liberal' in their approach to life, they demonstrate a psychological integrity that says much for the author. (54)

Some of Lawrence's most rigorous critics, then, celebrate his work for its commemoration of individuality, life, and—sometimes—brutal honesty.

From his earliest writings, Lawrence's empathy lies with the working class of his youth, and this concern for the exploited miners continues to inform his entire canon—especially in the context of their world that resembles a great machine in which they are cogs. His preference for palpable and organic forms over mechanical ones—and his distaste for the statistical abstraction that accompanied the new social model—accounts for his identification with many of the "underdogs" and even "outcasts" among his characters. In line with these priorities, then, it is natural, not surprising, to find Lawrence as a fairly frequent advocate for the disadvantaged, disabled, or disfigured. (This is so in spite of "power" theories that are said to dominate novels of his middle period). Lawrence in fact

lived in the late Victorian/modern era which ushered in philosophies central to the disability theory of today.

Lennard Davis, a leading disability theorist, in "Constructing Normalcy" finds,

[...] the social process of disabling arrived with industrialization and with the set of practices and discourses that are linked to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions of nationality, race, gender, criminality, sexual orientation, and so on.

[...] The connection between the body and industry is tellingly revealed in the fact that the leading members of the first British statistical societies formed in the 1830s and 1840s were industrialists or had close ties to industry [...]. (9-11)

Because our current understanding of disability is rooted in the rise of industry and mechanization, this model is central to a study of Lawrence's collier fictions. Lawrence examined his own ambivalence toward industrialization and mechanization through the collier. His works dealing with such figures, then—and there are many^{iv}—can often be viewed as socio-political statements.

Adolphe Quetelet, a French statistician, helped to develop the idea of the average man, who was "[...] both a physically

average and a morally average construct" (Davis 11). Quetelet's theory led to the idea of a middle class and, as Davis notes,

With bourgeois hegemony comes scientific justification for moderation and middle-class ideology. The average man, the body of the man in the middle, becomes the exemplar of the middle way of life. [...] In England too, the middle class as the middle way or mean had been searching for a scientific justification. (11)

This ideology, then, would lend itself to the kind of science that would justify the "norm." Quetelet meant for this "hegemony of the middle" to apply to the corporeal body as well as the social. He wrote: "deviations more or less great from the mean have constituted [for artists] ugliness in body as well as vice in morals and a state of sickness with regard to constitution" (qtd. in Porter 103). Karl Marx actually cites Quetelet's ideas in his development of the labor theory of value (Davis 13). So, in this way, Marxist notions also encouraged normalizing the body and the individual—for example, touting "average" wages and "average" workers".

These scientific philosophies quite logically worked hand-in-hand with a rise in statistics during the nineteenth century. The somewhat amazing, even disturbing, fact about the early statisticians is that they were "almost all eugenicists" (Davis 13-14). Statistics as a subject was tied to eugenics because a

central insight of statistics was that a population could be "normed." Statistics "bring the concept of a norm, particularly a normal body, and thus in effect create the concept of the disabled body" (Davis 14).

These concepts are extremely important to a study of any of Lawrence's work for a number of reasons. First of all, because Lawrence was so interested in the struggle between one's individuality and the societal instinct, it is interesting to see how his characters struggle to find their own places in a society that was becoming more and more "mainstreamed" and industrialized. Secondly, there has been very little study of Lawrence's writings from the point of view of disability studies. The small amount of work that has been done tends to view him in an unfavorable light. If our current understanding of disability is indeed rooted in industry, however, then it is important that Lawrence's collier figures form a major socio-political statement against viewing humans as though they are valuable only as commodities of the work force. Often these colliers are disabled—even defaced and ravaged like the land, standing as a testament against "norming" a society in such a brutal and impersonal manner.

Lawrence was always concerned with the human struggle with duality, especially that duality between the individual self and the communal self. A great deal of the conflict in Lawrence's

stories, particularly the collier tales, comes from the frustration the protagonist feels between trying to be himself and being made to fit certain social molds, in both home life and career. As the world became more industrialized, the distinctive charm of the agrarian life was being lost, and so was people's own individuality. Both men and women were made to operate more and more like machines. Labor, especially in places like the mines, became routine and automatic. At the end of *The Rainbow*, Ursula notes this lack of personality, this "death in life" lived by the colliers and their families:

She saw the stiffened bodies of the colliers, which seemed already enclosed in a coffin, she saw their unchanging eyes, the eyes of those who are buried alive: she saw the hard, cutting edges of the new houses, which seemed to spread over the hillside in their insentient triumph, the triumph of horrible, amorphous angles and straight lines [...]. (458)

Just as the assembly lines of the new age never varied from one job to another, the colliers were required continually to repeat the same steps in their work. There was no room for creativity or personality in this dangerous, even hellish, environment.

Robert Hudspeth, notes that in "Odour of Chrysanthemums,"

In the midst of this landscape is a richly symbolic image: a woman stands trapped between the evening ore

train and the highway hedge. Caught by nature on one side and by man's machine on the other, the woman prefigures Elizabeth's isolation and Walter's suffocation in the mine. The wife has been trapped by nature's inescapable reality as surely as the husband has been trapped by the accident. The apparently minor detail of an ordinary scene creates more connotations of isolation and frustration for Lawrence to exploit. (631)

People like Walter and Elizabeth Bates, caught in the early years of the twentieth century, are struggling to find balance between the old, natural world and the fast-approaching impersonal, cold, mechanical world. Tragically, Walter, like other colliers, cannot live in this environment; though he is not disfigured due to his work in the mines, he is literally stifled to the point of death. Elizabeth, reacting strangely to Walter's death, has a moment of enlightenment—even seeing new possibilities and truths about her own life. This ambivalent ending is not surprising; like many late Victorian and modernist writers and thinkers, Lawrence at once saw the destruction and mechanization of the environment, due to the industrial age and yet, he also recognized the wonderful possibilities and chance for renewal and rebirth that came with the times.

This juxtaposition is especially evidenced in his description of the "outside" of the homes and the pit "bottoms" themselves. In the opening of *Sons and Lovers*, for instance, he describes "Hell Row": "The houses themselves were substantial and very decent. One could walk all around, seeing little front gardens with auriculas and saxifrage in the shadow of the bottom block, sweet-williams and pinks in the sunny top block; seeing neat front windows, little porches, little privet hedges, and dormer windows for the attics" (10). In the same paragraph, Lawrence makes it clear, however, that this idyllic setting is only a façade. It was the view, he tells us, of the "uninhabited parlours": "The dwelling-room, the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scrubby back garden, and then at the ashpits" (10). As if there were anything left unclear to the reader, he explains that the actual living conditions in this area "were quite unsavory because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchens opened on to that nasty alley of ashpits" (10). The fact that these two distinct descriptions of the outside come in the same paragraph is very significant. Not only is agrarian land being lost; the land is being torn, exploited and destroyed. A fake, artificial structure invades and replaces the natural order. In *The Death of Nature*, Carolyn Merchant notes, "Sanctioning mining sanctioned the rape or commercial exploration of the earth

[...]. The organic framework, in which the Mother Earth image was a moral restraint against mining, was literally undermined by the new commercial activity" (41). Lawrence abhorred such commercialism, which was not only exploiting the human body, but was pillaging the land as well.

Lawrence so loved his English countryside that he describes the remnants of the older, vanishing agrarian culture and, at the same time, he also gives a look at the "Hell" already in place: a "hell," which, unfortunately for modern people, was only to grow. For Lawrence, though, these descriptions offer more than aesthetics. These opposing visual outlooks could be seen to represent his philosophy about modernization and what it meant for society. For Lawrence, this modernization meant a turn away from the natural and basic to the mechanistic. Like Elizabeth and Walter in "Odour of Chrysanthemums," people become caught between the "inescapable reality" of nature and the suffocation that comes with modern times (Hudspeth 631).

Perhaps one of Lawrence's greatest connections to disability theorists is his stance against viewing the body as a commodity. He explores this belief in many of his writings, but his collier works stand as the most obvious investigations into the commodification of the body—and as rejections of such misuse. Through his collier figure, Lawrence links the exploitation of the human body with the exploitation of the

earth. Like radical ecologists, Lawrence equates the forceful violation of nature with the domination of human beings. In *Radical Ecology*, Merchant explains, "[radical ecology] acts on a new perception that the domination of nature entails the domination of human beings along lines of race, class, and gender" (1). "A Sick Collier," for example, is not only concerned with the politics of commodity and the work force in an industrial society, but makes its point through the body of an injured miner. Two times in this story the men go on strike: locally and nationally. The union, of course, is concerned with the welfare and benefits of the workers. Since they strike twice, we can assume the workers are extremely unhappy with the industry as it stands in the story. This fact alone might stand as Lawrence's indictment of modernity and the industry, but Lawrence continues to develop his theory.

In the opening paragraph of "A Sick Collier," he begins with his highly detailed descriptions of Willy's body: "He was in build what they call a tight little fellow: short, dark, with a warm colour, and that upright set of the head chest, that flaunting way in movement recalling a mating bird, which denote a body taut and compact with life" (PO 165). Lawrence emphasizes that Willy is a healthy, good man. In fact, Willy "did not drink" and "he was not lazy" (165). This technique of minute description makes it clear that Willy's demise is a

result of exploitation of the body, not personal depravity. If Willy is an otherwise healthy, morally good man, this allows him, Lucy (his wife), and the reader to place the blame directly on the mining industry. In Lawrentian terms, the mine is synonymous with modernity.

Willy is treated as a commodity by the industry directly following his accident. Instead of being removed from the mine immediately and receiving treatment, he lies there two hours suffering. This might not seem unreasonable at first because it does take time to remove someone from so deep in the earth, but Willy's choice of words is quite telling. He cries to Lucy, "*they let me lie two mortal hours on th' sleck, afore they took me outer th' stall*" (PO 167; emphasis mine). If the industry saw men as unique individual humans, instead of viewing them as replaceable machinery, Willy might not have lain there in the cold, damp mine. Again, the modern industrial world is culpable for harming people as well as ravaging the earth. According to Merchant, this mechanistic worldview, where both man and earth can be exploited in the name of capitalism,

replaced the Renaissance worldview of nature as a living organism with a nurturing earth at its center. It entailed an ethic of the control and domination of nature and supplanted the organic world's I-thou ethic of reciprocity between humans and nature. Mechanism

and its ethic of domination legitimates the use of nature [and man] as commodity, a central tenet of industrial capitalism. (*Radical* 11)

Many of Lawrence's characters are confused by this cold, impersonal turn toward a mechanistic society. Willy, for instance, has a hard time understanding the pain and illness caused by his accident: "When he had had a smashed finger, he could look at the wound. But this pain came from inside, and terrified him" (*PO* 167). Perhaps a result of the changing times, this pain is partially due to the realization that he has become merely a tool in this new, impersonal culture. If he is not a healthy, efficiently working machine, he is useless. This link between Willy's illness and his social environment is made explicit.

A group of men has gathered in the street below Willy's window during the second strike. He calls to Lucy to bring him a red handkerchief, then proceeds to tell her the pain is coming back. While Lucy is reminding Willy that the doctors can find nothing more wrong with him, she notes, "There's a traction engine coming down-hill [...] That'll scatter them" (168). With this remark, Lucy seems to blame the men below the window and this commercial excitement for Willy's current state. In true Lawrentian fashion, however, it is ironic that a machine may actually help to remove Willy's source of pain. While there

may no longer be anything physically wrong with him, emotionally/internally he is struggling to find his place in this new culture. In fact, his mind was so weakened, "he hardly knew any self-control" (PO 169). He seems no longer to be in control of his thoughts and actions. He is becoming more and more a casualty to the times, in which he is viewed only as a machine, doing as he is told. Willy then becomes so upset with Lucy that "[h]is little head [is] bristling with madness, [but] he [is] strong as a lion" (169). He violently attacks her, telling her she is the reason for his pain. Clearly, then, there is nothing physically wrong with him, nothing causing him to be weak in body and incapable of either work or purposive life. Mentally, however, he has clearly snapped, viewing Lucy as a substitute for a robotic society that doesn't value individuality.

Finally, as if to reiterate the importance of commodification of the body in this tale, Lucy begs the neighbor not to share Willy's outburst with anyone because she believes his compensation might be stopped, if "they" knew he had become useless as a mental pawn: "Oh, I hope they haven't heard anything! If it gets about as he's out of his mind, they'll stop his compensation, I know they will" (PO 171). The ability to make money is important, especially if one is the sole breadwinner in the family—this becomes even more imperative when

that breadwinner is rendered disabled. It is extremely telling, therefore, that Lawrence ends the story on this note. It places a great emphasis on this aspect of the tale. In this corrosive society, the body is a commodity, and if one is mentally or physically unfit, there is no place for one, and there is no way to support oneself and a family. One is a machine. If it is broken, it can be replaced more cheaply than it can be fixed.

One interesting way that Lawrence uses devastating events—like disability, disfigurement and even death—is to make them an occasion of new realization and renewal. His collier tales are no exception. The death of Charles Holroyd, for example, in *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*, is the impetus for Lizzie's ultimate understanding of her turbulent relationship with her husband, and her realization that death exposes the "real self." Lawrence continues to explore this theme in various versions of the tale. Like Elizabeth Holroyd, Elizabeth Bates in "Odour of Chrysanthemums," when she stands over her husband's dead body, comprehends only that she never really knew him, or understood his world. Robert Hudspeth finds that "Elizabeth, for the first time, enters into a rich but devastating perceptiveness of her husband's world" (634). He goes even further, stating, "Lawrence accepts the reality of deprivation: death and truth are grim partners" (635). Through his death she now understands the true nature of their relationship:

There had been nothing between them, and yet they had come together, exchanging their nakedness repeatedly. Each time he had taken her, they had been two isolated beings, far apart as now. He was no more responsible than she. [...] I have been fighting a husband who did not exist. He existed all the time. [...] -And her soul died in her for fear: she knew she had never seen him, he had never seen her, they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark, not knowing whom they met nor whom they fought. And now she saw, and turned silent in seeing. (PO 198)

In the face of death, the widows in both the tale and the play realize that they were more or less pawns in marriage. And, perhaps most frightening for them, they come to the realization that their husbands most assuredly felt the same way. It is true these couples suffered, in part, from personal incompatibility. Also, however, this industrial world has become so impersonal, treating nature and the workforce as commodities, that this detachment is now infiltrating home life. After their husbands' deaths the widows realize that instead of offering their husbands a true, Lawrentian, passionate, recuperative love and marriage, they, like their husbands in the mine, have become like automata going through the motions.

Lawrence, of course, continues to explore this theme of disconnection through the Brangwen family in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. One especially fitting illustration is the love triangle of Ursula Brangwen, Winifred Inger and Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow*. Ursula rightly senses that Winifred and Tom belong together with their "corruption" that seems "sick and unwholesome" (326). Winifred and Uncle Tom, who is an owner of the Wiggiston mines, are both shown to be really hollow and committed to the exploitive world exemplified by Wiggiston: "His real mistress was the machine, and the real mistress of Winifred was the machine" (325). Likewise, Gerald Crich's death in *Women in Love* is another extremely graphic portrayal of how the cold mechanistic world has become virtually inseparable from personal life. As owner of the Beldover mines, Gerald is "the God of the Machine, Deus ex Machina," turning the miners into more impersonal "instruments" (228, 231). The industrialist finally dies alone in the frozen snow, never realizing true human connection. And, as Virginia Hyde aptly points out in her *The Risen Adam*, Lawrence often relates modern characters to the pietà image; they enact a kind of "crucifixion" and stand in need of renewal: "Lawrence's urgency to present and reiterate this model arises from his belief that modern people, especially during and after the war, are 'dead' in essential ways" (231).

Early in his writings, then, Lawrence has begun laying the groundwork for themes he will continue to explore throughout his career. In his work, death, maiming and disability may bring some type of realization. As Nora Foster Stovel finds, "[...] by tracing the development of Lawrence's presentation of 'cause and effect' through the various versions of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums,' *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*, and *Sons and Lovers*, we can observe his growing tragic recognition of the dignity of death" (79). Also interesting in all of these stories is the aspect of touch. For it is through touch that the widows "communicate" with the dead body. As noted in the previous chapter, for Lawrence, touch becomes a primary means of "sight." He rejects traditional sight or "gaze" because of its association with the assertive will and conscious, conquering mind. It is proper, then, that this new revelation comes to the widows through touch as they are washing the husband's body. T.H. McCabe finds in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" that Elizabeth's "intellect does take it [this new understanding] in, so that her understanding of otherness is a balance of both unconscious and conscious knowledge. The [...] rhythmic flow of images of obscured sight lead to this double knowledge of otherness" (156). Lawrence ingeniously combines intuitive and conscious understanding here, as in most of his work, further illustrating his belief in balance between the mind and body—and balance in

all things. This is quite a different Lawrence than has sometimes been claimed—a Lawrence whose focus on the palpable aims not at extreme experience but at balance by opposing purely theoretical or statistical misconstructions of the human being.

Statistics were such a big part of nineteenth-century culture and the industrial revolution that one cannot really discuss Lawrence's collier figures and his link to "normalcy" or disability without at least a brief conversation about the rise of statistics in relation to the establishment of ideal body standards, rejection of those who do not "fit," and even theories of eugenics. The premise of early statistics as they related to eugenics was that a population can be "normed." This would allow for the removal of "undesirable" qualities found in certain humans—like retardation, other genetic birth defects, and other characteristics that are not considered "standard." Lawrence shows these poor colliers and their families in such a comprehensive light that the reader is immediately engaged in the family life and other dynamics of their lives, becoming emotionally invested in them. Because he treats these characters as he does, we know that he was at odds with the "norming" of a population. In fact, the death and disability the miners suffer in these various collier works suggest that people cannot function in such a society. Lawrence valued, even savored, the differences in human life. His characters are

certainly never devoid of traits that others may find irritating, but this is part of their uniqueness.

All of these themes are visible throughout the bulk of Lawrence's work, especially when it comes to the works containing ill or disabled figures. It is true that they may not always be likeable, as is evident of Clifford Chatterley; however, at least Lawrence treats them in such a way as to make them individuals; in fact, in "Why the Novel Matters," Lawrence states, "Once and for all and forever, let us have done with the ugly imperialism of any absolute" (*STH* 196). Contemporary disability theorists really cannot ask for more, and could not say it better themselves.

Notes

ⁱ Much of Ruderman's evidence is from Lawrence's personal writings, whereas she also shows that his creative work develops greater empathies beyond them.

ⁱⁱ Among texts that helped to frame the critical debate are Siegel's balanced *Lawrence Among the Women*, Ruderman's *D.H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother*, and Kate Millett's angry chapter in *Sexual Politics*. For Anaïs Nin's famously sympathetic treatment, see my introductory chapter.

ⁱⁱⁱ Granofsky does not, of course, refer to Lawrence's own negative version of Wordsworth, as in ".....Love Was Once a Little Boy," in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine* (336), where he satirizes the poet as a sentimental "Sweet Williamish" writer; rather, Granofsky means Wordsworth as both a seer and realist.

^{iv} Lawrence dealt extensively with the mining industry in a great amount of his work, including *A Collier's Friday Night*, *The Daughter-in-Law*, *Touch and Go*, "The Miner at Home," "Strike Pay," and the list goes on. He also dealt with this topic in his non-fiction prose like "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," and in almost all the major novels.

^v And yet, Marxist criticism has contributed to our ability to analyze those very conditions. This dissertation makes use of

major studies, like Merchant's, that benefit from this tradition.

Geography of the Body: Mapping the Great War

If the industrial age was responsible for the maiming and disfiguring of many people, this horror was multiplied many times over during World War I. As Paul Delany states, during the years of the Great War, "Lawrence's romantic and self-creating impulses encountered the strongest resistance from an implacable and fearsome social reality" (*Nightmare ix*). In fact, Lawrence did steadfastly oppose the war; and in 1916 and again in 1917, he was "called up" and exempted from military service on health grounds. While living in Cornwall near the coast, he and his German-born wife Frieda underwent wrongful surveillance for suspected spying and were refused passports (Kinkead-Weekes 400-403). So he is one of a few great commentators on the war who did not actually go to the front. Nonetheless, he saw England itself under Zeppelin attack,ⁱ and he lived on the estate of the war casualty who helped to inspire his story "England, My England" (Kinkead-Weekes 252-254). For Lawrence, as well as for other modernist writers and

philosophers, this war was the predicted culmination of all the ills that came with Europe's increasing reliance on machines. The impersonal and mechanical quality of industrialization fostered an environment in which people were not only seen as machines for industry but were also treated as commodities on the battlefield as well. In "England, My England," Lawrence refers to the relation between "militarism and industrialization" (28), and in *Aaron's Rod*, his character Captain Herbertson acknowledges the unprecedented use of technology during the battles: "This was no war like other wars. All the machinery" (117).

Although Lawrence never saw the trenches, he shows through some of his characters that he was acutely aware of the ways that the soldiers were disabled there: the old veteran, however "hypnotised" by the destruction he has seen (AR 118), refers movingly to incidents of friendly fire, loss of feet, even decapitation, and death by shock.

Interestingly, Paul Fussell notes the inexpressible nature of the Great War for many writers, including Lawrence:

The point is this: finding the war 'indescribable' in any but the available language of traditional literature, those who recalled it had to do so in known literary terms. Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Pound, Yeats were not present at the front to induct them

into new idioms which might have done the job better. Inhibited by scruples of decency and believing in the historical continuity of styles, writers about the war had to appeal to the sympathy of readers by invoking the familiar and suggesting its resemblance to what many of them suspected was an unprecedented and (in their terms) an all-but-incommunicable reality. (*The Great War* 174)

Perhaps because Lawrence experienced warfare from his particular vantage point, he was especially apt in relating to his readers, verbalizing the often "incommunicable." Like much of his public, he was witnessing first-hand the devastating effects of the war in England. He was able to call upon the recognizable in a new, even nightmarish, environment. In fact, Delany notes Lawrence's own injuries from the war—though not caused from being physically involved in battle; he says, for an artist to understand the war meant that "he must himself swallow Europe's poison of hatred, blood lust, and grief; and Lawrence was sorely vulnerable to their inner wounds" (*Nightmare* 20).ⁱⁱ Delany recognizes, then, Lawrence's particular sensitivity to the wounding both psychologically and physically that came with the Great War.

In his own way, Lawrence, like Herbertson, was also absorbed in the aftermath of war, giving prominence to

continuing war wounds in works like *The Ladybird* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It is possible to see something else, beyond the fixation, in Herbertson's stories--a particular empathy with the wounded: "The men are wonderful, you know.... It's your men who keep you going" (AR 117). Although this is not the character usually identified with Lawrence in *Aaron's Rod*, he represents a part of the writer's experience of the war--the part that led, particularly, to his growing interest in theories of disability and healing. The War was "the spear through the side," wrote Lawrence, but added that people will yet "come through . . . and walk healed and whole and new, in a big inheritance, here on earth" (*Letters II*, 268-269).

We have seen how Lawrence employed the physical body as a plane for resistance in his colliery works. As we will see, he continues these theories in his war literature, which is quite evident in his depiction of the very human body of the beaten, battered Christ on the cross in his "war poem" (*Letters II*, 232). In November 1914, Lawrence wrote Harriet Monroe complaining about the poetic treatment of the war in the latest edition of *Poetry*. He stated, "in a real fury I had to write my war poem, because it breaks my heart this war" (*Letters II*, 232). He is referring specifically to "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?," a title which echoes Christ's cry from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

The title reflects the sentiment of the times for Lawrence. He believes that humanity has been abandoned—love and peace erased, exchanged for war and hatred, so that he (humankind) becomes “the bridegroom of War, war’s paramour” (CP 742). As Christ’s body was offered as compensation for humanity’s sins, according to Christianity, Lawrence pleads that the sacrifice of soldiers be enough, and that whatever sin has brought on this war be forgiven and considered redressed.

Lawrence believed that some poets from that volume of *Poetry*—which was dedicated to the war—were treating it too flippantly and irreverently. He explains,

It is the business of the artist to follow it [the war] home to the heart of the individual fighters—not to talk in armies and nations and numbers—but to track it home—home—their war—and it’s at the bottom of almost every Englishman’s heart—the war—the desire of war—the *will* to war—and at the bottom of every German’s. (*Letters II* 233)

When we view the war as Lawrence did in this directive, it and its consequences become much more personal. Instead of being a current affair that happened in a different world to a different people, it becomes everyone’s worry as well as everyone’s responsibility. The wounded earth of individual nations becomes the wounded earth of ALL nations. The maimed, torn, and dead

bodies of soldiers dying on an actual battlefield become the maimed, torn and dead bodies of every man, woman and child. The macrocosm mirrors the microcosm.

In *The Nightmare of History*, Helen Wussow notes Lawrence's "tendency to bring the war back to the individual" (47). His political and global consciousness undeniably links the individual and societal will in this way. The individual is both part and product of his or her society. The individual helps to create the global atmosphere and, at the same time, this global atmosphere cultivates the moods of individual citizens. Lawrence believes humankind should understand this connection and respect it—especially when it comes to important issues like war and destruction. Wussow agrees, explaining that Lawrence perceived the war

as an event occurring between individuals as well as countries.[...][H]e does not differentiate between personal and public states.[...] The state rests within the individual; a single person is a country, even a continent, whole and isolated unto him or herself. Thus, the impulse to war manifested by England and Germany is also exhibited by their separate citizens [...] (49).

If individual citizens employed this type of global consciousness, they would better understand their particular

importance and their responsibility to humanity. While it may seem a stretch to relate this line of thought to Lawrence's disability theory, he was not only becoming increasingly aware of the war-wounded individuals but was also developing his idea that attitudes and inner life can be healing or destructive. As Delany notes, in 1917, Lawrence denounced both socialism and authoritarianism, and he began to believe that "all political struggle, as a product of the organized will, destroys the free play of impulse that makes for life" (*Nightmare* 288). So, this new understanding and preoccupation made him a lay pioneer in considering the form of medicine we call "psychosomatic" today.

Lawrence employs this philosophy in "England, My England." He follows one family and their experiences during wartime in England. The most evident member of the family who is disabled is young Joyce, whose freak leg injury at home, unexpected and random, refuses to heal properly. Her presence is important; she shows that such wounds are not only confined to violent contexts but are, sadly enough, everyday, domestic, and part of the human condition. But the father Egbert, who is blamed for her injury, has a prefiguration of his own ultimate war wound: "there was a little frown between his brow as if he had been cleft there with a hatchet: . . . the stigma" (*E* 24). Other scholars have noted how the story of Egbert and Winifred comes to echo the story of England herself during World War I. In

fact, then, the story becomes primarily Lawrence's comment about the war and England's response to it: "Lawrence's story of the failure of the dilettante Egbert is really the story of the failure of his generation and indeed the failure of England" (Cushman 29). Especially in its final form, the story is "a fully considered statement about England and the war" (29). Just as Lawrence used his ill-fated colliers to make a statement against England's increasingly modern, industrial society, he uses the unfortunate circumstances surrounding Egbert and Winifred to voice his concern and opposition to the war. At the end, Egbert sustains his death injury: "He was hit in the head," Lawrence writes, noticing "the swinging of the pendulum of pain" and, finally, the Germans "in the glare of a light-bomb, by the side of the heap of earth thrown up by the shell [...] saw the dead face" (*E* 32-33).

In *The Great Adventure*, Michael Adams traces how the environment of the late nineteenth century led directly to war. He finds, first of all, that the nineteenth century emphasized a separation of the sexes. Such a division is extremely evident in Egbert and Winifred's relationship. Lawrence illustrates the differences between the two from the beginning. Winifred is "town-bred," while Egbert is constantly equated with the countryside and nature (*E* 9). Egbert is not concerned with the modern and immediate; he is more concerned with the ancient

traditions. Winifred, therefore, feels she must rely on her father and not her husband for the more important things in life. Because of this dynamic, Egbert's incompetence is constantly emphasized, with his father-in-law and wife always having the upper hand. Motherhood further strains Egbert and Winifred's already tentative bonds:

So, she had charge of the children, they were her responsibility. [...] She would do her very best for them, and have command over their life and death. —But no! Egbert would not take the responsibility. [...] But he would not let her have her way. [...] It was a battle between them, the battle between liberty and the old blood-power (17).

Of course, childbirth is probably the most obvious, graphic example of a division of the sexes. Lawrence understands this, employing it here as an explicit tool of disjunction.

Adams goes on to find this division of the sexes manifested itself in a definition of manliness that excluded the female as soft and sentimental. He says, "To be masculine was to be unemotional, in control of one's passions" (25). In Lawrence's "England, My England," Egbert is described as having a "subtle, sensitive, passionate nature"—all qualities associated with femininity, according to Adams (*E* 12). He loves to garden and

is very in tune with the older English rural society that is portrayed as prizing quickly decaying values.

Egbert's love of the old and agrarian solidifies his segregation from society and from Winifred. Adams concludes, "Male disjunction from the female could lead to overt masculinity expressed in violence" (35). The Lawrentian will immediately understand the significance of Adams' finding as it relates to Egbert. In all his works Lawrence advocates a balance between mind and body that he further correlates to the sexes. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he articulates this connection between man and woman:

It is the bringing together of the surcharged electric blood of the male with the polarized electric blood of the female, with the result of a tremendous flashing interchange, which alters the constitution of the blood, and the very quality of *being*, in both. (142)

For Lawrence then, a genuine mental and physical connection between a male and female helps to restore balance and keep one connected to one's emotions. Adams, like Lawrence, finds that a detachment from emotions is extremely dangerous. He concludes, "For some men who were divorced from their emotions, aggressive physical encounters with other men and animals became a primary form of communication" (Adams 37). Lawrence, in a similar

fashion, concludes that violence can derive from this disconnect between male and female opposites and from one's emotions:

Immorality, vice, crime, these come from a suppression or a collapse at one or other of the great primary centres. If one of these centres fails to maintain its true polarity, then there is a physical or psychic derangement, or both. And viciousness or crime are the result of a derangement in the primary system. (*F* 116)

Naturally, then, for Lawrence, this detachment between Egbert and Winifred can serve as a metaphor for the larger environment surrounding England during the war years, leading directly to the violence and emotional disconnection seen in war.

As a result of this disengagement, it made it easier for citizens and soldiers to get caught up in the kind of perilous group sentiment that can be seen in a nation during wartime. Egbert's wounding and demise, in fact, stand as testaments to just how dangerous this type of atmosphere can be. Though he was against the war in the beginning, because his feelings have been negated altogether, Egbert allows himself to surrender to the national spirit. Lawrence writes:

So when the war broke out his whole instinct was against it: against war. [...] He recoiled inevitably from having his feelings dictated to him by the mass

feeling. His feelings were his own, his understanding was his own, and he would never go back on either, willingly. (E 27-28)

Michael Adams also notes the very real pressure of the national spirit of Victorian England leading up to the country's involvement in the Great War. He says, "War became a Victorian game and, like other sports, it provided some men with a missing sense of vitality and community" (Adams 45). He goes on to quote a patriotic song of the time, "For war by any other name [...] is just another British game" (45). Leo Braudy observes that

[...] in the popular imagination of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, war was promoted as the universal tonic. It would bring back order and instill both national and personal pride, reconnecting the disaffected to their societies and strengthening the commitment of the socially engaged. (390)

Lawrence, then, because he was so opposed to the war and foresaw the risks in this type of non-thinking, going along with the masses, uses the maiming and death of soldiers (represented here by Egbert), similar to the way he used the bodies of miners to oppose the colliery system and industrialization, to show that humankind could not live in this atmosphere. Lawrence believed

that war and violence, rather than being a tonic for the ills of a sick country, only help to make the sore fester, leading to more and more bloodletting.

Paul Fussell notes that the national spirit surrounding, and during, wartime elevates military action "to the level of myth [...] imbued with much of its portent" (127). He finds

Such leanings toward ritual, such needs for significant journeys and divisions and returns and sacramental moments, must make us skeptical [that there was a movement in the literature of the Great War from a] "myth-dominated" to a "demythologized" world. No: almost the opposite. In one sense the movement was towards myth, towards a revival of the cultic, the mystical, the sacrificial, the prophetic, the sacramental, and the universally significant. In short, towards fiction. (Fussell 131)

Lawrence's depiction of the disabled veteran or the sacrifices of the dead may echo this sentiment. A reader might be inclined to see the romantic heroism in a character like Herbertson (*Aaron's Rod*), or maybe even in Egbert, perhaps seeing his enlistment and death as the ultimate fatherly compensation for dear Joyce's wounding (which happened to come due to his carelessness—leaving the sickle in the garden in the first place). Upon closer examination, however, these characters are

Lawrence's way of unmasking such a romanticism, which sometimes surrounds death and war. Their bodies and their wounds, for Lawrence, should serve to illustrate the grave and stark realities that always come with such heroism.

The kind of sapping, increasingly impersonal environment found in World War I England also made it easier to view men as commodities, just as the colliers had been seen in the mines. This made it acceptable to send young men to war. In this atmosphere, flesh wasn't being torn or killed; machinery was simply breaking down or being destroyed. Egbert's father-in-law explicitly makes this connection between the British colliery and war:

There was German military aggression, and the English non-military idea of liberty and the "conquests of peace"—meaning industrialism. Even if the choice between militarism and industrialism were a choice of evils, the elderly man asserted his choice of the latter, perforce. He whose soul was quick with the instinct of power. (E 28)

Lawrence continues exploring this connection throughout the story, repeatedly using language related to technology and industrialization. Egbert's lieutenant, for instance, has a "high, tense, *mechanical* voice," and Egbert sees "*Mechanism*, the pure *mechanical* action of obedience at the guns. Pure

mechanical action at the guns" (30-31; my emphasis). If soldiers are only seen as an extension of the machines they use on the battlefield, then the impersonal atmosphere that already exists is only strengthened. The men move further and further away from their individual identities into being seen only as commodities—with no personal identifying qualities whatsoever. Roger Ebbatson has noted such a movement in "England, My England," stating that the story, "traces a movement from rootedness and identity to non-identity, a movement in which its protagonist takes on the qualities of a commodity [...]"(80). Egbert does indeed move from being a father and husband—with a very individual personality—to a casualty of the war. He becomes just another of the many wounded and killed; in fact, that the story ends on the note it does, without even a mention of his name, only reinforces this idea. The Germans see only "the dead face," and Egbert's final musings are strangely disembodied from his actual character.

Egbert's nameless ending seems to echo the World War I Field Service Post Card. One main feature of the Field Service Post Card was the checkbox, where a soldier need only put a checkmark by the message he wished to send home. This removed any and all significant personal communications between the soldier and the family at home. Fussell finds "infinite replication and utter uniformity" attached to the Field Service

Post Card (186). He goes on, "As the first widely known example of dehumanized, automated communication, the post card popularized a mode of rhetoric indispensable to the conduct of later wars fought by great faceless conscripted armies" (186). This limited form of contact only makes the divide between seeing the soldier as an individual human and as just another commodity greater, making it even easier to send him to deformity or death. Fussell concludes, "The essential point made by the Field Service Post Card" is that "we are all interchangeable parts" (187).

Dehumanizing men in this manner only leads to the kinds of psychosomatic trauma experienced by those who saw battle. Daniel Hallock, in *Hell, Healing and Resistance: Veterans Speak*, though he is speaking of Vietnam War experiences, might as well be speaking of British World War I veterans. He says the military uses men as if they were artillery:

We cast them back like spent cartridges, into an uncomprehending society, hoping that the sands of time will cover their pain and anguish from our view. But, like a used shell on a battlefield, it does not go away; it surfaces again and again, rustier, uglier, and even more compelling (111).

Civilians, like Lawrence, who witnessed barrages, such as the dreaded Zeppelin raids, can also experience a similar

psychosomatic wounding. For this reason Lawrence was able to understand the fragile psyche of many veterans, giving him the ability to so sensitively portray characters like Herbertson in *Aaron's Rod*. The Captain's war experiences continue to haunt him—as well as those around him. Lawrence writes:

In this officer, of course, there was a lightness and an appearance of bright diffidence and humour. But underneath it all was the same as in the common men of all the combatant nations: the hot, seared burn of unbearable experience, which did not heal nor cool, and whose irritation was not to be relieved. The experience gradually cooled on top: but only with a surface crust. The soul did not heal, did not recover. (AR 114)

The psychological wounding originating during World War I came to be known as "shell shock." This new understanding of disability and wounding is historically significant. It marks a time when "psychiatric social work" became respectable, and it "opened the previously hostile medical profession to the possibility of psychoanalytic (especially Freudian) explanation, and introduced the general public to a view of war in which injuries could be mental as well as physical" (Braudy 393). That Lawrence employed this new understanding in his work does

indeed make him one of the earliest disability theorists. This should not be surprising, however, as Leo Braudy notes:

the British public and British newspapers tended to accept the psychoanalytic view of shell shock some time before medical or military people did (although they also believed in the persistence of patriotic morale long after it had vanished from the front). The reason may be that they were sympathetic to the abnormal stress of war and what it could do because they were feeling some of it themselves: from the sound of Western Front guns audible in London, the aerial bombardments, the sunken commercial ships, the sight of disabled servicemen on the street (393).

A totally new language had to be created to aid in understanding and treating the suffering soldiers: "Faced with wounds that could not be tied directly to a bomb or bullet, psycho-therapy furnished a language that could articulate what was taken to be a soldier's inner landscape" (Braudy 489). Lawrence, of course, already had his own language and understanding of the human inner landscape: his unique use of the chakra system. For Lawrence simply putting the chakras back in balance could heal this type of psychic wounding, harmonizing the psychic and corporeal energies. While Lawrence's unique philosophy may incur charges that he holds us responsible for our own healing-

and while some dislike this aspect of his work—it is actually empowering to consider the importance he places on our inner life and the power he sees inherent in our dynamic relation to the cosmic powers we can internalize. And surely Lawrence understood that there were never any true winners in a war between men; he understood “the human cost of war far outweighs any perceived gain in “freedom” or “way of life,”” and that “if we ignore the wounds and fail to listen and learn, we will orchestrate our own defeat” (Hallock 407). Lawrence certainly employed this concept in his war literature, utilizing the imagery of the disabled and disfigured bodies of soldiers to illustrate this fact. Although Lawrence was not a pacifist, people may still learn from his vision, expressed through characters like Egbert and even through the Christ imagery in his “war poem,” that health and rebirth may be alternatives to cycles of tragedy, violence and continued defeat.

Notes

ⁱ He describes these attacks as showing "the world in anger." He says the Zeppelin has "taken control of the sky" and the "bursting shells" replace the lights of heaven (*Letters II*, 390).

ⁱⁱDelany is referring to a November 1914 letter from Lawrence to Harriet Monroe. Lawrence says it is the business of artists to pay attention to the individual fighters—not to talk in nations or numbers. In other words, Lawrence believed that artists, especially, should be particularly compassionate to the individual soldier and citizen—no matter what nation they might belong to. I discuss this further on page 5.

Beyond the Eyes:

The Gaze and Another Way of Seeing the Disabled Body

As we have seen, Lawrence tried to turn the death and destruction of the Great War into something more understandable and hopeful than the incomprehensible situation it was for those who lived through it. He does this in such a way that his characters who were wounded in war tend to gain some extraordinary ability or understanding; they become "risen men," who had passed through a kind of crucifixion. Maurice Pervin, of Lawrence's "The Blind Man," experiences one such rebirth. The loss of his physical sight only heightens his ability to use his other senses, and Lawrence values these other senses at least as much as traditional sight.

Lawrence understands that, like spoken language, what one perceives visually may not always be complete. As humans, we tend to be very selective in what we both hear and see. As James Elkins finds in *The Object Stares Back*,

Recent medical experiments have shown that a great deal of vision is unconscious: we are blind to certain things and blind to our blindness. Those twin blindnesses are necessary for ordinary seeing: we need to be continuously partially blind in order to see. In the end, blindnesses are the constant companions of seeing and even the very condition of seeing itself. (13)

Maurice, then, by virtue of circumstance, becomes even more able to "see" because of his total blindness. Maurice is a largely complete, content person in his own right; he is not simply "enveloped by the otherness" that Rosemarie Garland Thomson finds surrounding Clifford Chatterley (10). Early in the story, Lawrence makes sure his readers understand we are not to pity Maurice, or otherwise see him as a victim. We see him as a strong, proud man, who is able to accomplish much. He is useful, helpful, and mostly happy:

Sightless, he could still discuss everything with Wernham [a farm worker], and he could also do a good deal of work about the place, menial work, it is true, but it gave him satisfaction. He milked the cows, carried in the pails, turned the separator, and attended to the pigs and horses.

Life was still very full and strangely serene for the blind man, peaceful with the almost incomprehensible peace of immediate contact in darkness. With his wife he had a whole world, rich and real and invisible. [...]

He did not even regret the loss of his sight in these times of dark, palpable joy. A certain exultance swelled his soul. (E 46)

Maurice, then, is not only adept at working with his blindness, but he also has a fulfilling marriage and home life. In fact, Maurice seems to thrive as a sightless person. It gives him a unique connection to, and understanding of, his wife. In this way, his disability actually seems to become an asset, allowing him a deeper connection to his wife and to those around him—like the animals and the farm hand with whom he works. This is not to say that he suffers no loss, and this point will be discussed below. Like the blind prophet Tiresias, however, Maurice can see, in some ways, even more clearly than others.

Bruce Clarke discusses Lawrence's technique of privileging intuition and a natural or inner type of understanding in "The Eye and the Soul: A Moment of Clairvoyance in *The Plumed Serpent*." Though he is

examining Kate Leslie's particular "moment of clairvoyance" in that novel, much of what he finds is applicable to all of Lawrence's work, especially where his works are dealing with traditional sight. Clarke explains Lawrence's viewpoint:

Unless the soul itself counters visual sensation with its own momentum, the eye will overpower the soul, and the more so the more the visual object at hand panders to a repressed eros. For Lawrence corrupt visuality denotes domination of the eye over the soul—the provocation of an inauthentic eros through surface fixations.

Lawrence's subversion of visuality amounts to a kind of recentering of the soul with relation to vision. (296)

Maurice is thereby "empowered" in the Lawrentian sense, in his soul. He is not bothered by "surface fixations" since he can see with his soul. Because of this, he is now closer to his wife and more apt than ever to understand humanity in general.

In many of his works, Lawrence likes to employ a theme of clarity that results from wounds and/or disability or loss. In "The Thimble," for instance, we are told of a young bride who has married her soldier husband in a rush,

almost without thinking about it. He is then sent to war, and he returns maimed—his “[...] mouth broken in, the bottom teeth all gone, the side of the chin battered small, whilst a deep seam, a deep, horrible groove ran right into the middle of the cheek. But the mouth was the worst, sunk in at the bottom, with half the lip cut away” (E 196). The whole of the opening pages detail her anxiety while she awaits his return. To further illustrate Lawrence’s point, early on, readers are also told that she had been most proud of her husband’s handsomeness. This attracted her to him in the first place. She goes over and over in her mind how she might react at the sight of the disfigured man—the stranger—who is her husband. Just after his return, however, we are told that he now has the ability to expose her soul.

His disfigurements cause the couple to soul-search and assess the reality with which they are dealing; gone is the simple life from before. They realize a deeper, more important connection than they had before: “[...] her soul was exposed and new-born. The triviality was gone, the dream-psychology, the self-dependence. They were naked and new-born in soul, and dependent on each other” (E 198). As the blind man, Maurice, can now *really* see and work with

his disability, no longer relying on appearances, so too the wounded soldier and his bride.

Not only does the disability lead to clarity, but, in both stories, it helps to expose the characters; the wounded are now more reliant on other senses, such as touch. The blind man cannot see and is forced to use touch, and the soldier's mouth is disfigured, impairing his speech. In this particular way, Lawrence has linked disability with his theory of the body and, at the same time, exposed us to his reading of what is wrong with society—namely, that it is generally too exclusively mental and visual. He has intentionally created a barrier between the characters and his society so that they will have to figure out a new way to get along and communicate. He has forced them to find other means of communication—causing them to rely on balanced instinct and inner resources. According to Lawrentian psychology, then, disability or disfigurement in many ways can become beneficial. These figures can become more integrated, more natural and true, serving as an example for those who are locked in a mechanized, too cerebral, too visual society.

In recent decades, disability theorists have begun to question society and how it marks or categorizes disabled/disfigured bodies. Ironically, much of this

categorization is visual; for example, Michel Foucault deals with the phenomenon of the "clinical gaze" in *The Birth of the Clinic*. He explains how people thought the physician's gaze "could penetrate illusion and see through to the underlying reality, that the physician had to power to see the hidden truth" (Shawver). This naturally led to a culture that saw the physician as all-knowing and wise, leading us to focus on a body's outward appearance. If people look different, then we treat them as different. Likewise, if people look "normal," but have internal or psychological disability, society—sometimes including medical professionals—may treat them as hypochondriacs. Due to this tendency, some disability theorists have begun to define the whole concept of disability as a social problem instead of seeing it as the individual problem of a nonconforming body. In other words, all bodies are unique and normal, functioning to their own extent. It is social bureaucracy that categorizes them otherwise.

One major problem many find with this new social model of disability, however, is its silence on questions of impairment. Jenny Morris and others discuss this in both *Pride against Prejudice* and *Encounters with Strangers*. They find that "part of the problem lies with the displacement, if not complete effacement, of the social and political

aspects of embodiment. The social model of disability denies the embodied experiences of pain and affliction that are an integral part of the lives of many people with impairments" (Hancock 40). However, Lawrence's "The Blind Man" handles even this issue with tact and balance.

Though Lawrence begins in the first paragraphs to show Maurice's happiness and abilities, the next few paragraphs address the depression and worries of an impaired person and his/her family. Isabel, Maurice's wife, is sometimes not happy and neither is Maurice:

And sometimes he had devastating fits of depression, which seemed to lay waste his whole being. It was worse than depression—a black misery, when his own life was a torture to him, and when his presence was unbearable to his wife.... She forced the old spontaneous cheerfulness and joy to continue. But the effort it cost her was almost too much.... [S]he wished she could be snatched away off the earth altogether, anything rather than live at this cost. (*E* 46-47).

Since Lawrence himself understands the pain, depression, and anger that can be associated with illness and "disability," as well as the special abilities and

compensations that come with this unique condition, he can convincingly create a character with these same contradictory feelings, without drawing pity for him. Readers become empathetic and understanding of Maurice without patronizing him. Indeed, Lawrence clearly dramatizes the fact that the disabled body does not want pity or patronization, only empathy and equality. This theme in Lawrence's story seems to alleviate concerns like those observed by Thomson. She finds, "[b]esides stripping any normalizing context away from disability, literary representation sets up static encounters between disabled figures and normate readers, whereas real social relations are always dynamic" (*Extraordinary Bodies* 11). Lawrence dynamically portrays all contexts of the issue, including social interactions.

Maurice tries to balance his inner and social faculties by reaching out to Bertie, Isabel's cousin, yet Lawrence ingeniously sets Bertie, who suffers no known physical impairments, in comparison to Maurice. Instead of stripping away "any normalizing context" from the "disabled" character, Lawrence thus reiterates Maurice's strengths, and points Bertie's flaws, creating a level, equal stage for both. We are told:

Bertie was a barrister and a man of letters, a Scotchman of the intellectual type, quick, ironical, sentimental, and on his knees before the woman he adored but did not want to marry. Maurice Pervin was different. [...] He was a passionate, sensitive, perhaps over-sensitive, wincing—a big fellow with heavy limbs and a forehead that flushed painfull.... So that he was just the opposite to Bertie, whose mind was much quicker than his emotions, which were not so very fine. (E 48)

Unfortunately for Bertie, he is described as "sentimental." Lawrence, of course, has a special vocabulary in which sentimentality is a bogus form of emotion. Many of Lawrence's disabled characters are freed of this over-romanticizing. For example, something that is destroyed for the young husband in "The Thimble," quite graphically with his wounded mouth, is his potential for traditional aspects of love like sweet words and kisses; but Lawrence now shows that such superficial pleasantries can represent false consciousness and can even destroy the possibility of real love. In a similar fashion, Maurice's loss of vision removes the tendency he might otherwise have to view his

relationship with Isabel simply idealistically. In the Lawrentian sense, he is seeing her through true sight.

Not only are Maurice and Bertie intellectually and emotionally different, with Maurice perhaps having the slight edge, but they also contrast physically: Bertie is described as a strange-looking fellow with a slight, almost weak, body: "[h]e was a little dark man, with a very big forehead, thin, wispy hair, and sad, large eyes. His expression was inordinately sad—almost funny. He had odd, short legs" (*E* 56). Ironically, it is the "disabled" character who has the "massive," physically strong and agile body: "[h]e was a man with rather sloping shoulders, but with heavy limbs, powerful legs that seemed to know the earth. His head was small, usually carried high and light.... His hair was brown and crisp, his hands were large, reddish, intelligent, the veins stood out in the wrists; and his thighs and knees seemed massive" (*E* 53). As with many Lawrentian characters, these opposing physicalities and sensibilities are directly related to their intuitiveness and their alliance with the earth and organic forces. In this respect, Maurice, the impaired man, is shown to be superior. He is not bothered with the "shallow, prattling, rather impertinent" world of the sighted (*E* 47). Later on we are told that Maurice enjoys a

new awareness with "no intervention of visual consciousness" (*E* 54). Indeed, Lawrence tells us, "[h]e did not try to remember, to visualize. He did not want to. The new way of consciousness substituted itself in him" (*E* 54). This unexpected result of impairment might strengthen the argument, prevalent today, against medicalization of the disabled body, which seeks to make the "unfit" fit through unnecessary medication, surgery and/or clinical judgment.

In an ingenious scene that allows the "able" body to experience the world of the "disabled," Isabel goes to the darkened barn to fetch her husband. In this manner, Lawrence does not strip Maurice away from his particular normalizing context (Maurice loves to work in the dark barn), but does place Isabel in an uncomfortable, unknown, "alien" world. When she enters the stall and closes the door, she enters Maurice's world, the world of the invisible. This beautiful scene allows us to see the grace, sureness and beauty of the impaired body, for not only do we know that Maurice is able to tend to the animals without benefit of sight; we also see how inadequate and afraid Isabel is around the horses and other animals in the dark. As Maurice intuitively knows where the horses are and is not afraid of being hurt, Isabel is very unsure.

Later in this sequence, the "disabled" body becomes the balancing and stable force:

He [Maurice] walked erect with his face rather lifted, but with a curious tentative movement of his powerful, muscular legs. She could feel the clever, careful, strong contact of his feet with the earth, as she balanced against him. For a moment he was a tower of darkness to her, as if he rose out of the earth. (*E* 53)

As with Bertie, in this situation, Maurice is the more "able." Contrary to critics like Thomson, who argue that disabled figures in fiction are seen only as freaks and are stigmatized by their disabilities, Lawrence again illustrates that he understands the need for impaired bodies to be viewed in all aspects of their existence. In fact, we are told, "[a]s he bent down to unfasten his gaiters and boots, he did not look blind" (*E* 53). Maurice has become so adept in his world that to others, in many ways, he appears unimpaired and "normal." He even shaves, and in an endearing scene of mundane domesticity, worries, as do many who are sighted, about being cut: "He had to handle the razor very carefully, as he shaved, for it was not one with him, he was afraid of it" (*E* 54-55).

Later in this tale, we return to the fear, shame and "oddity" associated with the "disabled" body, as seen elsewhere in other Lawrence works like "A Sick Collier." Bertie, Isabel and Maurice are at the dinner table, where "Maurice had a curious monolithic way of sitting in a chair, erect and distant. Isabel's heart always beat when she caught sight of him thus" (E 56). We can assume that Isabel finds her husband handsome and attractive, in many ways. His sometimes "curious," maybe "peculiar" manners become desirable, resulting in her heart racing. Only in the context of Bertie's presence at the supper table do she and Bertie become "a little afraid, and deeply disturbed" by Maurice's impaired body (E 57). Only a few paragraphs later, "Isabel wondered why she did not suffer when she was alone with Maurice. Bertie made her conscious of a strangeness" (E 57). As with Lucy, Willy's wife in "A Sick Collier," Bertie becomes a metaphorical embodiment of the "norm," and when societal norms are interjected into their relationship, Isabel feels weakened with shame over Maurice's physical impairments. Ironically, again, Lawrence capitalizes on this opportunity to reject the concept of the "norm," and to point out its own weaknesses. When Bertie is asked to pass a bowl, "Maurice held out his hand, and Bertie placed the bowl against his large, warm-

looking fingers. Maurice's hand closed over the thin white fingers of the barrister. Bertie carefully extricated himself" (*E* 57). As in the physical differences noted earlier between the two men, it is the "disabled" body that has the "warm-looking" fingers full of life and blood, and it is the "healthy," "normal" body that has thin, cold fingers that are all too ready to retreat from a brush with the "abnormal," even though Maurice's hand could possibly transmit life and warmth to the cold man.

Bertie's coldness is confirmed only a few paragraphs later when Bertie proves not to be confident within himself. He has trouble with women, knowing himself to be empty: "[a]t the center he felt himself, neuter, nothing" (*E* 57-58). Isabel, knowing his weaknesses, "despised him even while she admired him." In fact, "She looked at his sad face, his little short legs, and felt contempt of him.... He understood amazingly—but she had no fear of his understanding. As a man she patronised him" (*E* 58). The situation reverses the rationale for today's medicalization and rehabilitation of the disabled. In the story, it is not the disabled but the "normal" body that is inferior and subject to being patronized. Isabel understands that Bertie is even more impaired than her "disabled" husband, for he lacks substance and true

understanding of what really matters in life; therefore, she has no fear of him. Her husband pushes her to new limits, out of her comfort zone, and this may make him foreign, even scary at times, but she prefers this to the mundane experience of the societal norm.

Lawrence tackles this issue directly in a discussion among the three. Bertie asks the blind man if there are compensations that accompany his impairment (*E* 58). Maurice replies that there are, but he can't exactly explain what they are. Once the blind man takes his leave, Bertie and Isabel continue the talk. She acknowledges that blindness is a "great deprivation," but she continues,

Maurice is right. There is something else, something *there*, which you never knew was there, and which you can't express.... it's awfully hard to define it—but something strong and immediate. There's something strange in Maurice's presence—undefinable—but I couldn't do without it...But when we're alone I miss nothing; it seems rich, almost splendid, you know. (*E* 59)

Lawrence has now solidified the wealth and importance, as well as the relatively functional ability, of the impaired body. Rather than a figure to be pitied, Maurice is one

who may even be envied for the depth of his life, and for the love and devotion of his wife.

If Bertie is read as the embodiment of the social norm, then we realize that society at large still does not understand the unexplained beauty and strength of the disabled figure. Later Bertie and Maurice are alone, and Maurice verbalizes his worry that Isabel is "saddled" with him; he asks Bertie about the appearance of his scar. The answer is disquieting: "[I]t is a disfigurement. But more pitiable than shocking" (*E* 61). Even with all the discussion and illustrations of Maurice's abilities, society (Bertie) still defines him with a "pitiable," and can see only his impairment. Maurice, like other disabled figures, understands that many have pity for him, but he would rather have empathy. This is why Maurice attempts to make some contact with, and an impression on, Bertie—the embodiment of society.

In a tender and even comic scene, Maurice lays his hands on Bertie, knocking off the man's hat, replying, "I thought you were taller" (62). In itself, this is ironic, because if society and its norms are so imposing, one would think they would be represented by a larger figure, at the very least, one larger than the disabled man. Maurice's sheer strength seems to sap the other man, as he "stood

almost annihilated, unable to answer" (62). Still craving acknowledgement and some type of validation, Maurice asks Berite to reciprocate the touch, requesting that Bertie touch his eyes and scar. This touch has the possibility of removing Bertie's taboos and "fear" of the unknown. Ostensibly, it would take away the unknown and Bertie (society) would realize that this scar is made of the same skin that makes all human faces.

Bertie, though repulsed at first, places his hand on the scar and over Maurice's eyes. Maurice places his hands over Bertie's, and powerfully forces him to feel the eye-sockets. Maurice holds them that way for a matter of time, "whilst Bertie st[ands] as if in a swoon, unconscious, imprisoned" (*E* 62). The overpowering sensation of beginning to know the unknown proves too much for Bertie. Maurice says, "we shall know each other now, shan't we? We shall know each other now" (*E* 62). Though they both verbally agree they are friends, Bertie's physical reluctance suggests a more tentative stance. He, like society, is overcome with the new knowledge and power of the unknown. For the disfigured body, though, this fresh, delicate alliance comes as a revelation and surprise as well as "something exquisite and unhopd-for" (*E* 62).

We know in the end that Bertie "had one desire—to escape from this intimacy, this friendship, which had been thrust upon him." In fact, "He could not bear it that he had been touched by the blind man, his insane reserve broken in. He was like a mollusc whose shell is broken" (*E* 63). At first glance this seems a sad ending, but it offers a great deal of hope. The disabled figure has asserted himself into the "norm," and though tentatively, he has broken through, which is always the first step to finding common ground and erasing prejudices, ending discrimination and finding equality for all.

Learning to see the body's differences this way can be found not only in disability theory, but also in Gloria Anzaldúa's borderlands theory. Expanding on the theory of José Vasconcelos, Mexican statesman and philosopher, who envisioned "*la raza cosmica*," a fifth race that embraces the four major races of the world, Anzaldúa explains,

...[T]his theory is one of inclusivity. At the confluence of two or more genetic streams, with chromosomes constantly "crossing over," this mixture [...], rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool. From this racial, ideological, cultural

and biological cross-pollinization, an "alien" consciousness is presently in the making—.... It is a consciousness of the Borderlands. (377)

Though she specifically examines her own placement on the "borderlands" of society due to her mixed biological heritage, can we not usefully apply this theory to our placement in society despite disability or any other "labeling" or difference that may place us on the fringes or "borders" of our own communities? Recognizing and embracing human uniqueness, even "disabilities," allows people to become strong, and differences become the foundation of strengths—a lesson not unlike Maurice's. Anzaldúa's cross-pollinization theory, when applied to the disabled, can create a stronger society, where **no** person is devalued or ignored, and a society where Lawrence's blind man, and other disabled characters, will not be rejected but will be celebrated for their individuality and personal strengths. In the end, Lawrence's contribution to some such view could be his most important message, one that is almost the reverse of the authoritarian political philosophy that is often ascribed to him.

Living Outside-In: The Role of Beauty and Disfigurement in *The Ladybird*

"You, and your beauty—that is only the inside-out of you," says Count Dionys to Lady Daphne in *The Ladybird* (LB 180). She is exceedingly concerned with outside appearances. We are told over and over of her beauty and how proud she is of that beauty. Count Dionys, representing the more sensible (sense-able) of the two, is merely stating a famous Lawrentian belief on getting to the "appleyness" (the essence) of a person or thing (LEA 214). In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence tells his readers to "Be yourself;" in fact, it is so important, he says, that this "is the last motto" (105). In other words, one shouldn't be bothered with appearances and show—ultimately, you are you, and that is what matters. Lawrence's most successful characters try to live through their senses and intuition, as well as minds, and not be worried about others' perceptions of them—or even their own too-mental self-perceptions, for that matter. One immediately recognizes the Count's importance, then, when he

gently chastises Lady Daphne and when he goes on to tell her that her beauty is her "whited sepulcher," just an empty, beautifully-painted shell (*LB* 180). She is limited within her mode of life, like her ascetic mother, and her health is suffering the threat of possible consumption. Although Dionys also has limits within his opposing sphere, he is able to advocate a form of seeing that Daphne needs to practice. This special sight reveals the actual person, inside the person, rather than focusing on the beauty on the outside. It is in this vein that the Count, like other Lawrentian disfigured/disabled characters, is seemingly impeded but is actually enabled to live "outside-in."

This tale suggests Lawrence, once again, as a surprising precursor to some of the disability theorists today, particularly in its focus on inner balance and holistic healing. Although *The Ladybird* is frequently read as a tale of total polarity between the two main figures (who do complement each other like day and night), there is also a certain emphasis on each individual's need to balance the halves of the self and to gain both self-realization and mutual interrelationship. Daphne's physical illness is evident, and so is her husband's war wound. Although fairly little attention goes to the Count's disability (as opposed to his powerful influence), Con Corroneos and Trudi Tate have emphasized recently that he is "badly

wounded" (110); still, they followed a common theme about Lawrence's male characters of this period as overly dominating individuals. In fact, Daphne and the Count, as well as her husband Basil, all qualify as disabled figures who struggle, to varying degrees, with an ideal of wholeness. To a great extent, this is a tale about healing—and the failure of healing.

Many people regard the disabled or disfigured as ugly, and even morally degenerate, based solely on outside appearances. As Martin S. Pernick explains in "Defining the Defective," Albert Wiggam, a major popularizer of eugenics, "regarded health, intellect, morality and beauty as 'different phases of the same inner...forces'" (91). "Good-looking people," he claimed, "are better morally, on the average, than ugly people" (91). This is exactly the kind of attitude that this story questions. Forcing his characters, like the injured Dionys, and the disfigured soldier-husband, Basil, to live outside-in, because they cannot rely on their beauty, Lawrence compels the reader to challenge such beliefs and statements.

Rosemarie Garland Thomson, a disability theorist, who relies on a wheelchair herself, finds that "the bodies of the severely [...] disabled have always functioned as icons upon which people discharge their anxieties, convictions and fantasies" (56). One can tell through Lawrence's use of the disabled and/or disfigured body that he is dramatizing this same

point, revealing public insensitivity to "otherness." We all "discharge" our own nervousness onto these bodies, and some critics would argue that Lawrence did this, himself, if inadvertently. But in reality he has written this story as an exposé of such attitudes. First, he places Daphne in a hospital with wounded prisoners. In effect, Daphne's initial reaction to the hospital environment, where she finds Count Dionys, is demonstrative of this attitude: "Daphne was upset by the hospital. She looked from left to right in spite of herself, and everything gave her a dull feeling of horror: the terror of these sick, wounded enemy men" (*LB* 165). To be sure, the setting is during the years of World War I, these men are enemy soldiers, and the ill and the maimed surrounding her also add to her discomfort at this curious and terrifying site. Her acute consciousness of her own beauty is magnified in this environment, making it ironic that the wounded, "small" Count Dionys chastises her for this hollow awareness of herself.

The military hospital, with the wounded and broken in evidence, is depicted in terms that suggest a late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century "freak show," thus speaking volumes about the voyeuristic but cold regard that many people have for nonconforming bodies. The fascination and nervousness Daphne displays result from the same kind of "thrill" or "disquiet" that many who attended these shows experienced. These displays

fed on this same feeling. Like Daphne, many people became acutely aware of their own "superior" or "able" bodies. In fact, *monstra*, the Latin word for "monster," also means "sign," which "forms the root of our word "demonstrate," meaning "to show" (Thomson 56). Many people, then, have regarded the disabled/disfigured as monsters to be caged and displayed. This aspect of the gaze is what many disability theorists decry, including Lawrence—particularly in a story like "The Blind Man," where the major character only truly sees once he has lost his physical sight.

Lawrence works aptly, too, through Dionys, Daphne and Basil to show how perverted these ideas are. He allows readers to feel disquiet at their own shallow and narrow-minded beliefs, not at the disabled/disfigured body of others. As he states in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, people's partners should "tear [their] lovely opinion of themselves to tatters, and make them look a holy ridiculous sight in their own eyes" (198). This is how the Count functions for Lady Daphne. She wants to look her most beautiful when she introduces her husband, Basil, to the Count. Several times we are told how attractive she looks, and how conscious she is of those looks. Then we are told how she feels during the visit with the Count:

She might just as well have been an *ugly little nobody* [my emphasis], for all the notice that was taken of

her. She sat in the window-seat of the dreary small room with a look of discontent on her exotic, rare face, that was like a delicate white and pink hothouse flower. (LB 200)

Instead of garnering the attention for which she is so desperate, she seems almost a fool because no one is paying her any attention. Count Dionys is very much engaged in a vigorous, lively discussion with Lady Daphne's scarred-faced husband, himself a wounded war veteran. Once again, Dionys is the check on Daphne's opinion of herself. Rather than being impressed with physical, outside beauty, the Count is more interested in a spirited meeting of minds and souls. As John Humma so accurately notes, "It is not her beauty [...] that he cares about. [...] In the 'world inside-out,' the one we must nurture, something other than physical beauty matters [...]" ("Lawrence's" 226). Hence Lawrence, through the disabled characters of Psanek and Basil, has made yet another important statement about beauty and (dis)ability.

Leading scientists began to try to explain the evolutionary role of beauty in 1871 with Darwin's analysis of sexual selection in *The Descent of Man* (Mitchell 91). In fact, Francis Galton, Darwin's cousin, even compiled a "beauty map" of Britain, calculating "the ratio of attractive to plain and ugly women he encountered at various locations" (91).ⁱ Scientists and

eugenics popularizers found this problematic, however, because "aesthetic preferences" did not appear to "favor other adaptive traits" (91). Likewise, as noted by Martin S. Pernick, even "many professionals among the eugenics leaders felt that 'the mind is more important than the body'" (Mitchell 104). On this vital point Lawrence appears to agree: physical appearances, after all, are not as important as knowing oneself. And being comfortable with that person is most important. The indecision displayed by such theorists on beauty—plus the ineffectiveness of the methods to accurately measure any significant magnitude of beauty as a major indicator of other life traits—may inform the comments of Psanek (Count Dionys).

To illustrate these views most effectively, Lawrence must juxtapose a figure like the "small," "ill," "wounded," "*smorto*" Dionys to the "tall, beautifully built" Daphne (163-164; 160). It is certainly no accident that Dionys' name comes from the god Dionysus, who, in certain aspects, "represents the outstanding features of mystery religions [...] ecstasy, personal delivery from the daily world through physical or spiritual intoxication, and initiation into secret rites" (Gross). It would take just such a figure, in Lawrence's estimation, to help Daphne achieve a balance between the cerebral world, where sight and appearances matter excessively, and this Dionysian world, prizing intuition and sensuality even over physical beauty. In

fact, others have noted this "healing," or achievement of balance, effected through Dionys. Ronald Granofsky, in "Illness and Wellness in D.H. Lawrence's *The Ladybird*," for instance, finds, "The Count, almost from the first solicitous of Daphne's health despite his own discomfort, 'cures' her in Lawrentian fashion [...]" (106).

Interestingly, even though Basil, Daphne's husband, is himself disfigured, he is incapable, in this version of Lawrence's tale, of initiating a similar healing effect for either himself or Daphne. In the earlier version of this tale, "The Thimble," Mr. Hepburn (later Basil) achieves a profound understanding and ability to communicate with his wife on a "higher" plain due to this wound. Mr. and Mrs. Hepburn's mutual sicknesses allow them to heal themselves and each other. They come to understand, on their own, the same lessons that the Count brings to this later version. Lawrence Steven notes, in "From 'Thimble' to *Ladybird*," that "in *The Ladybird* both Daphne and Basil are helpless. [...] Fortunately for Daphne the Count saves her. Basil is left in his non-life" (247).

In this vein, then, it is worth noting how Lawrence treats both Basil's wound and Lady Daphne's illness in this later adaptation of his story. Basil's wound becomes less physically horrific, yet Daphne's illness becomes much more significant. Thereby, Lawrence has changed the meaning and focus of the

tale.ⁱⁱ The metaphoric use of the facial wound in "The Thimble" "informs the theme of superficiality running through the tale" (Steven 247). Not just a superficial scar in *The Ladybird*, the wound becomes "seared into [Basil's] brain" (247). He is completely out of touch with any possible benefit from his wound. Rather than attempting to really live, in the Lawrentian sense, he allows the scar to hobble him permanently, even though the wound is less physically severe, and is described in less graphic terms, than in the original version.

In contrast, Lady Daphne's pneumonia from "The Thimble" has become the much deeper threat of consumption in *The Ladybird*. Now, not only are her lungs affected, but she is no longer able to heal herself from within. Her conflicting Dionysian and Apollonian selves are out of balance. When we first see Daphne, Lawrence tells us "her reckless, anti-philanthropic passion could find no outlet" (*LB* 161). The battle between her father's "own wild energy," which she has inherited, and her conscious "adoption of her mother's creed [...] that life should be gentle and good and benevolent" has created a turmoil of frustration and bitter anger within Daphne; this battle is literally eating her from the inside, making her "doctors fear consumption" (*LB* 161). Though her own brush with illness has prepared her for new realizations, it is due to the Count's tutelage that Daphne learns to access her core, beyond the beauty. As Carol Siegel

states, "[. . .] Psanek, in turn, like the forgotten wild part of herself, calls her 'into the underworld' of their dark, silent communion, the subconscious world in which she finds her soul (or female essence) and so peace" (Lawrence 67).

The inability of both Basil and Daphne to restore themselves or each other in this version—while another (dis)abled man, Dionys, is able to help himself and Daphne, as she helps him—may say at least two things about how Lawrence's views on disability had evolved since the first version. First, Basil—arguably an earlier, less hateful version of Clifford Chatterley—cannot work past the scar, now a part of his soul. He is unable to access the sensitive, intuitive part of himself. Like Clifford, he is inadequate at working *through* his disability and using it to any advantage. Dionys, on the other hand, like some other disabled Lawrentian characters, uses his wounds, to a great extent, as a means to metaphorical death and rebirth. As James Cowan in "D.H. Lawrence's Dualism: The Apollonian and Dionysian Polarity and *The Ladybird*," suggests, "[the Count's] condition, as much metaphysical as physical, makes him almost acquiesce in death; but images of life in the fecund darkness of earth suggest that, however painful it may be, he will consent to rebirth" (83). Basil cannot or will not address his wounds and experiences in such a light. Second, this newer version may suggest that, no matter how superficial

or horrific the disability or disfigurement, it has the potential to "cripple" one's soul, if one lets it take one forever out of natural balance. Not only juxtaposing Daphne and Dionys, but also placing three disabled characters so close to each other (again a possible foreshadowing of Chatterley, Connie and Mellors), allows Lawrence to clearly illustrate his understanding of how one might successfully handle a disability.

Learning to live "inside-out" seems to be the answer to dealing with both life and infirmity. As Humma finds, "The number of *in*-words seems to multiply as we watch Lawrence's technique in the story taking shape" ("Enabling Image" 223). It is no surprise, then, that we see the *internal* union between the Count and Daphne grow. Later in the novella the unspoken soul-union between them shows they are both searching for maturity:

He suffered having the sensitive woman beside him. It affected him [...]. And she seemed to be sending her heart towards him. [...] From the breast she loved him, and sent out love to him. (208)

Though this passage signals a deeper, unspoken connection between the two, this connection is still not wholly mature. Lawrence notes of the "lower self" in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, "without sight or scent or hearing the powerful magnetic current vibrates from the hypogastric plexus [...] vibrating onto the air like some intense wireless message"

(194). On the other hand, the "upper" self is also precarious and isolated by itself. The connection, then, between two really attuned human beings reaches beyond the physical, beyond the beautiful or deformed; it is a true, *internal* union. Granted, Lawrence is discussing a sexual vibration, in *Fantasia*, but from this same vibration comes life and true connection—a "renewal" (195).

During this scene, however, the Count "suffers"; though Daphne is clearly becoming more sensible/sensate, she is still not completely working from this "hypogastric plexus," her "lower self." In many ways, Daphne is still using her beauty, in addition to this recent ability, to (too) consciously command power and control. This is especially hurtful and uncomfortable for Dionys. Without a word, she seems "to be holding them under her spell." She even seems "to have cast a certain muteness on the table, in the midst of which she remained silently master" (LB 208). As she continues to question Dionys for his opinions on the war, she is "[...] making him speak. [...] trying to read the future in him as the augurs read the future in the quivering entrails of the sacrificed beast" (208). Some critics, like Sandra Gilbert in her "Potent Griselda: 'The Ladybird' and The Great Mother," find the Count's emotional state to be due to Daphne's female power: "Imprisoned first in her country and later in her ancestral home, he is continually at her mercy

throughout the tale," says Gilbert (146).ⁱⁱⁱ She then implies that this is a result of Lawrence's fear/respect for female power and the Great Mother. While this interpretation works, there is yet another interpretation that is equally plausible. Speaking is "too mental." At this point, Daphne is compelling Dionys to rely on the "upper centers," which seems unnatural and forced to him. He is out of his natural element and fears to become unnaturally mechanical in his observations.

Lawrence also shows that this type of "upper" consciousness still afflicts Daphne with a "great gulf": "Her *consciousness* seemed to make a great gulf between her and the lower classes, the unconscious classes" (LB 211). In this very genuine way, Lawrence uses Daphne's beauty—and her awareness of that beauty as power—as a physical manifestation of the sterile mental consciousness Dionys opposes. While many people believe that disabilities can be crippling, for Daphne it is actually her "able," beautiful body—and her consciousness of it—that is causing her to be crippled. The only way to help Daphne out of this consciousness is to let her experience and employ senses other than sight—where her great physical beauty is so obvious to everyone. It is clear that this is the function Dionys performs for Daphne: he encourages her to be exposed to other senses. However, at the same time, it is clear that he is not

fully balanced but is uncomfortable with the verbal and mental world, especially in the supper conversation with Daphne.

Just as the Count helps to bring Daphne's Dionysian and Apollonian selves into balance, Daphne performs the same function for the Count. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the garment-making she does for the Count. He must be somewhat presentable to the external world, even though he is not at home in it. Because Daphne is relaxed as part of this world, she is the only really suitable choice to aid him in being more at ease in it. This is why it is so important to him that she be the only one to touch the garments. After Daphne asks if she should have her maid sew the shirts, he pleads, "Oh please no! Oh please no, do not trouble. No, please, I would not want it unless you sewed it yourself, with the Psanek thimble" (*LB* 173). He explains the shirt must be made "by a woman of [his] own blood." And "since fate has made [Daphne] so that [she] understand[s] the world as [he] understand[s] it," when she wears the ladybird, she'll understand his request (174-175).

After a brief exchange about madness, the Count explains how he was "quite quite sane" with his wife, who once made his shirts. One understands that his wife acted as a counter to his unbalanced self, much as Daphne will do, through making the garments and thus giving a palpable expression to her role in their relationship. As he brings the "magic" and balance to

her, through the darkness, she brings it to him in the daylight world, in the form of shirts, covering his wounds from the outside world.

Just as Daphne's transformation, her realization of a true self in Lawrentian terms, will only be complete when her exterior self "comes into relation with its interior counterpart, the 'dark,' Dionysian sister within," the Count's transformation can be completed only when he and Daphne come together [my emphasis](Humma 222). This Lawrentian transformation is effected near the end of the novella when Daphne and Dionys finally consummate their inner connection.

During the Count's visit, Daphne hears him "singing" at night, when he is by himself: "It was a curious noise: the sound of a man who is alone in his own blood [...]" (LB 212). At first Daphne cannot understand this noise she hears. She is unfamiliar with being totally in tune with her own more natural, less rationalizing self. After a couple of nights of listening, she begins to open up to the sounds—strengthening the *internal* bond between the two, awakening her own *inner* consciousness. Because of this, Daphne "could pass beyond the world, [...] where her soul [...] was perfected" (213). In this realm, her *inner* beauty becomes unblemished like the corporeal beauty she is so conscious of in the world she inhabited exclusively before this experience with the Count.

In fact, Daphne is very upset and worried when Dionys does not sing during the third night as she waits to listen. Her response shows the importance of this evening ritual as a means of fostering the new, stronger need she has for the Count. Rather than Daphne's representing all the "healing power" (as according to Gilbert), she cannot herself be healed without him ("Potent Griselda" 143). She fears that without hearing his song, she will be lost back in the world of the day—engulfed by her prior mechanistic consciousness: "It was her greatest nervous terror, lest the spell should be broken, and she should be thrown back to what she was before" (*LB* 214). Without being exposed to these new, "darker," more natural senses, she is terrified she will again become swallowed by the hollower appearances of the day. Her external beauty will once more be too visible in its light, and she doesn't want to become once more that "whited sepulcher."

She needn't worry at all, however. During the following night, "the kind of swoon [fell] upon her," and she "listened to the sound from the room. It called" (*LB* 214). She is again being called into that other world, where sight is not so important. Lawrence tells us "[...] she saw nothing" (214). Indeed, the following action, where she enters his world, takes place in darkness. She goes to him, and she first asks him to shut the door. She wants her old consciousness to be shut out

of this important rite. When he closes the door, "The room was complete darkness. There was no moon outside. She could not see him" (214). He has to be her guide in the darkness, literally, as well as metaphorically: "I will take you to the couch, he said, putting out his hand and touching her in the dark" (214).

At first, both are "startled" and "wounded" by the "day-mood of human convention" (215). She "shudder[s]" when he touches her hand to guide her to the couch; he is "silence[d]" by her interruption and by having to explain the song he sings. But this "shudder" shows her ability to make the transition to another self, one that, like that of Dionys, cannot or does not want to be perpetually bound to exclusively "daytime" rituals. Her interruption of the mood turns his time to be "alone in his own blood" into a mechanical, even analytical, event. However, they both finally begin to relax into their night-moods. Without sight and dialogue, their intuitive selves speak volumes: "It was uncanny, to feel her near in the dark, and not to see any sign of her, nor to hear any sound" (215). She brings him fulfillment: "[...] leaving him once more alone on a darkened earth, with nothing between him and the infinite dark space. Except now her presence. Darkness answering to darkness, and deep answering to deep. An answer, near to him, and invisible" (215). In this blackness, both are equal. His

disability/disfigurement is not visible, just as her beauty—an objectification of her dysfunctional daytime self—is not visible. She has learned to access that part of her that the Count would define as the “true” self. Therefore, they are both able to communicate without words; through Lawrence’s inversion of the Tantric centers, they are able to access the soul (and Lawrence places it in the blood), the inner self, achieving enlightenment.

They willingly submit to each other, and the ensuing narration cements the idea that her beauty, and the daytime, where that beauty is visible to all, is not what is most important. Indeed, the Count tells Daphne, when it is finished:

Now you are mine. In the dark you are mine. And when you die you are mine. But in the day you are not mine, because I have no power in the day. [...] in the day I cannot claim you. [...] So don’t forget—you are the night-wife of the ladybird, while you live and even when you die. (217)

She has now experienced a metaphorical death and rebirth such as the Count experienced earlier. Just as his disfigurement and disability no longer have a crippling effect on his life functions, her beauty, her too-conscious self, and her consumption should no longer have a crippling effect on her. That is, in effect, the case: “She had a strange feeling as if

she had slipped off all her cares. [...] She had always been Aphrodite, the self-conscious one. [...] Now [her eyes, once resistant and hard] had unfolded from the hard-flower bud, and had the wonder, and the stillness of a quiet night" (217). Even her husband, Basil, notices this great difference, and he realizes that their relationship will never be as it once was. Basil notes how she seems "virgin like," and he is "ashamed to make love to her" (218). They both come to the decision that their sexual love for each other will end. She agrees to obey him because she is his wife, but they both understand their lives have been forever changed, and Basil, left alone, cannot figure how to make the same transitions as the Count and Daphne have made. He is still lost in the appearances of the daytime world, asking her if she is in love with the Count.

During the ride to Voynich Hall, when he is taking the Count back to the hospital, we see just how lost and ineffective Basil really is. He tells Dionys that "something of [him] died in the war," and "it will take [him] an eternity to sit and think about it all" (220). He goes on to tell the Count that he doesn't mind "work, mechanical action"—to which, Psanek replies, "A man can only be happy following his own inmost need" (221). This discussion, once and for all, reinforces Basil's inability to actually learn from his condition. Basil is stuck in his mechanical rut and, worse, he doesn't mind it. This is the most

terrible spot to be in, in Lawrentian terms; he will never again be able to access his "true" self, and the fact that the Count replies the way he does, only serves as the exclamation point at the end of his sentence.

In total contrast to Basil and his problems, the last few paragraphs and pages of the novella continue to explain and develop the changes in Daphne and her relationship with the Count. It is still, and will continue to be, in the darkness—without the sense of sight: "[Daphne] never saw him, as a lover. When she saw him, he was the little officer, a prisoner, quiet, claiming nothing in all the world. And when she went to him as his lover, his wife, it was always dark" (219). For both of them, disability is, in part, a metaphor for being out of balance and not being comfortable relying on only one aspect of their selves. Thanks to Dionys, Daphne has indeed learned to live outside-in. On the other hand, he has more to learn, as his imperious philosophy continues to suggest.

Interestingly, though Daphne seems to have overcome her self-consciousness, some critics, like Lawrence Steven, proclaim the "unnaturalness" and self-consciousness of the Count. His prose, claims Steven, illustrates "lack of confidence" on Lawrence's part (252). On the contrary, I believe that Lawrence intends to illustrate at least three things here. First of all, the Count's "incantatory" speech reminds us that he is of the

night, and he is not comfortable operating from the "daylight" systems that would include everyday speech. Remember that he was very uncomfortable during his supper with Daphne, when he was like the "sacrificed beast." Also, his world, at least on a mythic level, is supposed to seem mystical and even hypnotic; therefore, "the method of [his] incantation (repeated insistence)" only reinforces this idea (Steven 252). How else would Lawrence have the Count speak to achieve (or at least attempt to achieve) this effect? Finally, and possibly most importantly from a disability perspective, Lawrence may be challenging his readers to feel the discomfort and "unnaturalness" that many disabled people, including the Count, feel in everyday society. Perhaps Lawrence's style here is an attempt to call to mind the more visceral response to a "nonconforming" body.

Indeed, Lawrence's important messages about beauty, disability/disfigurement, and human relationships make this far from his "ugliest story," as Julian Moynahan has deemed it (178). For a disability theorist, the tale makes a decidedly significant point. As Granofsky suggests, "[...] the endorsement of various forms of inversion becomes the scaffolding" for social change, "part of an entire cultural reform involving but not confined to political power" (109). Though one is not at all comfortable with his political beliefs,

perhaps Dionys can stand as an archetype for a strong, "able" bodied, yet physically limited, person. If so, a reader just may take notice and realize that the "disabled" can actually become a valuable, even necessary, part of society. They should not be judged or pigeonholed according to their disability. Perhaps, like Daphne, the "normates" and beautiful people of the world can flourish around and learn from all people, including those deemed "disabled." And, from a Lawrentian perspective, everyone should learn to live "outside-in."

Notes

ⁱ It is quite feasible that Lawrence was aware of this aspect of Darwin's theories. See Granofsy, *D.H. Lawrence and Survival*, and Chapter 1 above.

ⁱⁱ For a more lengthy discussion of this phenomenon, focusing on Basil's wound, see Steven's entire article.

ⁱⁱⁱ See also Carol Siegel's reading in *Male Masochism: Modern Revisions of the Story of Love*. 87-88.

A Little Droopingly, but with a Hopeful Heart?:
Sexuality of the Disabled in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence asks, "What is sex really?" (134). His answer, at least partially, relies on his knowledge of eastern philosophies and his particular use of kundalini. He finds that "We can never say, satisfactorily. But we know so much: we know that it is a dynamic polarity between human beings, and a circuit of force *always* flowing" (134). He defines coition as a "great psychic experience, a vital experience of tremendous importance" (134). Therefore, sex in the Lawrentian sense is an exchange of energy. He says that we all know it to include a "functional purpose of procreation," but this exchange of energy between the bodies is the most important part. If Lawrence believes this to be true, then how might one read the impotence of Clifford Chatterley?

Lady Chatterley's Lover explores what happens when this "dynamic polarity between human beings" is absent. The novel

tells the story of Connie and Clifford Chatterley. Connie is a young, energetic, cultural bohemian. Her artist father raises her in an environment that introduces her to intellectual and sexual affairs at an early age. At the age of twenty-three, in 1917, she marries Clifford Chatterley, who is the heir of an aristocratic English line. After a short honeymoon, Clifford is sent to war and returns, impotent, paralyzed from the waist down. We soon learn, however, that Clifford is not only impotent in the traditional sense, but that he is also unable to make the kind of mind-body completion Lawrentian philosophy describes. Connie, already somewhat familiar with the connection between the cerebral and sensual because of her early life experiences, searches for a more fulfilling relationship. She eventually finds Oliver Mellors, the Chatterleys' gamekeeper, and leaves Clifford behind—lost in his analytical world of words. He is never able to appreciate the correlation between intellect and corporeality.

Clifford's portrayal is not at all flattering. He is depicted as a tyrant, who is inept in his home life. Due to this representation, disability theorists may find fault with Lawrence's depiction, believing him to be unsympathetic to the disabled. Rosemarie Garland Thomson, for instance, finds Clifford "enveloped in otherness," perpetuating the stereotypes and mystery surrounding disability (*Extraordinary Bodies* 10).

In her essay, "It Is More than Lame," Cindy LaCom discusses the use of disability and its relationship to feminine sexuality in nineteenth-century literature. Although she specifically deals with female sexuality, many of her points are useful for a more general discussion about the sexuality of the disabled. For instance, she finds that female disability is often associated in the literature with diseased sexuality along with suspect morality. She goes on to argue, "as the female body came to function as a representation of feminine morality, the disabled body was increasingly read as a sign of either sexlessness or sexual deviance" (Morris, *Encounters* 192). And, finally, she concludes that a metaphoric reading of female disability may serve to reinforce sexual and social myths. In fact, it can be argued that any disability, regardless of gender, regardless of century, may be associated with the idea of a diseased sexuality, asexuality or sexual deviance. Consequently, a metaphoric reading of disability may serve to reinforce ANY sexual or social myth. This may serve to explain why critics, like Rosemarie Garland Thomson, take exception to the portrayal of Clifford Chatterley's disability.

As Donald Gutierrez finds in an analysis of *Sons and Lovers*, "D.H. Lawrence and Sex," "We find no hedonistic ease, no glamorous eroticism here or elsewhere in *Sons and Lovers*; instead there is pain, embitterment, anxiety, severe guilt,

dissociation, a drift towards self-annihilation" (46). And the same could also be said about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, especially in the beginning of the affair between Connie and Mellors. There is an "anxiety" and a sense of guilt, especially for Connie, in the beginning. Of course, there is always this same underlying strain throughout the novel for Clifford, as well as his "drift towards self-annihilation." Lawrence's sexual treatment is not always pretty-or exemplary-which only fuels the arguments and distaste of some critics. However, it is my contention that when we read Clifford and his inability to function in the Lawrentian sense, through Lawrence's adaptation of the chakra system and kundalini energy, we may actually see that the many critical observations of Lawrence's treatment of this disabled character are not entirely fair, or even complete, in their observations.

Perhaps before we really begin to discuss this aspect of Lawrence, or his Clifford in particular, it may be helpful to discuss how tantric sexual ideas may relate to the paraplegic or quadriplegic, especially as the medical establishment sees it today, and in recent decades. Health care workers now recognize that, "[f]or paraplegic and quadriplegic people, a loss of sexual function does not mean a corresponding loss of sexuality" (*Disability*). An interesting article entitled, "Disability and Sexuality-Information for Students," finds the "normal" approach

to sex that links it with physical attractiveness and youth tends to make sexual activity between older bodies or disabled bodies "unseemly" (*Disability*). It goes on to state that this approach ignores other very important aspects of a person's sexuality such as the "touching, affection and emotions" that go along with a very personal and purposeful intimacy. If we accept this type of sexual expression as a natural and important part of life, to deny this type of intimacy to disabled bodies, or to any body, I submit, is to deny these people a "basic right of expression" (*Disability*). It is perhaps most important to remember for our purposes here, and for Lawrence and Clifford, that there may be physical loss of function but that other intimate physical and emotional aspects of sexuality continue to be as important for disabled people as for the non-disabled.

I believe, then, that Lawrence's portrayal of Clifford, when read through this type of lens coupled with Lawrence's philosophical adaptation of the kundalini energy, shows that, despite Clifford's literal impotence and paralysis, these conditions serve as a larger metaphor for his being inept and impotent in his ability to find a Lawrentian balance of body and soul and a larger human intimacy—a connection to the workers in his family's mines, for instance. This is perhaps the actual or most important aspect of his disability for Lawrence, which paralyzed his relationship with Connie and his life in general.

Gutierrez explains, "one definition of the nature of his [Lawrence's] art concerns what area of 'you' sexuality may be and what it may portend about the crucial centers of an individual, a society, an epoch" (43). We should then keep Lawrence's larger, more important, purpose in mind as we read this character and his life. In fact, I argue that, had Clifford been able to employ the Lawrentian chakra energy, he could have had a fulfilling relationship with Connie, exchanging important energy in other ways, regardless of the inability to actually partake in the more traditional model of physical intercourse.

T.H. Adamowski in "The Natural Flowering of Life: The Ego, Sex, and Existentialism" explicates Lawrence's "circuit of coition." He explains, "what Lawrence (in *Fantasia*) calls the 'circuit of coition' is an effort by both partners to achieve spontaneity-without-a-subject, to become with each other *natural consciousness*" (51). In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, though Clifford could not act in a "traditional" sexual manner, he could still have developed a "natural consciousness" with Connie, utilizing the kundalini energy of tantra. Since these techniques have in fact been offered as alternatives to paralyzed people and their spouses, Connie and Clifford could have had a successful relationship, but Clifford remains too ego-conscious to achieve this.

Mitchell Tepper, who is himself a disabled person, explains in "Tantric Sex—A Different Perspective," that because many disabled people have lost the ability to access the sexual pleasure they learned about before disability—what he deems the medical model—the disabled body should learn to employ other techniques to have an outlet and the ability to experience physical intimacy. He explains that the medical model—the bodily function of orgasm—teaches that the ultimate "goal" of our traditional idea of sex "is usually seen as orgasm and the release of pent-up sexual tension" ("Tantric"). Contradictorily, he explains that Tantric orgasm is "counterintuitive to the medical model" ("Tantric"). The Tantric experience, he continues, "slows down, remaining in the moment, and travels toward deep relaxation" instead of rushing toward physical orgasm. In this manner, the energy is not lost—as in the medical model—but gained. Instead of manipulating partners for their own physical gratification, Tantric partners provide "vital" energy to each other.

Ray Stubbs, a prominent sexologist and Tantric teacher, more adequately explains this exchange of energy and fulfillment in *The Essential Tantra: A Modern Guide for Sacred Sexuality*. In a chapter entitled, "Orgasm as Transformation"—a significant title one might note because it is itself reflective of Lawrence's ideas about the renewing and revitalizing aspects of

"true coition"—Stubbs notes that "orgasms are an energetic experience and sexual orgasms are only one type of orgasm" (288). Stubbs also, interestingly, notes "science treats ejaculation and sexual orgasm as two distinct physiological phenomena which can occur in conjunction" (310). He goes on to outline four types of orgasm associated with four different energy fields surrounding the body. These systems are the physical body, the light body, the spirit body and the soul system (308). The illustrations of these energy fields are strikingly similar to Lawrence's own in an "Untitled" ink drawing of 1929—in which Lawrence is attempting an illustration of energy vibrations in and around the body. This can help us understand Clifford because Lawrence was working from a similar understanding of Tantric energy; it allows us to see Clifford's options.

Clifford, however, is too tangled up in his world of words to appreciate any physical sensations, much less connect any emotions to the actual physicality of the body. Mentally, he and Connie are very close, yet they are strangers to each other in the flesh:

He was at once too intimate with her, and not intimate enough. He was so very much at one with her, in his mind and hers. But bodily they were non-existent to one another, and neither could bear to drag in the

corpus delicti. They were so intimate, and utterly out of touch. (LCL 18)

Despite the fact that Clifford and Connie are able to experience a sense of intellectual intimacy and fulfillment as a couple (for a time), they are utterly devoid of any physical connection. Ironically enough, Clifford later states that sex between a man and woman "[...] perfects th[is] intimacy" (35). Though he cannot have sex in our "traditional" sense, he might still have some corporeal intimacy with Connie, yet he doesn't even reach out to her physically: "He never even took her hand and held it kindly" (112). Adamowski finds that a caress becomes the "ritual agent of transfiguration, moving along the 'grossly undifferentiated' parts of the body in order to reach the presence of incarnated consciousness" (52). Because touch is a driving force that compels change, Clifford, unfortunately, remains lost; his too-mental world doesn't allow bodies to touch. Ironically, Mrs. Bolton's later physical ministrations are cast in a negative key. In his world, only the spirits or minds can touch and, in Lawrence's world, this is not enough. Clifford has only one single idea of sex and carnal connection; he cannot imagine other ways to have similar physical fulfillment.

This failure of imagination, too, is ironic because it is this very subject of sex that seems to be a favorite topic of

conversation with his intellectual buddies. Their discussions make them all seem sexually progressive, espousing the *idea* of sex as a natural progression from conversation. In these talks, their intellectual life seems to move seamlessly into a sensual life. In practice, however, their theory is oddly removed from reality. Tommy Dukes, for instance, advocates the importance of intelligence coexisting with warmth of heart and sexual intimacy. Nevertheless, he admits his inability to exude this warmth and to take this open approach—much like Clifford's inability to unite his mind and body. Tommy's saving grace is his honesty and desire to engage with the truth.

In light of Lawrence's ideas on the mistake of making sex too mental, the group's shortcomings are not surprising. In the "Birth of Sex" chapter of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, for example, Lawrence states, "to translate sex into mental ideas is vile [...]" (139). These characters' discussions and behavior only graphically illustrate this fact. In the same section of *Fantasia*, Lawrence also states that one must truly "believe" in one's ideals and "surrender individuality" to become whole: "But once a man, in the integrity of his own individual soul, *believes*, he surrenders his own individuality to his belief, and becomes one of a united body" (137). Here again, we see how all these characters in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, including Clifford, fail to surrender their egos. Only Connie and Mellors finally

seem to be the ones to make this connection and demonstrate success in following their beliefs through, surrendering to something larger than themselves, and even Connie and Mellors are unsuccessful at first. In their early lovemaking sessions, Connie actually analyzes or thinks too much about the action; this is especially noticeable when she finds the bouncing of Mellors' buttocks ridiculous.

David J. Gordon explores this desire of Lawrence to "discover through sex a world beyond or below words [...]" (363). He explains that Connie and Mellors must not only learn the profoundest art of love but even "recover a speech that is, in Yeats' fine phrase, 'ancient, humble and terrible'" (370). Clifford, like his cronies, can speak a good game—particularly when it comes to high ideals about sex—but his words then become hollow and meaningless. Gordon continues to explain that, because Lawrence uses phrases like "unfathomable tenderness" and "ponderous, primordial tenderness" to describe the latter lovemaking moments of Connie and Mellors, he helps "to make the four-letter words ancient, humble and terrible rather than the language of schoolboy defiance" (371). The language of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* itself becomes symbolic of the pre-mental thought processes Lawrence advocated.ⁱ It is only the obsessive thought that makes the language shocking or shameful—even "vile." Again, too much introspective thought ruins everything.

Even Clifford's own literature is incapable of striking the balance between mind and body. The novel's Chapter IX, says Gordon,

speaks of the power of 'the novel properly handled' to 'reveal the most secret places of life.' And it is clear from this chapter that the properly handled novel must in our time attempt not only to evoke a pristine consciousness but to repudiate an old one through satirical particularity. In short both kinds of intercourse are required. (372)

Definitely reflective of his life's failure is Clifford's literature—it is only so many words. Like his life, Clifford's interests and writings seem incapable of evoking "pristine consciousness." Gordon continues, "[I]n the endless play of the mind, the physical and verbal aspects of consciousness, though never identical, cannot be separated" (374). Lawrence understands this, and tries to use Clifford's ineffectiveness as an example for his readers. Clifford is ineffective not because he is physically paralyzed, but because he does not understand this concept of holistic faculties. He always lives in the verbal—without regard for the physical—and tries to keep these worlds separate instead of understanding how they must work together.

In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover," Lawrence says that *Lady Chatterley* is a novel about phallic consciousness. Nothing in Lawrence has been more problematical, perhaps, than the "phallic consciousness" that has been the target of so many feminists.ⁱⁱ This "phallic" terminology has been misunderstood to refer exclusively to a male force. In fact, however, it is a means to achieve balance between the male and female and between faculties that would otherwise be opposites. Lawrence addresses the idea of regeneration for the individual person, and England as a whole, through a proper sexual connection—which must also include a soul union. This coupling should even restore "the park of Eden" (*LCL* 325). He sees the phallus as "the connecting link between the two rivers"—the blood of man and woman—"that establishes the two streams in a oneness, and gives out of their duality a single circuit, forever" (325). It is through this equilibrious union, then, that the fragmented will be made whole. The phallus, when it is in harmony with its true partner (not dominating or overpowering that partner), becomes the key to finding true balance.

Some people may find this very concept unfair to Clifford because he cannot physically perform his phallic duties, fulfilling his phallic connection to Connie. In fact, Lawrence himself said that this inadequacy makes it so much more "vulgar" of Connie to leave Clifford, in the end; however, upon closer

examination, it is easy to see how Lawrence prepares for this treatment and allows his readers to see the "true" Clifford—even before the War and his wounding (*LCL* 333).

Lawrence states that Clifford was a virgin when he married Connie. The "sex part did not mean much to [Clifford]"; it was "merely an accident, or an adjunct: one of the curious obsolete organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness, but was not really necessary" (*LCL* 12). Since he was not interested in the physical aspects of sex before his paralysis, we already see that Clifford can not or will not be able to make the sort of mind-body completion, finding the balance, of which Lawrence speaks. Whether Clifford is technically paralyzed initially or not, in the Lawrentian sense, he is paralyzed even before the war.

Even in regard to producing an heir to Wragby, Clifford is unable to connect any real emotion to the physical aspects of sexual activity, much less to fatherhood itself. He sees marriage and childbearing as a business, Connie his employee. When they are discussing having a child, Connie thinks of Clifford's "curious impersonality" in "his desire to have a son" (*LCL* 43). Connie, exasperated, thinks, "[t]he child, her child was just an 'it' to him. It-it-it!" (44). Clifford uses this opportunity to suggest Connie become pregnant by another man, explaining they will raise the child as their own at Wragby.

When they continue discussing the type of man who should impregnate Connie, Clifford states that it shouldn't matter too much—after all, according to him, it is just a physical function—and a social function, of course, so that the man should be from the ruling class, the “right” sort of people. Connie is emotionally attached to him and their marriage. She sits and “listen[s] in a sort of wonder, and a sort of fear” (44). He doesn't even see how Connie might be upset at the idea of becoming pregnant with another man's child—only to raise it in the manner Clifford suggests. He is again entirely incapable of connecting any emotional response or spirituality to sex.

This lack of affective reaction is even indicated in the phallic symbols that surround Clifford. From the pipe, cigarette or cigar that he and his friends smoke during their “famous evenings,” to Michaelis's car, to the stand of oak trees that Clifford so admires, he is surrounded by many celebrated representations of manhood and virility (36). After all, as Lawrence states, this is intended to be a novel about “phallic” consciousness, and Clifford's all-macho version of it is only a parody of the real thing. Like the ideology that Clifford and his “cronies” espouse, these symbols surrounding Clifford are only counterfeit stand-ins, underlining Clifford's inability to make the mind-body connection he needs to satisfy Connie as well as himself. Interestingly enough, these pseudo-phalluses are

detached from Clifford's body, and completely unrelated to women, just as his intellectual life is detached from his sexuality and from true contact with his wife.

In a philosophical discussion about the future, which might bring about the breeding of babies in bottles, Clifford even goes so far as to express a desire for civilization's utter elimination of the physical. In a proclamation that is keenly telling of his emotional state, he says, "I do think sufficient civilisation ought to eliminate a lot of the physical disabilities. [...] All the love business, for example, it might just as well go. I suppose it would, if we could breed babies in bottles" (*LCL* 74). He is very definite in his choice of words here; he uses the term "disabilities," linking it to physical love. He finds expressing any kind of physical love and emotion a disability itself—sex being necessary only for procreation. Consequently, if in the future, the breeding of babies can take place without the need for corporeal contact between the male and the female, so much the better, according to Clifford.

Connie, who was once attracted to, even loved, Clifford's mind, is really beginning to tire of this intellectualization of every physical sensation. In his pursuit of success, he has become single-mindedly obsessive, even irrational, to her: "All that talk! All that writing! All that wild struggling to shove

himself forwards! It was just insanity. And it was getting worse, really maniacal" (*LCL* 97). Her blossoming affair with Mellors, the gamekeeper, has only heightened her sensitivity to the physical and emotional; she is realizing that there is more to life than intellectual pursuits and supposed understanding.

Clifford, unlike some other disabled Lawrence characters who find a way to come to terms with an impaired physicality, does not enjoy any new revelations or any new consciousness. For instance, Maurice in "The Blind Man" has a much closer, intimate connection to both nature and Isabel due to his blindness; likewise, the young Mr. Hepburn in "The Thimble" and his young wife enjoy a much closer, much more meaningful and significant bond than they had before his wounding in the war. Somehow their impairments have forced them to work beyond the wounding or disfigurement. Clifford, on the other hand, does not experience that metaphoric type of death and resurrection.

Lawrence requires that all his characters accept full and soulful embodiment, disability and all, but he makes it clear that they may refuse. Even the Christ character in "The Man Who Died" had not only to "give up the illusion of his divinity but he [had to] abandon the illusion of being a privileged spirit-self enclosed within the arbitrary limits of a body" (Adamowski 43). If the perfect able-body (Christ) must overcome this consciousness of embodiment, we understand that Clifford MUST

somehow come to terms with his new body. This response is understandably difficult because the very nature of the body makes it so that one cannot easily forget oneself or show resolve in the face of adversity; this fact is many times multiplied if one has a disabled body.

In one of the most telling scenes in the novel Clifford actually fights *against* his impairment. As he and Connie are out for a walk in the woods, his wheelchair becomes stuck on a sharp incline. Rather than ask for help (because his pride won't let him), he insists on getting the wheelchair up the incline on its own power. He continues to fight with it until he is practically thrown from the chair:

The chair charged in a sick lurch sideways at the ditch. [...] But the keeper had got the chair by the rail. Clifford, however, putting on all his pressure, managed to steer in to the riding, and with a strange noise the chair was fighting the hill.

Mellors pushed steadily behind, and up she went, as if to retrieve herself. (LCL 189)

Instead of working with this vehicle and with those around him—connecting to both living things and the technological advances that can help make his life more normal—he fights against it all. And as T.H. Adamowski notes in "The Natural Flowering of Life," humans feel the distance between them as something to

overcome, but one must "overcome, Lawrence insists, without denying the body" (38). Therefore, in order for Clifford to prevail in making this connection to Connie and the world, he must work with and not against his disability, most represented here by the wheelchair itself.

This hatred of, or inability to accept, certain technological advances gracefully is quite ironic in light of Clifford's earlier statements regarding the breeding of babies in bottles. He seems to accept technology only when it replaces any human, physical contact, or subverts connection of emotion to physical sensations. He has no problem treating the mineworkers like machines, demanding that they work long hours for little pay in unsafe conditions. He is extremely mechanical and rigid in his relationship with them. At one point, "He began to read again his technical works on the coal-mining industry [...]. It was far more interesting than art, than literature, poor emotional, half-witted stuff, was this technical science of industry" (*LCL* 108). That he would rather read this sterile, abstract reading than literature that might emotionally touch him is further proof of his absolute imprisonment in this world of words and industry. And, as an almost physically mechanical being himself—his wheelchair being an extension of his lower half—Clifford, then, IS the machine that Lawrence and Mellors so fear. Lawrence's narrator employs

this metaphor in no uncertain terms, saying: "[...] Clifford was drifting off to this other weirdness of industrial activity, becoming almost suddenly changed into a creature with a hard, efficient shell of an exterior and a pulpy interior, one of the amazing crabs and lobsters of the modern financial world, [...] with shells of steel, like machines [...]" (*LCL* 110). In the Lawrentian sense, Clifford is indeed lost, with no sign of redemption.

Not just a sexually radical novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is concerned with what Lawrence understands to be the inability of the modern self to unite the mind and body. Lawrence believes that without this realization of sex and the body, the mind is lost in this modern wasteland of industrial technology—as in Clifford's case. Men and women must develop an appreciation for the sexual and sensual in order to relate to each other properly. They need not only to relate to each other intellectually, but they also need to have some type of physical connection. In fact, their very intellectuality must contain the link with the body's deep energies or else it is counterfeit intellectuality. As Adamowski finds, "If I de-situate my body, deprive it of its instrumental relation to the world, and live it as flesh, then the world must also change; for, in Sartre's words, it is 'as a reference to my flesh that I apprehend the objects in the world'" (53). Lawrence's disabled characters

would seem to have an upper hand here. They come ready-made to experience such a "de-situation." Many of his characters—like the blind man, Count Dionys, and others—are willing to use this type of de-situating to their advantage. Clifford, however, has an inability or unwillingness to experience things in this Lawrentian sense. He would rather live in a cerebral world—living with his faulty thinking and philosophies—unlike Lawrence's many other successful disabled characters.

In the end, then, it is not "vulgar" of Connie to leave, as Lawrence himself once suggests. She must leave him in order to find a shred of happiness and dignity. She needs someone like Mellors to help her realize all her faculties. If she had not left Clifford, she would be worse off in the end, and Lawrence wouldn't make his point so effectively about this exigent union of intellectuality and sensuality.

For those critics who still find Lawrence's treatment of Clifford offensive, it must be remembered that there are people in society just as miserable as Clifford who are perfectly able-bodied, and Lawrence creates those characters as well. It should not be forgotten that many critics and readers don't like Mellors, either—the more successful character, in Lawrentian terms. As Donald Gutierrez explains,

Mellors may not be one of the most attractive heroes in modern literature, but there is no reason why he

should be. As (to use Kingsley Widmer's apt phrase) a 'demonic lover,' an outcast rebel, and a man fighting for individual survival, he should *not* be conventionally attractive, but he should be vital, iconoclastic, gentle and selfish, and Mellors is. (55)

As opposed to Clifford, then, Mellors not only has a greater emotional IQ, but he is more in tune with his base self, his pre-mental self and even his social self in the lower, working classes—the unconscious classes that Lawrence tends to valorize. Lawrence actually makes Clifford more human, then, because he suffers the same struggles and failures as so many other people in society. Lawrence just has the courage to let Clifford fail *despite* his disability, not *because* of it. Unfortunately, unlike Mellors' "John Thomas," Clifford may exist "a little droopingly" but without the hopeful heart that Mellors asserts at the novel's end while awaiting the birth of his child—also an affirmation of Connie and Oliver's union.

Notes

ⁱ For a larger discussion of Lawrence's language see Diane Richard-Allerdyce's "L'écriture Feminine and its Discontents: Anais Nin's Response to D.H. Lawrence" as well as Lydia Blanchard's "Lawrence, Foucault and the Language of Sexuality."

ⁱⁱ See Kate Millet's Sexual Politics, for instance, for a famously scathing feminist reading of Lawrence's work.

Conclusion

Fiction as Autobiography:

Working Towards Acceptance Through Representation

Weldon Thornton finds "that our appreciation of Lawrence's work is [...] vitiated by misdirected biographical criticism, [and] by the assumption that his stories and novels are little more than vehicles of his ideas" ("The Flower" 247). While many scholars and readers may overemphasize the importance of an author's life—even to the detriment of the writer's work—when it comes to Lawrence's representation of disability, it is imperative not to dismiss Lawrence's own life experiences. His early life as a sickly child and his subsequent respiratory illnesses most certainly helped to shape many of his thoughts and works, and so did his knowledge of disability among miners and particularly among soldiers in World War I. Thornton goes on to caution that this "misdirected biographical criticism" leads to "an insufficient appreciation of the 'contextuality' that [Lawrence] achieves in his stories" (247). In this case, however, a direct examination of Lawrence's familiarity with illness only accentuates the "contextuality" of his work.¹

Though many feminist scholars and disability theorists may find Lawrence somewhat hostile and bitter in his depiction of powerful (or submissive) women and less than sympathetic in his portrayal of some disabled or otherwise "differently-abled"

bodies, many of these readings rely on the examination of one or two characters—like Clifford Chatterley, who is, admittedly, not a very desirable example of a human being—or on somewhat outdated scholarship, like the (in)famous 1970's study: *Sexual Politics*. A deeper investigation of a broad range of Lawrence's writing reveals a more compassionate author. "The Thorn in the Flesh," for instance, when read through a disability/semi-autobiographical lens shows a sensitive and thoughtful writer who is neither dismissive nor bitter, especially when it comes to self-acceptance, disability, and the pursuit of renewal.

In "The Thorn in the Flesh" Lawrence alludes, of course, to the apostle Paul's New Testament letter to the Corinthians. Lawrence employs Paul's graphic imagery in his story of the young Bachmann. In the New Testament letter, Paul shares his experience of divine visions and revelations. He tells the Corinthians that, in spite of his magnificent vision, he was left with a "thorn in the flesh." Paul states that when he asked God to remove this "thorn in the flesh" three times, the Lord answered him by giving him a better understanding of weakness instead: "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness." As Janet Everts Powers finds, "The 'thorn in the flesh' serves as a reminder that suffering and weakness lead to the glory [Paul] has seen in his heavenly vision" (93). Consequently, Powers explains:

Paul's discussion of the meaning of his apostleship centers around one major theme: the weakness of the apostle leads to the power of the gospel. This understanding is partly based on Paul's theological insights into the meaning of the gospel and the death and resurrection of Christ (94).

Many Lawrentian scholars will automatically see the importance of this weakness and resurrection imagery in Lawrence's work and life, even though some routinely align him with themes of power and leadership. With this idea of "perfect power in weakness" in mind, however, one understands that Lawrence also found the most interesting and genuine aspects of humanity in those weaknesses; therefore, though characters like Clifford Chatterley do exist in Lawrence's canon, he is just revealing another aspect of humanity—even if readers might not like the uncovered portrait. Bachmann and Emilie's story, however, offers a much more palatable, empathetic example of this approach.

Bachmann is a "fair, long, limber youth, good looking," who, however, suffers from a fear of heights (PO 22). Though he doesn't appear to be disabled, "he [is] bound in a very dark enclosure of anxiety within himself" (23). The description continues:

He marched with his usual ease, being healthy and well adjusted. But his body went on by itself. His spirit was clenched apart. And ever the few soldiers drew nearer and nearer to the town, ever the consciousness of the youth became more gripped and separate, his body worked by a kind of mechanical intelligence, a mere presence of mind. (PO 23)

As we have already seen, this type of mechanical compartmentalization of identity in Lawrentian characters is dangerous. Bachmann's true self has not yet been revealed to the reader. In fact, it is not until his fear of heights results in Bachmann "let[ing] go [his] water" and subsequently knocking his sergeant "over the ramparts" that we begin to see him exposed (35; 26). Until "his forearm hit[s] the officer," involuntary though it may be, Bachmann is described in terms that depict him as only a cog in the military machine—full of fear and shame. After the incident, the reader learns more of his background, including the fact that he has a sweetheart. This sweetheart, in fact, becomes a key factor in the remainder of the story, aiding in Bachmann's discovery of self-acceptance and self-worth.

The opening sections of the story are filled with the shame and embarrassment many people feel because of societal labels that make them feel less than adequate: "Shame, blind, deep

shame and ignominy overthrew [Bachmann's] spirit and left it writhing," and "Deep within him [Bachmann] felt the steady burning of shame in the flesh" (25, 27). Keith Cushman notes the difference between the use of shame in "The Thorn in the Flesh" and in its earlier version "Vin Ordinaire." He finds, "In 'The Thorn in the Flesh' the shame the young soldier feels because of his failure is a key structural principle" ("'Vin Ordinaire' into 'Thorn'" 49). Cushman also observes Bachmann's interesting reaction to the crucifix in Emilie's "Roman Catholic bedroom" in the original version. In both versions of the story Bachmann places an emphasis on the physical, human body of Christ, but his thoughts are more graphic and detailed in "Vin Ordinaire":

His senses quickened, he perceived *for the first time in his life* that the carved figure on the Cross was that of a young man, thin and wasted and cramped.

[...] The Christ was lean and rather bony, with high cheek-bones and a dead face, the mouth hanging slightly open. He was a common man. Bachmann had seen *many* a peasant who might have been his brother. And it startled him. He was shocked to think of the cramped torture the man must have gone through.

(Lawrence, "Vin Ordinaire" 309; my emphasis)

Bachmann's sensitivity here is extremely important in terms of disability theory. The soldier's own feelings of humiliation and unease have given him an increasingly empathetic soul. Bachmann goes on to think, "It might be me" ("Vin Ordinaire" 309). This is a clear and significant link to the apostle Paul's graphic imagery and meaning. Bachmann has received a gift—similar to Paul's vision—but he still possesses a "thorn in the flesh." Bachmann too has felt the torture and heavy burden of carrying a "stigma."

Bachmann enjoys a renewing relationship with Emilie, which is similar to Maurice and Isabel Pervin's replenishing relationship in the "Blind Man" and that of the young soldier and his new bride in "The Thimble." After Emilie and Bachmann consummate their bond, "he [is] restored and completed, close to her," and his "pride unconquerable" is "roused" (PO 34). He sits on the side of the bed, "escaped, liberated, wondering and happy" (34). And, as Cushman observes, "Literal escape from the army is no longer important, for now he is inwardly free" ("'Vin Ordinaire' into 'Thorn'" 54). In fact, when Fräulein Hesse, the "nursery governess" in the house where Emilie is "maidservant," inquires about what Bachmann will do now that he has abandoned his military post, he thinks, "What [does] it matter? He [now] had the inner satisfaction and liberty" (35).

So replenishing is their relationship that Bachmann actually comes to complete self-acceptance, despite any faults others might find:

But he said to himself: "What does it matter—I can't help it, well then I can't. If I go up a height, I get absolutely weak, and can't help myself." Again, memory came over him, and a gush of shame, like fire. But he sat and endured it. It had to be endured, admitted, and accepted—"I'm not a coward, for all that," he continued. [...] it was torture for him to pluck at this truth—"if I'm made like that, I shall have to abide by it, that's all. It isn't all of me." He thought of Emilie and was satisfied. "What I am, I am; and let it be enough," he thought. (PO 36)

Lawrence clearly knew, from the inside, what it is like to have a "thorn in the flesh." The story suggests the universality and the important uses of disability when Bachmann accepts himself, asserts his own worth, and pursues his life with the happiness of relationship. By such acceptance, Lawrence shows that the body can contribute to its own healing and ease, as in this story or in *The Ladybird*—or it can refuse to do so, as in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. As Keith Cushman suggests, perhaps this new understanding of acceptance and love had something to do with Lawrence's relationship with his wife Frieda. He concludes,

The insights that shaped the rewriting of "Vin Ordinaire" seem to have emerged with the writing of the early versions of *The Rainbow*, and they seem related to the fulfillment Lawrence found with Frieda.

The letter Lawrence wrote A.W. McLeod shortly before revising "Vin Ordinaire," in which he states that "the only re-sourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman," could be an explication of what he was attempting in revising the story of Bachmann and Emilie. [...] This letter anticipates the dualistic vision of both the "Study of Thomas Hardy" and the last revisions of *The Rainbow*. There is no mistaking Frieda's importance in this turning-point of Lawrence's career. The transformation of "Vin Ordinaire" into "The Thorn in the Flesh" is a brilliant dramatization-in-miniature of this crucial moment of transition. (58)

This "moment of transition," stemming from the healing that might come from a balance of opposites, perhaps helped to expand Lawrence's views on disability; for, in subsequent tales, like "The Blind Man," disability can help to generate compensatory gifts. The body can operate this way through his unique use of the chakra system, as previously discussed in the Introduction above.

"The Thorn in the Flesh" may not be an autobiographical recounting of an actual experience, but Lawrence completely understood the shame and defiance that may come to anyone that deviates from the societal norm. During World War I, Lawrence felt first hand the feelings he so artfully portrays in *Bachmann*. Though he was never assigned to active duty, he was required to undergo physical examinations, which eventually lead to his dismissal as "unfit" for military service. He employs these experiences in *Kangaroo*, through the partly autobiographical character of Richard Lovatt Somers.

In "The Nightmare" chapter of this novel, Lawrence relives, in painful, even excruciating, detail his experiences before the English medical board, and the shame ascribed to those who are not actively enlisted in service to the country in time of war. In fact, his humiliation is made greater because of the term "Rejected," the name of the category to which Somers is assigned. He is even given a card, labeled "R.," signifying his military designation. After his examination, the doctor says, "We shall reject you, leave you free," adding, "but we leave it to you to do what you can for your country" (K 219). So, even though he is not considered fit, he is made to feel more shamed when the doctors remind him that he should do *something*—as if he is too lazy to serve. This indignity continues in the following scene, when Somers "telegraph[s] the *ignominious* word Rejected"

to his wife, Harriet, and at dinner when some of the other men "loo[k] at him grudgingly, thinking it was because he was not a working man, he had got special favor" (K 220; my emphasis). Somers' experience is further complicated because he does not really want to be involved in the British war effort, so he chooses to take the opportunity to exercise his independent spirit—not taking any job related to the military.

In his letters, Lawrence describes these appearances before the medical board in quite striking language. To Dollie Radford, in June 1916, Lawrence wrote:

But it was a great shock, that barracks experience—that being escorted by train, lined up on station platforms, marched like a criminal through the streets to a barracks. The ignominy is horrible, the humiliation. [...] what a degradation and a prison, oh intolerable. (*Letters II*, 618)

Clearly this incident, and the subsequent reviews before the board, were traumatic and degrading for Lawrence. This scene is recalled almost word for word in *Kangaroo*:

[T]he change at the roadside station, with the porters chaffing the men that the handcuffs were on them. Indeed it was like being one of a gang of convicts. The great, prison-like barracks—the disgusting evening meal of which he could eat nothing [...].

Gaol! It was like gaol. He thought of Oscar
Wilde in prison. (218)

Paul Delany also notes the influence these medical inspections had on Lawrence. He finds, "The account of the examination in *Kangaroo* is so saturated with contempt that Lawrence often loses control of the fictional tone and yields to pure rage" (*D.H. Lawrence's Nightmare* 375). Undoubtedly, then, though Lawrence never saw active military duty, he was not untouched by the war; indeed he was scarred and made to feel the shame that many disabled/disfigured bodies know all too well. This is perhaps a main cause of the sensitivity as well as the frustration, even anger, his readers and critics find in some of his works—especially those that contain a disabled character. Similar to Bachmann as he views the crucifix, or even Paul with his "thorn in the flesh," Lawrence has become more insightful due to his unique understanding of rejection.

Though "The Nightmare" chapter is not a positive or optimistic chapter, there are also some echoes in it of the self-acceptance we see in some of his disabled figures, and Somers' realization comes to parallel Bachmann's in "The Thorn in the Flesh." Somers thinks to himself,

Let them label me unfit [...]. I know my own body is fragile, in its way, but also it is very strong, and it's the only body that would carry my particular

self. Let the fools peer at it and put me down undeveloped chest and what they like, so long as they leave me to my own way. (221)

Also similar to Bachmann, who has Emilie to fulfill him and to foster his new awareness of self, Somers has Harriett. Like his fictional counterparts, Lawrence had Frieda. This consciousness of balance of relationship, though, was also tempered by the war itself.ⁱⁱ

Indeed, the war disabilities became more pervasive in Lawrence after 1914, appearing even in the imagery of his love poetry (as in the "honeymoon" volume *Look! We Have Come Through!*). We have already seen disability-related themes in Lawrence's genres of the novel, novella, short story, essay, and even visual art. His characteristic theme of turning disability or extinction into some form of "resurrection" or renewal can also be observed throughout his poetry.

As we have already seen, the very basis of much of Lawrence's writing—fiction or non-fiction—lies in his deep belief in our relation to the surrounding cosmos. In fact, his theories of the body rely heavily on what he explains as its relation to the moon and the sun. In the "Cosmological" chapter of *Fantasia*, for instance, he goes into great detail speaking of the universe and its energy, resulting, first and only, from the

dead and living bodies of individuals. He produces his own myth of creation:

When time began, the first individual died, the poles of the sun and moon were flung into space, and between the two, in a strange chaos and battle, the dead body was torn and melted and smelted, and rolled beneath the feet of the living. So the world was formed, always under the feet of the living. (188)

Because Lawrence's work promotes such a sensibility, seeing, as it does, the individual body as a microcosm for the larger world, especially the physical earth, it is not hard to understand his treatment of the Great War in works like *Look! We Have Come Through!* Similar to the "wounding" of the earth in his colliery works, the "wounding" of the earth during the war corresponds to the damage to the physical body in the imagery of this volume of poetry. The destruction of individual bodies, then, in poems like "New Heaven and Earth" and "Craving for Spring" express Lawrence's actual global and political consciousness, and this poetry also serves as a type of indictment of the perpetrators of this war in which everyone, including Lawrence himself, may be guilty.

For Lawrence the war became a very personal and individual event. He saw every individual citizen as his or her whole

nation, as humanity itself, in fact. In a March 1915 letter to Gordon Campbell, he explains,

A man must now needs know himself as his whole people, he must live as the centre and heart of all humanity. [...] Because each of us is in himself humanity. You are the English nation. [...] I know that *I* am the English nation—that *I* am the European race [...]. La race c'est moi—La race humaine, c'est moi. Let everyman say it and be free. (301)

For Lawrence, then, no one is left unchanged and unscarred by this war. No one escapes culpability. However dire this may seem at first glance, according to Lawrentian terms, this new revelation caused by the war may also offer new hope. It offers the chance for renewal after the destruction.

This destruction and renewal are experienced on an individual and personal level. In true Lawrentian fashion, however, "individual rebirth points to the possibility of the regeneration of all human society" (Mandell 88). This volume of poetry, which details Lawrence's own understanding of his metaphoric death and regeneration, also may serve as a model for all humankind. If society experiences the war and its aftermath as Lawrence does, then the author has not misplaced hope in the world's future health.

Lawrence's war experience was intensely personal as well as broadly exemplary. Wussow explains, "[f]or Lawrence to fight or not to fight was a personal affair, a matter of private conscience not to be associated with any group cause" (45). As with most Lawrentian works, he promotes individual-versus-societal-conscience throughout the *Look!* volume. He believed that every person should examine his or her own feelings about the cause and purpose of the war and do as they felt best—not just follow the group or national feeling. In fact, so vehemently did Lawrence believe in this that his beard, according to Mark Kinkead-Weekes, even became a marker of his individual feelings and thoughts about the war; it became a personal war protest. To set himself apart from those that blindly followed the national feelings, he kept his beard, "when those intending-to-volunteer were going clean-shaven (or with moustaches to make them look older)" (*Triumph to Exile* 152). Interestingly, this aspect of Lawrence is echoed in "The Nightmare" chapter of *Kangaroo*, where Somers uses his beard as a personal protest statement: "[Somers] said in his heart, the day his beard was shaven he was beaten, lost. He identified it with his isolate manhood" (215). So it comes as no surprise then that he celebrates individual regeneration to contribute to the rebirth of humanity as a whole.

In "Paradise Re-entered," Lawrence explores this theme of humanity's renewal through individual experience. He writes: "At last to calm incandescence,/ Burned clean by remorseless hate,/ Now, at the day's renaissance/ We approach the gate" (*CP* 242). He is speaking to his lover here, of course, but this description serves as a model for Lawrence's readers. The hatred and violence they have lived through brings a cleansing effect—paradoxically enough—not only for them, but for society. Since each citizen embodies humankind, ALL can face the dawn and spring of a new day.

As if to reiterate the biblical implications of this philosophy, our narrator addresses his lover as Eve: "Back beyond good and evil/ Return we. Eve dishevel/ Your hair for the bliss-drenched revel/ On our primal loam" (Lawrence, *Complete Poems* 243). She is now the original, innocent woman—clean again—as if before the great temptation and fall. Adam and Eve, according to western Christian tradition were the first humans. Their fall from innocence in the Garden of Eden has been used as a cautionary, moral tale that can suggest a need for holistic health. This important allusion here then works on many levels. First, we understand the importance and faith Lawrence places on this idea of regeneration after destruction. Aptly, Lawrence chooses to refer to this first major biblical tale—from the book of Genesis, whose title means

"the beginning." Lawrence does in fact believe that there will be a new beginning after human suffering and loss. For him, there had to be. As Mark Kinkead-Weekes notes,

Lawrence had 'never come so near to hating mankind' for their folly, not only because of the death toll [in war], but because of 'those who, being sensitive, will receive such a blow from the ghastliness...that they will be crippled beings further burdening our sick society.' (152)ⁱⁱⁱ

The rebirth of mankind will bring about a cleansing of this "ghastliness," healing the "sick society," and maybe something valuable will result after all.

In the first section of "New Heaven and Earth" Lawrence lays the foundation for a similar poetic exploration of this theory. The opening action of the poem occurs chronologically as if it were after warfare—after the old world (old humanity) has been destroyed. The narrator seems simultaneously to feel trepidation and joy about this new world and the many changes that have already come as well as the many changes that will continue to follow.

It is in the second section of the poem where Lawrence begins to take actual individual responsibility for the failure and inhumanity of the old world. This is where he hopes to

impart his political, global consciousness to his readers and listeners. He writes:

I was so weary of the world, [...]

everything was tainted with myself, [...].

When I gathered flowers, I knew it was myself plucking
my own flowering.

When I went in a train, I knew it was myself
travelling by my own invention.

When I heard the cannon of the war, I listened with my
own ears to my own destruction.

When I saw the torn dead, I knew it was my own torn
dead body.

It was all me, I had done it all in my own flesh.

(Lawrence, *Complete Poems*, 256-257)

Lawrence ingeniously connects his own corporeality to nature and the earth here. His innocence is joined to the flowers he picks from the garden, so that he is responsible for losing his own innocence. As the world and many nations lose their innocence due to war, so do each nation's individual citizens, he implies. These citizens, according to Lawrence, share in the blame for this war; each independent person should examine his or her own guilt. Similarly, the war cannon, as it is being fired, heralds his demise as well as the demise of ALL humanity. Consequently then, all the actual torn and dead scattered throughout the

battlefields also represent the metaphorical torn and dead of ALL humankind.

This symbolic death, however, allows the promise of rebirth, which also brings great insight, if one allows oneself to experience this war and death as Lawrence does. In section five of "New Heaven and Earth," he goes into great detail explaining this experience. He writes:

For when it is quite, quite nothing, then it is
everything. [...]
then I am here
risen and setting my foot on another world
risen, accomplishing a resurrection [...]
new beyond knowledge of newness, [...]
still terrestrial
myself, the same as before, yet unaccountably new.

(Lawrence, *Complete Poems*, 258)

Once the leftover bits of the old world and the old humanity have been decimated, then the healing can begin. It is from these ashes that the new world and this new, universal understanding can arise for everyone. Lawrence makes it clear, however, that this understanding must come from the inside; he states that all humans are still in their worldly, corporeal way the same as before, but because of this experience, they will become inexplicably wise and fresh.

Lawrence ties this individual, cosmic experience to the earth, calling to mind the great historical explorers "Cortes, Pissaro, Columbus [and] Cabot" (259). He says that he is the "discoverer," who has "found the other world!" (259).

Interestingly, Sandra Gilbert in *Acts of Attention* calls Lawrence a "poet of the body," while examining Lawrence's belief that man is "irrevocably part of nature" (79, 164). Though she talks about Lawrence's attention to nature in regards to *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* specifically, the *Look!* volume investigates these same themes. In this manner, Lawrence once more unmistakably links the plight and experiences of the corporeal body to the actual earth. Just as man simultaneously informs society and is informed by it, so too with nature, according to Lawrence. Man IS the earth and the earth IS man. They are one and the same.

For Lawrence, this understanding is also part of the renewal that comes after destruction. Nature aids in ushering in the new heaven and earth. As Charles I. Glicksberg explains in "The Poetry of D.H. Lawrence," "Lawrence sinks himself down into the earth where trees have their roots, feels the sap striving upward, the miracle of creation and renewal. He *becomes* the cypress or purple anemone or almond blossom he describes" [my emphasis] (298). The disabled figure, or any body for that matter in Lawrence's work, not only *becomes* the

object in nature, but actually experiences the regeneration seen in nature.

Appropriately enough then, this volume of poetry ends with "Craving for Spring." This poem continues to explore the same themes and philosophies as "New Heaven and Earth." It introduces the hope and anticipation associated with the spring after a long winter. Lawrence decries weak self-importance while yearning for the rebirth and growth after winter. He celebrates the power of nature and her ability to overthrow the earth and its inhabitants. He writes: "[...] the gush of spring is strong enough/ to toss the globe of earth like a ball on a water-jet/ dancing sportfully;/ as you see a tiny celluloid ball tossing on a squirt of water/ for men to shoot at, penny-a-time, in a booth at a fair" (272). In this manner he personifies the spring, extending the metaphoric connection between individual corporeality to the actual earth.

He prays for the spring to come quickly:

Come quickly, and vindicate us
against too much death. [...]
have done with this shuddering delicious business
of thrilling ruin in the flesh, of pungent passion, of
rare, death-edged ecstasy.

Let the darkness be warmed, warmed through to a ruddy violet, incipient purpling towards summer in the world of the heart of man. (273)

Only this sense of death and rebirth can get rid of all this "perfume of corruption" (273).

Interestingly enough, he also faces this spring with the same trepidation and joy with which he faced the new heaven and earth. He awaits the spring with such anticipation that he prays he won't physically die before he is able to see it blossom. And, worse yet, he hopes he hasn't deceived himself. He doesn't want to misplace his optimism in the coming spring and the new world. As Mandell rightly notes, in "Craving for Spring," "Lawrence questions whether the horror of the war raging in Europe may be the first throes of the fight for renewal, the stirring of new life in the 'rotten globe of the world'" (88).

Due to this resultant fragmentation of both body and world during the war and the post war, Lawrence's own interest in disability and healing became increasingly prominent in his work. He encourages, even promotes, the strength that can come through disability. *Look! We Have Come Through!*, like his other writings, explores that theme. In spite of the maiming, death and destruction of both individual and societal bodies, the new world, the new humanity, will be realized. Perhaps it is in "Mutilation," where Lawrence most graphically depicts these

images of individual disfigurement. He writes: "Oh my God, how it [loss] aches/ [...] Like the agony of limbs cut off and aching;/ [...] A cripple!/ Oh God, to be mutilated!/ To be a cripple" (CP 212-213). He alludes to the deformity, loss and pain associated with amputation. In this particular poem he is speaking of the loss of a part of his self—if he should be separated from his love for long. And, granted, this poem doesn't offer the hope that later poems offer, but it comes earlier in the collection—before he has begun to experience his growth and regeneration, before he has "come through." However, this poem does graphically illustrate the importance he places on the body and its connection to balanced nature. As Mandell notes in *The Phoenix Paradox*,

This poem suggests the likeness of the lover cut off from his mate to the figure of Attis and the other vegetation gods, Adonis, Dionysos, and Osiris, in particular, whose sacrificial mutilation is part of the spring ritual that assures new life. We remember, as well, Christ, whose suffering and mutilation are preludes to his resurrection. (90)

As with the other poems in this volume, Lawrence clearly and cleverly links the images of death, destruction and mutilation of the body not only to nature but also to the very biblical idea of resurrection. Lawrence continues to believe in and

promote similar themes in his other works of this time period. For example, this sensibility is endorsed in works like "The Thimble," where the injured soldier-husband realizes a new and deeper understanding of his wife, only after his return from the battlefield. This same important strength is also seen in Maurice, Lawrence's blind man. Maurice's and Basil's war experiences open a new world to them and their loved ones because they arrive at acceptance and growth. They provide models of how to experience trauma and healing, thus realizing Lawrence's new heaven and earth.

Notes

ⁱ Thorton's view, however, is not necessarily representative. Many critics, like John Worthen, Keith Sagar and Mark Spilka, for instance, understand the importance of biography to understanding Lawrence.

ⁱⁱ In fact, the German setting of this story might be important in this regard. As a faction of might-equals-right was developing in Germany (which would eventually lead to The Third Reich), Lawrence seems to be becoming more and more cynical about the idea of forcing anyone (or any body) to conform to any mass ideology. He also seems to be espousing the idea that physical dominance of others could never be good.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kinkead-Weekes quotes from Lawrence's own correspondence here. See *Letters II*: 218.

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